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ISLAM PILGRIMS MEET AT MECCA,

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Mecca - chief town of the Hejaz in Saudi Arabia and a privileged Holy Place from days long before Mohamed. Not the sanctuary of a single tribe, but a place of pilgrimage. In timeless fashion the faithful make their way to Mecca from all over the Moslem world. The ceremony of the Tawaf - where the worshipper kisses and touches the objects of his veneration, but first he makes his seven-fold circuit of the sanctuary. When he came Mohamed destroyed the pagan idols but left the characteristic form of worship - the seven fold circuit, and the kissing of the stone. Now His Majesty, the King of Saudi Arabia on the right, welcomes other distinguished Moslems, including the Governor General of Pakistan, for whatever their country, Moslems are united in the faith that brings them to Mecca.

On foot and on camels, the pilgrims leave their camp to pay their homage - and the first duty that awaits the visitor (be he native or pilgrim), is to kiss the sacred stone..The lowly and the high..Now the Begum Aga Khan accompanied by the Governor General step forward in their turn to perform the rite.

Long before Islam, the Kaba, where the ceremony takes place, was where the Meccans prayed and did sacrifice, and Mohamed in his wisdom transplanted the old usages into Islam, like the throwing of seven stones in the name of Allah at a cairn.

The sacred doves take wing once more over Mecca and the Begum and the Governor General depart, united with their fellow believers.