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1340

With the compliments
of the
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With the compliments
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RAMC 1340/1

Station Hospital.
Valletta - Malta: -
19. 1. 85.

My dear Alexandra,

In your last letter you seem to express a wish that Maltese news should sometimes be conveyed in my handwriting, this is precisely that want -

M. tells me she has kept silent on Egypt in order that I might have the opportunity of telling about it myself.

Well, on the 13th Dec 84 in charge of 40 men of the Med. Staff Corps I went on board the H.M.S. ship Robilla - There was some little difficulty experienced in getting the men on board as many farewells had tended to entangle some of them, but by patience & exercise of charity it was managed.

The voyage to Port Said takes five days, the ship steaming about 300 miles each day. As you are doubtless aware P & O ships are very luxurious affairs, so that I cannot say that I suffered much while on board. At the same time, until you get accustomed to the life, it is very monotonous & you welcome the lunch & dinner bells more than you do on shore.

There were lots of passengers of course, the most notable being Lord Randolph Churchill — I had always looked upon him as a villain of the blackest dye but privately he is a quiet-speaking, very well-mannered, unobtrusive & modest kind of man — speaks well & has a good deal of quiet humour.

I however still refuse to look upon him as a man & leader

of men, but rather as a clever
kind of monkey, with all the
imitative & mischievous habits
of that animal.

We had a parsee professor from
Pepur with his parsee wife, a
most entertaining & frank little
woman who told you she was
married at 13, liked England,
etc. etc.

Young officers going
out to gain their reputations in
India. Coffee planters & merchants
going to Ceylon & Singapore &
China — An old Yankee Captain
going to Java to take care
of a ship, the Captain & crew
of which had all died of
Cholera — Two young ladies
going out to be married —
& so on — There were only
two children on board aged
4 & 6 — the 4 year old one chattered
with me for the first three days.

I wouldn't look at anybody else
when quarrelled because I didn't
go to her at once when coming in
deck one morning I wouldn't make
friends again, his name was
Beryl — You know what
people do on board ship, read,
talk walk about smoke, get
up sleep-states, play quarts &
cricket &c — The young men
meet after dinner in each other's
cabins & sing songs & smoke till
late — In short the ship is
just like a little village full
of gossip, scandal, reports of
quarts &c — you, & at the
same time overflowing with
kindliness & good-nature —

The crew are Las cars & a
very good natured hard working
class of men — They appear
at advantage at meal-times
when the all squat round

a huge platter of curried rice
which first of all they mix
well by delving their hands
through it & then taking a
handful they squeeze it into a
ball which they cram into their
mouths — Nothing of importance
occurred during the voyage —

One young man in the Indian
Staff made me his confidant
& adviser as to whether he sh.
propose to a Miss Phillips who
was on board — One of the

young ladies going out to be
married told me she wasn't
quite ~~so~~ sure if she were
wise as she hardly knew the
young man & certainly didn't
care for him much —

Myself told me she liked
Mans & not womans too ~~and~~
the little worldkin ways on —
One night a dance on deck

& some very good singing from
the girls —

At 8 pm on the 18th we reached
Port Said which is the most
dreary looking place in the world.

Some of the youths went ashore
but I went to bed.

Next morning we found ourselves
sailing slowly through the Suez
Canal — The canal is for all
the world like a huge ditch
with only room for one ship to
pass along the middle —

Behind the ship you see the
mud stirred up by the screw
showing how shallow it is.

The banks are only sand without
any protection so that they
are always falling in —

The ship makes a big wave
on each side, which leaves
large numbers of fish behind
it as it recedes — I

wondered why the Arab fishermen
didn't run along the bank &
net them with a landing net.

On each side of the Canal there
is a flat desert country; Near
Port Said, the desert is partly
under water & there huge flocks
of pelicans & flamingoes are
seen — The flamingoes could
only be counted by millions —

Many hawks are seen — also
now & then a huge vulture —

Here and there along the bank
are nice wooden houses where
the canal officials live —

When you meet another ship, one
must warp itself into places
deepened for the purpose in the
bank in order to allow the other
to pass —

All the 18th we
steamed slowly along the Canal
& fastened up at night near
the bitter lakes — Ships are

not allowed to sail at night.

