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TRÜBNER'S
ORIENTAL SERIES.

THE
SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY
ARTHUR GEORGE WARNER, M.A.
AND
EDMOND WARNER, B.A.

*"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry."*

FIRDAUSÍ

VOL. IV

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THE SHÁHNÁMA

VOL. IV.

A



ABBREVIATIONS

C.—Macan's edition of the Sháhnáma.	
L.—Lumsden's	do.
P.—Mohl's	do.
T.—Tíhrán	do.
V.—Vullers'	do.

- DEI. J. Darmesteter, *Études Iraniennes*.
- DZA. Professor Darmesteter's Trans. of the Zandavasta in the Sacred Books of the East. References to Parts¹ and pages.
- EHI. The History of India as told by its own Historians. By Sir H. M. Elliot, K.C.B.
- MZA. Rev. L. H. Mills' Trans. of the Zandavasta in the Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Part and pages.
- RM. The Mahábhárata translated into English Prose (*by Kisari Mohan Ganguli*). Published by Pratápa Chandra Rái, C.I.E.
- WPT. Dr. E. W. West's Trans. of the Pahlaví Texts in the Sacred Books of the East. Reference to Part and pages.

¹ The second edition of Part I. is referred to unless otherwise specified.

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

á as in "water."

í as in "pique."

ú as in "rude."

a as in "servant."

i as in "sin."

u as in "foot."

ai as *i* in "time."

au as *ou* in "cloud."

g is always hard as in "give."

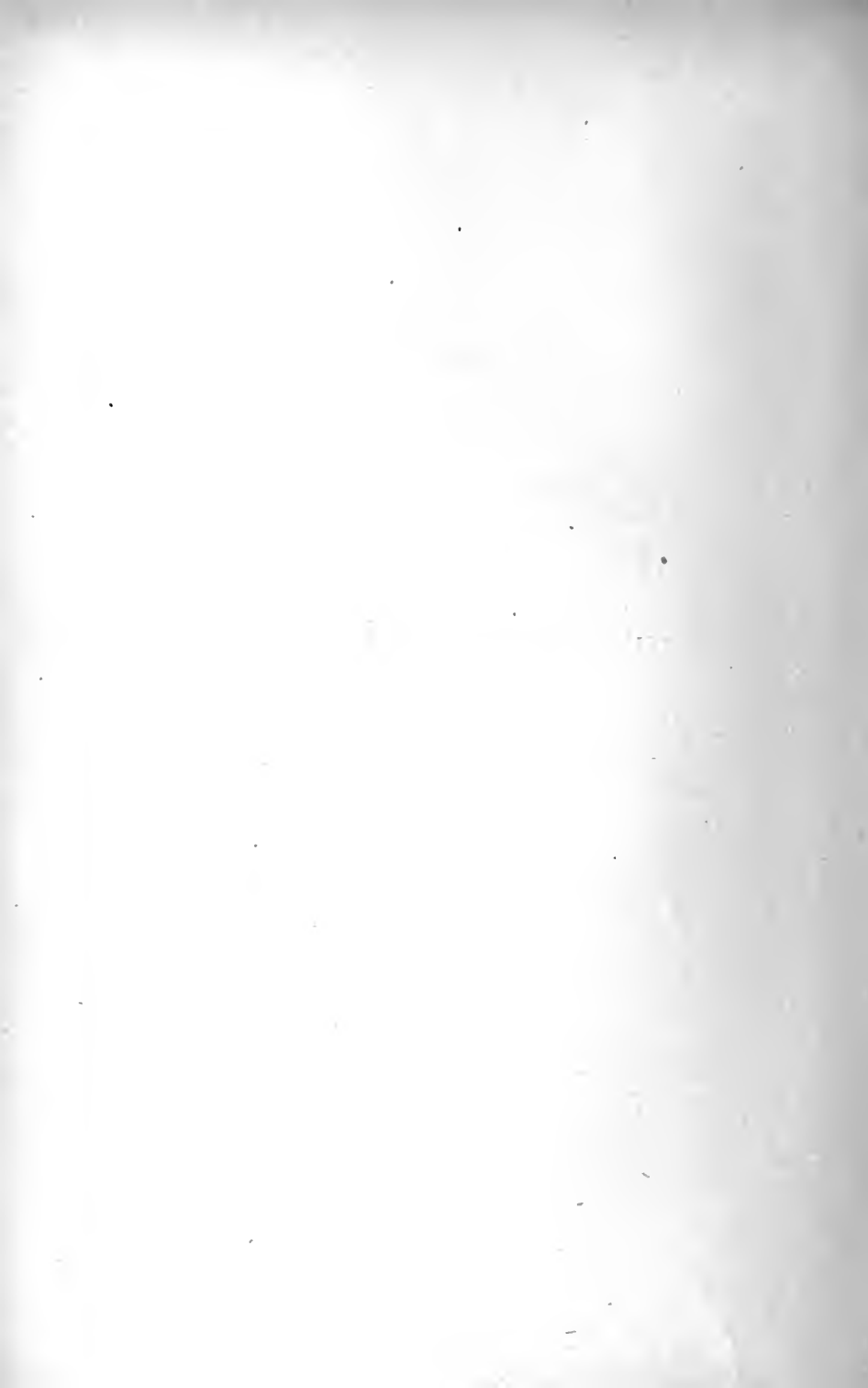
kh as *ch* in the German "buch."

zh as *z* in "azure."

II

THE KAIANIAN DYNASTY

(Continued)



XIII

KAI KHUSRAU (*continued*).

PART VI

THE BATTLE OF THE TWELVE RUKHS

ARGUMENT.

Afrásiyáb and Kai Khusrau continue the war with renewed vigour, Pírán and Gúdarz being in chief command on the Túránian and Íránian sides respectively. After some abortive negotiations the campaign opens, Húmán and Bízhan fight in single combat, and the former is slain. A general engagement between the two hosts follows, but the result is indecisive and both generals send for reinforcements. In the interval they arrange a combat of eleven champions a side in which the Íránians are completely victorious, all the Túránians, including Pírán himself, being slain with the exception of Gurwí—the executioner of Siyáwush—who is taken alive by Gív. Kai Khusrau comes up, and Lahhák and Fārshíward—Pírán's two surviving brothers—abandon their army and take to flight. They are pursued and captured by Gustaham, who is himself severely wounded but is saved by Bízhan and cured by Kai Khusrau, to whom also the Túránian army capitulates, and Gurwí is put to death.

NOTE

The Battle of the Twelve Rukhs or Champions is one of the most celebrated and favourite passages in the Sháhname from the Persian point of view, probably owing to the completeness of the Íránian triumph, the poet being determined, in spite of some evident qualms of conscience, that the Túránians should not get the best of it in any way. The English reader being unprejudiced probably would prefer a more equally balanced result.

The word Rukh is the familiar Rook of the game of chess, and

is used metaphorically by the poet as an equivalent for Champion. The word really means cheek, the two sides of the chess-board where the Rooks or Castles are placed being looked upon as its two cheeks. Formerly, moreover, the Castles moved as the Queen does now, and were therefore by far the most powerful pieces or Champions of the board, the piece which we call the Queen being then restricted to close attendance on the King and to a single move, as appears from the poet's own account of the game when he gives the legend of its origin, after describing its introduction into Persia during the reign of Núshirwán.

The reader will notice that there are really only eleven combatants on each side in the battle of the champions. To make up the full number the preliminary struggle between Húmán and Bizhan must be included, and even then there are only eleven combatants on the Iránian side to twelve on the Túránian, as Bizhan fights twice.

Bizhan appears to have been a special favourite of the poet, who never loses an opportunity of putting him forward.

§ 1. The Prelude is translated in the metre of the original, which, the reader may be reminded, is uniform throughout the Sháhnáma.

§ 4. "We will not rest and sleep, my mace and I,
The field of battle and Afrásiyáb."

These lines, which form a couplet in the original, are said to have been quoted to Mahmúd on a certain occasion by one of his ministers, and to have caused the Sultán to seek too late for a reconciliation with Firdausí.¹ The tradition goes back to within a century of the poet's death. The reading of the first hemistich of the couplet varies.

§§ 8-11. The time of the usually prudent Húmán being at hand he becomes fey, as Bahrám did on a previous occasion.²

§ 14. Shabáhang (Sirius) is given elsewhere as the name of Farhád's steed.³ Bizhan's steed was called Shabrang.⁴ Shabáhang seems used *metri causá* for Shabrang. One would gather from another passage, taken alone, that Bizhan used Giv's steed in the battle with Húmán.⁵

¹ See Vol. i. p. 45.

² See Vol. iii. p. 95.

³ *Id.* p. 313.

⁴ *Id.* and pp. 296 and 302.

⁵ See p. 45.

§ I

The Prelude

THE world, while thou anguishest, passeth away, V. 1141
 Abate both the woe and the weal of the day,
 But if thou adventure the pathway of greed
 The process of this world is longsome indeed !
 One view is—'Tis well after greatness to seek
 All be that it lurk mid the Dragon's own reek,
 And servants of greed and provokers of strife
 Will hear not commendment from any in life :
 The other—What reck if, since none can abide,
 Our Hostel of Sojourn be narrow or wide ?
 Whenas the tall Cypress is bent in the grove,
 And darkened the light of the Lustre above,
 When leafage is withered, when roots are unsound,
 And top is beginning to nod toward the ground,
 From dust having issued to dust it will go,
 While all is dismayment and horror and woe.
 Man's nature, when prudence and wisdom are his, V. 1142
 Accepteth untroubled the world as it is,
 Yet travail of body, if long be thy stay,
 Enforceth the need for thy passing away.
 Life's ocean is deep, and no bottom we see ;
 A hoard 'tis of secrets whose door hath no key.
 Thy wants will but greaten what while thou remain,
 And each day's provision prove provand for pain.
 But three things are needful—food, raiment, and bed :
 For these no reproaches descend on thy head.
 Content thee, for all else is travail and greed,
 And greed is a torment no lighter than need.
 Thou knowest that this world is fleeting, why let
 Thy soul and thy spirit with covetise fret ?
 Enjoy what thou hast, seek not more to possess,
 For greed will but make thine own glory the less.

§ 2

How Afrásiyáb called together his Host

The Turkman monarch's heart, as I have heard,
 Was ever vexed by greed. When he had quitted
 The field where Rustam gloomed the world for him
 He fared apace until he reached Khallukh,
 Avoiding other kings in his disgrace,
 And entered with a heart fulfilled with anguish
 His palace with his prudent veterans—
 Pírán and Garsíwaz, his counsellor,
 And Shída, Kurákhán and Karsiyún,
 Húmán, Kulbád, Rúfn son of Pírán—
 A warrior-crocodile—and Farshídwad.
 He spake with them at large of what had passed,
 Recalling every circumstance, and said :—
 “Since I assumed the crown of sovereignty,
 And sun and moon bestowed on me their light,
 I have held sway among the potentates,
 And nobody hath turned aside my rein ;
 Thus ever since the war with Minúchihr
 Írán hath not laid hand upon Túrán.
 Now from Írán they make a night-attack
 Upon my life at mine own palace-door !
 The craven hath become courageous,
 The Stag hath ventured to the Lion's lair !
 We must be up and doing in this strife,
 Or they will make our marches reek. 'Twere well
 To scatter messengers about the realm,
 And gather of the Turkmans and from Chín
 A thousand thousand girded for the fray
 To compass all the army of Írán,
 And make a battlefield on every side.”

V. 1143

Then all the priests advised him shrewdly, saying :—
 “Cross we Jíhún and beat the royal tymbals

On yon wide plain, and, speeding night and day,
 Camp at Ámwí; that is the place for battle,
 For bloodshed, and for fighting Gív and Rustam—
 Those haughty, city-taking warriors,
 Who privily have dipped their hands in bane.”

Thereat the monarch's face and fortune brightened,
 And, as the great are wont, he praised the priests
 And paladins, then called and charged a scribe.
 He sent ambassadors to the Faghfúr
 And monarch of Khutan, sent through the realm,
 Moreover, letters to all chiefs and nobles,
 And summoned troops because he purposed war,
 Enraged at Rustam's doings. Two weeks passed,
 Then from the Turkman states, Chín, and Khutan,
 A host assembled; like a troubled sea
 Earth heaved; it was so that the waste was hidden.
 Afrásiyáb collected in the city

V. 1144

All horse-herds running wild, undid the sacks
 Of treasures closely kept and handed on
 For generations since the time of Túr,
 And parted with dínárs by night and day.
 When all the army was equipped for war,
 So that there was sufficiency for all,
 He chose out fifty thousand warriors,
 Arrayed for strife and eager to engage,
 And said to Shída, his heroic son,
 Exalted o'er the Lions of the fight:—
 “I give to thee this well-appointed host;
 Prepare to march toward Khárazm; there guard
 The borders and be ever girt for battle.”

He bade Pírán choose fifty thousand men
 Of Chín, and said: “Go thou against Írán,
 And set a throne above the young Sháh's throne;
 Seek not in any wise the door of peace,
 And speak no word unless of war and vengeance;
 To mingle fire and water spoileth both.”

Those two illustrious, prudent paladins
 Went at the bidding of Afrásiyáb,
 The old at leisure and the young in haste,
 With iron mace and sword and golden gong,
 And, like a cloud that thundered, roared along.

§ 3

How Kai Khusrau sent Gúdarz to fight the Túránians

Thereafter tidings reached the conquering Sháh :—

“ A Turkman host hath marched upon Írán.

Afrásiyáb, that tyrant-miscreant,

Can neither rest nor slumber in his vengeance,

But fain would raise his head from its disgrace,

And from all sides hath sent forth troops to war ;

He rubbeth poison on his lance's point,

If so he may turn rein upon Írán.

V. 1145 Three hundred thousand warlike cavaliers

Will cross Jíhún and thence send up the dust

In battle-time to heaven. The warriors

Can sleep not at his court for tymbal-din.

What with the blare of brass and clang of bell

Thou wouldst have said: ‘ Men's hearts are in their
 mouths!’

If that host cometh to Írán for battle

No lion, lusty though he be, will meet them.

Pírán is posted by Afrásiyáb

With no small army on the Íránian coasts,

While fifty thousand girded for the fight

Have marched toward the borders of Khárazm.

Their chief is Shída of the lion-heart,

Whose scimitar will pluck the core from fire.

The troops resemble maddened elephants,

Such as would level mountains in the strife.”

The monarch at the news sat full of thought,

Then said: "Ye wise! the archimages say:—
 'The Turkman moon, when heaven's height is won,
 Shall meet disaster from the Íránian sun.
 Strike the black snake that cometh from its bed
 Toward the cudgel with uplifted head.
 The king that shall unjustly plant a tree
 Will lose his fortune and his sovereignty.'"

Then, having summoned all the archimages,
 He laid before them that which he had heard.
 The great men and the warlike sages sat
 In secret with the monarch of Írán,
 As Zál and Rustam, as Gúdarz and Gív,
 Shídúsh, Farhád, and brave Ruhhám, Bízhan,
 Ashkash and Gustaham, Gurgín and Zanga,
 And Gazhdaham, great Tús, son of Naudar,
 And Faríburz, blest scion of Káu's,
 With all the other nobles of the host,
 Who were the worldlord's flock. He thus addressed
 The paladins: "The Turkmans seek to war
 Against my throne, so we too must prepare."

V. 1146

He gave command and at his palace-gate
 The trumpets blared and brazen cymbals clashed.
 He went forth from the palace to the plain.
 They set his throne upon an elephant; .
 He mounted, dropped the ball within the cup,
 And "smeared earth," thou hadst said, "with indigo,"
 Such was earth's hue; the air was black with dust;
 The brave troops of the host resembled leopards,
 With maces in their claws and war at heart;
 The land heaved like a sea with warriors.
 A proclamation went forth from the court:—
 "Ye paladins of the Íránian host!
 None that can ply the stirrup and the rein
 May now abide at home in idleness."

The monarch gave command: "We need," he said,
 "Three hundred thousand warlike cavaliers,

With warriors and mighty men from Rúm
 And Hind, and gallant Arabs of the desert,
 Accoutred well—fierce Lions girdle-girt,
 Those that reach not the presence of the Sháh
 In forty days shall not obtain a crown.”

They sent out horsemen with the royal letters
 On all sides. Two weeks passed; throughout the realm
 Troops were in motion at the Sháh's command,
 And battle-cries went up from all the world.
 One morn at cock-crow rose the tymbals' din
 On all sides, and the chiefs of provinces
 Arrayed their troops before the monarch's gate.
 He oped his ancient treasures and bestowed
 Such largess that all heads were crowned with gold,
 While with horse-armour and men's coats of mail
 The massed array looked like a hill of iron.

V. 1147

As soon as this equipment was complete
 The Sháh made choice among the cavaliers
 Of thirty thousand armed with scimitars,
 Put them in Rustam's charge, and said: “Famed hero!
 Lead these toward Sístán and Hindústán.
 When at Ghaznín make for the upper road,¹
 So thou mayst win a signet, crown, and throne;
 But when thou hast achieved the sovereignty,
 And pard and sheep are drinking at one trough,
 Give Farámarz the signet and the crown
 Together with such troops as he may choose;
 Then sound the kettledrums, the horns, and pipes,
 And stay not in Kashmír or in Kábul,
 Because this war against Afrásiyáb
 Depriveth me of provand, rest, and sleep.”

He gave the Aláns and Gharcha to Luhrásp,²
 And said: “O hero of illustrious race!
 Go with a mountain-like array. Select it
 Out of the host, and lead thy seasoned horsemen

¹ “la route du nord” (Mohl).² The future Sháh.

To rob the Turkmans of the breath of life."

He bade Ashkash march forth with thirty thousand—

Impetuous Lions, brandishers of spears,
An army that was like a ravening wolf—
Toward Khárazm with mighty kettledrums,
Set up his place hard by the entering in,
And challenge Shída to the battlefield.

He gave a fourth host to Gúdarz and said :—

"O hero of a race of paladins !

Go with the great men of Írán, with Zanga,
Gurgín and Gustaham, Shídúsh, Farhád,
Kharrád and Gív, the general Guráza,
And brave Ruhhám."

He bade them arm for war,

And hasten to the marches of Túrán.

Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, the general,

The paladins and nobles, all obeyed

And mounted, and Gúdarz assumed command.

V. 1148

The Sháh then bade him : "Thou art bound for battle ;

See that thou do not aught injuriously :

Destroy no house that is inhabited,

And see that no non-combatant be harmed

Since God approveth not our evil deeds ;

Here we have no abiding but pass on.

In leading forth the host toward Túrán

Keep head and heart both cool. Be not agog

Like Tús, mount not the drums on all occasions.

Be just to every one in every thing,

Remembering God—the Source of good. Dispatch

Some wise and heedful veteran to Pírán,

Thus by much counsel gain that general's ear,

And clothe him in the raiment of good will."

The captain of the host said to the Sháh :—

"Thy hest is higher than the orbèd moon.

I will go even as thou biddest me,

For thou art worldlord and I am a slave."

Then from the portal of the paladin
 Shouts rose; the earth rocked with the din of drums;
 The soldiers trooped to camp, and all the scene
 Grew dark with horsemen's dust. Before the host
 Three score fierce elephants weighed down the world,
 And of those mighty elephants of war
 Four were caparisoned for royal use;
 Upon their backs was placed a throne of gold
 Whereon a Sháh might sit encrowned in state,
 But there the monarch bade Gúdarz to sit,
 And, as he urged the elephants, the dust
 Suggested this conceit of happy presage:—
 "Pírán's soul will we make go up in smoke
 As these beasts send the dust up with their feet."

V. 1149

Then by the Sháh's command the host moved on
 From stage to stage, inflicting harm on none.

§ 4

*How Gív was made the Bearer of Overtures from
 Gúdarz to Pírán*

Now when Gúdarz was drawing near Raibad
 He chose him captains out of all the host—
 A thousand valiant wielders of the spear,
 Exalted and renowned, and furthermore
 Ten famous horsemen of the Íránians,
 All ready speakers well beseen in fight.
 The chief next summoned Gív, told what the Sháh
 Had said, and added this: "My prudent son,
 Whose head is lifted over many a head!
 I have selected for thee worthy troops—
 Men who are chieftains in the provinces—
 That thou mayst make a journey to Pírán
 To speak to him and to receive his answer.
 Thus say to him: 'I with a host have reached

Raibad according to the Sháh's commands.
 Thou knowest what thy words and deeds have been,
 What peace and toil and trouble have been thine,
 And how the country of Túrán hath girt,
 With its illustrious kings, its loins for ill.
 The glorious Farídún had cause to weep,
 While in this world, for pain and misery,
 Írán was full of pain, the Sháh of grief,
 The moon shone not through mourning for Iraj.
 Thou only of the people of Túrán
 Dost pride thyself on kindness and good faith,
 Though that word kindness is a lie with thee ;
 I see not peace and kindness in thy heart ;
 Howbeit that courteous Sháh of ours said thus
 To me : " Address him with all gentleness,
 For in the days of noble Siyáwush
 He built no ill, and hath a claim upon me
 As being guiltless of my father's blood."

The Sháh condoneth all thy past misdeeds,
 And holdeth evil on thy part as good,
 Since thou hast wronged not any of our Sháhs.
 Thou art not to be slaughtered by my hand
 Because thy many faults are overlooked ;
 Else in this warfare with Afrásiyáb
 Thy destiny would make short work of thee.
 The great men of Írán and this my son
 Will tell thee mine advice. Hold parle with them ;
 Then, if thou art persuaded, thou art quit
 Of care and sure of life, thy land and kindred
 Will flourish, and thy neck escape my sword ;
 But if the fault be thine thy life will be
 In danger from the Sháh, and in this strife
 We will not rest and sleep, my mace and I,
 The field of battle and Afrásiyáb,
 To take revenge on whom our sovereign
 Hath no need to array a mighty host ;

V. 1150

But if thou wilt attend to mine advice,
 And wilt give credit to my prudent words,
 Then first: all those that brought about the feud,
 Those that rolled up their sleeves for shedding blood,
 Put forth their hands to murder Siyáwush,
 And wrecked the world by their unrighteousness,
 Thou shalt dispatch to me in chains like dogs
 That we may send them to the Sháh, for him
 To take their heads or to forgive their crimes.
 My Sháh, who is the warden of the world,
 Hath given me a list of all their names.

V. 1151

Hast thou not heard that which the mighty lion
 Said to the wolf—a pregnant utterance?
 “Fate hath no place except the dust in store
 For him whose hand hath shed a monarch’s gore.”
 Moreover all the treasures that thou hast
 Are but the enemies of thy dark soul;
 So thou shalt send to me thy noble steeds,
 Thy gems, dínárs, brocade, crowns, scimitars,
 Horse-armour, coats of mail, casques, Indian swords,
 The equipment of thy troops, thy gold, and silver.
 With that which thou hast gained by force or fraud
 Thou mayst buy life and see the pathway opened
 To safety. What is worthy of a king
 Will I send to the monarch of the world,
 And give the rest as booty to the troops—
 Instead of taking vengeance for wrong done:
 And furthermore when thou shalt have dispatched
 Thy favourite son—the guardian of thy throne
 And signet—with those leaders of thine army,
 Thy brethren twain, who ever lift their necks
 Above the moon—all three as hostages
 That I may feel assured—to this famed host,
 Then will thy tree of honesty bear fruit.
 Consider now and choose between two courses.
 By taking one thou wilt approach the Sháh,

Wilt go with kith and kindred to Khusrau,
 And rest beneath the shadow of his love,
 Wilt put away that of Afrásiyáb,
 And never even dream of him again.
 I will give pledges to thee that Khusrau
 Will raise thy head above the shining sun;
 Thou knowest best the kindness of his heart,
 And that he will entreat thee royally.
 Or if from terror of Afrásiyáb
 Thou art not willing to approach Írán,
 Go from Túrán and lead thy troops to Chách,
 Take thy teak throne and set thy crown on high;
 But if thy heart is with Afrásiyáb
 Depart to him and battle not with us,
 For in regard to those with whom I strive
 I have a lion's heart, a leopard's claws,
 And I will leave the Turkmans naught of throne;
 My bows are clouds that pour down showers of bane.
 If thou wilt none of this but willest strife,
 And thy head be all ill advice and guile,
 Rise and come hither all equipped for war
 If thou canst face the lion ravening.
 When both the hosts shall be arrayed for battle
 Will those in fault appear as innocent?
 Nay, and unless thou hearken to my words
 Thou wilt repent at last, but then repentance
 Will profit naught, fate's sword have reaped thy head!"

The paladin with these words charged his son,
 "Repeat them to Pírán," he said, "each one."

V. 1152

§ 5

How Gív visited Pírán at Wisagird

Gív left his father's presence, and departed
 To Balkh, with all those bitter words in mind.

Alighting there he sent a messenger
 Before him as directed by Gúdarz,
 On that same night assembled all his troops,
 And left the gates of Balkh for Wísagird,
 The city where Pírán was with his powers,
 And menaced the Íránian crown and throne.
 The messenger in audience of Pírán
 Said thus to him: "Gív hath arrived at Balkh
 With nobles and with gallant warriors."

Pírán pricked up his ears on hearing this,
 While shouts rose from the warriors of the host.
 He blew the trumpets and bound on the tymbals;
 The horse-hoofs turned the earth to ebony
 As five score and ten thousand cavaliers
 Came forward dight for war from his array.
 V. 1153 He left the more part, called his veterans,
 Advanced to the Jíhún and ranked them there,
 Made by the stream a wall of spears, and held
 An interview with Gív. Two weeks they parleyed
 In order that they might not war unjustly;
 The Íránians spake on all points, and Pírán
 Heard; but the Turkmans did injuriously,
 For while the Íránian chiefs employed their tongues,
 And grew more instant with their enemies
 In speech, Pírán dispatched a messenger
 To hasten to Afrásiyáb and say:—
 "Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, hath with his troops
 Placed his own helmet o'er the Íránian throne,
 And Gív, his favourite son—the shatterer
 Of hosts—hath reached me with an embassy;
 But I attend to thy commands alone,
 And stake my life upon my loyalty."

Now when this reached the monarch of Túrán
 He chose him thirty thousand mighty men
 Among his troops who drew the scimitar,
 And sent them to Pírán, the cavalier,

With these words: "Draw the scimitar of vengeance,
 And rid the earth of them; spare not Gúdarz
 Or Gív, Farhád, Gurgín or brave Ruhháin,
 For troops, whose object is the Íránian throne,
 Flock from all sides. These will I lead, will make
 The whole land of Írán a stream of gore,
 And by the counsels of the wise and brave
 Send up this time the dust from Kai Khusrau."

Pírán, when he beheld that mighty host,
 Each man as thirsty as a wolf for blood,
 Was, being reinforced, inclined to war.
 He washed his heart of honour and chose ill:
 That heart so well disposed grew overbearing,
 Grew full of thought and passionate for strife.
 He said to Gív: "Arise and go thy ways
 Back to the paladin and say to him:—
 'Seek not from me what sages will condemn—
 First to surrender to thy hands these chiefs
 Of high renown! How is this possible?
 And for thy next demand—the arms and troops,
 The noble chargers and the throne and crown,
 A brother who is my bright soul, a son—
 My well-belovèd and my paladin—
 "These things," thou sayest, "put afar from thee!"
 Can words so crude be uttered by the wise?
 Death would be better for me than such life:
 Shall I that am a prince do slavishly?
 In this regard the leopard coming near
 To battle with the fearless lion said:—
 "To have thee shed my blood and keep my fame
 Is better than to live a life of shame."
 Besides instructions from the king have come
 To me, and troops, with orders to engage.'"

V. 1154

Gív with his chiefs on this reply departed,
 Whereon Pírán, the captain of the host,
 Prepared for fight, sent up the battle-shout,

Pushed on to Kanábad and set his ranks
In war-array upon the mountain-flanks.

§ 6

The Arraying of the Hosts

Gív, when he reached the presence of his sire,
Informed him of the answer word for word,
And said: "Array the host upon the spot
Where thou wilt fight; Pírán hath no idea
Of peace, no room for justice in his heart.
I told him all thy words, appealed to him
In all ways. When the fault proved clearly theirs
He sent the king a camel-post to say:—
'Gúdarz and Gív are come to fight, and troops
Must be dispatched to me forthwith.' Thereat
V. 1155 Came reinforcements from Afrásiyáb,
And crossed the river while we were returning.
Now bind the drums upon the elephants
For battle since Pírán forestalleth us."

Gúdarz said: "He is sick of life. I thought
No other of the miscreant, and yet
By order of the monarch of the world
I had to send—there was no remedy—
And now the Sháh hath proved him to the heart.
I spake to that effect before the Sháh
When he gave orders for the troops to march:
I said to him: 'Put from thy heart the love
Of one whose heart and tongue do not accord.
Pírán's whole love is for the Turkmans; let
The Sháh wash hands of him.'"

The brave Pírán
Led in Gív's tracks his army lion-like,
And when Gúdarz knew that the host approached
He beat the tymbals, marched out from Raibad,

And drew his army up on that broad plain
With mountains in the rear. The day's light failed
What time Pírán marched forth from Kanábad.
A hundred thousand Turkman cavaliers
Went girt for battle, mailed, and carrying
Long spears and Indian swords. The embattled hosts
Looked like two mountains with their iron helms.
Then there arose the sound of clarions,
And thou hadst said : " The mountains are astir !"
The hosts stretched from Raibad to Kanábad :
The vales and plains were black and blue with them.
The lances' heads were stars, the swords were suns,
The clouds were dust-clouds and the ground was iron.
The earth re-echoed with the warriors' shouts,
The sky was iron with the helms and spears.
Gúdarz surveyed the army of Túrán,
Then all in motion like a heaving sea,
Flag following flag and troop succeeding troop
Without a break till night rose from the hills.
Both hosts placed elephants to bar the way,
Lit up the watch-fires, and thou wouldst have said
At all the shouting of the eager chiefs :—
" The world is Áhriman's and full of foes
From skirt to sleeve !" That darksome night the rocks
Were riven to their cores with tymbal-din !

V. 1156

The dawn ascended from the sombre mountains,
And then the leader of Írán bestrode
A fresh horse in the presence of the host,
And made his dispositions on all sides.
The army's right wing rested on a hill,
Undaunted mid the battles of the brave,
While to the left a river ran, as apt
As soul for body. In the front were ranged
The spearmen with the footmen in their rear
With coats of mail and iron-piercing shafts,
And bows flung o'er their arms. The soldiers' blood

Boiled in their veins. Arrear of these there came
 The warlike cavaliers, whose falchions robbed
 The fire of lustre, then the elephants
 Like mountains; earth was wearied with the tramp.
 Full in the centre of the host and shining
 Moon-like with jewels stood the glorious standard.
 What with the flashing of the blue steel swords
 Beneath the shadow of the flag of Káwa
 Thou wouldst have said: "The sky, this darksome
 night,
 Is shedding stars!"

Gúdarz arrayed the host

Like Paradise and planted in the garden
 Of loyalty the cypress of revenge.

V. 1157

He gave the army's right to Faríburz:

Hajír was with the baggage in the rear.

Guráza, chiefest scion of Gívgán,

And that o'er-looker of the Kaian throne,

Zawára, went to aid, and ranked themselves

With, Faríburz. Gúdarz then bade Ruhhám:—

"O thou, the inspirer of crown, throne, and wisdom!

Go with the cavaliers toward the left.

Like Sol from Aries on New Year's Day

Illuminate the army by thy Grace,

And nurse it tenderly, but like a lion

Smite foemen with thy chief-consuming steel."

Ruhhám went forth with his companions,

With Gustaham, and matchless Gazhdaham,

And Furúhil whose arrows pierced the sky.

Gúdarz then bade ten thousand cavaliers

On barded steeds to go with Gív, committing

The rear to him, a post for men of war;

Gurgín and Zanga bare him company.

A banner and three hundred horse to guard

The army's river-flank, as many more

To guard the mountain-flank, Gúdarz dispatched.

A watchman went upon the mountain-top,
 And kept his neck outstretched both night and day
 Above the army, with his eyes intent
 To watch the movements of the Turkman troops,
 And shout, if he perceived an ant's foot move,
 To rouse Gúdarz, who ordered so that field
 That sun and moon were eager to engage.
 The valiant crocodile will not affright
 The host whose leader is well seen in fight.
 Gúdarz then took the post of chief command
 To guard the army from the enemy.
 He raised the flag that gladdeneth the heart,
 And gave the chiefs that battled at the centre
 To each his station, summoning them all.
 Behind him was Shídúsh, Farhád before.
 Thus posted in their midst Gúdarz, their leader,
 Had Káwa's standard over-shadowing him,
 And dimming sun and moon.

V. 1158

Pírán from far

Looked forth upon that host, upon that pomp
 And circumstance of war, and hearts whence care
 And travail ebb'd. Dale, desert, mount, and waste
 Were full of spears, and rein was linked to rein.
 The chieftain of Túrán was sorely grieved,
 And rag'd at fortune's gloomy sun. Thereafter,
 Surveying his own host, the battlefield
 Displeas'd him; he saw not room to fight
 Or rank his troops, and in his anger smote
 His hands together, being forced to form
 As best he might since he must charge the brave.
 Then of his own chiefs and his men of war,
 And of the warriors of Afrásiyáb,
 That longed for fight, he chose him thirty thousand,
 Men fit for war and armed with scimitars.
 He gave the centre to Húmán—a host
 Of lion-flinging, battle-loving troops.

Andarímán he summoned with Arjásp,
 He gave Burjásp the chief command of both,
 And put the army's left wing in their keeping
 With thirty thousand gallant warriors.
 The brave Lahhák and Farshíward drew up
 With thirty thousand heroes of the fray
 Upon the right, and earth turned black with iron.
 V. 1159 He sent the brave Zangúla and Kulbád,
 Along with Sipahram, the good at need,
 And spearmen twice five thousand, to support
 The cavaliers, the wielders of the sword.
 Then with ten thousand warriors of Khutan
 Rúin in brazen panoply marched forth
 To ambush like a lion in the wood,¹
 With outposts on the river and the mountain
 To threaten the Íránian general,
 On whom, if he advanced beyond his lines
 And ventured forward on Pírán himself,
 Rúin the chief should fall, as 'twere a lion,
 And take him boldly in the rear. Pírán
 Placed likewise scouts upon the mountain-top
 To watch by day and count the stars by night,
 That if a horseman of the Íránians
 Should turn his reins toward the Turkman chief,
 The keeper of the watch should raise a cry,
 And all the battlefield be roused thereby.

§ 7

How Bizhan went to Gív to urge him to fight

Three days and nights the opposing hosts—all men
 Of name and eager for the fight—remained
 Embattled face to face: thou wouldst have said:—
 “No one's lip moveth!” Quoth Gúdarz: “If I

¹ Reading with P.

Yield to the foe my station, and advance,
They will assail my rear ; I shall but grasp
The wind."

Both night and day before the host
He stood in quest of favourable signs
From sun and moon. " Which is the auspicious hour,"
He thought, " for action when the wind of battle
Will blow and blind the Turkman horse with dust ?
Then haply I may get the upper hand,
And lead the army onward like a blast."

Pírán on his side waited anxiously
Until Gúdarz should seethe at heart with rage,
And by advancing leave his rear exposed
To those in ambush.

Came Gív's son, Bízhan,
The fourth day, from the rearward to the centre,
Came to his father's presence with his clothes
Rent, flinging up the dust to heaven and crying :—
" Why tarriest thou thus indolently here,
My veteran sire ? The fifth day now approacheth,
Yet all is peace by day and night. The sun
Beholdeth not our warriors' scimitars,
And no dust riseth to obscure the sky.
Our cavaliers are in cuirass and helm,
And yet the blood hath stirred in no man's veins !
Once, after famous Rustam, in Írán
No cavalier was equal to Gúdarz ;
But ever since the battle of Pashan,
And all the carnage of that mighty field,
When at Ládán he saw so many sons
Slain and Íránian fortune overturned,
He hath been liver-stricken, all distraught,
And indisposed to see another fight.
We must consider that the man is old,
And that his head is turned toward heaven above,
As one who counteth not his followers,

V. 1160

But reckoneth the stars around the moon.
 Know that he now is bloodless and hath grown
 Too feeble for the battles of the brave.
 I wonder not at veteran Gúdarz,
 Whose heart is no more set upon this world,
 My wonder, O my father! is at thee,
 From whom fierce Lions seek accomplishment.
 Two hosts are looking at thee. Rouse a little
 Thy brain to action and display thy wrath.
 Now when the world is warm and air serene
 The army should be ordered to engage,
 For when this pleasant season shall be gone,
 And earth's face bound as hard as steel with frost,
 What time the hand is frozen to the spear,
 With war in front of us and snow behind,
 What warrior will come before the host
 To challenge combat on this battlefield?
 While if thou art afraid of ambushes,
 Then of the soldiers and the men of war
 Thou shouldst commit to me a thousand horse
 Of mine own choosing, apt for fight, and we
 Will raise our foemen's ambuscade in dust,
 And send their heads cascading o'er the moon."

V. 1161

Gív smiled to hear Bízhan, praised his brave son,
 And said to God: "I give Thee thanks that Thou
 Hast granted me a son so excellent,
 And made him strong, God-serving, and discreet,
 Versed in affairs and eager for the fray.
 In this brave youth restored to me¹ I have
 The typic offspring of a paladin.
 Thus said the lion to the lioness:—
 'Suppose our cub should prove a coward, we
 Will own no love or consanguinity,
 His dam shall be the dust, his sire the sea.'
 Yet, O my son, impetuous in thy speech!

¹ After his captivity in Part V.

Loose not thy tongue against thy grandsire thus,
 For he is wiser and experienced,
 And is the leader of this noble host.
 The veteran needeth not in aught a teacher.
 If our own cavaliers have much to bear
 The Turkmans are not very bright and fresh,
 But luckless and dejected, with their eyes
 Suffused with tears and livers full of blood.
 This ancient veteran would have the Turkmans
 Advance to battle. When they leave the hills
 He will attack in force, and thou shalt see
 How he will ply the whole march with his mace.
 He watcheth too the aspects of the sky,
 And, when the auspicious time shall come, will void
 Earth's face of Turkmans."

" Chief of paladins ! "

Bízhan said, " if my glorious grandsire's purpose
 Be such we need not carry Rúman mail.
 I will depart, put off my fighting-gear,
 And make my shrunken face rose-red with wine,
 But when the chief of paladins hath need
 Of me I will return in battle-weed."

§ 8

How Húmán asked Pírán for Leave to fight

Within the Turkman army brave Húmán
 Came like a lion to his brother, saying:—
 " O paladin of great Afrásiyáb !
 We long for fight. The fifth day is at hand
 That all these cavaliers have borne their mail ;
 Their loins are chafed with iron, their hearts with ven-
 geance,
 Their eyes are on Írán. Why keep the hosts
 Confronting thus ? What is thy purpose ? Speak !

If thou intendest to engage, engage,
 And if thou meanest to retreat, retreat,
 For 'tis a shame to thee, O paladin !
 And old and young will laugh at thy proceedings.
 'Twas this same host that fled from us in battle,
 Disgraced and pale ; their slain filled all the field ;
 The whole earth ran with blood ; but, as for us,
 We lost not any cavalier of name ;
 Moreover Rustam is not in command.
 If thou distastest fight and bloodshed choose
 Some troops, give them to me, and be spectator."

Pírán, on hearing, answered : " Be not hasty,
 And harsh. Know, brother ! that this man of war,
 Who thus hath come against me with a host,
 Is of the chiefs of Kai Khusrau the choicest,
 The greatest noble, and a paladin.
 Now in the first place Kai Khusrau is higher
 Amidst all peoples than my sovereign ;
 Next, of the paladins of Kai Khusrau
 I know not any equal to Gúdarz
 In dignity, position, manliness,
 In prudent counsel and sagacity ;
 Then in the third place he is inly seared,
 And full of anguish, for his many sons,
 Whom with their heads dissevered from their trunks
 We left, and laid the earth's dust with their blood ;
 So long as life is in him he will writhe
 In serpent wise to compass his revenge ;
 And fourthly he hath brought and massed two hosts
 Between two mountains. Seek where'er thou wilt
 There is no way to him. Perpend, for this
 Is no brief toil. We must induce the foe
 To quit their station on yon walls of rock,
 And haply they may make through weariness
 Some weak manœuvre and attack us first ;
 Then, when the foes have left their vantage-ground,

We will pour showers of arrows on their heads,
 Enclose them as with walls and, like fierce lions,
 Prey on their lives, appease our lust on them,
 And our renown shall go up to the sun.
 Thou art the army's stay, our monarch's chief;
 Thy crown is raised o'er Saturn and the sky,
 Should one so famous hanker still for fame?
 Moreover none among their famous men
 Will venture forth against the roaring Leopard:
 Gúdarz will send out from among his troops
 Some one of small renown, and much ambition
 To fight with warriors, to contend with thee;
 And then if thou shouldst roll earth over him
 'Twould not enhance thy fame, while to the Íránians
 It would be no great loss, but should he shed
 Thy blood the Turkman host would be dismayed."

Húmán gave heed to what Pírán was saying,
 Yet thought his conduct foolish and replied:—
 "What cavalier among the Íránians
 Will come to fight me? Thou art bent on kindness,
 But lust of fighting hath come over me.
 If thou art not desirous to engage,
 And hast no fire of battle in thy soul,
 I will go saddle me my gallant gray,
 And challenge combat at the break of day."

§ 9

How Húmán challenged Rukhám

Húmán on reaching his encampment gnashed
 His teeth as wild boars do. When morning came
 He mounted on his steed, like some fierce lion,
 And, taking with him an interpreter,
 Approached the Íránian host. His heart was full
 Of fight, his head of vengeance on Khusrau.

Grief made the world seem narrow to Pírán
 On learning that his brother had gone forth
 To battle, and in deep distress of heart
 He called to mind some sayings of his sire's:—
 “The wise deliberateth every way,
 And hasteth not to mingle in a fray;
 The fool exhibiteth both dash and go
 At first, but in the end thereof is woe.
 Although the tongue within a brainless head
 Should shower pearls none would be profited.”
 “I know not,” said he, “what Húmán will gain
 By showing so much temper in this fight.
 May God, the Judge of all the world, assist him,
 Because I see not any help besides.”

Now when Húmán, the son of Wísa, bent
 On challenging the brave, drew near to where
 Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, lay with his host,
 The captain of the watch encountered him.
 The outpost—horsemen of Írán and all
 Suspicious—came to the interpreter,
 And asked: “Why doth this eager warrior
 Display himself as freely on the plain
 As he had been a herald and yet carry
 A mace in hand and lasso at his saddle?”

He said: “The time for sword and mace and bow
 Hath come, for this famed, lion-hearted man
 Desireth to encounter you in fight.
 He is the head of Wísa's sons, Húmán
 By name; his scabbard is the lion's heart.”

Now when the Íránians saw his mace, equipment,
 And royal stature, all their spear-armed hands
 Refrained from action through that chieftain's Grace.

V. 1165

All turned from him to the interpreter,
 And said: “Go tell Húmán our words in Turkman:—
 ‘We have no purpose to contend with thee
 For want of leave to combat from Gúdarz;

But to the famous leader of our host
The way is open if thou seekest battle."

They told Húmán at large about the chiefs
Of that proud host, told who the soldiers were,
And who commanded on the left and right.
The outpost sent a cameleer in haste
To tell Gúdarz: "The leopard-like Húmán
Hath come to combat with the paladin."

Húmán passed by the outpost, came apace
Toward Ruhhám, and shouted lustily:—
"Son of the chief whose fortune is discreet!
Ply now thy reins upon this battlefield
Between the hosts arrayed. Thou dost command
The left wing and thou art the Lions' Claws,
A guardian and a captain of Írán;
Thou shouldest fight me. Be the where thy choice—
Stream, mountain, desert. If not, Gustaham
And Furúhil perchance will charge together.
Who will fight me with sword, spear, massive mace?
Whoever cometh, fortune will make earth
Reel under him. Pard's hides and lions' hearts
Burst in the battle when they see our sword."

Ruhhám replied: "O famous warrior!
Among the Turkmans we considered thee
As wise; but thou art other than we thought,
For thou hast come alone upon this field
To brave a host, and weenest that no swordsman,
Nor any cavalier, can be thy match.
Recall to mind a saying of the Kaians,
And, being snared by wisdom, save thy neck:—
'No need for him who leadeth an attack
To settle by what road he will go back.'
All whom thou challengest by name are keen
For fight but, since the general of the Sháh
Hath not so bidden, will not volunteer.
If thou art fain to combat warriors

V. 1166

Why dost thou not accost the paladin?
Get licence for the combat from Gúdarz,
And then ask us to prove our readiness."

Húmán said: "Ply me not with fond excuses,
But take a spindle and put down the spear;
Thou art not one for war, no cavalier."

§ 10

How Húmán challenged Fariburz

Húmán, departing toward the centre, sped
To the other wing. With his interpreter
To Fariburz, like furious elephant,
He came and shouted: "Wretch, degraded one!
Erst horsemen, elephants, and golden boots
Were thine with Káwa's flag, but on the day
Of battle thou didst yield them to the Turkmans.
Íránian chieftains hold thy manhood cheap.
Thou wast the leader; but hast been reduced,
And shouldst wear the girdle of a slave.
As brother of the noble Siyáwush
Thou rankest o'er thy chief. I am from Túr,
King of Túrán, perchance in composition
Thine equal. Since thou art of worth to challenge
Thou shouldst prepare for fight; so now for once
Come forth with me upon the battlefield
That we may wheel in presence of the hosts.
Thou wilt be famous to the shining sun
Through meeting me. If thou wilt not, so be it.
See where Zawára and Guráza are;
Bring to encounter me some warrior
That hath a name among the Íránians."

Then Fariburz replied: "Forbear to fight
The rending lion; days of battle end
For this in triumph, and for that in woe.

When thou hast conquered, fear calamity,
 Because high heaven keepeth not one stay,
 And angry men bring things to such a pass
 As to lay desolate their own old home.
 The king deprived me of the flag, 'tis well.
 He gave to whom he would the elephants
 And host. Since Kai Kubád, in Kaian wars,
 If any one hath donned the crown of power,
 And girt himself to make earth prosperous,
 It is the chief Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
 Who ever fighteth foremost. His forefathers
 Have been the chiefs and champions of the Sháhs,
 And through his mace no doubt thy leader's day
 Will end. 'Tis for Gúdarz to give command.
 If he shall bid me fight with thee, and leecheth
 The sear upon my heart, thou shalt behold
 How I will raise my head from shame to heaven
 Upon the battlefield."

Húmán replied :—

V. 1168

"Enough! I see thee great in talk. What fighter
 Hast thou e'er hurt when girded with that sword?
 Contend then with that despicable mace;
 On helm and breastplate it will leave no trace."

§ 11

How Húmán challenged Gúdarz

Húmán, returning thence triumphantly,
 "A Lion," thou hadst said, "intent on mischief,"
 And keen for vengeance on the noble chiefs,
 Approached Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, and shouted :—
 "O haughty chieftain, binder of the Dív!
 I heard about thy converse with the Sháh,
 And thereupon thy leading forth the host,
 About the Sháh's gifts and about thy pledge

And exhortations to Pírán our leader.
 An envoy reached the army of Túrán—
 Gív, thy dear son, the refuge of the troops—
 And afterward thou swarest by the Sháh,
 By sun and moon and throne and diadem :—
 ‘ If e’er mine eyes shall light upon Pírán
 In battle I will take away his life.’
 Fierce as a lion hast thou ranked thy powers
 In thine anxiety to fight with us,
 Then why sulk thus behind a mountain-range
 As though thou wast a wretched mountain-sheep ?
 Thus doth the quarry in its headlong course,
 When fleeing from the lion’s bold pursuit,
 Make for some narrow covert in the wood,
 Forgetting honour in its fear for life.
 Lead just for once thine army to the plains.
 Why keepest thou the host behind the heights ?
 Was this thine understanding with Khusrau—
 To make a hill thy stronghold in the war ? ”

Gúdarz replied : “ Attend to me ; ’tis right
 That I should speak. That none took up thy challenge
 Thou thoughtlessly imputest unto me.

