

Character. Habits of Reading.

Notes in Books,
CUS417/6.3

Character

This is quoted in the front of Docteur's Histoire de la Médecine Arabe (1876)
and was evidently inspired by its perusal

" The world has seen but once so marvellous a spectacle as that presented by the Arabs in the 9th century. This pastoral people, whose fanaticism had suddenly made of them the masters of half the world, having once founded their empire, immediately set themselves to acquire the knowledge of science which was lacking to their greatness. They alone of all the invaders who fought for the remains of the Roman Empire pursued such studies. Whilst the Germanic bands gloried in their brutality and ignorance, and took a thousand years to reunite the broken chain of tradition, the Arabs accomplished this in less than a century, and it was they who provoked competition with the conquered Christians - that competition which secured the harmony of the races. At the end of the 8th cent. their whole scientific possessions consisted of a translation of one medical treatise and some books on Alchemy. Before the ninth century had run to its close the Arabs were in possession of all the science of the Greeks; they had produced from their own ranks students of the first order, had roused among their imitators men who, without them, would have been groping in the dark, and showed from this time an aptitude for the exact sciences which was lacking in their imitators and whom henceforward they surpassed. *