

594 B.C. he was summoned under the constitutional title of "archon" to undertake the work of sweeping political reforms, which, in consequence of bitter party strifes and the poverty and indebtedness of the small farmers or proprietors of Attica, were sorely needed. The Athenian like the Roman debtor had often sunk, under the legalized oppression of his creditor, into an actual slave, and had from time to time been sold and exported. Many poor creatures had fled away from home, and were supporting themselves by the labour of their hands in foreign countries. Many men who still clung to their little properties could, with all their pinching, barely keep their heads above water. The governing classes themselves felt that a crisis was at hand, and they appealed to Solon and made him practically dictator. Had he chosen to work on the popular discontent, he might have easily crushed the aristocracy and become a despot, or, as the Greeks called it, a tyrant, as many had done in other states of Greece by coming forward as champions of the people against the great ruling families. Solon obeyed a nobler impulse and aimed at saving his country without too violent a revolution. His first step was to give immediate relief to the poor debtor, to the wretchedly impoverished small farmer or proprietor, and to interpose between him and his creditor and landlord. On very many of the little properties of Attica were to be seen stone pillars with the name of the mortgagee and the amount of the mortgage inscribed on them. By a relief law, "a shaking-off of burdens" (*σεισάχθεια*), he annulled all mortgages, justifying no doubt so extreme a measure by the harshness of the contracts imposed by mortgagees on needy tenants and proprietors and by the urgent necessity of prompt release for the multitude of such small debtors. Thus the "mortgage pillars" were swept away and the land was once more free. Such a setting aside of the rights of property, expedient as it may have been under circumstances of acute public distress, must have inflicted a heavy loss on the wealthier class, and the landlord and the mortgagee would also have a fair claim for relief. This, it appears, Solon accomplished by a device which has been variously explained, a depreciation of the currency which relieved to a considerable extent—27 per cent., according to Grote's<sup>1</sup> calculation—the wealthier debtors of the landlord and mortgagee class. Grote here remarks that, had Solon cancelled all debts and contracts, there would have been no need to interfere with the currency and lower the standard of money. His relief law could not have been so sweeping and revolutionary as it has sometimes been represented. There was no redistribution or confiscation of the land, no universal remission of debts. For the great majority of the people indeed there was substantial relief. The land was free from incumbrance, and the small cultivator had a fresh start in life; there was no imprisonment or slavery for the debtor; and it would seem that debtors who had sought refuge abroad were purchased back and restored to their homes. Such on the whole appears to have been the character of Solon's first great reform, though some of the details remain obscure. The reconstruction of the political system on the principle that every citizen was to have a share in the government was Solon's next work. A few noble families, Eupatrids, as they were called, had hitherto had all the power in their own hands. Solon made property the measure of political power, and confined the higher offices of state to the wealthiest citizens; but election to these offices was to be made by the whole body of the people, the tenure of office was limited as to time, and an account had to be rendered publicly as to its exercise. The citizens were distributed into four classes

<sup>1</sup> *History of Greece*, ch. xi.

