but step by step, with great caution, we proceeded in the teeth of a biting east wind.

'As we descended the snow became a little softer, so that our progress was quicker. On regaining the ridge, we had an opportunity of looking up at the slope by which we had first tried to descend: it looked a terrible place, and seemed to end in a steep face of rock, which would be very difficult to come down. We had yet a good deal of walking before us, over rocks and ice, down some more snow-slopes, till at last we came to grass once more. Still downwards, through furze-bushes and patches of snow, and then, in two hours from the summit, we reached the coach road: an hour more brought us to Llanberis.' G. O. S.

ALPINE BYEWAYS.

THE KALTWASSER SATTEL.—AN EXCURSION FROM TARVIS IN CARNIOLA.—On September 14 I found myself at Tarvis, now become the terminus of a branch of the Vienna-Trieste line, which runs down the valley of the Save to Laibach. Limited time and the want of a guide or climbing companion forbad me from any attempt to scale one of the limestone peaks which raise their still unconquered heads to the south of the Luschari berg. But in this, to English travellers, remote corner of the Alps, where byeways still remain to be looked up, and questions of nomenclature settled, there is some excuse for chronicling even an unadventurous morning's walk.

The Jof di Montasio has been celebrated by most recent writers on the Julian Alps as one of the loftiest, boldest, and most imposing summits of the country upon which it looks down. It becomes clear, however, on close examination, that our travellers' pens have been making a shuttlecock of the euphonious title; now, like Mr. Ball, pitching it down firmly on the summit of the Wischberg of the government maps: now vaguely tossing it to and fro, or hitting it across the Wolfsbachthal to a stony crest, called on the same map the Balitza.

It seemed that the best way to inspect the rival claimants would be by a visit to the Wolfsbachthal. Mr. Gilbert, moreover, had roused our curiosity about this glen by an entry in the book at Caprile, in which he compares the view it affords of the Jof di Montasio with that of the Civita from Alleghe.

A car soon took us to the hamlet of Wolfsbach, a collection of public-houses hallowed by scriptural signs, and maintained by the custom of thirsty pilgrims on their way to the famous shrine of the Luschari Berg, which crowns the hill-top above it. Here our car-driver halted; there is no reason, however, why those who care should not drive on, as an excellent track used by timber-waggons extends quite to the head of the valley. The lower reach of the Wolfsbachthal is a straight, level, well-wooded trough, lying between two verdant but broken, and in places precipitous, hill-sides. In front, closing the view, a cluster of white limestone peaks, cupola-shaped,

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rising in gradation from west to east, fill the place assigned on the map to the Wischberg. They are bold rocks, and must finish little, if at all, under 9,000 ft., but bear no possible likeness to the Civita. It was clearly necessary to hurry on to the corner, where the glen bends abruptly eastward, and look for some further discovery. At the angle the ground rose considerably, and we had some way to go before the expected view burst on us. The colour and composition of the landscape which greeted us at the top of the ascent were, in their way, perfect. We looked across a spacious sunny bowl of woodland and meadow, dotted with ruddy hay châlets, and overlooked by a great mountain—as mountains go in these parts—bearing a general resemblance in outline to the Civita, but flatter and less relieved by buttresses than the glory of Caprile. The one is a massive imposing wall, to be taken in at a glance; the other a vast rock-curtain, draped by a master-hand, and requiring long and careful study fully to comprehend its manifold details.

Through a deep recess between this wall-mountain, the Balitza of the map, and the Himmelberg, a green buttress of the Wischberg, runs a path to the Raibl See, which must afford a good view of the back of the latter mountain, and possibly lead to the spot whence it may be attacked with success. Unless prepared to cross this pass, it seemed best to turn back at this point. We crossed therefore the broad but now waterless bed of the Seisara Giessbach, and plunged by a tempting path into the steep wood which clothes the lower slopes of the Himmelberg. If the Carinthian boor does not, as the poet declares, bar his door against the stranger, his neighbour the Carniolan certainly bars the path in the most effectual manner. The approach to a fortress in time of war could scarcely have been more carefully palisaded than was our humble track; at every few yards a tree had been felled across it, and left lying with all its branches, so as to make the most impassable obstacle for cows and men, and to force them to plunge right or left into the tangled wood. At last it seemed time to try elsewhere, and having scrambled across another dry but deeply-worn torrent bed, the channel of the spring meltings of the northern face of the Wischberg, we soon fell into a less troublesome track, by which we were led to an open portion of the hill-side, where stretches of meadowland gave space for a view of the surrounding scenery.

