



## Queries and replies

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property of the Society, namely :—Mr. Adam Black, publisher, Edinburgh, Mr. Robert Cox of Gorgie, Midlothian ; Mr. James Currie, shipowner, Leith ; and the Honorary Treasurers of the Society, Messrs. Alexander Bruce, Edinburgh, and Robert Gourlay, Glasgow, *ex officio*," which was unanimously carried. Mr. Ralph Richardson, the senior Honorary Secretary, stated that a sum of nearly £400 had been subscribed by members of the Society towards Mr. H. O. Forbes' expedition to New Guinea, an announcement which was received with applause. A vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Mr. Cox of Gorgie, terminated the proceedings.—On the following evening a meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the Society was held in the Hall of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow. Mr. Michael Connal, in the absence of Mr. James Stevenson, of Largs, occupied the chair, and intimated that owing to ill-health Mr. Johnston had been unable to leave London, and that his paper would therefore be read by the Secretary of the Scottish Geographical Society. Dr. Turner, Secretary of the Geographical Section of the Glasgow Philosophical Society, read a communication from Mr. James Stevenson, directing special attention to Mr. Johnston's paper and pointing out that the construction of the Suakin-Berber railway would enable British traders to reach the districts within and around the junction of the Blue and White Niles, which offered a favourable field for commercial enterprise. The paper having been read, Dr. Christie, Mr. Ewing, and Mr. James Thomson delivered short addresses. Mr. Ralph Richardson referred to the subscription towards Mr. Forbes' expedition, and both he and Mr. Silva White expressed, on behalf of the Society, gratification at the first joint meeting of the Geographical Section of the Glasgow Philosophical Society and the Scottish Geographical Society having been so successfully carried out. A vote of thanks was awarded to the Chairman for presiding.

### QUERIES AND REPLIES.

**St. Brendan** (*ante*, p. 124).—On the terrestrial globe of Martin Behem, made at Nuremberg in 1492, a large island is laid down between 40° and 47° W. long. from Ferro, and extending from the equator to about 9° N. lat., and it is stated that "in the year 565 St. Brendan came in his ship to this island." It was also laid down on many maps of the 15th century by the name of St. Brendan or St. Borondon. St. Brendan or Brandan is well known in early legend (see, *e.g.* Fordun's *Chronicle*, ed. 1872, vol. ii. p. 24), and his life and acts exist in several editions. He was one of the twelve disciples of Finnian of Clonard, and soon after his ordination by Bishop Eric he is said to have sailed with fourteen monks in quest of the land of promise of the saints, and spent seven years in the search. The monkish narrative of this long voyage to different unknown islands\* was one of the most popular tales of the middle ages, and had its influence on the mind of Columbus in determining him to seek for new lands in the far west. On Brendan's return, he went to visit St. Gildas, and then to the Western Isles, where he founded a church and village in Tiree and a monastery, perhaps on the Eilean-na-Naoimh in the Firth of Lorn, the next island to which is Culbrandon or Brandan's retreat, and not far to the north of it, on the island of Seil, the church is dedicated to Brendan. We have also Kilbrandan or

\* Yule, in his *Marco Polo*, vol. ii. p. 294, quotes the following curious lines from Bauduin de Sebourg (i. 123) :

" Li est de Saint Brandon le matère furnie,  
 Qui fut si près d'enfer, à nef et à galie,  
 Que diable d'enfer isserent, par maistrie,  
 Getans brandons de feu, pour lui faire hasquie." . . .

Kilbrennan Sound, and the natives of Bute are called "the Brendanes" (Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 77). In 559 A.D. the saint founded his principal monastery at Clonfert in Ireland, so that the date given on Behem's globe is probably twenty years in error, his voyage having been made in his earlier life. J. B.

Another correspondent supplies the following :—

**St. Brandan's Isle and the "Terrestrial Eden."**—In view of some recent speculations connected with the subject, and as bearing on a claim to carry Scottish geographical research back to a remote period, the inquiry of a correspondent in last number in regard to "St. Brandan's Island" seems to merit some attention. The answer to "X.'s" question as to the form of the saintly legend of the voyage of the Scoto-Irish "hermite" may perhaps be most conveniently found in the following quotation from the curious work just published by Dr. W. F. Warren, of Boston, entitled *Paradise Found; or the Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole* (London : Sampson Low & Co.) :—

"According to the story an angel brought to the good abbot, St. Brandan, son of Finlogho, who died A.D. 576 or 577, a book from heaven, in which such marvellous things were narrated concerning the then unknown portions of the world that the honest father charged both angel and book with falsehood, and in his righteous indignation burned the latter. As a punishment for his unbelief, God sentenced him to recover the book. He must search through earth and hell and sea until he finds the heavenly gift. The token given him by the angel is that when he sees two twin fires flame up, he shall know that they are the two eyes of a certain ox, and on the tongue of that ox he shall find the book. For seven long years he sails the Western and the Northern Ocean. He here encounters more marvels than were recorded in the original incredible book, and is even permitted to visit the Earthly Paradise. The beauty of the soil, of the fountain with four streams, of the magnificent castle lighted with self-luminous stones and adorned with all manner of precious jewels, surpassed description. The stay of the party seems, however, to have been short, and unfortunately just where the island was located the commander forgets to mention."