according to a graduated scale of property, the first class being alone eligible to the archonship or highest office and to military and naval commands. The actual administration of public affairs was thus restricted to the wealthy few. The second class were the knights or horsemen—the men who could keep a war-horse for the service of the state; these were assessed at three-fifths of the amount of the first class. The third class answered to our yeomen, and had to serve as heavy-armed infantry. These three classes were subject to direct taxation in the form of a graduated income tax, which was, however, simply an extraordinary tax, levied only in special emergencies at varying amounts per cent. on a citizen's rateable property, as set down in a public schedule. The fourth and lowest and most numerous class, which supplied light troops and sailors for the fleet, was exempt from all direct taxation, but paid indirect taxes; it would be made up of small farmers, tradesmen, and artisans, and consist in fact of quite the poorest and humblest class of citizens. Its members could not hold any office; but they had a large amount of political power through their votes in the popular assembly which elected the magistrates and called them to account, and through the very great judicial powers with which they were intrusted, and in virtue of which the Athenian juror practically decided questions both of fact and of law. Solon's constitution thus gave the people ample means of protecting themselves from misgovernment and oppression, every magistrate being directly responsible to them. Not that Solon himself contemplated anything like pure democracy; there is every reason to believe he shrank from it; but pure democracy was pretty sure to follow as soon as the people distinctly realized their power. Solon's council of 400, taken exclusively from the first three classes, must have been meant to furnish the popular assembly with political guidance, and this it did by preparing and introducing measures for discussion and superintending its meetings and exercising some direction over its proceedings. It is impossible for us to define its peculiar functions precisely. It was, however, ultimately under the control of the popular assembly, by which probably it was annually elected, and to which it had annually to render an account. We are not to suppose that either the council or the popular assembly originated with Solon. What he really did was to put them on a new footing, and to the latter, which previously in all probability had hardly any weight or influence, he gave greatly enlarged powers. The archons and magistrates and the council itself were elected by the popular assembly, and were responsible to it for good behaviour during their term of office. In this assembly met the citizens of all four classes, and consequently the great majority of its members would be poor men and almost peasants. The voting was by show of hands; every voter was allowed to speak; and in the voting there was no distinction of classes, all being on a perfectly equal footing. Although theoretically they could not originate any measure, but had to accept for discussion what had been prepared for them by the council, they had an absolute power of veto; and, as the election of the council was in their hands, it must have been easy for them to get that body to bring forward any proposal which they might wish to discuss. Thus it may be truly said that Solon laid the foundation of the future democracy. And through the *Helixia*, as it was called,—a body of 6000 citizens annually elected by lot to act as jurors for the trial specially of political offences,—the people acquired a complete control over public affairs. There was but one proviso: the Athenian juror must be upwards of thirty years of age. In the Athenian courts which were formed out of these 6000 citizens the functions of judge and jury

were united in one and the same person, and political questions were continually decided when, as often happened, a citizen was put on his trial for some alleged illegal or unconstitutional proposal. By such means popular rights and privileges were effectually protected, and the democratic character of the constitution enlarged and confirmed, as we see in the subsequent history of Athens. Solon, indeed, retained (he did not create) the famous senate of the Areopagus, and aimed at making it respected and capable of exercising a general superintendence over the morals and social life of the citizens. It was to be an aristocratic body, consisting only of archons who had acquitted themselves well and honourably during their year of office. It seems that he did not attempt to prescribe to it any special or particular duties, but that he rather trusted to its making its influence felt from the fact that it was, as every one knew, composed of men of acknowledged merit and ability. Consequently, as Thirlwall observes (*Hist. of Gr.*, ch. xi.), "it could only exercise its powers with advantage as long as it retained the confidence of its fellow-citizens; when that was lost it became time that its legal authority should cease." Solon evidently felt that, for a time at least, there must be checks on popular government. Had it been hinted to him that under his constitution power must finally drift down to the lowest social stratum, he would perhaps have replied that he had endeavoured to supply the entire people with a political training which should by degrees qualify them for absolute self-government.

Solon encouraged commerce and manufacturing industry, and drew a number of settlers from foreign parts to Athens, on condition of their paying an annual tax and putting themselves under the protection of a citizen who was to be their legal representative—their "patronus," according to Roman phrase. These settlers (*μετοίκαι*, "metics") had none of the political privileges of the Athenian citizen, and they could not acquire landed property. Many of them, however, flourished and grew rich, and had every reason to be satisfied with their position, which, in a kindly and tolerant community like that of Athens, was continually improving. Solon, too, like all the legislators of antiquity, endeavoured to regulate every department of life, compelling the attendance of the youths from sixteen to eighteen at the public gymnastic schools, and requiring them to serve the next two years on garrison duty. Restraints were put upon women as to their appearance in public, and even as to their mourning at funerals. Solon's punishments were for the most part rather lenient, and indicated a humane and generous temper. It is of course not to be supposed that all the details of his legislation were maintained, but they undoubtedly left their mark on the Athenian character.

