

In my book *Trans-Himalaya* I have related how a lucky chance brought me just in time to see the greatest annual holiday of the Tibetans, the New Year's festival, which was celebrated in Tashi-lunpo two days after my arrival at Shigatse. But before that I had the same good fortune in Tebbes, which I reached two days before the greatest annual festival of the Shiites in the first month of the Mohammedan lunar year, Moharrem. The first ten days in this month, which in the year 1906 fell in March, are consecrated to the sorrowful memory of Hussein's martyrdom at Kerbela. He was the second son of the fourth Khalif, Ali, and in the struggle with Yezid and the Ommeyyads lost both the battle and his life on the 10th of Moharrem, 680. The day is named Ashura, and no other day in the year calls forth to such a degree the religious enthusiasm and fanaticism of the Shiites. In all the towns of Persia the anniversary is celebrated with song and plays, with loud wailing and tears. The holy martyr's death and the defeat of the followers of Ali are bewailed, their bravery extolled, and the victorious fiend Yezid and his troops are overwhelmed with abuse. All the most popular events in the religious history of the Shiites are represented on the stage by more or less capable actors. The soldiers of the various armies appear in full harness, whole caravans exhibit their baggage and camps, a mollah intones the narrative of the fate of the family of Ali, and troops of fanatical volunteers go about the circus-like arena bawling and howling, "Ya Hussein, ya Hussein." Its name is *tekkieh*, and such a show-ground is to be found in every Persian town, in the larger towns several of them; even in such an insignificant place as Chahrdeh there is a *tekkieh*. But the passion-play itself is called *taziyah*.

It was to the *tekkieh* of Tebbes we now betook ourselves, after making a hurried inspection of the architectural beauties of the small town.

We enter an octagonal court where the play has just commenced. In the middle is a basin. The ground is paved with stone flags, and here and there in the pavement is a gap where a palm raises its noble trunk into the air. On the north and south *pishtaks*, façades with open vaulting