

THE CATHOLIC SUFFRAGIST

Organ of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, 55, Berners Street, London.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which *you* shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve?

—Francis Thompson.

FATHER THURSTON, S.J. ON THE BRIDE'S VOW.

BY LEONORA DE ALBERTI.

The Reverend Father Thurston, S.J., seems surprised that Catholic brides should rejoice at being exempt from a vow of obedience to their husbands, still more surprised that they should credit this to the honour of their church. They are advised not to dogmatize, before enquiring. As a matter of fact it is not the women who have dogmatized, though they do certainly rejoice. There is in our Catholic libraries a book entitled "Light for new Times," by Miss Margaret Fletcher, to which the Rev. Father Strappini, S.J., has contributed a preface. After declaring that the Catholic Church has always recognised the equality of the sexes, and has not hesitated to commit the care of a monastery of men to an abbess, this is what Father Strappini has to say: "The misnamed Reformation lowered the position of woman, and this lowering of her position is incidentally brought out by the words interpolated into the marriage service by the Anglican Church, when the wife is made to acknowledge her inferiority when she promises to obey her husband. This promise has no place in Catholic tradition. Catholic marriage is a contract between equals. The Catholic formula is identically the same for both man and wife; the same laws and the same duties are incumbent upon both. It was the new religion of the sixteenth century which debased the status of woman, and invented excuses to emancipate man from the observance of commandments which bind in exactly the same way both man and woman." I am not for the moment concerned with the historical accuracy or inaccuracy of this passage, but rather with the sentiments expressed. The book has been in circulation for ten years, it is especially addressed to young girls to instruct them in the way in which

they should walk; it bears the imprimatur of his Eminence Cardinal Farley, then Archbishop of New York; the 'nihil obstat' of the censor; and is to be found in the libraries of the Catholic Reading Guild installed in our churches. One is glad to see that Canon Murphy, in a recent issue of the *Tablet*, takes the same honourable view of the equality of bride and bridegroom. The Reverend Father Keating, S.J. has come forward to explain, for the special benefit of suffragists I gather, that there is nothing in Christian marriage which a reasonable woman could find burdensome, and that no constitutional monarch is held within such narrow limits as a Catholic husband. If this teaching is incorrect, the blame must lie with those who have spread it.

But I confess I do not understand why Father Thurston should object to a claim for discernment being put forward in favour of the Catholic authorities. The Church does not officially exact the vow, if the marriage service is left more or less to the discretion of local authorities, and yet this vow is rarely exacted, if Catholics in England deliberately dropped it, some of us might be tempted to believe, in spite of Father Thurston's marshalling of facts and theories, that the discernment is more widespread than we had imagined. For there can be no doubt that this vow has created in England an impression of inferiority, has resulted in an unfairness to wives, which could never have been intended—if it was intended, more shame to those who were primarily responsible.

With the greater part of Father Thurston's learned dissertation, its liturgical details and mediæval eccentricities, I am not competent to deal, but his ecclesiastical ogre—inspirer of wife-beaters and (as others say) of all that is

harsh in our laws, persecutor and oppressor of women, who has for ever felled to earth any daughter of Eve who raised her voice to demand the freedom Christ had purchased for her,—is a familiar personage to anyone who has kept abreast of latter day attacks upon Christianity. His woman-baiting propensities have been expanded and expounded and exploited, with specious plausibility. He is the hero of the rationalists and has strutted upon their boards for ten years and more. For my part, if he is not the myth which some people take him to be, he represents the spirit of men of his own type, he never has, and he never will, represent the spirit of Christianity. Nevertheless if he did exist, and as I *am* a Christian—may he rest in peace!

But to return to the point at issue. I have known pious Anglicans unwilling to be married in a Registry Office, unwilling to take a vow they had no intention of keeping, driven to the expedient of making a compact with their prospective husbands, that the vow should be considered as null and void, being extracted as they would say by *force majeure*. It is a question for theologians to decide when a condition of this kind invalidates the contract and the sacrament. For Catholics the case has but a speculative interest, for they know quite well that the marriage contract involves obedience on *both* sides where the primary ends of the sacrament are in question, and the emphasis which Catholic theology gives to the *mutual* obligation of husband and wife affords the clearest evidence of the church's view of their equality. Let it be noted, however, that even when it is a question of the most sacred duties of the marriage state, the obligation of obedience does not bind beyond reasonable limits.

