

the pillars of the religion of Islam, but it has proved one of the strongest bonds of union and has always exercised a tremendous influence as a missionary agency. Even to-day the pilgrims who return from Mecca to their native villages in Java, India, and west Africa are fanatical ambassadors of the greatness and glory of Islam. From an ethical standpoint, the Mecca pilgrimage, with its superstitious and childish ritual, is a blot upon Mohammedan monotheism. But as a great magnet to draw the Moslem world together with an annual and ever-widening *esprit de corps*, the Mecca pilgrimage is without a rival. The number of pilgrims that come to Mecca varies from year to year. The vast majority arrive by sea from Egypt, India, and the Malay Archipelago. The pilgrim caravan from Syria and Arabia by land is growing smaller every year, for the roads are very unsafe. It will probably increase again on the completion of the Hejaz railway from Damascus to Mecca. All told, the present number is from sixty to ninety thousand pilgrims each year.

For the details of the pilgrimage one must read Burckhardt, Burton, or other of the dozen travelers who have risked their lives in visiting the forbidden cities of Islam. In brief, the ceremonies are as follows: After donning the

**Observances
at Mecca**