

crystals and varied red felspath upon dark ground like a coal. It may be an aerolite, some say a lava stone. It is bordered all round with a large plate of silver about a foot broad, and is worn uneven by the touch and kiss of pilgrims. The Moslem world is full of traditions concerning it. It was originally white, but became black in the surface by virtue of its continual weeping on account of the sins of men. The tears were as unseen as they were silent, and left the interior of the stone as white as before. Others think the continual touching of the millions of pilgrims has changed its color, as all pilgrims, in marching round the Kāba, either touch it or kiss the finger. Some call it "the right hand of God." It is reputed to be one of the precious stones of Paradise, which came to earth with Adam, and having been preserved miraculously during the flood, was brought back to Mecca by the Angel Gabriel and given to Abraham to build in the Kāba. It is said that it once was stolen and could not be purchased for five thousand pieces of gold, but was afterward restored.

Here is then a survival of a polytheistic "stone age," a symbol of an idolatrous cultus which is appropriated, account for it as we may, by the most fanatical monotheism the world has seen. Destroy this, and you despoil Mecca of that which gives it worth. Strike out Mecca, and where were Islam?

Iconoclastic beyond any body of religionists known, and flaunting the "green banner" as the symbol of hatred to idol-worship, one hundred and seventy-five millions of Islam turn their faces in prayer to a spot which finds its most sacred characteristic in a relic of old Arabian stone worship. Strike this out, we have said, and the Moslem world has no geographical nor communal center.

THE HANYF.

We have little sympathy with the

idea that the Hanyf were remnants of the Israelites and that "the belief of Abraham" and the traditions and usages which Muhammad adopted at Mecca were Israelitish, and not heathen. Yet we must recognize the Hanyf as another Muhammadan element here asserting itself before Muhammad appeared. They had early taken the name *Moslem*, the believer, from the root *Islam*, "submission." They claimed to be blindly submissive to the commands of God, according to their name. What they were besides is the subject of widely divergent opinion: A sect, say some, which arose under the influence of the Arabian religions in protest against idol-worship and low morals; a remnant of the Israelites, say others, who made their way into Arabia in the times of David and again in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. It might seem at first glance of little import who or what they were, but it is not so. The question whether Muhammadanism was merely a natural and national reformation is involved in this, in part, as a primary question. Was there already a revolt in the heart of the people against the abuses of idolatry? Had Arab culture reached a stage where the secret thought of the best people demanded something purer, less gross, less offensive; a simpler, truer recognition of God and ethical goodness?

Judaism and Christianity had contributed to the Arab stock of ideas those of revelation and the moral government of God, and had intensified at least, the doctrine of the unity of God, even if we suppose that, underlying this Arabian polytheism there was the apprehension of it all the while.

Was Muhammadanism simply a return to the primitive faith, as Confucianism was to the primitive doctrine for which the Arab mind was ready, or which, in fact, was evolved by the national heart and