

length succeeded in getting a vessel, and it would require two months to prepare his outfit, which would be composed of baggage amounting to from fifty to one hundred tons. He intended to make a settlement at the mouth of one of the rivers, leave one or two white men there, and then go into the interior and explore. He would not promise too much to the Royal Geographical Society, for he might meet with impediments; but he sincerely hoped he should be able to reach a thousand miles, to stay there a time, and study the country, and then return. If life and health should be spared, he hoped to be able to write another account of his explorations. This time he should have more wisdom and more knowledge to apply to the task; still he was sure the book would be full of shortcomings, for which he knew the English people would forgive him. Although they did not agree on the gorilla question, he thanked Mr. Reade for the kind words he had spoken in his favour; and he also thanked the members of the Royal Geographical Society for the feelings they had always expressed towards him. He should work hard, and try to deserve their continued approbation.

The PRESIDENT stated that the next sitting would be on the 11th of May.

*Twelfth Meeting, Monday Evening, May 11th, 1863.*

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*J. A. Oldling, John Ritchie, and H. Bayley, Esqrs., were presented upon their Election.*

ELECTIONS.—*Rear-Admiral Horatio Thomas Austin, C.B.; Lieutenant J. Sale; Alexander Baring; James N. Dick; William James Farrer; Patrick Douglas Hadow; John Henry Mackenzie; William Simpson, and J. A. Wright, Esqrs., were elected Fellows.*

ACCESSIONS.—‘Notes on Ceylon and its Affairs during a period of thirty-eight years, ending in 1855,’ by James Steuart of Colpetty; ‘A Vacation Tour at the Antipodes, through Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, in 1861-62,’ by B. A. Heywood, Esq., M.A.; the ‘Anthropological Review’ for May, 1863; Map of British Columbia; Admiralty Charts and Ordnance Maps.

EXHIBITIONS.—Various curiosities from Australia were exhibited by Mr. Middleton, consisting of fishing-nets, necklaces, girdles, &c., of native manufacture, geological specimens, and sundry relics of Burke and Wills; also a lithographed view of a design for a National Memorial Obelisk to His late Royal Highness the Prince Consort, by George Peacock, F.R.G.S.

The PRESIDENT, in opening the business of the evening, said that there were no special papers to be read respecting one of the most adventurous and successful journeys that had ever been accomplished in Africa. He alluded to the expedition which the Society, aided by the Government, had sent out under Captains Speke and Grant, to proceed from Zanzibar into the interior of Africa, with the view to discover, if possible, the sources of the Nile. After very con-

siderable difficulties, that expedition had, when last heard of, arrived nearly at the position which Captain Speke reached in the previous expedition, under the command of Captain Burton. Instead of finding the country in a state of entire tranquillity, the people ploughing the land and occupied with agricultural pursuits, they found it in a state of great commotion, the different tribes quarrelling with each other, and invading each other's territories. The gallant officers were involved in considerable difficulties, and even the most sanguine of their friends at home began to despair of their success, for they had not then arrived at the great Lake Nyanza, which Captain Speke himself had discovered on his former expedition, and which he had named Victoria Nyanza. We now learned from a telegram, which had been promptly communicated to himself by Mr. Layard of the Foreign Office, that Captains Speke and Grant had arrived safely at Khartûm, on the Nile. He had every reason to believe, and the best African geographers he had consulted were of opinion, that these adventurous explorers had reached the White Nile, and had descended it from Lake Nyanza, and so have traced the sources of the Nile. We could not positively say that the source of the Nile had been discovered until we had fuller details; but he was inclined to believe that it had, because Captain Speke, in another telegram to the Foreign Office, sent word, “Inform Sir Roderick Murchison that all is well, that we are in latitude 14° 30' upon the Nile, and that the Nile is settled.” From these pregnant words he inferred that this great problem had at length been solved. The expedition was sent out by the Royal Geographical Society purposely to determine the sources of the Nile; and as this great Lake Nyanza (said by the Arabs to be 300 miles long) was a fresh-water lake, as its altitude had been proved to be nearly 4000 feet above the level of the sea, and as it trended from south to north, and waters flowed into it from the east and west, its exit must be towards the north; and hence the belief that the explorers had come down in a right line from south to north, and had really discovered the sources of the Nile. Another telegram had arrived, in which, as it appeared by the papers of the day, the discovery was announced in so many words. He sincerely hoped that they had set at rest this great question. In the time of the old Egyptian priests, in the time of the Pharaohs, in the time of the Greeks under Ptolemy, in the time of the Romans during all the imperial reigns of the Cæsars, it was always a great object to discover the sources of the Nile. And, previously to the present expedition, no one had ever succeeded, no one had ever traversed the interior of that country to which he was now directing attention. It was, therefore, one of the greatest geographical feats that had been accomplished in ancient or modern times. Cæsar himself is reported by Lucan to have said he would have given up that which was very dear to him, the civil war in which he was a great and successful conqueror, to have been the discoverer of the sources of the Nile. He thought we had reason to be proud that it was an Englishman and a Scotchman who had solved this great problem. He had another communication to make respecting the last telegram that had come, which contained a very important passage, “Mr. Baker has gone to the south-west.” It would be remembered that Mr. Baker was the gentleman who had gone from Khartûm to Gondokoro, to meet and assist this very expedition of Speke and Grant. By putting dates together, he had come to the conclusion that Baker had been of considerable assistance to them; and that, with the true spirit of enterprise which animated him, he had afterwards turned off to the west, possibly following the same line which had been taken by the party of Dutch ladies whom he had mentioned on former occasions as having already been as far as Gondokoro, and who were now exploring that great *terra incognita* to the west. People might naturally inquire if no news had been received of Petherick. He hoped, with such a skilful explorer as Mr. Baker, aided by these Dutch ladies, that we should soon have satisfactory intelligence on the subject, for he had not himself yet given up hope that Petherick might still be alive. The accounts of his

