of Dortmund, on the main railway Cologne-Elberfeld-Berlin. Pop. (1905), 17,394. Its early importance is attested by its seven fine churches (six Protestant), of which the most striking are St Peter's, the Wiesenkirche, a gem of Gothic architecture, Maria zur Höhe—St Mary-on-the-height—with beautiful mural frescoes, founded in 1314 and restored in 1850-1852, and the Roman Catholic cathedral, founded in the 10th century by Bruno, brother of Otto the Great (the present building was erected in the 12th century). This last, with its very original façade, is one of the noblest ecclesiastical monuments of Germany. Remains of the broad wall, now partly enclosing gardens and fields, and one of the gates remain; but the thirty-six strong towers which once defended the town have disappeared and the moats have been converted into promenades. The town-hall (1701) contains valuable archives, and among the numerous educational establishments must be mentioned the gymnasium, founded in 1534, through the instrumentality of Melanchthon, an evangelical teachers’ seminary, an agricultural school, and a blind asylum. Iron-working, the manufacture of soap, hats, sugar, cigars, bricks and tiles, linen-weaving, tanning and brewing, together with market-gardening and farming in the neighbourhood, and trade in cattle and grain are the leading industries.

Mentioned in documents as early as the 9th century, Soest was one of the largest and most important Hanseatic towns in the middle ages, with a population estimated at from 30,000 to 60,000. It was one of the chief emporiums on the early trading route between Westphalia and Lower Saxony. Its code of municipal laws *(Schran; jus susatense),* dating from 1144 to 1165, was one of the earliest and best, and served as a model even to Lübeck. On the fall of Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, Soest passed with the rest of Angria to Cologne. In the 15th century the strife between the towns­men and the archbishops broke out in open war, and in 1444 the strong fortifications of the town withstood a long siege by an army of 60,000 men. The women of Soest are said to have distinguished themselves in this contest *(Soester Fehde).* Papal intervention ended the strife, and Soest was permitted to remain under the protection of the dukes of Cleves. The prosperity of the town waned in more modern times: in 1763 its population was only 3800; in 1816 it was 6687.

See Vogeler, *Soest, seine Altertümer und Sehenswürdigkeiten* (Soest, 1890); Hausberg, *Die soester Fehde* (Trier, 1882); Sümmer- mann, *Die Wandmalereien in der Kirche Maria zur Höhe in Soest* (Soest, 1890) ; Aldenkirchen, *Diemittelälterliche Kunst in Soest* (Bonn, 1875) ; Ludorff und Vogeler, *Kunstdenkmälcr des Kreises Soest* (Soest, 1905).

**SOFA,** a long couch with stuffed back, arms and seat, to hold two or more persons. The word is of Arabic origin, and is an adaptation of *suffah,* couch, from root *saffa—*to draw up in line. According to Richardson, *Dict, of Eng. Lang.* quoted by Skeat, the Arabic *suffah* was particularly a reclining place of wood or stone placed before the doors of Oriental houses. In the history of furniture the sofa was a development of the straight backed settee. It was not so much therefore a long chair or combination of chairs, as a seat or couch for reclining. The early 19th- century type had a back with a single arm at one end, the other being left open. The most favoured modern form is that known as the Chesterfield, with double arms and back, heavily padded. (See also Settee.)

SOFaLA, a Portuguese seaport on the east coast of Africa, at the mouth of a river of the same name, in 20° 12' S. Pop.(1900), about 1000. The town possesses scarcely a trace of its former importance, and what trade it had was nearly all taken away by the establishment of Beira *(q.v.)* a little to the north in 1890. Sofala Harbour, once capable of holding a hundred large vessels, is silting up and is obstructed by a bar. Ruins exist of the strong fort built by the Portuguese in the 16th century. Previous to its conquest by the Portuguese in 1505 Sofala was the chief town of a wealthy Mahommedan state, Arabs having established themselves there in the 12th century or earlier. At one time it formed part of the sultanate of Kilwa *(q.v.).* Sofala was visited by the Portuguese Jew, Pero de Covilhão, in 1489, who was attracted thither by the reports of gold-mines of which Sofala was the port. The conquest of the town followed, the first governors of the Portuguese East African possessions being entitled Captains-General of Sofala. (See Portuguese East Africa.) Thomé Lopes, who accompanied Vasco da Gama to India in 1502 and left a narrative of the voyage (first printed in Ramusio, *Viaggi e Navegationí)*, identifies Sofala with Solomon’s Ophir and states that it was the home of the Queen of Sheba. This identification of Sofala with Ophir, to which Milton alludes *(Par. Lost,* xi. 399-401) is untenable.