The fact of the matter is that marital authority has been so shamelessly misused that a reaction was inevitable, not only among women, but—and herein lies much hope for the future—among men. They see that the happiness of countless nominally Christian homes has been ruined by the petty tyranny of the man, acting as he imagined well within his rights, and always of course in the name of God, until, though they would not confess

it, his death after the first shock must have been a secret release to his harrassed wife and tormented children. If a woman no longer cultivates a subservient and blind belief in her husband's omniscience, a belief which has wrought havoc in homes, and had disastrous effects both on herself and her partner, *etc* does endeavour to use her own intelligence for his benefit, and the welfare of herself and children. If she is willing to listen and to follow his advice on some things she expects him to listen to hers on others.

No one is likely to quarrel with Father Thurston's suggestion that the paragraph quoted from the Tridentine catechism will sound extravagant to our modern ideas, or to dispute the statement that its attitude is almost oriental, but can this be explained by the fact that it was compiled in Italy? Does it really represent the Italian mentality of those days? When Father Thurston has spoken other readers of the past tread with caution, but surely this was precisely the period when Italian women were at the zenith of their glory? The brilliance, erudition, mental independence of the great women of the Italian Renaissance scarcely justify the suggestion that an oriental attitude was prevalent in Italy, unless it prevailed on paper only. Italy was consumed with a thirst for learning, and men and women, we are told, attended the same academies, and followed the same classical studies. These were the rich days of Constanza d' Avalos, Vittoria Colonna, Giovanna of Aragon, Isabella d' Este, Emilia Pia, Elisabetta Gonzaga, who with their contemporaries held court for the fine intellects of Italy, and shone among them. The learning and culture which Italy passed on to Europe, was not confined to men alone. There must have been a very singular, a very rapid fall in the fortunes of Italian women, if by the time the catechism had reached completion they had degenerated into domestic drudges unable to stir abroad save by the gentle courtesy of their sultan jailers.

Father Strappini in one way is probably right, and in the great spiritual struggle of the sixteenth century woman lost her social footing, was fettered and flung aside—pos-

(Continued on page 71).

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

An American journal points out that the line of argument put forward by his Eminence Cardinal Gibbons to explain his reasons for opposing woman suffrage can only be applied to that one issue, and to nothing else. For instance, a sweated worker would get little sympathy from her employer if she pleaded she was losing her charm; your cook could not claim an extra half-holiday on the ground of being a princess, and your laundress could not shelter behind her God-given rule when expostulated with "for her policy of frightfulness in her warfare on your evening shirts." But his Eminence is as much entitled to his opinion as we are, and it must not be forgotten that with a fair-mindedness for which we cannot be too grateful he has supplied American Catholics with an official statement on the Suffrage which they have scattered broadcast throughout America. "The Church," his Eminence says, "has taken no official attitude on the subject, but leaves the matter to the good judgment of her children, as to what they think best. The statement that the Church is opposed to the enfranchisement of women is incorrect."

There have been some clever things done in the cause of Suffrage.

* * * *

Suffragists have frequently to complain of the lenient sentences imposed on men for offences against women and children. A particularly brutal case of assault on a wife was recently reported in the press. A man knocked his wife down, breaking her leg in two places, and threw her out in the yard, dragged her upstairs, and threatened to murder her if she told anyone. By sheer brutal threats he compelled her to go about for eleven days doing the housework, while she used two brooms as crutches. This pretty specimen was sentenced to six months' hard labour; perhaps we ought to be grateful that he was not invited to join the army.

* * * *

The *Daily Mail* has rendered a rare service to womanhood by publishing an article on "The Beauty Destroyers, or How Good Looks are Lost." We are to avoid all unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Anger and worry, irritability, fear, envy, malice, anxiety, and

melancholy, all these work havoc on the face. Grief and sadness, too, though not always to be avoided, rob the skin of its bloom, and eyes of their lustre. We are advised to make a searching examination of conscience and to make solemn resolutions morning and evening on these points, also when in a temper or irritable to fly to a mirror (that really might be a wholesome deterrent). All this is for physical beauty,—were we to speak of the beauty of the soul, probably the writer would think we were suffering from chronic dyspepsia, than which nothing could be more disastrous to the complexion. If some of our journalists were to cultivate a sense of humour, what treasures of amusement we should lose.