There is a strong family likeness, possibly also a common origin, in the St. Brandan legend and the stories of the Fortunate Islands and Garden of the Hesperides ; the Keltic terrestrial paradise, Avalon, the home of Morgan la Fee, visited by King Arthur, Holger Danske, and other heroes of chivalry, and many more ocean myths that have floated before the imaginations of saintly and secular romancers of the old world. A favourite theory of mediæval theologians and travellers was that the "Earthly Eden" was to be found in an unapproachable island of the Indian Ocean, sometimes identified with Ceylon ; and in this connection allusion may be made to the fact (which seems to have escaped the notice of Dr Warren) that the late General Gordon latterly occupied his mind much with a hypothesis that the true site of the "Paradise" of Genesis is the Seychelles Islands, and that he even believed that he had discovered, in the *coco de mer*, the "forbidden fruit." General Gordon's conclusions are understood to have rested largely on the existing and pre-historic conditions of the bed of the Indian Ocean, which he considered pointed to the convergence on the Seychelles of the "four great rivers" now represented by areas of oceanic depression. How is it, by the way, that no ingenious speculator in the dim region of ancient cosmology and mythical geography, has not fixed upon Roraima, ascended the other day by Mr. Im Thurn, as the true site of the "Terrestrial Eden"? It fulfils better than most others the required conditions of the "Golden Summit of the World," and of the "quadrifurcate rivers." Columbus, while struggling on his third voyage with the great volume of fresh water from the

Oronoko, which rushes through the narrows of the Gulf of Paria, was "hot" on the long-sought-for site. He was convinced that the water must flow from the Mountain of the World, on which, according to the theologians whom he cites, is placed the Earthly Paradise, "whither no one can go but by God's permission;" and, he adds, "if the water of which I speak does not proceed from the Earthly Paradise, it seems to be a still greater wonder, for I do not believe that there is any river in the world so large and deep." The veracious Sir John de Mandeville, who gives his description on the authority of "wise men," as he repents that he did not visit the spot himself, supplies us with particulars regarding the primitive Eden, which, it must be admitted, agree singularly well on some points with the account of the mysterious mountain of Guiana. "It is so high that the flood of Noah might not come to it, that would have covered all the earth of the world all about and above and beneath, except Paradise. And this Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall, and men know not whereof it is, for the wall is covered all over with moss, as it seems; and it seems not that the wall is natural stone. And in the highest place of Paradise, secretly in the middle, is a well that casts forth four streams, which run by divers lands." Thus far old-world assertion and new-world speculation, on a point which does not seem, in spite of Dr. Warren's ingenious and eloquent plea for the North Pole as the "primitive centre of distribution of the race," to admit of scientific determination; while the fate of St. Brandan is a warning against rash scepticism on any point of geography. In conclusion, however, a reference may be permitted at this moment to the proposed identification of the Helmund with the Phrath of the Mosaic record, and to the imposing array of authority, to the effect that the "Cradle of the Human Race" is to be sought, not at the North Pole, nor at the sources of Euphrates, Nile, or Oronoko, nor in some unsubmerged fragment of "Lemuria" or "Atlantis," but in the neighbourhood of the "debatable land" of North-western Afghanistan, over which Russia and Great Britain have been on the point of quarrelling. J. G.

No. 6.—F. W. inquires, Where is Arkinholm, vaguely mentioned in Burton's *History of Scotland* and elsewhere as the spot where the Douglasses met in conflict? [Arkinholm was situated on the river Esk, in Annandale, opposite Wauchope Kirk (Tytler), and the town of Langholm now occupies the site (Armstrong's *Liddesdale*, vol. i. p. 157). It is curious to observe that while the name of the town has changed, Arkinholm remains in the district. Slater's *Directory* for Langholm contains such entries as Alexander Stevenson, Esq., J.P., of Arkenholm, Arkingholm Terrace, and Erkingholme Terrace.]

## GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

### EUROPE.

**Blantyre, Lanarkshire.**—No name combines more harmoniously the ideas of Scottish topography of world-wide research than that of Blantyre, the Clydesdale parish which was the birthplace of Dr. Livingstone, and the nameplace of that other Blantyre on the Shiré uplands, which is the fitting memorial of the Church of Scotland to the heroic zeal of the great traveller and missionary. The Rev. Stewart Wright, the minister of the parish, in his *Annals of Blantyre*, just published (Wilson and M'Cormick, Glasgow), rightly interprets Blantyre's most honourable distinction; for the frontispiece of his book is a view of the humble building where, "in a little room up a spiral stair, David Livingstone first saw the light;" and there is an interesting notice of his early days in "the sweet and pretty village" by the Clyde, and his later geologising rambles in a neighbourhood then