V. 1169 Hear that I proffered oath and covenant
 By order of the Sháh, but now that I
 Have come with this great host—the pick of all
 The valiant chieftains of Írán—ye lurk
 Like old fox in a brake, frayed by the hunter !
 Ye practise cunning, artifice, and guile
 To ’scape mace, spear, and lasso. Brag not thou,
 Nor challenge us, for foxes meet not lions.”

Húmán, on hearing what Gúdarz replied,
 Raged like a lion on that scene of strife,
 And answered : “ If thou comest not to fight
 ’Tis not that fight with me disgraceth thee,
 But ever since the battle of Pashan
 Thou hast avoided Turkmans in the fray.

Thou didst approve me at Ládan and praise
 My prowess on the field, and therefore now,
 If it is even with thee as thou sayest,
 And thou art eager to make good thy words,
 Choose thee a champion from among thy troops
 To counter me upon the battlefield.

I like a lusty crocodile have challenged
 Ruhhám and Fariburz, and passed along
 Before thy host, not one opposing me.
 They were restrained from fighting by Gúdarz ;
 'Twas waste of time to listen ; but thou art
 The man that saith : ' In battle with my sword
 Will I make tulips on the yellow hills !'
 So let some warrior with his massive mace
 Confront me here. Thyself hast many sons,
 O man of name ! and all have girt themselves
 To fight with us ; set one of them against me,
 For if thou seekest fight why this delay ?"

"Which of the warriors," Gúdarz considered,
 "Shall go ? If I oppose some famous man,
 Some raging Lion, to this enemy,
 And if Húmán be slain upon the field,
 None of the Turkmans will come forth to fight ;
 Their general will writhe for grief of heart,
 And will not take the offensive in the war ;
 His host will tarry on Mount Kanábad,
 And we shall have to fight at disadvantage ;
 While should one of the nobles of this host
 Be lost so would my fame. The warriors
 Would have but broken hearts for this campaign,
 And would not tarry on the waste. 'Tis best
 Not to engage and foil the ambushade.
 His troops may grow adventurous, seek fight,
 And march against us from their cramped position."

V. 1170

Then to Húmán : "Depart, thou art a boy
 In action, and intemperate of speech.

Thy words have made me know thee in and out.
 Hath none among the Turkmans wit to think
 Aright? Know'st not that on the day of battle
 The savage lion smircheth not his paws
 With fox's blood? Besides both hosts are ranked,
 All necks are stretched for war, and all the chiefs
 Will gnaw their hands if only two engage.
 Let all advance and combat, host with host.
 Now go back to thine army and exalt
 Thy head before thy boyish chieftains, saying:—
 'I challenged oftentimes the Íránians,
 But no one stirred unless to heave a sigh.'
 This field of battle will exalt thy name,
 Pirán too will fulfil thy whole desire."

Húmán exclaimed: "What sort of chieftains then
 And warriors are all these? I am reminded
 Of what a king said—one that ruled the world:—
 'Thou longest for a throne—stop that desire!
 Or still long on resolved to face the fire.'
 Thou wishest not for war; but know that one
 Who plucketh roses must encounter thorns.
 Thou hast no lion-man to counter me
 Before the host and wouldest by a shift
 Dismiss me, but to know me is to know
 That I reject thy guile."

The warlike chiefs

V. 1171 Said to Gúdarz: "Thou shouldst send one of us
 To fight him," but Gúdarz said: "Not to-day."

Húmán, when he had had his fill of speech,
 Raged like a valiant lion, laughed and, turning
 His back upon the chief, sped toward an outpost.
 He strung his bow and flung four cavaliers
 Upon the meadow. When they saw from far
 The shots of that Túránian chief the guards
 Gave way and fled, attempting no resistance.
 He went toward the heights like one bemused,

And laid the mountains prostrate with his shouts :
 He brandished round his head his spear and cried :—
 “ Húmán, the son of Wísa, triumpheth ! ”

When his spear waved the blare of clarions rose
 Above the desert, and the exulting Turkmans
 Touched with their helms the orbit of the moon.

Now when Húmán departed thus in triumph
 Gúdarz was troubled at his insolence,
 And sorely vexed at that indignity.
 Rage and vexation tyrannised o'er him
 Whose warriors sweated under such disgrace,
 But still he drew this augury of good :—
 “ The eagerness for blood is on their side,
 Ill will be his who unto ill is guide.”
 Then, casting round his haughty chiefs his eyes,
 He sought the fittest for the enterprise.

§ 12

How Bízhan heard of the Doings of Húmán

Bízhan was told : “ Húmán the lion-like
 Came boldly to thy grandsire, having challenged
 The chiefs of both the wings. Not one went forth ;
 He then withdrew in anger and disdain,
 First having slain four horsemen of the host,
 And flung them to the ground despitefully.”

Bízhan raged like a leopard ; his hands itched
 For combat with Húmán. He bade to saddle
 His favourite elephantine charger, donned
 His Rúman war-mail, quickly girthed Shabrang,
 And came, full of resource, before his father,
 To whom he spake about his grandsire, saying :—
 “ My father ! said I not so, point by point ?
 ‘ Gúdarz,’ I said, ‘ is failing in his wits ;
 Dost thou not see the change in him ? His heart

Is full of fear, his liver full of blood
 Through his exceeding grief for all his sons
 Slain and beheaded on the battlefield.
 For proof—this Turkman boldly, lion-like,
 Came midst our warriors to Gúdarz, with spear
 In hand and shouting like a drunken man,
 And yet no horseman of this noble host
 Was fit to fight, to loft him on a spear,
 And make him like a bird upon the spit!
 Array, my loving and most prudent sire!
 My shoulders in the mail of Siyáwush,
 For none but I may battle with Húmán,
 And cause his manhood to go up in dust.”

Gív said, “My prudent son! give ear a while.
 I said to thee: ‘Be not impetuous,
 And say not aught untoward to Gúdarz,
 Because he hath experience and more wisdom,
 And is the leader of this noble host.’
 His cavaliers would fight an elephant,
 Yet bade he none to battle with Húmán;
 But youth, as it would seem, hath made thee rash;
 Thou hast set up thy neck and come to me
 With this request; I am not of thy mind,
 And therefore let me hear no more thereof.”

V. 1173

Bízhan replied: “If thou accedest not
 To my desire thou wouldst not have me famous.
 I will go girded to the general,
 And smite my breast for leave to fight Húmán.”

He wheeled his charger, hurried to Gúdarz,
 Saluted him, and told him all with sorrow:—
 “O paladin of our world-ruling Sháh,
 Versed in affairs, thou glory of the throne!
 I see this cause for wonderment in thee,
 Though I am one of little wit, that thou
 Hast made a pleasance of this battlefield,
 And purged thy heart of warfare with the Turkmans!

The seventh day is hard at hand ; but day
 And night bring rest, not action, for the sun
 Beholdeth not the warriors' scimitars,
 And no dust riseth in the face of heaven !
 More wonderful than that—from yonder host
 One Turkman—one misguided wretch—came forth,
 Whom God who giveth good, but bringeth ill
 On evil men, led from Túrán in arms
 In order to be slaughtered by thy hand,
 And thou didst spare the netted onager !
 I do not understand thy policy.

Supposest thou that, if Húmán were slain
 E'en now, Pírán would not come forth to fight ?
 Think not that ever he will be the first
 To move his army to the open field.
 Behold now I have bathed my hands in blood,
 And girded up my loins to fight Húmán,
 Whom, if the paladin will give me leave,
 I will encounter like a furious lion.
 Now let the general order Gív to give me
 The arms of valiant Siyáwush, the helm
 And Rúman mail, unbuckling them himself."

On hearing what Bízhan said and perceiving
 His courage and his wise advice Gúdarz,
 Rejoicing, mightily applauded him,
 And answered : " Fortune ever prosper thee.
 Since thou bestrod'st the pardskin, crocodiles
 Have held their breath and lions sheathed their
 claws.

Thou never retest but art first in fight
 And in adventures, faring gallantly
 And, like a lion, always conquering.
 Still ere thou challengest Húmán think well
 If thou canst meet him on the battlefield,
 For he is a malignant Áhriman,
 And like a mail-clad mountain in the fray,

While thou art but a youth. Heaven scarce hath
turned

Above thy head. Thou lovest not thyself.
Wait, and I will dispatch to fight with him
Some veteran Lion, like a thundering cloud,
To shower arrows down on him like hail,
And pin his steel casque to his head."

Bízhan

Said: "Paladin! a gallant youth should have
Accomplishment. If thou saw'st not my fight
Against Farúd now is the time to prove me.
I rolled up earth when fighting at Pashan.
None hath beheld my back upon the day
Of battle, and I am not fit to live
If I have not such prowess as the rest.
Now if thou dost deny me this, and say:—
'Adventure not thyself against Húmán,'
I will complain of thee before the Sháh,
And give up belt and helm from this time forth."

Gúdarz smiled joyfully upon the youth,
So like a noble cypress-tree, and answered:—
"How fortunate is Gív in such a son!
And may I ne'er forget the glorious day
Whereon a virtuous mother gave thee birth.
Pards' claws have proven impotent since thou
Didst stretch thy hands to fight. Thou mayest meet
Húmán, and may good fortune be thy guide.
Now in the name of God who ruleth all,
And by the triumphs of our warriors' Sháh,
Endeavour that destruction may o'erwhelm
This Áhriman, God willing, by thy hand.
Now will I say to Gív: 'Give to Bízhan
The suit of armour that he asketh for.'
If thou shalt vanquish thine antagonist
Thou shalt receive addition at my hands,
And shalt be greater than Farhád and Gív

In treasure and in troops, in throne and crown."

Thus spake the grandsire to the grandson—one
Full of resource and ruse—who, lighting, kissed
The ground and praised him. Then the paladin
Called Gív. Talk passed about the youth and how
He fain would combat in that royal mail.

"Chief paladin!" said to the sire the son,
'This one is mind and soul and world to me;
His life is not so worthless in mine eyes;
I would not lose him down the Dragon's maw."

"Fond one!" Gúdarz said, "think not thus of him.
Bízhan, though young and fresh, is led by wisdom
In all things, and besides we should fight here,
And purify the world of Áhrimans.

We, whom the Sháh commanded to take vengeance
For Siyáwush, may not heed kin or spare
Our lives although the clouds rain swords of steel.
We must not break Bízhan's heart for the fight,
Or veil his hopes of fame. A youth if slothful
Will prove but mean of spirit, dull of soul."

Gív, left without resource by such reply,
Made yet one more endeavour to persuade
His son, if haply he would shun the strife.
The son replied: "Thou wilt disgrace my name."

Then Gív said to Gúdarz: "Chief-paladin:
When our own lives are put in jeopardy
We cease to care about son, host, and treasure,
Respect for, and command of, chief and Sháh.
I have a ruggèd time in front of me;
Why should I sacrifice my life for him?
Where are his own arms if he fain would fight?
He hath his mail: why should he ask for mine?"

The champion said: "I do not want thy mail.
Think'st thou that all the warriors of the world
Will seek for fame in thine accoutrements,
And no chief aim at glory and renown

Unless he hath the arms of Siyáwush?"

He spurred his charger from the troops around
That he might quit them for the battleground.

§ 13

How Gív gave the Mail of Siyáwush to Bízhan

Now when Bízhan had vanished from the host
Gív's heart swelled up with sorrow, and repenting
He wept blood in his anguish. See what grief
And love a son may cause! He raised his head
To heaven with full heart and with liver stricken,
And said to God: "O Judge of all the world!
Vouchsafe to look upon this wounded heart.
Oh! burn it not with anguish for Bízhan,
My feet are in the mire made by my tears!
O Thou, the Omnipotent! restore me him
Unhurt."

He went in sorrow for the youth,
His son, and thought: "I pained him wantonly:
Why did I thwart his wishes? Should ill come
Upon him from Húmán, what good to me
Are armour, sword, and belt? I shall be left
All anguish, care, and wrath; on his account
My heart will ache, mine eyes will weep."

He went

Like dust, approached his son upon the field,
And said: "Why dost thou grieve us thus and haste
When thou shouldst tarry? Doth the black snake rage
So greatly on the battle-day that so
The crocodile may issue from the deep?
And is the shining of the moon so bright
As to eclipse the radiance of the sun?
Now thou art rushing on Húmán and turnest
Thy head from my behest, adopting thus

Thine own course, knowing not the task before thee!"

Bízhan replied: "Turn not, my valiant sire!
My heart from its revenge for Siyáwush.
Húmán is not of brass or iron, not
A mighty elephant or Áhriman.
He is a man of war. I challenge him,
And backed by thy good fortune will not shrink.
My fortune may be written otherwise
Than I desire, the Judge disposeth all;
Since what must be will be grieve not nor trouble
On mine account."

Gív, hearing his brave son
Whose loins were girt for battle like a lion,
Dismounted, gave to him the steed and mail
Of Siyáwush, and said: "If thou art bent
On fight, and self-will lordeth thus o'er wisdom,
Mount on this rapid charger, which will roll
Earth under thee. My mail too will be useful,
Since thou wilt have to fight an Áhriman."

When he beheld his father's steed before him
Bízhan alighted from his own like wind,
Put on the mail and made the buckles fast;
Then, having mounted on that royal charger,
Bound tight his girdle, took his mace in hand,
Chose from the army an interpreter—
One well acquainted with the Turkíman tongue—
And went, like some huge lion, with his loins
Girt up to take revenge for Siyáwush.

Bízhan, or ever he approached Húmán,
Beheld an Iron Mountain—one that moved—
The desert all a-gleam with the cuirass,
And under the cuirass an Elephant.
He bade the interpreter shout to his foe:—
"Turn back if thou art eager for the fray,
Bízhan is ready to contend with thee,
And thus he saith: 'O veteran cavalier!

Why urgest thou thy steed about the field,
 Sent by Afrásiyáb to come to ill?
 Thou shouldest have the curses of Túrán;
 Thou art the miscreant that made the feud,
 And art the guiltiest in all the land;
 I look to God for succour and I thank Him
 For bringing thee to meet me on this field.
 Draw in the reins of thine impetuous steed:
 My blood is boiling for revenge upon thee;
 Select a spot whereon we may engage,
 And wheel with me on desert, dale, or mountain,
 Or else between the hosts' embattled lines,
 For name and fame, where friend and foe alike
 May look upon thee and of all the chiefs
 Approve thee most."

Húmán laughed long and loud,
 And answered: "Luckless one! thou trustest much
 Thy body haply weary of its head!
 I will dispatch thee to the host so mauled
 That Gív shall be in pain and grief for thee,
 Soon will I separate thy head and trunk
 Like those of many of thy gallant kin.
 Thou wilt be in my clutches as a pheasant,
 When borne with shrieks and weeping tears of blood
 Above the cypress-branches by a hawk,
 Which sucketh at the gore and teareth out
 The plumes; but what availeth? Night is near.
 Go sheltered by its murk and I will go
 Awhile to mine own host, present myself
 At daybreak to the chief, and hurry back
 With head erect and dight to counter thee."

"Begone," Bízhan replied, "and may a ditch
 Be in thy rear and Áhriman in front!
 To-morrow, if thou comest to the field,
 Thy king and host shall ne'er behold thee more,
 And I will bear thy head so far away

That thou shalt cease to trouble for thy troops."

They wheeled and sought their camps and paladins,
Then passed in troubled, vexed repose that night
With hearts that were impatient for the fight.

§ 14

How Húmán came to Battle with Bízhan

When morning breathed above the mountain-tops,
And dark night's skirt was no more seen, Húmán
Equipped himself, and told Pírán: "I challenged
Bízhan, the son of Gív, and spent the night
Preparing."

Calling an interpreter,
He mounted on his wind-swift bay and reached
The appointed place, expectant of Bízhan,
Who with his own interpreter anon
Came dight for combat, riding Shabáháng,
Girt tightly, and advancing haughtily
Like warrior-pard to battle. He was mailed
Withal on his heroic breast, his head
Shone with his royal casque. He thus addressed
Húmán: "O light of wit! but yesternight
Thou didst bear off a souvenir from me—
Thy head! To-day my hope is that my sword
Will part it from its body in such wise
As with thy blood to turn the dust to clay.
Thou mayest take to heart an apologue:
The mountain-sheep once said to the gazelle:—
'Though all the plain were silk no more again
The snare once 'scaped for me! Be thine the plain.'"

V. 1180

Húmán replied: "To-day Gív's heart shall break
For his bold son. Wilt thou contend with me
Upon Mount Kanábad, or make the scene
Raibad, and far from aid on either side?"

Bízhan said: "Why this talk? Fight where thou wilt."

They left Mount Kanábad, rode toward the waste,
 And reached a desert-spot where they beheld
 No footprints left by man, where vultures flew not,
 And lions trod not, far from host and help.
 There they agreed: "Whichever shall survive
 Shall spare the fallen man's interpreter
 To bear his king the news of what befell."

This done, they lighted from their steeds, made
 fast

The divers straps and buckles of their mail,
 And fixed their saddles firmly; then the twain—
 Those wrathful warriors with vengeful hearts—
 Next gat their bows in order for the fray,
 And hurried forward to the battleground.

V. 1181 They strained their bows until the notches touched,
 Discharged their poplar arrows tipped with steel,
 Then took their spears, and wheeled to left and right
 While bits of armour flew and spearheads gleamed.
 Watch how the fortune of the day inclined!
 Their mouths gaped like a lion's with the heat;
 Both longed for rest and water; presently
 They damped their burning rage and stayed to breathe,
 Then took their shields and trenchant scimitars:
 Thou wouldst have said: "The Day of Doom hath
 come!"

But steel was foiled by steel, though in the fight
 The flashing sword-strokes showered down like fire;
 Each hero failed to shed the other's blood,
 And both their hearts were still insatiate.
 They took their maces, having done with swords,
 And passed all measure in their combating;
 Thereafter they essayed each other's strength;
 Each grasped his foeman's girdle and endeavoured
 To drag him from his steed and fling him down.

The stirrup-leathers in the violent strain
 Snapped, but each rider still retained his seat,
 And neither of them had the mastery.
 Then both the warriors lighted from their chargers,
 And breathed themselves a while. The interpreters
 Held the two steeds. Anon the combatants
 Rose like fierce lions, wearied as they were,
 And gat them ready for a wrestling-bout.
 Thus from the morning till the shadows lengthened
 These champions, on the poise of hope and fear,
 Contended with each other; neither turned
 His head away; their mouths were parched, their bodies
 A-sweat with toil and with the blazing sun:
 Then by consent they hastened to a pool.
 Bízhan, when he had drunk, arose in anguish,
 All shaking like a willow in a gale,
 And, in his heart despairing of sweet life,
 Called upon God and said: "Omnipotent!
 Thou knowest all within me and without.
 If thou perceivest justice in my cause,
 Both in my challenge and my purposes,
 The strength which I possess take not away,
 And give me self-possession in the fray."

V. 1182

§ 15

How Húmán was slain by Bízhan

Húmán, distressed and raven-black with pain,
 Advanced. All wounded as they were both came
 Like pards to fight again, strove mightily,
 And first one, then the other, touched the ground.
 They put forth all their strength and artifice
 Until high heaven's own artifice was seen,
 For, though Húmán was mightier, all prowess
 Is but defect in him whose sun is set.

Bízhan put forth his hands like leopard's claws
 To catch upon Húmán where'er he could ;
 His left hand gripped his foeman's neck, the right
 His foeman's thigh, he bent that mighty Camel,
 Raised him aloft, and flung him to the ground ;
 Then holding down Húmán, and drawing forth
 A dagger, swift as wind beheaded him,
 And flung away his carcase like a dragon's.
 Húmán lay rolled in dust, the waste ran blood.
 Bízhan surveyed that elephantine form,
 Fall'n like a stately cypress in a meadow,
 With great amazement, turned away, looked up
 To Him who ruleth o'er the world, and said :—
 " O Thou that art above both place and time,
 Above the revolution of the sky !
 Thou and Thou only rulest o'er the world—
 A matter which no wisdom can gainsay.
 I have no portion in this doughty deed,
 Not having pluck to fight an elephant,
 Yet have cut off Húmán's head in revenge
 For Siyáwush, and my sire's seventy brothers.
 Now may his spirit be in thrall to mine,
 His body rent to pieces by the lions."

V. 1183

He bound Húmán's head to the saddle-straps
 Upon Shabrang and flung the trunk to dust,
 With armour shattered and with girdle snapped,
 His head in this place and his trunk in that.
 The world is all imposture, nothing more,
 It will not help thee when distress is sore ;
 It showeth fairly, but it doth not so,
 And therefore let thy heart its love forego.

Húmán, the son of Wísa, being slain,
 The two interpreters ran to Bízhan
 To worship him as Brahmans do an image
 In Chín. He looked around the battlefield,
 And saw no way save past the Turkman host,

And fearing lest that murderous multitude,
 When they perceived the upshot of the fight,
 Should come forth in a mountain-mass to battle
 While he was not prepared to fight alone,
 He put from him the mail of Siyáwush,
 And donned instead the armour of Húmán;
 Then mounted on the elephantine steed,
 And took in hand the banner, of that prince.
 He went his way with blessings on the place,
 His wakeful fortunes, and the glorious field.
 Húmán's interpreter, when he beheld
 His master's fate, was fearful of Bízhan,
 Who said: "Fear not, I will observe the pact.
 Go tell thy host what thou hast seen me do."

He went what while Bízhan with bended bow
 Rode rapidly toward Mount Kanábad.

Now when the Turkman outposts saw afar
 The lance and standard of that chief of Túr,
 They sprang up cheering in their joy and sped
 A cameleer like smoke to tell Pírán:—

V. 1184

"Húmán, such is our king's victorious fortune!
 Is hasting from the place of combating,
 The standard of the Íránian chief is down,
 His corpse defiled in dust and drenched in gore."

The whole host shouted and their leader listened
 To hear Húmán's approach—a short-lived joy,
 And then the hail descended on their heads!

Anon the interpreter returned and told
 What he had seen, and tidings reached Pírán:—
 "The glory of the empire is bedimmed."

From the Túránian army rose a cry,
 The warriors unhelmed themselves; the world
 Grew overcast; there was no brightness left,
 And all their frantic words availed them not.

Now when Bízhan in crossing 'twixt the hosts
 Approached the shadow of the great king's throne,

At once that warrior of lion-heart,
 The army's refuge, dipped the sable standard.
 The watchmen of the Iránian host, perceiving
 The sable banner thus inverted, turned
 Their faces toward the paladin and raised
 A shouting from the watch-tower. They dispatched
 Post haste a cameleer to tell Gúdarz:—
 "Bízhan is come in triumph, lionlike,
 And carrieth the sable flag reversed."

Gív bare himself meanwhile like those distraught,
 All clamorous and restless everywhere,
 In quest of news of his heroic son,
 And sorrowed greatly at a time of joy.
 Then tidings came. He hurried forth. He saw
 The well-loved face. He lighted from his steed—
 V. 1185 His fitting course—and wallowed, head in dust,
 Returning thanks to God, then clasped his son
 Upon his breast, that youth so wise and brave.
 Thence, still returning thanks, they sought Gúdarz,
 Whose grandson lighting from his steed, which bare
 Húmán's head in its saddle-straps, presented,
 With mail besmirched with blood and head with dust,
 The armour, steed, and head of brave Húmán.
 "The paladin," thou wouldst have said, "will pour
 His soul out," he rejoiced so o'er Bízhan,
 And then began to praise the Judge of all
 For that good omen and unsleeping fortune.
 He next gave orders to the treasurer,
 And said: "Bring forth a crown and royal robe
 With patterns jewelled on a golden ground,
 The crown and belt with pendent pearls like suns."
 He likewise brought ten chargers with gold bridles,
 And ten boy-slaves fay-faced and girt with gold,
 Bestowed them on Bízhan, and said: "Brave Lion!
 None else had laid this Dragon low. Our host
 Hast thou delivered by thy sword and hand,

And broken too the Turkman monarch's heart,
 While our own warriors like lions ride
 On steeds which plunge and caracole in pride."

§ 16

How Nastíhan made a Night-attack and was slain

On the other side Pirán all pain and wrath,
 With heart grief-stricken and with eyes all tears,
 Dispatched a messenger to Nastíhan
 To say: "O famous warrior, good at need!
 Make ready to engage and dally not
 O'er this our brother's blood, attack the Íránians
 By night and make earth a Jíhún with gore.
 Lead forth ten thousand cavaliers of proof,
 Armed for the fray. Thou mayst avenge Húmán,
 And bring our foemen's heads between the shears."

Then Nastíhan: "So will I do for I
 Will make earth like Jíhún."

V. 1186

Two-thirds of night
 Passed, then the plain shook with the tramp of horse-
 men—

The Turkmen eager to exalt their necks
 By that emprise. As Nastíhan led on
 His vengeful powers toward the Íránian host
 He came, as dawn was breaking, to a place
 Where from the look-out the Íránian watchman
 Saw him, and shouted to the scouts: "A force
 Is on us from Túrán!"

They lightly sped
 Toward Gúdarz to say: "A host approacheth
 As 'twere a gliding stream; thou wouldest say:—
 'They have not speaking tongues.' The general knoweth
 How men are wont to make a night-attack."

Gúdarz said to the troops: "Be vigilant

And bright of heart, let every ear be open
To any indication of the foe."

With that he called the son of Gív—Bízhan,
The swordsman and heroic paladin—
And said: "Success and fortune are thine own,
The hearts of foes are shivered at thy name.
Take whom thou needest of my famous troops,
Go lion-like, receive the foemen's charge,
And by thy courage bring the heavens down."

Bízhan chose out a thousand cavaliers,
And, when the two hosts met, they drew their maces;
Murk gathered overhead wherefrom dark dust
Descending veiled the Turkman soldiers' eyes.
Bízhan, when he perceived the Turkman host
Thus hidden, bade his warriors string their bows.
The war-din rose. Encountering Nastíhan
He saw the flag of Wísa's family
Borne by that chief whose steed an arrow reached
Sent from the broad breast of Bízhan. The charger
Fell in its anguish, then Bízhan came up,
And with his mace smote Nastíhan's helmed head,
Brained it, and there an end. Then cried Bízhan:—
"If any soldier handle aught but mace
And scimitar, then will I break his bow
Across his head because although the Turkmans
Have fairy faces they are naught in fight."

V. 1187

His warriors took courage at his words,
And every one unsheathed his glittering glaive;
The air seemed rusty, earth a sea of blood.
Most of the Turkman troops blood-boltered fell
Beneath the chargers' feet, the others fled
Toward their host, the Íránians in pursuit.
Pírán missed Nastíhan, the earth turned black
To him, he bade the scouts: "Dispatch at once
A cameleer to the Íránian host
That he may get me news of Nastíhan,

Or if not I will pluck out both his eyes."

They instantly dispatched a cameleer,
Who went, beheld, returned to them in haste,
And said : " Lo ! Nasthan is on the field
With other chieftains of the Turkman host,
Beheaded, lying like an elephant,
His body blue with bruises from the mace ! "

Pírán swooned at the news, then tore his hair
And wept, rejecting food, repose, and sleep.
He rent his Rúman vest, and wailings rose.
He said : " Almighty Ruler of the world !
In sooth I must unwittingly have sinned
Against Thee, for Thou hast deprived mine arms
Of might, so darkened are my star and sun !
Alas ! that lion-quelling hero-taker,
That cavalier so young and brave and goodly—
My brother dearer to me than my life—
The head of Wísa's race, my brave Húmán,
And Nasthan, that Lion fierce in fight,
To whose claws any leopard was a fox !
Whom have I left upon the field ? My course
Is to lead out the host."

V. 1188

He blew the trumpets,
Bound on the drums, and with the heaven murky,
The earth like ebon, sun and moon obscured,
Marched from Mount Kanábad. Gúdarz too sounded
His clarions, marched, and took up his position.
Full in the centre, guarded by blue falchions,
Was Káwa's flag, while chiefs intent on strife
Stood ready with the lance and ox-head mace.
As morning dawned the hosts advanced, and battled
Till daylight failed, then both, still fit for fight
And eager for revenge, returned to camp.
The Íránian general occupied Rašbad,
And could not rest for his anxiety.
" A mighty battle have we fought to-day,"

He said, "and slain the leaders of the foe,
 And now methinketh that Pírán will send
 His king a cameleer and ask for succours
 In this campaign against me, and I now
 Will send intelligence to Kai Khusrau."

§ 17

How Gúdarz asked Aid of Khusrau

V. 1189 Gúdarz then called to him a letter-writer,
 And said: "I have some secrets to impart,
 And if thou openest thy lips thereon
 Thy tongue will bring disaster on thy head."
 He had a letter written to the Sháh
 About the host, the parley with Pírán,
 The ambassage of Gív to proffer league
 And love, and show Pírán heaven's purposes,
 The answer that Pírán had made to Gív,
 And to the wise and valiant chiefs, and how
 A Turkman host had pard-like followed him
 Up to Mount Kanábad to battle there;
 Then how they had prepared a battlefield,
 And had relieved their hearts by combating.
 Gúdarz gave to the Sháh a full report
 About Húmán and valiant Nastíhan,
 And how Bízhan upon the day of fight
 Had served the mace-men of Túrán; that done,
 Gúdarz spake thus about Afrásiyáb:—
 "He hath approached the river; should he cross
 Thou knowest that we cannot stand against him,
 O monarch of Írán, lord of the world!
 Unless Khusrau shall come to our support,
 And set a crown upon his warriors' heads;
 But if Pírán shall come alone the troops
 Will need no help; Khusrau shall learn how I—

His slave—have by his fortune used Pírán ;
 And furthermore the conquering Sháh perchance
 Will condescend to let his servant know
 What Rustam—binder of the Dív—hath done,
 And what Luhrásp hath done, and wise Ashkash.”

The letter being tied and sealed, Gúdarz
 Bade bring out many rapid courier-steeds
 With rɔyal saddles. Then he called Hajír,
 Who though a youth was prudent as an elder,
 And said : “ Wise son ! give all thy heart hereto,
 For thou, if ever thou desire my favour,
 Canst win it now. Charged with this missive speed
 Forth like a blast, repose not night and day,
 Nor pausing e'en to scratch thy head, and bear
 The Sháh my letter.”

V. 1190

He embraced Hajír,
 Who came out from his glorious father's presence
 And, calling from the host two of his kindred,
 And mounting them upon swift-footed steeds,
 Left his sire's camp-enclosure. With relays
 Of horses for each stage they ate, reposed,
 And slept upon their steeds both day and night,
 And on the seventh day approached the Sháh.
 One went to tell Khusrau, who sent Shammákh
 With many haughty chiefs to welcome them.
 “ O lion-taking son of paladins ! ”

Shammákh said, “ what hath chanced that thou hast
 come

Thus all unlooked for to the worldlord's court ? ”

Then at the Sháh's command they raised the curtain,
 And let Hajír ride through, who, when the Sháh
 Perceived him, rubbed his visage in the dust.
 Khusrau much greeted him, then made him sit
 Beside the throne, and asked about Gúdarz,
 The leaders, and the rest. The prudent youth
 Of ardent soul gave him the great men's greetings,

V. 1191

Informed him fully of the host's affairs,
 Then gave the letter of the paladin.
 The monarch called a scribe and had it read,
 Then filled Hajír's mouth with bright gems and ordered
 The treasurer, "Bring dínárs forth and brocade,"
 Who, when he heard the order, brought forth sacks
 Of coin and emptied them upon Hajír
 Until his head was hidden; then produced
 A suit of king's apparel—cloth of gold—
 And crown inlaid with jewels. Furthermore
 They led before Hajír ten noble steeds
 With golden saddles, while Hajír's companions
 Were clad in robes of honour and received
 Dínárs and drachms and goods of every kind.
 They left the throne-room with the Sháh and sat
 A night and day with wine and revelry.
 Khusrau considered every circumstance,
 And, having bathed his head and body, went
 First, freshly garmented in robes of service,
 While both his eyes were raining like a cloud,
 At dawn before the Ruler of the world;
 Then, stooping lowly with his head abased,
 He offered praises to the righteous Judge,
 To whom he prayed for Grace and victory,
 And pleaded for the crown and throne of might.
 He plained to God about Afrásiyáb,
 And in his grief poured water from his eyes;
 Then, like a stately cypress, left the place,
 And sat upon the throne in all his Grace.

§ 18

The Answer of Khusrau to the Letter of Gúdarz

The Sháh then called a wise scribe and dispatched
 A fair reply yet harsh in some regards.

He lauded first the paladin and said :—
 “Live evermore and may thy soul be bright !
 Blest be the prudent captain of the host,
 The heedful and discerning warrior,
 Lord of the iron mace and blue steel sword,
 Who brighteneth Káwa’s flag. Praise be to God,
 The Worldlord, that our troops have been triumphant.
 When fortune shone on thee it quickly raised
 Smoke from the foe. Thou sayest first: ‘I sent
 Some noble, prudent warriors with Gív
 As envoys to Pírán. What good advice
 I gave him ! But his ill-conditioned mind
 Rejected all. He would not league with me !’
 A king whose officer made war on him
 Gave utterance to a saw in this regard :—
 ‘When subjects turn from right, and do instead
 Such ill as this, their lives are forfeited.’
 Pírán, I knew, would not give up the struggle ;
 Still for past kindness’ sake I did not seek
 War to the death with him. Now time hath shown
 That all his sympathies are with Túrán ;
 Afrásiyáb is all the world to him,
 So strive no longer to divert his love,
 For he preferreth sentiment to wisdom,
 And no endeavour will bring grass from flint.
 That thou didst speak the foeman fair is good ;
 Fair speech befitteth well the noble race.
 And next, from thy description of the encounter
 Between the warriors with their massive maces,
 Of our good fortune, of the favouring sun
 And moon, and efforts made, I am persuaded
 That thy might will secure the victory ;
 But know that strength and courage are from God ;
 Acknowledge this and give Him all the praise.
 And thirdly, thou hast said: ‘Afrásiyáb
 Will cross the river, having marched thereto

V. 1192

V. 1193

Because Pírán hath sent to ask for aid.
 The matter is so, and we thus reply :—
 ‘ Know, O my thoughtful sage, mine officer
 Approved in all things ! that Afrásiyáb
 Abideth not by the Jíhún to fight
 With us ; the Khán is marching forth from Chín
 Upon him ; he is ambushed on both flanks,
 Or rather, through the innumerable host,
 Whose chiefs are now disposed around Túrán,
 As Rustam—refuge of the warriors
 On battle-days—Luhrásp and deft Ashkash,
 Afrásiyáb is threatened on all sides,
 And therefore marcheth to the river-bank.
 If he advanceth from his present ground
 He will resign his country to the foe.
 And fifthly, since thou askest me for tidings
 About the chieftains whom thou lovest well,
 Know, and may fortune ever go with thee,
 That on the road that lion Rustam took
 The dust hath risen from Kashmír and Hind,
 While from Khárazm, whereto the shrewd Ashkash
 Went, hath gone up the battle-cry, and Shída
 Defeated sought Gurganj ; and where Luhrásp
 Marched all the chieftains gave him passage, yielding
 The Aláns as well as Ghuz which now are ours.
 So if Afrásiyáb shall cross Jíhún
 These noble chiefs will take him in the rear,
 And leave him nothing but the wind to grasp.
 He will not then advance, be well assured,
 And leave to foes the towns and broad champaign,
 His fair support, whate’er Pírán may urge.
 He openeth not his lips by day or night
 Unknown to me. May that day ne’er be blest
 When he shall lead his host across the river,
 And may none see the day of gloom and straitness
 When he shall get the upper hand of us.

Now will I order Tús, that ardent chief,
 To mount the drums, seize Dahistán, Gurgán,
 And lands around, and thus exalt his head
 High as the sun; ourself will follow Tús
 With throne and host and elephants to aid thee.
 Meanwhile confront Pírán, array thy troops,
 And offer fight; Húmán and Nastíhan
 Are gone; regard his hands as full of grief,
 And if he challengeth our chiefs to combat
 Decline not thou. If he should offer battle
 Be of good courage, meet him like a lion.
 Dread not a conflict with Afrásiyáb;
 Take heart and turn not from him; thou wilt win
 If thou hast confidence, and God, I trust,
 Will favour me. Methinketh that when I
 March to support you ye will have your will
 Upon your foes and raise your own names sunward."

He sent the host much greeting from Káuś
 And Tús. The letter with his seal imprest
 He handed to Hajír whom too he blest.

§ 19

How Khusrau arrayed the Host

Now, when Hajír had left the presence, Khusrau
 Took counsel with a scribe. The Sháh's great love
 Toward his troops turned all his thoughts to war.
 He said thus: "If Afrásiyáb bestir
 Himself and cross the river he will drive
 My troops back; my course is to go myself."

V. 1195

Thereat he called to him the head of all
 The scions of Naudar, commanded him
 To lead a host to Dahistán forthwith,
 To occupy the whole waste of Khárazm,
 Watch o'er Ashkash upon the day of battle,

And enter into combat like a pard.
 Then from the court of Tús the tymbals, trumpets,
 And kettledrums resounded, chief and host
 Marched forth, and earth was hidden by the horse-hoofs.
 "The circling sun," thou wouldst have said, "stood still,
 Frayed by those cavaliers!" Tús marched two weeks,
 And light departed from the sun and moon,
 While news about the Sháh's own movements spread,
 For, when Tús left, Khusrau prepared to march,
 With five score thousand of the chosen chieftains,
 Toward Gúdarz with elephants and drums,
 The Grace and crown and throne of king of kings.
 Hajír sped proudly on before Khusrau,
 Glad, with a robe of honour, and in favour;
 Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth up the earth."
 As he approached the camp the clarions blared,
 And all the golden-girdled chiefs went out
 To welcome him. In presence of Gúdarz
 He told of his reception by the Sháh,
 What graciousness and interest were shown,
 What magnanimity and statesmanship,
 Spake of the Sháh's affection for his troops,
 And how his face cleared when he heard the message.
 Hajír then gave the letter of Khusrau,
 With greetings from the nobles, to Gúdarz,
 Who, hearing of the monarch's graciousness,
 And having pressed to his own eyes and face
 The letter, broke its seal and handed it
 When open to a scribe to read to him.
 The chieftain called down blessings on the Sháh,
 And kissed the ground on hearing his commands,
 Spent all the night consulting with his son,
 And took his seat at dawn for audience.
 Then all the men of name throughout the host
 Came helmed before the throne, anon Hajír
 Produced the letter of the glorious Sháh,

And gave it to a scribe who read it out.
 Gúdarz brought into camp all steeds at grass,
 And bade the quarter-masters do their office,
 Allowing them the keys of all his hoard
 Of mail, dínárs, gold casques, swords, crowns, and girdles ;
 For since the moment for revenge had come
 He poured that wealth out on the host till horse
 And foot were furnished ; thus an army gathered
 As 'twere a mountain ; earth shook at the tramp
 Of wind-foot steeds, the hearts of lions quaked
 At troops so whelmed with iron, gold, and silver.
 He bade them to prepare for strife and give
 Their hearts and ears to compassing revenge.
 They marched past their brave chief by companies—
 A mountain-mass of men—while he reviewed them,
 Saw earth obscured and heaven azure-dim,
 And said thus : “ From Jamshíd's days until now
 None hath arrayed the like with steeds and arms,
 Gold, silver, elephants of war, and Lions.
 Hence with God's aidance will I ride to Chín.”

V. 1197

This said he called the noble and the wise
 To entertain them at a drinking-bout
 With harp and pipe, and with the men of might
 Discussed the manner of the coming fight.

§ 20

How Pírán wrote to Gúdarz Son of Kishwáid

News of the Sháh's proceedings reached Pírán
 And filled his heart with terror ; he took refuge
 In knavery, deceit, and artifice,
 And then—his sole resource—he bade a scribe
 Indite a letter to the paladin,
 Wherein he proffered first great praise to God—
 His refuge from the potent Dív—then said :—

" In public and in private my one prayer
 To God, the All-ruler of the world, is this—
 To ban this scene of strife between our hosts.
 If it be thou, Gúdarz! that hast desired
 Thus to fulfil the world with thy revenge,
 Thy lust is sated. Say, what wouldst thou more?
 Behold how many of my gallant Hearts,
 Of mine own nearest kindred and my Lions,
 Hast thou flung—headless trunks—upon the dust!
 Hast thou no reverence, no fear of God?
 From love and wisdom thou hast turned thy face,
 And now that thou hast gained thine end 'tis time
 For thee to sicken of revenge and be not
 Henceforward bold in bloodshed. Do thou mark
 How many of the horsemen of Írán,
 And of Túrán, have perished in this war!
 It is high time that ruth should come to thee,
 With some remission in the quest of strife.
 In seeking vengeance for one dead and gone
 How many living ones wilt thou behead?
 Now, since the past will not return to us,
 Sow not fresh seed of vengeance in the world,
 Vex not thy spirit nor expend thy body,
 But cease from bloodshed, for the dead are cursed
 That leave a long-enduring name for ill,
 And whensoever sable locks turn white
 Small hope of life is left. If our two armies
 Again encounter on this field I fear
 That thou wilt see none left on either side;
 Lives will be lost, but vengeance will survive,
 While after all who knoweth which will win,
 Which be the luckless, which the illustrious?
 But if thy resolution to shed blood,
 And make a fight of lions with me here,
 Is all to win advantage for Írán,
 So say and I will send a messenger

To ask Afrásiyáb for his commands
 That so we may divide earth, and lay by
 The strife as in the days of Minúchihr
 When every one observed the settlement.
 Declare what lands thou claimest for Írán
 That we may move the Turkmans out of them,
 From settlement and desert, field and fell,
 As Kai Khusrau, the righteous judge, shall order.
 First will I draw toward the hills, and quit
 Írán from Gharcha to the land of Bust,
 Quit Tálíkán as far as Fáriyáb
 Including Andaráb, and cities five
 As far as Bámiyán, and all the coasts,
 And Kaian dwelling-places, of Írán,
 The country of Gúrkan, that favoured spot,
 Thus titled by the master of the world,
 With all from Balkh as far as Badakhshán
 That beareth indications of his sway ;
 While, lower down, the desert of Ánwí
 And Zam shall be included with Khatlán,
 Besides Shingán, Tirmid, and Wísagird,
 Bukhára and the cities round about.
 Proceed moreover to the land of Sughd ;
 None will claim aught thereof. To valiant Rustam
 I yield Nímruz and will withdraw the troops,
 Allowing him free access to the East,
 And all as far as Hind ungrudgingly.
 Kashmír, Kábul, and Kandahár with all
 That fronteth Sind shall likewise be included.
 The Aláns and parts invaded by Luhrásp,
 And all between them and Mount Káf, I yield,
 Without strife or contention to Khusrau,
 With all the region threatened by Ashkash.
 This done I will recall from every side
 My troops, and swear to be thy foe no longer.
 Thou knowest that I have been friendly, true,

V. 1199

And upright. I will send Afrásiyáb
 Intelligence that we have ceased from strife;
 Do thou moreover look on us with favour,
 And in thy kindness write Khusrau a letter
 To say that I have made thee overtures,
 And vie with thee no more in shedding blood.
 When we have ratified the covenant
 I will dispatch the treasures which Khusrau
 Demanded, and he too perchance will stop
 His warlike operations. Afterward
 I will send hostages with goods of all sorts,
 And by a friendly, just, and sacred treaty
 Will sew the eye of feud up with the hand
 Of good faith, broken in the great Sháh's time
 By evil-natured Túr and savage Salm,
 When Farídún was well-nigh crazed with grief
 Because the illustrious Íraj was slain.
 What thou requirest else be good enough
 To state, then write and tell the Sháh of all.
 Think not because I speak thee fair: 'These people
 Are giving way,' I only speak in love;
 Mine object is to make a happy ending.
 My treasures, troops, and military fame
 Surpass thine own, but this persistent strife,
 And impious bloodshed, cause my heart to burn
 Upon the troops' account, and I would stop
 The feud: besides I stand in awe of God
 Both in my public and my private life,
 Who as the Judge will not approve ill deeds,
 But utterly destroy our fields and fells.
 Now if thou turnest from these words of mine,
 And seekest war against me to the death,
 Condemning me though I am innocent,
 And not regarding aught that I can say,
 Since justice and injustice are all one
 To thee, and thou wouldst further spread the feud,

Choose out some chiefs that wield the massive mace,
 And I too will select among my troops
 Such warriors as are needful for the strife.
 These will we pair for combat. Let us twain
 Encounter likewise on the battlefield.
 Those innocent of bloodshed then perchance
 Will find repose from strife. Those whom thou holdest
 As guilty, those that grieve thy heart, will I
 Bring forth to thee upon the day of battle.
 Moreover thou shalt make a covenant
 That if thou shalt prevail to shed our blood,
 And if the Turkman warriors' fortune sinketh,
 Thou wilt in no wise harm my host or burn
 My country and my throne, but give my troops
 Free passage home and ambuscade them not.
 If I prevail, my good star bear me fruit,
 I will not ambuscade the Íránians :
 We will not be injurious or vindictive,
 But give them access to their king and country
 Without the loss of property or life.
 If thou consentest not, but wouldst prefer
 A general engagement, set thy host
 In order and the blood shed in the fight
 Shall rest upon thee in the other world."

V. 1201

He tied the letter and then called his son,
 A chief of brazen body hight Rúín,
 To whom he said : " Go to Gúdarz ; address him
 In prudent words and list to his reply."

Rúín, when he had left the chieftain's door,
 Came with ten horsemen and inspired by wisdom
 In haste to where the paladin was camped,
 And, when he saw Gúdarz, drew near to him
 With folded arms and head inclined. That chief
 Rose, clasped Rúín, and asked about Pírán,
 The host, the mighty men, the king and realm.
 Rúín then told his message and delivered

V. 1202 The letter, which a scribe approached and read
 With all its goodly language and advice,
 And wise Pírán's proposals for a peace.
 Then said Gúdarz: "Son of the general,
 And happy youth! first thou must be our guest,
 And then thou mayest ask for my reply."

They cleared a camp-enclosure for his use,
 Providing him a lodging fit for kings.
 Gúdarz, filled with anxiety of heart,
 Sat with his counsellor—the twain, no more—
 While they prepared an answer, picking out
 The fairest words. A sennight thus elapsed
 While minstrels, wine, and harp were in request,
 And daily when the sun sank in the sky
 Rúín was called to share the revelry.

