Southern Italy and carried their arms from the Adriatic to the Sicilian Straits.

Meanwhile the Sabines themselves were confined within comparatively narrow limits, and their extension towards the south was checked by the growing power of the Latins. Here their power appears to have attained its highest point about the time of the foundation of Rome, and the legend­ary history, familiar to every schoolboy, of the contests between Romulus and Tatius, the divided sovereignty at one time established between them, and the peaceful reign and legislation of the Sabine king Numa may be taken as representing the historical fact that the population of Rome really contained an important Sabine element, and that Sabine influences were largely intermixed with those of Latin origin, both in the civil institutions and still more in the religious rites and ceremonies of the rising republic. Beyond this it is impossible to pronounce with certainty as to the real value and significance of the tradi­tions preserved to us in the poetical legends transmitted in the garb of history; and it is impossible in an article like the present to give even an outline of the various theories that have been devised by modern writers to put an historical interpretation upon the records thus preserved to us. It is clear, however, that the power of the Sabines was by no means broken, even by the establishment of the more powerful monarchy at Rome under the Tarquins, and for a period of more than fifty years after the fall of the monarchy we find the Romans engaged in almost perpetual hostilities against the Sabines on the one side and the AEquians and Volscians on the other. At length in the year 449 b.c. the Sabines were defeated by the consul M. Horatius, in an action which appears to have been of so decisive a character that we do not find them again appearing in arms against the Romans for a period of more than 160 years. Their quiescence is the more singular as during this interval the republic was engaged in the long series of the Samnite Wars, in which their adversaries were the direct descendants of the Sabines, and had therefore every claim on their support. Still more unaccountable is it that, after looking on with apparent neutrality for so long, we find the Sabines in the year 290 b.c. once more in arms against Rome, and that at a period when the Third Samnite War had for a time crushed all the hopes of their natural allies. The result was, as might have been expected, that they found themselves wholly unequal to contend single-handed against the power of Rome, and the consul M’. Curius Dentatus reduced them to submission in a single campaign. They were severely punished for this defection; and henceforth their national existence was at an end. Those who survived the slaughter of the war were admitted to the position of Roman citizens, though at first without the right of suffrage, but twenty years after this also was granted them, and they were to all intents and purposes incorporated in the Roman state. Thus separated from all the tribes of kindred origin, they never again appear in history, and, like the Campanians and Latins, were content to swell the ranks of the Roman legions even in the fierce struggle of the Social War (91- 88 b.c.). Under the arrangements of the Roman empire their very name was lost as a territorial designation, but it always continued in popular use, and was revived in the Middle Ages as that of an ecclesiastical province. Even at the present day every peasant in the neighbourhood of Rome will point to La Sabina as the familiar appellation of the lofty mountain tract to the north of the city.

The limits of the territory occupied by the Sabines do not appear to have varied much from a very early period till the days of Strabo. That geographer describes them as extending as far south as Eretum near the Tiber, on the road to Rome, and a few miles only from Cures, the

reputed birthplace of Tatius and Numa, but which in his time had become a mere village. The principal town of the Sabines was Reate (still called Rieti), in the midst of the beautiful and fertile valley of the Velino, and from thence they occupied the upper valley of that river to its sources in the Monte della Sibilla and the rugged mountain valleys which connected it with that of the Aternus. Here was found Amiternum, the original capital of the tribe, near the modern Aquila, and between that and Reate lay Interocrea (Antrodoco), in a pass that has always formed one of the leading lines of communication through the central Apennines. In the extreme north was Nursia (Norcia), noted for the coldness of its climate, and cele­brated in ecclesiastical history as the birthplace of St Bene­dict. These were the only towns of any importance in the territory of the Sabines ; but they lived for the most part scattered in villages about the mountains, a circum­stance absurdly alleged by some Roman writers as a proof of their Laconian origin. It was doubtless owing to this habit, as well as to the rugged mountainous character of the country in which they dwelt, that the Sabines owed the primitive simplicity of their manners and the frugal and severe character which distinguished them even in the days of Augustus. All readers of Horace must be familiar with his frequent allusions to the moral purity and frugal manners of the people that surrounded his Sabine villa, which was situated on the reverse of Mount Lucretilis, only about 15 miles from the rich and luxurious Tibur (Tivoli). The small town of Varia (Vicovaro), in its immediate neighbourhood, seems to have marked the frontier on this side.

No remains of the Sabine language are extant in the form of inscriptions, but coins struck during the Social War with the inscription “ Safinim ” show that the native appellation was the same as that in use among the Latins. The form “ Sabellus ” is frequently found in Latin writers as an ethnic adjective equivalent to Sabine; but the practice adopted by modern writers, of employing the term “ Sabellian ” to designate all the tribes of Sabine origin, including Samnites, Lucanians, &c., was first introduced by Niebuhr, and is not supported by any ancient authority, (e. h. b.)

SABLE *(Musteta zibellina).* See Marten, vol. xv. p. 577, and Fur, vol. ix. p. 838.

SABLES D’OLONNE, a seaport town of France, the chef-lieu of an arrondissement of the department of La Vendée, is situated on the Atlantic seaboard in 46° 30' N. lat., 300 miles south-west of Paris by the railway for Tours and La-Roche-sur-Yon. The town stands between the sea on the south and the port on the north, while on the west it is separated by a channel from the suburb of La Chaume, built at the foot of a range of dunes 65 feet high, which terminates southwards in the rocky peninsula of L’Aiguille (the Needle), defended by Fort St Nicholas. To the north of Sables extend salt-marshes and oyster-parks, stocked from Auray or Cape Breton, and yielding 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 oysters per annum. The port of Sables, consisting of a tidal basin and a wet-dock, is accessible only to vessels of from 350 to 400 tons, and is dangerous when the winds are from the south-west. The entrance is shown by six lights ; a seventh lighthouse, that of the Barges, a mile out at sea to the west, has a height of 80 feet and is visible for 17 to 18 nautical miles. In 1882 145 vessels (62,073 tons) entered and 146 vessels (61,037 tons) cleared. The staple articles of trade are grain, wine, cattle, timber, salt, tar, fish, building stone, manures ; 400 boats are engaged in the sardine fishery. The beautiful smoothly sloping beach, a mile in length, is much frequented by bathers. It is lined by an embankment which serves as a promenade and drive, and is bordered by hotels, villas, and cafés. The population in 1881 was 9769, that of the commune 10,420.