Having done his work, Solon left Athens and travelled for ten years in Egypt, Cyprus, and Asia, gathering fresh stores of knowledge for himself and giving counsel to others. One would like to believe the beautiful story Herodotus tells of his interview with Cræsus, king of Lydia, whom he warned with the memorable saying that "we must not pronounce any man happy till we have seen his end." Unfortunately, Cræsus did not begin to reign till several years after Solon's travels, and with Grote we must be content to take the story as merely an "illustrative fiction." On his return to Athens in his old age he found the old feuds once more raging, and Pisistratus, his kinsman, and his friend in past days, intriguing for power. The two men had, it seems, a sincere respect for one another, but Solon protested against the complete surrender of the government to Pisistratus, the danger of which he publicly pointed out, though without effect. The crisis ended in the rule, in many respects an enlightened and

beneficent rule, of Pisistratus and his sons, of which Solon lived only to see the first beginning. He died, soon after having made his honourable protest, at the age of eighty, leaving behind him the good effects of a work which only a man of rare intelligence and wide sympathies could have accomplished. He was something of a poet, and several fragments of his poems, written generally with a practical purpose, have come down to us, and throw light on his political aims and sentiments.

Grote and Thirlwall in their histories of Greece give a full account of Solon's legislation. Plutarch's life of Solon, not a very critical performance, is our chief original authority. (W. J. B.)

SOLOTHURN. See SOLEURE.

SOMALI, SOMAL, a Hamitic people of east Central Africa, mainly confined to the eastern "horn" of the continent, which from them takes the name of Somali Land, probably the Punt of the Egyptian records. Here they are conterminous towards the north-west with the kindred Afars (Dankali), and elsewhere with the more closely related Gallas, from whom they are separated on the south-west by the river Juba. Tajurra Bay, with the lower course of the Hawash, is usually given as the north-west frontier; but, according to the recent explorations of Abargues de Sostén in eastern Abyssinia, there appears to be here an overlapping of the three peoples, the Isa Somali encroaching on the Afar domain north of Tajurra Bay nearly to the parallel of Asab Bay (13° N.), while the Dawari Gallas penetrate between this Somali tribe and the lower Hawash eastwards to the coast at Obok (12° N.). A line drawn from the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb through the Harrar district and the headwaters of the Haines river (Webbe-Shebeyli or "Leopard river") southwards to the equator at the mouth of the Juba will roughly define the landward frontier of the Somali territory, which is elsewhere sea-girt,—by the Gulf of Aden on the north, by the Indian Ocean from Cape Guardafui to the equator.

Our first contact with the Somali people may be said to date from the English occupation of Aden in 1839. But, notwithstanding the early visits of Cruttenden, Ch. H. Johnston, Captain Burton, and one or two others, very little was known about them before the seizure of Berberah by the Egyptians in 1874. This event led to the establishment of permanent relations with the coast tribes, and was followed by several excursions into the interior, of which the most fruitful in results have been those of Sacconi, Revoil, F. L. James, Paulitschke, Von Hardegger, and Josef Menge, the last three bringing our information down to the year 1885. From the reports of these observers the true relations of the Somali have been gradually determined, and we now know that they form a distinct branch of the eastern ("Ethiopic") Hamitic stock, of which the other chief members are the neighbouring Gallas and Afars, the Abyssinian Agau, and the Bejas (Bishari) of the steppe lands between the Nubian Nile and the Red Sea. Their close affinities both in physical type and in speech with the surrounding Gallas are obvious, and like them they are described as a fine race,<sup>1</sup> tall, active, and robust, with fairly regular features, but not free from an infusion of Negro blood, as shown both in their dark, often almost black complexion, and still more in their kinky and even woolly hair, sometimes short, sometimes long enough to be plaited in tresses hanging down to the shoulders.<sup>2</sup> Like

<sup>1</sup> Captain Wharton, who has been recently surveying the Somali seaboard, describes the coast tribes near the equator as "the handsomest race of men and women he had ever seen," black in colour, but with magnificent physique (*Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, Oct., 1885). Captain F. M. Hunter also describes them as a tall, fine-looking people, with oval face, high rounded forehead, full lips, strong regular teeth, bright restless eye, but lower limbs seldom well developed (*A Grammar of the Somali Language*, Bombay, 1880).