(Continued from page 70).

sibly he is wrong in not apportioning blame for the shameful deed with greater fairness. Possibly, too, the change was not unconnected with the licentiousness of the age, and women still pay for the sins of their fathers.

But suffragists exist, mainly, to combat present day evils, our faces are set to the dawn, we have no leisure to mourn over past grievances, we should not waste our energies on idle recrimination. If any man nowadays were to issue a manifesto that his wife must not go out without his permission, his manifesto would be received with derisive laughter; if he persisted in his persecution she would turn, amid the plaudits of her friends, to the nearest magistrate for relief, and by a legal separation be partially quit of a preposterous lunatic. The most conservative of theologians, however anti-feminist, or however imbued with a belief in the divine right of husbands to make themselves objectionable, would say the man was in the wrong, and for the rest, he would receive short shrift from any man or woman of the world to whom he might turn for sympathy. By God's mercy, if we may not speak of the discernment of His ministers, the Catholic bride has come to be considered by common consent the peer of her husband.

Rocinante can browse in peace—why should we tilt at windmills?

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WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE IN IRELAND.

By EILY ESMONDE.

Although the Suffrage Movement can hardly be said, as yet, to have passed the stages of infancy in Ireland, it shows signs of an extremely healthy later development, and its supporters over here are full of hope. Its inception has been indeed slow, but there are reasons for this apparent want of appreciation of the necessity for extending the Franchise to women on this side of the Channel in comparison to its more rapid realisation in England and elsewhere.

Political energy has, for many generations, been throttled, and almost done to death in Ireland. The story is too well known to bear repetition, but it is necessary to allude to it, in so far as it relates to my subject. Following upon the previous generation of political inaction, national aspirations, thrown back upon themselves, have been obliged to work out their salvation upon their own lines. Unanimity of purpose, pledge-bound suberviency to the voice of the majority has been the necessity of national life of Ireland for the last generation. What has been the result? The country has been ruled by a system of Conventions, admirably fitted to preserve unity on matters of general national import-

ance, but inimical to the free consideration of such as, to the average intellect, do not relate to these. Thus it is that the subject of Woman's Suffrage, although making considerable headway in Dublin, can, as yet, hardly be said to have reached the Irish provinces.

But times are changing, and when, with the establishment of a Parliament on College Green, the necessity for the old way of doing things has disappeared, the question of the enfranchisement of women must come to the front, and it is my confident belief that, when it is seriously studied by the Irish electorate, it will meet with a friendly reception. For there is no doubt that the atmosphere of Irish public life is well suited for the rational consideration of the value of feminist influence in affairs of State.

One has only to hark back to the days of St. Brigid to understand how this question of woman's service in matters of public importance was regarded in those times by the Church, which, in our own days, is by far the most potent authority, whatever her enemies may affirm, in public as in private life in Ireland. And, in making this assertion, I am not alluding to clericalism in politics as vul-

garly understood. The influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland is something quite different. There are, it is true, here as elsewhere, ambitious as well as capable, or as the case may be, incapable clerics, who see no reason why they should not use their pastoral authority in the furtherance of their political ideals. But it is not under the influence of this class that the battle for or against Woman's Suffrage will be fought.

Let us consider for a moment, the story of St. Brigid, since it bears, rather curiously to the uninitiated, on the subject in hand.

According to her biographer, after she had founded the Church of the Oak—in Irish the Church of Cell-Dara or Kildare, St. Brigid established two monasteries, one for women and one for men, and "seeing the need of a pontiff to consecrate her churches, and to ordain the sacred ministers" she was allowed to choose the person to whom the Church gave this jurisdiction. She was, of course, unable to confer jurisdiction on St. Conlaeth, who was appointed, but surely the fact that she was allowed to make the selection is a striking testimony to the opinion held by the Catholic Church in those far-away days.

