

## SOUDAN OR NIGRITIA.

54. The *Arabic* name *Soudan*, which the *Europeans* render by the synonymous one of *Nigritia* or *Negroland*, signifies properly all the country inhabited by the Negroes, but it is chiefly restricted both by the *Moors* and *Europeans* to that part of it situated along the banks of the *River Nigir*, with which the nations of *Barbary* maintain a commercial intercourse. It is thus bounded on the W. by *Senegambia*, on the N. by the Great Desert of *Sahara*, on the E. by *Nubia*, and on the S. by the *Kong Mountains* and the S. watershed of the *Tchadda*; its superficial contents may be taken at 100,000 square miles; the number of its inhabitants cannot be estimated. The great river *Nigir*, *Joliba*, or *Quorra*, drains the western portion of *Soudan*, as its affluent the *Tchadda* does the Eastern; it rises in the angle formed by the junction of the *Kong Mountains* with those of the coast of *Senegambia*: its upper course is through a hilly country, and is separated from its middle course by rapids; it frequently spreads and forms lakes, the largest of which is *Lake Debo*, or bifurcating forms large islands; its course is N. E. to *Kabra*, then S. E. to the junction of the *Tchadda*, then S. to the sea; its length may be 2,000 miles; its principal affluents

are the *Sahkatoo* and *Tchadda*, both from the left; the former drains the state of *Houssa*, the capital of which, situated on the river, bears the same name. The *Tchadda* is equal in volume to the *Niger*, and navigable for a great part of its course, which, so far as is known, is through a beautiful, fertile, and not unhealthy country. *Lake Tchad* occupies the lowest part of the central basin of *Africa*; its elevation above the sea exceeds 1,000 feet; it may be 200 miles long and 150 broad, but its depth is inconsiderable; it is surrounded by fertile pasture lands, and receives the waters of several streams, of which the *Shary* and *Jean* are most important; the latter is of considerable size, and enters the lake by several mouths. The whole country is still very imperfectly known: it has been chiefly explored by enterprising and indefatigable travellers from amongst our own countrymen, but by far the greater part of them have fallen victims to their zeal for the promotion of knowledge. *Soudan* is divided into a number of petty kingdoms, governed by sovereigns whose despotism is proportionate to the ignorance of their savage subjects: these kingdoms are independent of each other; but, as is the case with all other negro states, they are constantly at war with one another, being ambitious of an increased territory, and avariciously anxious for the profits which they derive from the sale of all their captives as slaves. About one-half of the inhabitants profess a very corrupted form of *Mahometanism*, and the others are pagans.

55. The principal kingdoms or states into which *Soudan* is divided, may be seen in the following table:

## Western States.

*Tombuctoo.*  
*Borgoo.*  
*Yariba.*  
*Fundah.*  
*Sackatoo.*  
*Kashna.*  
*Houssa.*  
*Adamowa.*

## Eastern States.

*Mandara.*  
*Bornou.*  
*Kanem.*  
*Begharmi.*  
*Saley, Waday, or Bergoo.*  
*Fur.*  
*Kordofan.*

56. *Tombuctoo*, or *Timbuctoo*, as it is also called, the great commercial emporium of the interior of *Africa*, is situated near the North Western extremity of *Soudan*, about 12 miles from the Northern bank of the *Niger*, its port upon which is called *Kabra*. It is a town of ancient foundation, having been built about the commencement of the 13th century, but it is neither so large nor so populous as it has till very lately been supposed, for its circuit is said not to exceed three miles, and the number of its inhabitants to be under 15,000. The population is chiefly composed of negroes, for the *Moors* who actually reside there are few: the houses are described as being generally mud-huts, crowded together in the midst of a barren and sandy desert. *Tombuctoo* owes all its importance to its central situation, which renders it the grand point of union betwixt the *Moors* in the Northern part of the continent, the negroes of *Senegambia* on the West, those of *Soudan* on the East, and of *Guinea* on the South; from all these countries

caravans repair to it, and for the time very much add to the population and life of the town, which on their departure again relapses into its native dullness. *Boussa* is the principal town of *Borgoo*; it is situated on an island in the middle course of the *Niger*, and has a population exceeding 10,000 persons. *New Birnie*, the capital of the kingdom of *Bornou*, is situated to the S. W. of *L. Tchad*, and contains about 10,000 inhabitants; it is a town of some importance, from its sovereign being one of the most powerful monarchs in the whole country, having at different times extended his conquests over all the surrounding states as far as *Dar-Fur*. *Kanem* lies to the N. of *L. Tchad*, its capital is *Mao*; *Begharmi* is on the opposite shores of the lake, and its chief town is also called *Begharmi*, or sometimes *Mesna*. *Dar Saley* or *Waday* is one of the most powerful kingdoms in all *Soudan*, and has rendered the neighbouring state of *Kordofan* tributary to it: its chief town is *Cobbe*, which is one of the principal channels of communication between the people of *Nigritia* and the *Abyssinians*, *Nubians*, and *Egyptians*.