§ 21

The Answer of Gúdarz to the Letter of Pírán

Gúdarz upon the eighth day called a scribe,
 And bade him write the answer, planting thus
 Another tree of feud. He offered praise
 To God, then point by point made this response:—
 "Thy letter I have read and understand
 V. 1203 Thy purposes. Rúín too hath delivered
 Thy message, but I wonder at thy writing
 Such goodly words, because thy tongue and heart
 Accord not, and thy soul is poor in wisdom.
 In all affairs thou speakest courteously,
 And usest phrases so instinct with grace
 That any one that is not really wise
 Would rest with confidence on thy good will;
 Yet art thou like those salt-marsh tracts which look
 Afar like water when the sun is on them;
 But lies and trickery are no avail

When it is time for mace and spear and lasso.
 I will have naught with thee but war and strife,
 This is no time for parley and rejoinder,
 For glozing, league, and love, but to discern
 The aspect of the sky, and mark to whom
 God will give strength, the sun, and conquering fortune.
 Still hear me, and let wisdom be thy guide ;
 First for thy saying : ' I, through loving kindness,
 Through fear of God, and recent happenings,
 Wish not for war ; my heart is strait and darkened
 By all this coil.' Thy tongue and heart agreed not
 What time these words were passing through thy lips,
 Because if justice had possessed thy heart
 Thou hadst not been the foremost to shed blood.
 When Giv first came to thee with prudent nobles,
 Brave officers, and other clear-brained chieftains,
 With fair discourse and prudent counsellings,
 Thou didst array thine army for this fight,
 And leave thine own land to invade another.
 In every conflict thou hast been aggressor.
 This tardy wisdom should have come before,
 And peace been thy beginning not thine end ;
 But thine ill disposition and ill strain
 Are forcing thee to quit the path of wisdom,
 Because the nature of thy race is evil—
 A race that is inured to treachery.
 Thou knowest how high-born Íraj was used
 By Túr in envy of the crown and throne ;
 How ill came on the earth through Túr and Salin,
 How vengeance and injustice spread around ;
 How Farídún in agony of heart
 Had open lips to curse them night and day ;
 And how by help of God who giveth good,
 Who tendered and supported Minúchih
 In seeking vengeance and in justifying
 The world by Grace of his supremacy,

Túr was requited for his wickedness.
 Thus much time passed until the evil strain
 Had reached Afrásiyáb through men of name
 But little wit; he sought a new revenge
 On Minúchihr, Naudar, and Kai Kubád,
 Did that whereof we wot to Kai Káu's,
 Sent dust up from the homesteads of Írán,
 And lastly with the blood of Siyáwush
 Prepared the base of new and lengthy strife.
 Thou hadst no thought of justice at the time
 When Siyáwush though guiltless yielded up
 Sweet life. How many great men of Írán
 With crown and state have perished in this feud!
 Thou sayest next: 'O thou with hoary hair!
 How long wilt thou be girded to shed blood?'
 Know, veteran deceiver who hast witnessed
 The ups and downs of life! that God hath given me
 A length of days and an illustrious fortune
 That I, in vengeance on the day of battle,
 Might send the dust up sunward from Túrán;
 And all mine apprehension is that God
 May end my life ere I have been revenged,
 And trodden underfoot your fields and fells.
 Thou sayest thirdly: 'I see not in thee
 The heart-felt fear and awe of holy God.
 Dost thou not realise that wanton bloodshed
 Will be thine own undoing in the end?'
 If for thy gentle words I turn from fight
 Almighty God will ask at Question-time
 About the days that I have spent on earth,
 And say: 'I gave thee leadership and strength,
 With manhood, wealth, and skill; why didst not thou
 Gird in the presence of the Íránians
 Thy loins in wreak for Siyáwush?' And when
 The just Judge asketh me about the blood
 Of all those seventy noble sons of mine,

How shall I tell the Maker of the world
 The motives that seduced me from revenge ?
 And fourthly as to wreak for Siyáwush
 Thou sayest, ancient prince ! ' For one now dust
 'Tis wrong to take the lives of living men.'
 Remember all the foul deeds which have been
 Most grievous to the heart in every way,
 The deeds which ye have wrought upon Írán,
 What numbers of our monarchs ye have wronged,
 What treaties have been broken, feuds begun,
 And your eternal instancy in ill !
 How can I think of these things and make peace,
 For all along thou hast held evil good ?
 Thou sayest fifthly : ' I will covenant
 With thee, will give the chiefs as hostages,
 Send treasure to Khusrau and end my travail.'
 Know then, O chieftain of the Turkman host !
 That we have no such orders from the Sháh.
 He bade me fight, avenging Siyáwush
 With blood for blood, and if I disobey
 My soul will shame before him. If thou hopest
 That he will look with favour on thy words
 Send him Lahhák and that stanch liege Rúín
 As hostages, with treasures such as may be,
 At once ; the road is open to Írán.
 And sixthly for the lands, the populous
 And fertile provinces, of which thou said'st :—
 ' We will evacuate and surrender them,'
 God hath forestalled thee ; if thou knowest not
 I will explain. Luhrásp hath all the west
 As far as to the marches of Khazar ;
 Toward the south, and all the way to Sind,
 The world is like a glittering Rúman glaive,
 For gallant Rustam with his trenchant sword
 Hath raised therefrom a Resurrection-blast,
 And hath despatched the prince of Hindustán,

Together with his black flag, to the Sháh.
 In Dahistán, Khárazm, and in those parts
 Where Turkmans ruled, the plains are cleared of those
 Who made the raids; Ashkash hath hailed on Shída,
 Hath brought him down nigh unto death, and sent
 Khusrau withal the captives and much spoil.
 Now here the contest is betwixt us twain.
 Thou hast beheld these famous Lions' prowess
 And mine; if thou wilt meet me face to face
 I will release thee from all further parley,
 For by God's power and at the Sháh's command
 Will I submerge this battlefield in blood.
 Observe, O famous leader of the host!
 The revolutions of the sun and moon,
 For heaven hath nigh enthralled thee and the head
 Of Turkman fortune is within the shears.
 Mark what the Maker will bring down upon thee
 For thine ill deeds; time hath uncloaked thy crimes,
 And ill is manifest, requiting ill.
 Be very heedful, ope thine ears and hearken
 To wise men's words. Know that this host so famed,
 These hundred thousand horsemen drawing swords,
 And all in quest of honour and revenge,
 Will not be charmed off from this battlefield.
 I reach the seventh point. Thou 'stablishest
 Thine honesty by oath. 'Twixt me and thee
 There is no talk of league; no dealings hath
 Thy soul with wisdom since in all thy compacts
 Thou leavest honesty in tears. Thine oath
 Wrecked Siyáwush. May no one trust thy words.
 Thou didst not save him in his evil day,
 Much as he called on thee in his distress!
 The eighth point is, thou say'st: 'My crown and throne,
 My valour and my fortune, are more great
 Than thine, and I possess more men and treasure,
 But out of love for thee my soul is sad.'

Methinketh that thou hast without a doubt
Proved me in war ere this. Thou know'st if thou
Hast found me wanting in the day of battle.
Now scan me well again: in wealth and crown,
In throne and prowess, haply I exceed thee
At every point. And lastly thou hast said:—
'Choose champions for the fray; I too will bring
Exalted horsemen from the Turkman host,
For, out of tenderness toward my troops,
I would not spread injustice and revenge.'
Thou dost not proffer this in tenderness,
Because thou knowest thine own heart and purpose.
The Sháh, the world-lord, will be wroth with me
If I shall cause our armies thus to part;
Before me is a guilty host wherewith
My people are aggrieved, the Sháh will never
Allow me to shun fight on such a plea.
First in full force our armies like two mountains
Must shock in battle. Let them be arrayed
In line upon the space which is between them,
And haply victory may declare itself;
But if not, we will choose a ground and champions,
And my word shall be kept though thine be broken.
But if thou wilt not with thy present force
Encounter me, then ask thy king for more,
And carefully consider thy position.
As for the wounded absent from the ranks,
Among thy kith and kindred and allies,
Wait till the leeches make them whole, for now
To gain time is of consequence to thee.
If thou wouldst have of me delay or respite
Well—but if battle set thy host in order.
I speak thus that upon the day of fight
Thou mayst not dare excuse thyself and say:—
'Thou camest on us unexpectedly,
Didst lie in wait, and gavest us no time.'

If I shall seek revenge a hundred years,
 Or now at once, 'tis all the same to me.
 There is no hope that I shall leave this feud ;
 'Tis ever present to me night and day."

Whenas the letter of reply was done
 The envoy fairy-like appeared therefor
 With girded loins upon a rapid steed,
 Escorted by a band of cavaliers.
 Rúín the warrior lighted from his horse,
 And introduced his escort to Gúdarz.
 The chieftain ordered that the archimages,
 And all the famous sages of the host—
 Wise men and shrewd—should come to him forthwith.
 The paladin bade read to them his answer.
 The great men, having heard that cogent letter
 Recited by the well-graced scribe, ignored
 The sense and counsel of Pírán, and thought
 His rede but shallow, while they praised Gúdarz,
 And hailed him as the paladin of earth.
 He sealed and gave the letter to Rúín,
 Son of Pírán of Wísa's race, and bade,
 What time they rose to go, prepare a robe
 Of honour—Arab steeds with golden trappings,
 And crowns and scimitars with golden sheaths.
 He gave Rúín's companions gold and silver,
 With crowns and belts to those of rank for them.
 Rúín departed with his little troop
 Back to his host. Arrived, he came before
 His sire, as was his duty, and bent low
 Before the throne. The veteran Pírán
 Embraced him. When Rúín had given the answer,
 Sent by the general of the Sháh, he told
 What he himself had witnessed. Then a scribe
 Read out the letter to the paladin,
 Whose cheek upon the instant grew like pitch.
 His heart became all pain, his soul all dread ;

He recognised that his decline was near,
 But took it patiently and silently,
 And kept it from his troops whom afterward
 He thus harangued: "Gúdarz is obstinate;
 His heart is instant with him to avenge
 The slaughter of his seventy sons beloved.
 If on the past he base revenge anew
 Shall I not gird me to avenge forthwith
 My brothers and nine hundred famous heads
 Lost to their bodies on the day of battle,
 For in Túrán there is no cavalier
 To gird him like Húmán and Nastíhan—
 That shadowing cypress-tree which in a breath
 Evanished from the copse? And now to arms!
 I will not leave the Íránians field or fell,
 But, by God's strength and our sharp scimitars,
 Bring down upon that folk the Day of Doom."

Such in the herds of horses as were fit
 He brought at once to camp from every side.
 He mounted all the infantry and gave
 To each of them two chargers fit for service.
 Then, opening a hoard laid up of yore,
 Began to make disbursements from his store.

§ 22

How Pírán asked Succour from Afrásiyáb

This done, Pírán, about the hour of sleep,
 Sent to Afrásiyáb a messenger,
 Shrewd, well advised, and old, of ready speech,
 A warrior, a cavalier, and brave,
 Thus saying: "Go, say to the Turkínan king:—
 'O righteous king who seeketh diadems!
 Since first the vault of yonder lofty sky
 Revolved above the sad, dark dust of earth

No king like thee hath sat upon the state ;
 The name of king hath not pertained to any ;
 None else is worthy of the throne, to bind
 The girdle on, and compass crown and fortune.
 The Ruler of the world will send up dust
 From those that meet thee on the day of battle.
 A slave am I and guilty in thy sight
 In that I did not follow thy shrewd counsels.
 The Sháh hath been much plagued by Kai Khusrau,
 And all through me, but yet I am not conscious
 That I did wrong ; it was the will of God ;
 What hath been hath been, much talk will not profit.
 The monarch, if he seeketh good in me,
 Will spare and pardon. Now I send him tidings
 How heaven hath been dealing with his slave.
 I led mine army to Mount Kanábad,
 And checked the progress of the Íránians ;
 Upon their side a mighty host advanced,
 Led by Gúdarz and other generals ;
 No greater host since Minúchihr was Sháh
 Hath issued from Írán against Túrán.
 They took up their position at Raibad
 Upon the mountains. For three days and nights
 The hosts faced one another like two leopards.
 We did not take the offensive for we thought :—
 ‘ Perchance the foe will march out on the plain.’
 Gúdarz however was content to wait,
 And would not leave the mountains ; then Húmán,
 My brother, that world-conqueror, longed for fight,
 And went to challenge the Íránians ;
 I know not what possessed that lion-man.
 The son of Gív came out, encountered him,
 And having slain him turned my head with sorrow.
 Who ever knew a lofty cypress-tree
 Killed by a blade of grass ? This broke the hearts
 Of our chief men, and happiness was dashed

By grief; moreover noble Nastíhan,
 With twice five thousand proven cavaliers,
 Departed from me at the break of day,
 And perished by the mace-blows of Bízhan.
 Grieved to the heart I led the army on,
 And went forth shouting to the battlefield.
 We fought in force till night rose o'er the hills,
 But when nine hundred of the king's great men
 Were headless on the field, and of the rest
 The more part had been wounded to the heart
 With grief, their bodies by the scimitar,
 The Íránians gat the upper hand of us.
 Their purpose of revenge is absolute,
 And I am fearful that the turning sky
 Will wholly cease to favour us. Since then
 Ill news have reached me and perturbed me more,
 That Kai Khusrau is coming with a host
 To aid his general in this campaign.
 If this prove true the king is ware that I
 Can not encounter them unless he set,
 With his fierce troops, his face toward Írán,
 Take part in this campaign, avert this evil,
 And make revenge the girdle of his loins,
 For if we perish by the Íránians' hands
 None will be left to take revenge for us!"

The messenger on this went like a blast. V. 1212
 He mounted swift as fire upon a courser—
 A mighty beast whose feet were like the wind—
 And journeyed, till he reached Afrásiyáb,
 Without a halt for breathing, rest, or sleep.
 He came swift as a blast before the king,
 First kissed the throne, then told his tale. The
 monarch,
 On hearing from Pírán such woeful tidings,
 Grew sorely troubled and his colour changed.
 He was heart-broken, grieving for the slain,

Whose hap became to him a lasting sorrow ;
 He grieved too that his army had been worsted,
 And country harried. War pressed everywhere,
 The world was strait to him in his distress ;
 Still, having heard the message of Pírán,
 And seeing that his troops maintained their ground,
 He blessed the general and showed joy. His heart
 Grew brighter. Then he called the messenger,
 Bestirred himself, took counsel all that night,
 And when at dawn he donned the crown anew
 He gave the messenger an interview.

§ 23

The Answer of Afrásiyáb to the Letter of Pírán

The monarch bade the messenger return
 To brave Pírán, that man of prosperous counsels,
 With this reply : " O warrior famed and true !
 Since thy pure mother bare thee thou hast made
 Thyself my shield. Thou standest first with me,
 And rankest o'er the other paladins,
 V. 1213 Still choosing toil in all affairs with all
 Thy wealth for me, conducting hosts Íránward
 From Chín, and blackening foes' hearts and fortunes.
 Prince and the paladin of earth art thou ;
 A thousand blessings be upon thy soul !
 Thy friendship dateth from Pashang and Túr ;
 The heaven raiseth not a paladin,
 The army seeth not a general,
 And no sage girdeth up his loins, like thee.
 First for thy saying : ' I was most to blame
 For Kai Khusrau's escape and his revenge.'
 Know thou that I, the king, am not aggrieved,
 And never laid the matter to my heart,
 So let not thine be straitened for this cause

Or fear disgrace. God will accomplish what
 He hath decreed, and needeth not a teacher.
 Call not Khusrau my grandson ; it is false,
 Because his Grace deriveth not from me.
 I will not ever be a grandsire to him,
 Or take advantage of our kinsmanship.
 In this affair of his none is to blame ;
 Nor do I strive against the Omnipotent :
 What happened was according to His will ;
 Why then should my heart be aggrieved at thee ?
 And secondly thou speakest of the army,
 And of the bias of sky, sun, and moon ;
 But heaven's bias is not all one way,
 It giveth sometimes sorrow, sometimes joy ;
 Be not heart-broken then on this account,
 Impose not chains like these upon thy soul.
 Thus is it written in respect of warfare :
 The sky abandoneth all sides in turn,
 It raiseth to the sun and casteth down.
 To talk about the slain is but to dream ;
 Forgo not to take vengeance for thy brother ;
 The heart in anguish for a brother's loss
 Will not be cured by leeches' remedies.
 Thou sayest thirdly : ' Kai Khusrau hath left
 His throne and cometh with his army hither.'
 The tidings that have reached thee : ' Kai Khusrau
 Is coming from his kingdom,' are not true,
 For it is Tús, the general, with his troops
 That is upon the march to Dahistán ;
 May no one ever look upon the day
 When he shall outstrip us, for I myself
 Will lead the host o'er the Jihún at dawn.
 I will not spare Gúdarz, Khusrau, or Tús,
 Or throne, or crown, or troops, or kettledrums,
 But so attack Írán that none shall see
 The Sháh's throne more. I will not leave the world

For Kai Khusrau, but take him unawares,
 And let his mother mourn a headless son,
 Unless the will of heaven be otherwise.
 Oh noble veteran! God hath suffered thee
 To lack for naught; all that thou wouldst is thine
 Of men, of treasure, and of might of hand.
 A splendid force of thirty thousand men—
 Intrepid, shrewd, and gallant cavaliers—
 Behold! I have dispatched to reinforce thee,
 And brighten thy dark mind, for ten Íránians
 Would look but small compared with one of these.
 On their arrival tarry not a day,
 Deprive Gúdarz of both his head and crown,
 Drag off with thine own steeds the very mountains
 Whereon he hath entrenched his host, and when
 Thou hast the victory be not slack in bloodshed.”

V. 1215

The envoy, having heard the monarch's message,
 Came to the captain of the host. Pírán,
 On hearing, called the troops. The messenger
 Repeated all the words, which gave good heart
 To all and freed them from their griefs, albeit
 Pírán was inly sorrowful of soul,
 His heart was full, his fortune soiled, he saw
 His king's host shrunk by battle everywhere,
 He feared withal an onslaught by Khusrau,
 And thus he prayed: “O Thou, the Omnipotent!
 What marvels happen in this life of ours!
 No outcast he whom Thou hast set on high!
 Save Thee there is no world-lord, none abiding.
 Khusrau for instance! Who supposed till now
 That he would be a king? How turning fortune
 Hath helped a self-made man! From withered thorns
 He bringeth forth fresh roses, and for him
 His sleepless fortune turneth dust to musk!
 Do one more marvel: let that noble man
 Possess his soul in sorrow evermore!

Between two kings—a grandsire and a grandson—
 I know not why this battlefield is needed.
 What with two warlike monarchs of two realms,
 What with two armies serried face to face,
 How can I tell the issue of this strife
 And fortune's trend ?”

Then wailing bitterly

He prayed: “O glorious and almighty Judge!
 If on this battlefield Afrásiyáb,
 With other nobles of the Turkman host,
 Shall perish in the struggle, and the head
 Of all our fortunes shall be overthrown
 When Kai Khusrau shall come forth from Írán
 For vengeance, and the world be turned to him,
 I am content to have my breastplate pierced,
 And that the Omnipotent should take my soul.
 Ne'er may these eyes of mine behold the man
 That followeth the course that I have followed,
 For unto him whose daily course is run
 In disappointment life and death are one.”

V. 1216

§ 24

How the Íránians and Túránians fought a pitched Battle

Now when the sun spread out its gold brocade
 The ocean of the plain of battle heaved,
 A war-cry rose from both contending hosts,
 And earth shook underneath the horses' hoofs ;
 On every side the troops advanced in force,
 And all the plains and hills were clad in mail.
 Both chieftains, both like leopards, mustered all
 Their powers for that encounter. Arrows showered
 Like rain descending from a darksome cloud.
 The world was like a winter's night¹ for murk,

¹ More literally “Like night (in the month) of Bahman.”

But what a murk ! Its rain was shafts and swords !
 The earth was iron with the horses' hoofs,
 The warriors' breasts and hands were red with gore.
 So many headless corpses strewed the field,
 That there remained no longer room to turn,
 Or passage for the horses' feet ; the earth
 Was tulip-hued, the air like indigo,
 And waves ran high upon that sea of blood.
 Both chiefs said : " If our warriors thus maintain
 The fight by nightfall nothing will be left
 Save heaven, the world, and God ! "

Now when Pírán

Saw how the battle went he bade Lahhák
 And Farshíward : " Dispose in three divisions
 What troops ye have efficient to restore
 The fight, and let the shrewdest of the three
 Compose our rear while ye march to our flanks."

V. 1217

He bade Lahhák to lead his troops in mass
 Toward the heights, and Farshíward withal
 His toward the stream, and raise dust o'er the sun.

As those Túránian chiefs led on their men,
 Intent on fight, a watchman of Írán
 Sent forth a messenger to tell Gúdarz,
 But he was with his army, on the watch,
 And when, along the route whereby they came
 To fall upon their foemen unawares,
 Lahhák and Farshíward sent up the dust
 From both the flanks the Íránian cavaliers
 Closed with the foe and mixed the dust with blood,
 While messengers from all sides came in haste
 To tell the paladin, who looked to see
 What warriors he had still keen for fight.
 His noble son, Hajír, that angry Lion,
 Was in reserve with shaft and sword ; Gúdarz
 Bade him to go to Gíy, the army's Stay,
 Bid him send reinforcements toward the mountain

And river, and withal leave in his stead
 Some valiant man and hurry to the front.
 Thereat the brave Hajír girt up his loins,
 And sped forth to his brother with that charge.
 Gív chose at once a man of high renown—
 A warrior named Farhád—and having called him
 Committed to his hands the chief command ;
 Then ordered Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
 With ten score valiant veterans to fall
 On Farshíward and raise the dust from stream
 And mountain. Swift as wind he gave Gurgín,
 Son of Mílád, two hundred with a standard,
 And said : “ Lead hence thy glittering spears and maces,
 Display thy prowess and assail the foe,
 For their supports are broken and their chiefs
 Downhearted in the strife.”

V. 1218

Then to Bízhan

He said : “ O lion-man ! a rending Tiger
 Art thou upon the battle-day, and now
 Thy lion-manhood will bestead thee well,
 For thou must fight the foe. Our army’s hopes
 Are set on thee and thou must take the field.
 Spare not the enemy, expose thyself,
 The time for battle and revenge hath come.
 Go to the centre and engage Pírán,
 For all his country hath its stay in him,
 And he will burst his skin at sight of thee.
 If thou shalt conquer him our work is done ;
 May God and thy good fortune be thine aid.
 Then will our soldiers rest from toil and stress,
 Our world-possessing Sháh will be rejoiced,
 Thou wilt obtain much treasure and much goods,
 And thy prosperity will be assured ;
 ’Twill break the backbone of Afrásiyáb,
 And fill his heart with blood, his eyes with tears.”
 When Gív had ceased, his son girt up his loins,

V. 1219

And urged his steed on like Ázargashasp,
 Those heroes fell upon the foemen's centre,
 As they were lions on a hunting-day,
 Bestriding windfoot steeds with outstretched necks,
 And satisfied the vengeance of their hearts.
 The horsemen and mailed chargers of Túrán
 Were scattered by the onset o'er the plain.
 What numbers fell beneath the horses' feet,
 Their grave the lion, mail their winding-sheet!

§ 25

How Gív fought with Pírán and how Gív's Horse jibbed

When, from the rear, Rúín, son of Pírán,
 Observed the onset with its cloud of dust
 He issued from the mighty Turkman host
 With other nobles, as they had been wolves,
 And like a stout pard grappled with the foe.
 He struggled but prevailed not in the strife;
 Then flung away his Indian scimitar,
 And showed his back despairing of the battle.

Pírán the chief with none of his own kin
 Stayed at his post amazed. Gív, seeing him,
 Wheeled to attack, and of the body-guard
 Speared four and flung them vilely to the ground.
 Pírán, the son of Wísa, strung his bow,
 And showered arrows on his enemy,
 While bold Gív held his shield above his head,
 And with his spear came charging like a wolf,
 But, when he sought to fall upon Pírán,
 His charger jibbed. Enraged he lashed his steed,
 And seethed, and cursed the foul, malicious Dív;
 Then with his shield of wolf-skin o'er his head,
 He dropped his spear, strung up his bow and drew it
 In hope to pin Pírán's hand to his shield.

Four times he hit Pírán's breast, thrice his steed,
 But neither horse nor rider suffered aught.
 Pírán, on Gív's companions drawing near,
 Fought yet more fiercely, charging him like smoke,
 To wound him and defeat his valiant troops.
 Gív too rushed forward and dishelmed Pírán,
 But hurt him not, and Gív was vexed at heart.
 Bízhan approached and said: "My glorious sire!
 I heard our monarch say: 'Pírán will fight
 In many a fierce engagement and escape
 The clutch of sharp-clawed Dragons, but Gúdarz
 Will take his life at last.' Strive not so fiercely
 With him, my sire! His time hath not yet come."

Gív's troops, brave men and full of wrath, came up
 Whereat Pírán turned toward his own array
 With groans, in dudgeon, and with livid face,
 And, when he reached Lahhák and Farshíward,
 Said: "O my men of name, brave Hearts, and swordsmen!

It was because of moments such as these
 That erst I fostered you upon my breast.
 Now when the host hath come forth to the fight,
 And when the world is black to us with foes,
 I have not seen one come before the host,
 And battle there for glory!"

V. 1221

At his words
 The chieftains' hearts breathed vengeance. As they
 fared

They said: "If we have not unsullied souls
 We need not be in terror for our bodies.
 Bind we our skirts together,¹ ne'er must we
 Relax our girdles from this strife."

They went,
 Lahhák and Farshíward, to challenge Gív,
 And brave Lahhák thrust at his girdle, hoping

Cf. EHI, i. 537, and the passages there quoted.

To bring him from his saddle headlong down.
 The coat of mail was shivered by the shock
 Yet Gív lost not his stirrups, and his spear
 Pierced the swift charger of Lahhák. It fell
 In agony. Lahhák regained his feet
 While Farshíward rode up and with his sword
 Struck at the spear of Gív as quick as wind,
 Clave it in twain and gloried in the stroke.
 Gív, when he saw the blow of Farshíward,
 Drew from his girdle his huge mace and bellowed
 Like some fierce-breathing dragon. With one blow
 He sent the falchion from his foeman's hand,
 Struck him another blow upon the neck,
 And rained a fiery shower upon his body,
 Which made his blood from mouth to liver tingle,
 Took all his strength away and dazed his head.
 While Gív was thus engaged Lahhák bestrode
 As rapidly as smoke a wind-foot steed,
 And those two warriors with mace and spear
 All lion-like attacked Gív, many a blow
 Rained on him from those valiant chieftains' maces,
 Yet sat he firmly on his pard-skin saddle,
 And that contention frayed him not a whit.
 Now when Lahhák and Farshíward encountered
 Such stout resistance from that lion-man
 They said to one another in fierce wrath :—
 "Ill hath descended on us from the stars!
 He on yon saddle hath a brain of brass,"
 Thou wouldest say, "on chest but lion's hide!"
 Gív called to his companions for a spear,
 And wheeled to right and left in his attack,
 But neither of the twain was overthrown.
 He thought : "A novel task confronteth me!
 The chiefs have come not from Túrán, but dívs
 Out of Mázandarán!"

V. 1222

Upon Gív's right

Guráza with a mace of Rúman steel
 Came dust-swift to encounter Farshíward.
 He rode a charger camel-like in bulk,
 And aimed a blow ; the wary Turkman ducked,
 And with his spear struck at Guráza's belt,
 But failed to pierce the mail. Then sword in hand
 Bízhan came lion-like to help Guráza,
 And smote upon the helmet Farshíward,
 Whose prowess rent the earth. Bízhan then sought
 To clutch his foeman's helm with his right hand ;
 His foeman stooped ; Bízhan's attempt was foiled.
 Behind Bízhan came Gustaham in haste,
 And other nobles of Írán withal
 Nigh the Túránian host, with anxious hearts
 And eager for the fight. Andarímán
 Came rushing dust-like to encounter them,
 And let fly with the mace at Gustaham
 To break his ribs ; he parried with his sword,
 Which snapped in twain and filled his heart with
 fear.

Hajír came up to aid those warriors,
 And showered arrows on Andarínán,
 Whereof one struck the saddle, piercing through
 The horse's mail, and horse and life grew strangers.
 The rider disengaged himself, held up
 His shield above his head, and rose crestfallen.
 The Turkmans shouted, and their cavaliers,
 Who charged like dívs, made shift to bear him off
 In presence of the foe. From morn, till night
 Rose o'er the hills, the horsemen on both sides
 Kept sending up the dust of war, and mixed
 The earth with blood until all spirit went
 From steeds and cavaliers, and mouths gave o'er,
 For they could raise the battle-cry no more.

§ 26

*How Gúdarz and Pírán arranged a Battle of Eleven Rukhs*¹

Now, when earth's face turned ebon, from both hosts
 The drums and trumpets sounded, and the drummers
 Upon their elephants made haste to leave
 The scene of action. Both the hosts agreed :—
 "Since night hath fallen we will quit the field,
 And in the morning choose us valiant men,
 Men that would send dust from the ocean's depths,
 Men of renown and eager for the fray,
 To meet in single combat ; thus our troops
 Will be relieved and shed no more the blood
 Of guiltless folk."

This settled, they withdrew,
 And thought that they had made the long road short.
 The two chiefs, both perturbed at that last fight,
 Turned from the strife, one toward Mount Kanábad,
 The other toward Raibad. Gúdarz sent out
 His scouts. The troops were galled by mail and helm,
 Their hands and falchions were adrip with blood ;
 They loosed the fastenings, put off mail and casque,
 And, with their bodies freed from iron burdens,
 Began to feast and drink. Then young and old
 Alert went to the paladin for counsel.

V. 1224

Gív said : "My father ! what strange hap was mine !
 When I had broken through the foemen's ranks,
 And come upon Pírán, my charger jibbed,
 And would not stir a foot. Thou wouldst have said
 That in my wrath I should behead my friend.
 Then was it that Bízhan recalled to mind,
 And told me of, a presage of the Sháh's
 That by thy hand Pírán will die."

"My son !"

Gúdarz replied, "my hand will take his life

¹ See p. 7.

Assuredly, and in God's strength shall I
Avenge on him my seventy sons beloved."

Gúdarz then viewed the host and saw it worn
With bloodshed, stress of war, and combating,
And, grieved to see his noble folk thus wan,
Dismissed them to recruit. They went their ways,
And at the dawn returned equipped and vengeful.
They greeted him: "Famed paladin of earth!
Hast risen refreshed by sleep? Dost purpose fight?"

He answered: "Noble and illustrious chiefs!
Be instant, all of you! by night and day
In blessings on the Maker, for till now
The war hath met our wishes. Many a marvel
Have I experienced, and known this world
As one of changes. Many men like us
The sky hath fashioned, reaping what itself
Sowed with delight. I instance first Zakhák,
The unjust, who rose to kingship. How he straitened
The world and yet its Maker suffered him!
Vile as he was, and noted as a tyrant,
The breezes wafted him supremacy!
Thus many years passed over his ill-doings;
Then God sent evil on the miscreant,
The Judge endured no longer his injustice,
And raised a just man to dispose of him.
The glorious Farídún, that righteous Sháh,
Girt up his loins to win the empire,
Unloosened all the coil of Áhriman,
And decked the earth throughout with righteousness.
From miscreant and ill-disposed Zakhák,
A man vituperated by our Sháhs,
The taint descended to Afrásiyáb,
Who looketh not upon the face of good.
When he enlarged his vengeance on Írán
He left the path of justice, law, and Faith;
At last he slew the noble Siyáwush,

And robbed our country of the breath of life.
 When Gív came to Túrán how many hardships
 Awaited him ! his bed was dust, his pillow
 A stone, he lived on game, wore leopard-skin,
 And wandered like a madman till he found
 The traces of Khusrau and did him homage.
 When they had set their faces toward Írán,
 And news reached fierce Pírán, he with his host
 Sped after to destroy them by the way,
 And did what harm he could, but God's protection
 Sufficed. Then in revenge for Siyáwush
 Our army marched toward the Kása rúd,
 V. 1226 And at Ládán, when mighty hosts had gathered,
 And at the camisado of Pashan,
 How many of my sons were slain before me
 While all our chiefs lost heart ! Pírán again
 Hath come to fight and now confronteth us,
 But feeling weak he will procrastinate
 By ruse and parle till reinforcements come.
 Now he is challenging our chiefs to combat,
 And we must be prepared, for if we show
 Unreadiness or weakness he will find
 Excuse of some sort to avoid a battle.
 If they will fight us let us send the dust
 Out of their men of name ; and if Pírán
 Will keep his word and meet us on the field
 I swear to you that I will fight and give,
 White-headed as I am, my body up
 For slaughter in the presence of our troops.
 I and the brave Pírán, Rúín, and Gív,
 Will quit ourselves like men, for none abideth
 For ever here, our fame alone will stay,
 And best it is to leave a lofty name,
 Since death will fling its lasso at us all ;
 The end is one to die or to be slain,
 We can but little trust the turning sky ;

And by the self-same token do ye likewise,
 Armed with your lances and man-slaying swords,
 Gird, all of you of any name, your loins
 For vengeance, for our foemen's fortune falleth,
 And we must strike at once. Húmán who fought
 With brave Bízhan had no peer in Túrán ;
 But since when fortune turned he was o'erthrown,
 Beheaded wretchedly, and rolled in blood,
 We need not fear them or withdraw ourselves.
 If single combat pleaseth not Pírán,
 And he shall lead his army forth like dust,
 We too must go forth like a mountain-mass,
 And counter him for, since our foes are downcast
 And fearful, sure am I that we shall gain
 The mastery and make them reek to heaven."

V. 1227

The noble veterans blessed him, saying thus :—
 " O chieftain, true of heart and pure of Faith !
 Ne'er since God made the world hath man beheld
 A paladin like thee. E'en Farídún—
 The ruler of the world—had no such servant.
 Thou art the army's stay, the Sháh's chief captain,
 Through thee the warriors exalt their helms.
 Thou hast devoted children, life, and goods,
 And what can Sháhs ask more of their commanders ?
 All that the Sháh required of Faríburz,
 And Tús, he will behold achieved by thee.
 We are thy slaves ; our hearts are full of love
 For thee. If now Pírán shall bring a thousand
 Against our ten, see which will turn from strife !
 But should he come to fight on plain and mountain
 In full force we are all heart-sore for vengeance,
 Our loins are girt for war. Oh ! may we give
 Our lives for thee ! To that we all are pledged."

Gúdarz was bright of heart at this, and cried :—
 " O paladins of our earth-ruling Sháh !
 Such ever is the wont of warriors,

Of noble Lions and brave cavaliers."

He bade the troops to mount and gird themselves
For fight, dispatched sun-faced Farhád to lead
The left wing, where Ruhhám had been, and sent

V. 1228

Katmára, a descendant of Káran's,
In haste to lead the right wing in the stead
Of Faríburz, and ordered thus Shídúsh:—

"My son and ready minister in all!
Be thy place in the rear with Káwa's flag,
And troops to give support to all the rest."

He then commanded Gustaham: "Go to,
Lead for the nonce, assume the chief command,
Be watchful, prudent, and the army's stay."

He issued orders: "Let no man advance
Beyond his post, look ye to Gustaham,
And be both night and day upon the saddle."

A cry rose midst the host, the soldiers mourned,
And hastened to Gúdarz, dust on their heads,
Because their leader with his hoary hair
Had girt his loins, and went to fight in person.
Gúdarz called Gustaham, gave him advice,
And said to him: "Be thou a trusty guard
Against the foe, be watchful night and day
In mail and ready for attack, unhelm not,
For, if thou shalt begin to be remiss,
Sleep will assail thee, and the sleepless foe
Will fall upon thee while thy head is nodding.
Maintain a watchman on the mountain-top,
And let the soldiers feel themselves secure.
If from Túrán by night and unawares
They fall on us by way of ambuscade
Thou must display the valour of a man
And warrior's prowess. Should ill tidings come
About us from the army of Túrán—
That they are slaying us upon the field,
And bearing to Túrán our trunkless heads—

Avoid a battle and abide three days,
 For on the fourth will come the famous Sháh
 To help with Grace and power."

Gustaham

Received the proffered counsels and, resolved
 To act with loyalty, this answer gave:—
 "I will obey thy bidding like a slave."

§ 27

How Pírán harangued his Men of Name

Since that last fight disastrous to Túrán
 The troops were sorry and dispirited,
 Sons with wan cheeks lamented for their sires,
 And brothers were in grief for brothers slain;
 Thus were they full of mourning and in dudgeon:
 High heaven loured above them. When Pírán
 Perceived that all his host was as a flock
 Rent by a ravening wolf he called the chiefs,
 And spake at large: "Experienced warriors,
 Worn, young and old alike, with combating!
 What majesty, what rank and dignity,
 Are yours in presence of Afrásiyáb!
 Ye have a name for glory and success,
 Ye had the world at will, but now, because
 Defeated once, ye will not fight at all!
 Know that if we retreat in cowardice
 The lusty leaders of Írán will come
 With massive maces in pursuit, and lord
 And liege see none of us alive again.
 Now put away these terrors from your hearts,
 And bear your griefs with equanimity.
 There is a saying current with archmages:—
 'It is the part of God to conquer always.'
 As for the world 'tis full of ups and downs,

And such that we walk fearfully therein.
 This host that now attacketh fled from us
 Erewhile. Let all of you that have regard
 For country and for child, for life and kindred,
 Gird them for vengeance on the Íránians.
 Gúdarz hath made a compact with me, saying :—
 ‘ I will make choice of chieftains from the host,
 Then let us set our champions face to face,
 Allowing both the armies to repose.’
 If he shall keep his compact, and produce
 His chieftains at their stations, be it so ;
 Or if he shall advance to fight in force
 We will go forth with eagerness to battle.
 Then if we give our heads up to the sword
 There is a day for birth, a day for death ;
 Or if not I will set their heads on stakes ;
 The turn of fortune may be either way.
 I will behead the man that disregardeth
 These words of mine.”

At once the warriors answered :—

“ O paladin of great Afrásiyáb !
 Though from of old thou hast had throne and treasure
 Still hast thou chosen travail for our sakes,
 Girt up thy loins before us like a slave,
 And givest son and brother to be slain.
 Why then should we, thy slaves, avert our heads ? ”

They spake and left the presence of Pírán,
 And every one made ready for the fray.
 They spent the livelong night in taking order
 For all things as their prudent chief had bidden.
 At dawn the sound of trump and pipe arose
 Before his tent-enclosure, and the chiefs
 Were in the saddle with their bows and arrows.
 Thou wouldst have said : “ Earth maketh for itself
 An iron veil of horseshoes.” Then Pírán
 Said to Lahhák and Farshíward : “ Great chiefs !

The safety of the army of Túrán
 Must be your care upon this battlefield.
 Set ye a watchman on the mountain-top
 To watch by day and count the stars. If ill
 Should come upon us from the turning sky,
 And it shall wholly cease to favour us,
 Be ye not hasty to engage in battle,
 But fall back swift as smoke upon Túrán,
 Since none, or few, except yourselves are left
 Of Wísa's seed, for all the rest are slain."

With bitter tears and heart-felt grief they clasped
 Each other to the breast and then departed
 With lamentations on their several ways.
 Pírán the chief, full of revenge, rode out
 Upon the field and raised his battle-shout.

§ 28

*How Gúdarz and Pírán chose the Warriors for the Battle
 of the Eleven Rukhs*

Pírán perceived Gúdarz and held a parley.
 "Wise paladin," he said, "how many souls
 Thou torturest! But will it benefit
 The soul of Siyáwush to cause Túrán
 To reek? His soul is with the good in heaven;
 Now that he resteth why not rest thyself?
 Two armies hast thou flung upon each other
 Like elephants beheaded. All the troops
 Of two realms have been slaughtered, and 'tis time
 For thee to quit the battlefield. The world
 Is void of men. We battle coldly. Why
 Must thou destroy the guiltless? Let us make
 A pact. If thou desirest so revenge
 Advance thy soldiers from the mountain-foot,
 And come thyself before them; then perchance

Thou wilt attain the vengeance that thou seekest.
 We—thou and I—will wheel upon this field
 Of battle and the others in like manner,
 And those of us who gain the victory
 Shall sit on thrones with every wish fulfilled.
 If I shall perish by thy hand forbear
 Revenge upon the soldiers of Túrán,
 Who shall submit to thy commands and give
 Their chiefs as hostages for their good faith;
 But shouldst thou perish by this hand of mine,
 Together with the nobles of thy host,
 I fight not with thy troops, and they have naught
 To fear from me.”

Gúdarz, on hearing, marked
 How fortune darkened all Pírán's endeavours,
 First offered praises to the Omnipotent,
 Then, calling to his mind the noble Sháh,
 Made answer: “I have heard thee, famous chief!
 Throughout. In that way did Afrásiyáb
 Get profit from the blood of Siyáwush—
 Speak out, turn not away—when they cut off
 His head as 'twere a sheep's what time his heart
 Was full, his liver pierced? Afrásiyáb
 Thereafter sent a cry up from Írán
 With all his slaying, raiding, strife, and turmoil.¹
 'Twas on thine oath that Siyáwush relied,
 And lightly didst thou give him to the wind;
 Then when my son approached thee afterward
 Thou didst reject my counsel, and make ready
 In fiery haste for war. My prayer hath been,
 Both publicly and privily, to Him,
 Who ruleth o'er the world, that I some day
 Might meet thee in the fight; and now that thou
 Hast come there is no room for tarrying,
 So let us twain, with our hoar heads, contend

¹ Cf. Vol. ii., p. 363.

Upon this battlefield. Do thou now choose
 A band of champions to encounter mine,
 Experienced chiefs with maces, swords, and lances,
 And let them strive together till they bring
 Their foemen's heads to dust."

V. 1233

The Turkman chief
 Made ready and chose out ten cavaliers,
 Who sped forth from the centre to the place
 Of combat, where no eyes were watching them.
 This was the compact made between the chiefs—
 That every Turkman warrior should encounter
 One from Írán. They matched Gív with Gurwí
 As peers in strength and pluck—Gurwí, the son
 Of Zira, whom of all the foe the Sháh
 Most loathed, Gurwí who, seizing by the beard
 The spotless Siyáwush, beheaded him.
 With Fariburz, the son of Kai Káuś,
 Kulbád, the son of Wíśa, hastened out,
 Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, went with Bármán¹
 In company but as antagonists,
 Guráza went with Siyámak, fierce Lion
 With snorting Crocodile. The old Gurgín,
 A Lion too, went with Andarínán.
 Rúfn the brave, who robbed the world of lustre
 In fight, went with Bízhan, the son of Gív,
 Akháśt with Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
 And Barta with Kuhram, the good at need,
 While Furúhil came forth with Zangula
 With all speed from the centre of the host.
 Hajír and Sipahram, as 'twere two dívs,
 Sent up the war-cry on the battlefield.
 Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, paired with Pírán,
 And all were ready for revenge and strife.
 The generals, as much opposed by duty
 As by religion, were athirst for blood,

¹ *Id.* p. 119.

V. 1234 And sware together not to quit the field
Till one of them had proved victorious.

Between the armies and commanding them
There were two hills, the one was toward Írán,
The other toward Túrán, and to the plain
Betwixt them went the lucky and the luckless.

Gúdarz said: "Let each warrior and man
Of blood that conquereth his Turkman foe
Bring from the spot his banner to this hill."

Pírán, the chieftain, had his standard raised,
And gave like orders, on the other height.

Then they descended to the level ground,
With girdles tightly girt for shedding blood,
And with their lassos, falchions, bows, and arrows,
Essayed all modes of fight. As for the Turkmans—
Those gallant chieftains—had a mountain faced them
They would have levelled it anon, so well
They plied their heavy maces, swords, and shafts,
And yet their hands were slack, for God had barred
The door of might against them, they were trammelled
Within a net of bale for having shed
Much blood without just cause, their chargers jibbed,
And thou hadst said of them: "Their feet are hobbled."
Among the Turkmans everything went wrong
Because their day was over, and their blood
Quaked. Thus the Maker of the world ordained,
And thou hadst said: "Earth hath them in its grip."
With all the manhood that they had they strove
'Gainst fortune for the honour of their throne,
And in their fight for sovereignty surrendered
Their heads without reserve for fame and glory.

Both sides came rushing to the battlefield,
And strove together, yet Pírán the chief
Knew inly that the evil day had come,
V. 1235 (Such is the process of high heaven above—
The source to thee of grief and happiness!)

But saw that fighting was his only course ;
The tyrant's turn it was to suffer force.

§ 29

How Fariburz fought with Kulbád

First, Fariburz, that gallant warrior,
Came speeding lion-like and, having strung
His bow, attacked Kulbád, the son of Wísa.
He wheeled about but, since his arrows failed,
Unsheathed with his right hand his glittering sword,
And clave his foeman's body to the waist.
Alighting he undid his royal lasso,
Secured Kulbád upon his charger's back,
And, having loosed the fastenings of his mail,
Rode to the hill triumphantly, exclaiming :—
“ Oh ! may our leader be victorious,
And all our Sháh's foes liver-stricken thus ! ”

§ 30

How Gív fought with Gurwí

Next there went out Gurwí, the son of Zira—
A valiant dív—with Gív, son of Gúdarz.
They fought long with their spears and mixed the dust
With blood till with the horsemen's combating
Their spearheads dropped affrighted at the fray.
They took their bows and arrows and fought on.
Gív purposed to dismount his foe alive,
And carry him still living to Khusrau—
A novel present to him from the Turkmans.
Gurwí, when Gív was closing, dropped his bow
In terror and laid hold upon his sword,
But gallant Gív came charging furiously,

While grasping in his hand an ox-head mace,
 And, roaring like a mighty leopard, struck
 His foeman's casque and drenched his face with blood.
 Gív, keeping his own seat, put forth his hand
 And, seizing, strained Gurwí against his breast,
 Who, fainting in the saddle, fell to earth
 Insensible. The warrior-pard alighted,
 Bound his foe's hands firm as a rock behind him,
 Then, mounting, made his prisoner run in front,
 And rode toward his comrades. Flag in hand
 He scaled the hill; his shouts brought down the moun-
 tains.

The king of earth had given him grace to win
 That triumph and he blessed the paladin.

§ 31

How Guráza fought with Siyámak

Next Siyámak of the Túránian host
 Went with Guráza to the battlefield,
 Both spear in hand and both with cries like those
 Of maddened elephants. The chiefs were all
 Wrath, rancour, and revenge. Anon they took
 Their massive maces, raged like warrior-lions,
 And smote each other on the head. Their tongues
 Were cracked with thirst, they closed in furious fight,
 Alighted, clutched, and raised the dust of strife.
 Guráza put his hands forth like a lion,
 And as a storm-blast bent his foeman down,
 Then dashed him to the ground with violence
 That brake his bones; he yielded up the ghost.
 Guráza in the same breath bound the corpse
 Upon his steed, swift as Ázargashasp
 Remounted, took the horse of Siyámak,
 And scaled the hill like one bemused with wine.

He held the glorious flag and proudly went
Rejoicing o'er his conquered enemy,
The victory of the Sháh, and that high fortune
Achieved beneath the shadow of the throne.
Dismounting then he prayed to God to bless
The fortune of earth's monarch with success.

§ 32

How Furúhil fought with Zangula

The fourth fight—Furúhil's with Zangula—
Was that of combatants like lions loose.
In truth there was no warrior in Írán
To match in archery with Furúhil,
Who, seeing that grim Turkman from afar,
Strung up his bow and, bending it, began
To shower shafts on Zangula, employing
The horsemen's ambushade. One poplar arrow,
Which flew with wind-like swiftness, struck his thigh,
Transfixing horse and rider. The fleet steed
Came to the ground headforemost with the smart,
Unseating Zangula whose face was wan;
His head sank and he yielded up the ghost;
Full surely he was born for evil days.
Then Furúhil leaped down, beheaded him,
Stripped off the Rúman armour that he wore,
And made his head fast to the saddle-straps,
Then took with him the steed of Zangula,
And scaled the hill, as he had been a leopard,
With breast and hand and sword all drenched with gore.
He raised the glorious flag, glad-hearted he
At having gained his end triumphantly.

§ 33

How Ruhhám fought with Bármán

It was Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, that made
 The fifth assay, and fought against Bármán.
 V. 1238 Both seized their bows and shafts of poplar-wood,
 The war-cry as of valiant horsemen rose.
 Their bows both shivered and they took in hand
 Their spears and scimitars. Both warriors,
 Both brave, both horsemen, shrewd and veteran,
 Fought long till e'en the combative Ruhhám
 Quailed, yet by thrusting at his foeman's thigh
 Dismounted him and had him at command.
 Bármán made off like dust, but from the reek
 Of battle came Ruhhám and from behind
 Thrust yet again and pierced him through the liver.
 Ruhhám trailed him along, rubbed his own face
 With his foe's blood in wreak for Siyáwush,
 Raised him upon the saddle and there bound him
 Firm as a rock, with hanging head and feet
 Below the girths, then mounting brought the corpse
 Swift to the trysting-place. Ruhhám thus won
 High fortune through the Sháh's victorious grace
 And throne exalted, and began to call
 Down praise upon him and his kin withal.

§ 34

How Bízhan fought with Rúín

In the sixth fight—Bízhan, the son of Gív,
 Against Rúín—the warriors rushed forth,
 Strung up their bows and wheeled to left and right,
 But shot in vain. Then, brazen mace in hand,
 Bízhan manœuvred for the vantage-ground,

And, with a rush earth-rending, smote Rúin
 Upon the head ; his helm ran brains and blood.
 There on the saddle gave he up sweet life,
 While calling on Pírán, the son of Wísa,
 And from the steed came headlong to the ground—

V. 1239

An iron body with a mouth all gore.
 Ere he had had full joyance of his youth
 He ventured all for gain and lost it all.
 The world is full of cark and care, good sooth !