And, if personal experience is of any value, the writer can testify that a very similar state of affairs exists in the Church of the present day in Ireland. I was speaking, not very long ago, on the subject to a learned and holy priest, who has laboured for many years to better the terrible social evils existing, as in all large cities, in Dublin. I asked him what was his opinion on the vexed question of the Suffrage. The emphasis of his reply, I confess, almost surprised me, for we Suffragists grow accustomed to discouragement. There was no mistaking his desire for the reform. "Morally, socially, from every point of view, woman's influence is for good, and how can it be exercised more potently than at the polling-booths? Undoubtedly it is to be desired."

This, I believe to be the general conclusion arrived at by those who study domestic politics from a moral or intellectual standpoint. But there are still many persons, in Ireland as elsewhere, who, consciously or unconsciously, ignore the moral and even the intellectual sides of political questions, and it is to this class that the propogandists of Woman's Suffrage must

address themselves during their crusade in Ireland. Ignorance has to be grappled with,—selfish indifference to unknown or half-understood evil has to be dissipated,—consciences have to be awakened. For this work, the Catholic Woman's Suffrage Society is surely peculiarly suited. When success comes, as it must come to so righteous a cause, then these, who have been the supporters of this feminist revival in Ireland will be able to claim, surely with reason, St. Brigid as their Patroness and Pioneer.

CATHOLIC SUFFRAGISTS IN PHILADELPHIA.

We take the following extract from the *Woman's Journal*:

"One of the biggest booms the suffrage movement has received in this city" is the way the Philadelphia North American characterises the work of the Catholic Woman Suffrage League. Thousands of letters were sent out by quarters into every Parish in Philadelphia, and permission has been asked of the priests in charge of the various parishes to send suffrage speakers to meetings of the church societies.

The appeal of Dr. Evelyn Douredoure, president of the league, to the laity explains this new movement of the women within the church. "We want the ballot for the same reason that the men want it," the letter sets out. "A man wants a voice in the government of himself, a woman wants a voice in the government of herself. . . . We want every Catholic man and woman to show that the Catholic Church is not opposed to woman suffrage. We want to give good, substantial, logical reasons why the women of Pennsylvania should be given the ballot as well as the women of western States."

Still a new women's league has been formed: "The Women's War Economy League." Its object is to help the Government by urging the women of the country to pledge themselves to certain definite restrictions. It seems a pity that the League does not direct its attention to helping the Government itself to save. Women might have been of great service in suggesting ways of economising the nation's funds.

THE DISCORD OF THE SPHERES.

Many people now believe that the proper sphere of any human being is that in which the talents bestowed on him or her by Providence may be used to the best advantage. To this enlightened minority there is nothing to be said but to wish them a speedy increase. The majority, if majority they be, especially those women who oppose the claims of suffragists with vague and virtuous platitudes about woman's sphere, are invited to go a little deeper into the matter.

What, in their opinion, is "woman's sphere?" The home, the care of children, the nursing of the sick, the economical apportionment of house-keeping funds, charitable works, &c. To this answer, at least, all parties are agreed. By what strange process of reasoning is the conclusion reached that these things being woman's sphere, the laws by which they are governed are man's sphere? "We do not want to be governed by other women, even in these things!" exclaims the convinced anti.

Bethink yourself, dear lady, if you were laid up whom would you call in to replace you in the government of your household? The nearest female friend or relation, and failing these an honest and experienced charwoman, certainly not your husband. "You really can't expect a man—" you would exclaim in womanly indignation. But if you can't expect a man—why expect men?

To push the matter a little further, let us suppose that all the families in a certain street, fired by the new ideas of communal house-keeping, joint nurseries, and other expedients for securing increased efficiency at reduced cost, should agree to set such an arrangement on foot, and imagine the faces of all the housewives if they were told that all arrangements for catering, baby-minding, sick nursing, education, recreation, &c., were to be decided upon by a committee of their husbands, men from whom they would not expect the successful purchase of the ingredients of a beef-steak pudding. Make the street two streets, the two streets a whole town, the town the whole country, and you have the case complete.

