

# THE FIREBRAND

*For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Ignorance and Superstition.*

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21.

## THE FIREBRAND

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### THE PURGATORIENNE.

Beneath those brightly peerless skies  
Which music's lamps illumine—  
Fed by the love of centuries  
And beauty's magic bloom—  
Countless souls inherit  
The Heaven—pure hopes assume,  
But Freedom's fair and sacred spirit  
Assaults the specious tomb.

Remote from where the spectral throng  
In frenzied bliss doth move  
Her apparition speeds along  
(Pyrophorus soul of love!)  
Forever free, though cheerless, fevered—  
With grief's chains interwove—  
Seeing by love's soft lustres, severed,  
Perdition built above.

Upon her hopes forevermore,  
As oil on Hell's fierce sea  
The dew of dawning sorrow pour—  
Salt myrrh of misery—  
Dripping, as madness drips on Death,  
A balm whose tonic glee  
Weaves with the lightnings of his breath  
Full-termed eternity.

Sweet seraph, unto her alone  
Yon realms forlorn appear;  
Fixed love allures with ceaseless moan  
Her wistful visage here.  
Fore'er through Joy's exalted zone  
With sorrow doth she move  
Winning with virtue Eden's throne  
But Tophet with her love.

John Dwyer.

### HYPERBOLICAL.

From the mountain-side down rushes the  
thundering streamlet,  
Splashing in youthful glee, knowing no  
bounds but its own.

In the valley flows a creek, dammed into the  
mill-yard;  
It's the streamlet, alas! Bearing a masters  
yoke.

Herman Eich.

### HARDSHIP AND POVERTY.

COMMON to the privileged and comfortable classes, who have monopolized the land, the plant, the stock and the means of production, Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his "Coming Slavery" shares the wide-spread belief that hardships and poverty among the masses are due to their lack of industry. He, for instance, ventured to go so far as to say: "It is manifest that there must exist in our midst an immense amount of misery which is a normal result of misconduct, and ought not to be dissociated from it." He is of the opinion that the poor are simply those who bear the penalties of their own "misdeeds." And when coming to that part of the inevitable truth where he sees hundreds and thousands walk about the streets of London, with nothing to do, he calls them simply "idlers." To use the words of Spencer: "They have no work," you say. "Say rather that they refuse work or quickly turn themselves out of it." Thus, with the idea that the vast amount of workmen who are unable to obtain employment, and are bound to tramp about the streets in a state of the most disgusting misery, are a lot of "good for nothings," Spencer settles the question of 'Progress and Poverty.'—But those who have considered the economic causes which create this social inequality resulting in this crying misery, in the bringing up of unhealthy and hunger-pinched children, readily see the mistake of this Spencerian notion. The fallacy is similar to that which would be involved in the assertion that every one of a number of competitors might win a race. "That anyone might be true; that every one might be impossible."

When land and the means of production are in the hands of the capitalists, and the proletarians have no other means of obtaining necessities of life, save that of selling themselves for exploitation, it is absurd to say that the more industrious will succeed.

The fact that nobody can produce his own food without land and machinery, the fact that the exertion of human labor-power without tools is a physical impossibility, and the fact that land and machinery are in the hands of the rich, must clearly show that there is no chance for the proletarian to succeed, be he as wise as Solomon and as industrious as Spencer. This being the case, industry, skill, frugality and intelligence can only avail the individual in so far as they are superior to the general level—just as in a race, speed can only avail the runner in so far as it exceeds that of his competitors. If one man should work

harder, with superior skill or intelligence than ordinarily, he will get ahead; but if the average of industry, skill or intelligence is brought up to the higher point, the increased intensity of application will but secure the old rate of wages, and he who would get ahead must work harder still. And so, though he who will work harder, with more skill and more intelligence will somehow increase his wages, it never follows that the wages of all can be increased this way. This is proven by the fact that in occupations where working hours are long the wages are no higher than in those where the hours are short—not speaking of the fact that generally the reverse is the case, "where the working day is long the wages are small." The same thing is with the one who gets his wife and children to assist him. He may thus increase his income, but in occupations where this becomes general, it is notorious that the wages earned by the whole family do not exceed the wages of those families in which it is customary for only the head of the family to work.

