laid the churches in ruins and, supported by the prince of Conde, count of Soissons, kept possession of the town for six months. During the League Soissons eagerly joined the Catholic party. Mayenne made the town his principal residence, and he died there in 1611. A European congress was held there in 1728. In 1814 Soissons was captured and recaptured by the allies and the French. In 1815, after Waterloo, it was a rallying point for the vanquished, and it was not occupied by the Russians till the 14th of August. In 1870 it capitulated to the Germans after a bombardment of three days.

SOKOTO, an important Fulah kingdom or empire in Central Soudan, comprising what are frequently called the Haussa states. Its boundaries (see vol. i. pl. II.) are irregu­larly marked off by the plateau lands of Air or Asben on the north, the kindred Fulah state of Gandu on the west, while the river Binué practically forms its southern limit as far as the meridian of 10° E.; beyond this it runs south into the Congo basin. On the east lies the kingdom of Bornu. From north-west to south-east Sokoto has a length little short of 900 English miles and its average breadth is about 280. The whole area has been roughly computed to be equal to that of Spain (about 195,000 square miles), and to have a population of from ten to twelve millions. The country may be described as a great undulating plain, rarely exceeding 1000 feet in height, with the exception of the province of Bauchi in the centre, which runs into a highland region with heights of 3000 feet, and the still more imposing masses of Adamawa in the south, which are said to attain an altitude of 10,000 feet in Mount Alantika. In other respects Sokoto presents more varied features, chiefly determined by the amount of rainfall, though the varying fertility of the soil is a not unimport­ant factor. In the southern parts, where there are almost perpetual rains,. large streams and rivers are numerous, —the feeders of the Binué, the great eastern (left-hand) tributary of the Niger. Here grow the virgin forests with giant growths and exuberant foliage, with creepers, with bananas and plantains, palm-oil trees and yams. In the more temperate—because more elevated—districts of the middle area, with a smaller rainfall, the vegetation is less luxuriant, and such fruits as the date, lime, and pome­granate are cultivated. In the northern parts the climate is still more arid, and the country is burned up for the greater part of the year. This is the region of acacias and mimosas, of baobabs, of the branching dúm palm and the curiously bulged deléb. Here are no forests nor rank grass, while the exigencies of a dense population have caused the clearing away of the bush except on the most barren spots, where it supplies the necessary fuel for domestic purposes. In this northern district there are no streams except in the wet season, and the wants of the people are supplied by fountains in the more favoured places, and by wells—frequently very deep—in those not so advantageously situated. Lying within the tropics, Sokoto is subject to excessive heat,—damp and steamy in the south, dry and furnace-like in the north, where it suffers from the hot winds from the Sahara. In Adamawa the rainy season—or, to be more correct, the season of excessive rains—commences in April and lasts till October or later, while in Gober in the north the rains commence in June and seldom last more than three months, during which the country becomes transformed from a repellent desert into a well-cultivated nursery garden.

For Central Africa Sokoto may be described as fairly healthy, though, as may be expected from a conjunction of excessive heat with excessive rain, fevers are not uncommon in the southern parts, while ophthalmia is prevalent in the north, especially among the poorer classes, who are compelled to expose themselves to the blind­ing dust from the deserts and the excessive glare of the sun reflected from the burning sands.

The natural productions of Sokoto are such as are more or less common throughout the whole of the Soudan *(q.v.).* Among cereals rice and wheat are cultivated in many parts, though the staple productions are Kaffre corn, millet, and maize. Sweet potatoes,

ground nuts, yams, onions, and other vegetables are largely grown. Of fruits dates, pomegranates, citrons, and bananas abound in more restricted areas. The Shea butter tree supplies an excellent oil for lamps, and also for cooking, though it is only used by the poorer classes. The palm-oil tree is only found in the damp basin of the Binué. The most important vegetable products are cotton and indigo, which are universally grown. The cotton is manufactured into cloth, being used by the native population as well as largely exported to neighbouring countries. In some parts a species of silk found in the forests is largely used, and the people of Yakoba in Bauchi are said to rear the silkworm. Of mineral products there seem to be few, though it is known that both silver and lead occur in the Binué area. Iron is extensively diffused and of excellent quality.