And after every rise there is a fall.
 Bízhan dismounted lightly from his steed,
 Like Áhriman upon his fallen foe,
 And cut his head off with a scimitar ;
 For him was neither grave nor winding-sheet.
 Bízhan next with his lasso bound the corpse
 Upon the saddle : there was none to mourn ;
 Then, mounting like a furious elephant,
 And seizing in his hand his foeman's reins,
 Bízhan took up his own swift charger's bridle,
 And hastened hill-ward with his lion-flag,
 With rusty blue steel rings, in hand, and cried :—
 " In every contest may our monarch win,
 And crowned for ever be his paladin."

§ 35

How Hajír fought with Sipahram

Hajír rushed seventh from among the heroes—
 A famous warrior and noble horseman—
 While Sipahram, Afrásiyáb's own kinsman,
 A hero high in rank and estimation,
 Essayed fight with the offspring of Gúdarz—
 A cavalier unequalled in the host.
 They went upon the ground, dark dust-clouds rose,
 They fought together with their scimitars,

And made sparks stream from iron. Lion-like
 The brave Hajír confronted Sipahram
 Right manfully and, in the Maker's name,
 And by the fortune of the youthful monarch,
 Struck with his sword the helmet of his foe
 Upon the crest, and death came then and there.
 The Turkman tumbled headlong from his steed
 In miserable plight and drenched with blood.
 The fortunate Hajír, alighting, bound
 His foe's corpse firmly on the saddle, mounted
 His own steed, led the other and departed.
 He clomb the hill, he blessed his lucky star
 And glorious country, but acknowledged still
 In his bright fortune and his might God's will.

V. 1240

§ 36

How Gurgín fought with Andarímán

Gurgín was eighth and he went out to fight
 Andarímán, one of the Turkman host.
 Experienced both and veteran they went
 And chose a battlefield. They wheeled with spears.
 When these broke down they took their bows, and arrows
 Rained while the chiefs held up their wolf-skin shields
 To save their faces. Arrows showered like hail
 On wolf-skin buckler, helm, and casque. At length
 Gurgín shot at Andarímán a shaft
 That pinned the Rúman helmet to his head,
 And as the cavalier reeled with the smart,
 Gurgín shot yet another, pierced his side,
 And brought the blood-drops from his eyes with anguish.
 Gurgín gat down like wind, took his foe's head,
 And strapped it to the saddle. Having mounted
 He led the Turkman's charger, and then scaled
 In haste the hill, his bow slung on his arm,

By God's strength who had sheltered him from hurt,
 And the victorious fortune of the Sháh—
 The world-lord. Thus returned triumphantly
 He set the heart-illuming flag on high.

§ 37

How Barta fought with Kuhram

The ninth fight was 'twixt Barta and Kuhram,
 The swordsman: both were men of blood and chieftains.
 When they had tried all other ways they took
 Their Indian swords in hand. Then all at once
 Kuhram turned face from Barta. Barta smote
 Kuhram's helm-top and clave him to the chest:
 Fear filled foes' hearts at Barta, who, alighting,
 Fast to his corken saddle bound Kuhram,
 And mounted. Shouting up the hill he went
 Like some fierce leopard. In one hand he grasped
 His Indian sword, and in the other held
 His conquering flag. Head-downward on his steed
 Was flung Kuhram. He cried: "The Sháh hath won.
 His crown is ever higher than the sun."

V. 1241

§ 38

How Zanga, Son of Sháwarán, fought with Akhást

Tenth went forth Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
 Armed from the warriors and mighty men,
 And his opponent chanced to be Akhást,
 Whom none had ever worsted in the fight.
 Both took their massive maces, and their strife
 Surpassed all bounds. At length both were o'ercome
 With their belabourings. Their Arabs jibbed;
 Thou wouldst have said: "They have no pulses left."

The warriors when the sun began to sink,
 And when the desert was a-glow like iron,
 Were so exhausted that thou wouldst have said:—
 "They cannot stir a step." "Our livers now,"

V. 1242

They said, "are scorching; let us stay to breathe
 Awhile, and afterward renew the combat."

They went accordingly and led their chargers
 Apart, and then securely hobbled them.
 Thereafter, having taken rest, they rose
 For fight again, and with their lances wheeled
 Like fire about the centre of the ground;
 Till Zanga got the better: rending earth
 He charged and struck Akhást upon the waist,
 Then flung him headlong from his steed face-downward,
 And shouted like a rattling thunder-clap:
 Thou wouldst have said: "He split the battlefield!"
 Alighting, Zanga went and dragged his foe
 Face-downward through the dust, made shift to lift him,
 And flung him prone across the saddle-back,
 Then, mounting his own charger, led the other.
 Strange! what misfortunes fell upon the Turkmans!
 He left the plain and reached the glorious hill,
 Wolf-blazoned flag in hand. He set it up
 Before his mates with blessings therewithal
 Upon the Sháh and his chief general.

§ 39

How Gúdarz fought with Pirán

Whenas the ninth hour of the day had passed
 There was no Turkman left on that broad plain,
 Their lives had been dissevered by the sword.
 Thou wouldst have said: "The world is pitiless!
 For one, whom it is tending with all care,
 And dowering with days, it will prepare

A night-surprise amid his happiness,
And bring upon him obloquy and stress.
Both first and last we are the wind's possession,
We ask for justice and behold oppression!"

Whenas the Turkmans in those luckless combats
Had struggled fruitlessly Pírán descried
None of his champions left upon the field ;
The leaders of Írán and of Túrán
Advanced together for their grim revenge,
And set earth's surface rolling as they came,
Grief in their hearts and vengeance in their heads.
The sun paused dust-stayed on that day of battle.
Those cavaliers tried every kind of sleight
With sword and brand, with lasso and with mace,
But Heaven's purposes were brought to pass,
Disaster came upon Pírán from God ;
Against that will he had no remedy—
The will that made his steed fail under him.
Pírán saw well enough how matters stood,
And knew that God had caused that change of fortune,
Yet he acquitted him right manfully,
And strove against the purposes of fate.

The two chiefs of the host, those shrewd old men,
Then took their bows and arrows in their hands.
Gúdarz chose out a poplar arrow—one
That would pierce iron—shot it mightily,
And pierced the armour of his foeman's steed,
Which shivered, gasped, and fell. Pírán fell under ;
His steed rolled o'er him ; his right hand was broken.
He struggled out and rose upon his feet.
Though knowing well that his last hour had come,
And that he could not scape from that dark day,
Yet fled he from Gúdarz toward the hill,
Distressed by running and his injured hand,
And gained the top if so the paladin
Might not pursue. Gúdarz, perceiving this,

Wept bitterly. He feared a change of fortune,
 Well knowing its inconstancy and how
 'Tis ever prone to tyranny. He shouted :—
 V. 1244 “O famous paladin! what aileth thee
 That thou dost foot it thus like game before me?
 Where are thy troops, O captain of the host!
 Where all thy might and manhood, arms and heart,
 Thy treasure and thy wisdom? Prop of heroes!
 Afrásiyáb's main stay! the sun is louring
 Upon thy king, and fortune utterly
 Hath turned its face from thee. No room is here
 For guile, attempt it not. Since thus bestead
 Ask quarter for thy life that I may bear thee
 Still living to the Sháh. That conquering one
 Will pardon thee because, like me, thou art
 A hoary paladin.”

“Now God forbid!”

Pírán replied, “God grant that no such ill
 Befall my latter end and I survive.
 To beg my life were heaviness indeed!
 Born was I in the world for death, and I
 Thus fighting put my neck within thy power.
 A saying have I heard among the great :—
 ‘In this fair world, though many days be past,
 Inevitable death will come at last.’
 Herein I have no reason to complain.”

Gúdarz rode round the hill and grieved to find
 No road. He lighted, took his shield and went,
 Like those in quest of quarry, up the mount,
 His shield before him and a dart in hand.
 Pírán descried him, leaped up on the crest,
 And, arrow-fashion, hurled a javelin
 Which struck the ancient chieftain on the arm.
 Gúdarz thus wounded by Pírán's hand raged
 For vengeance and sped forth a dart. It hit
 Pírán upon the breast, crashed through his mail,

Transfixed his liver, and came out behind.
 Pírán reeled and his head became distraught ;
 His liver's blood came pouring from his mouth,
 His soul departed to rejoin his comrades.
 Thus fortune changeth sides from day to day,
 It heareth not what counsellors may say,
 But rendeth, having dipped its hands in bane,
 The lion's heart and leopard's hide in twain.

Now when Gúdarz had clambered to the summit
 He saw Pírán o'erthrown in sorry plight,
 With broken arm and heart, his head in dust,
 His armour riven and his girdle snapped.
 "O Lion," said Gúdarz, "chief paladin,
 And warrior bold ! the world hath looked on many
 Like me and thee but will have peace with none !"

He stretched his hand out, horrible to tell,
 Drank of his foeman's blood, smeared his own face
 Therewith, lamenting bitterly the murder
 Of Siyáwush, then praised the Omnipotent,
 And mourned before the just Judge for the death
 Of his own seventy well-belovèd sons.
 He was about to take his foeman's head,
 But deemed the act unworthy of himself,
 So raised the banner of Pírán beside him,
 His head and body lying in its shade,
 And went back to his warriors, while the blood
 Poured from his wounded arm as 'twere a flood.

§ 40

How Gúdarz returned to the Warriors of Írán

Meanwhile the vengeful warriors of Írán
 Descended from the hill toward the host,
 Their slain opponents bound upon their saddles
 According to the usages of war ;

But since the paladin was not with them
 A cry ascended both from old and young :—
 V. 1246 “Perchance Gúdarz hath steeped his head in blood,
 And perished by Pírán’s hand, through old age.”

The troops wept bitterly, beholding not
 Their paladin, but soon amid the dust
 They saw his flag come flaunting from the field.
 The drums beat in the camp, dust kissed the sky,
 The great men, smiling and rejoicing, went
 To meet him. Said the troops : “The paladin
 May be returning worsted by Pírán,
 Because he is a lion-hearted hero,
 And hath been courting combat all his life.”

Then, while both young and old gave ear, Gúdarz
 Spake, pointed with his finger to the field,
 And told how fortune had entreated him,
 Then bade Ruhhám to mount and fetch Pírán.
 “Bind him upon the saddle, bring him down,”
 He said, “from yonder height ; and bring besides
 His armour and his flag, just as they are,
 But lay no hand upon his belt or loins.”

Ruhhám departed like a rushing wind,
 Laid on the saddle that illustrious form,
 Whose mail was drenched with gore, with lasso-coils
 Bound it securely and conveyed it down.
 Whenas the warriors and haughty chiefs
 Beheld Pírán’s flag from the trysting-place
 All of them blessed the chief of paladins,
 And said : “Grand back-bone of the Íránians,
 And servant of the Kaians’ crown and throne !
 Thou hast made both thy body and thy soul
 A ransom for the host in victory,
 And in defeat.”

V. 1247

Gúdarz replied : “When war
 Began to press methought : ‘Afrásiyáb
 Will lead his host to this side of the river.

His troops have been at rest from strife and toil
 While mine are spent with hurry.' So I sent
 A prudent man and gave the Sháh much counsel.
 I said : ' If now the Turkman king shall bring
 His host we cannot hold our ground.' Methought :—
 ' Khusrau will hasten to this battlefield,
 And when we take the bodies of the slain
 Upon this scene of vengeance to the Sháh,
 Just as ye have them now upon the saddles,
 He will rejoice and we shall be advanced,
 Because this feud of the Íránians
 And Turkmans came from these now passed away.' "

All praised him : " Ne'er may earth and time lack
 thee.

Whate'er we gain we gain it from thy words,
 And sun and moon take lustre from thy looks."

They went and bore the slain just as they were,
 But forced Gurwí to walk, a lasso bound
 His hands, a halter was about his neck.
 As soon as they approached the main encampment
 The troops turned out to meet their general
 With Gustaham the Lion leading them.
 He came before the gallant paladin,
 Then kissed the ground and offered praise. He said :—
 " Behold thine army safe and sound. As thou
 Committed'st it to me so I restore it."

With that the watchman's shout came to their ears V. 1248
 From Mount Raibad : " The plain is dark as night
 With dust. A wondrous din of kettledrum
 And clarion ariseth ; thou wouldst say :—
 ' The desert is in motion ! ' Glittering,
 As 'twere the azure sea, a throne of turquoise
 Is borne on elephants, the air is glowing
 With hues of yellow, red, and violet,
 As 'twere a silken banner, while afar
 A glorious standard like a cypress-tree

Appareth, round it are mailed cavaliers,
 And earth throughout is violet-hued with steel.
 Flag followeth flag, and some are charged with dragons
 And some with eagles. In another day
 They will be here if thus they keep their way."

§ 41

How Lahháik and Farshídwárd bewailed Pírán

The Turkman watch upon Mount Kanábad
 Beheld that wonder and came in apace;
 He said: "Unless mine eyes are dim, unless
 This sight of mine be dazed exceedingly,
 God hath wrought havoc on the Turkmans, all
 Their toils have turned to dust. The Íránians
 Have come down shouting from their height, and each
 With flag in hand. That of Pírán the chief,
 I see, is down, his body drenched in gore,
 While as for those ten warriors who went hence
 With him, I see them far away o'erthrown,
 And flung with bloody bodies o'er their steeds.
 Toward Raibad a cloud of darksome dust
 Appareth and the plain is azure-dim.
 Amidst the warriors is Káwa's standard,
 While in the vanguard glitter blue-steel swords.
 The standard of the king of kings appareth
 With trump and drum, and earth is ebon-hued."

V. 1249

Lahháik and Farshídwárd went to the look-out,
 And saw with their own eyes Pírán the world-lord,
 Their chief and brother, slain, and with him those
 Ten chosen cavaliers, the Turkman champions.
 There, in the watch-tower, grievously distraught,
 And wailing for their brother's blood, they cried
 In their affliction: "O thou Lion, chief
 Of Turkmans, and undaunted cavalier!

What do thy greatness and thine uprightness
 Avail since thou hast willed to quit the world ?
 Our foes have everything for which they toiled ;
 The world hath ended for thee evilly.
 Who is there to take vengeance for thy sake,
 And who now will ensue thy precedents ?
 Calamity hath come upon Túrán,
 And on Afrásiyáb, and all is lost.
 We must behead ourselves and whelm in blood
 Sword, hand, and body."

When they called to mind

Pírán's last charge to them they acted not
 Upon their own wild words, for he had said
 To Farshíward, when challenging Gúdarz :—
 " If I am slain abide not with the host,
 For earth will prove too narrow for our nobles
 When I am gone, and none of wits be left
 Of Wísa's race, and if the Íránians
 Slay us and bring Írán our trunkless heads
 Our army will ask quarter of Gúdarz ;
 But do not ye demean yourselves so much :
 Make for the waste and ye may yet survive."

They went back to their camp, their eyes all tears
 Of blood, their bodies failing. All the host
 Knew that the flock was wandering shepherdless.
 All were exceeding sorrowful and wept ;
 They burned as though upon consuming fire.
 They came before Lahhák and Farshíward
 With lips that breathed forth deep, cold sighs, and
 said :—

V. 1250

" What shall we do now that our paladin,
 The back-bone of our host, hath left the field ?
 Whom will he hearten more to gird his loins,
 And set an iron helmet on his head ?"

They answered : " Who hath limited God's will ?
 He brought it on Pírán thus to be slain

In battle wretchedly and miserably,
 To be beheaded by the scimitar,
 And have no winding-sheet but grimy dust,
 What while his foemen hale him here and there
 With head and mail and raiment drenched in blood.
 What was to be hath been—Pírán hath gone,
 And all his work and toil have turned to wind.
 Alive he was the pillar of the host,
 His soul full of affection for his troops;
 He was their guardian from the enemy,
 And under-prized that noble head of his.
 The other world is his for good or ill,
 But surely God hath set him with the just.
 His care for us surviveth his departure:
 He made this compact with Gúdarz, and said:—
 ‘If I am slain upon the battlefield
 Thou shalt not punish the Túránian host,
 But let them have free passage to Túrán,
 Not doing them a mischief in revenge.’
 The Íránians will respect the covenant,
 We feel no apprehension on that score.
 There are three courses open, only three,
 So hearken all of you, both old and young!
 If ye will ask for quarter so resolve
 Forthwith; if ye will make for home set forward
 For good or evil; but if ye propose
 To fight, then let your spears be dipped in blood.
 Discuss we these then from all points of view,
 But God’s will only can prevail at last.
 If ye intend to fight delay a while
 Because Pírán asked succour, and the king
 Hath raised an army which may come in sight
 At any time, and we shall be avenged.
 If ye are purposed to return to land,
 And throne, the Íránians surely will not hinder.
 If ye would ask for quarter from the Sháh

Ye must bestir yourselves and go at once ;
 Each man of you is master of his fate,
 And if your hearts are set upon Írán
 Be not enraged against us brethren twain,
 For never will we purge our hearts of wrath,
 And there hath ne'er been one of Wísa's race
 Whose waist the girdle's buckle hath not galled.
 Obedient to Pírán's last words we go
 To journey through the desert to Túrán,
 And if the Íránians occupy the road
 We will contend with them while strength remaineth."

Mark what the Turkmans, hearing this, rejoined :—
 " Our leader and ten noble warriors
 Have been slain vilely thus. On the other side
 Khusrau is seen approaching ! Who dare tarry ?
 We have not steeds or arms or feet or wings,
 We have not treasure, leader, field or fell,
 We have not strength for fight or road for flight,
 And have no cause to spite ourselves. If we
 Retreat, and if Gúdarz and Kai Khusrau
 Come after us with elephants and troops,
 Not one among us will escape with life,
 Or see again his home and family.
 To ask for quarter is no shame for us,
 Who, great as is our host, are leaderless.
 Who now will fear the monarch of Túrán ?
 Afrásiyáb is but a pinch of dust.
 Why was he not like Kai Khusrau, who showed
 What great affection to his troops he owed ? "

V. 1252

§ 42

How Lahhák and Farshíward took the Road to Túrán

Now, when the host thus answered, those two chiefs—
 Lahhák and Farshíward—arose. They knew :—

“’Tis not their time for war, the troops are right :—
A flock without a shepherd perisheth.”

They bade the rest farewell and then they took
The longsome desert route, with flag in hand,
With hearts all grief and eyes all tears of blood.

They journeyed with ten noble cavaliers—

Brave warriors and ready for the fray.

Upon the road were horsemen of Írán—

An outpost-party and a gallant one.

The Turkmans charged, the outpost held its ground,

Strife rose unlooked for, earth grew tulip-like

With blood. Of those Íránians eight were slain—

Brave men and Lions on the day of battle—

While of the Turkmans none escaped with life

Except those two illustrious warriors,

Who went—a gallant pair—upon their way,

Like Lions, on their journey through the waste.

Then from the look-out cried the Íránian watch :—

“Ye nobles and ye gallant fighting men !

Two chieftains with ten noble cavaliers

Have issued from among the Turkman host ;

They have engaged our outpost and have mixed

V. 1253 The earth with blood. Two Turkmans with their arms
Have ridden off, and eight of ours are slain.”

Thereat Gúdarz said : “These must be Lahhák

And Farshíward, gone with their necks unbent

And hearts as yet unbroken by the fight ;

If from Írán they journey to Túrán

Loss will assuredly befall our host ;

Let him that seeketh honours from the Sháh

Now set upon his head a Rúman helmet,

Pursue Lahhák and Farshíward, and send

The dust up from them with his scimitar.”

Not one among the Íránians volunteered,

For they were spent, their reins were galled with iron,

Save Gustaham, in fight a lion grim,

Who said : " O thou who dost deserve a throne !
 On going forth to combat with the Turkmans
 Thou gavest me the drums, the camp-enclosure,
 And chief command. While others sought renown
 I had no share. Now will I compass fame
 Herein, go forth, and take them in my toils."

Gúdarz rejoiced and smiled on Gustaham ;
 His cheeks grew fresh, care left him and he said :—
 " The sun hath given thee a happy fortune !
 A Lion thou, thy prey the onager.
 Go forth, God give to thee His help, and may
 Three hundred like Lahhák become thy prey."

§ 43

How Gustaham pursued Lahhák and Farshíward

Then Gustaham put on his mail, farewelled
 Such warriors as he saw, and hurried forth
 To fight those two proud Turkmans, while the troops
 Among themselves said : " Evil will befall him."

Now, like a ship at sea, a Turkman host
 Came from Afrásiyáb to aid Pírán,
 But when they neared the desert of Daghwí,
 And tidings came to them : " Pírán is dead !
 Thus went the combat of the champions,"
 They all returned lamenting to their king.

Bízhan, informed that Gustaham had gone
 To fight against Lahhák and Farshíward,
 Thought : " If he reach Daghwí they must not send
 The dust up from him on the day of battle."

Then with heart wrung with grief for Gustaham
 He went, like lion grim, to seek his grandsire,
 And, seeing him, spake loudly and at large :—
 " O paladin ! it sorteth ill with wisdom
 Thus to surrender every man of name

In thy command to wanton massacre,
 And make the turning sky responsible !
 Two lusty warriors of the Turkman host
 Have hurried on their way like lions. Both
 Are braver than Pírán or than Húmán,
 And nobles of their land by native worth.
 Now Gustaham hath gone to fight the two !
 He must not be defeated. All our joy
 Will turn to grief if from our host we lose
 That lion-man."

On hearing this, Gúdarz,
 Perceiving his distress, mused much and long,
 Took the same view and told the warriors :—
 "Whoever is in quest of name and rank,
 Let him go after Gustaham with speed
 To give him aid against his enemies."

None of the company returned an answer,
 None cared for him and none was rested yet.
 V. 1255 Said to Gúdarz Bízhan : "Except myself
 None of the warriors will succour him,
 For no one is aweary of his life.
 I must depart myself since at his case
 My heart is full of grief, my face of tears."

Gúdarz replied to him : "O lion-man,
 Unused as yet to this world's heat and cold !
 Dost not thou see that we are conquering ?
 Rush not upon this enterprise, my son !
 For Gustaham will triumph and behead them.
 Abide and I will send a cavalier,
 Like lion grim, to help him in the fight,
 And lay upon the dust his foemen's heads."

"O prudent, wise, and ardent paladin !"
 Bízhan replied, "he must be helped while living,
 Not when the foes are sending up his dust.
 When he is slain, and all is over with him,
 What profit will it be to send a horseman

To find him slaughtered and his head in blood ?
 So order me, who am concerned for him,
 To gird my girdle tightly in this quest ;
 But if thou sayest : 'Go not,' I forthwith
 Will cut my head off with this watered steel,
 For if he dieth I will not survive ;
 So seek no pretext for refusing me."

Gúdarz replied : "Go after him at once
 If thou hast no regard for thine own life.
 Since thou art still insatiate of fight
 Gird thee and stay not e'en to scratch thy head.
 Good sooth ! thy heart is cold toward thy sire
 Though thou dost burn his liver constantly ;
 Thou wilt but cover thine own head with dust ;
 How much I dread thy passion for the fray !"
 Bízhan bent, kissed the ground, and went his way.

§ 44

How Bízhan followed after Gustaham

Bízhan girt up his loins, armed him for strife,
 And put the saddle on his steed Shabrang.
 News reached Gív of the doings of Bízhan,
 How he had armed to fight with Farshídward.
 Gív sprang up, mounted swift as smoke his Arab,
 Went to Bízhan, seized on his bridle, dragged him
 Aside, and said : "How often have I warned thee
 In vain ! Thou givest me no moment's pleasure.
 Now whither wouldst thou hasten ? Grieve me not
 By every act. What wouldst thou have me do,
 Hoar as I am ? I have no son but thee,
 And know no happiness when thou art sorry.
 Ten days and nights hast thou been in the saddle,
 And borne the vengeful sword against the foe ;
 Thou hast been galled by coat of mail and helm :

Wilt thou be never satiate with blood ?
 Since He that giveth good hath given us
 The victory, we ought to rest with joy.
 Why stake thy head before its time ? Too much
 Thou trustest to thy sword. None is successful
 In this world save he seek his proper end.
 Forestall not fate so fast, for even now
 Its eye is on us ; for thy father's sake
 Abandon this ; thou shouldst not vex my heart."

"O full of wisdom !" thus Bízhan replied,
 "Men think not thus of thee. Hast thou forgotten
 The past ? Why fondly turn away from justice ?
 Know, father ! what thou sayest is unjust.

V. 1257

Hast thou forgot the battle of Ládán,
 The deeds which Gustaham and I performed,
 And our companionship in weal and woe ?
 If in God's providence the evil day
 Is imminent no caution will avert
 What is decreed, and further talk is useless.
 So strive not to divert me from the fight,
 For I have pledged my life to this emprise."

Then Gív : "If thou art fixed it will be best
 For us to fare o'er hill and dale together,
 And I will give thee aid in everything."

"Now God forbid that we three warriors,"
 Bízhan said, "of the chiefs of royal race
 Should chase two craven Turkmans all that way !
 So by our bright-souled monarch's life and head,
 By that famed paladin my grandsire's life,
 And by the blood of Siyáwush, return,
 And let me go. I will not do thy bidding,
 Because thou sayest : 'Turn away from fight.'"

Gív, hearing this, relented and bestowed
 His blessing on his son, then left him, saying :—
 "Go conquering and come again with joy,
 Heart-easèd, having bound the hands of evil."

Bizhan made haste to follow Gustaham
Lest ill should come upon him from Túrán.

Now when Lahhák and Farshíward had passed
The river, speeding onward like the dust,
They journeyed in an hour seven leagues,
And felt in safety from the Íránian host.
They caught sight of a forest and a stream—
A shady resting-place for warriors.
Inside the wood were lions, fowl, and game,
Trees overhead with grass and stream below.
They halted there to hunt, and being thirsty
Went to the stream, but still they needed meat,
For grief and joy stay not the appetite.
They went among the pastures, dropped much game,
Then lit a fire and, having eaten kabáb,
Went to the stream. There Farshíward kept watch,
Lahhák reposed. Bright is no warrior's day
Whene'er he hath been worsted in the fray.

V. 1258

§ 45

How Lahhák and Farshíward were slain by Gustaham

Now Gustaham meanwhile was drawing nigh
The spot. His charger smelt the other steeds,
Began to neigh, and hurried on apace.
The charger of Lahhák by that same token
Neighed back again as though it had been mad,
While Farshíward came rushing to Lahhák,
And roused him from sweet slumber, saying thus:—
‘Bestir thee from thy pleasant sleep and slay
The head of evil fortune like a man,
Because a sage once spake this weighty saw:—
‘Whenas the lion from the wolf shall flee
Let not the wolf go in pursuit, for he
Will bring upon himself calamity.’

Ho! rouse thee, for an army from Írán
Hath cut us off!"

Both mounted, left the meadow,
And scanned the plain to see what course to take.

V. 1259

They sighted Gustaham far off alone,
And, having craned their heads and recognised
The foe, spake thus together: "One approacheth.
It cannot be but Gustaham that cometh,
The banner of the brave in hand, to battle.
We need not flee unless to draw him on
Out to the open; there he shall not 'scape
Unless our evil fortune play the tyrant."

Thence turned they toward the plain with Gustaham,
The vengeful, in pursuit, who drawing nigh
Roared like a furious lion, raining arrows
Of poplar, and when Farshídwad advanced
To combat smote him on the head—a sword-stroke
That mixed his brains with blood. He tumbled head-
long,

And yielded up the ghost. So passed away
That famous warrior of Wísa's seed.
Whenas Lahhák beheld his brother's face,
And knew that he was then at peace from strife,
He trembled and became distraught with grief,
While all turned black to him. His ardent soul
Grew sick of life, he strung his bow, came on
With weeping eyes and shot at Gustaham.
First one shot, then the other. Not an arrow
Fell to the ground. Both cavaliers were wounded,
Then fought with scimitars, till suddenly
The advantage came to Gustaham, who twitched
His reins, charged, smote Lahhák upon the neck,
And brought upon him Doom's Day in a moment.
His head rolled under foot as 'twere a ball,
And all his battles and his warfare ended.
Such usage hath the turning sky above,

Withdrawing from its fosterlings its love !
 Wouldst thou its head ? A foot will offered be !
 Wouldst thou a foot ? The head affronteth thee !

V. 1260

So hurt was Gustaham, though not unhorsed,
 That thou hadst said : "The man will break in
 pieces !"

Bent down upon his saddle he advanced,
 And, as he urged his charger, dripped with blood.
 He came anear a spring, saw stream and shade,
 Alighted, tied his charger to a tree,
 And, having drunken largely of the water
 That he had chanced upon, gave thanks to God,
 But thou hadst said : "The earth hath bound him
 down,"

So writhed he wallowing in the grimy dust,
 His form all gashes with the scimitar,
 And said : " Almighty Ruler of the world !
 Of all mine army and my family
 Inspire affection for me in Bízhan,
 Gív's son, or other famous warrior,
 That he may carry me alive or dead
 Hence to the host that they may know that I
 Have died with glory, and I ask no more."

He moaned till morning and throughout the night
 Writhed snake-like on the dust in painful plight.

§ 46

How Bízhan beheld Gustaham in the Mead

Now when the world grew radiant with the sun
 Bízhan arrived and roamed the mead to find
 Some trace of his lost comrade. He descried
 Far off a dun steed like one ridden post.
 It pranced and grazed, like leopards at their ease,
 With saddle underneath and broken reins.

Bízhan descried the saddle upside down,
 The stirrups and the lasso drenched with blood,
 A sight whereat his wits abandoned him,
 And like a roaring lion's was his cry.

Thus said he : " O my comrade kind and good !
 Where hast thou fallen in the pasturage ?

V. 1261 My back-bone hast thou broken, bruised my heart,
 And as for dear life I have done with it.

What shall I say ? Where shall I seek thee now ?
 What tricks hath yonder sky played off on thee ?"

He followed up the horse-tracks to the spring,
 And there saw Gustaham upon the mead,
 His mail and helmet smirched with dust and blood,
 Himself flung headlong down—a mass of wounds.
 Bízhan alighted swiftly from Shabrang,
 And pressed his comrade in a close embrace,
 Removed the Rúman breastplate that he wore,
 And took the helmet from his wounded head,
 Surveyed his body in its stricken plight,
 Saw that the wounds, whence matter ran, were mortal
 If left undressed, and that his heart and soul
 Were filled with grief and anguish. Scanning well
 These wounds Bízhan lamented o'er him saying :—
 " O my good comrade ! thou hast gone, and I
 Have striven but ill. I should have sought thee sooner,
 And come upon the scene when thou wast fighting.
 I might have helped thee at the time of need,
 When thou wast combating with Áhriman,
 But now the foe hath satisfied his lust
 And done whate'er he would."

The wounded man
 Was roused and breathing hard replied : " Good friend !
 Grieve not for me ; thy pain is worse to me
 Than mine own death. Re-helm my wounded head,
 And make some shift to bear me to the Sháh.
 God grant that I may live to look on him,

And then I shall not fear the approach of death,
For none of us may couch save in the dust.
The man who dieth having won his will,
And compassed all his purpose, is not dead.
Next as for these two cowards, craven foes,
Whom God hath slain through me, thou mayst perchance
Make shift to carry them upon a saddle,
Or, if not so, behead them, and convey
Their noble heads and weapons when thou goest
That men may understand about this combat ;
Tell too the Sháh, the ruler of the world,
That, not in vain, I gave my head to wind,
But roughed it everywhere in quest of fame."

V. 1262

He pointed out those Turkmen to Bízhan,
Far in the distance, slain, and cast away ;
Then faintness seized his soul. Bízhan, distraught
With grief, went to his charger, loosed the girths,
Laid, wailing bitterly, the saddle-cloth
Beneath the wounded man, tore up his shirt
For bandages, and bound the wounds with care.
Grief-gloomed of soul he hurried to a hill,
Thence spied some scattered Turkman cavaliers
Upon the desert, came down swift as lightning,
Distraught by dread that Gustaham might die,
And all at once of those fear-stricken horsemen
Saw from afar two speeding on their way.
He loosed his lasso, noosed a Turkman's neck,
Flung him, but gave him quarter for his life,
And thus obtained a helper for himself.
Thence hasting on like dust before the wind
He went toward Lahhák and Farshidward,
And found them on the ground and drenched with blood,
While at their heads their chargers grazed at ease.
Bízhan saw all and lauded Gustaham
Because he had achieved complete revenge.
He bade the Turkman, who had begged his life,

V. 1263

To place those two commanders of the host
 Upon a saddle, then like some fierce pard
 Returned to Gustaham, raised him like wind
 Upon the saddle gently with no pain,
 And bade that Turkman mount upon the steed,
 And clasp the wounded man about the waist.
 The Turkman travelled at an easy pace,
 Invoking fervent blessings on Bízhan,
 Who rode in pain and grief, all soul-distraught
 For Gustaham—would he avail to bring
 The wounded man still living to the king?

§ 47

*How Kai Khusrau built a Charnel-house for Pirán and for
 the other Chiefs of Túrán, and how he slew Gurwí the
 Son of Zira*

The day was nine hours old, the sun was leaving
 The vault of heaven, what time Khusrau, the world-lord,
 Approached in state his army on the field.
 The chiefs, the nobles, and the warriors
 All went afoot to welcome him, the sages
 Blessed him and said: "Hail, monarch and high
 priest!"

Khusrau was mounted that the troops might see him,
 And in return saluted, saying thus:—
 "May earth be ever peopled with the brave."

Behind the army like a mountain came
 Gúdarz, such was the custom, with his comrades—
 These same ten champions, who upon the field
 Of fight had sent the dust up from their foe—
 And brought the slain whose heads were hanging down,
 Whose bodies, arms, and mail were smirched with blood.
 The champions followed thus behind the host,
 And in their turn saluted Kai Khusrau.

Gúdarz went on his way toward the Sháh,
 And lighted on beholding him far off;
 Then, having drawn anigh, did reverence,
 And wallowed in the dust before his lord,
 Exhibited the corpses of the slain,
 And told him how the champions had been paired.
 Gív brought Gurwí, the son of Zira, running
 Before the valiant leader of Írán;
 Khusrau beheld him, deeply sighed, dismounted,
 And offered praises to the Almighty, saying:—
 “Praise be to God, to Him who is our refuge,
 And gave to us both might and victory!”

The Sháh stood up while uttering his praise,
 And lifted from his head the Kaian crown.
 He called down blessings from the righteous Judge
 Both on the paladin and on his troops,
 And said: “O famous men and fortunate!
 Ye are the fire, your foes are only reeds.
 Gúdarz the chieftain and his kin—those men
 As fierce as fire—have given soul and body,
 And ta'en the very life-breath from Túrán.
 Now will I share with you my royal treasures,
 And will not grudge you e'en mine own right hand.”

He then surveyed the slain and, when he saw
 The Turkman general, shed tears of sorrow,
 Remembering Pírán's good offices;
 His heart burned so that thou hadst said: “It flameth!”
 With visage stained with blood-drops from his eyes
 He made oration o'er that chieftain's death:—
 “Ill fortune is a Dragon grim and snareth
 Great lions with its breath; none may escape
 Through valour, so this sharp-clawed Dragon came.
 Thou hast been troubled for me all my life,
 And hast for my sake laboured strenuously.
 This man deplored the blood of Siyáwush,
 And in that matter gave offence to none.

So friendly was he yet became a foe,
 And filled the country of Írán with fear,
 For Áhriman seduced his heart and turned
 His rede to other ends. Full many a time
 I counselled him, but he misprized my words.
 He would not leave Afrásiyáb, and now
 His sovereign hath thus requited him !
 We wished for him another recompence,
 Prepared for him a throne and diadem,
 But matters have gone further than we purposed,
 And heaven hath turned above him otherwise.
 Wrong took the place of love within his heart,
 So that his countenance was changed toward us.
 He came to fight against you with his host,
 And slaughtered many of the Íránians,
 Rejected all the counsels of Gúdarz,
 Mine own injunctions, and my warriors' words,
 Made havoc of his honest heart's affection,
 Mixed up together bane and antidote,
 And when he hasted from Túrán to fight
 His fate was on the javelin of Gúdarz.
 He gave up son and brother, crown and girdle,
 Arms, men of war, and station, field and fell,
 All in the quarrel of Afrásiyáb,
 And fate hath come upon him suddenly."

He ordered that the body should be washed
 With musk, pure camphor, and rose-water mixed
 With spices, and embalmed with musk and camphor,
 And clad it stainless with brocade of Rúm.
 The mountain was Pírán's grave, and Khusrau
 In his affection had a charnel built,
 And raised its summit to the turning sky.
 Within it there were set up princes' thrones,
 Such as befitted men of high degree.
 They placed the Turkman paladins thereon
 With belted waists and crowns upon their heads.

Such is the world in its perfidiousness !
 It raiseth oft and bringeth down no less,
 So that the sage's heart must ever be,
 At this world's process, in perplexity.

Khusrau then looked upon Gurwí, the son
 Of Zira, cursing him as he deserved,
 Looked on that loathly face wherefrom the hair
 Hung down like dívs', and said: "O God! Thou knowest
 The manifest and hidden. Of a truth
 Káuís had done amiss and grieved the Maker
 In that He raised up such a dív as this
 'Gainst Siyáwush. I wot not why Gurwí
 Should hate that faultless one, but by His might
 Who ruleth all and giveth good—the Guide—
 I will have vengeance on Afrásiyáb
 For Siyáwush and soon."

He bade disjoint
 Gurwí with cords and fling into a stream,
 First cutting off, as 'twere a sheep's, the head.
 "So must I treat Afrásiyáb," he said.

§ 48

How the Túránians asked Quarter of Kai Khusrau

The Sháh abode upon the battlefield
 Awhile, employed upon the host's affairs,
 Bestowing kingdoms, crowns, and robes of honour
 On those that had deserved them; Ispahán,
 The crown of greatness, and the throne of chiefs,
 Was given to Gúdarz, while those that shared
 With him the toil and glory of revenge
 Had robes of honour equal to their meed.

V. 1267

Then from the Turkman troops still on the field,
 O'er whom Pírán had held command, there came
 A prudent envoy to the Sháh, and said:—

" We are the slaves and servants of the Sháh,
 And take no step unless at his command.
 None can escape the providence of God
 E'en though he be within the Dragon's breath.
 The monarch is aware what men we are,
 And for what cause we girded up our loins.
 The case of Siyáwush was not our fault,
 But Áhriman seduced our monarch's heart.
 He is a headstrong man and ill-advised,
 With no respect for chiefs or fear of God,
 And we have suffered from that day till now,
 And washed our cheeks in heart-felt tears. At home
 Our kindred is all sorrowful, our wives
 And children mourn us. Not through lust of fighting,
 Not for field, fell, and throne, have we come hither,
 Yet evil hath befallen us herein,
 And sires have lost their sons, and sons their sires.
 If thou wilt give us quarter we will gird
 Our loins as slaves before thee. We are all
 Within the gullet of the Crocodile
 In that we are at warfare with thy host ;
 But in our army there are many chiefs
 Well worthy of the service of the Sháh.
 We are in fault and he is sovereign ;
 Whate'er we suffer at his hands is well.
 We will bring all our chiefs to him, but not
 With any thought of strife or murmuring.
 If in his heart he harboureth revenge
 On us, use warranteth beheading foes,
 While well it is if he shall pardon us :
 Let him do that which seemeth good to him."

V. 1268

Whenas the Sháh, that noble man, had heard
 Their lamentable speech he pardoned them,
 And bade them come before him. So they came
 At his desire to seek to clear themselves,
 And as they laid their heads upon the ground

Their hearts were full, their eyes shed vengeful tears.
 Then looking up to heaven the monarch said :—
 “ Almighty Judge, our Help ! these are the troops
 That with their heads full of revenge desired
 To bring the country of Írán to dust,
 That scatter everywhere the bane that biteth,
 And fling therein the heads of noble chiefs ;
 But now the Almighty hath so dealt with them
 That they lack rede and knowledge, foot and head.
 To Him I stretch my hands, for He sufficeth ;
 I want no other helper in the world.
 In this regard a wise man spake a saw,
 When mounting on his saddle for the fight :—
 ‘ This charger is a shining throne to me,
 The rest is left to sleepless destiny.
 In this campaign a crown and throne we seek,
 Or else the customary bier of teak ;
 Or I may fall within the leopard’s claws,
 Or with my brain replenish vultures’ maws.’
 Your evil deeds recoil upon yourselves
 As every man of wisdom is aware.
 I have not washed my hands in blood of yours,
 Nor will I aggravate your evil plight.
 Ye are in my protection, one and all,
 However hostile to my throne ye be.
 Whoever doth desire to stay can stay ;
 He shall experience neither gain nor loss ;
 And whosoever of you would return
 To his own king, I will not hinder him,
 For I have no occasion through God’s strength
 For more or less, for labour or for greed.”

The Turkmans, having heard the Sháh’s harangue,
 Removed their casques and owned themselves o’ercome ;
 Though warrior-leopards they became like deer.
 The monarch of the world bade them surrender
 Their armour, falchions, spears, and javelins.

Those haughty Turkmans piled up to the moon
 Their armour for the steeds and Rúman helms,
 And then they set up all around the heap
 Their flags of yellow, red, and violet,
 And swore great oaths: "We all through life will be
 The servitors and bondslaves of the Sháh,
 And charge our hearts with love for him."

Thereon

The watchful Sháh forgave them their misdeeds
 Completely, and dispersed them out of hand
 In various settlements throughout the land.

§ 49

How Bízhan returned with Gustaham

Thereafter from the look-out came a cry:—
 "The dust of horse hath risen from the way;
 I see afar three steeds, each with a corpse
 Bound wretchedly upon it, and therewith
 One cavalier."

The Iránian chieftains all
 Turned to the road their eyes in wonder, asking:—
 "Who is this warrior of Irán that cometh
 So hardily across the battlefield?"

Anon Bízhan came riding up; his bow
 Hung on his arm; Lahhák and Farshíward
 Were flung across two steeds, all blood and dust,
 While on another steed was Gustaham,
 In pain and grief, borne in a Turkman's arms.
 Bízhan drew nigher still. He laid his face
 Upon the ground and kissed it when he saw
 His monarch's head and crown and lofty throne.
 Khusrau joyed at the sight of him and asked:—
 "O lion-man! how went it on the field?"

Bízhan then told the tale of Gustaham,

Lahhák, and valiant Farshíward, the plight
And wounds of Gustaham, the fight between
The cavaliers, and all things great and small.
He added : " Gustaham hath one desire,
And one not grievous for the Sháh to grant :
He hath a wish to look upon the Sháh,
And then is ready to give up the ghost."

Thereat the Sháh commanded in his kindness
That Gustaham should be produced before him.
Now Gustaham was hurt so grievously
That thou hadst said : " He barely draweth breath,"
Yet at the perfume of the king of kings
The warrior writhed and turned toward Khusrau
His eyes wherefrom he showered drops of love ;
The monarch bathed his countenance in tears
Of blood, the nobles wept as they had been
Consuming in fierce fire. Khusrau was grieved
To lose a chief whose head beneath his helm
Was battle's anvil. From Húshang, Jamshíd,
And Tahmúras, the Sháh inherited
An amulet—the hope of wounded men—
And ever bare it on his arm but, since
His heart was yearning upon Gustaham,
He took the precious jewel off and bound it
Upon the warrior's arm, and stroked his wounds.
He placed by Gustaham physicians brought
From Hind, Rúm, Chín, Túrán, and from Írán
By world-wide quest for such contingencies,
Recited over him all manner of spells,
And thence departing to the place of prayer
Much communed with the Maker of the world.
Two sennights thus passed o'er the wounded man,
Who was restored to health and happiness.
They carried him on horseback to the Sháh ;
The monarch of the world, on seeing him,
Said to the Íránians : " Through the grace of God

We all are fortunate and happy now ;
 When we had gained the day did not our grief
 For Gustaham subdue our mirthfulness ?
 This is in brief the All Provider's love,
 And not man's knowledge or solicitude."

He called Bízhan, the son of Gív, and set
 In his the hand of gallant Gustaham,
 And said : " Know that good fortune is of God ;
 So take not any credit to thyself,
 Because He ever is the Succourer,
 And only He can help us in our need.
 If any dead man ever came to life
 The World-lord hath so dealt with Gustaham."

To Gustaham he said : " In these our days
 I have not seen a helper like Bízhan.
 Had he not chosen toil on thine account
 Who would have seen thanksgivings such as these ? "

The Sháh stayed yet a sennight at Raibad,
 Bestowing drachms, dínárs, and various gifts,
 While sending messengers on every side
 To great men and to nobles with commands
 That they should come to court equipped for war,
 " For we intend to fight the king of Gang."

Now that the battles of Pírán are told,
 The combatings of Kai Khusrau unfold,
 And marshal, poet ! in thine expert brain
 The choicest words to tell the vengeance ta'en
 By that impetuous Sháh—the wreak that he
 Sought on Afrásiyáb laboriously.

PART VII

THE GREAT WAR OF KAI KHUSRAU WITH AFRÁSIYÁB

ARGUMENT

The poet begins with an elaborate prelude wherein he eulogizes Mahmúd and then continues his story of the reign as follows: Kai Khusrau and Afrásiyáb both resolve to carry on the war with vigour. Their preparations are described. The armies meet, fruitless parleys follow, Shída challenges Kai Khusrau to single combat and is slain. A general engagement ensues, Afrásiyáb is defeated and takes refuge in Gang-bihisht, which is stormed by Kai Khusrau. Afrásiyáb escapes and, helped by the Khán and the Faghfúr, renews the struggle, is again defeated, flees to Gang-dizh, whither he is pursued by Kai Khusrau, again escapes, becomes a fugitive, and finally takes refuge in a cave, where he is made prisoner by the hermit Húm and put to death with his brother Garsiwaz by Kai Khusrau. Kai Káuś dies. Kai Khusrau falls into melancholy, persists in giving up the throne, appoints Luhrásp to be his successor, rides with his paladins into the mountains, and disappears. Those who remain with him till the end are lost in the snow. Luhrásp becomes Sháh.

NOTE

On this Part as a whole see Vol. III., p. 8.

§ 1. See Vol. I., p. 30 *seq.*

§§ 2 and 3. It will be noticed that in this part of the poem several names reappear that have been long absent from its pages, *e.g.* Ighrírás and Káran. The son of Tús is also mentioned, and it is probable that the Zarásp slain by Farúd in Part I. of this reign is intended. Such names are the common property of different and often inconsistent traditions.

Afrásiyáb's son Shída is also called Pashang. We keep invari-

ably to the former name, as there are other Pashangs—the father of Afrásiyáb and the father of Minúchihir.

§ 12. Afrásiyáb's brother, whose head Kai Khusrau sends to Kai Káu's, is apparently the Ighrírás mentioned on p. 156. According to another tradition Afrásiyáb had slain his brother Ighrírás long before for treachery.¹

§§ 13, 31, 36, 38. In these and other sections the reader will note that there are two Gangs—Gang-bihisht, in the original Bihisht-i-Gang, and Gang-dizh—due to the existence of variants of the same legend. For Gang-dizh see Vol. II., p. 189.

Mount Ispurúz was the scene of the defeat of Kai Káu's by the White Dív,² and therefore must be identified with some mountain of the Alburz range bordering Mázandarán, while the sea crossed by Afrásiyáb in his flight from Kai Khusrau can be no other than the Caspian, yet Kai Khusrau is described as sailing from and returning to the sea-shore of Makrán, *i.e.* Balúchistán, so that we may have here a survival of the old cosmogony (Vol. I., p. 71). The sea crossed by Afrásiyáb and Kai Khusrau is called "the water of Zirih," and this expression, like the corresponding one in the account of Kai Káu's expedition to Barbaristán, is merely equivalent to "sea."³

§§ 40-44. The old epic story of the feud that began with the murder of Íraj ends appropriately in Ázarbáiján. In Firdausí's version Kai Khusrau and Kai Káu's, in despair of catching Afrásiyáb after his flight from Gang-dizh, go on a pilgrimage to the temple of Ázargashasp and pray that he may be delivered into their hands. In the meantime Afrásiyáb has taken refuge in a cave near lake Khanjast⁴ (Urumiah) in Ázarbáiján, making it, as the poet says, his palace and his home. Here he is overheard bewailing himself and is captured by the hermit Húm, but escapes by a subterfuge and plunges into the lake. Gúdarz and Gív happen to be passing at the time, and the former is said to have recalled an old story to mind when Húm informs them of the state of affairs. They communicate with Kai Khusrau and Kai Káu's, Afrásiyáb is induced to come forth from the water by a stratagem, and is put to death with his brother Garsíwaz. Most of these incidents appear in the older authorities but, as Darmesteter has pointed out,⁵ not in the connexion in which they appear in the Sháhnáma. In these the story may be pieced together thus: Afrásiyáb, we are told, made his residence in Mount Bakyír.⁶ We learn from the Aogemaidé—a Pahlaví discourse on death—that

¹ See Vol. i. p. 367.