Framed between the nearer slopes, the Balitza, a broad bold line of cliffs lifting themselves starkly above the verdure, looked all its inches, and acquiescing almost in Mr. Gilbert's comparison, we agreed that, if size alone could render a claimant successful, this must be the rightful Jof. But the Jof had always been described to me as a conical peak, and there, immediately over our heads, shot up the tall cupolas of the Wischberg, noble crags, and not lightly to be passed over. These sloping meadows fringed with birch and pines, and watered here and there by a bubbling fountain, are spots to linger in; full of soft beauties themselves, and surrounded by mountains, which, even in the cloudless glow of autumn noon—a state of atmosphere the least favourable to illusions—have a peculiar grandeur of their own; different indeed, and to my mind inferior, to that of the snowy Alps, or even of

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the greatest Dolomites, but still not to be denied by any eclectic mountaineer. Heightened and glorified by the slant rays of a setting sun, or, better still, gleaming white through the parting shroud of storm, the Julian Alps would hold their own with many of the loftier European ranges.

We were now making for the gap at the south foot of the Heiligenbergspitze, marked on the map simply as 'sattel.' The cow-trampled track, climbed steeply along the edge of a deep 'graben,' through thick woods, which cut off our view, and increased our impatience to reach the ridge. From the green saddle we had again a fine view of the wall mountain and the cupolas, apparently of equal height. On the further side lay the deep trench of the Kaltwasser Thal, a new tier of Wischberg pinnacles rising above its head, and a steep little pass between them and the Königsberg leading to Raibl.

Time permitting, we could have done nothing better than cross the crest of the Heiligenbergspitze to the Luschariberg; the two hills bear to one another the same relations as the Esel and Klimsenhorn of Pilatus—one a top, the other a spur. Our proper course was to follow the track indicated on the map along the southern side of the deep ravine, which broke away from our feet into the Kaltwasser Thal. 'Medio tutissimus ibis' is by no means an Alpine proverb, and we were repaid for choosing a terrace path which promised to carry us round the eastern spurs of the Heiligenbergspitze, by being deserted on precipitous ground, and forced to descend directly down a very steep and tiresome hill-side into the valley. The Kaltwasser Thal is a narrower glen than its neighbour, and, except for the fine view of the buttresses of the Wischberg at its head, has little to detain the traveller. It emerges on the dusty Predil road, some three miles above Tarvis.

Our whole walk occupied some six and a half hours, but as we had no local knowledge, and aimed rather at points of view than at the shortest path, the first 'fast walker' who gets over the distance in half the time will have no legitimate ground for self-congratulation.

And now, after all, which is the Jof di Montasio? Clearly, I think, after taking into account the written descriptions of this region, it ought to be a different mountain from the Wischberg. The Balitza is a lofty mass, well worthy of a sounding title, and likely to get one, as having one foot in Italy, which the Wischberg has not; and, seen end on, a wall may look sharp enough—witness the famous Cimon della Pala. The testimony of maps favours this view; those that print 'Jof' at all, printing it over some part of the mass elsewhere marked as Balitza. On the whole, therefore, I think we may fairly accept the theory sanctioned by both Messrs. Gilbert and Tuckett, that Jof di Montasio is the Italian name for the mass known to the Sclaves on its north as the Balitza. D. W. F.