The inhabitants of this extensive region, held together by a conquering race and not by any natural tie into one common kingdom, are of diverse tribes and affinities. They, however, may be roughly divided into three groups. (1) First come the pure Negro races of Adamawa, of which the chief tribe is the Batta. (2) The Haussa form the mass of the population except in Adamawa. They are pre-eminent among Negroes for their physical appearance and intellectual abilities. They are wonderfully skilled in various arts and industries and noted for their commercial genius and enterprise. Mohammedanism is their religion, and indeed in all respects they are well advanced on the road to civilization. They are very fond of voluminous clothes. (3) The Fulahs are a Hamitic race, who from being simple herdsmen in the beginning of the 19th century have become the rulerδ and masters over a hundred alien races be­tween the Atlantic and Lake Tchad. They have not the commercial or industrial skill of the Haussa, but in other respects have reached a higher level. They are of slender build and are distinguished by their light coppery colour. The inhabitants of Sokoto live mostly in large towns, many of which contain from 10,000 to 20,000 in­habitants. These towns are all protected by strong mud walls and outer dry moats. Their interior is divided into a series of com­pounds, each entered through a flat-roofed audience chamber. Inside are the beehive-shaped huts of the household. The gate­ways are also strongly fortified. The ruler over Sokoto is a Fulah sultan, whose power is absolute, though tempered by a species of feudal system. The governors of some of the larger provinces, though owning allegiance to the sovereign, are mostly hereditary, and beyond sending a yearly tribute are practically independent. The tie indeed is more religious than anything else. The great weakness of the empire is its want of coherence and the absence of a strong central Government. Yet, though always appearing to be on the point of falling to pieces, it contrives to keep together. The condition in which Barth found it in 1855 was practically the same as when the present writer visited it in 1885.

The chief provinces of Sokoto are Zamphoro, Zaria, Katsena, Bauchi, Kano, and Adamawa. The most important towns are— Sokoto, the acknowledged capital of the empire, famed chiefly for its leather-work and straw hats (it divides with Wurnu the dis­tinction of being the residence of the sultan ; Clapperton died here in 1837); Wurnu, about 18 miles farther east, the present (1887) headquarters of the court ; Kano, the great commercial emporium of Central Soudan ; and Yakoba, chiefly noted for its large size,— said to contain 150,000 inhabitants.

The history of Sokoto may be said to have commenced with the 19th century. Previous to that date little is known further than that the country was divided among a number of small chiefs, a prey to the powerful kings of Bornu, Kebbi, and Songhwai (Songhai). In 1802 the Fulahs, then little regarded and semi-serfs in position, were scattered all over the country, apparently without any national tie to unite them to common action. At last, however, an imam—one Othman dan Fodio—appeared, who with the watchword of Islam gave a new life to his tribesmen and in an incredibly short time transformed them from peaceable nomads into soldiers of the Crescent, and after a few initial reverses swept like a whirlwind over an enormous area, establishing himself as ruler and Mohammedanism as the religion of the whole of Central Soudan. At his death the parts now known as Sokoto fell to the share of his son Bello, and in the family of Othman the reins of government have since remained, though the descent is not as a rule from father to son, but either to a brother or a brother’s son. The latest phase in the history is the proclaiming of a protector­ate over a part of Sokoto on the Binué by the British Govern­ment, and the handing over of the administration of the Niger region to the Royal Niger Company. To this company the sultan has conceded all his rights on the Binué and a monopoly of trade throughout his dominions, thus making them practically masters of all foreign intercourse.

The most important sources of information regarding Sokoto are—Clapper- ton’s *Journeys* in the early part of the 19th century ; Barth’s *Travels in Central Africa* between 1849 and 1855—a perfect mine of information ; and Rohlfs’s *Reise durch Nordafrika vom Mittelmeer nach dem Tschad-See* in 1866-67. Among later and minor travellers have been Flegel, who visited Sokoto in 1880, and Thomson, who conducted a commercial and political mission to the court of the sultan in 1885. (J. TH.)