

## VIII

### POLITICAL CHANGES IN ARABIA

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**I**N order to fully understand the political changes in Arabia and to fully grasp their significance in the mission fields there, one must be thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs prior to the year A. D. 1908, when the Turkish revolution took place and a new Constitution was given to the people.

When Selim I, of the Ottoman Empire, conquered Egypt and overthrew the Mamelukes he not only received the keys of Mecca and Medina from the Meccan Sherif, but he also got the then Caliph of Egypt, Mohammed XII, to make over to him the right and the title to the caliphate, and as the large majority of the orthodox believers in Islam at once accepted his lordship he came to be looked upon as the *Imam ul Muslimin* or earthly head of the Moslem world who had absolute power over all true believers in the Islamic creed.

To his authority, however, the Arabs of the Yemen never gave ready obedience; as they believed that since Mohammed was an Arab and Islam was generated in Arabia therefore the *Imam ul Muslimin* ought to be an Arab too, and speak the same pure language that Mohammed used in promulgating his message to the world. None other, they hold, than an Arab can be Heaven's vice-gerent to the children of men and that is why Turkish authority has never been able to establish itself in the Yemen in the same strong way and on the same firm basis that it has in Syria and in the Hejaz.