BY PAUL INGELOW. Continued from 1st page.

CHAPTER VI.-THE WILL Mr. Vernon was showing the results of

over-excitement as Le Britta wheeled him into the room just vacated by labor. Durand. That resolute eye of his, however, evidenced that he was determined to carry out the project suggested by the

photographer, and after sinking back among the pillows and resting for a moment or two, he said :-"Wheel the table nearer, Gladys, and bring the writing materials from the mantel."

The devoted girl obeyed him, with that instinctive gentleness and lack of bustle that evidenced long attention to the invalid. She placed pens and paper near to his hand, and brought as well the oxidized ink-wells, the contents of which had been so mysteriously juggled by Durand only a few minutes previous. As for the pretended tramp himself. if he still lurked at the window, he did so too deftly to betray his near proxim-

ity. "Now then, Mr. Le Britta, begin," The photographer joggled his memory to recall the legal formula for a will,

and Mr. Vernon began writing. "What miserable ink!" he ejaculated suddenly and with irritation. "It looks like iron-rust water. Gladys did not pay any attention to the remark, attributing it to failing eyesight and the usual crotchety, fault-finding

temper of her sick relative. "It makes a wretched blotch, looks like brown paint," again uttered Vernon, wrathfully, surveying with a frown of annoyance the first few words he had written on the white page before him. "Is there none better in the house, Gladys?"

"I fear not, uncle," murmured his niece gently. I suppose I'll have to make it do" growled Vernon. Proceed Mr. Le Britta." The photographer supplied the words of the form usually adopted in framing a will and Mr. Vernon wrote in his bequests. He left all his property real and personal to his

beloved niece Gladys Vernon. When he referred to his moneyed possessions he glanced at a cabinet in one corner of the apartment, seemed to be about to refer to something there, evidently changed Jera Le Britta his executors and guardians of Gladys during her brief minority. Le Britta flushed gratefully at the compliment thus paid to him. It

evidenced the confidence with which he had inspired the old man and the regard which he felt for him. Always a heart-winner, with his unobtrusive, earnest ways, the present acknow-

ledgment of his devotion while it placed

an obligation upon him still pleased "Thank goodness! that is off my mind" exclaimed Vernon, with a great sigh of satisfaction and relief. "Not quite yet, uncle," insinuated

Gladys, gently.
"Eh! you mean?"— "The witnesses." True, Mr. Le Britta, you will sign

"Not until the other witness is here," interrupted the photographer. "The witnesses must sign each in the presence "Uncle, the housekeeper has returned, will not her signature help us out?"

"She is not an interested party, she is not mentioned in the will' spoke Le that it bore, he lifted it to his lips and Britta. "Yes, that will save us the drained its contents. trouble of summoning an outsider." Gladys left the apartment, and returned with a pleasant-faced woman of about forty, a few minutes later.

"Mrs. Darrell, Mr. Le Britta" uttered Gladys, and the photographer bowed and proceeded to the side of Mr. Vernon. He started slightly as his eyes rested design. closely on the written page.

the worst faded ink. About to speak of to his face, made his eyes sparkle, enit Le Britta checked himself. Every little dowed him with remarkable strength occurrence agitated the invalid, and what He arose from his chair, tottered to the after all mattered obscure ink so that it made a legible record. He signed his name as witness, the

house-keeper followed his example and withdrew from the apartment, and Mr. table as if to allow it to dry.

Gladys' pretty face showed the relief of a difficult task accomplished. She was glad to get the affair off her uncle's mind. Unconsciously her nervous fingers from the written page.
"Take care Miss Vernon!" laughed Le Britta "or you'll be shooting off my

loaded camera. The will, Mr. Vernon?" he continued interrogatively as the invalid made a motion toward it. Vernon took up the document and folded it up. He placed it in an envelope, sealed it and handed it to Gladys.

"Take it, my child" he said. "It will you can be sure to find it when I die." "Oh, I hope that will be a long, long time, dear uncle" returned Gladys sincerely, The invalid uttered a moan gained the floor of the sick-room.

Gladys, Mr. Le Britta must remain with adjudged Vernon to be asleep, and Mr. Vernon' demurred the photographer. "I have already extended my vacation and there is a convention of the Knights of Pythias where they insist nobody can photograph their august sassemblage except my poor self."

