

sympathy in speculative pursuits diffused through an intelligent and acute audience; in short, they had not had a national education such as fitted the Greeks to be disciples of Plato and Hipparchus. Hence, their new literary wealth rather encumbered and enslaved, than enriched and strengthened them: in their want of taste for intellectual freedom, they were glad to give themselves up to the guidance of Aristotle and other dogmatists. Their military habits had accustomed them to look to a leader; their reverence for the book of their law had prepared them to accept a philosophical Koran also. Thus the Arabians, though they never translated the Greek poetry, translated, and merely translated, the Greek philosophy; they followed the Greek philosophers without deviation, or, at least, without any philosophical deviations. They became for the most part Aristotelians;—studied not only Aristotle, but the commentators of Aristotle; and themselves swelled the vast and unprofitable herd.

The philosophical works of Aristotle had, in some measure, made their way in the East, before the growth of the Saracen power. In the sixth century, a Syrian, Uranus,¹⁵ encouraged by the love of philosophy manifested by Cosroes, had translated some of the writings of the Stagirite; about the same time, Sergius had given some translations in Syriac. In the seventh century, Jacob of Edessa translated into this language the *Dialectics*, and added Notes to the work. Such labors became numerous; and the first Arabic translations of Aristotle were formed upon these Persian or Syriac texts. In this succession of transfusions, some mistakes must inevitably have been introduced.

The Arabian interpreters of Aristotle, like a large portion of the Alexandrian ones, gave to the philosopher a tinge of opinions borrowed from another source, of which I shall have to speak under the head of *Mysticism*. But they are, for the most part, sufficiently strong examples of the peculiar spirit of commentation, to make it fitting to notice them here. At the head of them stands¹⁶ Alkindi, who appears to have lived at the court of Almamon, and who wrote commentaries on the *Organon* of Aristotle. But Alfarabi was the glory of the school of Bagdad; his knowledge included mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy. Born in an elevated rank, and possessed of a rich patrimony, he led an austere life, and devoted himself altogether to study and meditation. He employed himself particularly in unfolding the import of Aristotle's treatise *On the Soul*.¹⁷ Avicenna (Ebn Sina)

¹⁵ Deg. iv. 196.

¹⁶ Ib. iv. 187.

¹⁷ Ib. iv. 205.