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Bokhara

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additional work will be done in the neighbourhood of the South Shetland Islands and Erebus Gulf.

It is my intention to ask the learned societies of Scotland to appoint a committee of advice to which all questions concerning the details of the organisation and scientific work will be submitted. I have been assured by leading members of the councils of most of these Societies that this committee will be constituted as soon as the necessary funds have been secured. The cost of the Expedition, on the lines indicated above, will not exceed £35,000, of which about £10,000 has already been secured. Professor Erich von Drygalski has expressed his pleasure in hearing of a Scottish Antarctic Expedition. "Wishing the best result," he says, "to the endeavours made in this direction, I shall be very happy to allow the German Expedition to co-operate with the planned Scottish one."

The plans have been long considered, and I have consulted with many of the leading authorities in Europe whilst maturing them, notably I may mention His Serene Highness the Prince of Monaco, and Sir John Murray. They are based on the experience I have gained during one summer I spent in the Antarctic regions, and during four summers and one winter in the Arctic regions, and during cruises with the Prince of Monaco in his yacht *Princesse Alice*, and Mr. Andrew Coats in his yacht *Blencathra* (now *Pandora*), doing deep-sea sounding and dredging, as well as on my experience, during more than a year, on the wintry summit of Ben Nevis, where I was in charge of the Observatory.

BOKHARA.

By W. R. RICKMERS.

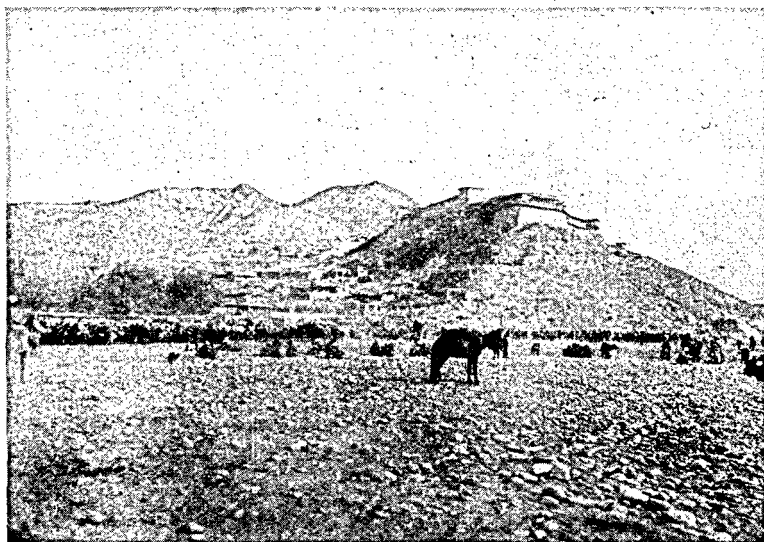
THE heart of Asia is easily reached by rail from the shore of the Caspian, and already the personally conducted tourist has triumphantly entered the gates of Bokhara the Noble.

Already in 1896 I had seen much to interest me in the eastern provinces of Bokhara, and in the year before last I decided to revisit them. Accordingly our little caravan left the metropolis on June 27. The first part of our journey lay along the great trade-route to India, and as far as Karshi there is some genuine desert-travel. Gradually, as one passes Baissun, Hissar, Dushambey, the ground rises, and at the provincial capital of Baljuan one encounters in earnest, as it were, the swell from the great ocean of mountains which occupies the centre of the continent. To this province of Baljuan I shall take you to-night. The distance from the railway is 500 miles, and we were three weeks in covering them.

Before starting for the far interior, let us take a glimpse at the capital. First, a view from a housetop over the expanse of flat roofs, from which here and there rise stately mosques and minarets; then a stroll on the market-place, where surges a crowd arrayed in all the hues of the rainbow. Do you wish to step back into the Middle Ages, to everything that was brilliant or sordid in them? do you wish to realise the days

which followed on each Arabian night, with nothing to mar the truth of the dream?—then go to the holy city, to Bokhara-al-Sherif. Lucky are those who behold this glorious sight before the shop-signs of the European trader have become too numerous.

