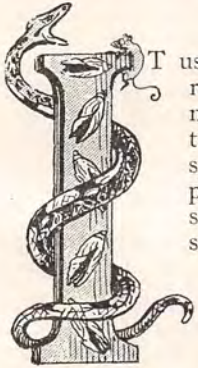


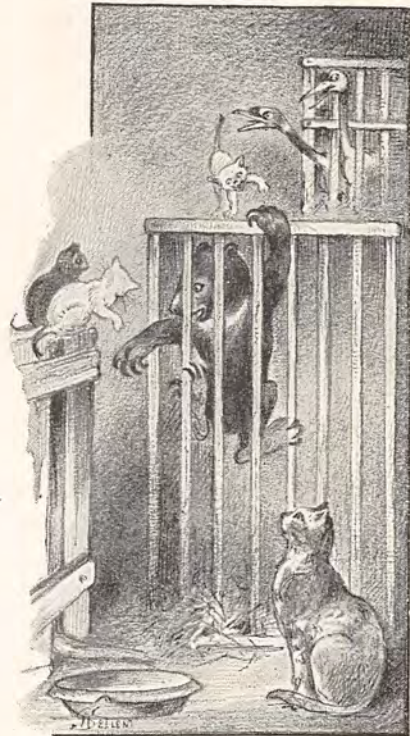
## THE ARK OF THE JAMRACHS.



Used to be said of "Old Jamrach" that if an animal, no matter how rare, existed on this globe, he could get a specimen. It was even once proposed—we do not say how seriously—to settle the vexed sea-serpent question by giving the famous animal-dealer an order for the monster. In one case his dominion over the animal kingdom was put to a severe test—Lord Lilford ordered a pair of nutcrackers—brown birds with white spots, about the size of a pigeon. Jamrach found a pair, but it took him a quarter of a century to do it in. These nutcrackers, it may as well be mentioned, are at the present time comparatively plentiful, though a few years ago thought to be nearly extinct.

Associated with the name of Jamrach are rare stories as well as rare animals; some of these stories bear marks, evident to the experienced, of being works of imagination. For instance, one may almost any time read of Hagenbeck, the celebrated lion-tamer, how he went down to Ratcliff Highway and planted down £200 for a tiger. Then arose the question, so runs the story, as to how the animal was to be conveyed to Hagenbeck's quarters. This question Hagenbeck is represented as speedily settling, by producing from his pocket a dog's collar and chain, attaching them to the tiger; so leading it from Jamrach's stables to the street, hailing a hansom, jumping in with the tiger following at his heels, and taking the vacant seat beside him as a pet dog might do. Now, when a man buys a wild animal, the question as to how it

is to be conveyed never arises. The method of conveying such a commodity is as settled as the method of moving furniture, and the proceeding to the dealer in dangerous animals as prosaic. Again, when a man pays £200 for an animal that is to aid him in getting a living, he has some regard for the animal if he has none for himself and other people. Men are not so fond of attaching £200 worth



MALAYAN OR SUN BEAR.



to the end of a string, and then giving it a chance of running away, of being destroyed, or even damaged.

The nearest approach in actual fact to the story of Carl Hagenbeck and the tiger is found in the freak of a spendthrift, who ran through £300,000 in three years. He bought a tiger from Jamrach; it was put into the regulation den or box—a strong packing-case with sliding doors at each end—and taken on the top of a four-wheeler to Piccadilly. There its mad-cap purchaser turned it loose in his drawing-room, and then ringing the bell sent one of his servants up to fetch something. Fortunately the servant came by no harm. On its becoming known that a tiger was in the house, consternation followed; and when the foolish freak had been carried quite far enough, a hole was knocked in the panel of the drawing-room door and the tiger shot.