"At least remain until to-morrow" urged Vernon. "I wish to have a confidential interview with you when I am rested. I do not feel equal to the task after the excitement of the day." Le Britta could not very well refuse.

Gladys darkened the sick-room and led her guest to the broad outside porch, where he had the choice of swinging chairs or a hammock, brought him some books, and left him, to aid the housekeeper in providing for his comfort during his anticipated brief stay. From reading and resting Le Britta fell to meditation over all the strange occurrences of the past few hours.

Every element in the case under meditation was clearly outlined and comprehended in his quick mind, except one-the relation of the young man he had seen conversing with Gladys in the garden, her lover-like companion, whom she had called Sydney.

Feeling naturally a warm interest in the fair, innocent creature whose happiness seemed menaced by a villain; he hoped that a reconciliation would take place between the lover and Gladys' irascible uncle ere he left. Then he could leave with the assurance that both had a protector, in case Durand at | your body!"

tempted to trouble them further, "I do not see how Durand can bother Vernon now," mused Le Britta, "except through the secret he holds. What a strange fate led me to participate in the ambitions, hopes and fears of these two people! To-morrow, however, I must

leave the field of romance, to return to the humdrum existence of practical labor. I may never see them again; but the experience has enabled me to do a kind deed, and win new friends. My vacation has done me good. To-morrow must welcome studio, home, friends and those I love so dearly. Le Britta's face glowed with affection and happiness, as he pictured the happy

home-circle that knew him as father, husband, protector and guide—the ever-gentle wife, the two happy-hearted cherubs who made life worth living, the bright-eyed, intelligent young lady whom he had recently taken into his employ under his instructions, to aid in the more artistic portion of his work.

The bustling, energetic, typical western town where he had settled down in business, was about fifty miles distant from Hawthorne villa Here Le Britta had been located for several years, from a bare two hundred dollars having worked up his business until he had amassed a generous competency. and at thirty years of age was beloved and respected by his fellow townsmenwith the same of his artistic excellence spread far and wide. He had learned the rudiments of his art in three of the

larger western cities; had known all the comforts and luxuries of wealth and refinement, but when reverses came to his parents, he had struck out manfully for himself. And now, having amassed

had been an aid, a comforter, an adviser,

'Which way did he go?" a small fortune, he thought far more of the good it enabled him to do, and of his profession, than of the mere satisfaction of piling up riches. In all this struggle, his noble helpmate

A Dark Night's Work. a kindred spirit. Perhaps the happiness she had brought to him warmed his heart with noble, generous sympathy for those less fortunate, whom he endeavored to place upon a like basis of right-doing and earnest adherence to the principles of success in life. She, like kimself, was an artist, and with her critical taste to aid him, and the molding of the mind of his assistant, Maud Gordon, the atmosphere of his neat, beautiful studio was

one of high art, rather than professional "With the morrow the old life of work, recompense, happiness" mur mured Le Britta; and his eyes closing in a muse of peaceful contemplation, he slumbered before he was aware of the insidious approach of the drowsy god. It was nearly dusk when he awoke with a start. Something had aroused him with a shock. He sprang to his feet excitedly. "What was it!" he ejaculated, alarmed. 'Some one cried for help. There it is

He ran to the door leading out upon the porch. As he gained it, in accents of the wildest terror, through the gloomy, silent house rang out the wild frantic tones of Gladys Vernon:-"Help! help! help!"

Yes, something had happened. In flash, J.ra Le Britta, with a vivid memory of Durand, the tramp, of the exciting incidents of the early afternoon, felt certain. But what?

He was soon to know! Something had, indeed, happened! something strangely exciting, distressing, tragic; and that terrified shriek, repeated, announced the

"Help! help! help!"

