

bring, to the cultivation of the science of the Greeks, their own oriental habit of submission, their oriental love of wonder; and thus, while they swell the herd of commentators and mystics, they produce no philosopher.

Yet the Arabs discharged an important function in the history of human knowledge,¹⁵ by preserving, and transmitting to more enlightened times, the intellectual treasures of antiquity. The unhappy dissensions which took place in the Christian church had scattered these treasures over the East, at a period much antecedent to the rise of the Saracen power. In the fifth century, the adherents of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, were declared heretical by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), and driven into exile. In this manner, many of the most learned and ingenious men of the Christian world were removed to the Euphrates, where they formed the *Chaldean* church, erected the celebrated Nestorian school of Edessa, and gave rise to many offsets from this in various regions. Already, in the fifth century, Hibas, Cumas, and Probus, translated the writings of Aristotle into Syriac. But the learned Nestorians paid an especial attention to the art of medicine, and were the most zealous students of the works of the Greek physicians. At Djondisabor, in Khusistan, they became an ostensible medical school, who distributed academical honors as the result of public disputations. The califs of Bagdad heard of the fame and the wisdom of the doctors of Djondisabor, summoned some of them to Bagdad, and took measures for the foundation of a school of learning in that city. The value of the skill, the learning, and the virtues of the Nestorians, was so strongly felt, that they were allowed by the Mohammedans the free exercise of the Christian religion, and intrusted with the conduct of the studies of those of the Moslemin, whose education was most cared for. The affinity of the Syriac and Arabic languages made the task of instruction more easy. The Nestorians translated the works of the ancients out of the former into the latter language: hence there are still found Arabic manuscripts of Dioscorides, with Syriac words in the margin. Pliny and Aristotle likewise assumed an Arabic dress; and were, as well as Dioscorides, the foundation of instruction in all the Arabian academies; of which a great number were established throughout the Saracen empire, from Bokhara in the remotest east, to Marocco and Cordova in the west. After some time, the Mohammedans themselves began to translate and

¹⁵ Sprengel, i. 203.