Charles Jamrach acquired his world-wide reputation as an animal-dealer from a variety of causes. For one thing he was a keen business man—nothing pleased him so much as a clean, clever deal. He was something more, however, for mere business keenness

would not make noblemen and other gentlemen speak of him as their "dear old friend," and would not accord him columns of obituary notices in the leading journals at his death. He was a big man and a strong man—big enough, and strong enough, and brave enough to run after a tiger that escaped from his premises, and rescue from its jaws the little boy that it had picked up *en route* to freedom. He was a genial man, too, always the same in manner to people of high and low degree, and always smoked a big Dutch clay pipe, except between his first and second breakfasts when he smoked a cigar on his way to business. It was his habit to take two breakfasts—one at home with his family and another at his office with his chimpanzee. He had a weakness for chimpanzees—for a period regarded as the much-inquired-for "missing link"—and always had one in his office. It was an expensive affection, for his chimpanzees one after another soon caught cold and died, and chimpanzees were then at £30. However, times were good, and £30 were only an hour's makings.

It was the year after the Queen had ascended the throne that Jamrach, at the age of twenty-three, came over from Hamburg and opened shop in Ratcliff Highway. Till then he had been working for his father, who, besides being commander of the Hamburg river police, ran a business in curiosities and strange animals. These were acquired from sailors, and it was the son's business to travel the Continent with the rarities. His last expedition for his father was to St. Petersburg, at that time the great outlet for tropical birds, it being the fashion for the princes and noblemen, and as many others as could afford it, to keep aviaries.

Thither, accordingly, young Jamrach used periodically to set forth from Hamburg with a stock of parrots and his father's benediction. On one of these trips no market being illimitable, he and all the other parrot travellers failed to find buyers—a serious matter for them, for live stock is apt to die, and costs something to look after and keep. To make a long story short, one after another of the travellers succumbed; Jamrach, who had no more money than the rest of them, but had a good reputation in the trade, purchasing their stock at a low figure by means of bills payable at six months. He thus practically made a "corner" in parrots. This in itself helped the market to recover; and when Jamrach returned to his father and placed eight hundred Russian imperiales in the old man's hands, he felt a little grieved, knowing the anxiety and trouble he had gone through, at his father's behaviour. The latter simply



"I'M A JAPANESE DOG WORTH £50."



"ARE YOU?"



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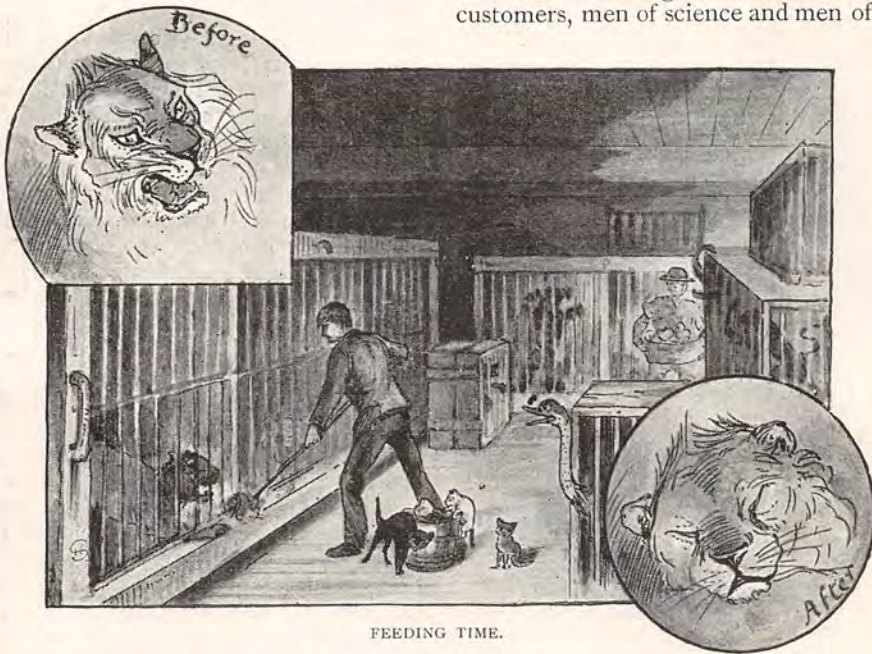
A COMPLETE STORY—IN THREE CHAPTERS.



took the money—a large sum in those days—and locked it up. This made Jamrach resolve to leave his father; and the conditions of shipping—there being no Suez Canal then, and the ports of this country being consequently the first to tap home-coming ships—pointed to England as the position wherefrom to command the trade in animals and rarities. Nor was he mistaken.

