

Aceldama, and inundated with blood the fairest fields of Europe," nevertheless, by bringing the Christians more generally and more directly in contact with the Saracens, accomplished much good. "They proved," says Guizot, "a great step in the enfranchisement of mind, great progress toward more extensive and liberal ideas. They, the Crusaders, also found themselves in juxtaposition with two civilizations, not only different from their own, but more advanced—the Greeks on the one hand, and the Mohammedans on the other. . . . It is curious to observe in the old chronicles the impression which the Crusaders made upon the Mussulmans. These latter regarded them at first as barbarians; as the rudest, the most ferocious and most stupid class of men they had ever seen. The Crusaders on their part were struck with the riches and elegance of manners of the Mussulmans" ("History Civilization," i. 154).

Brought thus in contact with a people greatly their superiors in intelligence and culture, the Christians could not help receiving benefit from those whose country they invaded. That Christendom, in various ways, is vastly indebted to the Arabs, and especially to the Saracens, for the advancement that has been made within its limits, no person who has an acquaintance with the history of the Middle Ages can deny. By them the learning and ethics of pagan antiquity were disinterred from the dust of centuries and transmitted and cultivated on the soil of modern Europe. And it was contact with the Saracens that quickened the energies and enlarged the minds of the European Christians, and prepared the way for advances in every direction. Knowledge and scepticism increased together. The Rationalism of Abelard in the twelfth century, the heresies of the Waldenses which gave the Church so much trouble and called forth her vengeance, the spirit of Freethought, of which general complaint was made in the thirteenth century, all furnish evidence of the existence of a strong and growing sentiment against the prevailing system. The poetry of Dante, in which he assigned several popes a place in hell for their vices, the sonnets of Petrarch, in some of which the Church of Rome is characterized as a harlot, and the tales of Boccaccio, wherein the vices of the monks and priests were freely exposed, among other works of less ability and note, tended to increase contempt for the Church and her unholy pretensions. The influence of Roger Bacon, who was imprisoned fourteen years, and finally died in prison, his name blasted as that of a magician, helped the cause of science and progress. The invention of rag paper and afterwards of printing, led to a rapid dissemination of knowledge. An acquaintance with the mariner's compass, by enabling men to make the ocean a highway, and a knowledge of gunpowder, which gave civilized nations an immense advantage over barbarians, proved of incalculable value to the cause of progress. Portugal doubled the Cape of Good Hope and found a maritime passage to India; Spain explored and established herself in a new world; England, in the person of Drake, circumnavigated the world; Copernicus, and later, Galileo, opened to the contemplation of man