Round Cortina.—Cortina d'Ampezzo is undoubtedly one of the best head-quarters for exploring the Dolomites. Lying in the midst of numerous excursions, both far and near, its position is at once central and generally convenient. At an elevation greater than that of Cha-

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mouni, it is easily reached by an excellent post road, traversed by public conveyances—slow, to be sure!—which connect, so to say, the Trieste and Venice railway with the new line through the Pusterthal, and the South Austrian lines. One finds here a few established guides of more or less merit, with a fixed and not unreasonable tariff; together with inns which are sufficiently good for any but a very unreasonable tourist. The pension of the 'Stella d'Oro' is the most comfortable. The 'Aquila Nera' has more of the noise and bustle of the village or post-inn about it. However, I have always found the Father Ghedina and his sons very just and friendly: two of these sons are painters—the eldest of Venetian reputation; the second, less well known, but of some talent, has his studio down at the mill by the river's side, where he generally keeps some sketches, and where he works at his art during the warmer months of the year. He has also exercised his skill and industry upon the walls of the *dépendance*, or supplementary building opposite the hotel.

First and foremost among the minor excursions to be made from Cortina is that to the 'Grotto of the Tofana.' The walk affords fine views, including a glimpse of the Marmolata, if not also of the Cimon della Pala; and a nice little bit of rock-climbing at the finish redeems it from absolute tameness. The grotto itself, requiring torches or flambeaux to show off its roof and its ice-stalks, is a large cavern on the great southern face of the westernmost peak of Tofana—a sheer precipice, embracing well-nigh the entire height of the peak. Access to it is obtained by a ledge running along this face, and not very far from the bottom of it; the only difficulty is in first getting upon the ledge, when the season is somewhat advanced, and winter snow lingers no longer in the rent of the cliffs which leads up to it; but I was told that even this difficulty would be remedied by the fixture of a ladder and some iron wire, thus rendering the *mauvais pas* accessible at all times, even to ladies. A visit to the Grotto may be combined with an ascent of the Tofana, a feat accomplished by a lady last summer, on which occasion the abundance of snow rendered the expedition arduous. A few days later I followed the lady's good example in ascending the middle or highest peak of Tofana, in company with Mr. C. J. Trueman and his English servant Batt—a hero of the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny. We had to circumvent the peak (first ascended by Grohmann some eight or nine years ago), by passing along the edge of steep snow-slopes under the cliffs on its north-western side—at this moment frozen, and requiring a good deal of step-cutting. The only incident worth notice in this ascent relates to Alessandro Lacedelli, who happened to let his axe slip through his fingers while cutting steps. The instrument shot swiftly and smoothly downwards, about to disappear, as we all imagined, over a series of cliffs which terminated the slope, when some isolated protuberance most obligingly arrested its course, say a couple of hundred feet below us! Alessandro, taking one of our axes, merely as an alpenstock, at once descended the hard steep snow, where a decided slip might have been fatal, and recovered his own, as cleverly as any good Chamouni guide could have done. I was astonished; though I afterwards found that his boots were armed with spikes fixed into the heel-plate, which, as he himself allowed, gave him great purchase where the

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snow was frozen at the surface. As we approached Cortina on our return, Lacedelli called our attention to an old man in knee-breeches, grave and bony, basking before his cottage door. 'That is old Lacedelli,' said he, 'my relative. Although now in his 80th year, he is still capable of climbing, without assistance from any man, any of the mountains hitherto ascended in this neighbourhood!' This wonderful old man was over 70 when he acted as leading guide to Dr. Grohmann in his arduous ascent of the Sorapis—the only ascent, I understand, that has ever been made of the mountain; although the southern side has been explored from the Forcella Grande to within a very short distance of the summit, and is supposed to offer a much more direct and easier route than the one followed by Dr. Grohmann, from the Lago di Sorapis, on the north. I have had a great fancy to stand upon the top of this mountain; and a few days after the Tofana expedition I made the attempt, with Santo Siorpaes, which was frustrated, however, by bad weather. We started from San Vito, and reached the summit of the Forcella Grande; descended a little on the other side of the col; and after passing the night in a very rough gîte on the left bank of the torrent, with a fearful thunderstorm raging for many hours over our heads, and finding any further attempt would be useless, we made the best of our way, in continued bad weather, towards the valley of Auronzo, and ultimately returned to Cortina by Bastian's hut and the Tre Croci, having made the complete tour of the Sorapis and Croda Malcora, although we had failed in getting to the top of it. The Forcella Grande is very beautiful: near the summit on the Auronzo side stands a remarkable isolated rock, which, seen from where we made our bivouac, looks just like a ruined tower, with a broad terrace winding outside its walls towards the top. The gorge, downwards towards Auronzo, is magnificent for its rocks and its forests. At the bottom of it we passed under some of the noblest fir-trees, both for height and circumference of trunk, that I ever beheld in any part of the Alps. Bastian's hut was at this time occupied by the forester, a brother of Santo's, who sold wine and other refreshments. The site is highly romantic, but the weather too often draws a curtain of mist down over the far-famed rock scenery which it otherwise commands.