"Swiss family labor is watchmaking competes in cheapness with American machinery." Thus we say, with all true economists, that no increase of productiveness of labor can increase general wages, so long as there are others who swallow up the gain. Since land and the means of production are monopolized, and the laborer, in order to gain a livelihood, must sell his strength and skill to a master, the greater the power of labor, the richer will his master and the upper class become, but not one jot richer will the workingman be. This is not merely a deduction from principle, but a fact, proven by experience. The growth of knowledge and the progress of invention have multiplied the effective power of labor over and over again without increasing wages. In England there are over a million and a half of paupers. In the United States almshouses, prisons and hospitals are increasing whilst wages are decreasing.

It is true that greater industry and skill, greater prudence and higher intelligence, are, as a rule, found associated with better material conditions of the working classes; but that this is effect and not cause, is shown by the relation of the facts. Wherever material conditions, of the working classes, have improved, improvement in the personal qualities of workingmen have followed. Wherever their material conditions have been depressed, deterioration of personal qualities has been the result. But nowhere can improvement in material conditions be shown as a result of the increase of industry, skill, prudence, or intelligence in a



class condemned to toil for a bare living.

The fact is, that man as he stands to-day, is bound to become what he is,—is bound to become a pauper or a criminal, and it is no earthly use to complain. A man who must fill his life with drudgery and bitter disappointments, in order to gain an animal existence, loses every inclination of industry and does what by necessity he is forced to do. A man, whose conditions are such that they cannot be worse, while there is little or no hope that anything he may do will make them much better, ceases to look beyond the day. "Deny him leisure" said the old Moore, "(and leisure does not mean the lack of employment, but the absence of the need which forces to incongenial employment) and you can not, even by running the child through school and supplying the man with classics, make him intelligent."

It is true that improvement in the material conditions of a people or class may not immediately show in mental and moral improvements. When we compare different countries, such as Russia and the United States; different classes of the same country, such as the middle class and that of the proletariat; and the same people at different periods, such as the Americans a year ago and today, we are forced to that inevitable conclusion, that personal qualities appear, as material conditions are improved, and that they disappear, as material conditions are depressed. Poverty is the cause of all the evils and you may be charitable or whatsoever you will, hardship and poverty will be with you still. To make people industrious, skillful and intelligent, they must be relieved from want. To be charitable and keep the poor alive by amusing them, as some suggest, is not to solve the labor problem. Charity is no solution; it is an aggravation of the difficulty.

"The proper aim is to try to reconstruct society on such a basis that poverty will be impossible."

If you would learn how to swim you must go into the water. If you would have the slave show the virtue of a freeman, you must first make him free.

Harry A Koch

16 Hanover st. Boston, Mass.

#### THE ALTRUIST

Is a monthly paper, partly in phonetic spelling and devoted to common property, united labor, mutual assistance and support, and equal rights for all. It is issued by the Altruist Community, whose members hold all their property in common, and live and work together in a permanent home for their mutual enjoyment, assistance and support, and both men and women have equal rights and decide on all its business affairs by their majority vote. 25 cents a year; specimen copy free. Address A. LONGLEY, Editor, 2 N. Forth st., St. Louis, Mo.

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#### LAW AND PROPERTY.

Webster says, among numerous definitions of the term, property is "that to which a person has a legal title."

The combination of law and property is an inextricable one—but the earth existed and brought forth fruit before man invented laws! The attributes of property are not inherent in the land, its tillers, or its products, although that idea has been persistently proclaimed to the uneducated "hewers of wood" as well as slyly and firmly impressed upon professionally active minds.

Despotism is a certain consequence of concentration of legal rights applied to nature's stores, and the plentiful remains of dead civilizations furnish ample proof of the fatality of despotism. We appear to gain in civilization for a season and rattle along at a good round pace, but Authority is a mucky material to grade a road with and mankind has not thought it worth while to even experiment with anything else, so the lopsided social institutions end in a general collapse.

The mass of reformers make a marked distinction between the public corporation (government) and the private corporation. At bottom there is none, for both deal with public concerns. The difference is in outward appearances, and consists entirely of names and of modes of conducting affairs. Both are systems of exploitations, and pretense is an important element of their respective organisms; pretense of protection of every individual interest by the corporation of state, and pretense of development and improvement of the country by the private corporations. Both organizations are made up of usurpations of privilege, and are employed for personal aggrandizement and mastery.

