

tic shapes, while others forever unseen uttered prophetic warnings and forecast the future.

Society was of low type. Females were wretched and degraded, and licentiousness was open. The number of wives was unrestricted, and divorce and remarriage were subject to caprice. There was a limit to the period of divorce beyond which remarriage was prohibited, and a man might keep his wife in perpetuated divorce by remarrying her just before the expiration of the limited term, and redivorcing her at once. Daughters were killed at pleasure or buried alive. Women mixed in public assemblies without restriction.

THE STONE AGE SURVIVAL.

Of this pre-Islamic fetishism Muhammad retained the most prominent feature. Mecca is essential to the communal life of Islam. It would disintegrate without it.

What is it, then, that gives Mecca its importance? It is the Kāba and the Kāba alone. And it is the black stone built into it which renders the Kāba of any worth. This has made Mecca a place of pilgrimage from a period long anterior to Muhammad. From "time out of record" Mecca has been a place of pilgrimage from "a circuit of a thousand miles, interrupted only by the sea."

The Kāba has been rebuilt several times. Muhammad found it damaged by a flood and falling into decay, being without a roof and despoiled of some of its treasures, and the remainder insecure. He built it A.D. 605, and it was rebuilt A.D. 1627. The best authorities think it to have been connected with systems of idolatry prevalent in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. Some have supposed it devoted to Saturn, and it has been the emblem of four different faiths, Hindu, Sabeen, Gueber, and Moslem. This "Cube House," or Kāba, is called by the Moslems "the house of God." It is forty or fifty feet in height, and fourteen by eighteen paces in ex-

tent, inclosed by a wall that is in turn surrounded by a colonnade of three hundred and eighty pillars of marble, granite and porphyry, which support one hundred and two small domes. It has but one door, which is opened but two or three times a year, and is reached by a ladder. It is wholly coated with silver, and has gilt ornaments. Wax candles are burned before it nightly, and perfuming pans of musk and aloes. The water-spout is golden. Veiling the Kāba is a very ancient custom. A covering is stretched over the building; sometimes it is Yemen cloth, sometimes Egyptian linen, sometimes red brocade or even black silk. To furnish this veil is the emblem of Moslem royalty. The Khalif Sultan of Egypt and the Turkish Emperor have furnished it.

About one-third of the distance from the top a band of golden embroidery of Koran texts is placed across the building. Poems, for which prizes have been awarded, are also hung in golden text within the building.

The whole territory about Mecca, five, seven or ten miles distant, is considered sacred. No twig must be cut, no fowl must be killed, within this precinct. Touching this line, the pilgrim must clothe himself in two woolen wrappers, and a pair of scant slippers.

Since the second year of the Moslem era the Kāba has been the prayer-point (Kibleh) for Moslems in all the world. The direction of Mecca is marked in every mosque—in the desert of Africa, on the levels of the Gangetic valley, on the high tables of Central Asia, and in the cities of Turkey. Five times a day, wherever the Moslem spreads his prayer-carpet, he bows with his face toward Mecca.

But remember what has already been said. *The black stone is essential to the Kāba.* It is a fragment of volcanic salts, sprinkled with colored