head most of poor Joseph Thomson's papers; but I was unable to obtain any information, as the inhabitants, though well remembering Thomson, had never heard of the robbery. On July 11 I struck the Niger and crossed to Gomba, on the right bank, the river being about half a mile wide at this point. Gomba belongs to the Gandu division of the Sokoto empire, the Fulahs having succeeded at this place in forcing their way across the Niger, and thus forming an enclave in the kingdom of Borgu, which with this exception possesses the whole right bank of the Niger from the frontier of Ilorin up to and beyond Illo. The population of Gomba is about 3000, two-thirds of whom are pagans.

On July 13 I sent off most of my carriers and the Sultan of Sokoto's people overland to Leaba, in Borgu, and thence to Lokoja to await my return, and, Mr. Teed arriving in the afternoon, we started up-river in canoes, reaching Gere, the waterside town of Illo, on July 18. Both Gere and Illo are Borgu towns, the chief of Illo being the half-brother of the king of Boussa, the paramount ruler of Borgu; but this chief died on July 19, and it was not then known who would succeed him. On July 26 we left Illo and Gere by canoe for Boussa. I will refer here only to our visit to Yelo, the capital of Yauri, with about 5000 inhabitants. It was the Yauri people who pursued Mungo Park down to Boussa, and caused his death. After passing through numerous rapids, we reached Boussa on August 5. The route between Boussa and the mouth of the Niger was described in a paper read to the Society last year by Captain Lugard, so at this point I will conclude these brief notes. I fear I have conveyed a very inadequate idea of the natural wealth of the region which I traversed, and the remarkable industry of its inhabitants under most adverse conditions. I do not hesitate to say that the only things needed to convert the Central Sudan into another India are peace and freedom.

Before the reading of the papers, the President said: We have this evening the pleasure of welcoming the return from the Niger country of our Vice-President, Sir George Goldie, governor of the Royal Niger Company. I am glad to say that he looks as well, if not better, than he did when he left England. I also have great pleasure in introducing to you the reader of the paper, Mr. Robinson. He went out for the Hausa Association, and reached Kano, the centre of trade in that densely populated Central African region. He has also brought back a mass of native manuscripts, and the material for a grammar and enlarged dictionary. He will read a very interesting account of his journey this evening; and we shall also have another paper by Mr. Wallace, who is still out in the Niger country, on the central portion of Hausaland, a little further to the north. I will now request Mr. Robinson to read his paper.

After the reading of Mr. Robinson's paper, Major Darwin, in introducing Mr. Wallace's paper, said: Mr. Wallace went to the country in 1878, and therefore knows its condition intimately. He is the agent-general of the Niger Company, and as the Niger Company is the representative of British authority over the whole region, therefore it is very clear that Mr. Wallace, the chief
executive authority of the Niger company, has a most important position. There are some chartered companies which have the habit of always bringing their affairs before the public; there are others which seem to keep them in the background; but we must not judge of the relative importance of the regions by the amount we hear about them. Some day the people of this country will wake up to the enormous importance of these Niger regions.

After the reading of Mr. Wallace's paper, the President said: I am sure the meeting will like to hear any remarks which Sir George Goldie will like to make on the paper just read.