Jamrach still maintained his continental business connections. He now both bought and sold for his father, the latter doing the same for him; moreover, he knew the con-

scientific investigation was on the rise. Museums and zoological gardens were being formed; rarities of every kind were in demand; shell-collecting was becoming a mania. In a word, the people and products of the world were being studied as they had never been studied before. What is more, an era of unprecedented prosperity had set in, and there was no lack of means to gratify the wholesome craving for enlightenment. Jamrach rose on this tide. Seafaring men, as we have seen, flocked to his doors with the results of their tradings with native races, and these results brought to him as visitors and customers, men of science and men of fortune,



FEEDING TIME.

tinental markets generally, and what they were capable of absorbing. He could thus buy what a purely English dealer, confined to the English market for customers, dare not buy.

This alone was sufficient to put him in the front rank at once. He had specially shrewd business ideas too, though. For instance, in dealing with ships' captains and sailors it was his custom not to beat them down to the lowest penny they would take, but to give them as much as he could. In this way he earned the reputation of being a liberal buyer, and was talked of all over the world by seamen. The consequence was, though there were dozens of other animal and curiosity dealers round about him, all seamen with rarities bent their steps in the first instance to Jamrach's. He thus had the pick of the market.

Meanwhile the modern spirit of inquiry and

and the agents of scientific institutions. This gave tone to Jamrach's emporium that mere *bric-à-brac* and animal dealing, on however large a scale conducted, could never have conveyed.

As illustrating some of the uses that Jamrach's extraordinary collection was put to, may be mentioned the purchase of a couple of big elephant skulls by a celebrated hunter and traveller. This gentleman occasionally lectured on his travels, and among the exploits he recounted was the shooting of a couple of elephants, whose skulls he had brought home as a trophy, and which he had displayed on the lecture table. Needless to add, he had been burdened only for a very short journey with these skulls—bought in Wapping! Similarly, after their travels, many young gentlemen found a visit to Jamrach's very necessary to complete their education and their collections.



From these various causes, then, it was that Jamrach's became a resort for people of fashion, and a curious record of some of the odd things that used to go on there may still be seen on one of the office windows. The office itself is worth a word. It is a middling-sized, lowish-roofed, uncarpeted, grimy room at the back of the shop, where the birds are kept, and whose screams are shut off by a couple of glass doors. From the top of an



"DOWN WENT THE INDIAN PRINCE AFTER THEM."

old bureau, heathen idols, dusty and neglected, look down with lofty unconcern or callous grin upon the visitor, knicknacks are strewn about the floor. A few dusty books are on a shelf, and in a handier place is a copy of Debrett's Peerage. The view from the windows is distinctly slummy—a narrow passage in which some rare geese may be waddling about, a dirty brick wall, and the next-door neighbour's washing—such is the place that dukes and duchesses, and people of the highest fashion used to frequent for an hour or two in the afternoon.

Well, the panes of one of the windows of this so-called office are scored and scratched in a singular way, and thereby hangs a tale. The first of these scratches was made by the Duke of Wellington, to whom Jamrach was

showing three very large unset diamonds he had become possessed of. The duke taking the biggest one, went to the window, and after looking closely at it, drew it down the pane of glass nearest him, and so tested it. After that everyone who was shown the diamonds did as the duke had done—made a cut in one of the window panes, and there to this day the various cuts remain.

When the fame of these diamonds got to be noised abroad, Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, who was a constant buyer of rare animals, especially birds, came in one day, and after seating himself began:

"You make a lot of talk about your diamonds, Jamrach. You show them to everybody and you've shown them to me. Now I'm going to show you something."

So saying, he pulled a paper packet out of his pocket, and unfolding it displayed a hundred unset diamonds—all of the finest water and brilliant cut. He placed the open packet on the table and in succession produced two more similar packets.

"Now," he said, looking towards the three gleaming packets on the table, "what do you think of that? You may have big diamonds, but my diamonds beat yours in number and value."

The Maharajah was excited and as he finished speaking he extended his hand and upset one of the packets. Splash went the brilliant stones upon the floor, and down upon his knees in the same instant went the Indian prince after them. When Dhuleep Singh had gone, Old Jamrach got down on his hands and knees and had a good hunt for himself. It was in vain, however, not a single jewel having escaped the prince's eye. It was an extraordinary scene—an Oriental potentate on his knees in a back room in what was then the most notoriously cut-throat thoroughfare in London, and picking up diamonds too, in such a neighbourhood!