The righteous anti should remember the philosophic axiom that the macrocosm can be

inferred from the microcosm; or, if that sounds too ambitious, let her apply the ancient wisdom of the nursery riddle with its obvious but unexpected answer—"What makes more noise than a pig under a gate?" "Two pigs under a gate." "What is more helpless than one man trying to manage a house and baby?" "A number of men trying to manage many houses and a multitude of babies." Surely this logic is elementary! Why should it be supposed that the incompetence of Mr. Jones, plus the inefficiency of Mr. Smith, plus the futility of Mr. Brown when added together in Parliament will yield a sum total of wisdom which will enable them to pass Bills upon the care of infants and other matters, which it does not become a young woman, or a woman of any age, certain or uncertain, to question or criticize? Some may take refuge in the truism that two heads are better than one, but surely that depends on the heads. That saying may be countered with "Too many cooks spoil the broth," and in a case where each cook taken separately is blankly ignorant on the subject of broth-making, the resultant devil's brew may easily be imagined.

Antis, male and female, will, of course, declare that the whole world is governed by women. Where were we brought up if we have not heard that: "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world?" The privilege of rocking the cradle, especially in the small hours of the morning, is not one which is likely to be disputed. But let the rocker test the truth of the musty adage by attempting to have a say in the destiny of the baby in the cradle, and she will find that she may not even decide whether or where it shall be christened, if it shall be vaccinated or not, how it shall be educated, nor where it shall live. In short that the whole duty of woman is to produce an occupant for the cradle, and having done so she shall be told that though she is its mother, she is not technically a parent.

This farcical situation is enough to move one to a flight of fancy in the style of Peter Piper:

If the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, where is the world the hand that rocks the cradle rules?

A.D.A.

REVIEWS.

"THE SOUL OF THE WAR" The novels of Mr. Philip Gibbs, distinguished as they are, had hardly prepared his admirers for such a piece of work as "The Soul of the War" (Hienemann 7/6) which can only be described as a masterpiece. Beauty and horror, sick despair and spiritual exaltation, groaning agony, and Homeric laughter, delicate poetry, and stark realism, are blended together in a picture of the war, which bites like acid into the brain of the reader, leaving an impression which can never be effaced. Surely in the years to come this book will stand as a record of the way in which war was regarded by all cultured and sensitive intellects of the twentieth century. Indeed we believe that it expresses the feeling of the majority with regard to war at our present stage of civilization and, if this is so, the hope that this may prove the last great war will be justified.

Mr. Gibbs pays due homage to the heroism of those who in blind obedience to the call of duty go forth to slay or be slain with no hatred of their fellows in their hearts, but only a dumb bewilderment that such things can be; and yet one fact stands out from almost every page—"the monstrous absurdity of war, this devil's jest" the folly and futility of it all. Let anyone read these wonderful descriptions of trench warfare, and the effects of shell fire on the souls of men, and dare to say that the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war" has not departed from this world for ever. The machinery of murder invented by modern science has killed the glamour of war, and in that at least it has done good service to humanity.

The keen psychological insight with which Mr. Gibbs dissects the racial differences between the French and English, does not forsake him even when he deals with atrocities perpetrated by the Germans in Belgium. Speaking of the shame and horror with which many young Germans will look back upon their own deeds in days to come he says:

"For a little while they had been caught up in the soul of war and their heroism had been spoilt by obscenity, and their ideals debased by bestial acts. They will have only one excuse to their recaptured souls: "It was war." It is the excuse which man has made

through all the ages of his history for the bloody thing which, in all those ages, has made him a liar to his faith and a traitor to the gentle gods."

One feature of this book cannot be passed over in a feminist paper and that is the many beautiful passages in which the author, a proved friend to the cause of womanhood, pays tribute to the heroism, fortitude, and dignity of the women victims of the war, and the splendid courage and self-forgetting service of those who brave death, and what is almost worse, the sickening sights and unspeakable horrors which they endure daily in nursing the wounded and ministering to the dying.

DR. AGNES McLAREN (Mary Ryan, M.A. Catholic Truth Society. 1d.)

