



**A Short History of the Saracens: Being a Concise Account of the Rise and Decline of the Saracenic Power and of the Economic, Social and Intellectual ... Destruction of Bagdad, and the Expulsion of**

*Syed Ameer Ali*

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Excerpt from A Short History of the Saracens: Being a Concise Account of the Rise and Decline of the Saracenic Power and of the Economic, Social and Intellectual Development of the Arab Nation From the Earliest Times to the Destruction of Bagdad, and the Expulsion of the Moors From Spain


Of all the older nations that have carried their arms across vast continents, that have left ineffaceable marks of their achievements on the pages of history, and enriched the world of thought by their discoveries and speculations, the Saracens stand to us the closest in time. Modern Europe is still working with the legacy they left behind, with the intellectual wealth they stored for their successors. It is, therefore, a matter of regret that in the West a knowledge of their history should be more or less confined to specialists; whilst in India, a country which was at one time peculiarly subject to the influence of their civilisation, it should be almost unknown. Much of this no doubt is due to the absence of a proper work on the subject. To arrest attention, to enlist sympathy, to evoke interest, something more is needed than a bare narration of wars and conquests, more especially in the case of a people whose name, unlike the Romans and Greeks, has not been made familiar from childhood. In order to prove attractive and interesting, a history of the Saracens should contain not merely a description of their military successes, but also tell us something of their inner life and their social and economic development. Such a work, by tracing the affinity of modern civilisation to theirs, might serve to remove many prejudices and some of the bitterness engendered by the conflict and quarrels of centuries.

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