Next day we reached Suez about
11 A.M. & anchored in the bay
about a mile from the shore.


What a yelling quarrelling
people the arabs are who come
off in sailing boats to take passengers
on shore — They all set upon a
hapless passenger like dogs on
a bone, & pull different ways —

To be continued in
our next.

With love to all

Yr. aff. Bro

D. Muse.

The boats that come off to the Ships
are the usual Egyptian looking boats
shaped so, ~~spiffy~~  the men are dressed
in ~~loose~~ ~~loose~~ loose flowing white
garments, & look ruffians —

The Captain ordered that no boats
should hang on to the Ship but
keep clear — One boat would
hold on, so they brought bucket
after bucket — full of dirty water
potato peelings & all sorts of filth!
& emptied them on the heads
of the two Arabs — This however
had no effect as the Arabs
just sat to & cleaned themselves
& the boat held on as before —
They are the most pertinacious
persistent, obstinate villains
in the world —

At 4 p.m. I got orders to take
the men on shore — With some
little difficulty the party there

were collected & got on board a
lighter - I tried to look dignified
& at my ease on board the launch
while the men sang songs of an
after-dinner type as a sort of
farewell to the passengers of the
Bohilla who were lining the side
of the ship, but I am afraid with
but meagre success -

By then we found a train
waiting to take the men to the
Camp, some three miles off, where
I handed them over, & went to
the Suez Hotel -

Suez is a small, tumble-down
disreputable, mud-built looking
place, with nothing whatever
of interest, except perhaps the
donkeys which are all called
after people of eminence -

The boys run after you crying
"ride the grand old man," or
"ride Randolph Churchill," "Salisbury"
& the like -

The little clusters of arab houses you see, are simply four low mud walls, with a flat roof of long reeds — The children make mud-pies outside much as European children do & look rather picturesque in their long gowns of brightly coloured cotton — The women are hideous looking but with more consideration for your feelings than you would give them credit for usually veil themselves up to the eyes:—

I think I was the only visitor at the hotel so that it was anything but festive —

The dinner they gave me was cold & badly cooked with nothing to redeem it except perhaps the Mandarin oranges which are very good —

Next morning I found another man at breakfast who had arrived with some men on board the Indus & who was also going to Cairo —

This was Grant of the 92nd Highlanders
son of one of our Scotch Earls, bound
for the front being one of the
thirty officers, Wollesley had telegraphed
for — After breakfast we walked
to the Camp got the men into
order & into the train —

At the Station Grant & I
swagged as bravely as was in us
with evident adoration of a
crowd of ragged Arabs — It
is rather funny to see, as you often
do, a very diminutive Englishman
strutting along with his nose in
the air, supporting on one side
a mighty sword, which is balanced
on the other by a huge revolver
about as long as his arm —

We started at 9.30 am & reached
Cairo about 5 in the afternoon.
A long dusty wearisome journey.
The first half of the way is through
desert with nothing to be seen
except an occasional camel,
a vulture & some stone-chats.

2 The last half is through fertile country, fields of rice, maize, & wheat, with clumps of palm trees as far as the eye can reach on either side — with here & there a little village with its mud minarets — Lots of birds are to be seen, chiefly Kites, Kestrels, hooded crows, a bright coloured lapwing, & flocks of beautiful little white cranes — The soil is of a rich black colour & the little shoots of grain spring out of it of the vividest green.

A land the most fertile all night long shrouded in thick moist mist all day shone on by the warmest sun, teeming with life & rapid growth —

Thousands of acres of the richest soil where all night long myriads of snipe run about & fill the air with their cries, feeding sumptuously on waxing fat & juicy.

In the morning the lazy arab
comes along, scratches the earth
th with his primitive plough
carelessly scatters a few handfuls
of grain, & to-morrow the earth
is green — The last sentence
is not to taken too literally.

Arriving at Cairo I had to march
my men three long weary miles
to the Citadel when I left them
& made for the Hotel —

Grant & I went to the Royal
Hotel, when you go to Cairo go
to Shepheard's which is a much
cheerier place — Here Grant & I
stayed for a week, feeding fat
on the snipe & flick-pots of Egypt.