² See Vol. ii. p. 38 *seq.*

³ *Id.* p. 80.

⁴ Properly Chíjast. See DZA, ii. 66, *note.*

⁵ DEI, ii. 225.

⁶ WPT, i. 38.

this palace was an iron one, underground, a thousand times the height of a man, and with a hundred columns. In that palace he made the stars, the moon, and the sun go round, making the light of day. In that palace he did everything at his pleasure, and lived the happiest life, but with all his strength and witchcraft could not escape Astivihád (the demon of death).¹ Here too he sacrificed a hundred male horses, a thousand oxen and ten thousand lambs that he might seize the Glory that was in the sea Vouru-Kasha and belonged to the Aryan people.² Three times he sought to seize it in the sea Vouru-Kasha, stripping himself naked in his desire to seize that Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathustra. But the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan (Afrásiyáb) rushed out of the sea Vouru-Kasha, thinking evil thoughts: "I have not been able to conquer the Glory."³

We read farther how the gallant Husravah (Khusrau) offered up a sacrifice behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters. He begged a boon saying: "Grant me this, O great Ashi Vanguhi! that I may kill the Turanian murderer, Frangrasyan, behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters, to avenge the murder of my father Syávarshána (Siyáwush), a man, and of Aghraératha (Ighriras), a semi-man." The great Ashi Vanguhi ran and came to his side. The gallant Husravah, he who united the Aryan nations into one kingdom, obtained that boon.⁴ So that . . . the lord Kavi Husravah prevailed over all; he put in bonds Frangrasyan and Keresavazda (Garsíwaz).⁵

Of the god Haoma (the hermit Húm of the Sháhnáma) we read that he offered sacrifice, Haoma, the enlivening, the healing, the beautiful, the lordly, with golden eyes, upon the highest height of the Haraiti Bareza. He begged . . . a boon, saying: "Grant me this boon, O good, most beneficent Drváspa! that I may bind the Turanian murderer, Frangrasyan, that I may drag him bound . . . unto king Husravah, that king Husravah may kill him, behind the *Kaékasta* lake, the deep lake of salt waters, to avenge the murder of his father Syávarshána, a man, and of Aghraératha, a semi-man." The powerful Drváspa, made by Mazda, the holy Drváspa, the maintainer, granted him that boon, as he was offering up libations, giving gifts, sacrificing, and entreating that she would give him that boon.⁶ Elsewhere we read: "Quick, cut off then Haoma's portion, gift of flesh for doughy Haoma! Heed lest Haoma bind

¹ DZA, i. 380.

³ *Id.* 300.

⁵ *Id.* 304.

² *Id.* ii. 64 and *note.*

⁴ *Id.* 278.

⁶ *Id.* 114.

thee fettered, as he bound the fell Turanian Frangrasyan (the murderous robber) fast in iron close-surrounded in the mid-third of this earth!"¹

The original version of the story therefore would seem to have been that Afrásiyáb built himself an underground palace where he offered sacrifice to obtain the Glory of the Iránian race, but vainly. He then attempted three times to seize it by force and again failed. Haoma then captured him in his palace and handed him over to Husravah, who slew him. Firdausí, it will be observed, represents Afrásiyáb's attempt to seize the Glory as an attempt to escape from Húm. Haoma is of course the personification of the ancient Aryan drink-offering² and a god of the old nature-worship. It is one of the instances in which such divine beings have become human in the Sháhnáma. Another instance is that of Kai Khusrau himself, in whom a trace of his divine origin is to be found in his passing without death to heaven. This trait is found in the *Zandavasta*: "Mayest thou be freed from sickness and death, like king Husravah!"³

§§ 47-63. The legend of Kai Khusrau's melancholy, his expedition into the mountains, and his attainment to Heaven without having tasted death, has its parallel in the great Indian epic the *Mahábhárata*, where Yudhishtira, the eldest of the five Pándavas, becoming weary of the world, resolves to retire from the sovereignty and acquire merit by pilgrimage. On hearing of his intentions his four brothers—Bhima, Arjuna, and the twins Nakula and Sahadeva—resolve to follow his example and accompany him. Yudhishtira appoints successors to his various kingdoms, and makes a distribution of his treasures. He then once more summons his subjects and informs them of his intentions. "The citizens and the inhabitants of the provinces, hearing the king's words, became filled with anxiety and disapproved of them. 'This should never be done'—said they unto the king. The monarch, well versed with the changes brought about by time, did not listen to their counsels. Possessed of righteous soul, he persuaded the people to sanction his views. . . . Then Dharma's son, Yudhishtira, the king of the Kurus, casting off his ornaments, wore barks of trees. Bhima and Arjuna and the twins, and Draupadi also of great fame,⁴ similarly clad themselves in barks of trees. . . . The ladies, beholding the princes in that guise, wept aloud. . . . The five brothers, with

¹ MZA, iii. 245. Darmesteter translates "bien qu'il fût enveloppé d'une forteresse d'arrain." DEI, ii. 227.

² See Vol. i. p. 8.

³ DZA, ii. 327.

⁴ Draupadi was the joint wife of the five Pándavas.

Draupadi forming the sixth, and a dog forming the seventh, set out on their journey. . . . The citizens and the ladies of the royal household followed them for some distance. . . . The denizens of the city then returned "to their new ruler and to the new situation caused by the renunciation of the Pándavas. The seven pilgrims meanwhile had set out upon their journey. They first wandered eastward, then southward, and then westward. Lastly they faced northward and crossed the Himavat. Then they beheld before them a vast desert of sand and beyond it Mount Meru. One by one the pilgrims sank exhausted and expired, first Draupadi, then the twins, then Arjuna, and then Bhima; but Yudhishtira, who never even looked back at his fallen comrades, still pressed on and, followed by the faithful dog, who turns out to be Dharma, the god of righteousness, in disguise, entered Heaven in his mortal body, not having tasted death.¹

On comparing this legend with that of the text it will be seen that, in spite of natural differences of detail, the resemblances are too numerous and close to be wholly accidental. In both legends two kings, after triumphing over their mortal foes in a great war, become world-weary and determine to renounce the sovereignty. In both the people protest in vain. Both kings appoint their successor, whom the people accept. Both bestow gifts and other favours on their chiefs. In both we have the lamentations of the kings' wives. Both journey into the mountains with a devoted band, the number of which is the same in both cases, and both are accompanied by a divine being, for the part of the dog in the Indian legend is indicated in the Íránian as being taken by Surúsh, the angel of Urmuzd.² In both the leaders pass deathless into Heaven, and in both their mortal comrades perish. One legend therefore must be derived from the other, or else, and this seems to be the better opinion, they must be referred to a common origin of great antiquity.

§ 1

In Praise of Sultán Mahmúd

God bless the Sháh, the pride of crown and throne
 And signet-ring, bless him whose treasuries groan
 With his munificence, what while the fame

V. 1272

¹ RM, Maháprasthánika Parva. There is a more accessible English version in the late Sir Edwin Arnold's "Indian Idylls," p. 244.

² Cf. pp. 273, 303, 308.

Of majesty is heightened by his name.
 From sea to sea hosts answer to his call,
 The Glory of his crown is over all ;
 No gold is in the mine, to men unknown,
 That fortune hath not reckoned as his own ;
 And, God assisting him to all his ends,
 He spoileth foemen to enrich his friends.
 At feasts he scattereth treasure, while in fight
 The Elephant and Lion feel his might,
 And when he dominateth lands in war
 He bringeth Doomsday with his scimitar ;
 But, whether jewels with his hand he fling,
 Or wield a sword, he seeketh one sole thing—
 That heaven at feast shall hail him as a Sea,¹
 In fight as sun-faced Lion. All agree—
 Earth, water, and the heavenly Fount of light—
 That such another Sháh ne'er was for fight,
 For gifts and toil, for glory and renown.
 Mixed he not love with war he would bring down,
 When wroth, the stars. Strong is he, his array
 Such that therein the wind is barred of way.
 Seven hundred elephants of mighty size
 Bring up his army's rear, and his allies
 Are God and Gabriel. From all the great
 He claimeth tribute, and from every state ;
 While, if they pay not, all is lost to them—
 Their country, treasure, throne, and diadem.
 Who dare break fealty with him or slight
 His bidding who at feast is this world's Light,
 And Mountain with the breastplate on in fight ?
 Abú'l Kásim ! may that brave king—the cause
 That freeth onager from lion's claws,
 World-lord Mahmúd, who bringeth to the ground
 Chiefs' heads in fight—be Sháh, the moon be crowned
 By his high star, world without end, forwhy

V. 1273

¹ "une mer de générosité" (Mohl).

He is the Adornment of the radiant sky,
 At feasts a Cloud bestowing bounteously,
 And dowered with wisdom, justice, and renown.
 May this world never lack his head and crown.
 He hath host, courage, minister, and treasure,
 And one to him are fight and scenes of pleasure.
 O'er all the world one carpet hath been placed—
 His token nevermore to be effaced—
 And on it are a cushion and a seat—
 For Fazl, son of Ahmad, a man replete
 With justice, prudence, rede, and godly fear;
 No Sháh before had such a minister.
 In his hands is the peace of all the state,
 For he is good and chief of all the great,
 Frank-spoken, with clean hands and single heart;
 To serve God and his sovereign is his part.
 With this wise, upright minister for friend
 My far-extending labour reached its end.

I framed this story of the days of yore,
 Selected from the book of men of lore,
 That it in mine old age might yield me fruit,
 Give me a crown, dínárs, and high repute,
 But saw no bounteous world-lord; there was none
 Who added to the lustre of the throne.

I waited for a patron patiently—
 One whose munificence required no key,
 A Guardian of the Faith and crown, a Light
 To make the crown and ivory throne more bright,
 Strong in the battles of the brave, acute
 In why and wherefore, one to bring to fruit
 The bough of Faith and wisdom, and confute
 By mere conjecture other sages' lore,
 Should think no ill and rest in God secure.
 While three score years and five were passing by,
 Like spring-winds o'er the desert, poverty
 And toil were mine; next year like one bemused

I leaned upon a staff, my hands refused
 The rein, my cheeks grew moon-like pale, my beard
 Lost its black hue and camphor-like appeared,
 Mine upright stature bent as age came on,
 And all the lustre of mine eyes was gone.
 When I was fifty-eight, and when in truth
 I still felt young though I had lost my youth,
 A proclamation reached mine ears at last
 Whereat care aged and all my troubles pass'd.
 It ran: "Ye men of name who long to find
 Some trace of Farídún still left behind!
 See bright-souled Farídún alive again
 With earth and time for bondslaves. He hath ta'en
 The world by justice and by largessings,
 And is exalted o'er all other kings.
 Bright are the records of his earlier day,
 And may he flourish, fruit and root, for aye!"

Now since that proclamation reached mine ear
 I wish not any other sound to hear;
 In his name have I fashioned this my lay,
 And may his end be universal sway,
 For he—this lord of sword and crown and throne—
 Will be mine aid now that my youth hath gone.
 I ask of God almighty and most high
 That I so long may 'scape calamity
 That in the world-king's name I may tell o'er
 These tales, omitting naught of ancient lore;
 Then let my worthless corpse be dust, but rise
 My quick soul to the mines of Paradise.
 The righteous judge and bounteous lord of earth,
 In whom it seeth every kind of worth,
 The lord of Chín, the lord of Hindústán,
 Lord of Írán and country of Túrán,
 The lord of splendour and exalted aim,
 Beyond the reach of calumny and blame,
 At whose voice crocodiles in water crack

Their skins, and leopards on the desert-track,
 Mahmúd, the world-lord, like the sun in light,
 A Lion with a scimitar in fight,
 From every want on earth will set me free,
 And rank me high in his nobility.
 For ever may his throne endure, and still
 May fortune turn according to his will!
 At feasts what are *dínárs* to him but dust?
 His bounty causeth not his heart distrust.
 Bold is the man that praiseth him, I wis
 Such praisers do not know what praising is,
 Because the world's king passeth thought. 'Tis his
 As Jupiter's own diadem to be.

I have endured, O king! a slavery
 That some memorial may be left of me.
 The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
 Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
 But storm and rain shall never mar what I
 Have built—the palace of my poetry.
 As years pass o'er the tale that I have writ
 Each man possessed of wisdom reading it
 Shall bless the world-lord Sháh and say: "May none
 Behold unfilled by him the royal throne!"

His own achievements celebrate his name,
 And all the world is witness to his fame.
 For me, I cannot offer praises meet,
 But I will laud the dust upon his feet.
 May this age live for him alone and may
 His fortune be illumed by wisdom's ray,
 As merry be his heart as jocund spring,
 May time no scath upon his person bring
 May he be all his people's hearts' delight,
 Victorious ever, and a man of might.
 So long as round the earth the heaven shall spin,
 And Jupiter pursue its course therein,
 May he continue in his grace and pride—

No evil eye, no want unsatisfied !

I now resume mine old-world legendry
From true traditions. As time's course I see
I need none other to admonish me.

The combatings of Kai Khusrau arise
Before me: ye must hear my witcheries,
For I shall shower pearls as I descant,
And in among the rocks my tulips plant,
Now have I got a theme long known to me,
Such that the marrow of my speech 'twill be.

O thou who lookest on a bygone age !
Joy sometimes filleth thee and sometimes rage,
And wondrous 'tis how many novel smarts
Yon turning sky reserveth for our hearts !
One's lot throughout his years is grief and fret,
And he must taste of sorrow and regret ;
Another's portion is all honey, sweet,
Indulgence, luxury, and lofty seat ;

Another hath to walk a treacherous way,
Whiles up, whiles down. Such fosterage we meet

From fortune, but the thorn-prick will out-stay
The blushing of its rose, and at three score
The hand should be withheld from grasping more,
While to survive to three score years and ten
'Neath heaven's vicissitudes is not for men,
Or if, worse hap ! one live so many years,
Existence then is but a cause for tears.

If three score years were but a fishing seine ¹
A wise man would not seek escape in vain,
But through the turning sky or through the net
Spread by the sun and moon I cannot get.

V. 1277

A king may labour and deny himself
The gust of vengeance and delight of pelf,
Yet must he pass hence to the other land,
And leave his toils behind just as they stand.

¹ The same word in the original means a net and sixty.

Think of Sháh Kai Khusrau, for now thou hast
 To treat as new the doings of the past.
 He, having slain his grandsire, passed away ;
 The world peruseth not his grants to-day .
 This Wayside Inn doth ever treat us so ;
 Use thine endeavours to escape its woe.

§ 2

How Kai Khusrau arrayed his Host against Afrásiyáb

The warfare of Gúdarz and of Pírán
 Being ended, the victorious Sháh prepared
 For war again, and chiefs with countless troops
 Flocked from all sides ; the sound of clarions
 Arose. They pitched the camp upon the plain,
 And set upon an elephant a throne
 Of turquoise, and the world's face grew like Nile.
 The Sháh sat throned and crowned, from plain and court
 Shouts rose, no room was left to move on waste
 Or sleep in city. When the noble Sháh,
 Thus seated, dropped the ball within the cup,
 And girt his loins, there was tarrying
 Throughout the realm save at the great king's gate,
 Such was his ordinance for all the kingdom.

Of those whom he had strictly charged, and sent
 Out to the marches, with Luhrásp and Rustam,
 The strong of hand, who could despoil the deep
 Of crocodiles, and with far-famed Ashkash,
 The paladin, approven, great, and ardent,
 He bade the efficient to return to court.
 He oped his treasury to pay the troops,
 Spake often of the spirit of his sire,
 Chose envoys fluent, shrewd, and well advised,
 And sent this letter in the ancient tongue
 To all the chiefs and nobles : " Kai Khusrau,

V. 1278

The victor, seated on his elephant,
 Hath dropped the ball; the land is like the Nile.
 Let there be neither rest nor sleep for you,
 But only vengeance on Afrásiyáb."

When all the men of leading in the realm
 Had read the letter of the Sháh a shout
 Ascended from the warriors of the world,
 The earth began to heave as 'twere the sea,
 The chieftains out of all the provinces
 Marched court-ward with their troops, and when a host
 Had formed war-worthy he inspected it,
 And drew it up as on the field of battle.
 He chose out thirty thousand cavaliers,
 Who drew the sword, among those famous troops
 To occupy with him the army's centre,
 And bathe their hands in blood in every fight.
 He further chose three persons from the host,
 Great men and prudent, having forms of brass;
 The three were Rustam, that great paladin,
 Gúdarz, the ancient, cunning Wolf, and Tús,
 The paladin, who wore the golden boots,
 And had the custody of Káwa's standard.

V. 1279

On his right hand the Sháh placed Tús, with whom
 Were Manúshán and well advised Khúzán—
 Both kings in Párs and helmed with helms of gold.
 Beyond these were Árash—a Fire in fight—
 And king Gúrán—the Lustre of the host—
 The one the monarch of the Khúzians,
 And fortunate in battle-time, the other
 King of Kirmán, impetuous in strife—
 Sabbákh, the wary monarch of Yaman,
 Íraj of lion-heart—an Elephant
 For bulk—who was the ruler of Kábul,
 A worldlord and a man both wise and holy,
 Shammákh, who was the native king of Súr,
 Girt for the fray, and, greater still, Káran,

The fighting-man, victorious everywhere,
The shatterer of hosts, who ruled Kháwar,
A worldlord, wary, and imperious.
All those that held descent from Kai Kubád—
Great men of understanding and high birth—
The Sháh set on his left with Diláfrúz
To marshal them. The chiefs sprung from Gúdarz,
Who plied the sword by night despite the gloom—
Bízhan, the son of Gív, and brave Ruhhám,
Both reckoned by the Sháh among the great—
Gurgín, Mílád's son, and the troops from Rai,
All marched as bidden by the Sháh. Moreover
The scions of Zarasp, who gave new lustre
To glorious Ázargashasp, kept guard
Behind the Sháh with cloud-transfixing spears.
He gave the right wing into Rustam's charge,
Where all the troops were one in heart and body,
For all those from Zábulistán—the chiefs,
And kin of Zál—he stationed on the right,
Retaining for himself the chief command.
Then for the left wing he selected troops,
Like Sol in Aries, led by Gúdarz,
Son of Kishwád, Hajír, and by Farhád.
The chiefs from Barda' and from Ardabíl,
When ranked before the ruler of the world,
Requested that Gúdarz might be their leader,
And drew up on the left. The monarch bade
To hold the way before the central host
With elephants of war with towers thereon;
The earth was like the Nile. Within the towers
He stationed archers valiant in the fray,
And thousands strong, and round each elephant
Three hundred horse—famed fighting-men—as guards.
The warriors from Baghdád who were with Zanga,
The son of Sháwarán, picked men of Karkh—
He ordered with their arbalists to take

Their place afoot before the elephants,
 And had two miles of mountain fronted them
 They would have pierced the rocks' hearts with their
 arrows;

No one was able to withstand their shots.
 Behind the elephants he placed the footmen
 With head-transfixing spears nine cubits long.
 They held in front their bucklers of Gílán:
 The blood seethed in their livers. After these
 Came foot in line with breastplate-piercing shafts
 And shields, then warrior-horsemen with full quivers.
 Out of the army of Kháwar¹ the Sháh
 Chose thirty thousand warriors and chiefs
 Equipped with armour, shields, and Rúman helms,
 And made that gallant horseman Fariburz
 Their chief in consort with Tukhár, the king
 Of Dahistán, who scorned all enemies,
 And was by birth of noble Dashma's seed—
 A family of puissance in those days.
 Nastúh was at the side of Fariburz,
 Supported by a crowd of warriors.
 The great men and the war-experienced chiefs,
 Brought from the desert of the Bedouins,
 Were all commanded by Zahír, who used
 To pluck gazelles away from lion's claws,
 And bidden by Khusrau to join Nastúh,
 Thus piling up the left wing of the Sháh.
 There was a host from Barbaristán and Rúm,
 Whereof the leader hight Kishwaristán.
 These, thirty thousand strong in horse and foot,
 Set forward likewise to the king's left wing.
 There was another host from Khurásán,
 Men of ambition and experience;
 Their leader and their guardian in the quest
 Of fame was Minúchihr, son of Árash.

V. 1281

¹ " de l'Occident " (Mohl).

There was a man of name too of the race
 Of Gurúkhán—a king and of the seed
 Of Kai Kubád: his name was King Ffrúz—
 A chief, the lustre both of heart and host.
 There was the king of Gharcha too who used
 To spring on elephants as lions do.
 The Sháh assigned them posts by Minúchihr,
 And made the head of all their house their captain.
 Moreover from Mount Káf the mighty men—
 The offspring of Jamshíd and Faridún—
 Advanced in all their pride with spear and mace,
 Incensed against the offspring of Zádsham.
 Khusrau selected thirty thousand swordsmen—
 Men of ambition and of royal seed—
 And gave that force to Gív, son of Gúdarz,
 In whom the marches joyed. Supporting him,
 With troops in single and in double file,
 Was Áwa, son of Samkunán; his warriors
 Were brave and wary. To the right the Sháh
 Dispatched ten thousand swordsmen—gallant horsemen—
 And to the rear of Gív, son of Gúdarz,¹
 Ten thousand more brave troops. The swordsman

Barta

Marched with his mountaineers amid that throng—
 A noble band and gallant combatants—
 In Gív's support. The Sháh sent thirty thousand
 Picked cavaliers of battle to the left,
 All warlike youths commanded by Zawára,
 And next selected from among the troops
 Ten thousand well equipped, and made their head
 Káran the fighting man that he might urge
 His steed between the embattled hosts as champion.
 To Gustaham, the son of Gazhdaham,
 The Sháh said: "Be Káran the fighter's comrade,"
 And bade the son of Tús to make the rounds

V. 1282

¹ P. has:—"And to support Gúdarz, son of Kishwád."

Throughout the host with trump and kettledrum
 To stay from unjust deeds the hand of him
 That did not worship God, to see that none
 Among the soldiers was in want of food,
 And also that no person was oppressed.
 He was to ask the Sháh for what was needful,
 And be in all the mouthpiece of the host.

The world was full of wains and buffalos
 Sent forward with provisions by the king ;
 His scouts were visible on every side,
 He roused the heads of sleepers from their slumbers,
 Appointed watchmen's stations on the mountains,
 And left behind no stragglers from the army.
 To every quarter he sent spies and sought
 With diligence to know how matters stood.
 Caves, deserts, hills, and plains on every side
 Were filled with dust raised by the troops, while rein
 Was linked to rein, all necks were craned for fight,
 And none was either fearful or distressed ;
 The Sháh took treasure with him on the march.
 On this wise when he had arrayed the host
 He sky-ward raised his Kaian diadem,
 And friend and foe alike forbore to have
 A purpose save the battles of the brave.

§ 3

*How Afrásiyáb heard that Pírán was slain and that Kai
 Khusrau had arrayed his Host*

The Turkman king reposed upon his throne
 Of ivory on the further side of Jáj,
 And of his myriads of troops meanwhile
 The more part were in arms, prepared for war.
 Whate'er existed on that hilly march,
 Upon the trees or growing on the ground,

The troops consumed it all—both fruit and leaf.
The world was bent on death. The Turkman king
Was at Baigand, surrounded by his kindred
And his allies, for all the chiefs of Chín
And of Máchín were present there. Pavilions
And camp-enclosures occupied the world;
No room remained. Afrásiyáb, that wise,
Ambitious man, was at Kunduz and there
He feasted and reposed, selecting it
Because it had been built by Farídún,
Who had erected there a Fane of Fire
With all the Zandavasta limned thereon
In gold. The name Kunduz is ancient Persian;
Thou hast may be some knowledge of that tongue,
But now the name is altered to Baigand,
So light and fickle is this age of ours!
Afrásiyáb was sprung from Faridún,
And was unwilling to desert Kunduz,
But with his meiny camped upon the plain,
Confounding with his host the heavenly sphere.
His camp-enclosure, thronged with multitudes
Of servitors, was of brocade of Chín;
The tents within it were of leopard-skin—
A usage of the Turkman king Pashang.
The royal tent contained a throne of gold
Adorned with gems and golden ornaments;
There sat the monarch of the Turkman host
With mace in hand and diadem on head.
Outside stood many standards of the chiefs,
And at the monarch's portal were the tents
Of those whom most he honoured—brethren, sons,
And others not akin. 'Twas his desire
To reinforce Pírán, but with the dawn
A cavalier came swift as dust with tidings
About him, and the wounded straggled in,
Withal lamenting, dust upon their heads,

Each with his own account of injuries
 Inflicted by Írán upon Túrán,
 Told of Pírán, Lahhák, and Farshíward,
 And of the nobles on the day of battle,
 How they had fared both in the van and rear,
 And how they had been worsted on the field,
 How also Kai Khusrau arrived one day,
 And with his host filled earth from hill to hill.
 "Our troops all asked for quarter," thus they said ;
 "The flock was frightened being shepherdless."

The monarch, when he heard it, was aghast,
 His face was gloomy as his heart was dark,
 He came down wailing from the ivory throne,
 And cast his crown down in the magnates' presence,
 A wail of anguish went up from the troops,
 The nobles' cheeks were wan with misery.
 They cleared the place of strangers and assembled
 The monarch's kin. Afrásiyáb in anguish
 Wept, rent his locks, and wailed : "Ye Eyes of mine,
 My noble cavalier Rúín, Húmán,
 Lahhák, and Farshíward, horsemen and Lions
 Upon the battle-day ! no son or brother,
 No chief or leader, hath survived the fight !"

He thus lamented. Then his humour changed,
 He sorrowed for the soldiers, then he swore
 A mighty oath and cried in grief and anguish :—
 "By God, I will have none of ivory throne,
 My head shall have no commerce with the crown,
 My tunic shall be mail, my throne a steed,
 My crown a helmet and my tree a spear.
 Henceforth I wish not feast and banqueting,
 Or e'en provision for the crown itself ;
 I want but vengeance for my famous men,
 My swordsmen and my men of high emprise,
 On base-born Kai Khusrau, and may the seed
 Of Siyáwush be lacking to the world."

While he bewailed those tidings news arrived
Of Kai Khusrau : " A host is near Jíhún,
And all the realm's face is o'erspread with troops."

In grief and wretchedness he called his powers,
Spake of Pírán at large and of the slaying
Of Farshídward, his brother, of Rúín
And other heroes of the fight, and said :—
" Ensue not slumber and repose henceforth ;
Our foes have mustered and have come sharp-clawed.
This is no time for dallying and debate,
But for revenge, for bloodshed, and a struggle
For very life. Our task is love and vengeance,
This for Pírán and that on Kai Khusrau."

With tearful eyes the chieftains of Túrán
Replied : " We all are servants of the king,
And will not quit this vengeance while we live.
None hath borne children like Pírán, Rúín,
And Farshídward—the seed of Farídún.
We, great and small, are at the king's disposal,
And though the hills and dales become a sea
Of blood, we have our bodies' length of earth,
Not one of us will quit the battlefield
If He who is the moon's Lord aideth us."

Thereat the Turkman monarch's heart revived ;
His humour changed ; he was himself again.
He oped his treasury's door, he paid his troops,
His heart all wreak, his head vainglorious,
And gave up to his soldiers all the herds
That he possessed upon the hills and plains.
He chose him thirty thousand Turkman sworders,
Equipped for war, and sent them to patrol
Jíhún in boats that none might cross the river
By night and make a foray unopposed.
He sent his forces out on every side,
Employing much resourceful stratagem,
But 'twas the ordinance of holy God

That that unrighteous king should be destroyed.
 At night he sat in conclave with the wise,
 With world-experienced, prudent archimages :
 They bandied earth's affairs about among them,
 And settled that the king should send his host
 Across Jíhún. The king, who sought a means
 To counteract the mischief of the foe,
 Then parted all his army into two,
 And ordered Kurákhán, his eldest son,
 To come to him. For valour and for state,
 For mien, for looks, for prudence and for counsel,
 Thou hadst declared the son to be the sire.
 The monarch gave him half of that great host—
 Experienced men of name and warriors—
 And sent him to Bukhára, there to be
 Behind his father like a mount of flint.
 The king kept on dispatching arms and men,
 Provision trains ne'er ceased. He left Baigand
 And hastened to Jíhún. The army lined
 The bank throughout. Above a thousand boats
 Were ferrying for a week until the hills
 And plains were naught but warriors. The crowd
 Of elephants and troops of Lions made
 The passage of the stream a busy one.
 Boats covered all the water and the host
 Marched toward the desert of Ámwí. The king
 Brought up the rear and crossed intent on war.
 He sent on all sides speedy cavaliers—
 Men shrewd and ardent—and commanded them :—
 V. 1287 “Survey the country both to right and left
 For some spot large enough to hold the host.”

Whenas the scouts returned from every side
 They thus reported to the exalted king :
 “The many troops engaged in this campaign
 Will need supplies and grass and halting-places.
 There is beside the river of Gílán

A route with fodder and encamping-grounds
 Where men of vigilance may bring provisions
 By water to the army. On the way
 Are sands and ample room for pitching tents
 With palace-like enclosures."

This refreshed

His heart. He heightened on the imperial throne,
 A general was he expert in war,
 And went not by the words of any teacher.
 He ranged the centre and the wings thereof,
 The outposts to observe the enemy,
 The rear, and station for the baggage-train,
 He ranged the left and right. He made a camp
 In royal wise, with five score thousand swordsmen
 To form the centre, making that his station
 Because he took the chief command himself.
 Pashang, whose hands were strong as leopard's claws,
 Commanded on the left, in all the host
 A peerless noble, and unequalled horseman
 In any land. His sire surnamed him Shída,¹
 For he was like bright Sol, would urge his steed,
 Seize, and pluck out by force, a leopard's tail;
 He went to use an iron spear and pierce
 A mountain in the fight. To him the king
 Committed five score thousand troops and chiefs
 For that campaign. He had a younger brother—
 His glorious peer, a warrior Jahn by name,
 A potent prince, his father's counsellor,
 Raised by his understanding o'er the throng.
 His sire gave him a hundred thousand horsemen
 Equipped for battle—Turkmans of Chigil—
 To guard the rear of Shída and not turn
 Their heads away though stones rained from the
 clouds.

V. 1288

The king chose of his grandsons one who used

¹ *i.e.* The shining one.

To cut his collops out of lions' backs
 As leader of the right wing of the host,
 Which hid the sun itself in clouds of dust.
 The cavaliers of Tartary, Khallukh,
 And Balkh, all paladins who used the sword,
 Had for their chief Afrásiyáb's fifth son—
 A famous warrior eager for the fight,
 One whom they used to call Gurdgír the valiant—
 A man whose sword and shafts would pierce a moun-
 tain.

With him went thirty thousand warriors—
 Men of the fray and armed with swords for battle.
 Damúr and Jaranjás were his companions
 In rendering support to noble Jahn.
 Their leader was the veteran Nastúh,
 Whose own superior was valiant Shída.
 Of Turkman warriors thirty thousand men
 Marched forth with maces and artillery,
 Led by brave Ighrírás who counted blood
 As water. Next the king chose forty thousand
 Whose chief was elephantine Garsíwaz—
 A leader of ambition midst that folk,
 The chief of nobles, and the army's stay;
 The exalted king entrusted to his charge
 The elephants. He next chose from the troops
 Ten thousand men insatiate of fight,
 And bade them place themselves with lips afoam
 Between the lines upon the battlefield
 To charge the foe dispersedly and break
 The hearts and backs of the Íránians.
 The rear was toward the east. At night they barred
 The road with elephants. Afrásiyáb,
 The world-illuming monarch, kept before
 His soldiers' eyes Nímrúz as Cynosure.

§ 4

*How Kai Khusrau had Tidings that Afrásiyáb advanced
to fight with him*

Now when Khusrau heard from his watchful spies
About the Turkmans and Afrásiyáb:—
“He hath conveyed such hosts across Jíhún
That neither sands nor rocks are visible!”
He called his warriors and declared to them
What he had heard, chose from among his troops
The fittest of the mighty of Írán,
Men that had tasted this world’s salts and sours,
To succour Gustaham, son of Naudar,
At Balkh, and bade Ashkash to lead to Zam
A host with treasure, elephants, and drachms
That none might take him in the rear and frustrate
The purpose of the Lions of Írán;
He ordered next his warriors to horse,
Struck up the tymbals and led on the host,
But marched with counsel, prudence, and no haste,
For that in warfare leadeth to repentance.

The Sháh, when he had reached the waste, inspected
The bearing and equipment of his men.
The army’s route was toward Khárazm, where sands
And plains were fit for strife, with Dahistán
To left, the stream to right, the sands between,
Afrásiyáb in front. The Sháh in person,
With Rustam, Tús, Gúdarz, Gív, and a staff
Of noble warriors, went round the field
To view the approaches and the pathless waste;
Then, having heard about his grandsire’s force,
He made his dispositions craftily,
And, having not expected such a host,
So many elephants and men of war,
He strengthened his position with a fosse,

And spread his scouts about on every side.
 He filled the fosse with water when night came
 Upon the side toward Afrásiyáb,
 And scattered caltrops all about the plain
 So that the foemen should not traverse it.

When Sol was shining out of Aries,
 And gracing all the surface of the world,
 The Turkman general reviewed his host,
 Struck up the tymbals and arrayed his ranks.
 The world was filled with din of trump and troops,
 The warriors put on their iron helms.
 Thou wouldst have said: "Earth's face is iron, and air
 Empanoplied with spears!"

Three days and nights
 The hosts abode thus and none stirred a lip.
 The cavalry were mounted on both sides,
 The footmen stood in front. Thou wouldst have said:—
 "Earth is an iron mountain, heaven is mailed."

Before the two kings the astrologers,
 Much musing and with tables on their breasts,
 Sought out the secret purposes of heaven
 With astrolabes to find the favoured side,
 But heaven looked on with a spectator's eye,
 And left the gazers in perplexity.

§ 5

How Shída came before his Father Afrásiyáb

Upon the fourth day when the strain was great
 The valiant Shída came before his sire,
 And said to him: "O famed throughout the world,
 And most exalted of all potentates!
 No monarch under heaven hath Grace like thine,
 And neither sun nor moon opposeth thee;
 An iron mount would run as 'twere a river

If it should hear the name Afrásiyáb.
Earth is not able to sustain thy host,
Or yon resplendent sun thy casque. Of all
The kings none fronteth thee save Kai Khusrau,
Thy kinsman but a base-born miscreant.
Thou didst hold Siyáwush as son, didst bear
A father's pains and love for him, betooming
No noxious blast from heaven to visit him.
Thou didst distaste him when assured that he
Aimed at thy crown, thy throne, and diadem,
And if the king of earth had spared his life
The crown and signet both would have been his.
The man that now hath come to fight with thee
Shall not have long of this world. Father-like
Thou didst encourage this black reprobate,
Forbearing to consign him to the dust ;
Thou didst support him till he spread his wings,
Fit through thy favour for the throne of gold,
And bird-like flew Íránward from Túrán ;
Thou wouldst have said : ' He never saw his grandsire.'
Look at Pírán's own deeds of kindliness
Toward that faithless and unworthy man ;
Yet he forgot Pírán's love and fulfilled
His heart with vengeance and his head with strife,
And when he caught Pírán as he desired
He put that kindly paladin to death.
Now hath he issued from Írán with troops
To make a fierce attack upon his grandsire.
He seeketh not dínárs or diadem,
Not treasures, horses, scimitars, or soldiers,
But aimeth at the lives of his own kindred,
And that is all the burden of his talk.
My father is a king, a most wise monarch,
And will bear witness that my words are true.
What need have armies for astrologers ?
The brave seek honour with their scimitars.

V. 1292

The horsemen on the right are all for battle,
 And, if the king permitteth, I will leave
 The foe no cavaliers, but pin their helmets
 Upon their heads with shafts in spite of fosse
 And reservoir."

Afrásiyáb replied:—

"Be not impetuous. What thou say'st is true,
 And never should one listen save to truth ;
 Yet, as thou know'st, the warrior Pírán
 In this world trod the path of excellence ;
 There was no fraud or falsehood in his heart,
 He sought for nothing but the good and right,
 He was an elephant in strength in battle,
 He had a sea-like heart and sunny face :
 Húmán his brother was a warrior-leopard,
 So was the brave Lahhák, so Farshíward.
 A hundred thousand Turkman cavaliers,
 Ambitious men accoutred for the fight,
 Departed hence all seething for the fray,
 Though I in secret sorrowed and bewailed:
 They perished on the battlefield ; the ground
 Whereon they lay was puddled with their gore.
 The marches of Túrán are broken-hearted
 With sorrow, all men dream of dead Pírán,
 And no one speaketh of Afrásiyáb ;
 So let us tarry till our men of name,
 Our great men of the host, our cavaliers,
 Have gazed awhile upon the Íránians,
 And have not hearts impassioned, grieved, and sore.
 The Íránians too will see this mighty host
 With all its treasures, thrones, and diadems.
 It is not good for us to fight in force ;
 Defeat will come and we shall grasp the wind,
 But warriors will I send dispersedly,
 And fill the wastes with our foes' blood."

Then Shída:—

“Sire! fight not thus. First of our warriors
 Am I—a brazen-bodied cavalier—
 And have seen none who in the battle-day
 Could scatter wind-borne dust upon my steed.
 I passion for a combat with Khusrau
 Because he is the new king of the world,
 And if he shall encounter me, as I
 Doubt not, withal he shall not scape my clutch,
 The Íránians shall be broken—heart and back—
 And all their projects marred, while if another
 Come forth I soon will lay his head in dust.”

V. 1293

The king replied: “O inexperienced one!
 How should the king of kings encounter thee?
 If he would fight I am his opposite,
 ’Tis mine to trample on his name and person,
 And if we meet thus on the field both hosts
 Will rest from strife.”

“Experienced one,” said Shída,
 “Inured to this world’s heat and cold! thou hast
 Five sons before thee still. We will not suffer
 These thoughts of fight. No worshipper of God,
 Nor army even, could approve that thou
 Shouldst go in person to confront Khusrau.”

§ 6

How Afrásiyáb sent an Embassy to Kai Khusrau

Then unto Shída said Afrásiyáb:—
 “Imperious son! ne’er be mishap thy lot.
 Though thou wouldst fight with Kai Khusrau thyself
 Take not this present matter in ill part:
 Go forth and be the Maker thine ally,
 And may thy foemen’s heads be overturned.
 Convey a message unto Kai Khusrau
 For me and say: ‘The world is changed indeed!’

The grandson waging war upon his grandsire
 Must have a head all guile and wickedness.
 Was it the Maker's aim to fill the world
 With fight and feud? When Siyáwush was slain
 The fault was his for heeding not advisers;
 V. 1294 But if the blame was mine what had Pírán,
 What had Rúín, Lahhák, and Farshídward,
 Done that they should be bound to horses' backs,
 Blood-boltered, and like maddened elephants?
 Now if thou say'st: "Thou art a miscreant,
 A villain of the seed of Áhriman,"
 Behold thou art descended from my seed,
 And castest an aspersion on thyself.
 Leave fighting to Gúdarz and Kai Káús,
 And let them come against me with their troops.
 I have not spoken thus as fearing thee,
 Or as grown recreant in mine old age.
 My troops are as the sand upon the shore,
 Brave warriors and Lions all prepared
 At my command upon the day of battle
 To make Mount Gang an ocean, O my son!
 Still I am fearful of the Omnipotent,
 Of bloodshed, and calamities to come,
 For many an innocent and noble head
 Will be dissevered on this battlefield.
 If thou renoucest not this strife with me,
 Good sooth, thine own disgrace will come of it;
 But if thou wilt agree with me by oath,
 And keep it, I will point thee out a way
 Whereby thy troops and treasure may be saved:
 When thou shalt have forgotten Siyáwush,
 And made another Siyáwush of me,
 Then Jahn and valiant Shída, who in battle
 Turn Mount Gang to a sea, shall be thy brothers,
 And I will bid the Turkmans to withdraw
 From all tracts that thou claimest for Irán,

And such ancestral treasures as I have—
Dínárs, crowns, horses, thrones, and battle-gear,
Left to me by my father's sire Zádsham,
Crowns for grandees, thrones, coronets, and all
That thou requirest to supply thy troops—
Will I dispatch just as they are to thee.
My son shall be thy paladin, his sire
Thy kinsman ; then both hosts shall rest from strife,
And this our fight shall issue in a feast :
But now if Áhriman shall so pervert
Thy mind that thou wilt don thy winding-sheet,
Wilt make thine only object war and bloodshed,
My good advice not rooming in thy brain,
Come forth in presence of thy host, and I
Will likewise come forth from my station here ;
Let us encounter while our troops repose.
If I shall perish all the world is thine,
My soldiers are thy slaves, my sons thy kin,
While if I slay thee I will injure none
Among thy folk, thy soldiers shall have quarter,
And be my chiefs and comrades. Furthermore
If thou wilt not come forth but art unwilling
To struggle with the veteran Crocodile,
Then Shída shall oppose thee girt for fight,
So be no laggard when he challengeth.
The sire is old ; his substitute is young—
A youth of prudence and of ardent soul.
He will contend with thee upon the field,
And bring a lion's heart and leopard's claws.
Then shall we see whom fortune favoureth,
And whom it crowneth with a crown of love ;
While if thou willest not to fight with him,
Preferring action of another sort,
Wait that the troops may rest them for the night.
Then when the mountains don their golden crowns,
And when the dark night, drawing back its skirt,

Shall hide its head beneath a veil of hair,
 Let us make choice of warriors from the host—
 Men of exalted rank with massive maces—
 Make earth the colour of brocade with blood,
 And give our foes their bodies' length of earth.
 The second day at cock-crow let us bind
 The kettledrums upon the elephants,
 Bring forth a reinforcement of the chiefs,
 And make blood run like water down the streams.
 V. 1296 The third day we will bring forth both the hosts,
 In mass like mountains, for revenge and strife,
 And find out who is loved and who rejected
 By heaven above.' If he refuse to hear
 My counsel given, challenge him thyself
 To single combat in some distant spot
 Beyond the sight of either of our hosts."

Then Shída chose him of the wise men four
 Experienced much in this world's heat and cold,
 Did reverence, and went forth. The father's heart
 Was full, his eyelids overflowed with tears.
 A thousand of the troops escorted Shída—
 Men of discretion well equipped for fight—
 And presently the Íránian scouts descried
 The flag and lances of the prince of Túr.
 Anon the Turkmans that were in the van—
 Young cavaliers and inexperienced—
 Fell on the Íránian outposts and shed blood
 In Shída's absence and against his wishes.
 There were some wounded on the Íránian side,
 And still the conflict was continuing,
 When Shída came himself upon the spot,
 And saw the Íránian outpost-guards. His heart
 Was sorely grieved, he called his warriors back,
 And said to the Íránians: "Dispatch
 A horseman in due form to Kai Khusrau
 To say: 'An ardent spirit, Shída hight,

Hath brought a message from the king of Chín—
The father of the mother of the Sháh.”

A horseman galloped from the Íránian outpost,
Approached Khusrau in haste, and said to him:—
“An envoy from the monarch of Túrán—
A noble hero with a sable flag,
Who saith: ‘My name is Shída’—doth demand
Permission to discharge his embassy.”

The Sháh’s heart filled with shame, and as he wept
Hot tears he said: “This is my mother’s brother,
My peer in height and valour.”

Looking round

V. 1297

He saw none but Káran of Káwa’s race,
And said: “Go thou to Shída with good cheer,
Greet him from us and hear the embassy.”

Whenas Káran approached the company
He caught sight of the waving sable flag,
Came up to Shída and gave greeting, adding
That of the Sháh and of the Íránians.

The young man’s answer was in honied tones,
For he was shrewd of heart and bright of mind,
Delivering what Afrásiyáb had said

Concerning peace and feast and war and strife,
And when Káran had heard the goodly words
He came and told the monarch of Írán,

For wisdom and that message were well paired.¹

When Kai Khusrau heard this he called to mind
Old times and, laughing at his grandsire’s action,
His machinations and diplomacy,

Exclaimed: “Afrásiyáb repenteth crossing
The stream, and though dry-eyed hath much to say;
But my heart is fulfilled with ancient griefs.

May be he striveth to affect my mind,

¹ V. has a fresh heading here; but, as it occurs again in its proper place later on, the arrangement of the text as given in C., which makes no break here, has been adopted.

And fright me with the greatness of his host,
 Unwitting that high heaven turneth not
 As we desire when evil days are toward.
 Mine only course is to encounter him
 With vengeful heart upon the battlefield,
 And, when I should be striving, dally not."

The wise men and the captains of the host
 All spake out, saying: "This must never be:
 Afrásiyáb is wise and veteran,
 And never dreameth but of stratagems;
 He knoweth naught but sorcery, black arts,
 Deceit, malignity, and wickedness.

V. 1298

Now he hath chosen Shída from the host
 Because he saw therein the key to loose
 The bonds of bale. He challengeth the Sháh
 To fight that he may fill our day with dust.
 Adventure not thyself against his rage,
 Or weary of Írán and of the crown.
 Engage not rashly in a fight with him,
 And let us not be left in grief and anguish.
 If Shída now shall perish by thy hand
 Their host will merely lose one man of name,
 But if thou perishest in some lone spot
 The darksome dust will go up from Írán,
 And none among us will be left alive:
 Írán will perish—city, field, and fell.
 We have none other of the Kaian race
 To gird himself to execute revenge.
 Thy grandsire is an old experienced man
 Of high repute in both Túrán and Chín,
 Who offereth excuses for ill done,
 And will not fight unless he be compelled;
 He will, he saith, transfer the steeds, the treasure,
 And drachms which Túr erst hoarded for Zádsham,
 Besides the golden throne, the princes' crowns,
 The golden girdles, and the massive maces,

To thee, if so he may avert this trouble.
 He will abandon too all lands which thou
 Lay'st claim to as belonging to Írán ;
 Let us withdraw glad and victorious,
 Dismissing by-gones from our memory."

So spake both old and young, save famous Rustam,
 Who wished revenge not peace in that he grieved
 For Siyáwush. The monarch bit his lip,
 And turned a troubled look toward the speakers ;
 Anon he said : " 'Tis not for us to quit
 This battlefield and march back to Írán.
 Where now are all the counsels and the oaths
 Whereby we pledged ourselves to Kai Káu's ?
 What while Afrásiyáb is on the throne
 He will not cease to devastate Írán.
 How can we look upon Káu's, and how
 Excuse ourselves before him ? Ye have heard
 Of what befell illustrious Íraj
 From Túr all for the sake of crown and state ;
 And how Afrásiyáb dealt with Naudar
 In murderous haste ; and further how he slew
 The noble Siyáwush, though innocent,
 And still because of treasure, throne, and crown.
 A crafty Turkman out of yonder host
 Hath formally approached and challenged me
 To single combat. Why are ye so pale ?
 I marvel at it thus affecting you
 While making me still keener after vengeance.
 I never thought : ' The Íránians will unbind
 The girdle of revenge.' I have not seen
 One of Írán o'erthrown so that the rest
 Should be so anxious to avoid the fight
 For mere words spoken by Afrásiyáb."

The Íránians, sorry for their fault, excused
 Themselves and said to him : " We are but slaves
 And speak as love dictateth. High renown

Is all the object of the king of kings,
 The noble outcome of his enterprises :
 Let not the worldlord, the supreme, reproach us
 Since no Íránian cavalier, they say,
 Is able to contend against this man.
 The troops are shouting on the battlefield
 That none can do this brave deed save their Sháh,
 Who, as the archmages' king, will not consent
 That we shall be disgraced for evermore."

