
The Oriental Question.

By Clement Dupont, O. S. B.

(Continued)

The Western provinces of the Turkish Empire in Asia have ever been a wide battlefield open to political and religious strifes. As this most interesting corner of the world justly prides itself in being the cradle of mankind, it may on the other hand be asserted that nowhere else has the inspired Word been more fully realized, "that God delivered mankind up to unending contradictions." Needless to refer to the pages of Sacred History; from the days of Cain, the first murderer, and Nimrod, the first conqueror, the old story repeats itself: as time goes on, humanity is never wanting, for its own punishment, in endless supplies of Pandora's gifts, and no country has been so severely laid under the baneful curse as this, the Land of the first Eden.

In the past fifty years, the Armenian and Syrian massacres have more than once given a warning to the Christian world that Islam's fanaticism is rather slumbering than extinct and might suddenly be awakened were it not for the wholesome fear which christened battleships and 13 in. guns inspire to shaky legged minarets of the Levantine coast.

Now that the constitutional government is facing every day some unforeseen problems, it is not an easy task to foretell whether foreign difficulties will not, at an early date, be further increased by internal dissensions. Whilst Macedonian troubles have come to an end in the European provinces of the Turkish Empire, here, in Asia Minor and Syria, it is the everlasting schismatical sects that create trouble to Catholics, or even to themselves.

On landing upon the Asiatic shores it will be our privilege once more to meet with numerous communities of Greco-Hellenes, a name that distinguishes Greek-born clergymen from aborigenes converted in Asia to the Greek schism, i. e. Greco-Arabs.

Under the despotic and corrupt regime of the Sultan the so-called Orthodox Greek Church, whose headquarters are in Constantinople, had become invested with a semi-official cha-