CHAPTER VII.-A TRAGIC HOUR. When Jera Le Britta and Gladys left Mr. Vernon to the solitude of the sick room, the latter sank back in his chair with a weary sigh. It was true that a great care had been

removed from his mind by the settlement of the matter of the will, but his eyes were still haunted with worrying dread, and he shuddered every time ne thought of the man so feared-Ralph Durand. 'I have blocked his game in one way -he can never become Gladys' guardian,

nor secure the control of my estate now," reflected the invalid; "but he the matter of the old family secret. He is a desperate man and will try to blackmail me, to sell me the secret. Well, money can silence his lips. Then I shall lover, Sydney Vance, here?"" his mind, and then concluded the instru- know some peace again. Ah! if I were "Yes," gasped the affrighted woman, ment by appointing Doctor Winston and not so weak. For Gladys' sake I would like to live. This new friend, Le Brittahis coming has been a rare blessing to us.' Vernon's mind became gradually quieted down, as he realized that he had a stanch, strong defender so near to him,

and he dozed lightly. It was just getting dusk, and he was about to tap the little silver bell at his hand, the customary signal for his faithful nurse, Gladys, when he started, and

The curtains had moved aside and a villainous face peered in. It was instantly suppressed a startled, agitated cry. "Durand!" gasped the affrighted invalid. "He still haunts the place. The mysteriously disappeared. As to Durand, will? No. That is safe with Gladys, but the money box! Can that be his

motive?" With infinite difficulty the invalid lifted himself to an upright position. He managed to drag the little medicine chest nearer to him. Then, with trembling fingers, he selected a bottle from the many that the case contained, and, by the dim light reading the inscription

"The dcotor gave me that as a final exigency," he murmured. "I demanded a draught that would revive and give me strength as a last vital emergency. The reaction may be fatal, but I have work to do. Ralph Durand shall not prosper in his villainy. I will balk his every

The writing was plain enough, but the ink used was wretched. Mr. Vernon had spoken truly. It looked as if written with Already the powerful potion had begun abinet in one corner of the apartment, unlocked it, drew forth a somber-looking metal box, and, clasping this tightly under his arm, he parted the draperies at one end of the room, and disappeared Vernon pushed the document across the with a last apprehensive glance at the window, where the sinister face of the

moment or two previous. One minute passed by-two-three Then, gasping, tottering, white-faced rested on the camera a few feet away Gideon Vernon re-entered the room, staggered to his chair, sank into it exhausted. but the precious box of treasure was no longer in his possession.

"Safe!" he almost chuckled. "A barren welcome will the sordid Durand secure from his sneaking visit to the villa. What is that?"

The shadows of eventide were deepening, but a broad flare of light in the west outlined the window frame. A be safe in your keeping Hide it where darker shadow crossed it. Assuming form and substance, the haggard, venomous features of Durand were revealed. This time he crept over the sill and

The invalid, motionless, watched him "I am very tired" he spoke. "Draw The plotter directed a keen glance at the the shades and I will try to sleep a little. chair and its occupant, evidently us for a day or two." "I fear I will cautiously approached the self-same have to be getting back to business, cabinet that Vernon had denuded of its precious treasure less than five minutes

He opened it, glared into it, felt in it Then, a hoarse, grating cry of disappointment and rage escaped his lips. "Not there!" he hissed, fiercely, "and yet I saw him put it there this very

afternoon. Has all my patient watching been in vain No! no! I must, I will have at least that much of his miserly wealth, if I wrench the secret from his craven heart." Durand recoiled as if dealt a blow, as,

in mocking response to his vivid soliloquy, a low, rasping laugh rang derisively He stared in wonderment, and then, in baffled rage and hate at the chair.

for its occupant had moved, and he saw the keen, glittering eyes of the man whose peace of mind he sought to destroy, fixed contemptuously upon him. "You-awake?" he gasped. "Yes, Ralph Durand, I have been watching you' spoke Vernon, in a

marvelously calm tone of voice. "You are baffled, beaten!" With a cry of unutterable anger, the villain sprang to the invalid's side. "You know what I came for, Gideon

Vernon!" he hissed, malignantly. Speak! where is your treasure box?" "Be careful! I am a desperate man." "You cannot harm me."

"Can I not? I can choke the life from "And I can cry for help.

"The box! where is it? give it up, I The word gurgled in the in alid's throat. It died to a moan. Enraged beyond measure, Durand had dragged Vernon from his chair. Maddened with spite and discomfiture, he dealt him a heavy blow, and then, as he fancied that he saw a form at the door that led out

upon the veranda, he sprang to the window, leaped through it, and disappeared in the deepening darkness of the night.

