of Seville, called Zarabanda. During the 16th and 17th centuries the saraband was exceedingly popular, alike in Spain, France, Italy, and England. Its music was in triple time—generally with three minims in the bar—and almost always consisted of two strains, each beginning upon the first beat, and most frequently ending on the second or third. Many very fine examples of it will be found among the *Suites* and *Partitas* of Handel and J. S. Bach; but by far the finest we possess is that which Handel first composed for his overture to *Almira,* and afterwards adapted to the words “Lascia, ch’io pianga,” in *Rinaldo.*

SARACENS was the current designation among the Christians of Europe in the Middle Ages for their Moslem enemies, especially for the Moslems in Europe. In earlier times the name of *Saraceni* was applied by Greeks and Romans to the troublesome nomad Arabs of the Syro- Arabian desert who continually harassed the frontier of the empire from Egypt to the Euphrates. It is easy to understand how, after Islam, the name came to be extended to the Moslem enemies of the empire in general, but no satisfactory explanation has been given of the reason why the Romans called the frontier tribes Saracens. It is most natural to suppose that they adopted some name of a tribe or confederation and used it in an extended sense, just as the Syrians called all these northern nomads by the name of the tribe of Tayyi’. The common derivation from the Arabic *sharkî, “* eastern,” is quite untenable. Springer suggests that the word may be simply *shoraká,* “ allies.”

SARAGOSSA. See Zaragoza.

SARAKHS. See Persia, vol. xviii. p. 618.

SÁRAN, or Sarun, a British district in the lieutenant- governorship of Bengal, lying between 25° 40' and 26° 38' N. lat. and 83° 58' and 85° 14' E. long. It forms one of the north-western districts of the Patná division in the Behar province, and comprises an area of 2622 square miles. Sáran is bounded on the north by the district of Gorakhpur in the North-Western Provinces, on the east by the Bengal districts of Champáran and Tirhut, on the south by the Ganges, separating it from Sháhábád and Patná districts, and on the west by Gorakhpur. It is a vast alluvial plain, possessing no mountains, and scarcely any hill or even undulations, but w’ith a general inclina­tion towards the south-east, as indicated by the flow of the rivers in that direction. The rivers and watercourses are very numerous, few tracts being better supplied in this respect. The principal rivers besides the Ganges are the Gandak and Ghagrá, which are navigable throughout the year. There is little or no waste land, and the district has long been noted for the high state of its cultivation. Sáran is beautifully wooded; mango trees are very numerous ; and it yields large crops of rice, besides other cereals, tobacco, opium, indigo, cotton, and sugar-cane. Though possessing no railways or canals, the district is well provided with roads. There is very little jungle; large game is not met with, but snakes are very numerous. Sáran is subject to blight, flood, and drought; its average annual rainfall is 45 inches. The administrative head­quarters are at Chhapra.

The census of 1881 returned the population at 2,280,382 (1,083,565 males and 1,196,817 females); Hindus numbered 2,010,958, Mohammedans 269,142, and Christians 282. The population is entirely agricultural; there are only three towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, viz., Chhapra (51,670), Sewan (13,319), and Revelganj (12,493). Manufactures are few and of little account; the principal are indigo, sugar, brass-work, pottery, saltpetre, and cloth. The commerce of Saran consists chiefly in the export of raw produce, of which the chief articles are oil-seeds, indigo, sugar, and grain of all sorts except rice; the imports consist principally of rice, salt, and European piece-goods. Revelganj is the chief trading mart. The gross revenue of the district in 1883-84 amounted to .£203,734, of which the land contributed £122,612, Saran formerly

constituted one district with Champáran. The revenue areas of the two districts were not finally separated until 1866, but the magis­terial jurisdictions were first divided in 1837.

SARAPIS. See Serapis.

SARATOFF, a government of south-eastern Russia, on the right bank of the lower Volga, having Penza and Simbirsk on the north, Samara and Astrakhan on the east, and the Don Cossacks, Voronezh, and Tamboff on the west. The area is 32,624 square miles, and the popula­tion (1882) 2,113,077. The government has an irregular shape; and a narrow strip, 140 miles long and from 20 to 45 miles wide, extending along the Volga as far south as its Sarepta bend, separates from the river the territory of the Don Cossacks. Saratoff occupies the eastern part of the great central plateau of Russia, which gently slopes towards the south so as imperceptibly to merge into the steppe region; its eastern slope, deeply cut into by ravines, abruptly falls towards the Volga. As the higher parts of the plateau range from 700 to 900 feet above the sea, while the Volga flows at an elevation of only 20 feet at Khvalynsk in the north, and is 48 feet beneath sea-level at Sarepta, the steep ravine-cut slopes of the plateau give a hilly aspect to the banks of the river. In the south, and especially in the narrow strip above mentioned, the country assumes the characteristics of true elevated steppes, intersected with waterless ravines.

Every geological formation from the Carboniferous up to the Miocene is represented in Saratoff; the older ones are, however, mostly concealed under the Cretaceous, whose fossiliferous marls, flint-bearing clays, and iron-bearing sandstones cover broad areas. The Jurassic deposits sel­dom make their appearance from beneath them. Eocene sands, sandstones, and marls, rich in marine fossils and in fossil wood, extend over large tracts in the east. The boulder-clay of the Finland and Olonetz ice-sheet penetrates in Saratoff as far south-east as the valleys of the Medvyeditsa and the Sura; while extensive layers of loess and other deposits of the Lacustrine or Post-Glacial period appear in the south-east and elsewhere above the Glacial deposits. Iron-ore is abundant; chalk, lime, and white pottery clay are extracted to a limited degree. The mineral waters at Sarepta, formerly much visited, have been super­seded in public favour by those of Caucasus.

Saratoff is well watered, especially in the north. The Volga, from 1 to 7 miles in width, separates it from Samara and Astrakhan for a length of 500 miles; its tributaries are but small, except the Sura, which rises in Saratoff and serves for the northward transit of timber. The tributaries of the Don are more important; the upper Medvyeditsa and the Khoper, which both have a south­ward course parallel to the Volga and water Saratoff each for about 200 miles, are navigated notwithstanding their shallows, ready-made boats being brought in separate pieces from the Volga for that purpose. The Ilovla, which flows in the same direction into the Don, is separated from the Volga only by a strip of land 15 miles wide; Peter I. proposed to utilize it as a channel for connecting the Don w’ith the Volga, but the idea was never carried out, and the two rivers are now connected by the railway (52 miles) from Tsaritsyn to Kalatch which crosses the southern ex­tremity of Saratoff.

Lakes and marshes occur only in a few river-valleys. The region is rapidly drying up, and the forests diminish­ing. In the south, about Tsaritsyn, where the hills were densely covered with them a few centuries ago, they have almost wholly disappeared. In the north they still cover more than a third of the surface, the aggregate area under wood being reckoned at 2,661,000 acres. The remainder is distributed as follows :—arable land, 11,509,000 acres ; prairies and pasture lands, 3,799,000; uncultivable,