of David.”@@1 In New Testament times Solomon was the current type alike of magnificence and of wisdom (Matt. vi. 29 ; Luke xi. 31). But Jewish legend was not content with this, and, starting from a false interpretation of Eccles, ii. 8, gave him sovereignty over demons, to which were added (by a perversion of 1 Kings iv. 33) lordship over all beasts and birds, and the power of understanding their speech. These fables passed to the Arabs before the time of Mohammed (Nábigha, i. 22), found a place in the Koran, and gave Solomon (Suleimán) a lasting fame throughout the Moslem East. The story of Solomon, the hoopoe, and the queen of Sheba in sur. xxvii. of the Koran closely follows the second Targum to Esther i. 2, where the Jewish fables about him may be read at large. Solomon was supposed to owe his sovereignty over demons to the possession of a seal on which the “most great name of God ” was engraved. See Lane, *Arabian Nights,* introd., note 21, and chap. i. note 15.

SOLOMON, Song of. See Canticles.

SOLOMON, Wisdom of. See Apocrypha.

SOLOMON ISLANDS, an extensive group of islands, the largest and as yet least known of any in the Pacific Ocean, though among the very first that were discovered. They form a double chain of seven large and many small islands, extending for over 600 miles in a north-west and south-east direction between 5° S. lat., 154° 40' E. long., and 10° 54' S. lat., 162° 30' E. long. The northern extremity stretches to within 120 miles of New Ireland, the south-eastern point to 200 miles west of Santa Cruz, and the nearest portion of New Guinea lies about 400 miles to the south-west of the group.@@2 See vol. xix. Plate III.

The Solomon Islands vary considerably both in size and character. It is as yet doubtful which of them is the largest, but seven are from 50 to over 100 miles in length and from 15 to 30 miles in breadth; several must there­fore equal the county of Cornwall in area. They are well watered, though the streams seem to be small ; their coasts afford some good harbours.@@3 All the large and some of the smaller islands appear to be composed of ancient volcanic rock, with an incrustation of coral limestone showing here and there along the coast. Their interior is mountainous, and Guadalcanal, where there is an active volcano, reaches an altitude of 8000 feet. Malanta and Christoval are over 4000, Ysabel and Choiseul 2000 feet high. The mountains of the latter fall steep to the sea, and the whole of its north-east portion forms an elevated wooded plain. There is some level land in Bougainville, which is also said to possess an active volcano. Every traveller has extolled the beauty and fertility of the islands. In San Christoval deep valleys separate the gently-rounded ridges of its forest-clad mountains, lofty spurs descend from the interior, and, running down to the sea, terminate, on the north, in bold rocky headlands 800 to 1000 feet in height, while, on the south, they form and shelter bays of deep water. On the small high island of Florida there is much undulating grass land, interspersed

with fine clumps of trees ; but patches of cultivated land surround its numerous villages, and plantations on the hill-sides testify to the richness of its soil. To the south of Choiseul lies a small cliff-girt islet, Simba (Shortland’s Eddystone), with a peak ending in a crater 1200 feet high, on the side of which are a solfatara and two boiling springs. It is inhabited, and has a small safe harbour. Surgeon Guppy, late of H.M.S. “ Lark,” has recently made valuable geological observations in the north and south of the group. The whole chain of islands appear to be rising steadily, and traces of ancient upheaval are very general,— for instance, Treasury Island, where a coral-encrusted volcanic peak has been raised 1200 feet, and the atoll of Sta Anna, the ring of which now stands hundreds of feet above the present level of the sea. Some of the smaller islands are of recent calcareous formation. Barrier and fringing reefs, as well as atolls, occur in the group, but the channels between the islands are dangerous, chiefly from the strong currents which set through them.

The climate is very damp and debilitating. The rain­fall is unusually heavy. Fever and ague prevail on the coast, but it is likely that the highlands will prove much more healthy. The dry season, with north-west winds, lasts from December to May.

