

to whom the oldest, and, at the same time, one of the richest sources of knowledge, that of the Indian physicians, had been early opened.* Chemical pharmacy was created by the Arabs, while to them are likewise due the first official prescriptions regarding the preparation and admixture of different remedial agents—the dispensing recipes of the present day. These were subsequently diffused over the south of Europe by the school of Salerno. Pharmacy and *Materia Medica*, the first requirements of practical medicine, led simultaneously, in two directions, to the study of botany and to that of chemistry. From its narrow sphere of utility and its limited application, botany gradually opened a wider and freer field, comprehending investigations into the structure of organic tissues and their connection with vital forces, and into the laws by which vegetable forms are associated in families, and may be distinguished geographically according to diversities of climate and differences of elevation above the earth's surface.

From the time of the Asiatic conquests, for the maintenance of which Bagdad subsequently constituted a central point of power and civilization, the Arabs spread themselves, in the short space of seventy years, over Egypt, Cyrene, and Carthage, through the whole of Northern Asia to the far remote western peninsula of Iberia. The inconsiderable degree of cultivation possessed by the people and their leaders might certainly incline us to expect every demonstration of rude barbarism; but the mythical account of the burning of the Alexandrian Library by Amru, including the account of its application, during six months, as fuel to heat 4000 bathing rooms, rests on the sole testimony of two writers who lived 580 years after the alleged occurrence took place.† We need not here describe how, in more peaceful times, during the brilliant epoch of Al-Mansur, Haroun Al-Raschid, Mamun, and Mota-sem, the courts of princes, and public scientific institutions, were enabled to draw together large numbers of the most distinguished men, although without imparting a freer develop-

* On the knowledge which the Arabs derived from the Hindoos regarding the *Materia Medica*, see Wilson's important investigations in the *Oriental Magazine of Calcutta*, 1823, February and March; and those of Royle, in his *Essay on the Antiquity of Hindoo Medicine*, 1837, p. 56-59, 64-66, 73, and 92. Compare an account of Arabic pharmaceutical writings, translated from Hindostanee, in Ainslie (Madras edition), p. 289.

† Gibbon, vol. ix., chap. li., p. 392; Heeren, *Gesch. des Studiums der Classischen Litteratur*, bd. i., 1797, s. 44 und 72; Sacy, *Abd-Allatif*, p. 240; Parthey, *Das Alexandrinische Museum*, 1838, s. 106.