Property "rights" in land or its products are inseparable from property rights in man; sophistry heaped upon sophistry cannot forever hide the stubborn fact. An accepted legal title, that is, one acquiesced in by the populace, to that which sustains human life, guarantees the dominion by the holder of the title over the beings dependent upon that sustenance. The possessor of property may be a king, a governor, a priest or a private citizen of more or less wealth, but whatever his rank or place, his authority over his specified territory is as positive and as pitiless as that of the master over chattel slaves. The chattel slavery system of civilization relied upon law (the decrees of the masters who were in accord on the subject) to keep it in working order.

The subjection of man, under any pretext whatever, is preposterous, and the appalling results cannot be dodged. Presumptuous domineering continuously maintained reduces to a condition of servility the creatures so inconsiderately treated. Take a cursory glance at the conquest of America, if the irregular overrunning and appropriating of this continent by Europeans may be dignified by the use of a word so grandiloquent as conquest; the discoverers of the new world, bound by superstitious allegiance to and dependence upon the old, waived their claims to their find and fawningly left with "His Majesty," whose throne and power were "established" on law (and the strong box!) the supervision of the parcelling of

he plunder. Deference, the outcome of training in humility by presuming persons of "ability," to those whom the pirates acknowledged as authorities, and the habit, transmitted from generation to generation, of being guided by other minds in the matter of living, held in abeyance the inclinations the adventurers may have had to dispense with the aid of royalty in distributing the spoils. The performance was one of folly, and looks extremely ridiculous to us in this year of eighteen hundred and ninety-five, now that the equality of man has long been taken for granted (in theory!) but let us not be too uproarious in our mirth, for now, as then, are people tied to fictions as frail as allegiance to a king, though the frailty is as solid in the seeming as the everlasting hills. We divide our time between worshiping the useless dead things of the past and hooting at the ignorance of our barbarian ancestors for having done likewise! We bow down to books of law, compiled principally from "precedents" hatched in tyrannous courts, and to the private grandees created by the slight innovations in phrasing, that revolutions have forced into the common codes. The conquerors of America, bent on confiscation from the weaker nations, and being childishly egotistical, prided themselves upon their superiority as shown by their expertness in battle, and instead of attempting to learn the truths the new peoples might by chance (?) have discovered, they scouted the possibility of anything but "superstition" passing current among the "savages" for knowledge. Similar egotistical assumptions in relation to prevalent industrial concerns hinders the advancement of the ambitious human race.

The highest order of the devotees of the god, Law, has always recognized the indispensability of the treasury! Lacking that, law is impotent. And the shrewdest manipulations of the toil of men would be at their wits end without legal enactments to prescribe the proper conduct for—the exploited.

As long as the possession of a surplus of lands or goods (property) is countenanced by man, is admitted to be a "natural right," is legally sanctioned, just that long will property attach to itself other property, and rules for enforcing contracts for transfer, and laws for the "protection" of the person owning property and of the property itself will form a part of the social order, and the perversion of mind force in the subjugation of human machines act as a boomerang in its effects upon the race.

Law announces its "right" to tax property in tones that menace a supposable contradictor. A tax on property is a tax on man. Tax is a tribute.

By its methods of keeping full-handed, the State has forced in times past outward respect for and general obedience to its commands.

Law and property "must go" and "go" together.

Another truth pointing to greater freedom for mankind, has been sighted, its word symbols have been uttered. When the light shall have been a little more widely diffused the present state of bondage will be spurned by the slaves.

VIROQUA DANIELS.

KEEP OFF THE GRASS.



## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Continued from No. 20.