Dr. von Krafft, the geologist, was of our party; I need not praise him here, for his recent appointment to the Geological Survey of India is in itself, I think, a sufficient appreciation from a competent quarter; then there was Makandaroff, my Caucasian interpreter, not endowed with great courage, but with a fertile brain, a stock of languages, and great volubility of speech—all qualities which generally prove the better part of valour, out East; and an officer of his Royal Highness the Ameer, who accompanied us as guide, his duty being to see that every-



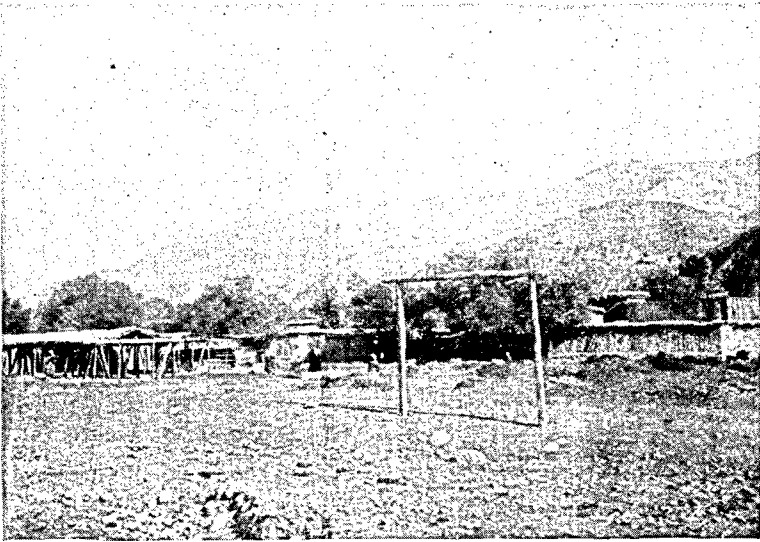
The Governor's Castle, Baljuan.

where fitting accommodation was provided for ourselves and our horses. His presence with us was tantamount to a letter of safe-conduct. He also, I daresay, had to keep a fatherly eye on our behaviour.

The native horses are of medium height, and good-tempered. I was not smart enough for the horse-dealers, and had to sell many invalids on the way. A few turned out very well under our treatment, and did good service till the end, when we were very sorry to part with old friends, who would have to go back to blows and scanty fare. They were not only useful, but also provided amusement. Many a time did we interrupt the march and play at cowboys in trying to catch a runaway. The roads are rough tracks, though in the plains one could drive along them at a pinch, provided the vehicle has a good constitution. Bridges are few and far between, and often the Ameer's highway is deflected for a

considerable distance owing to their scarcity. Most of them, constructed on a primitive form of the cantilever principle, are unable to resist the onrush of the spring floods, and have to be built anew each year.

Our quarters were uniformly the best the place offered—either the modest mud-hut of a village squire or the spacious residence of the governor of a province. In the deliciously cool nights of summer we always slept outside, the dryness of the atmosphere doing away with all danger of a chill. Our guide always sent a messenger in advance to announce our arrival. On approaching our destination we were usually met by a crowd of gaily dressed officials, whose white turbans, brilliant garments, and richly caparisoned steeds recalled some scene from the writings of an Eastern poet. Saluting us with true Oriental dignity, they



The Gallows.

escorted us to their houses, where we found ample preparations made for our reception. Where Russians often pass, tables and chairs are provided, but being of native manufacture, their proportions are awkward and their equilibrium is unstable. The table or carpet was covered with a profusion of fruits and sweets of every variety; soups, fowl, mutton, and rice forming the more substantial part of the repast. Certain kinds of sweets—the cheapest Moscow can produce—are only for show, as nobody will eat them, and they presented a venerable appearance. They seem to be considered an indispensable table-decoration. When the next stage was a lonely outpost, they were sent ahead by an express rider, in order that they might figure on the humble piece of felt on which the local authorities served the meals. Subsequently they were returned to the treasury at headquarters. I do not wish to belittle

the good intentions of our hosts: they went so far as to carry chairs on horseback to out-of-the-way places, though we were quite content to squat on the floor. I take it for granted that the East has good bazaar jokes about us Occidentals, and thus we are quits.