<sup>2</sup> The occasional presence of "steatopygia" (Topinard) shows that all these features are undoubtedly due to Negro intermixture.

the Gallas also they are still in the tribal state, broken up into an endless number of clans and septs, variously grouped by different writers. According to Captain Guillaum<sup>1</sup> there are three main divisions—the Aji on the north and north-east coast, the Hawiya on the south-east coast, and the Rahhanwin in the interior. But these are reduced by James to two, Isak and Darode (apparently the Edur and Darrud of older observers), with several main branches as under.—

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| Isak   | { | Habr Gerhaji, south from Berberah, beyond the coast range. |
|        |   | Habr Tjaleh, east from Berberah, north of the coast range. |
| Darode | { | Habr Awál, Berberah district.                              |
|        |   | Mejertain, east coast from Guardafui to 4 north.           |
|        |   | Dolbohanti, Nugal River.                                   |
|        |   | Warsangueli, north coast, west from Guardafui.             |
|        |   | Marehan, between the Mejertain and Ogadain.                |
|        |   | Ogadain, Webbe basin, and widespread in interior.          |

To these, however, must be added the powerful Gadabirsi west from Berberah and the Isa (Issa) of the Hawash basin, besides the three low-caste tribes dispersed amongst the others,—Tomal (ironworkers), Ebir (dealers in charms), and Midgan (ostrich breeders).

The Somáli, who are mainly Mohammedans of a somewhat fanatical type, are a fierce lawless people, impatient of control, and yielding a reluctant obedience even to their own rulers. Hence the tribal chiefs enjoy little more than a nominal authority, although some of the more powerful amongst them affect the title of sultan. At present the great Habr Gerhaji nation appears to be split into two sections, each under a chief claiming this rank. All go armed with spear, shield, and short sword, the latter exactly like that of the ancient Egyptians, whom the Somáli are otherwise said to resemble more than any other African people. The weapons are freely used in their disputes, although the tribal laws against homicide are severe, heavy fines of camels or other property being imposed, which must be paid either by the criminal or the community. They are great talkers, keenly sensitive to ridicule, and quick-tempered, although amenable to reason if they can be induced to argue the point. According to the character of the soil and climate they live a settled or nomad life, in some places breeding numerous herds of camels, goats, and fat-tailed sheep, in others growing large crops especially of durrah, or collecting the gums—frankincense and myrrh—for which the land has always been famous. The Marehan (properly Murreyhan) tribe is said to have given its name to the myrrh, which is obtained in the greatest perfection in their district, although the term seems too old to admit of this derivation, and is more probably connected with a Semitic root *mar*, *mur*—bitter. Through the ports of Berberah and Zeila, a considerable export trade to Arabia, Egypt, and India is carried on with these articles and the other natural products of the country, such as hides, horns, ostrich feathers, coffee of a very fine quality, indigo, salt. But the natives take little part in this movement, which from remote times has been in the hands of the Indian banians settled at various points on the coast. In 1879–80 the total value of the exports was estimated at about £140,000.