A form had appeared at the door in question, the figure of a young man. It was Sydney Vance, pretty Gladys Vernon's lover. He had come, as he told her he would in the interview in the garden, determined on surprising Mr. Vernon alone, resolved to atone for his past coldness, and heal the breach of enmity that existed between himself and the uncle of the woman he loved. Fatal moment! He had not seen the

fugitive Durand, but, as he advanced, he made out the gasping, writhing form on the floor of the apartment. "Mr. Vernon!" he ejaculated, alarmed and leaning over the invalid. "You have "No!" gasped Vernon, "Struck down

"Your death-blow," repeated the flesh. petrified Sydney.

"Yes! yes!" "You mean"-

The prostrate man could not speak. A The prostrate man could not speak. A sudden rigidity seized his limbs, and he only pointed spasmodically toward the open window, and tell back, the bug of common which he had held that startling lowest prices.

Onadys had not gone with the carry we will keep a fine line of watches, clocks, jewelery silverware, spectacles etc., new and latest styles at lowest prices.

C. WARMUNDE open window, and tell back, the hue of interview with the village police officer,

death in hi, to it --Is was at that we mens that the door of the room connecting with the half epened, and Giadys Vernon, bearing a lighted lamp, crossed its threshold. Behind her, bearing a tea-tray, came the housekeeper. Sydney saw Gladys, but, intent on following out Vernon's orders, he disappeared. A frightful scream escaped Gladys' lips

gasping in the agony of death on the floor, her flying lover. The housekeeper, alarmed, pressed close after her. "Uncle! uncle! oh! what does this mean?" she shrieked, as she noticed a lurid mark on his brow. "Murder-that villain," gasped Ver-

"And he, Sydney, here!" "Yes, yes. I was struck - down. Sydney Vance-he"-The dying man meant to say that Sydney was pursuing the real assassin. Oh, fatal weakness! To the ears of the appalled housekeeper, his last incoherent utterance ascribed the crime of the moment to Gladys Vernon's lover! "Uncle, dear uncle-help! help! help!

Twice-repeated, the frantic utterance rang out, for, with a heart-rending moan, just then, Gideon Vernon sank back-dead! It was this blood-curdling cry that had aroused Jera Le Britta, and he dashed into the room a minute later, to witness the most exciting tableau of all his var- shall prevail! All that justice can do to ied existence.

CHAPTER VIII. - DOOMED! Le Britta was too staggered to speak, as he looked down at the lifeless form of old Gideon Vernon, and surveyed the distracted Gladys as she folded his motionless form in her frantic clasp. The housekeeper, white as a sheet. seemed stricken dumb with terror The torn curtain at the window, the rifled

cabinet, the over-turned invalid chair, the mark on the dead man's brow, the general disorder of the apartment, all spoke of crime, deadly assault, robbery, murder! The incoherent ravings of the frantic Gladys thrilled the startled and appalled photographer to sudden horror. She wailed out her grief at her uncle's death, vainly calling upon him to return to life,

praying for the punishment of his cruel assassin. She moaned that she had seen Sydney Vance at the window - she will doubtless attempt to persecute me in recalled Vernon's last dying allusion to him, and in sheer bewilderment Le Britta | the room was broken only by Gladys' turned to the housekeeper. "What does she say-she saw her

> "And Mr. Vernon"-"Accused him of murdering him." "Oh, impossible!" gasped the incredulous Le Britta. "But murder has been done. The assassin cannot have gone far. Quick, Mrs. Darrell! remove that distracted creature from this room, quiet her, restrain her, or I fear for her mind. I will scour the shrubbery and summon

she saw him fly."

help. Yes, he is dead," murmured Le with quickening breath, fixed his eyes Britta in a broken tone of voice, as he gazed at the white, colorless face of Ver-He sprang through the window, and withdrawn, however, as Vernon barely for half an hour threaded every maze in the garden and its vicinity. All in vain!