The small island of Chiloane, with a good harbour, 40 m. S. of Sofala, has been colonized from Sofala (the township being named Chingune) as has also the island Santa Carolina, in the Bazaruto archipelago.

See *Bull. Geogr. Soc. Mozambique* (1882) for an account of the Sofala mines; and, generally, Idrísí, *Climate,* i. § 8, O. Dapper, *Description de ΓAfrique* (Amsterdam, 1686); T. Baines, *The Gold Regions of South Africa* (1877); G. McC. Theal’s *Records of South Eastern Africa* (1898-1903); Sir R. Burton’s notes to his edition of Camoens.

**SOFFIONI** (sometimes spelt *suffioni),* a name applied in Italy to certain volcanic vents which emit jets of steam, generally associated with hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide, sometimes also with a little ammonia and marsh-gas. The soffioni are usually arranged in groups, and are best represented in the Maremma of Tuscany, where they contain a small pro­portion of boric acid, for which they are utilized industrially. For such natural steam-holes, the French geologists often use the term *souffiards* in place of the Italian soffioni.

**SOFFIT** (from Fr. *soffite,* Ital. *soffitta,* a ceiling, formed as if from *suffictus* for *suffixus,* Lat. *süffigere,* to fix underneath), a term in architecture given to the underside of any construc­tional feature; as for instance that of an arch or an architrave whether supported by piers or columns; also to the underside of a flight of stairs, and in the classic entablature to the under­side of the projecting cornice.

**SOFIA** (Bulgarian *Sredetz,* the middle town, a name now little used), the capital of Bulgaria, situated almost in the centre of an upland plain, about 1700 ft. above sea-level, between the Western Balkans on the N. and Mt Vîtosh on the S. Pop. (1907) 82,187. Two small tributaries of the river Iskcr, the Perlovetz and the Eleshnitza or Boyana, flow respectively on the east and west sides of the town. Since 1880 the city has been almost entirely renovated in the “ European ” style; the narrow tortuous lanes and mean houses of the Turkish epoch have almost disappeared, and a new town with straight parallel streets has been constructed in the eastern suburb. The oldest building in Sofia is the little round chapel of St George in the Jewish quarter—originally, it is said, a Roman temple; then a church, then a mosque, and now a church once more. Of the principal mosques the large Buyuk Djamía, with nine metal cupolas, has become the National Museum; the Tchema Djamía or Black Mosque, latterly used as a prison, has been transformed into a handsome church; the Banya- bashi Djamía, with its picturesque minaret, is still used by Moslem worshippers. Close to the last-named in the centre of the town, are the public baths with hot springs (temperature 1170 F ). In the cathedral or church of Sveti Kral (the Saint King), a modem building, are preserved the remains of the Servian king Stefan Urosh II, A large new cathedral dedicated to St Alexander Nevski was in course of construction in 1907; the foundation stone was taken from the church of St Sophia. The palace of the prince, occupying the site of the Turkish konak was built by Prince Alexander in 1880-1882; it has been greatly enlarged by King Ferdinand. In front of the palace is the public garden or Alexander Park. The theatre, the largest in south-eastern Europê, was completed in 1906. Other important buildings are the Sobranye, or parliament house, the palace of the synod, the ministries of war and commerce, the univer­sity with the national printing press, the national library, the officers’ club and several large military structures. A small