Like many other Mohammedan peoples, the Somáli claim Arab descent, their progenitor having been a certain Sherif Ishak b. Ahmad, who crossed over from Hadramaut with forty followers about five hundred years ago. Other traditions go farther back, tracing their origin to the Himyaritic chiefs Sanháj and Samamah, said to have been coeval with a King Afrikus, who is supposed to have conquered Africa about 400 A.D. These legends should perhaps be interpreted as pointing at a series of Arab immigrations, the last two of which are referred to the 13th and 15th centuries. But these intruders seem to have been successively absorbed in the Somál stock; and it is remarkable that the Arabs never succeeded in establishing permanent settled or nomad communities in this region, as they have done in so many other parts of the continent. Their influence has been very slight even on the Somál language, whose structure and vocabulary are essentially Hamitic, with marked affinities to the Galla on the one hand and to the Dankali (Afar) on the other. Captain Hunter's *Grammar*, with exercises and vocabularies (Bombay, 1880), utilizing the materials published by General Rigby in the *Proceedings* of the Bombay Geographical Society (1849), is the only comprehensive treatise on the language, which appears to be spoken with great uniformity throughout the whole of Somáli Land. Hunter mentions an eastern and a western dialect, differing, however, but little from one another, which is the more remarkable that there is no written standard and little oral literature, beyond some proverbial sayings, short stories inculcating certain moral teachings, and some simple love-songs. Although the rhythm is defective, these chants are

<sup>1</sup> Documents sur l'histoire, &c., de l'Afrique Orientale, 1856–59.

not lacking in poetical ideas, and often betray an unexpected refinement of feeling not inferior to that of similar compositions amongst more civilized peoples. (A. H. K.)

SOMERS, JOHN (1652–1716), was born on March 4, 1652, at Worcester,—the eldest son of John Somers, an attorney in large practice in that town who had formerly fought on the side of the Parliament, and of Catherine Ceaverne of Shropshire. After being at school at Worcester he was entered as a gentleman commoner at Trinity College, Oxford, and afterwards studied law under Sir Francis Winnington, who became solicitor-general, and joined the Middle Temple. He appears, in addition to his legal studies, to have written several poems and pamphlets. He soon became intimate with the leaders of the country party, especially with Essex, Russell, and Algernon Sidney, but never entered into their plans so far as to commit himself beyond recall. He was the author of the *History of the Succession of the Crown of England, collected out of Records, &c.*, and was reputed to have written the *Just and Modest Vindication of the Two Last Parliaments*, which was put forward as the answer to Charles II.'s famous declaration of his reasons for dissolving them. This, however, was by Sidney, though probably Somers was responsible for the final draft. When the grand jury of Middlesex threw out the bill against Shaftesbury, and were vehemently attacked for so doing, Somers wrote in defence of the rights of grand juries. In 1683 he was counsel for the sheriffs Pilkington and Shute before the Court of King's Bench, and secured a reputation which continually increased until the trial of the seven bishops, in which he was junior counsel. "Somers rose last. He spoke little more than five minutes, but every word was full of weighty matter; and when he sat down his reputation as an orator and a constitutional lawyer was established." In the secret councils of those who were planning the revolution Somers took a leading part, and in the Convention Parliament was elected a member for his native town. He was immediately appointed one of the managers for the Commons in the conferences between the Houses, and in arguing the questions whether James II. had left the throne vacant by abdication and whether the Acts of the Convention Parliament were legal—that parliament having been summoned without the usual writs—he displayed great learning and legal subtlety. He was further distinguished by being made chairman of the committee which drew up the celebrated Declaration of Right. On May 9, 1689, Somers was made solicitor-general. He now became William III.'s most confidential adviser. In the controversy which arose between the Houses on the question of the legality of the decision of the Court of King's Bench regarding Titus Oates, and of the action of the Lords in sustaining this decision, Somers was again the leading manager for the Commons, and has left a clear and interesting account of the debates. He was next employed in January 1690 as chairman of the select committee of the House of Commons on the Corporation Bill, by which those corporations which had surrendered their charters to the crown during the last two reigns were restored to their rights; but he refused to associate himself with the violent measures of retaliation which the Whigs on that occasion endeavoured to include in the bill. In April a speech by him carried through the Lower House, without opposition, the bill which declared all the laws passed by the Convention Parliament to be valid. As solicitor-general he had to conduct the prosecution of Preston and Ashton in 1691, and did so with a moderation and humanity which were in marked contrast to the customs of the former reigns. He was shortly appointed attorney-general, and in that capacity strongly