whose handiwork in the crime of the hour Le Britta was quick to suspect, he had vanished as effectually as though the earth had opened and swallowed him up. He hurried to the nearest house and announced the tragedy of the hour to its startled inmates. Soon a messenger was speeding on horseback for the village, with orders to secure a physician. He arrived an hour later, as fast as breathless haste could bring him. Neighbors had crowded the house in the mean-

old Gideon Vernon had been murdered and robbed. The house was a scene of pitiful commotion, but amid it all, feeling the grave responsibility that rested upon him, Jera Le Britta kept his head, and tried to act calmly. had been removed to her own room. The housekeeper had been warned by Le Britta not to mention what she had heard concerning Sydney Vance. In his own mind Le Britta had formed a reasonable theory as to the crime. Its perpetrator, beyond doubt, to his way of thinking, was the villain Durand. Sydney had come to make his peace with Vernon, had appeared in time to be mistaken for the murderer, had certainly

gone to pursue the real assassin; but why did he not come back to the house plotter he so dreaded had appeared a of grief to explain it all? The doctor pronounced Gideon Vernon beyond the reach of all earthly ministrations, and Gladys in a dangerously hysterical condition. He administered a soothing draught to the distracted girl, and left directions with Le Britta to send for him if she got worse. Then Le Britta sent the housekeeper to attend to her young mistress, and it was not until nearly midnight that he sat down in the apartment adjoining the sick room to keep his solitary watch over the dead. the undertaker having arrived from the

village, and prepared the body for burial the following day. It had been a hard day for him, and that day had scored a most distressing termination for the fair young girl he

had hoped to aid in her troubles. Le Britta arose as he heard some one knock gently at the outside porch door. He opened it. A man, roughly dressed, but honest-faced, stepped across the "Who are you?" demanded Le Britta, suspiciously.

"An officer from the village. I heard about the case when the doctor was sent for, and came soon after." "I did not see you," remarked Le Britta, a trifle uneasily, hoping to evade official investigation of the case until he had conversed with Gladys, and learned of the whereabouts of Sydney Vance. "No, that's true, I always work in the dark on a dubious case of this kind."

"Dubious?" "Exactly. Wasn't it murder?" demanded the officer, sharply. "I think it was, "Think? You know it! Come, sir! I understand your motive in trying to shield a person presumably innocent,

but it's no use. "Then"_ "The murderer is, of course, Sydney Le Britta's heart sank. He was certain that this could not be-that young Vance was only the victim of circum stances, but how to prove that fact, once the hue and cry was raised over the person last seen in the room with the mur-

".Why do you think that?" he faltered. "I don't think it, I know it," proclaimed the officer, stanchly.

"The housekeeper's story"-"What! she has been talking?" ejaculated Le Britta, in dismay. "I made her, and her story proves beyond any doubt that there was a quarrel between Vernon and young Vance. that Miss Vernon saw Vance fly from the room, that the last words of the murdered man charged Vance with the

"But, the evidence"-"Is plain. The testimony of Miss Vernon alone," announced the officer, in tones of pitiless, professional precision, 'unsupported by any other evidence, will send Sydney Vance to the gallows!" There was a heart-rending moan in the hallway without, and then a fall. And, springing to the door, with consternation and alarm, Le Britta saw Gladys Vernon lying senseless on the rich axminster carpet.

She had stolen from her room to speak to him; she had lingered at that halfopen door. She had learned all. She knew that her lover, her innocent lover, was charged with hideous, baleful crime, and her words had doomed him!

CHAPTER IX.-BLANK!

The funeral was over, the last sad rites had been performed, dust unto dust He is an experienced repairer of complicated watches had been returned, and after a stormy such as repeaters chronographs, etc--murdered-dying! I have received my existence of power, pride and pain, old Gideon Vernon had gone the way of all

There were very few at the ceremonythe attendant physician, Doctor Winston; the village lawyer, several of the neigh-"Ralph Durand! Quick! after him! bors only. Vernon had lived almost the apprehend the assassin! There is not a life of a recluse, and had never been the man to make many friends. Gladys had not gone with the carriGladys would find a safe and pleasant He hastened to open the door, as a faint tapping sounded upon its outside portals.

Gladys Vernon, pale, and with eyes

drooping from long grief, entered the

apartment. She pressed Le Britta's proffered hand with grateful emotion, and then, haifas she took in all the bewildering and hiding her face in her hand, sat like one terrifying scene - the prostrate uncle performing a painful duty near the table formalities of examiring the will, Miss Vernon," spoke Mr. Munson, in a kindly tone of voice. "We will read it, verify the signatures, and I will take it and file it in the court, to make it safe from any interference of interested outsiders. You understand?"

Gladys murmured a faint affirmative.