To trace to some extent the development of the order of rationality in the individual organism, as the life-forces come up into higher equitable arrangement is necessary, though perhaps somewhat speculative; for that human reason can satisfactorily recognize its order of evolution is considered a question. Primarily the life-forces must have assumed an attitude of organization, the sensitive vibration resulting therefrom, giving rise to mutualized conscious individuality, such phenomenon necessarily commencing whenever the preceding or disassociated state ceases, whatever that conditional state may be. Organic life being then in a process of organization with a constant tendency towards a more heterogeneous individuality, the presence of arbitrary forces thus necessitates a constant struggle in the life organism for mutual re-adjustment. The harmonious development of organic life, then, necessitates the feature of spontaneity of attraction. Voluntary action and reaction are co-existent with healthy development, whilst arbitrary forces are necessarily based in dominating usurpation, the effect of which is partial or complete disintegration of the constructive elements. It would then seem that organic maladjustments are mainly the result of such restrictive arbitrary forces, together with invasive externals, neither having constructive desires or mutual propensities for the interdependent life organism. These causes evidently produce weakness of harmony in the collectivity, expressing themselves as disease in the material side of life, and as pain and misery in the psychical sphere of thought and feeling, that is, the point where the life-actions of the parts mutualize and center their activities into collective consciousness. Liberty thus lies at the very root of development, for where arbitrary forces prevail, disease and insanity result therefrom, suicide and crime then predominate. And they are very predominant disorders of the present age.

Organic life is evidently desirable under normal conditions, as shown by the inherent selfish instinct of self-preservation, which operates invariably for self at times of sudden danger, regardless of either custom, code or creed. This powerful impulse is perhaps the most potent factor in organic evolution and gives to life the feature of struggle and stability even while under terribly adverse conditions. That life forces need and desire liberty in association, is plainly seen. This is continually expressing itself and giving rise to the phenomenon of the reasoning faculties, instead of the domineering impulses heretofore prevailing. This creation of reason is evidently the result of the friction of environment producing the awakening struggle of the life organism from its automatic instinct to a conception of its broader possibilities. Organic action must now be decided from the penetrating point of reason, of experience and experiment, rather than blind groping instinct. Organic life is, then, a desire for larger happiness, primarily expressed instinctively, secondarily expressed in a more rational manner.

We can now perhaps perceive the misconception, the errors made by the collective con-

sciousness while primitively reasoning out the mystery of organic existence of its individuality proper, and the operation of its external environment, not at first perceiving that consciousness was the product of an interdependent organism, and that the sense perceptions and the intuitional conceptions were the necessary expression of the relations of the life forces for internal and external environment, mutualizing their impressions and expressions into and through collective consciousness.

Primitive life not recognizing the inseparable identity of the noumenal sense organization and the phenomenal mind consciousness, attributed causation to something apart from environment and the organic functions of the body. This causal shadow necessarily gave rise to the conception of souls as being something apart from the individuality. This error seems to have been transmitted to external nature. The nature of force not being understood to any extent, another causal power must be created therefore, in order to explain the operations of nature. First an immanent soul to explain organic motion, then a universal soul to explain universal motion. This supreme power thus becomes identified as the first cause, the arbitrary creator and governor of the external, interdependent, self-operating universe. Humanity is thus well equipped for all forms of metaphysical metamorphosis, inspired superstition, spiritual mediators and privileged authoritarians. The product of these seemingly erroneous ideas is necessarily manifested in the hereditary institutions of the present exploiting, paternal system.

(End of part I.)

JOHN PAWSON.

## CLIPPINGS.

WHAT will be done with the lazy in communistic society? This is the question against which many a smart do-nothing runs up his caput. An exchange answers this ingenious question as follows:

"With its present machinery, (not calculating upon 'rather perfection of same) mankind is enabled, according to census statistics, to bring forth all products necessary for a day with the present force of laborers, in three hours, not counting in the numerous waste labor-forces, which today as servants and coachmen of the rich, or as merchants and drummers, make up the great apparatus which keeps alive our present commercial system. Professor Theo. Hertzka, of Vienna, says in his work, 'Principles of the Social Movement:' To satisfy the wants of the 22½ millions of inhabitants of Austria (Cisleithania) 615,000 men would have to work eleven hours per day, or 300 days in the year.

These 615,000 are only a fraction (12.3 per cent.) of those that are considered able to work, excluding all persons of more than 50 or less than 16 years of age.