Karatagh, which is situated at the foot of the Hasrat Sultan mountains, is the summer residence of the Kush-Begi of Hissar, the most important statesman after the prime minister. He is the governor of the entire eastern half of the Ameer's dominions, and invested with great privileges, having power over life and death. During the winter he lives at the ancient capital of Hissar. At the appearance of the warm season, when malaria and mosquitos render the place

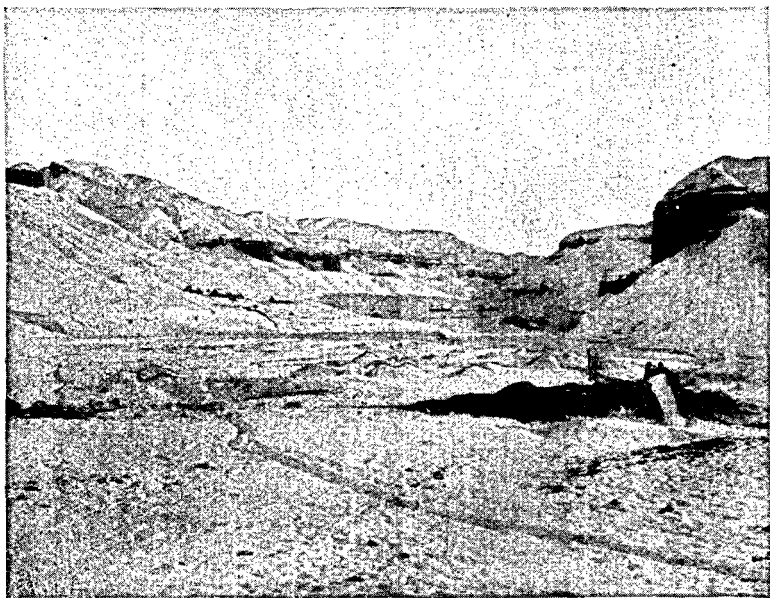


A side valley of the Yakh Su.

almost uninhabitable, he migrates with his goods and chattels and a great part of the population to Karatagh. This biennial exodus almost clears the town, for everybody, from the highest official down to the meanest prisoner in the jail, follows his master. Not only does the Kush-Begi move all his valuables, even the lumbering cannon, of which he can muster three specimens, are dragged in the train of the hundreds of camels. Many of the animals groan under the weight of the hard cash, while others have the lighter burdens assigned them of carrying the numerous inmates of the harem.

As the prophet has strictly forbidden the drinking of wine, I was astonished to find among the furniture a quantity of empty champagne bottles; but the contents thereof were known to the law-abiding Moham-medan under the name of French lemonade.

From Karatagh we had each day to struggle over some rugged mountain pass, and we successively crossed the Kafirnigan, the Vaksh, and the Kisil Su rivers. Between Norak, famous for its salt-mines, and Tut-Kaul, the Vaksh runs through an extremely narrow valley. Here the path skirts the rim of precipices over which a single false step would suffice to fling horse and rider into the turbulent waters below. At the spot where this river, equal in volume to the Thames, is pent into a rocky channel eight feet wide, the native engineers have seen their opportunity. A few beams are sufficient to span the cleft, while a thick hedge of interwoven branches screens the giddy depths from the traveller's eyes. The gate on the bridge marks the frontier between the provinces of Hissar and

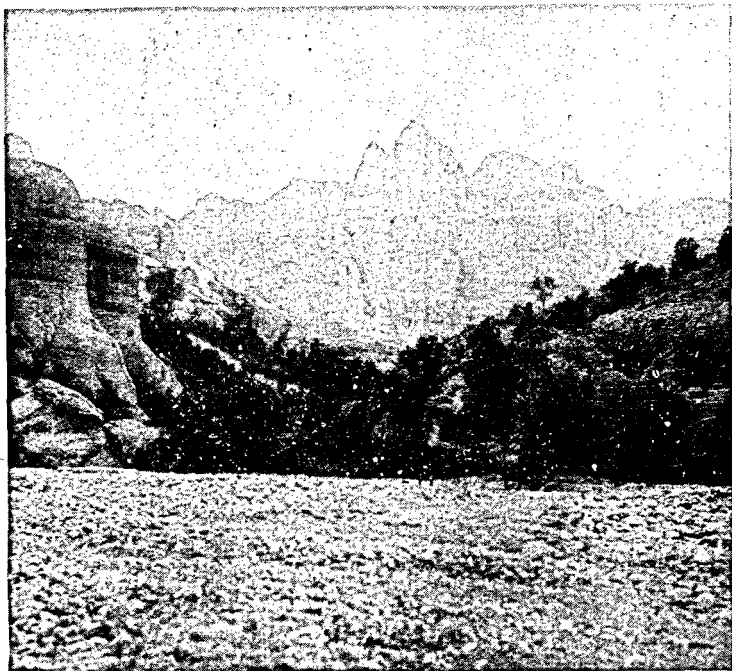


The Russian colony in winter.