death were not clear and definite: and as it was known that Mr. Petherick was a man of great endurance, he might have gone through great difficulties; at all events, whatever might be the result, we should soon have our anxieties set at rest.

Mr. GALTON doubted whether the source of the Nile would have been found in the Lake Nyanza. The reported size of that river above Gondokoro appeared to him too small to be commensurate with so great a source.

The PRESIDENT stated that in the year 1848, before the Lake Nyanza was discovered, and before the altitude of the great range of the Snowy Mountains was ascertained, Dr. Beke called attention to the possibility of discovering the sources of the Nile by another route, to come out at Sennaar, on the Blue Nile, and also to the possibility of there being a ridge at the northern end of the lake Victoria Nyanza, which would throw off the waters in the direction to which Mr. Galton had alluded.

Dr. BEKE said his idea was first conceived in 1846, that the sources of the Nile should be sought by entering from the coast in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar, and penetrating into the interior—in short, by taking very nearly the route which Captains Speke and Grant had followed. He himself had set on foot an expedition in 1848, which reached Zanzibar, but went no further. He believed that Claudius Ptolemy, the geographer of the second century, knew nearly as much of the sources of the Nile as we were likely to know in a few days. That writer described the snowy Mountains of the Moon as being to the west of the “Barbarian Gulf,” near Zanzibar, round which dwelt the Cannibal Negroes, and said that beyond that were the two lakes of the Nile, which received the melted snows from the Mountains of the Moon. Dr. Beke further stated that he had founded his views upon this text of Ptolemy, and substantially they were now confirmed. His opinion was that the mountain-range of Eastern Africa continued to the south of Nyanza; that Captain Speke crossed the ridge in about 35° E. longitude; that the water-parting is to the south of the lake, and not to the north; and that consequently Nyanza drains into the Nile, whether by the river which passes by Gondokoro, or by any other stream, it is impossible to say, till we receive fuller particulars from the travellers. We did not know the longitude of the river at Gondokoro, but we knew that its altitude there is not more than 1700 feet, and that the lake, which is at a very short distance from it, is nearly 4,000 feet. A few days would determine whether his views were right or wrong.

The PRESIDENT, before calling upon Dr. Shaw to read the following communications respecting the most recent journeys in Australia, stated that two of the distinguished explorers of that great continent were then in the room—Mr. Landsborough and Mr. Middleton. Mr. Landsborough, who, as Sir Henry Barkly said, had done more to utilise the colony than any explorer who ever went out, having traversed Australia from north to south, after a previous exploration to the south-west from the Gulf of Carpentaria, had brought before us absolutely the real condition of the “Plains of Promise,” and the capability of the land for settlement by Europeans, and for the production of sheep and wool. Mr. Middleton was second in command of the M’Kinlay expedition from South Australia.

The Papers read were—

1. *Extracts of a Despatch from His Excellency Sir George Bowen to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, in reference to the Colony of Queensland, dated Brisbane, 8th January, 1863.*

“I HAVE the honour herewith to transmit three copies of the Queensland Book Almanack for 1863. The historical and topogra-