What can I say of Cairo — A
large city full of mosques,
palaces & hovels — Everywhere
dirt & tumble-downishness — The
streets crowded with people in all
sorts of queer dresses all jumbled
together with donkeys, mules
& camels — Everyone shouting

& Shoving -

One day Grant & I went to the Pyramids, about five miles from Cairo. The road carries you across the Nile, here a splendid, wide, slow-running, yellow coloured river.

When we reached the base of the Great Pyramid we were met by an army of arabs, who deafen you & nearly tear you to pieces in their eagerness to become your guide.

One's first impression of the pyramids is one of disappointment but when you begin to climb, you sing another tune - It is only by climbing that you get any idea of their immense magnitude, & your mind becomes overpowered by the feeling of vastness & solidity -

Grant & I of course would begin by disdaining any assistance from the arabs but before I was one eighth

of the way up I was very glad to
give ~~the~~^{both} hands to the arabs &
before I was quite up didn't
refuse the kind offices of two
others who came behind & gave
a friendly shove — each step
is like stepping from the floor
on to the mantel-piece & you
can easily imagine how tiresome
that snow becomes — At the
top the arabs all gather close
round you demanding Bakshish
& try to sell coins & other rubbish
they have picked up —

They are a horrid nuisance &
take away all the pleasure —

Going down is worse than going
up & I was a wiser & sadder
mortal when I again reached
the plain — I had much more
respect for King Cheops than
I had when beginning to climb
We saw the Sphinx & the temple
of that name which I
think the most wonderful

of all, as it is built of huge blocks of granite & alabaster each block some 16 feet long.

Outside the temple I fell foul of an arab who had followed me up to the top of the pyramid down again, on to the Sphinx & temple, every 15 seconds pulling my coat & whispering in a soft voice to buy something or other.

I was sorry that the sixth Commandment ~~was~~ ^{was} was in force even in Egypt as it would have afforded me infinite satisfaction to have killed him. As it was that Arab was seen no more that day in my neighbourhood.

The Boulaq museum in Cairo is probably the most interesting museum in the world, here you see King Pharaoh as fresh & beautiful a mummy as the day he was buried 4000 years ago —

The wreaths of lotus flowers laid on the breast are ~~in~~ quite intact & some still show the colour. Statues of their gods, & of the Kings & Queens, pikes, bows, weapons, tools &c &c all 'beautifully clean & in good order. —

We saw also the tree under which Joseph & Mary rested when escaping into Egypt, — also mosques &c by the dozen. —

I am however does not admit of lengthened description —

One evening we went to a grand ball at General Stevenson's where we met all the beauty & bravery of Cairo —

On the Friday evening I rec'd orders to proceed to Alexandria & take ship to Malta —

Reached Alex: without adventure at 3 pm on the Saturday went at once on board

the 'Mareotis' & was disgusted to find she didn't sail till Monday.

Next day went to Ramle } where the 19th Reg^t is quartered.

The Hospital is in part of the Khedive's Palace which is a huge quincrack concern which cost a million & a half some years ago — Then I met Colonel Burland of the 19th whom I had met ~~here~~ in Malta who was a very kind & hospitable giving me dinner &c — Also a surgeon I knew in Aldershot & so got through what would have been a weary day —

On Monday we sailed & reached Malta at 10 pm on the Thursday.

The Captain was very Scotch & towards night was usually rather 'fow' & argumentative.

And so ended my trip to Egypt
which looking back on. ~~was~~
very interesting but mightily
wearisome at the time.

With love to all

Yours affly M^r
D. Bruce

Umbogo.

Tululand. 9.2.96.

My dear Alexandra.

I have received
yours of the 14th Dec^r. I guess Alice
will make more money and more
comfortably by sticking to his last
or seam in Scotland than by
embarking in speculation in S. Africa.
The Tululand coal fields are near the
coast, near St Lucia Lake, and at
present there is no way of transporting
them - If there was there wouldn't be
many claims to take - I expect
within a very few years there will
a railway up to the fields - an
extension from Verulam to the border
of Tululand at the Tugela River


has been lately surveyed and a concession granted for right to build a railway from there to the fields -

I hope your new colliery will soon begin to turn out the dollars - We have been hard up all my life and never expect to be anything else -

You ask how we live in the wilds - Well very much the same as you live in the tame - With regard to feeding we have flour and the boy makes bread - We have Mealie meal to make porridge and a cow which gives us a little milk - Now and then at rare intervals we have butter - For meat we depend on buck - When we can't shoot one we kill a chicken or open a tin of preserved meat - We have two of a population here besides ourselves, the Acting Resident Magistrate & his clerk - We all have dinner together at the Magistrate's hut and after dinner

we play a rubber of whist, and then
march home to bed.

