



GROUP OF ARMENIANS.

driven from their devastated homes by the ruthless Kurds from the mountains, they have carried into other lands the same commercial instincts as the Jew, the same keenness in trade, the same faculty of growing rich; and wherever they are met with they are still Armenians, the ancestral type unchanged; but, at the same time, always peaceable and submissive subjects.

This same feature of persistence of type marks, in a still more interesting way, the history of their religion. No doubt the strongest plea in the appeal which the sufferings of these poor people make upon our sympathies is that of a common Christianity, that they are one of the very oldest Christian nations in the world, one that has kept its faith and form of worship almost intact from the first century to the present, through the unparalleled persecutions of one thousand years. They claim to have received the Christian faith from the apostle Thaddeus, who, they say, accompanied by Bartholomew and Judas, preached the Gospel and founded a Christian church in Armenia as early as the year 34. Traces of Christian worship in the country at a very early date go to bear out this story, though it can only be regarded as legendary. But there can be no doubt of the historical fact that St. Gregory "the Illuminator," who converted the King of Armenia and

many of his subjects to the faith, through his influence, was consecrated by the Archbishop of Cæsarea to be Bishop of Armenia in 302. And his successors, in unbroken line, under the title, first of Patriarch, and subsequently of "Catholicos," of whom there are now five, have continued to rule that Church to this day.

The ecclesiastical status of the Church of Armenia is that of one of the separated churches of the East, cut off from communion with the orthodox Greek Church. The separation took place A.D. 491, and was due to the non-acceptance by the Armenian Church of the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, in that year, which condemned the doctrines of Eutychius. But there appears to have been some misunderstanding as to the effect of the decrees which led to this schism; for although the Church of Armenia is to this day classed as an Eutychian Church, it never adopted or favored that heresy. In fact, it is almost purely orthodox; and while in *formal* heresy is so far recognized that Greek priests are allowed, under certain circumstances, to communicate individual Armenians.

With the exception of the secessions which took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, under the agitation of Jesuit missionaries, and which led to the formation of the Armenian Uniat Church, the ancient Church of Armenia has maintained its doctrine and