Should, however, these three millions which are able to do productive labor, actually engage in such, instead of the 615,000, it would take but 70 days per year to bring forth all the necessities. Should these 3 millions work ev-

ery day, to keep products fresh on hand, it would require one hour and 22½ minutes per man daily. Who will uphold then, that any one will be disinclined to exert himself, when very able man with this work-time doubled, that is 2 hours and 45 minutes, can live in luxury. Surely the lazy will not come from the ranks of those which now must drudge from 10 to 12 hours per day, without catching a glimpse of the gladness of life.

Should there be any such, they certainly will be those to whom work is a horror; our modern dividend rogues and coupon clippers.

The contempt in which these sharks will be held will make them conscious of the fact, that through moderate, voluntary exertion only, will life be worth living."

—Freiheit.

## COMMENTS.

LAWRENCE GROUNDLAND, the noted State Socialist agitator, and author of "A Co-operative Commonwealth," is in town. Last Sunday evening he lectured at the Unitarian Church. In his lecture he constantly bid for well-to-do "intelligent" persons to become leaders in socialism. He constantly spoke of the well-to-do as the intelligent, in contrast to the working people. He said the worst government on earth was better than no government at all.

He said that socialism was God's manifest will and inevitable, but admitted that it might last but a short time. He also said that socialism did not contemplate the abolition of property, for that would be communism, and that there are very few communists at the present time; that property acquired under socialism could be saved, accumulated and bequeathed. He considered State productive employment of the idle as of great importance, and one of the first steps toward socialism.

In all this we see the reaction that always comes from an attempt to fit new ideas to old institutions; the desire to compromise.

\* \* \*

MASSACHUSETTS has purchased 2,000 acres of marshy, rocky land, and will henceforward send all men there for two years, without compensation, whenever convicted of vagrancy—of being without work. The socialists constantly demanding "State productive employment for the idle," and Massachusetts has now provided a means of giving it to them. This shows how easy it will be for the State to institute chattel slavery, and that it will do so whenever plutocracy says so.

Oh what a blessing government is! Hurrah for the State.

H. A.

\* \* \*

We have been sending out quite a number of sample copies and complementaries. We wish everyone to have the paper who wishes it, but cannot afford to send it to those who do not care for it. If you receive THE FIREBRAND and have not let us know whether you want it or not, please do so, as we have numerous calls for sample copies, and often our issue of twelve hundred will hardly reach around.

We are under considerable expense, paper, postage etc. If you can contribute a dime or two we will be glad to receive it. COMMITTEE.



## PRISONERS OF POVERTY.

The actual condition of the working people today resembles very much, that of convicts in penitentiaries. This may seem rather strange to those who still hold to the belief, that though poor, they are still free. The high wall with its sentries, surrounding our modern bastilles, is the government, with its institutions, laws, statutes and injunctions, while the sentries are the army, militia, sheriffs, policemen and pinkertons. If a prisoner in the penitentiary moves across the deadline and does not stop at the halt of the sentry, death by the bullet is his fate, likewise if a producer moves across the line, drawn for the protection of the exploiters, or robbers, death also, though in many different ways, is his fate. Let him antagonize the interests of the ruling classes, so that they fear he might incite his fellow prisoners to revolt, and the gallows awaits him.

Spies, Parsons, Engles, Ling and Fisher were hanged by the neck until dead, at Chicago, in '87, for the above offence.

Many an unknown dead hero lies buried in the cemeteries of freedom, for trying to escape from the prison of government, nay, even for infringing on one of the many rules, all of which are not even known to the most learned lawyers. The unknown heroes for the cause of liberty are the men who have been killed in the numerous labor uprisings, called riots by the robbers. The jails and penitentiaries of the world are full of men and women who had courage enough to attempt to escape from prison, to gain freedom; or who were even modest enough to try to lessen the respect for its rules. Alexander Berkman, Hroneck, Nold, Baue, Debs, Moses Harmon are a few, who I call to mind just now, not to mention the innumerable who are suffering in other countries, for the same offences. And there is still another way to punish the rebellious ones, and that is by assassination. Any one who reads the capitalist papers must have noticed, for instance, the men who made themselves prominent in the Cripple Creek strike, in Colorado, are getting killed, one after another; it is generally stated as occurring in a saloon row, or something of the kind.

The government fears these men, because they managed the most successful of strikes, and the word has passed along the line of their minions that these men must die! They are being assassinated for the offense of successfully resisting force by force, of following the prophetic words of Louis Ling, who said: "If you get at us with gatling guns, we will dynamite you."