We welcome with much pleasure this life of a valiant and holy woman. Following in the footsteps of the Master whom she loved, Agnes McLaren spent her life doing good. Though she lived many years among Catholics, she was not received into the Church until the age of sixty-one, but she was quick to grasp the immense opportunities afforded by Catholicism, and might well have turned to some of her new co-religionists and asked reproachfully: "Why stand you there idle?" It was Agnes McLaren who went to Rome to secure the approval and blessing of the Holy Father on the work of the International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice, and who made a tour of France to secure the approbation of Catholic ecclesiastics upon this great work. It was Agnes McLaren, again, who was the promoter of the Catholic Medical Mission to Indian women, which we hope is destined to play a big part in carrying the truth to the women of India. Catholic Suffragists have a deep veneration for this noble woman, who, convinced that to be true to their past Catholic women should be in the vanguard of the feminist movement, lent the weight of her name and the beauty of her example to the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, in the first days of its infancy. A biography of Dr. McLaren has been recently published in French, upon which, apparently, this interesting English record is founded.

LONDON AND BRANCHES.

London and Branches. Office: 55 Berners, Street, London. Re-opens Sept. 14th. Hours 3-30 to 5-30, Saturdays 10 to 1. Other times by appointment. Library volumes 2d. per week. Mass will be offered for intentions of the Society at St. Patrick's Soho, at 10.30., on Sunday 3rd. October. During the holidays the Catholic Suffragist has been sold at Barmouth, Bexhill-on-Sea, Eastbourne, Bristol, Torquay, and Liverpool.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.—Hon. Sec., *pro tem.*, Miss Cooper, M.A., 18, Colquitt Street, Liverpool. A very successful meeting was held at Colquitt Street on Saturday, August 14th, when six new members volunteered for paper-selling. Our best thanks are due to Miss Murray who has organized the paper-selling since Easter—also to Misses Jervis and Stone who were the first to volunteer for this work. Over 230 papers have been sold this month in Liverpool amongst other places at the following Churches:—Pro-Cathedral St. Anne's St. Bernard's, St. Francis (Hale Rd.), St. Hugh's, St. Mary's, St. Patrick's, St. Peter's, St. Philips, and St. Sebastian's. Still more might be done if all the Churches of the town could be visited. Volunteers for this important work should send in their names to Miss Murray at the above address, where papers can always be obtained.

Many of our members were present at the 11 o'clock Mass at St. Clare's, Sefton Park on Sunday Aug. 15th., which was offered by request of the Liverpool C.W.S.S. for the repose of the soul of Captain Herbert Finegan, one of our associates, who was killed whilst leading his company of the 1/8th Liverpool (Irish) regiment in a charge against the German trenches. R.I.P.

A jumble sale was held on Aug. 19th. The success of which was due to the personal

assistance of many of our members and to the generous donations of others.

On Thursday, Aug. 26th, the relatives of soldiers and sailors (Women's Patriotic league) belonging to the Burlington St. Club, which is under our management, went for an outing to the Cenacle Convent, Wavertree. A motor char-à-banc conveyed the party from Burlington St. and the weather being ideal, the women had a very pleasant drive through the Garden City to Wavertree, where they spent the afternoon in the garden. After a hearty tea, races were run, affording much amusement. Among the prizes were two dolls from Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's factory, which one of our London members kindly sent us.

Miss Cooper and Mrs. Hughes have worked untiringly and with great devotion on behalf of the club and they deserve our warmest thanks as do all those who have assisted them in this work. The club is open on Monday's and Thursdays from 6-30 to 9 p.m. We should be grateful if more of our members could help on either of these nights.

Subscriptions are now due, and should be sent to Miss McKinley, Hon. Treasurer, 139, Northbrook Street, Princes Park, Liverpool.

A FAMILIAR SOUND.

By a law passed in 1822 clergyman in the State of New York were politically protected, "even from themselves." All ministers of whatever denomination were refused permission to hold office, civil or military, "under any pretence or description whatever." This law was passed, not because the State did not honour its clergy, but "because by their professions they were dedicated to the service of God and the cure of souls and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions." This law lasted just twenty-four years and was abrogated in 1846. Apparently the clergymen of New York State preferred to do their own thinking about the great duties of their functions, and to settle for themselves where civil duties became part of the service of God.—*Woman's Journal*.

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