"Doctor Winston will convey you at

once to his home. The housekeeper can retain charge here until we decide what to do with the mansion.' "Dispose of it, close it up!" breathed Gladys, in a fear filled, shuddering tone. "I could never live again beneath the roof where my beloved uncle met his doom, where my heart broke"-She paused, amid hot, blinding tears. "If your thoughts are of the accused murderer," interrupted Le Britta, "take

courage, Miss Vernon! You know, and ! know, that Sydney Vance is innocent: you know, and I know, the real assassin. Fear not! The truth is mighty, and it trace this terrible crime to its real perpetrator, will be done. "Try not to distress yourself over all that just now." stoke the lawyer.

"Yes-last night." "Where is it?" "He gave it to me for safe-keeping." Gladys drew the same enveloped and sealed document from her pocket that Le Britta had seen her uncle give her the

"It has not left your possession since it was delivered to you?" demanded Mr. Munson. "Oh! no." "This is the same document-you can swear to it."

day previous.

"Yes, sir." "These are merely formal questions," proceeded the lawyer. "We all know the contents of the will, but I will read it over for form's sake " Rip-rip-rip. The somber silence of soft crying, and the tearing open of the end of the envelope. The lawyer drew out the single docu-

ment it contained. He opened it, glanced at it, stared at it, glared at it, arose to his feet, and uttered a quick ejaculation. "Why! what's the matter, Munson?" demanded the doctor, startled at his companion's sudden excitement of

"This paper"-"The will?" "It is no will!" "Why"-

"There is some mistake." "Mistake?" murmured Le Britta, not unprepared for strange surprises under that strange roof, after all the extraordinary occurrences that had signalized his brief sojourn there. Yes. this is no will. Look!"

The lawyer held out the paper. His own face was perturbed, the doctor stared bewilderingly, Le Britta's eyes glowed with dark suspicion, Gladys gasped affrightedly. For the page, one side and reverse, front and back, was-blank! it was to convey her to her own apartment again, where she revived only to go through the most poignant hysterical

grief and despair. The doctor, again summoned, ordered positively that she be kept under the time. Like wildfire the news spread that influence of sedatives until after the funeral, and that the housekeeper should keep close watch and ward over her afflicted young mistress. Le Britta was nearly worn out with sleeplessness and care. He felt that the

gloom of the hour would abide with him for a long time to come, and he was Gladys, immersed in grief and emotion, glad when the body of the murdered man was consigned to its tomb. Th inquest, the commotion, the prying watchful officer; all this ja red on his finer sensibilities, and he breathed a sigh of infinite relief as he returned to the house from the cemetery, to observe Doctor Winston, Mr. Munson, the lawyer, seated in the library, looking grave an thoughtful. At the door outside, too, Le Britta me

the officer. "Have you found any trace of the sup posed assassin?" inquired the photographer. "None," responded the other. "Is not that singular?"

"Not at all, seeing that a box filled with money is missing. Sydney Vance had good reason to fly and hide with that treasure. "You will persist that he is the crim "The coroner's jury decided so on my plain statement. What would a court of ustice say with the added testimony of

What indeed! Le Britta's heart sank at the thought. Should young Vance ever return, it would be to fill a felon's cell. Perhaps, realizing all this, and knowing that Gladys' welfare was menaced by the real murderer, he was determined to conceal himself, to preserve his liberty, rather than face an overwhelming, crushing accusation he could not refute. In the library, Doctor Winston and

Mr. Munson bowed gravely, as Le Britta entered the room, and the latter Dunlap, McKim & Downs, "I do not know what this afflicted family would have done without you. Mr. Le Britta.' The photographer bowed deprecatingly. "Circum tances forced my slight services,' he said, unaffectedly. "True, but they have been valua! 1 ones. Doctor Winston has just had a

conversation with poor Gladys. He tells me there is a new will, and much more about a dreaded enemy of Mr. Vernon, that induces me to take immediate steps, as his local legal adviser, to secure to her the rights the will gives her." "Eminently proper," nodded the doctor.
"Yes, I think so," asserted Le Britta. "Gladys says she will be here in a few moments, weak as she is, realizing the necessity of following out the wishes of her dead uncle, anxious not to detain you from your business, and desizous of eaving this gloomy house to make her nome with your fellow-guardian, Doctor Winston here. Le Britta's face brightened, as he ealized that under the charge of the

nenevolent old physician and his wife, [To be Continued.]

TIME TABLE.

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