

and portals, face the court. In front of the façade on the north side is a large tent with its edges and folds stretched out by ropes. Here sits a mollah and reads the legend of the passion in a loud, clear, sonorous voice.

As a *kafir* or unbeliever I could not go too near. My friend, the Governor, who fulfilled all my wishes with the greatest amiability, had at first expressed some anxiety with regard to my presence at the play. He could not answer for his countrymen's self-control, and for their outbursts of fanaticism. Their fury against the enemies of religion might find in me a convenient object of attack. But to obviate all unpleasant incidents and to secure my complete safety he surrounded me with a needlessly strong guard, which took up its position in a vaulted recess where I stood with my camera, and partly on the stone pavement before it, above which the floor of the recess was raised about 3 feet.

The court swarmed with spectators, but I had a good view over their heads of what was going on, though I missed some details. The actual play was performed on a raised platform in the tent, and the distance was so great and the shadow inside so dark that I could only distinguish the gaudily dressed actors who represented Hussein and Yezid and their men, and hear how they wrangled with one another. At any rate, they reproduced part of the tragic story, which has been related so many times already that I need not recapitulate its changing scenes and phases.

The part of the play which represented the concentration of the troops at Kerbela, the march of the armies to the field of battle, and the passage of the baggage caravans through the desert, were seen much better, because the men and animals, who took part in them, were not drawn up in the tent but wandered about round the basin and therefore passed just in front of our "box." There marched real caravans of camels, the finest and tallest animals that could be obtained, elegantly decorated with cloths and finery, red rosettes, ribands and tags, bells and rattles, and whole rows of boys sitting on them. Then came trotting mules carrying *kajeveh* or wooden cages covered with red and blue cloth. In such pairs of panniers women ride, but