In regard to work I am as you know
working at the Tsetse Fly disease —
Up to the present it has been thought that
the fly bit the horses & so poisoned
them — I have found out that the ~~fly~~
disease is caused by a parasite in
the blood — a very small thing shaped so

 I have found that several
of the wild animals, buffalo, wildebeests,
Koodos have this in their blood —

Well the fly bites and sucks blood
out of a wild animal and then he
goes to a horse, or cow, or dog and
transfers the parasite to its blood &
then the animal gets very sick &
dies — The Governor of Natal expects
me to find a cure for the disease &
to find some way of making the
country healthy for domestic animals,
I hope his expectation will be realized.

When we go down to the Fly Country,
which is very unhealthy, we live in
tents and chase buffalo &c all day
long - We have about 20 natives with
us who carry the dead beasts into camp,
but you must have seen photographs
of all these things - You don't
say how Minnie is getting on - Do you
see her & her handsome husband often -
Maggie & Alice &c &c. When you write
give us all the gossip you can, remember
we are very much abroad out here -

I have just been out for an hours ride
on Mr's horse, if it can be called riding,
the paths are narrow & very steep, and
the long grass meets over them, so that
you can see when the stones come -

All the horses are dead except Mr's. It
has never been allowed off the hill -

M. is hard at work carpentering (6.30 pm)
making a stick out of red wory wood.

With love to you all

Your aff brother

D. Bruce

Umbro, Zululand.
24th Apl. 1896

My dear Alexandra.

I received your last letter yesterday and found it full of news which interested us much - I had never heard of R Smith's losing his money or anything else in your letter, and it is always very interesting to hear about people one has known.

I had a long letter from Mr Ireland on the same day - They seem to be going on much as usual - Mrs James Smith had been staying with them & she is going to Bonn in Germany for her children's education.

do you ever hear about Charlie
Todd - I wonder how he is getting
on - I heard Tom was getting
married sometime ago - So Annie
Thomson has got married at last -
He has waited a long time, he
must be 41 yrs old - do you ever
hear anything about Katie Williamson
I heard her mother was dead -
I am glad to hear that Minnie has
forgotten us - She is a queer girl -
But it wouldn't be in nature for
you and me not to like her - I
didn't know John had been ill -
Give her my best love next time
you see her - I am sorry to
hear you are troubled with colds -
Warm clothing and Cod liver oil
are the only things I can recommend

This is a fine climate for cold people - I haven't had a cough or a cold since coming out here, which is rather an uncommon thing for me - The work is progressing slowly, I have found the parasite of the Nagana in the blood of several of the wild animals such as buffalo wildebeest &c, so I expect the Government may stop protecting their creatures some day, which they do at present - There is a great dearth of news up here -

We have an addition to our population of 4 in the shape of Capt. Pearce & 50 men of the Zululand police - I expect we are going to annex Tongaland next month - Tongaland is near here, about 20 miles to the North

and lies between Sambaani's country
which we annexed last year, and
the sea. There seems to be lots of
excitement in Natal & the Cape
about the Matabele rising - Troops
are going there from Maritzburg &
if I had been there I would very
likely have been sent - But on the
top of our hill we are as quiet as
mice - No doubt there will be lots of
excitement in this part of the world
for years, as the place is very savage
still - I am glad your kids are
getting on so well and hope you
are making lots of money out of
the new pit - You should scribble
a line every week or two instead
of waiting a whole month for a
reply to you - With best love to you
all - Your aff. Mother
Dorothy

RAMC 1340/3

Kaew Hill. Auckland.
Masaland. 10th Feb 1912.

My dear Sobel.

