

somewhat different forms, the story of a bright appearance in the Western sky, connected with a singular dream of the emperor, which the astrologers and soothsayers interpreted to mean that a great sage had arisen in the West, who was ruler of a powerful country named Medina, and that it was very important, in the interests of the empire, that friendly relations be established with him; that then the Emperor sent an embassy to Mohammed, who appointed three envoys, of whom only one lived to reach China, by way of Si Ngan Fu, and afterwards settled in Canton. This sounds wonderfully like the story of the introduction of Buddhism, and may be taken with at least one grain of salt. This much, however, appears to be true, that in the early part of the Tang dynasty, about A. D. 628, a maternal uncle of Mohammed, Wahib Abi Kabcha, came to China, was received with much favor by the Emperor, and established himself in Canton. P. Darby de Thiersant states that "this man obtained an authorization to build a mosque at Canton, and, at the same time, the right for his co-religionists to profess freely their worship in the empire." He then goes on to say: "Wahib Abi Kabcha, his mission accomplished, returned to Arabia in 632, hoping to find again the Prophet, but on arriving he was apprised of his death, which caused him profound grief. He rested for a time, and when Abu Becker had formed the Koran from the scattered leaves left by Mohammed, he took the holy book and set out again for China. He suffered much in returning to Canton, where he died, worn out by the fatigue of the voyage. He was interred in one of the suburbs of the city, where his tomb remains until this day, an object of veneration to all believers in the extreme East. It is to him that Muslims are indebted for the construction of the most ancient mosque in

China. The first Mohammedan temple, built afterwards in the Northwest, at Si Ngan Fu, one of the two capitals of the empire, dates from A. D. 742, from which we may suppose that Islam did not penetrate by land into the north of the empire until that time. In the flourishing period of Kai Yuen (713-742), relates the Si Yu Chen, 'the barbarians of the West arrived *en masse* in the Middle Kingdom, and, as by an irruption from more than a hundred kingdoms, removed at least a thousand leagues, bearing with them as presents their sacred books, which were received and deposited in the hall for translation of sacred books and canons of the imperial palace. Starting from that epoch, the religious doctrines of different countries of the West spread themselves and were practiced openly in the empire of Tang.'

"The first real nucleus of Mohammedans of the West implanted in China was a contingent of 4,000 Arab soldiers, which the Kaliph Abu Giafer sent, in the year 755, to succor the Emperor Sou Tsong, menaced by the rebel An-lo-chan, and who, as a recompense for their services, permitted them to establish themselves in the principal cities of the empire. These soldiers, who married Chinese wives, may be considered the first stock origin of Mohammedan Chinese."

The above extract contains the substance of what is known concerning the entrance of Islam into China, and the account is corroborated by the fact that those who have given attention to the matter say that the Mohammedan Chinese are different by race from other Chinese; that in them may be clearly recognized a mixture of Arabic, Turkish and Chinese blood.

From this time, A. D. 755, or thereabout, until the latter part of the ninth century the trade of Canton with Arabs and other people from