All these modes of depriving the rebellious ones of their life and small amount of liberty left them, are merciful, compared with the most horrid of all punishments, death by starvation and desparation.

People who will not bow down and kiss the hand that smites and robs them, are denied the opportunity to make a living, they are blacklisted, hunted from place to place, until they either submit or die behind a fence as a tramp, commit suicide or become desperadoes, to be hunted down like wild beasts by the dogs of plutocracy.

We are surrounded and hemmed in from all

sides. We are forced to labor for the benefit of those who toil not. We are being robbed under the guise of law and order. The knights of old rode forth in their armour of steel and robbed the wayfarer on the highways. So it is at this day; the robber barons clad in their armour of law and order, and with their lance and sword of government, they rob us as of yore, but call the plunder by another name, and that is profit, rent, interest, taxes, etc. As long as the rations dealt out to the convicts in this penitentiary, without walls or iron bars, were somewhat generous, the great majority did not complain, though there were always some who knew that they were not free, but since the rations have been cut down so as to almost amount to nothing, a loud murmur has arisen among the prisoners of poverty and toil. The prison chaplains point out in vain to the glorious hereafter, but the empty stomach demands a remedy just now. Driven by hunger, they have banded together and have marched to the chief warden, and petitioned for better treatment, but their petition was not even accepted and the convicts were told to "keep off the grass," and go home and starve some more. Others again have gone to some outlying corner of the prison and tried to lighten their burden by cooperation, as in Kaweah, Topolobambo, and numerous other places, but being within the precincts of the prison, which is worldwide, the must necessarily submit to its rules, that is of obeying and delivering over the greater share of their products to their masters. All the attempts to start a little heaven in one corner of hell have failed.

And now others have arisen and have said to their fellow slaves, submit to the powers that be, give unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God, but let us pay no more toll to our masters, for exchanging our rations, let us keep all of the miserable pittance dealt out to us, by exchanging it among ourselves, and call it "Labor Exchange. By being saving and slaving from morning till night, we might in course of time undermine the walls of our prison and gain freedom." And the Chief warden and his sentries laughed goodnaturedly and said: "Let them enjoy themselves a little; it occupies their mind and diverts it from more dangerous plans."

But a few have arisen among the prisoners and called their fellow sufferers together and said: We are many and our oppressors are few, the walls that surround us, built by the government, are weak; they will fall at the first determined attack. Let us get ourselves free and enjoy our life; there is plenty for all. A few hours of pleasant toil will supply us with all we need! But a loud murmur of indignation arises among the prisoners, led by the petted trustees of plutocracy, and the multitude cries, you are an Anarchist—away from here! We are lawabiding, orderly prisoners, jailbirds and willing slaves.

Hang the Anarchists! cries the trustees. Hang the Anarchists! cries the multitude—and men and women are persecuted by their fellow prisoners, for showing them the road to freedom. Such is history.

How much longer will men be led by the sneaking, sniveling trustees of the plutocratic prison of poverty? How much longer.

E. Slabs.

## The Letter-Box.

L. D. A. WASHINGTON, D. C.—Much obliged. When you find out let us know.

J. R. NEW YORK—Copies of Nos. 19 and 20 sent as requested. Would that every city had as active a worker as you.

W. C. O. LOS ANGELES CAL.—Thanks. Perhaps we will be in position to publish the books you have translated, after a while. We hope so. We are permanent, so don't be backward about getting subscribers.

E. E. GRESHAM, OR.—The Leader is about dead. The "Union Labor, Leaders," Hengst and Fitch are anxious to consolidate it with the P. P. Post. Just what effort will be made to pay the printers for work done we don't know.

H. F. H. SEATTLE, WASH.—Hope the Exchange will succeed. Sorry the comrades are so cowardly or indifferent. Write the news of the movement whenever you can.

H. U. LITTLE ROCK, ARK.—We have a circulation in every State in the Union except New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Mississippi. We have some readers in Canada, England and France.

W. W. H. CINCINNATI, O.—Yes the "educated" are as interested in the contents of THE FIREBRAND as anybody, but social position prevents many of them from taking as active an interest in its welfare as they would like.

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