

tash River a narrow strip of green fields between precipitous red walls, and there we encountered the first of the famous Mohammedan shrines of Central Asia, a group of votive poles bearing flowing yak-tails, sheep-skins, horse-tails, and streamers of cloth, after the Buddhist fashion. As we approached the shrine, Akhmet, the servant who was with me, became visibly excited. With flushed cheeks he said to the guide:—

“Tell me a long way before we reach the shrine, so that I may be sure to dismount in time.”

A quarter of a mile away, after offering a prayer, he began to walk; and at two hundred feet from the mud wall enclosing the shrine—an unusual feature—took off his shoes and prayed again. A sheikh, or priest, appeared.

“Can one buy a sheep here?” demanded Akhmet eagerly.

“No, there are no sheep: they have all been driven up to the head of the valley; but there are some goats.”

“Very well, bring me a goat, and bring it quickly.”

In his fervor, Akhmet did not even ask the price of the animal, although usually he was a keen bargainer; and later, when I offered to pay for it, he said:—

“No, this is a sacrifice. I must pay for it myself.”

With surprising speed, two sheikhs, the one old, wizened, and miserly, the other middle-aged, fat, and gluttonous, brought a goat, together with wood, water, fire, and a huge iron kettle. All the able-bodied men in the vicinity found out what was going on as if by magic. Within an hour and a half, they had killed, cooked, and eaten the animal; its horns and skin had been added to the trophies hanging