The Rothschilds have been frequent visitors at Jamrach's, and good customers—especially Alfred and young Walter. Respecting Alfred, a story reappears at regular intervals of a few months in the newspaper chit-chat columns. The latest form of the story is that he has roaming about his house in a state of perfect freedom a couple of lions, which he has succeeded in domesticating by having them brought up on a purely vegetable diet. Vegetarians have even pressed this story into the service of their propaganda, and have drawn the conclusion that if a purely carnivorous animal like a lion can do without meat, *a fortiori*, man can.

Now it may be a pity to stop the interesting career of this story, but Mr. Alfred Roth-



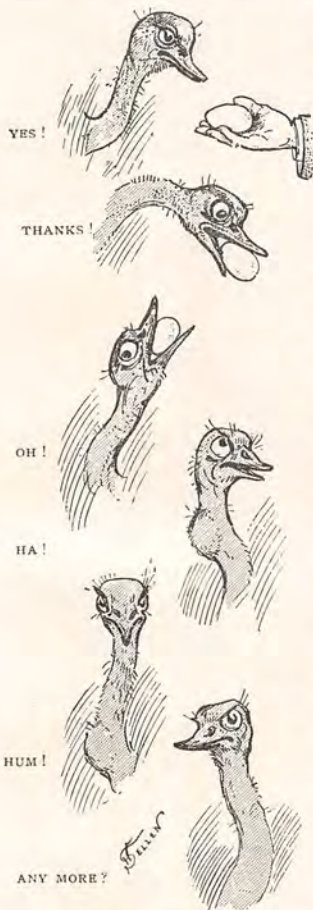
schild hasn't a lion at all, and never had one. What he did have was an idea that the ferocity of the lion was due to its eating flesh, and he communicated this idea to Jamrach. This led to an experiment with a lion cub of six months. The cub's fangs were drawn, and its claws cut. It was then fed on bread and milk with two pounds of boiled mutton a day. The intention was to gradually reduce the meat to *nil*, to give the cub a walk on the chain each day; and when he had been proved to be sufficiently docile, he was to leave Jamrach's stables for Mr. Rothschild's hearth-rug, and become a domestic pet at Halton. All these good intentions, however, were frustrated. The young cub was docile enough, and suffered himself to be stroked by the ladies who came to see him. It was the docility of decay though, and Master Leo, as he was called, drooped and died in a couple of months. Now, let us hope, he will be allowed to remain at rest, and not made to go on multiplying as he has done since the writer first described the experiment two years ago.

A deal with one of the ladies of the Rothschild family is told by the reigning Jamrach, Albert Edward, the old man's son and successor. The lady came down to the animal depôt, accompanied by her sister, the late Countess of Rosebery. She wanted a pair of black-necked swans, to make a present of. Jamrach hadn't the swans, but he knew they had a pair at the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, so he wired for them, and next day they were *en route* to London. When they arrived, he wired to the lady; she came down, saw the birds, was delighted with them, agreed to the price, £40, and left the address she wished to have them sent to. That address was Paris; so they were shipped back, and to all appearance the transaction was happily ended. Some time after that Ferdinand Rothschild wanted to buy a black buck antelope, for which young Jamrach asked £15. "No," said Ferdinand, "you ask too much; I'll give you £10. You sold my sister a pair of black-necked swans for £40, and you paid only £20 for them, and they went back to the place they came from!" The swans had been recognised in Paris by someone connected with the Jardin des Plantes, and so the story of the transaction came out. To give £20 for an article one day and get £40 for it the next is a pleasant-looking piece of business. All businesses, however, like everything else, have an unpleasant as well as a pleasant side. So great is the risk of his trade, that such animals as Jamrach deals in cannot be insured; and cases where the steamboat or railway companies can be held liable are so rare, that they have yet to occur in his experience.

An interesting, though comparatively insignificant, case recently happened. Six pairs of large grey dormice and some blue thrushes, in separate packages, were despatched simultaneously from Switzerland. The blue thrushes arrived all right, and in due time; the dormice didn't. The whole consignment had been seen and attended to, fed and watered, by Jamrach's agent, *en route*,

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"A LIVELY SENSE OF FAVOURS TO COME."