Baljuan. In ancient times, when constant wars were waged between the minor states, many a border raid must have been frustrated at this point.

Baljuan, the capital of the province of the same name, was the last town of any pretensions which we passed before we arrived at our destination. Here, in contrast to the flat mud housetops prevailing in other parts, we have sloping roofs thatched with reeds. The ground is entirely composed of loess, a kind of clay. This formation dominates the landscape as far as the high alpine regions. Its varied aspects, deep chasms and steep banks, constitute a characteristic scenery of their own. A sea of slippery yellow mud in rain, the source of volumes of impalpable dust in dry weather, it makes itself but too familiar with the clothing and the eyes of the traveller.

The palace of the governor is picturesquely situated on the high banks of the Kisil Su. On market-days the population overflows into the dry bed of the river, and one may see a crowd of horsemen playing their favourite game. A goat is killed and flung among them; they then try to carry it away to a certain goal. Exciting scrimmages occur, and one continually sees feats of strength and skill, such as the picking up in full gallop of the heavy animal. The natives are not scientific riders, but sit tight all the same; they madly career over the boulders, pulling their poor brutes suddenly round with a savage jerk at the rough bit. Thus the horses soon develop a fault of some kind, and



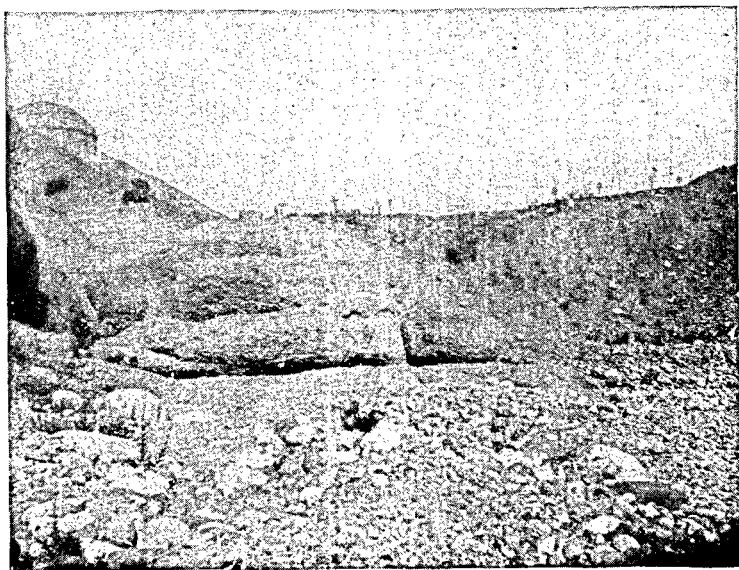
A valley in the conglomerates.

it is extremely difficult to find a moderately perfect charger, though there are many fine-looking animals and even a few famous breeds. Rich officials only want a plump, prancing steed with fancy marks or an odd freak of build or colouring. They do not give so much for intrinsic qualities, as they can always change *en route*. As riders they have great patience and staying-power, often doing 500 miles in nine or ten days. Some of the Government messengers will do 200 miles within the forty-eight hours.

The inhabitants of the country are a very quiet people. Their chief characteristic is a dignified slowness coupled with graceful bearing.

Loud laughing or wild gesticulations one hardly ever sees, and only once have I witnessed a fight between two men. A Bokhariot is never in a hurry, and enforced punctuality would tax too heavily his conceptions of time. Of bold assaults there is no fear as long as a single Cossack is to be found within a hundred miles; but they like to play nasty little tricks whereof the perpetrators are difficult to find. Robberies are generally committed by Afghans or Turkomans.

The laws of the country are very strict, and therefore you find outside every village a structure, which looks as if it had been erected for football, but which is a goal at which many a career has ended—the gallows. It must be said that these people have



A Barrier.

solved the problem of painless hanging, for the criminal's throat is cut before he is made to swing. Russia has taken steps to prevent draconian justice, and many of these instruments evidently suffer from neglect.