I haven't written you yet to thank you for the beautiful Christmas present you sent me. As I never wear ties here on week-days, I can only wear yours on Sundays so I expect it will last long and keep clean. On week-days I only wear a Kharki shirt & riding breeches with leather gaiters and brown boots. A belt & felt hat completes the costume. I'm sorry that my rather mature shape doesn't lend itself much to this attire but I persevere in it as one of the advantages of the wilds is that you can dispense with the starched shirts & collars of civilisation. I tried to do away with shaving when I came here, but alas a few white hairs appeared in the coming beard & as I knew that would make me feel old I flew to the razor again. It is good to assume ^{a presence} a virtue if you have it not.

Well I suppose I should begin at the beginning and give you a history of our wanderings since leaving England. We left London on Tuesday the 7th Nov^r at 11 o'clock and as we had told everybody we were going on the Thursday we had a quiet time. One of our friends however had found out & brought a huge box of most excellent Chocolates. After that I thought it wasn't perhaps a very good plan not to tell anyone when you were going, if such nice presents were missed. I met a friend on board the boat a Dr. Armand Ruffer of Alexandria. He had a frightful cold & I fancy he gave it to me as a few days later at Marseilles a very bad cold seized me & clung to me until we were as far as Aden. How I suffered from that cold. Often I had to leave the table at meals such fits of coughing used to come on. Runs in the family I suppose. At Paris we stayed for a couple of days at the Grand Hotel, a huge uncomfortable place. Mary went to see her cousins the Houselliers & I went to the Pasteur Institute to see Laveran. We also went to the Louvre to see the Venus de Medici & the bare place on the wall where the Mona

Lisa sad hung. Lunched in the Bois de Boulogne & went to a comic opera. Left the Gare de Lyons at 9.30 for Marseilles. Alas the ss. Poorkha was late so we had to spend a day and night at Marseilles. A most uncomfortable thing though why it should be I don't know. If I go on at this rate it will take six letters to get you to Hyavaland.

Let me jump to Chinde where we arrived on Sunday the 18th of December. There is no harbour at Chinde so you are put into a basket and lowered over the side into a small tug & so get over the bar into the river Zambezi. There was a bit of a sea on & to see the tug coming out & suddenly standing now on her head then on her side made one wonder why one had left his comfortable home.

We went straight on board a small stern-paddle steamer the Empress & started the same afternoon up the Zambezi. There were seventeen passengers crowded into the small boat. We had two launches attached to the sides of the steamer. The river was low & we stuck away little while. The temperature was over 100° in the cabins. There was no soda water after the first two days. The Zambezi water tasted beastly as if full of

of mould & altogether it was rotten. The river passes winding about as bad as the Forth, through an absolutely level plain, so that there is nothing to look at except the high banks. There were however plenty of hippos, crocodiles and large water birds so I amused myself most of the day watching them. Thousands of geese & cranes. Some of the men had rifles ready & fired at every croc. that showed. They are wily brutes however & usually slide into the water before you are within shot. They lie on the sand banks asleep with their mouths wide open & it is curious to see how the birds wander about quite close to them, not in the least afraid. Well we suffered in this way for seven and a half long days until we got to the Shire River. In my next letter I must tell you our experience of a house-boat on the Shire. I see it is just dinner time. I hope you are getting on well & enjoying yourself. We had a letter from your mother yesterday in which she gave us much news. Now with best love from us both.

Your affectionate Uncle
David Bruce

Ramc 1340/3

SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

SURGEON-GENERAL SIR DAVID BRUCE, A.M.S.,

DIRECTOR.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "TSETSE."

KASU HILL,

CENTRAL ANGONILAND,
NYASALAND.

30th January, 1914.

My dear Isobel,

Very many thanks for your Christmas present. I have taken an unconscionable time in writing to thank you, but when I arrived here I found many arrears of work awaiting me.

How are you all? Have you got into the new house? And how does the new motor go? Are you still taking riding lessons, or are you perfect? If we had only horses here it would remove the monotony, but there is hardly such a thing in the country. I hope your mother is well and keeping her enemy, bronchitis, at bay. I had a fearful cough myself when I left England, and didn't get rid of it until we got to Madeira.

