SABIANS. In three passages of the Koran Mohammed mentions between the Jews and the Christians a sect whom he calls Sabians (*Sábi'úna).* He distinguishes them from the Magians and polytheists (xxii. 17), and appears to say that they believed in God and in the day of resurrection and judgment. It has commonly been supposed that the sect referred to is the Mandæans (*q.v.*); but it is more probable that they were some obscure half-Christian body (Elkesaites?), which had representatives in Arabia itself (see Mohammedanism, vol. xvi. p. 547). The name is derived from the Aramaic with a softening of ע to א, such as took place in certain dialects of that speech, and means “Baptists.” The older Mohammedan theologians were agreed that the Sabians possessed a written revela­tion, and were entitled accordingly to enjoy a toleration not granted to mere heathen, and it appears that the Mandaeans got the benefit of this, whether they were the sect Mohammed had in view or not. But under Al-Mamún (830) a body that had certainly no claim to be deemed other than polytheists began to shield themselves under the same name, viz., the Harranians, or remnant of the old heathen of Mesopotamia. Star-worship had a chief place in the religion of the Harranians, as it had had in the older Babylonian and Syrian faiths, but they had partly disguised their polytheism in a fantastic philosophy, so that they were able on occasion to pose as people of enlightened beliefs. Accounts of these false Sabians reached the West through Maimonides, and then through Arabic sources, long before it was understood that, in this application, the name was only a disguise. Hence the greatest confusion prevailed in all European accounts of them till Chwolsohn published in 1856 his *Ssabier und Ssabismus,* in which the authorities for the history and belief of the Harranians in the Middle Ages are collected and discussed. See also Dozy and De Goeje in the *Actes* of the sixth Oriental congress, ii. 1, 185 *sq.,* Leyden, 1885. It is quite inappropriate to call star-worshippers in general Sabians or Zabians or to speak of a distinct Sabian religion, as older writers do. The religion of the Harranians is simply a modernized form of the old Syrian polytheism.

SABICU WOOD is the produce of a large leguminous tree, *Lysiloma Sabicu,* a native of Cuba, where alone it appears to be found. The wood has a rich mahogany colour; it is exceedingly heavy, hard, and durable, and therefore most valuable for shipbuilding. Sabicu, on account of its durability, was selected for the stairs of the Great Exhibition (London) of 1851, and, notwithstanding the enormous traffic which passed over them, the wood at the end was found to be little affected by wear.

SABINE, Sir Edward (1788-1883), astronomer, was born in Dublin on 14th October 1788, a scion of a family said to be of Italian origin. He was educated at Wool­wich and obtained a commission in the Royal Artillery at the age of fifteen. He attained the rank of major-general in 1859. His only experience of actual warfare seems to have been at the siege of Fort Erie in 1814 ; but few men have seen more than he of active and sometimes perilous service. In early life he devoted himself to astronomy and physical geography, and in consequence he was appointed astronomer to various expeditions, among others that of Sir J. Ross (1818) in search of the North-West Passage, and that of Sir E. Parry soon afterwards. Later, he spent long periods on the inter-tropical coasts of Africa and America, and again among the snows of Spitzbergen. Sir Edward Sabine died at East Sheen, Surrey, on 26th May 1883.

Of Sabine’s scientific work two branches in particular deserve very high credit—his determination of pendulum data for the investigation of the figure of the earth and his extensive researches connected with terrestrial magnetism. His pendulum observations were the first to show the altogether unexpected amount of accuracy attainable in a matter which, under the most favourable conditions,

is one of great delicacy, but which had to be pursued by him under circumstances often of peculiar difficulty. The establishment of a system of magnetic observatories in various parts of British territory all over the globe was accomplished mainly on his representations ; and to the direction of these observatories and to the reduction and discussion of the observations a great part of his life was devoted. His published papers, as shown by the Royal Society’s *Catalogue,* amounted in 1872 to 101. While the majority bear on one or other of the subjects just mentioned, others deal with such widely different topics as the birds of Greenland, ocean tempera­tures, the Gulf Stream, barometric measurement of heights, arcs of meridian, glacier transport of rocks, the volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands, and various points of meteorology. Sabine occupied for ten years (1861-71) the president’s chair of the Royal Society, and was made K. C.B. in 1869. Though he cannot be said to have been a man of striking originality, his unflagging devotion to his work deservedly won him an honourable position among the foremost scientific men of the present century.

SABINES. The Sabines (Sabini) were a people of Cen­tral Italy, who played an important part in the early history of Rome. According to all old writers they were one of the most ancient nations of Italy, and the parent stock from which many of the other tribes that occupied the central and southern regions of the peninsula derived their origin. Of their own origin and affinities we know very little. Strabo calls them a very ancient race and “ autochthonous,” which may be taken as signifying that there was no authen­tic tradition of their immigration, or of the quarter from whence they came. The story of their Laconian descent may be safely rejected as one of those fictions by which a certain class of the later Greek writers sought to derive every people in Italy from a Greek origin. But the evi­dence concerning their language, scanty as it is, is sufficient to prove that they were a cognate race with the neighbour­ing Umbrians and Oscans, as well as, more remotely, with the Latins. Cato, the best authority among the Roman writers with respect to the different races of Italy, affirmed that the Sabines originally occupied the country about Amiternum, in the upper valley of the Aternus, at the foot of the loftiest group of the Apennines. From thence they gradually extended themselves into the fertile valleys about Reate, where we find them established in historical times, and occupied the tract from thence to the Tiber and the Anio. But even in its widest extension the region held by the Sabines was of small dimensions, and for the most part of a rugged and mountainous character. Hence it was natural that they should seek a place for their super­fluous population by repeated emigrations into the neigh­bouring districts, and the general tradition among Roman writers ascribed the origin of several of the more powerful and populous nations of the peninsula to such emigrations. This result was especially promoted by a custom which, though not unknown to the other nations of Italy, appears to have been peculiarly characteristic of the Sabines—that of a Ver Sacrum, or “sacred spring,” when everything born in that year was consecrated to some local divinity, most frequently to Mamers or Mars. All the cattle were duly sacrificed, while the young men were allowed to grow up to manhood, and then sent forth in a body to seek for themselves new abodes beyond the limits of their native land. To such colonies is ascribed the foundation of the Picentes or people of Picenum, the Samnites, and the Hirpini. Of these the last-mentioned derived their name from *hirpus,* the Sabine name for a wolf, an animal of that description being supposed to have been divinely sent as the leader of the colony, as a woodpecker *(picus),* also sacred to Mars, became that of the Piceni. The Peligni also, as we learn from Ovid, himself a native of the dis­trict, claimed a Sabine origin, and the same was probably the case with the smaller kindred tribes of the Marsi, Marrucini, and Vestini. The Samnites, again, in their turn sent forth the Frentani and the Lucanians, who extended their dominion throughout the mountainous regions of