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# The American Cyclopædia, Vol. 2

## A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge; Ashes-Bol (Classic Reprint)

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# The American Cyclopaedia, Vol. 5

## A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge; Code-Demotica (Classic Reprint)

*Forgotten Books* Excerpt from *The American Cyclopaedia, Vol. 5: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge; Code-Demotica* Less authority than they afterward acquired all these existed before the legislation of Lycurgus; so also the distinction between Spartans and Laconians, and the still greater distinction between the former and their serfs the helots. Usages had grown up corresponding to this isolation of a small number in the midst of a numerous subject people, and it was for the carrying out more efficiently the design of these usages that Lycurgus prepared the code which thenceforth became the fixed law of Sparta. In like manner the Athenian state was harmonized by the laws of Solon, but more particularly by his constitution of political powers. The archonship, the

areopagus, and the council of 400 were constituent parts of the government before his revision of the laws. The assembly of the people had also taken some part in public affairs, but in a rude, irregular manner, without any fixed authority or prescribed mode of proceeding. Solon constituted it the chief legislative body, yet with the restriction that they were to consider only what was proposed by the senate. This restriction was afterward evaded, because the assembly could modify any proposition that came before them without sending it back to the senate for approval; and again, when a law was desired by the people, any one could present it to the senate and procure the preliminary action necessary for bringing it before the people. A still greater popular power was conferred by the judicial authority given to the dicasteries, which were composed of a large number of citizens, drawn by lot, presided over by one of the archons. The number of jurors in important cases was very large, sometimes including the whole body of citizens qualified to serve. The other laws of Solon corresponded with this development of the popular element. All citizens over the age of 20 were entitled to speak and vote in the assembly, and to sit as jurors in the dicasteries; trade and manufacturing industry were encouraged, and intercourse with foreigners was promoted by giving to them greater privileges than were allowed by any other Grecian state. Still it appears that all his legislation was in consonance with the spirit of the people, and the particular laws were probably for the most part reenactments of customs already existing, but with some wholesome restraints or new provisions intended for the maintenance of the largest liberty within the proper limit of civil order. - The same principle is again exhibited in the Roman laws of the twelve tables. The account given by Livy is, that commissioners were sent into Greece to examine the laws and institutions of the principal states, and to transcribe the laws of Solon; that after their return, another commission (the decemvirs) was constituted to draw up a code of laws, the result of which was the compilation of the twelve tables. But the laws of Solon were certainly not incorporated in the code of the decemvirs, nor, so far as we are able to judge. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at [www.forgottenbooks.com](http://www.forgottenbooks.com) This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.