V. 1300

Khusrau replied : " Know, counselling archmages !
 That Shída on the day of battle holdeth
 His father as no man. Afrásiyáb
 Made armour for his son by magic arts
 Perversely, darkly, and malignantly.
 The arms which ye possess are not sufficient
 To pierce that breastplate and that helm of steel.
 The charger is of demon pedigree
 With lion's action and the speed of wind.
 A man that is not dowered with Grace from God
 Would lose both head and feet in fighting Shída ;
 Besides he cometh not to fight with you,
 For that would shame his Grace and birth. The
 scions

Of Farídún and of Kubád are twain
 As warriors, but one in heart and habit,
 And I will burn his father's gloomy soul
 As he burnt Kai Káuś for Siyáwush."

Those lion-horsemen of Írán 'gan call
 Down blessings on their monarch, one and all.

§ 7

How Kai Khusrau sent an Answer to Afrásiyáb

Khusrau then bade Káran, his faithful liege,
 To go back with this answer from the Sháh :—

"Our controversy hath grown long and stubborn
 Till matters now have reached a pass indeed!
 A man of honour and a warrior
 Is not in war a laggard. I demand not
 Thy treasures or the country of Túrán,
 For none abideth in this Wayside Inn.
 Now mark to whom the Lord of sun and moon
 Shall give success upon this battlefield,
 For by the Maker's might, the Omnipotent,
 And by the diadem of Kai Káu's,
 Who cherished me, I grant you no more time
 Than roses can withstand the autumnal blast.
 We need not wealth acquired by tyranny
 And wrong, for heart and fortune ever smile
 On one that hath the warm support of God.
 Thy land, thy treasures, and thy host are mine,
 So are thy throne, thy cities, and thy crown.
 Now Shída armed, with troops, in warlike wise,
 Hath come to us and challenged us to fight.
 Him will I entertain at break of day,
 And he shall view my sword that streweth heads.
 I see none in the Íránian host to wheel
 With him upon the battlefield, and therefore
 'Tis plain and scimitar for me and Shída
 Until I bring on him the Day of Doom.
 If I shall prove the victor in the fight
 I will not rest upon my victory;
 We will set champions shouting on both sides,
 The plain shall shine and savour with their blood;
 And afterward will we lead forth our hosts
 In mass, as they were mountains, unto battle.'
 When thou hast spoken thus, to Shída add:—
 'O full of wisdom and aspiring chief!
 Thou hast come here alone within the net,
 Not come in quest of fame, or to deliver
 Thy father's message, but by adverse fate:

The Worldlord hath impelled thee from the host,
 And here will be thy shroud and sepulchre ;
 Harm will befall thee for that harmless head,
 Which they struck off as though it were a sheep's ;
 Thy sire will weep o'er thee as bitterly
 As Kai Káuś is weeping for his son.' ”

Káran went from the presence of the Sháh
 In haste and, drawing near the sable flag,
 Told all the message of Khusrau to Shída
 With frankness, not concealing anything,
 And he, with heart like roast before the fire,
 Went to his father and reported all.
 The monarch gloomed, grew sad, and heaved a sigh.
 The dream which he had dreamed in days of yore,
 And had preserved a secret of his own,¹

V. 1302

Now turned his head and filled his heart with fear :
 He knew that his decline was close at hand.
 Then Shída said : “ To-morrow on this field
 The ants shall find no way between the fallen.”

The monarch answered : “ Take no thought, my son !
 Of fight for three days hence, because my heart
 Is, as thou mayst say, broken by this war ;
 I am in case to pluck it from my body.”

“ O monarch of the Turkmans and of Chín ! ”
 The son replied, “ fret not thy heart so much,
 For when bright Sol shall raise its glittering standard,
 And light the visage of the violet sky,
 Upon the field shall meet Khusrau and I,
 And from him will I make the dark dust fly.”

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 232.

§ 8

How Kai Khusrau fought with Shída the Son of Afrásiyáb

Whenas the azure Veil grew bright, and when
The world was like a topaz, Shída mounted
His battle-steed. Youth's vapours filled his head
With strife. He set upon his shining breast
A breastplate and a royal helm of iron
Upon his head. A Turkman warrior bare
His standard. Shída went forth like a leopard.
Now when he drew anear the Íránian host
One of the nobles went and told the Sháh :—

“ A cavalier hath come between the lines
With shouts and gestures and with sword in hand,
A noble bent on fight, who biddeth us
Inform the Sháh that Shída hath arrived.”

The monarch laughed, called for his coat of mail,
And set aloft the flag of majesty.

He put a Rúman helmet on his head,
And gave Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz, his flag,
But all his soldiers were distressed, and wept
As though they were consuming in fierce fire.

They cried : “ O king ! let not the iron gall
Thy sacred form ; the wonted place for Sháhs

Was on the throne. May he 'gainst whom thou girdest

Thy loins for fight be laid in darksome dust,

His purposes and efforts be confounded.”

V. 1303

The monarch, armed with girdle, mace, and helmet,
Dispatched a message to the army thus :—

“ Let no man quit his post on left or right,

Upon the centre or upon the wings ;

Let none attempt to bring on fight or skirmish,

But hearken to Ruhhám, son of Gúdarz.

By noontide ye shall see which will be worsted :

If Shída then shall prove the conqueror

Look for instructions for the fight to Rustam,
 Be all of you obedient to his word,
 And keep in trouble near your remedy,
 For troops beneath the eye of such a man
 May face with calmness all the sleights of warfare.
 Let not your hearts be straitened; first and last
 War's wont is this—at whiles a rise or fall,
 At whiles rejoicing and at whiles dismay."

He urged his charger on—night-hued Bihzád,
 Who rolled the wind before him as he sped.
 Khusrau was armed with breastplate, helm, and lance,
 His steed's hoofs sent the dust up to the clouds,
 While Shída, seeing him between the lines,
 Heaved from his breast a deep drawn chilly sigh,
 And said: "Thou art the son of Siyáwush,
 A man of prudence, wise, and self-controlled,
 The grandson of the monarch of Túrán,
 Who grazeth with his helm the orbèd moon;
 But thou art not what one experienced,
 A man whose food is wisdom, would expect,
 For hadst thou brains thou wouldst not go about
 To fight against thy mother's brother thus.
 If thou desirest fight avoid the host,
 And choose thy ground in some sequestered spot
 Where no Íránian or Túránian
 May look on us: we need no help from any."

V. 1304

The Sháh replied: "O Lion ravening
 In fight! I am indeed the heart-seared son
 Of blameless Siyáwush, whom thy king slew,
 And I have come for vengeance to this plain,
 Not for the sake of throne and signet-ring.
 Since thou hast moved this matter with thy sire,
 And challenged me of all the host to battle,
 I may not send a meaner opposite.
 So now do thou select a battleground
 That shall be far removed from both the hosts."

They made this compact: "None shall fight in aid
From either side, and for our standard-bearers
Day shall not darken with calamity."

The twain departed from the hosts afar,
Like merrymakers going to a feast,
And reached a barren spot and waterless,
Untrod by lion and pard, a waste within
The marches of Khárazm and fit for fight;
The soaring eagle flew not over it;
Part was hard, arid earth and part mirage.
There those two warriors like ravening wolves
Made for themselves an ample battlefield.
The cavaliers, as lions full of rage
Leap from the covert on a hunting-day,
Wheeled with their mighty lances round and round
Till, when the shining sun had passed its height,
There were no heads remaining to their spears,
And bridle and horse-armour reeked with sweat.
They then renewed the battle vehemently
With Rúman mace and trenchant scimitar
Until the air was darkened by the dust;
Howbeit neither wearied of the combat.
When Shída saw the valour and the might
Of Kai Khusrau the tears fell on his cheeks:
He felt: "This Grace hath been bestowed by God,
And I have reason to bewail myself."
His steed moreover was distressed by thirst;
The man's own strength was failing. In his straits
He thought: "If I say thus to Kai Khusrau:—
'Come let us try a wrestling-bout afoot,
And make ourselves run down with blood and sweat,'
He will not for his honour's sake dismount;
His person as a Sháh would be disgraced;
Yet if I 'scape not by this artifice
Good sooth I am within the Dragon's breath!"
He said: "All warriors fight with sword and lance,

And wheel about, but let us fight, O Sháh !
Afoot and stretch our hands out lion-like."

Khusrau, the ruler of the world, perceived
That which was passing in his foeman's mind,
And thought thus : " If this Lion strong of hand,
This scion of Pashang and Farídún,
Shall once be rested he will scatter heads,
And cause full many a lion-heart to wail,
While if I shall contend with him afoot
It may go hard with the Íránians."

Then said Ruhhám : " O wearer of the crown !
Disgrace not thus thy birth. If Kai Khusrau
Must fight afoot in person to what end
Are all these cavaliers upon the field ?
If any must set foot upon the ground
Let me who am descended from Kishwád,
But thou art the exalted king of earth."

The Sháh replied : " O loving paladin
And cavalier ! brave Shída will not fight
With thee, he is the grandson of Pashang,
Nor hast thou prowess to contend with him :
The Turkmans have not such another chief.
'Tis no disgrace for me to go to battle
Afoot, so let us strive like pards together."

Upon the other side the interpreter
Said thus to Shída : " Flee the foeman's danger.
Thou hast no other course but to withdraw
Because thou canst not stand against Khusrau.
To flee before the enemy in time
Is better than to do oneself despite."

Then Shída : " But the voices of mankind
Will not be hushed. Since first I girt myself
I have maintained my head sun-high, but never
Beheld a warrior of such strength, such Grace,
And mastery on any field, yet still
A grave is better for me than retreat

When once I am engaged in fight ; moreover,
 Though we may tread upon a dragon's eyes,
 We cannot 'scape the process of the heavens.
 If death is to befall me by his hand
 'Twill not be let by friend or enemy.
 I recognise this might and manliness ;
 This noble warrior hath the Grace divine,
 Still I may be the better man afoot,
 And as we struggle make him stream with blood."

Then spake the monarch of the world to Shída :—
 "O famous offspring of a noble race !
 Of all the men of Kaian seed not one
 In sooth hath e'er assayed to fight afoot,
 But notwithstanding if thou wishest I
 Hold it a wish that I shall ne'er deny."

§ 9

How Shída was slain by Khusrau

The Sháh dismounted from his night-hued steed,
 Removed his royal helmet and, entrusting
 The noble charger to Ruhhám, advanced
 As 'twere Ázargashasp. When Shída saw
 From far Khusrau approaching him on foot
 That warlike Crocodile dismounted likewise,
 And there upon the plain the champions closed
 Like elephants, and puddled earth with blood.
 When Shída saw the stature of the Sháh,
 The breast, the Grace divine, and mastery,
 He sought some shift whereby he might escape ;
 Such is the purchase of a shifty heart !
 Khusrau, when ware of this, though not expressed
 In words, reached out, strong in the strength of Him
 By whom the world was made—the Omnipotent—
 And, as a lion putteth forth its paws

Upon an onager and flingeth it,
 Clutched with left hand the neck, with right the back
 Of Shída, raised him, dashed him to the ground,
 And brake his legs and back-bone like a reed.
 Then, drawing forth his trenchant blade, Khusrau
 Clave Shída's heart in twain and, having shivered
 His breastplate and thrown dust upon his helmet,
 Said to Ruhhám: "This 'matchless miscreant,
 Brave but unstable, was my mother's brother;
 Entreat him kindly now that he is slain,
 And fashion him a royal sepulchre;
 Anoint his head with precious gums, rose-water,
 And musk, his body with pure camphor; place
 A golden torque about his neck, a casque
 With ambergris therein upon his head."

The interpreter of Shída looking forth
 Beheld the body of the famous prince,
 Which they had raised blood-boltered from the sands
 To carry toward the army of Khusrau.
 The interpreter drew near and cried aloud:—
 "O thou illustrious and just-dealing king!
 I was no more than Shída's feeble slave,
 No warrior, cavalier, or paladin:
 O Sháh! forgive me in thy clemency,
 And may thy spirit be the joy of heaven."

"Tell my grandfather," thus the Sháh replied,
 "Before the troops what thou hast seen me do."

The nobles' hearts and eyes were on the road,
 Awaiting Shída's coming from the field.
 A cavalier sped o'er the yielding sand,
 Bare-headed, weeping scalding tears of blood,
 And told Afrásiyáb, who in despair
 Plucked out his locks all camphor-white and scattered
 Dust on his head. His paladins drew nigh,
 And all who saw the Turkman monarch's face
 Rent hearts and garments for him; such a wail

Of lamentation went up from the troops
 That sun and moon were moved to pity them.
 Then said Afrásiyáb in his distress :—
 “Henceforth I seek not quiet or repose,
 And be ye my companions in my sorrow ;
 Our sword’s point shall not see the sheath, and I
 Will ne’er know joy again. Bind we our skirts
 Together,¹ leave Írán no field or fell.
 Account him not a man but dív or beast,
 Whose heart shall not be pierced by agony ;
 Let shamefast tears be never in those eyes
 That tears of hot blood fill not at our woe
 For that moon-faced and warlike cavalier—
 That Cypress-tree upon the streamlet’s lip.”

Afrásiyáb wept tears of blood for grief
 That leeches cannot cure. The men of name
 All loosed their tongues before the king and answered :—
 “May God, the just Judge, make this light for thee,
 And fill thy foemen’s hearts with sore dismay ;
 Not one of us will tarry day or night
 In this our grief and our revenge for Shída,
 But raise the war-cry in our soldiers’ hearts,
 And scatter heads upon the battlefield.
 Khusrau, who hath not left an ill undone,
 Now addeth feud to feud.”

The warriors
 Were broken-hearted, grief possessed the king,
 The field was filled with stir and clamouring.

§ 10

How the Battle was joined between the Hosts

When Sol was rising in the Sign of Taurus,
 And when the lark was singing o’er the plain,

¹ Cf. p. 85 and note.

A sound of kettledrums arose in camp,
 A din of tymbals and of clarions,
 V. 1309 As Jahn led forth ten thousand valiant swordsmen
 Equipped for war. Khusrau, beholding them,
 Commanded, and Káran of Káwa's race
 Led like a mountain from the central host
 Ten thousand veterans, while Gustaham,
 Son of Naudar, rushed with his battle-flag
 Like dust-cloud to the fray; the world grew dim
 With horsemen's dust, troops filled the earth and banners
 The air. Khusrau was instant in the centre,
 Afrásiyáb was active on the field,
 Till heaven dusked and warriors' vision failed;
 Then when the brave Káran had routed Jahn,
 And when the moon set o'er the mountain-skirt,
 The warriors came back from the field. Khusrau
 Exulted over the Íránians
 Because they had prevailed, yet they prepared
 All night for war and neither slept nor feasted.

When Sol arose in Cancer, and the world
 Was full of hostile sounds and purposes,
 The armies of both realms arrayed themselves,
 And every lip was foaming for the fight.
 Khusrau, attended by one faithful liege,
 Withdrew behind the rear, and there dismounted
 To proffer much thanksgiving to the Maker.
 He laid his face upon the tawny dust,
 And spake thus: "O Thou justly dealing Judge!
 If, as Thou know'st, I have experienced wrongs
 And borne them patiently for many a day,
 V. 1310 Requite the doer of the wrong with blood,
 And be the Guide of him that was oppressed."

Thence with grieved heart, and head full of revenge
 Against the offspring of Zádshám, he came
 With shoutings to the centre of the host,
 And set his glorious helm upon his head.

The battle-cry arose, the din of horn,
Of brazen trumpet and of kettledrum.
The opposing forces came on mountain-like,
Troop after troop astir—a sea-like host.
Jahn and Afrásiyáb were at the centre.
As those two hosts advanced thou wouldst have said :—
“The valleys and the desert are afoot.”
The sun was darkened by the armies’ dust,
While at the flashing spear-heads, eagle’s plumes,
The din of trumpets, shouting warriors,
And heroes’ maces on the battlefield,
The crocodile in water and the pard
On land, the iron and the rocks and mountains,
Dissolved with fear. Earth heaved and air was full
Of shouts; the ears of savage lions split;
Thou wouldst have said: “The world is Áhriman’s!
’Tis naught but enemies from sleeve to skirt!”
While everywhere lay slaughtered, heap on heap,
The warriors of Irán and of Túrán.
The sands were naught but blood, heads, hands, and feet;
Earth’s heart was shaken; underneath the hoofs
The fields and fells seemed linen stiff with gore.
Anon the warriors of Afrásiyáb
Advanced like ships upon the sea, attacking
The archers’ towers—defensive citadels—
Borne by the elephants before the centre.
Amid a rain of arrows from the towers
There rose the clamours of the battlefield,
As spearmen and the elephants came onward
With many a warrior from the central host.
Afrásiyáb two miles away descried
That vast array and towered elephants,
And with his own huge elephants and troops
Advanced; the world grew dark, no light was left.
He shouted: “O ye famous men of war!
Why do ye cramp yourselves and crowd about

The elephants? The fight extendeth miles.
 Draw from the centre and the towers, spread wide
 To right and left."

He ordered Jahn, no novice,
 To quit his post with mighty men and lead
 Ten thousand cavaliers and veteran,
 All lancers dight for combat, toward the left,
 And thither sped that lion-warrior.
 When Kai Khusrau perceived that Turkman battle,
 And how it hid the sun, he turned toward
 His own chiefs—heroes of the fray—and bade them
 Shine on the left like Sol in Aries.
 They set off with ten thousand noble troops,
 Mailed and with ox-head maces. Next he bade
 Shammákh of Súr: "Among our men of name
 Select ten thousand youthful combatants,
 Unsheathe your swords between the embattled lines,
 And stoop your heads upon your saddle-bows."

The hosts so grappled that thou wouldst have said:—
 "They are one mass!" From both sides rose a crash,
 Blood ran down from the fight in streams; they led
 The elephants with towers aside; the world
 Became like Nile. When both to right and left
 Dust rose, that refuge of the host—the worldlord—
 Called for his armour and advanced with Rustam
 With shouts and fury from the centre. Trump
 And tymbal sounded. On one hand was Tús,
 The chief, with Káwa's flag. The paladins,
 That wore the golden boots, all left their stations
 With smarting hearts and formed the Sháh's left wing,
 While battle-loving Rustam and Zawára,
 His brother, set their faces toward the right.
 The veteran Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
 With many noble chiefs, supported Rustam,
 As did Zarasp and prudent Manúshán.
 The din of war rose from the scene of strife.

None will behold a fight like that. The sand
Was strewn with killed and wounded—those whose day
Was done. Men saw not how to cross the field
For slain. The waste was as Jíhún with blood,
One man lay headless and another headlong.
The cries of horse and rider rose above
The tymbals' din. "The mountains' hearts are split,"
Thou wouldst have said, "and earth is fledged with
horsemen."

Here heads lay trunkless, there were headless trunks,
While massive maces clashed. The sun was fain
To flee before the flash of trenchant swords
And falchions. Thou hadst said: "A murky cloud
Hath risen raining blood upon the field."

Fartús was slain upon the Turkman left
By Faríburz, the son of Sháh Káús,
While on the right Kuhílá, who himself
Was equal to a hundred elephants,
Fell by the hand of Minúchihr. With noon
Came storm and cloud. The world-illuming sun
Was veiled, earth darkened and the eyes of men
Were troubled. As the sun began to sink
The Turkman monarch's heart was moved by terror
As cavaliers from every kingdom, march,
Domain, and principality, pressed on,
While with the various mail and diverse flags
The world was yellow, red, and violet.
When Garsíwaz behind the king saw this
He brought his troops up; to the right he sent
A noble band—men one in soul and body—
Another to the left, and spread his chiefs
On all sides—forty thousand cavaliers,
And chosen mighty men, that drew the sword.
He hastened to Afrásiyáb who, seeing
His brother's face, took courage and advanced.
Rose war-din, air was veiled with feathered shafts.

When darkness came in rearward of the sun,
 And day was almost night, false Garsíwaz,
 That miscreant,¹ hurried to his brother, saying :—
 “ Who of our warriors still desireth fight ?
 The earth is full of blood, the air of dust.
 Withdraw the army since the night hath come,
 Bestir thee, for the troops will wail anon,
 And soon thou wilt be fighting while they flee !
 Do not thyself such wrong.”

The king was wroth,
 And would not hear a word, but urged his steed
 Forth from the host ; he rushed upon the field,
 And slew some nobles of the Íránians.
 Khusrau perceived this, went out in support,
 And both kings of both realms, thus bent on battle,
 Fared ill-attended by their cavaliers.
 Howbeit Garsíwaz and Jahn allowed not
 Afrásiyáb to challenge Kai Khusrau ;
 They seized their monarch's reins, turned round his
 steed,
 And hurried toward the desert of Ámwí.
 On his withdrawal Ustukílá came
 Like smoke to offer battle to the Sháh.
 King Ílá too rushed forward like a leopard,
 And Burzúyalá eminent in fight.
 The bodies of those three were rocks of flint,
 They were all fierce and ruthless warriors.
 V. 1314 The Sháh, perceiving them, urged from the throng
 His charger, came upon them mountain-like,
 Smote with his lance the valiant Ustukílá,
 Unseated him and cast him on the earth.
 King Ílá rushed before the line and struck
 Khusrau upon the girdle with a spear,
 Which failed to pierce his breastplate or affray

¹ From the Íránian standpoint, because he had brought about the death of Siyáwush. See Vol. ii. p. 292 *seq.*

His glorious heart. He saw his foeman's pluck
 And strength, unsheathed forthwith his trenchant sword,
 And clave the spear asunder with a blow,
 Which Burzúyalá seeing, and withal
 The monarch's courage, might, and mastery,
 Made off amid the gloom; thou wouldst have said:—
 "He burst his skin." The Turkmans, when they saw
 The prowess of the Sháh, fled one and all.
 As for Afrásiyáb himself, the plight,
 So bare and hopeless, was as death to him,
 And when the Turkman horse were ware thereof
 They charged no more. When they returned in shame
 Afrásiyáb commanded them to shout:—
 "This lion-courage cometh of the night,
 Which causeth our retreat but, though the wind
 Sought thee to-day and gave a glimpse of joy,
 Expect us with our banner, our heart's lustre,
 When daylight cometh back; then will we turn
 The surface of the desert to a sea,
 And smash the bright sun into Pleiades."

Thereat the several monarchs of these two
 Contending hosts each to his camp withdrew.

§ 11

How Afrásiyáb fled

When half dark night had passed, and heaven half
 turned

Above the hills,¹ the Turkman leader packed
 His baggage, gave out helms and mail to all
 His troops, and bade ten thousand Turkman horse
 On barded chargers to be outpost-guards.
 He spake thus to the host: "When I have passed
 The river follow me, troop after troop,

V 1315

¹ Reading with P.

Leave day and night unreckoned."

From Ámwi

He crossed Jihún that night with all his host,
While all the country, road and waste alike,
Was naught but empty tents and tent-enclosures.
When dawn brake forth upon the mountain-tops
The outposts saw no soldiers on the plain,
And brought the joyful tidings to Khusrau :—
"The Sháh hath no occasion for more strife :
We see the tent-enclosures and the tents,
But not a horseman of the foe remaineth."

Khusrau forthwith fell prostrate on the ground
While giving praises to the All Just and Holy,
And saying : "O Thou glorious and almighty,
The Worldlord, the Provider, and the Judge,
Who gavest me Grace, strength, and diadem,
And now hast blinded my foes' hearts and souls !
Oh ! banish this oppressor from our world,
And burden him with terror all his years."

Whenas the sun took up its golden shield,
And night assumed its hair of turquoise hue,
The world's lord sat upon the ivory throne,
And donned the crown that brighteneth the heart.
The army praised him : "May he live for ever,
This Sháh who is so worthy of the state."

The soldiers lacked no booty ; it was there,
Left by the army of Afrásiyáb,
But all the people said : "We have been tricked ;
He hath departed with host, trump, and drum ;
The famous monarch hath escaped unhurt
At night-time from the clutches of the free !"

The shrewd Sháh said : "Chiefs of the Íránian host !
'Tis good whene'er the Sháh's foe hath been slain,
And good when he retreateth in confusion.
Since God, the Arbiter, hath given us Grace,
Crown, majesty, and kingship over kings,

Give ye thanksgiving everywhere to Him
 With benedictions offered day and night,
 Because He maketh luckless whom He will,
 And setteth up the worthless on the throne;
 We cannot question or advise or move
 Therein, for no slave can withstand His word.
 Here shall I tarry for five days; the sixth
 Is sacred to Urmuzd, the light of earth;
 Upon the seventh we will march; the foe
 Provoketh me and I desire revenge."

Five days they searched for their Íránian slain,
 And having washed the dust off gave them all,
 As they deserved, a worthy burial.

§ 12

How Kai Khusrau announced his Victory to Káuś

Khusrau then bade a scribe to come to him,
 Supplied with paper, musk, and spicery.
 They wrote a letter from the battlefield,
 Couched in befitting terms, to Sháh Káuś.
 The scribe began it with the praise of God,
 Who is the Guide, and Object of all praise,
 And then Khusrau dictated: "May the power
 Of my great sovereign, fearful for my life
 As though he were my sire, last like the hills,
 And be his foes' hearts stricken. From Írán
 I reached the sandy desert of Farab,
 And fought three mighty battles in three nights.
 The horsemen of Afrásiyáb were more
 Than sages dream of. I have sent the king
 Three hundred of our noblest foemen's heads—
 That of the brother of Afrásiyáb,
 His son, his honoured nobles, and his kin—
 Together with two hundred men of name

In bonds, and each a hundred lions' match.
 We fought upon the desert of Khárazm.
 In that great conflict heaven blessed our efforts,
 Afrásiyáb hath fled and we have crossed
 The river in pursuit, and wait the issue."

V. 1317 They sealed the letter with a seal of musk,
 And after, as he marched across the waste,
 "Be blessings on this battlefield," he cried,
 "And be each year to prosperous stars allied."

§ 13

How Afrásiyáb went to Gang-bihisht¹

Now when Afrásiyáb had fled the field
 He crossed the river like a rushing wind ;
 His own troops joined the troops of Kurákhán,
 And told their tale. How bitterly their monarch
 Wept, with those still surviving of his race,
 For his illustrious son, for his great men,
 His kinsmen and allies ! There rose a wail
 Of anguish and thou wouldst have said : "The clouds
 Are drawing tears of blood from lions' eyes."
 He lingered in Bukhárá for a while,
 And wished his Lions to renew the struggle.
 He called to him the great and haughty chiefs
 Of those who still survived but, when they came,
 The advisers of the army loosed their tongues,
 And said, for they were left without resource
 By that campaign : "The great men of our host
 Have passed away ; our hearts are wounded for them.
 In sooth of every hundred there survive
 Not twenty ! Those departed claim our tears.
 Now for a while we have renounced our treasures,
 Our children, and our kin, and fought beyond

¹ Gang-dizh in the original. See p. 136.

Jihún as we were bidden by the king,
 And what un wisdom brought on us thou knowest,
 For thou art king and we perform thy hests.
 If now the monarch will be well advised
 He will withdraw the army hence to Chách,
 And, if suggestions may be made to him,
 Cross the Gulzaryún and wait a while
 At Gang-bihisht, because it is a place
 As fit for recreation as for fight."

V. 1318

No other plan was mooted, all agreed.
 They marched to the Gulzaryún, with eyes
 Wet and full hearts; there spent the Turkman king
 Three days, recruiting with his hawks and cheetahs,
 Thence on to Gang-bihisht where, though he had
 But short repose, he thought it Paradise;
 To him its soil was musk, its bricks were gold;
 There he was happy, laughing in his sleep,
 Thou hadst said: "Safety is his bedfellow."
 He summoned countless troops from every side,
 The great men, haughty chiefs, and potentates,
 While he was drinking wine among the bowers
 And roses with companions, harp, and rebeck.
 He sent his spies abroad to every quarter,
 And revelled with his chieftains day and night,
 Awaiting what time's course should bring to light.

§ 14

How Khusrau crossed the Jihún

As soon as Kai Khusrau had passed the river
 He banished banqueting, repose, and sleep,
 And, when he had transported all his troops
 Across, he sent this proclamation forth:—
 "Let no man be in terror at our coming,
 But offer prayer for us to holy God."

He gave great largess to the mendicants,
 Especially to those who welcomed him.
 V. 1319 He thence departed to the march of Sughd,
 And saw a novel world—the home of owls.
 Upon that country too he lavished treasure
 In eagerness for its prosperity,
 And, whereso'er he halted, cavaliers
 Came seeking quarter. Tidings reached Khusrau
 About the doings of Afrásiyáb
 And of his army: "Kákula is with him
 With reinforcements like huge lions loose.
 He is by race from Túr, revengeful, injured,
 And seeketh all occasions for a fight.
 Afrásiyáb hath sent some troops to Chách,
 For he would seek the Íránian throne and crown,
 And many with Tawurg toward the desert,
 Where all are hostile to the Sháh, to hold
 The road against the Íránians."

Kai Khusrau

Was not perturbed, for wisdom ruled his thoughts.
 The troops from Barda' and from Ardabíl
 He ordered to approach by companies,
 To march before him, and return the number
 Of leaders, frontier-chiefs, and archimages.
 They marched; their general was Gustaham,
 A man who never blenched where Lions fought.
 Khusrau next bade the army of Nímrúz
 To march with Rustam, burner up of chiefs,
 On fiery camels and to lead their chargers;
 Then, changing from their camels to their steeds,
 To make a joint and sudden night-attack
 Upon the foe. So both these crown-adorners
 Marched forth, one to the desert, one toward Chách.
 The Sháh continued for a month in Sughd—
 A district well affected to himself—
 Gave to his troops their pay and rested them,

And sought occasion both for fight and fame.
 He gathered all the warriors skilled in leaguers
 To aid him and dismayed the evil-doers.
 Thence proudly, girdle-girt, and dight for battle
 He led a host from Sughd and from Kashán ;
 The world was lost in wonderment at him,
 And tidings reached the Turkmans : " Kai Khusrau,
 The aspiring Sháh, hath come in quest of vengeance."
 Then all of them took refuge in their holds ;
 The world was full of bruit and turbulence.
 Anon the Sháh harangued his host and said :—

V. 1320

" In that our task is different to-day,
 As for the Turkmans who submit themselves,
 And in their hearts repent of making war,
 Fight not against them, and shed not their blood.
 Lead none the way to evil, but if any,
 Whose vengeful heart remaineth recusant,
 Shall seek to strive against you with a host,
 Then bloodshed, harrying, and combating
 In any quarter are permitted you."

A shout rose from the army of Írán,
 And all obeyed the orders of the Sháh ;
 The warriors went up against the holds,
 Against all holds held by ambitious chiefs,
 And razed the walls. No dwelling-place was left,
 No slaves or cattle, nothing good or bad.
 He traversed in this way a hundred leagues,
 Depopulating stronghold, hill, and plain.
 He marched to the Gulzaryún, explored
 The land with guides, and saw a world like gardens
 In spring, the dales, wastes, hills, and earth all fair,
 The mountains stocked with game, the plains with
 trees—

A world for favoured folk. He sent out scouts
 And spies to learn whate'er was left to know.
 They pitched the youthful monarch's camp-enclosure

V. 1321

Beside a stream. The worldlord took his seat
 Upon the golden throne with his famed lieges,
 And held at night a feast till day. The dead
 Rose from the dust!

Upon the other side
 Afrásiyáb at Gang, by day and night,
 Spake with his wise, experienced, prescient nobles,
 And said: "Now that the foe hath reached our couch
 How is it possible to rest at Gang?"

They answered: "Since the enemy is nigh
 We see no course except another battle:
 It is not well to yield with such a host."

With this they left the presence, and all night
 Prepared their forces for the coming fight.

§ 15

How Kai Khusrau fought with Afrásiyáb the second Time

At cock-crow, when the dawn began to break
 And when the tymbal's din rose from the court,
 An army marched out to the waste from Gang,
 And cramped the very ants and gnats for room.
 Approaching the Gulzaryún the host
 Made earth like Mount Bístún. The army marched
 Three days and nights. The world was full of turmoil
 And din of war. The column stretched seven leagues,
 And soldiers were more plentiful than ants
 Or locusts. On the fourth day they drew up
 In line. From stream to sun the flash of arms
 Ascended. Jahn, son of Afrásiyáb,
 Whose spears o'ershot the sun, was on the right.
 Afrásiyáb took station at the centre
 With chieftains, sages, and proud cavaliers.
 Kubard, the lion-warrior, held the left
 With cavaliers brave and experienced.

Revengeful Garsiwaz was in the rear
To guard the army from the enemy.

Full in the centre on the other side
Khusrau supported like a hill his host.
With him were Tús, son of Naudar, Gúdarz,
And Manúshán, high born Khúzán, Gurgín,
Son of Mílád, the lion Gustaham,
Hajír and brave Shídúsh. Upon the right
Was Faríburz, son of Káuś. The troops
Were one in soul and body. On the left
Was Minúchihr, who held his own in battle.
Gív, offspring of Gúdarz, the guard and stay
Of every march, was in the rear. The plain
Became a sea, the earth an iron hill
Of horseshoe-nails, the hoofs were tulip-hued.
A cloud of black dust gathered overhead,
The hearts of flints split at the tymbals' din,
Earth heaved like murky clouds; thou wouldst have
said :—

“It will not bear the hosts !” The air resembled
An ebon robe, the drumming frayed the stars.
The field was naught but heads, brains, hands, and
feet :

Good sooth, no room remained. The chargers trampled
On lifeless heads and all the waste was filled
With trunkless heads and hands and feet. The wise
Were not in evidence and both hosts owned :—

“If on this field of anguish and revenge
The troops continue thus a further while
No horsemen will survive, and in good sooth
The sky itself will fall !” At all the crashing
Of ax on helmet souls farewelled their bodies.
When Kai Khusrau observed the battle's stress,
The world grown straitened to his heart, he went
Apart and prayed to God to do him right :—
“O Thou beyond the ken of saints,” he said,

V. 1323 “The Lord of this world and the King of kings!
 If I had never been a man oppressed,
 And tried like iron in the crucible,
 I would not ask to be victorious,
 Or urge my cause upon the righteous Judge.”

He spake and laid his face upon the ground ;
 His bitter lamentations filled the world.

At once there came a furious blast, which snapped
 The green boughs, from the battlefield raised dust
 And blew it in the Turkmans' eyes and faces.

Afrásiyáb, apprised that any one

Had turned his back on fight, beheaded him,
 And made the dust and sand his winding-sheet.

Thus was it till the heaven and earth grew dark,
 And many Turkmans had been taken captive.

Night came and donned its musk-black garniture,
 Preventing fight. Then both the kings recalled

Their hosts, for heaven and earth alike were dark.

The mountain-skirt down to the river-bank

Was naught but troops in breastplate, mail, and helm,

Who set the watch-fires blazing round about,

While outpost-guards went forth on every side.

Afrásiyáb took order for the fight,

But tarried till the fountain of the sun

Should rise, light up the faces of the hills,

And make earth like a ring of Badakhshán ;¹

Then would he bring his noblest cavaliers

To strive for glory on the battlefield ;

Howbeit God appointed differently,

And everything must yield to His decree.

¹ *I.e.* like rubies.

§ 16

How Afrásiyáb took Refuge in Gang-bihisht

When night was dark, dark as a negro's face,
 One sent by Gustaham, son of Naudar,
 Came to Khusrau and said: "Long live the Sháh!
 We have returned in triumph joyfully.
 We made an unexpected night-assault
 Upon the foe, who had no mounted outposts;
 Not one of them had wit enough for that.
 As soon as they were roused from sleep they drew
 Their massive maces and their scimitars,
 And when the day dawned none but Kurákhán
 With certain of the soldiery was left.
 The field is covered with their headless trunks,
 Earth is their couch and dust their coverlet."

V. 1324

A cameleer moreover with good news
 Of Rustam came about the dawn, and said:—
 "We gat intelligence upon the waste,
 And thereupon we hasted. Rustam held
 Upon his way alike by day and night,
 Insisting on the march with all dispatch.
 We reached the place by daylight as the sun,
 The lustre of the world, rose in the sky;
 Then matchless Rustam strung his bow and set,
 When he was near, the helmet on his head,
 And all the plain or ever he had thumbed
 A shaft was freed from Turkman combating.
 Now he hath marched for vengeance to Túrán,
 And tidings verily will reach the Sháh."

A shout of joy ascended from the host,
 Whereat the Turkman leader pricked his ears,
 And called his faithful followers to horse.
 A cavalier moreover came in haste,
 With lamentation to Afrásiyáb,

And said thus: "Kurákhán hath left our troops,
 And now is nigh at hand with sixty men;
 There is a host too marching on Túrán,
 Exhausting all the water in the streams."

The monarch thus addressed his counsellors:
 "A fearful struggle now confronteth us;
 If Rustam layeth hand upon our throne
 We shall be lost indeed! But at this present
 He thinketh that we have not heard of him,
 And are in grievous travail with Khusrau,
 So let us fall like fire on him by night,
 And make the plain as 'twere Jíhún with blood."

V. 1325

The warriors and prudent counsellors
 Agreed thereto. The monarch left his baggage,
 And led his army from the plain like fire.
 Anon an outpost from the waste reported
 That heaven was gloomy with the dust of troops;
 He saw that all the Turkmans had withdrawn,
 And brought these tidings to the king of men:—
 "The plain is full enough of huts and tents,
 But there is not a Turkman left inside."

Khusrau knew why the prince of Chín had gone
 Precipitately from the battlefield,
 That he had tidings as to Gustaham,
 And Rustam, and that that had made him speed.
 Khusrau sent off in haste to say to Rustam:—
 "Afrásiyáb hath turned away from us,
 And surely hasteth to contend with thee.
 Array the host and be upon thy guard,
 Keep to thy shaft and quiver night and day."

The monarch's messenger was one who skilled
 To cross that pathless tract. Arrived he found
 The lion-hearted Rustam girt for fight,
 The troops with maces shouldered and their ears
 All strained; he thereupon declared to Rustam
 The message purposed to secure his safety.

Revengeful Kai Khusrau upon his side
 Abode in quiet free from bruit of war,
 He gave his soldiers all the Turkmans' tents,
 Enclosures, thrones, and crowns. He sought the
 slain

Íránians, washed away the blood and mire,
 And gave them sepulture befitting princes.
 Then, passing from the dust and blood of battle,
 He packed the baggage, called the troops to horse,
 And with all speed pursued the Turkman king.

Whenas Afrásiyáb was near the city¹
 He thought thus: "Rustam hath had sleep enough,
 I will surprise him in a night-attack,
 And make the dust fly from his soldiers' hearts."

But in the gloom he noticed outpost-guards,
 Heard how the chargers neighed upon the plain,
 And wondering at Rustam's work marched off,
 Reflecting that his troops had been defeated,
 And had to struggle for dear life; that Rustam,
 The deft of hand, was in the front, the Sháh
 Behind with all his warlike cavaliers.

V. 1326

Afrásiyáb called any that were near,
 Discoursed at large in his anxiety,
 And questioned them: "What seemeth good to
 you?"

A chief replied: "The treasure of the king
 Is all at Gang-bihisht. What profiteth
 A toilsome march like this? Gang is eight leagues
 In length and four in breadth; men, women, children,
 And troops are there; thou wilt have wealth, the foe
 Will still toil on. No eagles soar above
 Its battlements, none dreameth of such heights!
 There are provisions, palace, treasure, crown,
 And majesty, command, and throne and host.
 The country round about is called Bihisht,²

¹ "sa ville de Gangue" (Mohl).² i.e. Paradise.

Where all is pleasure, peace, and happiness.
 On all sides there are fountain-heads and pools
 An arrow's carry in their length and breadth ;
 And sages have been brought from Hind and Rúm
 To make that fertile land a paradise,
 While from the battlements the eye beholdeth
 All that is on the plain for twenty leagues.
 Is fighting all thy business in this world,
 Where every man is but a sojourner ?”

Whenas Afrásiyáb had heard these words
 They pleased him and, relying on his fortune,
 He entered Gang-bihisht exultingly
 With all his arms and implements of war.
 He went about the city and beheld
 Not e'en a hand-breadth of waste ground therein ;
 There was a palace lifted to the sky,
 Built by himself—a king whose word was law.
 Alighting there he held an audience,
 And gave out money for his soldiers' pay.
 He sent a band of troops to every gate,
 And put each quarter in a chieftain's charge,
 While sentinels all round the battlements
 Held watch and ward alike by day and night.

V. 1327

The king, upon whose right hand were installed
 Both priests and nobles, bade a scribe be called.

§ 17

The Letter of Afrásiyáb to the Faghfúr of Chín

They wrote to the Faghfúr of Chín a letter,
 And, after paying countless compliments,
 Thus said Afrásiyáb: “Revolving time
 Affordeth naught to me excepting war.
 Him whom I should have slain I tendered dearly,
 And now through him my life is one of hardship.

If the Faghfúr, of Chín would come himself
 'Twere well, my soul is protestant of friendship;
 But if he cannot still let him dispatch
 A host to march with us against the foe."

The messenger arrived in Chín by night;
 The great Faghfúr received him graciously,
 And decked for him a pleasant residence.

Afrásiyáb for his own part at Gang
 Abandoned quiet, banqueting, and sleep,
 Arranged his catapults upon the walls,
 And fitted up the towers to stand a siege.
 He bade magicians¹ bring up mighty stones
 Upon the walls, he summoned many experts
 From Rúm, and stationed troops upon the ramparts.
 A prelate shréwd of heart² set up thereon
 Ballistas, catapults, and arbalists,
 And shields of wolf-hide. All the towers were filled
 With coats of mail and helms. He kept a troop
 Of smiths at work to fashion claws of steel
 On every side and bind them to long spears
 To grapple any that adventured nigh,
 Or, if not that, to make him shun the hold.
 In all his dealings he was just; he gave
 His troops their pay and well entreated them.
 He gave moreover helms and scimitars,
 Mail for the chargers, shields from Chín, with bows
 And arrows to his men past reckoning,
 Especially to all the warriors;
 When that was done he and his faithful lords
 Reposed. A hundred harpers fair of face
 Met daily in his halls to make him mirth,
 And day and night while holding festival
 He called for native Turkman songs and wine.
 Each day he threw a treasure to the winds,
 And recked not of the morrow. So away,

V. 1328

¹ "mécánicos" (Mohl).² Cf. Vol. i. pp. 373. 378.

Since fate is fixed, with sadness and be gay!
 He lived two sennights thus exempt from sorrow,
 But who can tell who will rejoice to-morrow?

§ 18

*How Kai Khusrau arrived before Gang-bihisht*¹

Three sennights passed, Khusrau arrived at Gang,
 And, listening to the sound of flute and harp,
 Laughed and went round the circuit of the hold,
 Astonied at the inconstancy of fortune.
 He was amazed at seeing such a place—
 A heart-alluring heaven—standing there,
 And said: "The builder of these walls built not
 As one expectant of calamity,
 Yet now the murderer of Siyáwush
 Hath fled for refuge to these walls from us!"
 He said to Rustam: "Mark, O paladin!
 Discerningly the bounties and the triumphs
 In fight accorded us by God, the Worldlord!
 This wicked man pre-eminent in ill,
 Rage, folly, and deceit, hath made this hold
 His refuge, here obtained a rest from fortune,
 And, worst of villains, groweth worse with age.
 If I would thank God for His mercies here
 I must not sleep all night; success and power
 Both come from Him who fashioned sun and moon."

V. 1329

There was a mountain on one side the city,
 Preventing all attack, upon another
 A river ran, one to rejoice man's soul.
 They pitched the camp-enclosure on the plain,
 The paladins took station round the hold.
 The host extended over seven leagues,
 And earth saluted the Íránians.

¹ Gang-dizh in the original.

The camp-enclosure on the right was Rustam's,
 Who asked the Sháh for troops, while Faríburz,
 Son of Káu's, and Tús, with trumpets, drums,
 And heart-illuming standard, marched and pitched
 Upon the left, and, thirdly, Gív took station.
 Night came; from every quarter shouts arose;
 Earth was all strife and stir, its heart unseated
 By din of trumpet, kettledrum, and fife.
 Whenas the sun had cleared the sky of rust,
 And rent in twain heaven's sable stole, the Sháh
 Went round the host upon his night-hued steed,
 And spake to elephantine Rustam thus:—
 "O thou illustrious leader of the host!
 Afrásiyáb, I hope, will have no longer
 The world to look on even in his dreams,
 But whether I shall take him dead or living
 He shall behold the sword-point of God's slave.
 Methinketh that a host will come to him
 From every side, so mighty is his sway;
 They fear him and will succour him through fear,
 Not of their own wills and for vengeance-sake;
 So ere he call up forces let us seize
 The roads, moreover raze the castle-ramparts,
 And sink their dust and stones in yonder river.
 The day of stress is over for the troops,
 A day of ease succeedeth one of toil;
 No army feareth vengeance or attack
 From foes withdrawn for shelter to their walls.
 The city, where Afrásiyáb is now
 Heart-broken, shall become a brake of thorns.
 As we recall the words of Kai Káu's
 We are reminded of our righteous cause,
 He said: 'Time shall not clothe in rust and dust
 The boughs and trunk of this revenge of ours.
 'Twill be an evergreen, and not a heart
 Will shrink from dying in this royal feud,

But sire to son for three score centuries
 Will hand it on and, when the sire shall pass,
 The feud shall stay, the son take up the woe.' ”

The mighty men called praises down on him,
 They hailed him as the monarch of pure Faith,
 And said: “Thou shalt avenge thy father thus;
 Be ever happy and victorious.”

§ 19

*How Jahn came to Kai Khusrau with an Embassy
 from Afrásiyáb*

The next day when the sun rose o'er the hills,
 And set its golden lantern in the sky,
 There went up from the hold a mighty shout,
 Which caused Khusrau to ponder. Thereupon
 The portal of the hold was opened wide,
 And then the mystery was unveiled, for Jahn
 Came with ten cavaliers, all men of wisdom,
 Estate, and knowledge, to the royal entry,
 And there alighted with the other nobles.
 The chamberlain went in before the Sháh,
 And said: “'Tis Jahn with ten more cavaliers.”

The king of kings sat on the ivory throne,
 And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,
 While Manúshán, the warrior, went forth,
 And brought wise Jahn to audience. At his coming
 The face of Kai Khusrau was tear-bedimmed.
 The valiant Jahn, lost in astonishment,
 Removed his royal helm and drawing nigh
 Did reverence, and said: “O famous king!
 Be goodness aye thy partner through the world,
 Be prosperous in our land, and may the hearts
 And eyes of all thy foes be rooted out.
 Live ever happily and serving God,

Thou that erst stretched thy hands upon our soil !
 Blest was thy sojourn, happy is thy coming,
 Kind hath been all thine intercourse with us.
 I bring a message from Afrásiyáb,
 Provided that the Sháh will bear with me."