AN UNSOCIABLE RELATIVE.

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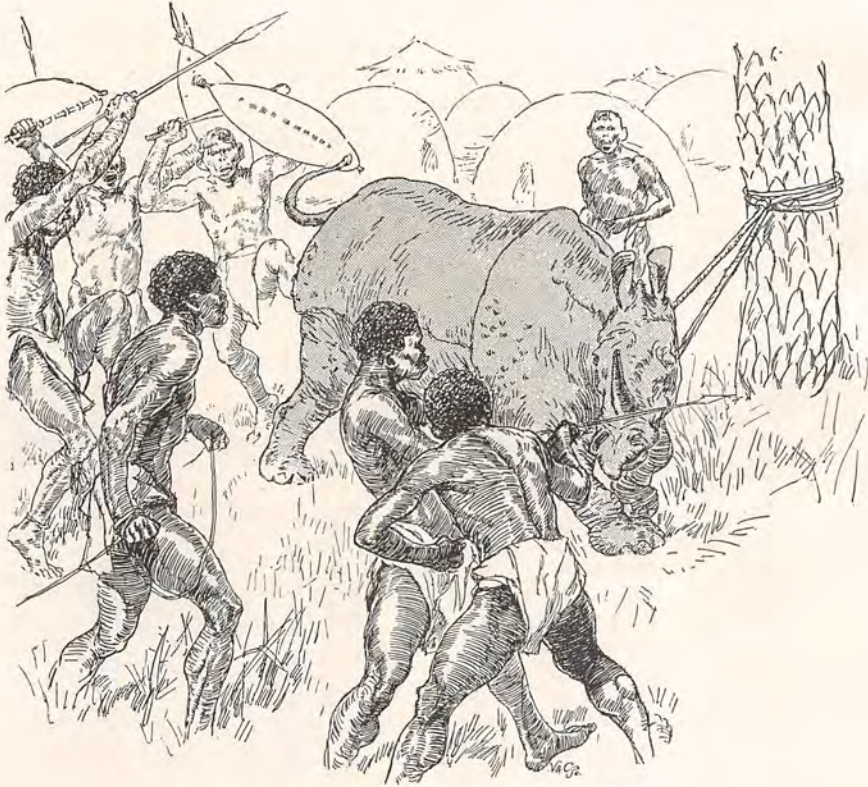
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at Cologne. The next point of inquiry was Ostend. Here the box was found, but it was empty; the dormice had gnawed around the ventilating holes of their box, until these holes were large enough to let them out.

Jamrach claimed compensation; the International Express Company replied that the mice should have been so packed that they couldn't have nibbled their way out. They were securely enough packed, answered

farmer at Weedon. He found a tiger amongst his sheep in a field alongside the London and North-Western line, and not being skilled in the hunting of big game, sent to the barracks for assistance. A troop of soldiers came down the line and fired at the tiger from the train, ultimately succeeding in killing it. That tiger had left Jamrach's in the morning, safely and securely packed in an iron-bound den. Its destination was Liverpool. It was put in



"RAW MATERIAL": A RHINOCEROS TIED TO A TREE.

Jamrach, and nibbled their way to freedom because they were starving, their food-supply having given out through the delay caused by the Company's neglect.

Here this quaint little incident has ended. It may begin a new career by the discovery of a colony of strange dormice at Ostend, and much speculation as to how in the world these strange animals got there!

Animals are found in out-of-the-way places sometimes. One summer, it may be remembered, Harry Furniss, in a letter to the *Times*, told how he found some snakes in Regent's Park, supposed to have come out of the Zoological Gardens. The most startling discovery of this kind, however, was made by a

an open truck of a goods train, and the den, by some means or another, got smashed—it was supposed by a projecting iron girder on a passing train. The liberated tiger jumped from the moving train and ran down an embankment into the field of sheep where it was discovered, and where it found a very easy dinner. The price that Jamrach had sold the tiger at was £150, which sum he claimed from the railway company. All he got was the dead body of his tiger. "There's your tiger," in effect, said the company. "It had no business to jump from the train."