Let us now turn to less gloomy impressions—to a haven of rest, the governor's garden at Baljuan, with our apartments. The contrast between this shady grove and the dreary dusty steppe is heavenly. Trees such as these are rare, the country as a whole being remarkably bare of the more stately representatives of the vegetable kingdom. The natives with their primitive tools play havoc with any forest within reach, ruthlessly destroying as many as two or three trunks in the attempt to obtain a single plank. The trees in the gardens or courtyards are generally planes.

Continuing the journey, we left Baljuan and crossed a watershed into the valley of the Yakh Su. We bade farewell to the regions of sand and steppe and loess, and entered the sub-alpine level. From the summit of the pass between Khovalin and Saripul we had our first glimpse of that wonderful mountain system henceforth to be known as the Conglomerates of East Bokhara. This district was first visited by Regel, but other travellers have neglected it and nobody has hitherto described its peculiarities. It constitutes a curiosity of the earth's surface, being a mixture of the Bad Lands, the Dolomites, and the Garden of the Gods.

The remarkable geological feature of the Conglomerates covers an



Scenery on the Oxus.

area of 800 square miles, disposed in a long strip. Ascending the Yakh Su river we established our headquarters at one of its tributaries—the Safet Darya or White river.

Conglomerate is, as its name implies, a mixture. A most heterogeneous selection of crystalline, volcanic, and stratified rocks, being the boulders and pebbles from the mountains of older formations, were deposited on the bottom of a tertiary ocean, and so thick was this layer that new mountains could be carved out of it. Its artificial analogy is the concrete used for building, of which there are two kinds, the soft or collapsible and the solid; it is the same in nature. In the case of East Bokhara the conglomerate is very hard indeed, the fragments being cemented together by silicates. On this material running water has been and still is the chisel for Nature's sculpture. You will

observe perfectly level bands across the face of the mountain, showing that the layers have not been disturbed by upheavals. If we go a few miles farther north to the Yakh Su valley, we find the strata tilted. They have been broken into huge slabs and almost set on end. Their upper edges, seen sideways, look like sharp points.

The Russian gold-mining camp of Safet Darya is 6000 feet above sea level. The precious metal has been obtained from this region for centuries, as is shown by old heaps of tailings. Legend associates these old workings with Chingiz Khan, whose name is as proverbial in Central Asia as that of Queen Tamar in the Caucasus. The apparatus for treating the gravel is very simple, the gold dust being caught by strips of felt. From eight to twenty-four grains of gold may be extracted from a ton of gravel. If it were not for the money-lenders and the official blood-suckers, the population might attain a flourishing condition. Russia is, however, changing this state of affairs.

During our stay at the colony we made frequent excursions to the surrounding mountains and valleys. The scenery is wild and weird to the last degree. An intense solitude pervades the valleys; hardly a living creature is to be seen. Serrated ridges and gaunt pinnacles stand out black against the sky. In the more secluded valleys meagre woods manage to exist, to the great delight of the lover of nature. The pine is represented by the thuya, which thrives on scanty soil, and is satisfied with a precarious foothold on the brow of precipices, safe from the ravages of man.

I shall now say a few words concerning an interesting phenomenon, which has not yet, I believe, been described in the literature of physical geography. There are several barriers reaching across one of the valleys, and dividing it into sections. The river passes through a narrow cleft or cañon on one side. As lengthy explanations are out of place here, an outline of my theory must suffice. The valley was choked by *débris*—earth and gravel—coming from one direction. Here and there a rock ridge, which protruded too far, was buried in the softer material, and the river, raised into a higher bed, cut through the solid conglomerate, thus gradually regaining the original level.