Among the many peaks and rocky forms around Cortina is one remarkable for its utter nakedness and uninviting aspect. This skeleton ridge, culminating in sharp teeth separated one from the other by deep perpendicular clefts, is named Piz Formin—sometimes Croda del Lago, from a pretty little lake which lies smilingly at the foot of its grim rocks. It is the highest point between the Pelmo and the triple Tofana, and has, I am told, attracted the attention of more than one mountaineer. Santo pronounced it quite impracticable last summer. Not so, however, the slightly lower peak, known as the Becca di Mezzo Dì, to the south of it, which Mr. Ball likens to a 'carious tooth,' and which also was never known to have been ascended. This might be a little difficult, he said, but he saw nothing impracticable about it. Its height was not considerable, but it was an isolated peak, very conspicuous from Cortina, and from its position promising a fine view. Accordingly, on a bright morning (July 5), at 5 A.M., I left Ghedina's inn accompanied by Santo, with the determination of climbing, if possible, this little

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virgin peak. We approached the rocks, or 'Croda' as they are locally termed, from the east, but it was from the first doubtful whether this side would do. 'Were it not for that *lastra*,' said Santo, alluding to a stretch of steep smooth rock which stared us in the face, 'we might get on to the "grat," and follow it easily enough to the top. Let us go round and examine the other sides.' So off we went to the north and west sides, where the slopes below the rocks were now steep snow-fields. Here, however, the cliffs above looked more perpendicular, and offered no encouragement. We made our way to the southern side, and struck a dry couloir near its head, which opened out almost opposite the Pelmo, and divided the main mass of the rocks from a ridge running off south-west. Santo now said he saw the way up. After a little breakfast we crossed the couloir and went straight up the rocks—less wall-like than on the other sides—by one or two steep and rather head-trying chimneys. The stone was dry and gritty, and it was not easy for the first climber to avoid sending down upon the other occasional showers of small gravelly débris, or pebbles. We soon got upon the arête; then wound round a short ledge on its eastern side; then, pulling ourselves easily over a few pieces of rock, we landed safely upon the summit, where we found that the 'Croda' below us was cleft in all directions and split into pinnacles, in place of being the solid, compact mass it appears from below and in the distance. Had we overcome the 'lastra' which Santo so much objected to on the eastern face, we should certainly never have been able to have followed, or indeed to have found, any continued arête to the summit from that direction. The general view rather disappointed our expectation. The elevation of our newly-ascended peak—barely 9,000 feet—was hardly sufficient, with so many loftier mountains around, to command a very wide horizon. The Pelmo, Antelao, Croda Malcora, and Croda Rossa all looked very fine, and the Cristallo very perpendicular. We had a good opportunity of surveying the Piz Formin, close beside us; which survey, together with another we made from its lake on our descent to the valley, would seem to justify the opinion expressed by Santo as to its inaccessibility. We had arrived on the summit about 9·40, and we remained there about an hour, taking care to erect a 'stone man' before we left it. The descent of the rocks was, in vulgar phraseology, 'short and sweet,' a little stiff in one or two places, but not in the least dangerous, except for very clumsy hands and feet. At Cortina we learned that our ascent had caused some interest, and that our movements had been watched through the telescope. Now that the way is known, this little expedition may be made in seven or eight hours from the village and back again; while the détour by the lake under the 'Formin' makes an agreeable variation in the route.

