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POLITICAL CHANGES IN TURKEY

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THE proclamation of the Turkish Constitution in 1908 roused the Mohammedan portion of the empire to a new activity. Political and social influences, of which the Moslem masses had previously had but a dim conception, were now, with a startling emphasis, forced on the attention of Islam. With the introduction of the constitutional régime, the theocratic conception of the state had been, in effect, completely set aside. The nation was now asked to live its political life on a separate plane from that of the Mohammedan faith. Mass meetings were held in all the cities of the empire, at which orators vied with one another in expounding the new conception of nationalism. They laboured to prove that the life of the nation as a whole was a public affair that did not directly involve religious issues. These speakers announced, as though it was a great discovery, that the tests of loyal citizenship were purely civil and moral, and that in relation to the government the forms of a man's religious belief gave him no title to special privileges. Astonishing and ingenious arguments were brought forth from the teaching of their prophet, in the Koran and the Tradition, to show that these new political principles were not foreign to Islam, but were in accord with the purpose of its founder. These mass meetings were addressed by men of the new school, or at any rate, by those who professed to belong to the new school. The zealous leaders of ecclesiastical life—the Ulema, who