We wished to reach the summit of a very prominent and jagged peak in the wildest portion of the conglomerates. It was, however, no easy matter to find a way, for the fortress is defended by a puzzling labyrinth of trenches, walls, and buttresses. From no point of vantage could we get a clear insight into the plan of the stronghold. What looks compact from afar dissolves into independent ridges and chasms as one approaches. After two abortive guesses, we succeeded in the third attempt. First this plateau was reached, and then, after a descent into the intervening depression, the mountain itself. The rock-work was never very difficult, but often exciting. Here one can have the sensation of which one frequently reads, but which is rarely literally true, that of going along a ledge similar to a shelf in a cupboard—that is to say, with a perpendicular wall above and below. As the material is exceedingly firm, the projecting stones offer excellent handholds, and steep walls can be surmounted with remarkable ease. On these ledges



Barrier at the junction of the Dandushka and the Safet Darya.

one finds steep inclines of very hard earth, like those on the moraines of glaciers, and a secure footing can only be obtained by cutting steps.

The top of Hazrat Ishan is partly covered with snow, which forms a glacier, the only one in the conglomerate. The name of the mountain, Hazrat Ishan, is derived from a Mohammedan saint, who is said to have converted to Islam this part of the country. A minor saint, viz. a mollah or priest, from one of the villages, is buried on the top. A heap of stones and the usual pole hung with rags indicate the spot. Native officials in gorgeous raiment may now and then be seen wending their way to the summit, bent on a pilgrimage to the holy grave. Owing to the advantageous position of Hazrat Ishan the view is very grand. Not a single snow-mountain is seen towards the



In the plains of the Oxus.

west, but eastwards there is nothing but an immense ocean of ice and snow, sweeping round in a huge curve from north to south.

I only observed two wild mammals, marmots and a species of mountain-sheep, probably arkhal. I once stalked and wounded one of the latter, but it got away in the inextricable maze of gullies and ledges. As the natives use for pasture every patch of grass to which they can drive their sheep, the game frequents only the loneliest parts. There is, however, one place safe from domesticated cattle, the plateau near Kutch-Manor, which is a grassy plain of considerable dimensions. When Dr. von Krafft and myself reached the top of Kutch-Manor we also passed over this secluded paradise, which even the native hunters have never been able to enter. Towards all sides steep rocks descend from it; and the marmots, which stare till one might almost seize them, and

the broad tracks traced out by the hoofs of mountain sheep, show that here the wild animals feel secure amid an abundance reserved for their exclusive use. Birds of prey are plentiful. In the rocks just above our house a pair of vultures had their sleeping-place, and we could see them going to bed every evening at six o'clock.

Before our return we paid a short visit to the plains of the Oxus. Dr. Krafft was called home, so there were only my wife and myself. The villages become more and more well-to-do as one approaches the low lands. We pushed on as far as Parkhar, in the beautiful and idyllic plain of the Sayat river, a branch of the Oxus. Here we have a pleasing combination of pasture, park, swamp, and impenetrable jungle. Every pool is the abode of numerous water-fowl, and the reeds swarm with pheasants. The tracks of the tiger are frequently seen, but I waited four consecutive nights without getting a shot: the decoy goat always refused to bleat.

Returning to Safet Darya we found a snowstorm raging in the Yakh Su valley, and the Russian Colony buried in snow. These signs of approaching winter warned us not to delay our start. On 4th November, therefore, we left, following our previous route as far as Akrobat. Here we struck northwards, and travelled by way of Shahr-i-ziabs and Kitab to Samarkand, thus bringing to a close a most enjoyable and instructive journey.

RIVER TERMINOLOGY.

By RALPH RICHARDSON, F.R.S.E., F.S.A.Scot., Hon. Secy. R.S.G.S.

ONE of the first things which attracted and demanded the attention of Man must have been his supply of Water. Sources, streams, rivers must often have been the object of his search, the subject of his study, and they must have determined and defended his habitation, for without them he could not exist.

We may assume, then, that these most necessary objects acquired an importance from the earliest times, and we may reasonably look for the names bestowed upon them by primitive man being handed down to us in ever-changing forms from one generation to another.

As a proof of this, let us, by way of introduction, glance at the origin of the word *Water* itself. Strange as it may appear, it is derived from "the first vocal sound uttered by infants, the first audible sign of human life,"¹ and appropriately forming the first letter in the alphabet. As this vocal sound indicated the first sign of life in animated beings, it became also the first sign of aqueous life in the world which man inhabited. In other words, prehistoric man employed the vocal sound *A* to indicate "a source."

This vocal sound *A* may seem to many a singular one to apply to a

¹ Letter A in *Dictionary of the English Language*. By Charles Richardson, LL.D. New edition (1856).