THE LANGKOFEL.—The Langkofel is one of the representative peaks of the Dolomites, and perhaps one of the oldest known to foreigners; few tourists beholding it for the first time from certain points in the Grödnerthal can fail to be somewhat awestruck with its extraordinary, I may even say unique, aspect; nothing can look much more impregnable to everything without wings than does this stately mountain, grandly towering over the pine-forests and pasture-slopes of

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the Seisser Alp. It has been asserted that every mountain has its weak point somewhere, but sure enough the Langkofel has no weak point on this side! thought I to myself, as I walked down the char road between Santa Maria and Santa Christina, in the summer of 1871. I was not then aware that it had ever been ascended, and wondered whether it ever could be. I soon afterwards learned that Dr. Grohmann had attained its highest point, but I could obtain very little information as to the real nature of the ascent. This last summer I proposed to Santo to try what we could make of it, when he told me he had already reached one of its peaks with Mr. Tuckett. On July 9th, my friend Trueman accompanied me over the Grodner Joch to Santa Maria, where I found provisions and a porter. No one here seemed to know much about the Langkofel, for Herr Grohmann had brought both his guides from the Pusterthal; but the landlord of the inn, a very good fellow in his way, lost no time in sending to fetch a man—brother to a chamois-hunter of the valley—whose courage and legs he was sure he could rely upon for our purpose. The cut of this individual, Antonio Kaslatter, was at least uncommon; he stood somewhere about five feet nothing in his boots, a pair of roomy Wellingtons, under trousers which ceased a little below the calves. He wore a round short jacket, and a round hat, pulled well down over his ears; when his back was turned, he continually reminded me of a big old-fashioned schoolboy. Withal, he had a good broad shoulder of his own, a square jaw, and a shrewd good-humoured eye. He had no regular alpenstock, but carried a short ferruled walking-stick, secured to his wrist by a thong. Thus equipped, he offered to accompany us for a consideration of four guldens the two days, for which we should probably require his services, adding, at the same time, that he did not fear to follow where any man would go! There is a small châlet close under the Plattkofel which would have just suited us to pass the night in, and thither we repaired; but, finding it closed and unoccupied, we were forced to descend to the Solchner châlet, a sort of primitive auberge, frequented principally by herdsmen and woodcutters. Trueman had now taken leave of us, and gone on to Ratzes Bad, hoping to hail us the following day on the Langkofel, from the top of the Schlern; but the following day was to be a failure for us: suffice it to say that the weather obliged us to return, after we had made a very fair start. Owing to the continued unpromising condition of the weather, we did not leave the châlet on the 11th before 5·30 A.M., and even then not without misgivings. On the side of the Seisser Alp the Langkofel is separated from the Plattkofel by a wild glen or hollow, into which we mounted pretty steeply over snow and *éboulements* from a small green Alp; on the southern side, however, the rocks of the two mountains seem to amalgamate above the Fassathal, although they are intersected or penetrated from the north by at least two steep snow valleys, which might, likely enough, prove practicable as passes over to Campidello, or to the foot of the Fedaya! Insufficiency of time prevented our making the experiment on the present occasion. Turning our backs then upon the rocks of the Plattkofel, we made straight for those of the Langkofel on the eastern side of