Thereat Khusrau bade bring a golden stool.
 They set it 'neath that prudent man who took
 His seat, recalled the message of his sire,
 And thus addressed the Sháh : " Afrásiyáb
 Is sitting with his eyes fulfilled with tears.
 I first convey this greeting to the Sháh,
 Sent by the heart-seared monarch of Túrán :—
 ' Praise be to God, our Refuge, that a son
 Of ours should have attained such eminence.
 The Sháh upon the father's side is sprung
 From Kai Kubád, upon the mother's side
 From Túr : thy head is higher than earth's kings
 Because thou comest of this noble stock.
 The swiftly flying eagles in the clouds,
 And in the streams the lusty crocodiles,
 Are guardians of thy throne, and in thy fortune
 The beasts rejoice ; earth's great men with their crowns
 And coronets are thine inferiors.
 I marvel that the curst Dív never willeth
 Me aught but harm. Why went my heart astray
 From sense of right and loving-kindliness
 So that my hand slew noble Siyáwush,
 The son of Kai Káuś, and for no fault ?
 My heart is sore thereat ; I sit apart
 In anguish taking neither sleep nor food.
 I slew him not ; it was the wicked Dív,
 Who ravished from my heart the fear of God ;
 His time had come and that was mine excuse,
 I was illuded. Both a sage and king
 Art thou, approving men of holiness ;
 Mark then how many cities and how great,

With gardens, spaces, halls, and palaces,
 Have been destroyed in vengeance and the plea
 Hath been Afrásiyáb and Siyáwush!
 Mark too the fights of cavaliers, as huge
 As elephants and strong as crocodiles,
 Whose heads are trunkless and whose only shrouds
 Are lions' maws; the desert hath no hostel
 Remaining, every city here is ruined.
 Till Doom's Day nothing will be told of us
 Save that we fought with trenchant scimitars,
 The Maker of the world will be displeased,
 And we shall writhe in anguish at the last.
 If thou seek'st fight thy heart assuredly
 Will never have a moment's peace from feuds.
 Observe time's changes and no other teacher,
 For though thy heart be full, thy head all vengeance,
 We have the hold while thou art on the plain.
 I speak of Gang; it is my paradise,
 Its seed-time and its harvest are mine own;
 Here are my hoards, my host, my crown, and signet;
 It is a place for sowing and for feasting,
 A place for Lions on the day of battle.
 The summer-warmth is past, the rose and tulip
 No longer bloom, cold, wintry days confront us
 When hands are frozen to the hafts of spears.
 Well know I how the clouds will lour above,
 And rivers be firm ground. From every side
 Troops at my call will come; thou canst not strive
 Against the sun and moon. If thou supposest
 That time will render unto thee the fruits
 Of war, then heaven will belie thy thoughts,
 And others eat the produce of thy toils.
 If now thou sayest: "I will take the Turkmans
 Of Chín, will dash the heaven upon the earth
 And pierce this people with the scimitar,"
 Shall I become a captive in thy hands?

Presume it not, for this shall never be ;
 None will erase a man indelible.
 The grandson am I of Zádsham the king,
 Descended from Jamshíd and Farídún,
 My knowledge and my Grace are both from God,
 And I possess a pinion like Surúsh.
 When destiny oppresseth me my heart
 Requireth not a teacher ; I will go
 At slumber-time, as God commandeth me,
 Like stars before the sun, cross the Kímák,
 And yield thee realm and crown. Then shall Gang-dizh
 Be thine abode, both land and troops shall lose me ;
 But when the day of vengeance shall arrive
 I will array, hoar-headed as I am,
 This host, will come to execute revenge
 On thee, and everywhere restore my Faith ;
 But if thou wilt put vengeance from thy thoughts,
 And charm the realm with loving-kindliness,
 I will unlock my hoard of girdles, crowns,
 Gold, jewels, and dínárs—whatever Túr,
 The son of Farídún, took from Íraj.
 Them take and never think again of vengeance.
 If thou wilt have Chín and Machín, 'tis well,
 Seize all according to thy heart's desire.
 Before thee are Makrán and Khurásán ;
 Take less or more and I am satisfied.
 By that same route which Kai Káuś hath traversed
 I will dispatch thee what thou wilt of troops,
 I will enrich thy whole host and bestow
 On thee the golden throne and diadem.
 I will be thy support in every war,
 And hail thee king in presence of all folk.
 Say what thou wouldest have—all thy desire—
 And by the past and future judge thine end ;
 But if thou shalt reject this rede of mine,
 And wilt wage war upon thy mother's father,

Array thy host as soon as Jahn hath gone,
Fit as a pard am I for fighting on.'”

§ 201

How Kai Khusrâu made Answer to Jahn

At this the Sháh looked smilingly on Jahn,
And answered him: “O thou that seekest fame!
We have heard all thy words from end to end.
First for the blessing that thou gavest me,
So be it on my signet, crown, and throne;
Then for the greeting of Afrásiyáb,
Whose eyes by thine account are full of tears,
Let that too be upon my throne and crown:
May they be happy and victorious.
And further that thou gavest praise to God
Is pleasing to the Sháh, His worshipper—
The happiest of the monarchs of the earth,
The most approven, glad, and conquering.
God hath bestowed on me what thou hast said;
May wisdom still accompany each grace.
Fair words are thine at will; but thou art not
Pure-hearted or a worshipper of God,
For wise men’s deeds are better than their words.
The glorious Farídún did not become
A star; his head is in the dark earth still,
Yet say’st thou: ‘I am higher than the sky.’
In such wise hast thou purged thy face from shame.
Thy heart is given up to sorceries,
And words are but a trinket on thy tongue.
A glozing tongue and lying heart reflect
No lustre on a sage; so never call
My murdered father monarch of the world
Now that the bones of Siyáwush have perished.
Moreover from her bower thou haled’st down

My mother to the street, thou hadst become
So full of vengeance, and didst kindle fire
Upon my head while I was yet unborn,
And everybody present at thy court
Cried shame upon that wayward soul of thine,
For no one of the kings, the warriors,
And mighty men e'er did such deeds as haling
A woman out before the folk, consigning
A great dame to the executioners,
A daughter to be scourged until she cast
Her babe. The wise Pírán, when he arrived,
Beheld what he had never seen or heard
Before. It was God's ordinance that I
Should be exalted over all the folk ;
He saved me from thy bale and mischief, fate
Had secrets for me ; soon as I was born
Thou didst commit me to the shepherds' charge
As 'twere a worthless brat, a meal for lions.
So fared I while the days passed o'er my head
Until Pírán conveyed me from the waste,
And brought me to thy presence ; I was fit,
As thou didst see, for throne and crown, and thou
Wouldst have beheaded me like Siyáwush,
And left my body naked of a shroud,
Had not all-holy God restrained my lips,
And left me standing dazed before the court.
Thou thoughtest that I had not heart or wit,
And didst not execute thy foul design.
Reflect on Siyáwush and his just acts ;
What was the evil that thou sawest in him ?
Thou wast his chosen refuge in the world ;
He acted as befitteth men of name ;
He came, for thee resigning throne and crown,
And hailed thee only in the world as king,
Put trust in thee and quitted his own folk
Lest thou shouldst say that he had broken faith ;

- V. 1336 But when thou saw'st his breast and girdlestead,
 His greatness, might, and mien, thine evil nature
 Was roused, thou didst o'erthrow that holy man,
 And like a sheep behead a prince so dear !
 Thou from the time of Minúchihhr till now
 Hast been but miscreant and malevolent.
 Our troubles had their origin with Túr,
 Who bathed his hands in ill against his sire,
 And so it goeth on from son to son
 Against all kingly usage, law, and Faith.
 Thou didst strike off the head of king Naudar,
 A man of royal birth and lineage,
 And slay thy brother, righteous Ighrías,
 Who lived for honour ; thou hast ever been
 A villain, vile, and led by Áhriman.
 Thy crimes, if one should count them, would surpass
 The revolutions of the sky in number.
 Thou hast sent down thy roots to Hell, and thou
 Wilt not declare thyself of human birth.
 'The loathly Dív,' thou hast gone on to urge,
 'Inclined toward Hell my heart and ways.' Záhák
 Put forth, so did Jamshíd, that very plea,
 In moments of despair, and said : 'Iblís
 Mised our hearts and severed us from good.'
 'Twas their ill nature and their teacher's promptings
 That gave them no surcease of evil fortune,
 For when one is averse from what is right
 Then fraud and falsehood ruin everything.
 Moreover at the battle of Pashan
 How many troops were slaughtered by Pírán !
 The blood of those descended from Gúdarz
 Turned earth to mire and loss was piled on loss ;
 E'en now thou didst come forth with myriads
 Of Turkman cavaliers in war-array,
 Didst lead thy host for battle to Ámwí,
 And Shída came forth as mine opposite ;
- V. 1337

Thou sentest him that so he might behead me,
 And thou thereafter mightst lay waste my realm,
 But God, the Lord of earth, was mine ally,
 The fortunes of my foes were overthrown.
 And now thou say'st: 'Thy throne illumineth
 My heart, thy fortunes make me glad.' Consider;
 Can I recall thine acts and think it true?
 Henceforth till Doomsday I have naught to say
 To thee save with the trenchant scimitar,
 And I will strive against thee in the strength
 Of treasure, host, fair fortune, and the courses
 Of sun and moon, will make my prayer to God,
 And ask no guide but Him. The world perchance
 May then be purged from evil men while I
 Will gird myself with justice and with bounty;
 With them will I regenerate the world,
 And haply clear the garden of ill weeds.
 Tell to my grandsire all my words and seek
 No pretext to avoid so great a strife."

He gave to Jahn a crown of emeralds,
 A pair of earrings, and a golden torque,
 Who thereupon departed to his sire,
 And told him everything. Afrásiyáb
 Raged at that answer; grief and haste possessed him;
 He gave the troops a largess from his hoards,
 And furnished maces, helmets, casques, and swords.

§ 21

*How Kai Khusrâu fought with Afrásiyáb and took
 Gang-bihisht¹*

All night until the sun rose in the sky,
 And made the mountains like white elephants' backs,
 Afrásiyáb was ordering the host:

¹ Gang-dizh in the original.

- What Turkman cavalier took any sleep?
 Whenas the din of tymbals rose from Gang,
 While earth grew iron, heaven ebony,
 V. 1338 The famous Sháh—magnanimous Khusrau—
 Bestrode his steed at dawn, rode round the hold,
 And noted places open to attack.
 He ordered Rustam to assail one side
 With forces like a mountain, Gustaham,
 Son of Naudar, to occupy another,
 And wise Gúdarz the third, while he himself,
 Who prospered everywhere, attacked the fourth
 With tymbals, elephants, and cavalry;
 Thus he disposed his forces and, resuming
 His seat upon the throne, required the troops
 To excavate entrenchments round the fortress.
 Then all who had experience in sieges
 From Rúm, from Chín, and Hind, with veteran chiefs
 From every quarter, rode around the place,
 Like couriers, devising plans to take it.
 The monarch made a trench two spears in depth,
 And stationed guards that none might make a sally
 By night and slay his troops ere they could draw.
 Around were ranged two hundred arbalists,
 And, when a foe's head showed above the ramparts,
 Those engines showered like hail thereon; behind
 Were Rúman troops engaged in working them.
 The Sháh then bade that elephants should draw
 Shores to the hold. He undermined the walls
 And shored them up; upon the wooden props
 He smeared black naphtha, such was his device,
 V. 1339 Whereby the walls were stayed and overthrown.
 When all had been prepared the king of earth
 Drew near the Maker of the world in prayer,
 Writhed in his quest of vengeance like a serpent
 Upon the dust, and praised the Almighty, saying:—
 “Thine is it to abase and to exalt;

In every strait we look to Thee for succour.
 If Thou perceivest that my cause is just
 Make not my foot to slip, hurl from the throne
 This sorcerer-king, and give me joy and fortune."

When he had prayed he raised his head, arrayed
 His shining breast in armour, girt his loins,
 Sprang up, and rushed as swift as smoke to battle,
 Commanding onslaught on each gate in force.
 They set the wood and naphtha all ablaze,
 And hurled stones on the heads of the besieged.
 Then twanged the arbalists while in the smoke
 The sun's bright visage gloomed, the scorpions,
 The catapults, and flying dust turned heaven
 To azure dinness, earth to indigo.
 Chiefs shouted, trumpeted the elephants,
 Flashed swords and massive maces. From the showers
 Of arrows and troops' dust thou wouldst have said :—
 "The sun and moon contend!" The world was hidden
 To clearest eyes so viewless grew the sky!
 The woodwork, covered with black naphtha, blazed, V. 1340
 And burned like firewood, for God willed it so.
 The walls, thou wouldst have said, came headlong down
 From their foundations like a mount in motion.
 With them fell many a Turkman, like a lion,
 Surrendered to ill fortune, when its head
 All unawares is taken in the toils.
 The Íránians' war-cry rose victoriously;
 They made with warlike Rustam for the breach.
 Afrásiyáb, on hearing that the ramparts
 Were shattered, rushed to Jahn and Garsíwaz,
 Like dust, and shouted: "What are walls to you?
 The army's hold must be the scimitar.
 Now for your country and your children's sake,
 For treasure and for kin, bind ye your skirts
 Together,¹ leave no foeman anywhere."

¹ Cf. p. 85, and note.

Then mountain-like the Turkman troops advanced
 In rank toward the breach; they closed like lions,
 And both sides raised a shout, but in the strife
 The Turkman horsemen shook like willow-trees,
 And gave up land and country in despair.
 The Sháh bade Rustam bring up to the breach
 The spear-armed footmen followed by two bands
 Of archers eager for the fray on foot,
 And armed moreover both with sword and shield,
 With mounted warriors as their support
 Where'er the stress of battle proved severe.
 The horsemen and the footmen on both sides
 Came onward like a mountain to the fight,
 And warlike Rustam, like a mighty lion,
 Led forward all his forces to the breach.
 V. 1341 He mounted on the walls like flying dust,
 Struck the black flag and set up on the rampart
 The ensign of the Sháh, the violet ensign
 Charged with a lion, while the Íránians
 Hailed with a shout the triumph of Khusrau.
 A multitude of Turkman troops were slain,
 The fortunes of the foe were overthrown,
 And Rustam at the crisis of the fight
 Gat in his grasp brave Jahn and Garsíwaz,
 Those two supporters of the Turkman throne,
 The glorious son and brother of the king,
 Such was the evil fate that fell on them!
 The Íránian troops on entering the city—
 An army full of vengeance and heart-seared—
 Gave up themselves to pillaging and slaughter,
 While shrieks arose and lamentable cries;
 The women and the children wailed aloud,
 And left their dwellings to the conquerors.
 What multitudes of women and of babes
 Were lost beneath the feet of elephants!
 The people fled like wind and none took thought

Of country more. In woeful plight all eyes
 Wept blood. The Turkman warriors' fortunes fell.
 The treasures were given up to spoil,
 The women and the children captive borne,
 Their souls by heaven, their flesh by arrows, torn!

§ 22

*How Afrásiyáb fled from Gang-bihisht*¹

Afrásiyáb departed to his palace,
 With full heart, weeping; having gained the roofs
 He looked upon the city. There he saw
 The more part of his warriors slain, the rest
 Withdrawing from the battle. There arose
 Cries from the cavaliers, shouts from the leaders,
 Din from the drummers on the elephants,
 Which trod from sight all that they saw alive.
 The place was full of smoke and shrieks for succour,
 And all was conflagration, sack, and storm.
 One side rejoiced, the other was in woe,
 And in this Wayside Inn 'tis ever so.

V. 1342

Afrásiyáb, beholding matters thus,
 Such terror and defeat, no Jahn, no brother,
 No land, no throne, no realm, no gems, no treasure,
 Cried out in very earnest, seared and sore:—
 "How wantonly heaven's vault hath dealt with us!
 Mine eyes have looked upon a day when death
 And slaughter seemed to me of small account!"

He came down woeful from the palace-roof,
 Farewelled his throne of sovereignty, and said:—
 "When shall I ever look on thee again
 Upon a day of pleasure, ease, and joy?"

He thence departed dazed, and disappeared;
 His wits and counsel flew away like birds.

¹ Gang in the original.

Now when he built the palace in the hold
 He made a secret passage underground,
 And not a soldier of the army wotted
 That there was such a by-way underneath
 The castle. He made choice of ten score chiefs,
 And vanished by that secret souterrain.
 Emerging he betook him to the waste,
 While all his kingdom wondered after him,
 None knowing where he was because he vanished
 So suddenly. Khusrau approached the palace,
 Trod down his foe's star, and assumed the throne
 Amid the paladins with golden helms.
 They made abundant quest, but failed to trace
 That chief of nobles; then the Sháh inquired
 Of Jahn and Garsíwaz about their king:—
 "How did he go and whither hath he gone?
 He vanished hence; where hath he taken shelter?"
 They answered fully and Khusrau gave ear,
 But not a trace showed of Afrásiyáb.
 V. 1343 The conquering Sháh said to the Íránians:—
 "Now that my foe hath vanished from the throne
 His name and purpose matter not a jot;
 'Tis one to us be he alive or not."

§ 23

How Kai Khusrau gave Quarter to the Family of Afrásiyáb

Khusrau then chose out sages from the host—
 Chiefs veteran and practised in affairs—
 And said thus: "Hail! May ye be filled with justice.
 The portal of this ill-starred Turkman's hoards
 Intrust I unto you. Be diligent.
 The sun from yon high heaven must not pierce
 The palace of Afrásiyáb, nor would I
 That thence his women's voices reach the street."

He sent out keepers for the herds that were
 At large about the hold and, being kingly,
 Harmed not the kindred of Afrásiyáb.
 The troops marked this and clamoured: "Kai Khusrau
 Hath entered in such wise that thou wouldst say:—
 'Tis to the portal of a host!' No thought
 Of sire beheaded by the sword unjustly,
 Of mother haled down naked by the hair
 From throne and high place by Afrásiyáb,
 Occurreth to his mind! This harmless Sháh
 Was shepherd-reared and suckled by a sheep.
 Why doth he not in sharp-clawed leopards' wise
 Awake the Day of Doom in this man's home,
 Bring to the ground his halls and palaces,
 And make a bonfire of his kith and kin?"

The Sháh, apprised of all the Íránians' words,
 Sent and convoked the sages, spake at large,
 And said to them: "We must display not harshness,
 Or praise heads void of wits. We must be just
 In vengeance, and in passion think of fame,
 For fame is our memorial in the world
 Since life continueth not, and this same sky
 Which turneth over us may play the tyrant."

V. 1344

He ordered: "Bring the women forth unseen,
 Those that are royal, have been always veiled,
 And never left the bower for the street."

Now when the Íránians were ware of this
 They hurried full of vengeance to the palace.
 The warriors thought: "Khusrau will slay these
 women,"

So wished to bear them off with ignominy,
 And were prepared to pillage and to slaughter.
 Then from the palace rose this wail: "Thou knowest,
 Most just, wise Sháh! that we are powerless,
 And no fit objects of contempt and insult."

The chiefest of the ladies with her daughters,

Came wailing to the Sháh ; each daughter had
 A hundred slaves with ruby crowns before her,
 Their jewelry was like the shining sun ;
 The raiment that they wore was cloth of gold.
 All carried golden goblets in their hands,
 Their hearts were awe-struck at the king of kings ;
 The dames were all musk, rubies, gold, and gems,
 And hung their heads down in their shamefastness ;
 They carried cups and censers, and the fuel
 Was ambergris and undried aloe-wood.
 Thou hadst said : " Saturn out of highest heaven
 Is showering constellations on the earth."
 The chiefest lady drew anear the throne,
 Invoking fervent blessings on the Sháh,
 While all her delicately nurtured daughters
 In like wise offered up their supplications.
 Oh ! pity those fall'n in their day of stress
 From all self-pleasing and luxuriousness !

V. 1345

The ladies mid their anguish praised Khusrau :—
 " O man of royal birth and blessed steps !
 How well it were had not thy heart been grieved
 And vengeful with Túrán ! Then thou hadst come
 To feast and mirth, the accredited of kings ;
 Thou hadst been lord and master of this land,
 And crossed thy feet upon the royal throne ;
 Then Siyáwush would never have been slain
 In wantonness, but sun and moon decreed it,
 And base Afrásiyáb hath acted so
 That he will never dream of thy forgiveness.
 I gave him counsels but without avail ;
 He rashly turned his head from mine advice.
 I call upon my Maker to bear witness
 That blood hath fallen in showers from mine eyes,
 While here upon the earth thy kinsman Jahn,
 Galled by thy fetters, will bear testimony
 How in my palace both my heart and soul

Were full of grief because of Siyáwush,
 And that Afrásiyáb, thine enemy,
 Heard much advice, but nothing profited,
 Until his days have ended as we see,
 All his dominions being overthrown,
 His crown and girdle given up to spoil,
 His day obscured, himself flung headlong down.
 His present life is even worse than death,
 And fate hath burst the skin upon his body.
 Now look on us as being innocent,
 And treat us with a kingly clemency.
 We are dependent wholly on Khusrau,
 And hear no name but his. So let him not,
 For wrongs done by Afrásiyáb the warlock,
 Act hastily to those, who did no wrong,
 With bloodshed, outrage, and indignity,
 Or lightly persecute those not in fault;
 Unworthy 'tis for monarchs to behead
 The innocent. Thou hast another home,
 For none may tarry in this Wayside Inn,
 So act as God requireth at thy hands,
 And hold in awe the Day of Reckoning."

Khusrau, on hearing this, was greatly moved
 For those fair ladies in their fallen fortunes;
 His cheeks glowed like a lamp at their distress
 And anguish, and the sages' hearts were troubled,
 For all of them remembered child and wife,
 And all the captains and the valiant chiefs
 Invoked much blessing on the Sháh and said:—
 "Now for the Maker's sake let not the Sháh,
 That man of name, exact revenge on them."

V. 1346

The prudent Kai Khusrau made answer thus:—
 "In spite of all that hath displeased me
 I will not cause a like distress to any,
 However much my heart desireth vengeance,
 And, though aggrieved am I when I recall

How that great monarch wronged my noble mother,
Yet will I bring the like on no one's head."

The master of the world, the holy-born,
Then sent the ladies home, first saying to them :—
"Be at your ease; hear what I say in person :—
No miscreant that breaketh faith am I;
Henceforward ye have naught to fear from me,
And none shall entertain the wish to harm you,
Or otherwise his own life shall be brief.
Now in your palaces at ease abide,
Your souls and bodies unto God confide."

§ 24

How Kai Khusrau exhorted the Íránians

Khusrau addressed the Íránians: "Conquering fortune
Hath given us the kingdom, crown, and throne;
The whole realm of Túrán, which we have captured,
Shall, like Írán, be yours to dwell therein.
Put ye away all vengeance from your hearts,
And charm the land with loving-kindliness,
For in their hearts the people fear us greatly,
And all the dust is turned to mire with bloodshed.
I give to you the treasures of Túrán,
And look not even for your gratitude.
Be strenuous and be instant in well-doing,
And where ye found it winter make it spring.
My soldiers shall be satisfied anon
With treasures and dínárs, but let us keep
Our hands from bloodshed, not behead the guiltless;
It sorteth not with manhood to be moved
To anger lightly or to strike the fallen.
Avert your faces from the women—all
That veil themselves when going forth abroad;
Respect too others' wealth since for its sake

Friends are made foes; the Maker disapproveth
 Of those that seek to harm the innocent,
 And all that would assist my policy
 Must not lay waste the land which now is mine.
 Besides men call a prince who layeth waste
 A peopled land unjust and sinister."

The Sháh commanded then his troops to open
 The treasures of the army of Túrán,
 Save great Afrásiyáb's own privy hoards,
 Which he reserved, but gave his men the rest—
 The treasures and the weapons, thrones and crowns.
 The scattered countless host of Turkmans flocked
 From all sides to the Sháh, who gave them quarter,
 Made much of them, and ordered their affairs
 With all dispatch. He gave the chiefs their portion
 Of Turkman lands, a city to each noble,
 But in each province those that were rebellious
 Received no quarter at his warriors' hands.
 The country of Túrán was overcome,
 And, when the letters to the chiefs arrived,
 From every quarter messengers set forth
 To carry to the Sháh the offerings
 And letters of the potentates who now
 Were one and all the servants of Khusrau.

§ 25

*How Kai Khusrau wrote a Letter with the News of his
 Victory to Kai Káuś*

Khusrau then called and charged a trusty scribe.
 First in the letter he gave praise to God
 That He had purged the earth of wickedness,
 Had overthrown the chief of sorcerers,
 And waked the fortune that had slumbered so—
 God, Source of might, of knowledge, and of justice,

And everywhere the Joy of the oppressed—
 Then: "By the fortune of Sháh Kai Káuś,
 The great, the experienced, the benevolent,
 This Gang that was Afrásiyáb's was stormed,
 The head of his good fortune fell on sleep.
 In sooth upon a single battlefield
 Full forty thousand of his warlike chiefs,
 Illustrious men who wielded massive maces,
 Fell in their ranks by the Gulzaryún,
 And afterward there came a hurricane,
 Which rent the trees asunder, root and bough,
 And drowned a multitude that still opposed us.
 Afrásiyáb escaped to Gang-bihisht,
 A place of arms completely garrisoned,
 And of a truth in the ensuing siege
 There perished thirty thousand warriors.
 The tyrant showed himself to be a man,
 But was not helped by wisdom or by fortune.
 His troops are scattered over all his realm,
 And he himself hath vanished from the world.
 Hereafter I will send the Sháh reports
 Whenever further glory shall be mine."

He sealed the letter with his golden signet,
 And, having gladly sent it to Káuś,
 Disposed himself for mirth with fairy-faced ones
 To bring him wine. 'Twas thus till spring, the world
 Became a paradise of hue and scent,
 The plain resembled painted silk, the sky
 A leopard's back; the onager and deer
 Roamed o'er the waste, and time passed blithely on
 With hawk and cheetah in pursuit of game,
 With musky wine and Idols of Taráz.
 The cattle like so many onagers
 Spread far and wide; their necks grew full of
 strength
 Like lions' and their ears and heads like stags'.

Khusrau moreover sent forth those that spied
Upon the world's affairs to every side.

§ 26

*How Kai Khusrau had Tidings of the Coming of Afrásiyáb
with the Host of the Faghfúr*

Then tidings came from Chín and from Khutan
How that Afrásiyáb was with that folk :—
“ His cause is taken up by the Faghfúr,
And clamour filleth all the land of Chín
Whence troops extend to the Gulzaryún ;
The Khán of Chín himself is in command.
None knoweth how much wealth, how many slaves,
And steeds with harness, the Faghfúr hath sent
Afrásiyáb. A host acclaimeth him,
And he hath all the treasures of Pírán—
Enough dínárs to load six thousand camels—
And as he bare them from Khutan an army
Flocked round him.”

All that had been given quarter
Thereat revolted from the Íránians,
And girded up their loins to take revenge.
Now when Afrásiyáb came from Khutan
He brought with him an army-shattering host ;
“ Earth,” thou hadst said, “ will not sustain them all,
The stars will not avail to reckon them ! ”
In dudgeon, with this warlike host, he set
His face from Chín to go against Khusrau,
Who, when he heard, sent scouts out on the road,
And bade Gúdarz and lion-bold Farhád :—
“ Abide ye here, be just and politic,
And let your scouts be out both night and day.”

Then said he to Gúdarz : “ This host is thine,
Thou art its refuge both by day and night.

Hang every Turkman, whom thou shalt perceive
 To be in favour of our enemies
 In aught, forthwith alive upon the gibbet,
 Head downward, feet aloft; forbear to vex
 The inoffensive. Watch o'er host and treasure."

Drums sounded from the monarch's tent-enclosure,
 There was a blare of gong and clarion.
 An army such that it embroiled the sun
 Marched forth from Gang. When he had left the city
 The Sháh arrayed his men against the foe.
 Two leagues divided host from host. Khusrau
 Convoked his noble chiefs, and said: "To-night
 Let matters rest, yet be not lax or slothful."

The scouts, distributed upon the waste,
 Went all night long their rounds about the host.
 He stayed one week preparing for the strife,
 And on the eighth day, when the scouts fell in
 Reporting to him that a host had come,
 He had his troops arrayed in such a fashion
 That sun and moon grew eager for the fray.
 Afrásiyáb beheld this, ranked his powers
 To face the enemy, and told his sages:—
 "This battlefield is sleep and feast to me;
 I would have welcomed it at sleeping-time,
 And had provoked it had it not been offered.
 Long have I been a fugitive, and now
 My heart and head are full of strife and vengeance.
 If Kai Khusrau's Grace, or mine own new fortune,
 Constraineth me I know not, but I purpose
 To fight with him come triumph, death, or sorrow."

The sages of his kin and alien
 Replied: "What need for host and combating,
 If kings must fight in person? All of Chín
 And native Turkmans, of thy race as well
 As alien, acknowledge thee. Oh! may
 Our souls and bodies be a ransom for thee!

Our loyalty hath never wavered yet ;
 If hundreds perish, thousands shall come on :
 Hold not thyself so cheap. We are thy lieges,
 And live but in the glory of thy crown."

Then from the army there arose a shout,
 And earth and time grew full of strife and stir ;
 Stars shone through tawny dust, and to the eye
 Sol's yellow face was lapis-lazuli.

§ 27

The Message of Afrásiyáb to Kai Khusrau

The Turkman chief selected from the host
 Two veterans and sent the Sháh a message :—
 "Thou hast destroyed a multitude of troops.
 In truth between Írán and Gang, O king !
 There are a thousand leagues of hill and plain,
 Of sandy wastes and hard, and our two armies
 Have been like ants and locusts while the soils
 From Gang and Chín until thou reach Írán,
 Are like an ocean with the blood of feud ;
 So that if holy God drew from the dust
 To some abyss the blood of all the slain
 'Twould make a Red Sea that would drown both hosts !
 If thou wilt have my treasure or my troops,
 The country of Túrán, the throne and crown,
 I will resign them to thee and be gone,
 But yield my life up only to the sword.
 Attempt not that ; I am thy mother's sire,
 Descended from the warlock Farídún,
 And if thy heart is troubled to avenge
 Thy father, and thou hast no reverence left
 For me, the fault was all with Siyáwush
 In that he filled my heart with grief and care ;
 Besides the stars which circle over us

V. 1352 Are both our shelter and our bane at whiles.
 Now sixty years have passed above my head
 Since I went out with chiefs upon the plain,
 While thou art young, Sháh of Írán, in fight
 The Lions' Claws; so choose a battlefield
 Remote, not on thy lieges' skirts, and we
 Will wheel in combat far from either host.
 If I fall by thy hand thy hook will serve
 To draw forth crocodiles from waterways,
 But strive not with my kindred and allies;
 Refrain thyself, see the not with such revenge;
 And if thou shalt be slaughtered by my hand,
 As God shall help me, I will suffer not
 One of that folk of thine to feel a pang,
 Or look upon the darksome dust of battle."

Khusrau, when he had listened to the message,
 Said to the son of Zál, the son of Sám:—
 "This evil Turkman, who beguileth men,
 Discerneth not between the ups and downs,
 And talketh so of battle that perchance
 He fain would lie in Shída's sepulchre!
 'Tis no disgrace for me to fight with one,
 Whose ancestor was Farídún, and sire
 Pashang."

But Rustam answered him: "O Sháh!
 Have not the flame of battle in thy heart:
 'Tis a dishonour for the Sháh to combat
 Although a Leopard be thine opposite.
 As for his saying: 'Fight not with my host,
 Nor yet against my family and realm,'
 Thine army stretcheth out from sea to sea,
 And never will consent. If thou wouldst make
 A treaty with thy grandsire in God's sight
 'Tis needful that his heart be free from guile.
 Now let a general attack be made
 In force; speak not of things that cannot aid."

§ 28

How the Íránians and Túránians fought

Khusrau, on hearing ancient Rustam's words,
Approved thereof and answered thus the envoy:—

“So this malignant man would fight with me!
He gave with guileful tongue and heart intent
On wrong a greater pledge to Siyáwush.
Go hence, and say thus to that evil-doer:—
'Speak not henceforth in such a strain as this:
Chiefs get no glory out of knavery;
Thy mind is strangely warped, thy heart deceitful.
If thou art set on fight, and fight alone,
There are antagonists besides myself;
There are the matchless Rustam and brave Gív,
Who both are eager to contend with Lions;
Besides if monarchs are to challenge monarchs
What need is there for army and for mellay?
Henceforth I will not fight with thee myself,
But thou shalt see a day of gloom and straitness.'”

V. 1353

The messenger withdrew, returned like wind,
And advertised his lord of what had passed,
Who in his dudgeon made no haste to battle,
But when the Sháh moved forward to the attack
The other army was obliged to stir;
One host was eager, one had fain delayed,
While earth was all in motion like the sea.
Such were the showers of shafts that thou hadst said:—
“The clouds rain hail from mighty lions' maws!”
From dawn until the sun grew dim the earth
Was soaked with blood beneath the warriors' feet.
When night was closing in the hosts withdrew
Because the horsemen's sight was failing them,
And, when the king of kings returned to camp
In all his glory, pomp, and circumstance,

He said to Tús: "Afrásiyáb to-day
 Did not engage in battle willingly.
 Methinketh he will make a night-attack
 To free his heart of long-enduring griefs."

He bade a trench be dug across the road,
 Whereby the army of Túrán would come,
 And issued orders: "Let none kindle fires,
 And let no jingling camel-bells be heard."

V. 1354 Then from the host Khusrau chose cavaliers
 Of valour, putting them in Rustam's charge,
 And chose moreover from the Íránians
 Another force of men girt up for war,
 Committing them to Tús the general
 With orders to set forward toward the hills,
 While matchless Rustam's way was toward the plain.
 The Sháh bade: "Let them march with all dispatch
 To left and right still keeping on the level,
 One toward the plain the other toward the heights,
 And not make use of outposts, lamps, or torches;
 So if it chanceth that Afrásiyáb
 Shall fall upon us at the time of sleep,
 Our warriors may take him in the rear
 To cut him off from help. Our troops will be
 Behind him and the ditch in front, and then
 The Sháh with all his elephants and men."

§ 29

*How Afrásiyáb made a Night-attack upon Kai Khusrau
 and was defeated*

The Turkman leader, when the night closed in,
 Made ready with his soldiers to attack,
 And, having summoned all his veterans,
 Spake of the past at large: "This knave accursed
 Hath triumphed greatly o'er his grandsire's troops:

Now yonder host no doubt are fast asleep,
 And scattered widely over hill and plain ;
 So let us put misgiving from our hearts,
 And make an onslaught on the foe at dawn,
 For if we overcome them not to-night
 We shall be humbled to the very dust.
 Unless good fortune shall regain its lustre
 Resource is wind, and manhood but a lie."

They all agreed thereto and, having risen,
 Made preparations for the night-attack.

Afrásiyáb chose fifty thousand men

Among the host, all veteran warriors

And fit for combating. Spies went on first—

Experienced men and lovers of the fray.

Their chief approached the encampment of Khusrau

V. 1355

Where he perceived no challenge of the watch,

And everything appeared to him at rest—

No scouts, no watch-fires, not a breath of wind,

No thought about Túrán in any heart.

On seeing this he turned, went back in haste,

And said: "Not one is wakeful! All of them

Are dead asleep! Thou wouldst have said: 'These men

Have drunk all day!' No outposts are in sight,

And only brambles stand up on the plain!"

Afrásiyáb heard this, was cheered of heart,

Sent his host forward, mounted on his steed,

And girt him with his warriors to attack.

They came on, like the waters of the sea,

Apace but silently, without display,

No trumpet-call, no shout; but when they neared

The camp-enclosure rose the clarion's blare,

Rose roll of tymbal from the saddle-backs,

The sable standard was unfurled, and those

That were the foremost of the assailant band

Urged on their steeds and raised the battle-cry;

But many cavaliers fell down the fosse,

While others turned away their heads from fight.
 On this side Rustam came up from the plain,
 And dimmed the heaven with his horsemen's dust ;
 On that side Gív, son of Gúdarz, and Tús
 Came on ; in front the drums and trumpets sounded,
 The king of kings with Káwa's flag was there ;
 The air was violet with horsemen's sabres,
 The cry was "give" and "take" and "bind" and
 "slay,"

The steeds were jaded and their riders dazed ;
 Two seas of blood were heaving and their waves
 Gave earth the hue of tulips, while the host
 Of steel-clad army-breakers made the mountains
 Shake to their centres. On that Day of Doom
 Those who would flee found no way to escape ;
 Among a hundred chiefs not ten were left ;
 The slain themselves blocked in the fugitives.

V. 1356

Whenas accounts came from that battlefield
 The leader of Túrán was so distressed
 That all his troops lamented, wept, and burned
 At that great anguish of their monarch's heart,
 Who spake thus : "Verily a sage himself
 Escapeth not the process of the sky !
 But since the foe is fainer for our lives
 Than for our wealth we can but strive once more,
 And either give our bodies to be slain,
 Or set the crown of kingship on our heads."

From both the camp-enclosures shouts arose,
 The world was filled with blare of clarions.
 The troops marched, shouldering double-headed darts
 And scimitars, in lines three leagues in length.
 That field was like the sea. Bright sun and moon
 Shone not. The hosts came onward, rank on rank,
 As in the ocean wave pursueth wave.
 Thou wouldst have said : "The vales and hills are full
 Of blood. The sun hath left the turning sky."

Heaven's face was smeared with pitch and no one
tendered

His person. Then arose a mighty blast—

A storm whose like is not in memory.

It raised the dust, it blew against the heads

And eyes of the Túránians and bore off

Their helms. Afrásiyáb was all astound.

The desert was all brains and blood, the rocks

Were red as jujubes to their very cores!

The Turkman cavaliers, who in their days

Of ease thought lightly of a leopard-hunt,

Declined to battle with the turning sky

What time the blast uplifted man and horse.

Khusrau, on seeing this and that the hearts

And fortunes of the Íránians were joyous,

With Rustam, Gív, son of Gúdarz, and Tús,

Advanced the tymbals from the army's centre,

And battle-shouts arose. Upon one hand

Was Rustam, on the other hand the Sháh.

The dust hung in the air as 'twere a cloud,

And what a cloud! One raining shafts and swords!

On every side were mountain-heaps of slain

With springs of blood within them from both hosts.

The air was like a robe of indigo,

The earth appeared to be a sea of gore,

And heaven was like an eagle's wing with arrows.

Afrásiyáb looked on with glooming heart,

Descried the waving flag of violet,

And showed his flag no longer at the centre,

But left his host embattled, and himself

Retreated with his chiefs and men of name.

He took with him a thousand of his kin,

And choicest of his troops—all fit for fight—

And, taking to the pathless waste, preserved

His life from foemen by his body's toil.

The Sháh sought for his grandsire in the host,

Advancing to the centre with all haste,
 But, though he urged his charger to the utmost,
 He found no traces of Afrásiyáb,
 Whose soldiers, when they looked toward the centre
 And missed the sable flag, laid down their arms
 And asked for quarter. Kai Khusrau received them
 With graciousness, gave them a separate camp,
 Then bade his men set up the golden throne,
 And deck the tents with broidery of Chín,
 Brought forth the wine and summoned minstrelsy,
 Inviting many captains of the host.
 He made a feast which lasted till the dawn,
 A feast which made the dead rise from their graves.
 Whenas the sun's hand showed upon the sky,
 And wounded with its nails the dark night's face,
 The Íránian monarch bathed his head and body,
 And with the Zandavasta sought a spot
 Where he was hidden from the Íránians' eyes,
 And where wild creatures could not hear his voice.
 From break of day till in the Dóme of Teak
 The moon assumed her heart-illuming crown,
 He offered praises to the Omnipotent
 For that glad turn of fortune, rubbing oft
 His visage in the dust and pouring down
 Two rivers from his eyes upon his cheeks.
 Thence he departed to his crown and throne
 With stately step, glad-hearted, fortunate.
 All who had fallen of the Íránians,
 Alive or dead, they carried off the field,
 But left with scorn the bodies of the foe.
 They turned the whole field into charnel-houses,
 And, when they had disposed of all the slain,
 The Sháh bestowed the booty on his men,
 And thence toward Gang-bihisht he made his way
 With troops at all points ready for the fray.

§ 30

How the Faghfúr¹ of Chín sent an Envoy to Kai Khusrau

Now when the tidings reached Máchín and Chín
 About the Turkmans and the Íránian king,
 The Khán and the Faghfúr both writhed with anguish ;
 Each was concerned about his mighty throne,
 Repented of the aid that he had furnished,
 And diligently sought a remedy.
 Said the Faghfúr : " Now will Afrásiyáb
 Hereafter never even dream of greatness,
 And therefore doubtless we shall suffer loss
 Through having sent the treasure and the troops.
 Repentance is the one resource for us
 Since this is matter to destroy our realms."

He called to him a faithful messenger,
 And gave him full instructions. What was fitting
 Among his hoards—dínárs and uncut gems—
 He sent with his excuses to the Sháh.
 The messengers departed on their journey ;
 Those mighty men of Chín made no delay,
 And in one sennight they arrived at Gang.
 The conqueror received them graciously,
 And seated them according to their rank,
 Accepted that which they had brought with them—
 The rarities, the purses, and the slaves—
 And thus addressed the envoy : " Say to him :—
 ' Accord us not an empty reverence,
 Afrásiyáb must never visit thee
 E'en in thy dreams at night.' "

V. 1359

The envoy left
 Like wind and told the words to the Faghfúr,
 Who, when he heard them, sent Afrásiyáb

¹ The Khán in the original, but the context seems to require the Faghfúr.

A messenger by night to say to him :—
 “ Avoid the frontiers of Khutan and Chín,
 And grieve for all the evil done by thee.
 All those who quit the path and go astray
 Encounter tribulation on their way.”

§ 31

How Afrásiyáb crossed the Sea

Afrásiyáb, when he had heard the message,
 Repenting of his deeds of yore, betook him
 Across the pathless desert, and resigned
 The style of monarch to preserve his life ;
 But, seeing that his days were spent in pain,
 Distress, and toil he made all haste to reach
 Mount Ispurúz, and both by day and night
 Avoided foes. His provand everywhere
 Was game. Thus fared he till he reached the sea,
 His loins all galled with travail, belt, and buckle.
 Now when he reached that deep, whereto he saw
 No middle and no end, he bade the shipman
 Prepare a ship to carry him across.
 The old Salt said : “ Great monarch of Khutan
 And Chín ! although my years are seventy-eight
 I ne'er saw ship cross hither.”

Said the mighty

Afrásiyáb : “ Oh ! well is he that dieth
 By water, not by foeman's scimitar !
 The world accepteth him as one not slain.”

V. 1360

He issued his commands to all the captains
 To launch sufficient vessels and set sail
 Toward Gang-dizh away from good and evil.
 Arriving there he ate and slept in peace,
 And rested from the fortunes of the war.
 “ We will be happy here,” 'twas thus he spake,

“And not concern ourselves about the past;
 When my dim star hath brightened I will cross
 The sea, take vengeance on my foes, and make
 My policy and institutions flourish.”

When Kai Khusrau was made aware thereof—
 The new departure of that ancient man—
 He spake to Rustam thus: “Afrásiyáb
 Hath crossed o’er to Gang-dizh, and thus made good
 His words to me: ‘High heaven is with us.’
 His crossing turneth all our toils to wind.
 Ne’er will I hold a parley with my grandsire
 Save with the sword, ne’er hold this feud outworn,
 But in the might of God, the Conqueror,
 Gird me to take revenge for Siyáwush,
 Will cover all Makrán and Chín with troops,
 And traverse the Kfmák. When both Máchín
 And Chín are mine I shall not ask Makrán
 For aid, but bear, if heaven will favour us,
 The host across the sea. Although the task
 Prove long I yet may take that man of blood.
 Ye have endured much travail, and have passed
 O’er field and fell and cultivated tracts,
 And yet to lay this travail on ourselves
 Is better than to give our foes the world.
 Our fame shall last until the Day of Doom
 For conquest and for foemen put to flight.”

Thereat the paladins were sorely downcast,
 Sighs were upon their lips, frowns on their brows.
 “The sea is rough,” they said; “with all these troops
 The business with fair winds would take six months!
 Who knoweth which of us will ’scape the waters?
 Afrásiyáb hath brought ill on the host:
 On land we have to fight, and when at sea
 Are in the gullet of the crocodile!”

Each had his plan, and after much debate
 Thus Rustam spake: “Ye world-experienced,

Ye puissant princes, and ye veteran chiefs!
 The toils that we have borne must not be fruitless,
 Or made sport for the wind of indolence;
 Moreover this victorious Sháh should gain
 The fruit of his good star. We never halted,
 Unless to fight, between Írán and Gang.
 The Sháh would eat the fruit of all his toil;
 For this he came, for this he will march on."

Whenas the army heard the words of Rustam
 They framed their answer in an altered tone.
 The mighty men, the men of wisdom, rose
 With tongues prepared to answer pleasantly,
 And said: "We all are servants of the Sháh,
 And he that hath our service hath our love.
 Thine is it to command on land and sea;
 We all of us are slaves and bound to thee."

§ 32.

*How Kai Khusrau sent the Prisoners and Treasure to
 Káuś with a Letter*

The Sháh rejoiced thereat, made much of them,
 And seated them, each as his rank deserved,
 Then oped the portal of his grandsire's hoards,
 Unmindful of the bonds of love and kindred.
 They put upon a thousand lusty camels
 Loads of brocade, of jewels, and dínárs.
 There were ten thousand oxen drawing wagons
 With implements of war, and camels laden
 With drachms past counting from the treasury.
 When night had come he issued orders, saying:—
 "Bear the kinswomen of Afrásiyáb,
 And household, whether they be slaves or daughters,
 In litters from the palace by the road
 Down to the royal park, and furthermore

A hundred famous and illustrious chiefs,
 Each one of them renowned for gallantry,
 And all the kindred of Afrásiyáb,
 Whose eyes are filled with tears of grief for him,
 Such men as Jahn and noble Garsíwaz,
 In litters with their feet made fast in bonds,
 Besides a thousand hostages from Chín
 And Turkistán as pledges for those states."

The Sháh then chose him from the Íránians
 Ten thousand men. He put them in Gív's charge,
 And said: "O thou whose steps are fortunate!
 Go with this company to Kai Káu's."

He ordered next a scribe to come prepared
 With paper, musk, and spicery, to write
 A letter with rose-water, musk, and ink
 About the matter of Afrásiyáb.

The scribe, whenas his pen was wet with musk
 And ink, praised first of all the righteous Judge:—
 "He is the Upholder and the Finisher,
 He is the Artificer of earth and time,
 The Maker of the ant and elephant,
 Of trifling mote and of the dark blue sea,
 The Lord of that which is and that which is not,
 To whose supremacy all things submit.
 The sky will not turn harshly o'er the man
 Whom He hath fed with loving-kindliness.
 His blessings be upon the king of earth,
 The Maker of the warp and woof of peace.
 I reached this fortress which Afrásiyáb
 Kept for his season of repose and ease.
 Within it were his throne and coronet,
 His greatness, diadem, his crown, and host.
 'Twas forty days before the ramparts fell,
 And we could reach the enemy; but Gív
 Will give the Sháh the full particulars
 Of all that chanced upon the battlefield.

V. 1363 When in God's presence thou shalt ope thy lips
 Give thanks on my behalf both day and night.
 I will lead on the army to Máchín
 And Chín, and thence will march upon Makrán,
 And after with the aid of holy God
 Will cross the sea."

Forthwith Gív left the presence
 With many troops and gallant warriors.
 The journey passed like wind; he neared Káuś,
 Who, when he heard of that auspicious offspring
 Of paladins, sent many troops to meet him;
 The nobles too set forward on the way.
 When gallant Gív was coming to the Sháh
 That warrior-band looked like a plain of lions.
 Gív, entering the presence, kissed the ground
 Before the state. Káuś, on seeing him,
 Arose with smiles and stroked him on the face,
 Asked touching king and host, and how they fared
 Beneath the circling sun and shining moon.
 The gallant Gív told all that he had seen,
 About the great king and the warriors,
 In words whereat the ancient Sháh grew young,
 Then gave the letter to a scribe to read,
 Who read it to the monarch of Írán,
 And filled the whole assembly with amaze.
 Then Sháh Káuś descended from his throne,
 Took from his head the Kaian coronet,
 And, wallowing upon the darksome dust,
 Returned thanksgiving to all holy God,
 And thence departed to his dwelling-place,
 Escorted by his loyal paladins.
 Gív told what he had seen and what Khusrau
 Had said. Káuś brought wine and summoned min-
 strels,
 Inviting the brave princes of Írán,
 And spent in converse all the livelong night;

Thus did the hours of darkness fleet away
Until with lights the guests went from the presence,
And made for home with glad and merry hearts.