Sir George Goldie: After the two interesting papers we have heard, which naturally occupied a rather longer time than most single papers, I shall not detain you more than a few moments. I have taken a particular interest in the papers to-night, from the fact that they emanate from two travellers who view things from distinct points of view. One of them, Mr. Robinson, who was an experienced traveller before he went to the Central Sudan, is a scholar and student; the other, Mr. Wallace, has lived for eighteen years, more or less, in the Niger region, and has been occupied almost entirely with learning, and afterwards carrying into effect, administrative duties there. Thus we have the views of two men on the same region from different points of the compass. I look upon papers such as we have heard to-night as chiefly valuable because they serve to dispel a common illusion about Africa. Some two years ago, a very eminent diplomatist, taking advantage of an after-dinner speech to address two European nations through the press, spoke of the swamps and jungles of tropical Africa as if that vast region, which is perhaps twice as large as Europe, consisted, at any rate mainly, of dense forests peopled by pigmies, or mangrove swamps inhabited by fierce cannibals. Of course, it was a diplomatic speech for a diplomatic purpose, but it must have been uttered with a full and well-justified confidence in the ignorance of the general public. Now we learn from these papers that the Hausa regions are free of swamp and jungles. We learn that they are, in the first place, very fertile; we learn next that they have highly organized governments, although exceedingly bad ones, which I myself would place on a level with that of our country in the time of King Stephen, and that they possess dense populations, composed of a highly industrious race. This is the special point I wish to emphasize to-night. I would point out that there are probably very few of us—I can answer for myself—who, if we had to work under the conditions in which the natives of these ill-governed countries have to work, if we were uncertain as to what would become of the fruit of our labours, if the earning of wealth would call down upon us attacks which would cost us not only property, but liberty, would not become idlers, whereas these extraordinary people appear content to work for others, and not for themselves. This is worth emphasizing, partly because the ultimate value of tropical Africa must depend on the industry of its native inhabitants, especially where it cannot be permanently settled by Europeans, and partly because it has been the fashion in the press to speak of the insuperable indolence of the African (as if all Africans were alike) as the obstacle which cannot be overcome in developing the continent. I will make only one remark with regard to three points to which Mr. Robinson referred, matters which seem very wide apart, but which really hang together. He referred to the question of currency, to the question of transit, and to the question of slave-raiding. All three are very important points, seemingly unconnected with each other; yet none of them can be settled until European power is firmly established in that country. Those who have had to deal with these regions have long realized that there are only two practicable policies to follow. The one is the summary process which Mr. Robinson, with the generous
impulse of the humane man, intolerant of the horrible indifference to human suffering and of the cruelty he has seen, recommends to us, and which I hope he can recommend sufficiently strongly to the people of this country to induce them to obtain a vote for the necessary millions to carry out that policy; and the other is the policy which has already been followed, the policy of a gradual advance, cutting our coat according to our cloth, making an advance where we can, driving a nail where it will go, pushing ahead where we see a weak place, and drawing back where we find insuperable obstacles. That is the policy, the representative of which in Africa is now Mr. Wallace, and I venture to say, a more capable and more experienced representative could not be found.

The President: Hausaland, of which we have heard such a very interesting account this evening, is a region which has a peculiar interest for this Society. The attention of geographers had been very specially turned to the discoveries of Clapperton, who, I think, died in Sokoto in 1827, and the exploration of Hausaland in the years immediately preceding our foundation, and we may also remember that the first time our royal award was given, it was presented to Richard Lander, the discoverer of the mouth of the Niger, so that when we turn our attention to Hausaland, we turn it to an old love. I remember one of the very first papers I heard read at a meeting of this Society was by Dr. Baikie, R.N., one of the most daring explorers of Hausaland in former years, an abstract of whose papers Sir John Kirk, after carefully examining them, gave us some years afterwards. I very much regret that Sir John Kirk is unable to be present this evening. We must all rejoice, I think, that the continuation of work which was done so well by Dr. Baikie and his contemporaries has now fallen into such excellent hands, and we must congratulate Sir George Goldie on the admirable way in which he and Mr. Wallace, and his other coadjutors, have been carrying forward the labours of their predecessors, and doing most important service to their country. This Society has already expressed its sympathy for the objects of the Hausa Association, for which objects Mr. Robinson has been working for three years. I am confident, and I think we may assure Sir George Goldie and Mr. Robinson, that the papers we have heard this evening will certainly increase that sympathy amongst the Fellows of this Society. It now only remains for me to ask you to pass a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Robinson and to Mr. Wallace for the valuable papers we have heard to-night, and to Sir George Goldie for his interesting remarks upon them.

EXPEDITION THROUGH SOMALILAND TO LAKE RUDOLF.*

By Dr. A. DONALDSON SMITH.

I accepted an invitation of the Amara chief to spend a night in his village, as I wished to study native customs. I and my ten boys occupied the chief's house. It was a very long wooden building, with a peaked roof covered with grass reaching to the ground. You had to stoop as you entered the one opening, and push aside the grass. Once inside you seemed to be in absolute darkness, but gradually your eyes became accustomed to this, and you could make out a double row of stalls on each side of a long chamber, and a small fire burning at the