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the glen. These were not inviting; and indeed, until we arrived at their base, about 7·20, I could hardly conceive where it might be possible to get up. We first attacked the precipice where the rocks, though very steep, were still scantily clothed with short and slippery grass. Here, in skirting the edge of some cliffs, we passed one or two *mauvais pas*, but we soon turned directly upwards, and came upon 'Croda,' or bare rock, which we found better 'going.' Peter Salcher led Grohmann up a snow couloir in a very ugly cleft, lying a little south of our passage, and, from all accounts, more troublesome to deal with; but our different routes converged at no great height above the bottom of the precipice. There is a small glacier, or snowfield, high among the cliffs, and distinctly visible from the Seisser Alp. We reached the border of this glacier at 9·30, and, after a short halt, we went north, up an unmistakeable snow couloir, which comes down to it. We took the rocks to the left of the head of the couloir, and, after a little stiff climbing, we attained a ridge looking into the upper part of the Grödnerthal. Upon a point of the same we found a bottle, containing Mr. Whitwell's card, left in 1870. At this moment the clouds broke, and disclosed a higher point, north of us, crowned with a cairn and flagstaff; but we at once perceived that it was utterly impossible to get there from the ridge on which we stood: itself impassable a little farther on. We went down again to the top of the couloir, and, as it was then only a quarter after mid-day, with a much more promising sky, we descended slightly on the north side of it. We had all along been bearing too much to the south among the rocks; now, crossing a short snow-slope, we saw a large couloir below us, which appeared to run up into the very heart of the cliffs. Santo thought it unnecessary to descend to it, and recommended the course of striking across some precipices to our right, on the chance of being able to get into it higher up. This succeeded admirably; we found the couloir long and steep, slightly serpentine in its course, but with objectionable angles of rock projecting here and there. I say objectionable, because, without affording any secure resting-place, they threatened most obtrusively to break one's head in the event of an accidental glissade; the snow was, moreover, in a bad state of consistency from the weather. Santo led the way upwards, kicking steps, for nearly an hour; we passed a very steep couloir coming down from a peak to the right of our couloir: it had bare ice in it towards the top, and looked a nasty, if not a dangerous, passage. I thought the peak above it might be the one we were in search of; but Santo immediately exclaimed, 'I see the summit on our right!' Continuing nearly ten minutes longer on the snow, we were enabled to board the rocks on the left of the couloir, just under the main arête, and in less than another ten minutes we stepped upon the culminating point of it, where Grohmann had left his Stoneman in 1869. The flagstaff was still erect, but the little flag had been torn down in the strife of the elements, and was now lying among the stones. We raised it, and set it afloat again in the breeze. The names, 'P. Grohmann, P. Salcher, and F. Innerkoffler,' along with the figures '1869,' were painted in large black letters on the stones at our feet. This peak was apparently rather the highest of a group of three of almost equal elevation, which evidently formed the highest

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mass of the mountain, and which was penetrated by the couloir we had just come up. The nearer to us of the other two might probably have been reached by us without much difficulty, in passing a narrow little arête, not unlike a col, if we had entertained any doubt of its being lower than our own; but the outermost one to the right of the couloir, and closest to the Seisser Alp, would, I am sure, prove much less accessible, and could, I think, only be attacked by the small couloir we saw on our left in coming up the great one. I should not be much surprised if this peak turned out to be the highest of all, although I am still inclined to accept Grohmann's measurement in giving the greatest elevation to the one we were upon. We now saw the ridge that we were first on considerably below us, separated from us by vertical precipices. What we were able to see of the general view was fine and varied. We caught occasional glimpses of the Oetzthal and Zillerthal ranges; the higher of the Dolomites in our neighbourhood—or comparatively speaking in our neighbourhood—were the Monte Pordoi, the Marmolata, Cimon della Pala, and Rosengarten; among more distant minute objects we saw very distinctly the great fort at the foot of the Brenner. But it was already 2·30, so we left the summit, supposed to be about 10,400 ft., and descended the couloir carefully backwards. This was not to the taste of our little porter, who could not at first be made to understand the danger of snow under certain conditions; notwithstanding, as the descent became steeper, instinct perhaps induced him to adopt our mode of progression as the best, and so satisfied was he with his experience of it, that he told Santo he had given him a lesson in climbing, and would, by way of return, treat him to a bottle of wine at Santa Maria, where we arrived soon after 8 o'clock. Kaslatter ought now to know the way up Langkofel; he is a cheery, courageous little man, although by no means a first-rate cragsman.

W. E. Utterson Kelso.

REVIEW.

THE MOUNTAINS OF SYRIA.*

Captain Burton is a type of the professional traveller, and he displays in many points the advantages that professionals usually have over amateurs. Long and varied experience has taught him both what and how to observe and collect, so that even from countries whence others return empty-handed he is sure to come back bringing his sheaves with him. 'Unexplored Syria,' the second sheaf we have had lately, is a tying-up of the facts collected by the author during his two years' consulship at Damascus, together with the results of some further explorations, partly planned by himself, but carried out, after his premature translation, by his friend Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake. As usual with Captain Burton, the bundle is pitched at our feet very much as it was gathered, and without any trouble having been taken to dress it up in the form most likely to be acceptable to that easily repelled if omni-

* *Unexplored Syria.* By R. V. Burton and C. V. Tyrwhitt Drake. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1872.

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