Apart from accidents, the losses of the dealer in strange animals are very heavy. The animals do not belong to this country,



and they are in captivity, while their natural state is freedom. Even at the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, where the utmost care is exercised, and where everything possible is done to remind the animals of their natural surroundings, three corpses on an average are taken to the dead-house every morning.

The deaths amongst a dealer's stock figure much higher, his animals being more exposed, and at the same time less accustomed to the climate. Chill seems to be the chief cause of death to wild animals in captivity. In this way Jamrach lost eighteen lion cubs worth £30 each in a few days; in one week five giraffes worth £100 each (giraffes would now, through the closing up of the Soudan, fetch £400 a piece—not £1,000, as some reports say); and in a similarly short time four elephants which had been sold for £800, and were on the point of being shipped to America.

Another heavy loss accrued through the death of a rhinoceros, valued at £800. This animal died in so mysterious a manner that its corpse was sent to the Zoological Society's pro-sector for post-mortem examination.

The pro-sector still remembers that post-mortem. How he had to get right inside the carcass of the huge monster to perform the autopsy, and how, even so, the muscular exertion was more like what a navy might put forth in opening a drain than the skilled operator with the scalpel. The cause of death was found to be suffocation, an abscess in the rhinoceros's throat having eaten its way into and perforated the windpipe. The origin of the abscess was due to its treatment while still in the hands of the natives. They had tied it by the neck to a tree, and its continual tugging had set up the irritation that led to the cancerous growth. Thus the real hide of the rhinoceros, unlike the proverbial one, is penetrable!

Chill has already been instanced as a leading cause of death to rare animals in the hands of dealers. In zoological gardens deaths often happen through the mistaken conduct of visitors. Recently, a hippopotamus died at the Berlin Gardens. It was opened, and an india-rubber ball was found inside it. Now the hippopotami are covered in with wire netting at Berlin. In our own gardens, over-feeding by visitors is a frequent cause of death.

At one time Jamrach had an ostrich with the run of the ground floor of his stables. In a post on that floor was usually stuck, when not in use, the butcher's knife wherewith the meat was cut for the carnivora. The knife suddenly disappeared and could not be found.

The ostrich died, was cut open, and the knife found inside.

Jamrach's first royal customer was the present Emperor of Austria, whom over forty years ago he supplied with a couple of elephants. He delivered them himself at Schönbrunn, where he met the Emperor, who told him he had been seeking a lion with a long mane for some time. Jamrach told him he would bring him such a lion in a week.

"What!" said the Emperor, "you get in a week what I've been trying to get for years?"

The wily dealer said nothing, though he knew exactly where to put his hands on a long-maned lion; and setting off at once, travelled through France in search of the showman who had it. Within the stipulated time he had sold it to the Emperor. Then followed an exemplification of the truth of the astute Bacon's remark that "Dispatch is to them (kings) the most grateful of all things." Nothing was too good for Jamrach, who to his last day could recall the Emperor's Tokay wine. The present King of Italy, when Crown Prince, visited Jamrach's. His fancy was black-necked swans. Dom Luis, the late King of Portugal, was another visitor and customer, a transaction with him being in a pair of black cockatoos for £80.

Space will not permit to tell how Abdull Azziz, the Turkish Sultan, spent the British money he got hold of on marble menageries, and filled them with lions and tigers, nor how another similarly improvident ruler, the Khedive Ismail, indulged his fancy for birds—still, too, with the assistance of British money. These were right royal times for Jamrach, as the plain matter-of-fact records of his ledger show.

Still, clever dealer though he was, Old Jamrach had a weakness. He was a conchologist. As a youth he took lessons in conchology, and all his life he was an enthusiastic collector of shells. He spent several thousands in sending men out to collect for him, not satisfied with the shoals that were ever being brought to his own doors.

At one time Old Jamrach's collection of shells was reputed to be worth £10,000. Since his death, three years ago, they were a perfect nuisance, till last September, when Mr. A. E. Jamrach found a customer for them at £100. Even so, the customer got tired carting them away and left thirty loads. These the dustman was engaged to remove at 3s. a load. Thus, what less than a quarter of a century ago was so highly valued, is to-day treated as rubbish. Let collectors of postage stamps take warning. *Sic transit gloria.*

W. B. ROBERTSON.