I am afraid I have nothing very interesting to tell you about, but I may as well write what has happened since I saw you last. We left Southampton in the "Edinburgh Castle" on the 1st November, and had beastly cold stormy weather until we reached Madeira. Then it was warm and fairly smooth until we came to Cape Town on the 18th. Nothing exciting occurred. Someone sang, or recited, "She didn't care, she didn't stamp or tear her hair," which is about the only thing I can remember. We had a fancy-dress ball, of course. After saying, as usual, that I wouldn't bother to dress, at the last moment I found

myself made up as a pirate chief. We had some "knuts" on board who tried to dance the tango, but it was a very milk-and-watery performance, very like the skit on it I saw in Punch the other week. We arrived in Cape Town early on the morning of the 18th and got into a train for Beira. We had five days and four nights of it. The first day, after leaving the low-lying coast country, we got into the karoo, which is another word at this time of the year for a hot, dusty desert. Next day we arrived at Kimberly, passing through a still hotter and dustier desert. You travel day after day for hundreds of miles and hardly ever see the slightest sign of human habitation. On Thursday we got to Bulawayo, Friday to Salisbury, and Saturday to Beira. It got hotter and dustier as we went on, the food was bad, the drink worse, and the carriages as dirty as ourselves. We had a poor time of it; but still, it was a change from the monotonous sea. Between Salisbury and Beira the scenery was very fine. The spring foliage of the trees was marvellous in its variety of greens, browns and yellows. At Beira we stayed at the Savoy Hotel, and wasn't it hot? I don't know how long we might have stayed there, but by good luck the "Carisbrook Castle" was delayed by having to take in tow a Portuguese steamer which had broken down, and we caught her. We got on board on Monday the 24th. On Tuesday we reached Chinde, and the same evening started up the Zambesi in the s.w.s. "Princess." Next day it was stifling -- 107° in the shade and a hot wind blowing like a blast from a furnace. Thursday was also unbearably hot, but in the

evening a violent thunderstorm came on. The lightning was absolutely continuous for at least two hours, and the rain came down in buckets-full. This cooled the air a bit. On Saturday we arrived at the Shiré river, and next morning left the steamer and got into a house-boat. We remained in this torture-chamber until noon on Monday, when we arrived at Port Herald; not much of a "Port" as the river has sunk so much of late years that the natives at this time of the year wade across, the water not coming up to their knees. We remained at Port Herald until Wednesday morning. Heat terrific; rest-house disgraceful; food beastly. Then by train to Limbe. Next day -- the 4th December -- by motor-van to Zomba. On the way a native got his hand into the machinery and crushed it into pulp. That didn't add to the amenities of the journey.

Stayed at Government House until the 12th, as there was a difficulty in getting transport up Lake Nyasa. The Governor's name is Smith. He has been all his life until now in Cyprus. There is a wife, a sister-in-law, a daughter, and an A.-D.-C. One day we went up to the top of Zomba mountain, 7000 feet high. It is a beautiful place, with streams full of trout, and fine vegetation. Miss Smith fell head first into the stream and had to be clothed in borrowed plumes while her own were hung on trees to dry.

From Zomba to Fort Johnston at the south end of Lake Nyasa is about eighty miles. This we did in motor-cycles with side-cars.

That same evening, about 9 o'clock, we got into a small steamer, or launch, the "Pioneer." A thunderstorm came on during the night, with wind and rain, and as we were going the same way and at about the same rate, it remained with us for some hours. The launch pitched and rolled and corkscrewed in an extraordinary way, so there wasn't much sleep that night.

We reached our destination -- Domira Bay -- next day, the 13th, and left in machilas for Kasu at noon. Thirty long miles and a climb ^{of} 2000 feet. It was very hot and the machilamen knocked up long before we reached the hill. So we had to walk a lot of the way; and wasn't I tired when we got up to the hut at 10 o'clock at night.

Now, what do you think of that for a disagreeable journey?

We found all well at Kasu, but tired with the camp and everything belonging to it. Majors Harvey and Hamerton, like wise birds, have flown, and I expect we will all do likewise before long.

Now, I have written a long and very uninteresting letter, for which I hope you will forgive me; but the journey was uninteresting, being all over old ground.

So with best love to you all,

Yours affectionate uncle,

David Bruce



RANC 1340 | 4



RAME 340/4



Major and

H. F. Fitch.

Lady Smith.

RMC 1340/4



HILLS & SAUNDERS

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