A comparatively shoal sea—under 1000 fathoms— surrounds the Archipelago, and, including the New Britain and Admiralty Islands, stretches to New Guinea and thence to Australia. This sufficiently accounts for the Papuan character of its fauna, of which, however, it is the eastern limit, in spite of the fact that this shoal water extends to the extreme south of the New Hebrides. Here the strange little marsupial the cuscus (see Phalanger) is still to be met with; the hornbill, the cockatoo, the crimson lory, and birds of a dozen other genera have already been discovered, “all,” as Wallace remarks, “highly characteristic of the Moluccas and New Guinea, and quite unknown in any of the more remote Pacific islands.” But, like the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands possess a megapode (*M*. *breηchleyi)* which is peculiar to itself. An alligator frequents the coast, and the sea teems with fish. Insects seem to be fairly well repre­sented. The flora has been even less studied than the zoology, but it also shows strong Papuan affinities. Vege­tation is most luxuriant : unbroken tracts of magnificent forest clothe the mountains, where sandalwood, ebony, and lignum vitæ have already been found. Mangrove swamps are common on the coasts.

The Solomon Islanders, excepting those of Bellona and Rennell in the south, and Ongtong Java in the north—who are pure Polynesians—are a small sturdy Melanesian race, taller in the north than in the south, but averaging about 5 feet 4 inches for men, and 4 feet 9 inches for women. They are well proportioned, with nicely rounded limbs. Projecting brows, deeply-sunk dark eyes, short noses, either straight or arched, but always depressed at the root, and moderately thick lips, with a somewhat receding chin, are general characteristics. The expression of the face is not unpleasing. The mesocephalic appears to be the preponderant form of skull, though this is unusual among Melanesian races. In colour the skin varies from a black-brown to a copperish hue, but the darker are the most common shades. The hair is dark, often dyed red or fawn. Crisp, inclining to woolly, it naturally hangs in a mop of ringlets 3 to 8 inches in length ; but, when carefully tended, it forms one smooth bush—the usual fashion for both sexes. Epilation is practised ; little hair, as a rule, grows on the face, but hairy men are not rare.@@4 Skin diseases are pre­valent.

The Solomon Islanders are intelligent, of a quick and nervous temperament, crafty, thievish, and revengeful, yet, quickly amen­able to good treatment, they make faithful servants. They are fond of dancing; their music is a monotonous chant with an

@@@1 The most ancient tradition, that of the LXX., gives Solomon no part in the authorship of the canonical psalter ; see vol. xx. p. 29.

@@@2 Islands of the Archipelago.—The larger are—in the eastern chain, Bougainville, Choiseul, Ysabel, Malanta; and in the western chain, New Georgia, Guadalcanal (often misspelt Guadalcanar), San Christoval. The smaller are—Buka (the most northern), Shortland, Treasury, Faro, Simba (Eddystone), Rubiana, Hammond, Marsh, Savo, Buena Vista, Anuda, Ngela (Florida), Ulawa (Contrariété), Ugi, Three Sisters, Sta Anna, Sta Catalina, Bellona, Rennel (the most southern). Mendaña mentions seeing near Buena Vista a small island in a state of violent eruption; he named it Sesarga. Ongtong Java is a group of coral islands in the north-east, but it does not, geographically, form part of the group.

@@@3 Blanche Bay, Bougainville; Port Praslin, Ysabel; Maruvo, New Georgia ; Port Wiseman, Florida ; Curaçoa Harbour in Marau Sound, Guadalcanal ; Recherche Bay, Makira Bay, and Vanga Harbour, San Christoval.

@@@4 On the islands in Bougainville Strait tribes with lank, almost straight, black hair and very dark skin are found. The mountains of the large islands seem to be thinly inhabited by a smaller and ruder race, with whom the coast tribes wage perpetual war and for whom they express great contempt.