Now when the sun shot from its radiant orb
Its arrows and night turned its gathered reins,
There rose a din of tymbals at the court,
The warriors went in to audience.
The ruler of the world then summoned Gív,
Placed him upon the famed, imperial throne,
And ordered that the spoils should be brought forth,
The haughty and illustrious warriors,
Together with the guiltless womenfolk—
The unseen victims of Afrásiyáb—
With Jahn and Garsíwaz—the man of guile,
Who had tripped up the feet of Siyáwush.
Káuś, beholding wicked Garsíwaz,
Cursed him as he deserved. They brought both him
And Jahn in gyves before the lofty throne,
With all the prisoners and hostages.
The Sháh dealt with them after their deserts,
Put one in ward, another into bonds;
One was all hope, another in distress.
Káuś beheld with eyelids full of tears
The daughters of the great Afrásiyáb,
And made the royal bower their dwelling-place,
With handmaids to attend them. All the spoils
Of every kind, dínárs and uncut gems,
He gave to the Íránians that they
Might call down blessings on the king of earth.
He made the captives over to his chiefs,
Retaining neither great nor small himself.
They then prepared a residence for Jahn,
Providing food, attendants, and a guard.
There was a gloomy dungeon in a hold,
Repulsive, with a charnel-house hard by,
And this became the lot of Garsíwaz:

Such are time's changes! Blest are they that rule

With open hands and hearts devout and pure,

V. 1365

Who reckon that the world will not endure,

And never haunt the portal of the fool;

But he whose wits are small and lusts¹ debased

Is by a leech among the madmen placed.

Whenas the Sháh had made an end of these

He cleared the hall of every stranger there,

And then the scribe prepared himself to write,

And made his pen's point like a diamond.

They wrote a letter to the provinces,

To all the men of name and all the chiefs:

It ran: "Túrán and Chín are now the Sháh's,

The sheep and leopard water at one cistern."

He made a gift of money to the poor,

And to his own attendants and his kin.

Before his portal for two sennights' space

Men saw no passage through the crowds that sought

For largess. The third week Káús reposed

In Grace upon the throne of majesty,

While mid the sound of flute and song the cup

Was welcomed. From the goblet of the Sháh

Rose for a sennight waves of ruddy wine.

When New Moon came he made a gift to Gív—

A gift of gold plate set with turquoises,

Of golden chargers and of turquoise goblets,

Of golden girdles and of silver harness,

Of female slaves with torques and earrings on,

Of bracelets and of crowns of jewel-work,

Of raiment also, thrones, and carpetings,

Of bright stuffs, perfumes, and embroidery.

The monarch sent for Gív; they seated him

Upon a golden throne and then presented

The gifts before him. After that was done

Gív with his face caressed the royal throne.

¹ Reading with C and P.

§ 33

The Answer of Sháh Káuís to the Letter of Khusráu

A scribe with paper, musk, and spicery
 Approached Káuís, and wrote : " I am rejoiced
 And well content with this God-given fortune
 In that my son hath proved victorious,
 And worthy of the greatness, crown, and throne.
 That bad man, who oppressed and used the world
 To no end but for war and harrying,
 Is now a fugitive therein through thee,
 And no one uttereth his name aloud.
 He was a man of bloodshed all his years,
 Unstable, passionate, and evil-natured ;
 'Twas he who struck the neck of crowned Naudar—
 That living monument of Sháhs of old.
 He is a fratricide, a miscreant,
 A regicide, malicious, vile, insensate.
 Let him not set his foot within Túrán,
 Makrán, or by the sea of Chín. Perchance
 The world may be delivered from the villain.
 Now if the upright Judge, the only God,
 Guide thee to cleanse the earth of bad men's troublings,
 And of fools' pratings and performances,
 Be joyful in the justice of the Maker,
 And be a new foundation for the world.
 If I shall see thee come again in joy,
 While grief shall fill the bosoms of our foes,
 Thenceforth will I devote my days to prayer
 To holy God, from whom are hope and fear,
 That thou mayst be victorious and glad.
 May thy head flourish, justice fill thy heart,
 Be the Creator of the world thy Guide,
 Thy seat upon the throne for evermore."

They sealed the letter with the Sháh's own signet,

And Gív went from the palace to return ;
 He loitered not in going to Khusrau
 At Gang-bihisht, did reverence and delivered
 The letter and the message of Káuś,
 The Sháh was joyful at his grandsire's words,
 Called minstrelsy and boon-companions,
 Exulting as a victor for three days.
 The fourth day, when the World-illuminer shone,
 He gave out helm and mail to all the troops,
 Gave as it is the wont of Sháhs to give,
 V. 1367 With Gustaham, son of Naudar, he left
 A world—a noble host of warriors—
 Then quitted favoured Gang-bihisht for Chín,
 And won a fresh world with the scimitar.
 He battled both by day and darksome night ;
 He was a watch by night, a scout by day,
 And thus it was until in tears, with dust
 Upon his head, he reached his father's city.
 He went about the garth of Siyáwush,
 Went where the bason overflowed with blood,¹
 And said : " If now the Judge, the only God,
 Will but vouchsafe to guide me on the way,
 Then by this self-same token will I shed
 Afrásiyáb's own blood like water here !"
 He left the spot, departing to his throne,
 And communed with the holy Judge alone.

§ 34

*The Embassy of Kai Khusrau to the Faghfúr of Chín
and the King of Makrán*

Khusrau chose envoys good at parleying,
 And sent some to the Khán, to the Faghfúr,
 And to the ruler of Makrán, to say :—

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 321.

“ If ye will choose the right, perform my hest,
 And in your hearts repent of your ill deeds,
 Dispatch provisions on before my troops,
 For ye must needs behold me on my march,
 But him that turneth from these words of mine,
 Or faileth to present himself before me,
 Will I behead with trenchant scimitar,
 And on his palace bring the Day of Doom.”

These envoys went to all the provinces,
 Wherever there was any famous chief,
 And grieved were the Faghfúr and Khán of Chín,
 Grieved too the potentates of all those climes,
 But gave warm greetings to the messengers
 In dulcet voices and with honied words ;
 They said : “ We all are servants to the Sháh,
 And only tread the earth to do his will.
 We will survey the passes where the road
 Is bad for troops, provision barren places,
 And furnish all the aidance in our power.”

V. 1368

Those that were wise said : “ If he pass us by,
 And leave us scathless, we will give the poor
 No little largess both of food and money.”

Each gave large presents to the messengers,
 Who came back to the court content and glad ;
 But when the noble envoy reached Makrán,
 Approached the throne, delivered up the letter,
 And gave the oral message that he bore,
 He found the heart all other of that king,
 Who thoughtlessly misprized the messenger,
 To his folk's grief, and answered : “ Tell the Sháh :—
 ‘ Assume not o'er us novel powers. The age
 Is 'neath my fortune, and my crown and throne
 Illume the earth, and when the bright sun shineth,
 Such is its love, it shineth first on us.
 Moreover I have knowledge and much wealth,
 With greatness, manliness, and might of hand.

If any asketh leave to pass 'tis well,
 Because the earth is every creature's realm.
 If thou wilt pass I will not bar the way :
 Do thou no damage with thy troops in passing ;
 But if thou enter cities with thy host
 Thou hast no portion in this sovereignty.
 I will not suffer thee to cross our soil,
 Or even to set foot upon our marches,
 Nor will I let thee come off conqueror,
 However much thy good stars favour thee."

Now when the Sháh heard such an answer given
 He moved forth from his quarters with the troops,
 And took the way that leadeth through Khutan—
 A world-lord followed by a famous host.
 Then the Faghfúr and Khán of Chín came forth
 To meet the Sháh with blessings and excuses,
 Came with their chiefs to meet him on his way,
 When he was still three stages short of Chín.
 The route was cleared as bare as any hand,
 The dales and plains were like a dwelling-place,
 The road was well supplied with clothes and victuals,
 With halting-places, feasts, and carpetings ;
 And when the troops were drawing near a city
 The folk put decorations everywhere.
 They fastened up brocade upon the walls,
 And sifted musk and spicery o'erhead.
 Then the Faghfúr, when confidence returned,
 Went first to lead the way toward the palace,
 Thus saying : " We are subjects of the Sháh—
 If we are worthy even to be subjects.¹
 May thy good fortune civilize the world,
 And may thy friends' hearts be rejoiced in thee.
 Unworthy though my halls be of the Sháh
 I hold them not inferior to the road."

Illustrious Khusrau went to the palace,

¹ Reading with P.

And took his seat upon the famous state,
 While the Faghfúr presented unto him
 A hundred thousand coins—dínars of Chín—
 And stood there in the presence of Khusrau,
 Together with the prudent frontier-chiefs.
 In Chín Khusrau continued for three months
 With all the nobles of the Íránian host;
 Each morning the Faghfúr attended him,
 And made the Sháh new gifts continually,
 Who in the fourth month marched from Chín like
 wind
 Upon Makrán; but Rustam stayed behind.

§ 35

*How Kai Khusrau fought with the King of Makrán and
 how the King of Makrán was slain*

Khusrau departed and when near Makrán
 Chose one of much experience from the host,
 And sent him to the monarch with these words:—
 “ May kings and wisdom be companions.
 Consider from what regions we have come :
 We are not drunk and dozing o’er our purpose.
 My fortune and my crown illumine the world ;
 My throne is based on chieftains’ heads. Prepare
 A road and provand for my host ; let plenty
 Adorn my throne for no one fareth well
 When rations fail, and save I furnish them
 The troops will combat and will make the world
 Strait to their foes ; but if thou wilt not hear me
 Thou shalt wade through the blood of multitudes,
 And make a desolation of Makrán
 If thou attack the Lions unprovoked.”

The envoy came and did his embassy,
 But no advice or justice found a place

In that king's heart. His foolish head was angered ;
 He raged and there was mischief in his thoughts.
 He concentrated all his scattered troops,
 Prepared a battlefield upon the plain,
 And bade the messenger : " Go get thee hence !
 Return to that malicious man and say :—
 ' By change from days of darkness thou hast grown
 Thus prosperous and world-illumining,
 Yet, when thou comest, shalt behold our might,
 And learn what men and warriors really are.' "

Whenas the envoy of the Sháh had gone
 The whole state of Makrán was filled with clamour,
 The land from mount to mount and all the marches
 Were occupied by troops. The monarch brought
 Two hundred elephants of war. " No room,"
 Thou wouldst have said, " remaineth on the earth !"
 While at the chargers' neighs and soldiers' shouts
 The moon strayed from its pathway in the sky.
 The scouts approached the Sháh and said to him :—
 " Makrán is darkened with the dust of troops,
 The realm is full of flags and elephants ;
 The Sháh can see them now two miles away."

The monarch bade his troops draw up in line,
 And take their maces and their swords in hand,
 While from Makrán a scout came on the plain,
 And all the livelong night went round the host.
 Upon the Íránian side Tukhár kept watch,
 Who thought a fight a small thing. Those two met—
 A noble Lion and fierce Elephant.

V. 1371

Tukhár struck with his falchion, clave his foe
 In twain, and filled Makrán's king's heart with fear.
 The two hosts in the ordering of their ranks
 Made heaven viewless with the clouds of dust,
 They drew toward each other mountain-like,
 And closed ; the leader Tús came from the centre,
 While din of trump and tymbal filled the world,

With Káwa's flag before him, while behind
Were warriors with their golden boots. The air
Was full of arrows, earth of elephants;
The world was heaving like the dark blue sea.
The monarch of Makrán at the army's centre
Died smitten by a double-headed dart.
One asked: "Shall we cut off his head, O Sháh!"
Who answered: "We will treat him with respect.
Who cutteth off kings' heads unless he be
A villain of the seed of Áhriman?
Prepare a charnel-house, musk, and rose-water—
A sleeping-chamber worthy of a king—
And, seeing that the wound is through his mail,
By that same token strip ye not the body,
But veil his visage with brocade of Chín,
For he hath died the death that heroes die."

Now of that host there were ten thousand slain
Of cavaliers and warriors wielding swords;
Of prisoners there were seven and fifty score,
And the survivors' heads were filled with anguish.
The Íránians carried off the camp-enclosure,
The spoil, the elephants, and splendid throne,
And all the nobles of Írán grew rich,
While many had a crown and throne besides.
Anon the warriors, lovers of the fray,
Proceeded to the pillage of Makrán;
The wail of women rose from town and waste,
The land was full of cries; the Íránians fired
The holds and towns, dashed heaven upon earth,
Transfixing many with their archery,
And making women and young children captives.
As soon as the Sháh's wrath had been appeased
He ordered that his army should withdraw,
And also that Ashkash, the shrewd of wit,
Should cease from pillage, strife, and harrying,
And suffer nobody to do an outrage,

Or treat the wretched with severity.
 Then all the upright people of the state
 Approached to plead their cause before the Sháh,
 Thus saying: "We are innocent and helpless,
 And aye oppressed by tyrants. It would be
 Well worthy of the Sháh to pardon us
 If he shall recognise our innocence."

A proclamation went forth from head-quarters:—
 "Ye paladins whose counsel prospereth!
 If through injustice, pillage, strife, or tumult,
 Henceforth an outcry riseth anywhere,
 Then will I cut in two the outragers
 That have no fear of God before their eyes."

The worldlord tarried one year in Makrán,
 And requisitioned great ships everywhere;
 Then when the spring arrived and earth grew green,
 When tulips filled the hills and grass the waste,
 When steeds could pasture, hunters go afield,
 And gardens were adorned by flowers and fruit-trees,
 He bade his faithful liege Ashkash remain
 To govern leniently and uprightly
 Withal, maintaining justice unimpaired,
 And marched out from the country to the desert,
 Light-heartedly accepting all the toils.
 'Twas holy God's decree that in the waste
 They should not look on dust. The firmament
 Was full of cloud, the earth of springing corn,
 The world of tulips and of fenugreek.
 Provision-trains went on before the host
 In wagons drawn along by buffalos.
 The waste gave herbage, room to camp was there,
 Earth was all moisture, and all clouds the air.

§ 36

How Kai Khusrau crossed the Sea

The warriors, when Khusrau had reached the sea,
Put off their mail; the Sháh had taken with him
The mariners from Chín and from Makrán,
And made those preparations on the shore
That men are wont to make before a voyage;
He bade prepare provisions for a year
To last till he should reach the other side.
The prosperous Sháh, the seeker of God's way,
Withdrew in all his glory from the strand,
And, in the fervent importunity
Of pleading with the Maker of the world,
Besought of the Almighty and most High
To bear him scathless to dry land again.
He said: "Almighty Ruler of the world,
Who knowest both the secret and the open!
Thou art the Warden both of land and sea,
The Lord of heaven and the Pleiades,
The Guardian of my life and of my host,
The Guardian of my treasure, throne, and crown."

The sea was rough and all hearts were distressed,
Yet for six months the vessels were their couch.
The seventh month, when half the year had passed,
The north wind blew against them, and the sails
Were ta'en aback; the vessels moved stern-foremost.
They wandered from their proper course and reached
A place which sailors call "The Lion's Mouth,"
Yet God so ordered it that wind and storm
Dealt gently with the fortune of the Sháh.
The soldiers on the voyage pointed out
To Kai Khusrau in great astonishment
How lions fought with oxen in the waves;
They sighted men with hair like lassos, men

Completely covered, as sheep are, with wool!
 There was a troop with heads like buffalos,
 Their hands behind their backs and feet in front!
 There was a fish that had a leopard's head,
 A crocodile that had an onager's,
 A lamb a hog's! The water teemed with them!
 The Íránians showed each other those strange sights,
 And called upon the Maker of the world,
 Till by the mercy of the Lord of heaven
 The wind abated and the storm was hushed.
 In seven months the voyage was completed,
 They were not visited again by storms.

Khusrau on landing saw a spacious plain,
 Then came before the Maker of the world,
 And chafed his face upon the dusty ground.
 He drew his ships and boats up from the sea,
 And tarried not, there was no time to lose.
 Before him were the desert, plain, and sands,
 The shifting sands o'er which he passed unhurt.
 The cities there resembled those of Chín;
 The tongue was like that spoken in Makrán:
 He rested in those cities and required
 A great provision from them for his host.
 The Sháh committed all that land to Gív,
 And said to him: "Partake of fortune's fruits.
 Treat even evil-doers leniently,
 For wealth and goods are worthless to my heart.
 Henceforward hold I no man of account,
 But worship God who is the Succourer."

He chose out from the host a man of name,
 Acquainted with the language of the folk,
 To take a message to their kings, it ran:—
 "Whoever seeketh peace and satisfaction,
 Let him attend this court in merry guise,
 With jocund heart, rich gifts, and right good will;
 But he that shall transgress mine ordinance

Shall bear the penalty of his ill counsels."

Whenas the messenger had come to them
He gave the message of the king of kings,
And every one replied: "We are his subjects
If we are worthy even to be such."

No chief refused; they, old and young alike,
Came to the audience of the Sháh with gifts,
The marchlord and the monarch equally.
Khusrau, on seeing this, received them well,
And raised their necks until they reached the sun,
Then sought intelligence about Gang-dizh,
The throne of power, and Afrásiyáb.

The spokesman of the company replied:—
"No seas or mountains are before thee here,
And, reckoning all roads, both good and bad,
Hence unto Gang is but a hundred leagues.
No life is left in that unrighteous king,
But few of his unrighteous men remain,
And ever since he came across the sea
He and his followers have been at Gang."

The Sháh was glad at that intelligence,
And thought the labour light. He gave the chiefs
A robe of honour each, called for their steeds,
And then dismissed them homeward while he went
Toward Gang-dizh with all his armament.

§ 37

*How Kai Khusrau reached Gang-dizh*¹

He drew the army up, gave rations out,
And, mindful of the Giver of all good,
Proclaimed: "Whoe'er ensueth wickedness
Shall writhe beneath the chastisement of God.
Ye must not so conduct you in this city

¹ Gang in the original.

That e'en an ant shall be a sufferer."¹

V. 1376

Whenas the worldlord looked upon Gang-dizh
His cheeks were veiled by tears. Then from his steed
Alighting and with head upon the ground
He praised the Maker, saying: "O righteous Judge!
A slave am I whose heart is filled with awe
And reverence. Thou hast given me strength and rule,
Grace, army, courage, fortune, feet, and wings,
That I might see my father's city-walls
Arising from the ground. 'Twas Siyáwush
Who raised these battlements from their foundations
By Grace of holy God, and when a tyrant
Stretched forth a hand against him wickedly
His murder wounded all men to the heart."

The troops with one consent wept o'er those ram-
parts,

Wept for the blood of blameless Siyáwush,
Who perished by his adversary's hand—
An act which sowed the world with seeds of feud.

Now when these tidings reached Afrásiyáb:—
"The world-subduing Sháh hath crossed the sea,"
He kept what he had heard concealed till night,
And then without a word to any one,
And leaving all his veterans behind,
Fled unattended, full of wretchedness.

When Kai Khusrau had entered into Gang
His head was troubled and his heart was full.
He saw a pleasance that rejoiced all hearts,
With meadows like the lamps of Paradise;
Each corner had its fount and rosary,
The ground was hyacinths, each bough a perch
For nightingales. All said: "Behold a place
Where we could live in happiness till death!"

The wary king thereafter gave command
To seek the leader of the Turkman host.

¹ Cf. Vol. i, p. 201, and *note*.

They searched the gardens, plains, and palaces,
 Employing guides to point them out the way.
 The searchers roamed about like maniacs,
 If haply they might find a trace of him,
 And in the prosecution of the quest
 They captured no small number of his folk,
 And slew full many who were innocent,
 But of the unjust king they found no trace.

Khusrau abode a whole year at Gang-dizh,
 With minstrels and with revellers; the world
 Resembled heart-enthraling Paradise,
 All gardens, rosaries, and pleasancess.
 The Sháh's affection would not let him leave;
 He tarried there victorious and glad.

V. 1377

The paladins of the Íránian host
 Appeared one day before him and said thus:—
 "Grant that the Sháh's heart be at perfect rest,
 And not a thought be turned toward Írán,
 Still in good sooth our foe Afrásiyáb
 Hath left this shore and gone across the sea,
 And Sháh Káu's upon the throne is old
 Without an army, treasure, Grace, and power;
 So if Afrásiyáb shall reach Írán,
 Full of revenge, who will watch o'er the land?
 Should he recover throne and diadem,
 Then all our travail will produce no fruit."

The Sháh replied: "The counsel that ye give
 Is mated to advantage."

He convoked

The chief men of the place, spake much to them
 Of travail past, and him that was the fittest—
 The first in honour and most capable—
 The Sháh presented with a robe of honour,
 Intending to make Gang a marchlord's castle,
 And said to him: "Abide here in all joy,
 But never careless of the enemy."

He then distributed what wealth there was,
 Distributed both steeds and hoarded treasures,
 Enriching all the townsfolk with their shares ;
 What armlets, thrones, and coronets were theirs !

§ 38

*How Kai Khusrau returned from Gang-dizh to
 Siyáwushgird*

V. 1378 Now at the hour when chanticleer awaketh
 The tymbals sounded in the palace-court,
 Whereat the army eager to depart
 Turned toward the desert. All the local chiefs,
 Wherever there was any mighty man,
 Went forth to furnish victuals for the way,
 Such as were worthy of the Sháh and host.
 Along the route whereby the army marched
 The valleys and the plains were like bázárs ;
 No man could venture to withhold his hand
 Upon the mountains, wastes, or camping-grounds.
 The great men, who with gifts and offerings
 Kept coming to give welcome to the Sháh,
 Upon beholding such a glorious monarch
 Approached in crowds to do him reverence,
 While he excused them from attending him
 Upon the march and gave them robes of honour.
 Gív came forth with an army and with all
 The leaders of that land to give him welcome.
 The prudent Sháh received Gív graciously,
 With honours such as Siyáwush had paid,
 And, lighting when he reached the sea, inspected
 The sails, and stayed two sennights on the shore
 In talk with Gív of all that he had seen,
 And said : " Whoe'er hath viewed not Gang hath naught
 To make him wish to tarry on the earth."

The Sháh then bade his men to load the ships
And, sending first two boats, launched after them
A thousand vessels. He bade all that skilled
In seamanship, and showed a dauntless heart
Upon the depths of ocean, to set sail.
They crossed the sea, the voyage of a year,
In seven months; so speeding was the breeze
That Sháh and army made their way across,
And not a sleeve was turned by hostile winds.
Whenas the leader reached dry land once more,
And disembarking looked upon the plain,
He came and chafed his face upon the dust,
Invoking holy God. He lavished food
And raiment on the mariners and steersmen,
And ordered robes of honour and dínárs
For those that had endured the toil aboard;
Then took the desert-route while all men marvelled.
Ashkash on hearing brought a host to meet him,
And lighting from his charger kissed the ground,
And did obeisance. They bedecked Makrán
Throughout, and summoned minstrelsy, the harp
Was heard in all the ways and wastes, and thou
Hadst said: "The harp is warp, the air is woof."
They decked the walls with hangings of brocade,
And scattered drachms and sweetmeats underfoot.
The magnates of Makrán—both men of name
And mighty warriors—appeared before
The conquering Sháh with gifts and offerings.
Ashkash presented all the land's best products.
The Sháh approved all that Ashkash had done
As ruler of Makrán, and chose a chief,
Bestowing on him many gifts and blessings.

When with the noble chieftains of Írán
Khusrau had left Makrán and drawn toward Chín,
Came Rustam, son of Zál, the son of Sám,
To meet him with a glad, contented host.

That noble cavalier, when Kai Khusrau
 Appeared afar, beheld the parasol,
 Alighted from his steed, and did obeisance.
 The noble Sháh clasped Rustam to his breast,
 Told of the wonders seen by him at sea,
 And how Afrásiyáb, the sorcerer,
 Had disappeared. He stayed as Rustam's guest.
 One sennight and then left Máchin and Chín,
 Bestowing them on the Faghfúr and Khán,
 Who oftentimes blessed him. Many a gift and counsel
 He gave them and released their hearts from care,
 V. 1380 Then took his way toward Siyáwushgird
 Upon the Ard of month Sapandármad.
 His eyes and heart were full on entering
 His father's city. When he reached the spot
 Where Garsíwaz, the man of evil mark,
 Gurwí, the accursed, and executioners
 Had shamefully beheaded Siyáwush,
 He poured that dark dust on his head and rent
 His face and breast while Rustam rubbed his face
 In that dust too and cursed Gurwí's soul black.
 Then Kai Khusrau exclaimed: "Thou, O my lord!
 Hast left me here as thy memorial;
 I have forgone no jot of vengeance for thee,
 And will ensue it while the world endureth.
 I made the throne quit of Afrásiyáb,
 And I will seek no rest or sleep henceforth
 In hope that I may get him in my clutches,
 And make the world both black and strait to him."
 Next turning to his father's treasure-hoard,
 As he had been instructed by his mother,
 He opened it and furnished forth supplies.
 He stayed two weeks with gladness in that city,
 And gave two hundred purses of dínárs
 To Rustam and abundant gifts to Gív.
 Now Gustaham, son of Naudar, on hearing:—

"The Sháh is visiting his father's city,"
 Set forth to meet him with a mighty escort
 Of chieftains and of warriors of Írán,
 And, seeing in the distance the Sháh's head
 And crown, alighted and fared far afoot,
 While all the host acclaimed the earth's just king,
 Who ordered Gustaham to mount his steed,
 And thus they went rejoicing, hand in hand,
 To Gang-bihisht. The troops received high honour.
 Their loyalty was like a fruitful tree
 In constant bearing. Sháh and cavalier
 Were busy at the banquet and the chase,
 While all the Turkmans of exalted rank
 Had every favour that they could desire.
 By day-time and by night-time equally
 Khusrau sought tidings of Afrásiyáb,
 But nobody could show a trace of him ;
 There was no mention of him in the world.
 One night the Sháh, when he had bathed himself,
 Went with the scriptures of the Zandavasta.
 Apart, and all night wept and laid his head
 Upon the ground before the Maker, saying :—
 "This feeble slave of Thine hath evermore
 Some trouble in possession of his soul.
 The world—its mountains, deserts, wastes, and waters—
 Will I thresh out to find Afrásiyáb
 Because he walketh not Thy way, O Judge !
 Contemning every one on earth as vile.
 Thou knowest that he is neither just nor true,
 A shedder of much blood of guiltless heads.
 Oh ! that the righteous Judge, the only God,
 Would guide me to that doer of ill deeds,
 For though I am but an unworthy slave
 I am the Maker's worshipper. I hear
 No fame or rumour of Afrásiyáb
 On earth : I see him not but Thou seest all.

If Thou art pleased with him, O righteous Judge!
 Divert my thoughts from any further strife,
 Quench in my heart the fire of my revenge,
 And make my purposes conform with Thine."

Then from the place of prayer he sought his throne,
 A noble youth and of unsleeping fortune.
 At Gang-bihisht he lived a restful life
 For one whole year exempt from war and strife.

§ 39

How Kai Khusrau returned from Túrán to the Land of Írán

When he had tarried long at Gang-bihisht,
 And yearned to look again on Kai Káuś,
 He put the country from the sea of Chín
 Up to Kibchák in charge of Gustaham,
 Son of Naudar, gave him a countless host,
 And said to him: "Be ware of heart and glad.
 Stretch forth thy hand o'er Chín and o'er Makrán,
 Dispatching letters unto all the folk,
 And seeking tidings of Afrásiyáb;
 It may be that the world is rid of him."

V. 1382

Whatever was of value in the land—
 Such as dínárs and precious stones uncut,
 Musk, camphor, golden trappings for the steeds,
 Slave-boys and horses, thrones and necklaces,
 Brocade of Chín and carpeting, and all
 The produce of the country of Makrán—
 The monarch drave before him on the way,
 In wagons drawn by forty thousand oxen,
 While all men said: "None ever saw such wealth,
 Nor hath there been such wealth as this before!"
 The army was so great that day and night
 The troops were passing over hill and vale,
 And they who reached a station saw no break

In those behind them. Thus Khusrau reached Chách,
And hung the crown above the ivory throne;
Then as he tarried one week more in Sughd
Khúzán and Talímán appeared before him;
He marched thence to Bukhárá while the earth
Was hidden by his troops. In rest and feasting
One week was spent, the next, lamenting sore
Past times, he donned new raiment and approached
The Fane of Fire built with its towers by Túr,
The son of Faridún. He showered gold
And silver on the archmages and flung jewels
In numbers on the Fire. Then, fain to go,
The happy Sháh went with contented heart,
And crossing the Jfhún arrived at Balkh,
Experienced in this world's salts and sours;
Then, after he had tarried there a week,
Pursued his march, and left in every city
A noble of exalted rank with troops.
The people decorated way and waste
Where'er the Sháh was passing with his host.
As he neared Tálíkán and the Marvrúd
The world was full of sounds of flute and harp,
The people decorated all their cities,
And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy;
They poured down drachms and saffron from above,
Musk and dínárs were strewn from end to end.
Thence by the road to Nishápúr the Sháh
Conveyed the treasure, troops, and elephants.
On all the mendicants within the city,
And all that lived by toil, he lavished drachms;
Two score and fifteen purses were expended.
He went thence on the road to Dámaghán,
And all the way he scattered drachms and gold.
The monarch rested for a sennight there,
Inspecting horses, elephants, and troops,
And at the week's end went to Rai by roads

Filled everywhere with minstrel, harp, and wine.
 For two weeks he did justice and gave gifts,
 And with the third departed to Baghdád,
 Dispatching camel-posts from Rai to go
 To Kai Káús at Párs to let him know.

§ 40

How Kai Khusrau returned to his Grandsire

The heart of Sháh Káús revived thereat,
 And thou hadst said : " He is another man !"
 He set up in the halls his golden throne,
 And decked his palace with the gauds of Chín.
 They decorated all the towns and ways,
 The streets, bázárs, and quarters of the city,
 And all the nobles went to meet Khusrau,
 The great men and the chieftains of Írán.
 They put up cupolas on way and waste ;
 The world seemed all brocade of gold. The folk
 Mixed musk and gems, and from the cupolas
 Poured them upon the heads of those below.
 When Kai Káús with his illustrious chiefs
 Had come outside the city the young Sháh
 Beheld his grandsire while a long way off,
 And gave his steed the spur. The two embraced
 With many a kiss upon the face and head,
 And both of them shed tears of bitterness
 For having lived disconsolate so long,
 While Kai Káús applauded that young Sháh,
 So favoured by the stars and fortunate,
 And said : " Ne'er may the world, the crown of great-
 ness,
 And throne of nobles be deprived of thee,
 Because the sun hath seen not such a Sháh,
 Such steeds, such mail or such a throne and helm,

Among the mighty none hath borne such toils,
 Or viewed so much earth's sights and mysteries.
 If Siyáwush could quit the charnel-house
 He would desire the Grace that now is thine ;
 Since he is gone be thou the world's delight
 And be thy foes uprooted, heart and soul !”

Khusrau replied : “ All was by thy good fortune.
 Thine Offshoot fruited, and the grass would grow
 From flint for any grandson born to thee.”

His grandsire kissed him, teeth and lips, exclaiming :—
 “ May I be with thee ever, day and night.”

Khusrau brought rubies, gold, and emeralds,
 And showered them upon the old Sháh's head
 In such a manner that the jewelled throne
 Had all its feet concealed with offerings.
 Káu's commanded : “ Call the company,
 And spread the board within another hall.”

The potent chiefs being seated with the Sháh
 Within a rosary bedecked with gold,
 Khusrau recounted all that he had seen—
 Things seen and heard by none before that time.
 His talk was of the sea and of Gang-dizh,
 Which filled the lips of all the chiefs with sighs
 For that delightful city, plain, and upland,
 With meadow-lands and pleasancess like lamps.
 Káu's was lost in wonderment at him,
 And, estimating what he had achieved,
 Said thus to him : “ A young Sháh's youthful words
 Make month and day both young. None in the world
 Hath ever looked upon a Sháh like thee,
 No ear hath heard these tales. Come let us pledge
 This youthful star and drink to Kai Khusrau.”

V. 1385

He decked that rosary of golden work,
 Brought wine and revellers with ruby lips,
 And for a week a wave of wine o'erflowed
 The goblet in the halls of Kai Káu's.

The Sháh, the eighth day, oped his treasury,
 And made a recompense for toils achieved.
 For those great men that were with him in fight,
 In feast and joy and grief, there was prepared
 A robe of honour suited to their ranks,
 And that the choicest in the treasury.
 Then all departed, each to his own province,
 Each noble followed by his famous troops.
 The monarch dealt next with the common soldiers,
 And from the treasury gave them one year's pay.
 The grandsire and the atheling next sat
 In conclave with the counsellors, and thus
 Khusrau addressed Káuś the Sháh, and said :—
 "Of whom shall we seek guidance save of God ?
 We crossed the desert, spent a year at sea,
 And journeyed seared of heart o'er mountain-ranges,
 But nowhere on the mountain, sea, or desert
 Saw any traces of Afrásiyáb.
 If he shall suddenly arrive at Gang,
 And gather troops, toils will confront us still,
 Although the righteous Judge be on our side."

The grandsire, giving an old man's advice,
 Replied : "We two will mount our steeds and seek
 In haste the temple of Ázargashasp,
 Will bathe our heads and bodies, hands and feet,
 As well becometh worshippers of God,
 And to the almighty Maker of the world,
 In this our trouble, proffer muttered praise.¹
 Then, as we stand in presence of the Fire,
 It may be holy God will be our Guide,
 And He that showeth justice show the way,
 To where Afrásiyáb is lying hidden."

V. 1386

This counsel they agreed to act upon,
 Not swerving either of them from the path,
 And, mounting swift as wind upon two chargers,

¹ See Vol. i. p. 80, s.v. Zamzam.

Sped to the temple of Ázargashasp,
 In white robes, with hearts filled by hope and fear.
 Whenas they looked upon the Fire they wept,
 As though they were consuming in fierce flames,
 Before the Master of the sun and moon ;
 They called upon the Maker of the world,
 And showered jewels on the archimages.
 Khusrau, while bathing still his face in tears,
 Let fall dínárs upon the Zandavasta,
 And thus they passed a sennight in God's presence ;
 But think not that they used in days of yore
 To worship fire, 'twas but their cynosure.
 Tears from the eyes of worshippers might pour,
 Yet, though thou ponder long, when thought is done,
 All holy God is still the needful One.
 Thus at Ázar Ábádagán the two
 Remained one whole month with their retinue.

§ 41

*How Afrásiyáb was captured by Húm of the
 Race of Farídún*

Now thus it came to pass : Afrásiyáb
 Roamed to and fro foodless and slumberless,
 His soul on thorns, his body but a curse,
 Through constant terror of calamity.
 He sought for some spot somewhere in the world
 Where he might have repose of mind with health,
 And found a cavern near Barda', a cavern
 Upon a mountain-top concealed from men.
 He saw no room for hawks to fly o'erhead,
 No lion's trace, or boar's haunt, underneath.
 'Twas far from cities and with water near :
 Call it the cavern of Afrásiyáb.
 The king in his despair took to the mountain

V. 1387 As being such an unfrequented spot,
 Conveyed food thither, fearing for his life,
 And made the cave his palace and his home,
 Wherein he sojourned for a certain time
 With full heart and repenting of his deeds.
 Whene'er a monarch is athirst for gore
 His tenure of the throne is well-nigh o'er,
 So when this king, this master of the state,
 This lord of earth, well-starred and fortunate,
 Shed blood then enemies grew manifest !
 The king that never saw kings' blood is blest.

Now in those days there lived a holy man,
 One of the seed of Farídún, the teacher,
 A devotee of Kaian Grace and mien,
 One who was girded with a royal girdle,
 And used the mountain as his place of worship
 As being far from pleasures and from men.
 The name of that illustrious one was Húm,
 A man of prayer who shunned society.
 A cavern that was on the mountain-height
 Far from the throng was very near to him.
 It happened that one day he climbed the mountain
 That he might worship God, the righteous Judge,
 And as he prayed upon the top before
 The all-sustaining Ruler of the world,
 And worshipped, vested in his woollen robe,
 A wailing from the cavern reached his ears :—

V. 1388 “Alas ! O prince ! O famous sovereign !
 O mighty man exalted o'er the nobles,
 Whom Chín, Túrán, and all the world obeyed,
 Whose stipulations ran in every place !
 Yet now thy portion is a cavern here !
 Where are thy mighty men and men of war ?
 Where are thy treasure and thy manliness,
 Thy valour, courage, and sagacity ?
 Where are thy majesty, thy throne, and crown ?

Where are thy country and thy mighty host
 Now that thou dwellest in this narrow cavern,
 A fugitive within this rocky hold?"

Húm as he listened to the Turkman dirge
 Forwent his prayers and, going from the spot,
 Said thus: "This lamentation in the night
 Must be the utterance of Afrásiyáb!"

Whenas he felt assured thereof at heart
 He sought the entrance of the gloomy cave,
 Discerned the cavern which Afrásiyáb
 Had made his place of slumber and repose,
 And then advancing like a savage lion
 Put off the woollen garment round his loins,
 And with the lasso that he used as girdle,
 And which assured him of the Worldlord's aid,
 Grasped in his hand, gained entrance to the cave. V. 1389
 The king, as Húm approached, leapt to his feet.
 They struggled long and Húm prevailed at last,
 Threw down Afrásiyáb and tied his hands,
 Then going from the cavern dragged him forth
 With frantic efforts such as madmen use.
 This is a matter that is wonder-worth;
 But let whoever is a king on earth
 About his own fair reputation think
 Naught else—excepting only meat and drink.
 Thus after all his luxury and ease,
 His power, his army, and his treasures,
 Afrásiyáb to choose a cave did well;
 If 'twas a net of bale how could he tell?

§ 42

How Afrásiyáb escaped from Húm

Húm, after having bound the monarch's arms,
 Bore him from his retreat. Afrásiyáb .

Exclaimed: "O pious man, thou devotee,
Who knowest holy God! what wouldest thou
With me—a monarch of the world although
I live concealed in this unfathomed cave?"

Húm said: "For thee it is no resting-place.
Thou art reported through the world as one
Oppugnant to the fear of holy God,
Who slew midst kings his brother Ighrírás,
Illustrious Naudar, and Siyáwush,
That heirloom of the Kaians. Shed not thou
The blood of kings nor flee from throne to cave¹
Unfathomed."

"Man of might!" the king replied,
"Whom knowest thou in this world free from fault?
Such was the process of high heaven above me
That I have brought forth travail, loss, and anguish;
Though one may catch a lion by the neck
He cannot thwart the purposes of God.
Oh! pity me who am in hopeless plight,
And am, however much I be a tyrant,
The grandson of the glorious Faridún!
Oh! free me from thy lasso's bondage! Whither
Wouldst bear me vilely bound? Hast thou no fear
Of God upon the Day of Reckoning?"

Húm said: "Malignant one! good sooth, thy days
Are few, thy words as weeds within a garden:
Thy fate is in the hands of Kai Khusrau."

Albeit Húm was sorry for the wretch,
And loosed for him the royal lasso's coils,
While he, on finding that the holy man
Felt pity for a king's bewailings, writhed,
And wrenched his body from his captor's clutch,
Then plunged into the lake² and disappeared!

¹ There is a play of words in the original between Gáh (throne) and Ghár (cave).

² *I.e.* Urumiah. See p. 136.

It happened that Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
 Was on his way with Gív and other nobles
 In state with expedition to the Sháh,
 And gazing from a distance at the lake
 Observed Húm with the lasso in his hand
 Disconsolately wandering on the shore,
 Saw too the water troubled and, observing
 The sorry looks of Húm, said in his heart:—
 “This holy man is fishing on the bank.
 Perchance his net hath caught a crocodile,
 And he is in amazement at the sight.”

He spake to Húm and said: “O holy man!
 What is thine object? Make it known to us!
 What wouldst thou of the lake unless to wash
 That dusky form of thine?”

V. 1391

Húm answered him:—

“O noble man! consider what hath chanced:
 I have my dwelling on yon mountain's top
 Afar from men and 'tis mine oratory.
 I passed the night, the livelong night, in prayer
 Till at the hour when birds begin to sing
 A sound of lamentation reached mine ears,
 And thus I thought in my shrewd heart: ‘Now I
 Will rase the root of vengeance from the world.
 This bitter wailing in the hours of slumber
 Can be from no one but Afrásiyáb.’
 I rose, searched all the mountain and the caverns,
 And saw in one the famous man himself;
 That luckless one was lying in the cave,
 Lamenting bitterly o'er crown and throne.
 He sprang up at mine entry from his place,
 And gained a footing on the flinty floor,
 Yet bound I with my girdle both his hands
 Firm as a rock, so that they dripped with blood,
 And brought him from the mountain in all haste,
 What while he wailed and shrieked as women do.”

Moved by his great and lamentable cries
 And promises, I somewhat loosed his bonds.
 Then on this very spot he slipped my grasp,
 And pierced my heart and soul by his escape.
 He vanished in these waters of Khanjast.
 Now have I told thee all about the case."

Gúdarz, when he had heard the whole account,
 Recalled to mind a legend of old times,
 And full of thought went to the Fane of Fire,
 Just like a man o'erwrought, and there began
 To pray before the Fire, and offer thanks
 To Him who made the world; then told the Sháhs
 The secret and the things that he had witnessed,
 Whereat they mounted on their steeds again,
 And full of joy departed from the Fane.

§ 43

How Káuś and Khusrau came to Húm

V. 1392 The monarch of the world in grave concern
 Went instantly to Húm who, when he saw
 The crowned heads of the two Sháhs, offered them
 The reverence that was due, while they invoked
 God's blessing on him. Then said Sháh Káuś:—
 "Thanks be to God in whom our refuge is
 That I have seen the face of this good man,
 This man of knowledge, power, and mastery."

Húm answered: "Through thy justice may the land
 Be prosperous, may the days of this young Sháh
 Be bright, and thy foes' hearts be rooted out.
 I offered prayer upon this mountain-top,
 What time the Sháh was passing to Gang-dizh,
 That He who made the world would prosper earth
 Through him. When he returned I laughed for joy,

¹ *Id.*

And sought God's presence, offering my praises.
 At night-time suddenly the blest Surúsh
 Made that which had been secret known to me :
 A cry went up from yon unfathomed cave ;
 I heard it and attended to the voice.
 One bitterly lamented ivory throne,
 Realm, army, state, and crown. Down from the peak
 To that strait cave I came and grasped a lasso—
 My girdle. I beheld the head and ears
 Of him that sojourned there—Afrásiyáb.
 I used my lasso as a cord and tied him
 Firm as a rock, then haled him forth all helpless.
 He bitterly complained of those tight knots,
 And said in anguish : ' O beloved of fortune !
 Relax for me the tightness of these bonds.'
 But when I did so he escaped my grasp,
 Plunged, and is hidden in the water there !
 We must cut off his foothold from the world.
 If he be still as heaven fashioned him
 His blood will stir with love for Garsíwaz
 What time the exalted Sháh shall give command
 To bring that brother with his feet in fetters,
 And sew him to the neck in raw ox-hide,
 Depriving him of power to help himself.
 Afrásiyáb, when he shall hear the voice
 Of Garsíwaz, will come forth from the lake."

V. 1393

The Sháh bade those who mounted guard that day
 To go with swords and bucklers of Gílán,
 And fetch the miserable Garsíwaz—
 The cause of all the trouble in the land.
 The monarch bade the executioner :—
 " Drag him along and show him no respect."
 They put him in an ox-hide to the neck
 So that he could not stir. His skin burst on him,
 He begged for mercy, and asked God for aid.
 Afrásiyáb, whenas he heard that voice,

Rose quickly to the surface of the lake,
 And swimming onward with his hands and feet
 Came to a spot that was within his depth,
 And listening to his brother's cries on shore
 Saw what was worse to him than death itself.
 When Garsíwaz beheld him in the water,
 With eyes fulfilled with blood and troubled heart,
 He cried and said : " O monarch of the world,
 The head of nobles and the crown of chiefs !
 Where are thy customs, state, and policy ?
 Where are thy head and treasure, crown and host ?
 Where all thy knowledge and thy might of hand ?
 Where are the mighty men that were thy lieges ?
 Where are thy glory and thy fame in war ?
 Where are thy joys in goblet and in feast
 V. 1394 Since thou hast need to hide thee in the lake,
 And such ill fortune hath befallen thee ? "

Afrásiyáb thereat shed tears of blood,
 And answered : " I have roamed the world at large
 Both publicly and privily withal
 If haply I might 'scape mine evil lot,
 But ill and worse than ill befalleth me !
 Now is my life grown loathsome and my soul
 Fulfilled with anguish for thy sake that one
 Sprung from Pashang and Farídún erewhile
 Thus should be netted by the Crocodile ! "

§ 44

*How Afrásiyáb was taken the second Time and how
 he and Garsíwaz were slain*

While these two princes were exchanging words
 The mind of Húm, the devotee, devised
 A scheme ; he went upon a spit of land,
 And, when he saw Afrásiyáb anear,

Undid the royal lasso from his waist,
 And came on stalking like a savage lion,
 Then flung the lasso that was ready coiled,
 And took the monarch's head within the noose.
 Húm dragged him forth in miserable plight,
 And loathing life itself, from lake to land,
 Resigned him to the Sháhs and went his way ;
 Thou wouldst have said : " He and the wind are mates !"
 The world-lord with a trenchant sword approached,
 His head all vengeance and his heart all wrath,
 And thus Afrásiyáb, the insensate, spake :—
 " This is the very day whereof I dreamed !¹
 The sky hath long turned o'er me, and it now
 Hath rent the veil that hid its purposes.
 O wicked seeker of revenge !" he cried,
 " Why dost thou wish to slay thy grandsire ? Speak !"
 " O evil-doer," answered Kai Khusrau,
 " Well worthy of reproach and infamy !
 First I allege the murder of thy brother,
 Who never sought to injure noble men ;²
 Next of Naudar, that famous sovereign—
 That world-lord and memorial of Íraj—
 Whose neck thou clav'st with thy sharp scimitar,
 And brought'st a Day of Doom upon the world ;³
 And thirdly that of Siyáwush, like whom
 None seeth any horseman to recall him,
 Whose head thou didst cut off as 'twere a sheep's,⁴
 And didst exalt thyself above high heaven.
 How was it possible to slay my sire
 And not expect an evil day like this ?
 Thou wast in haste to work iniquity,
 And hast for ill a recompense of ill."

He said : " O Sháh ! that which hath been hath been,
 I cannot choose but listen to thy words ;

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 232.

² See Vol. i. p. 367.

³ See Vol. i. p. 362.

⁴ See Vol. ii. p. 320.

Yet suffer me to see thy mother's face,
And then speak on."

But Kai Khusrau replied:—

"Instead of asking for my mother, think
What evil thou hast wrought upon my head!
My sire was guiltless; I was still unborn;
Yet was thine evil rampant in the world!
Thou didst behead a king for whom the crown
And throne of ivory wept bitterly;
Now is the day when God will recompense;
He payeth ill with ill."

With Indian sword

V. 1396 He smote Afrásiyáb upon the neck,
Then flung upon the dust the swarthy form,
Whose ears and hoary beard were red with blood,
While Garsíwaz his brother lost all hope;
Afrásiyáb's imperial throne was void;
The day of his good fortune reached its close;
Ill came on him for ill. Seek not, my son,
A key whereby ill's bonds may be undone.
Why shouldst thou? Thou knowest that from ill
Ill will befall the evil-doers still?
A king possessed of Grace divine will vent
His wrath in bonds and in imprisonment,
For if he sheddeth blood his life will be
Forlorn, high heaven exact the penalty.
To fierce Bahrám thus said an archimage:—

"Shed not the blood of guiltless heads. If thou
Wouldst keep that crown of thine upon thy brow
Be clement, let good thoughts thy mind engage.
Consider what the crown said to the head:—
'O head! in thee let brains and wisdom wed.'"

The cheeks of Garsíwaz were wan, his heart
Was full of trouble for Afrásiyáb.
They dragged him from the jailors shamefully
In heavy bonds, on that his evil day,

Begirt with guards and executioners
 As such a noted miscreant deserved.
 When in sad plight he came before Khusrau,
 With tears of blood upon his livid cheeks,
 The Sháh, the king of kings, set loose his tongue,
 Discoursing of the dagger and the bowl,
 Of Túr, the son of Farídún, fierce Salm,
 And of Íraj, that most illustrious prince ;
 Then called an executioner who came
 With trenchant sword unsheathed, and cruel heart,
 And clave the chief asunder at the waist
 While all the soldiers' hearts were terror-stricken.
 They flung those two like mountains side by side
 While folk stood round beholding far and wide.

§ 45

How Káuś and Khusrau returned to Párs

In all haste from the lake, when he had won
 His whole desire from God, the Sháh departed
 Toward the temple of Ázargashasp.¹
 He and his grandsire offered to the Fire
 Much gold and murmured many a benison.
 One day and night they stood before the Judge
 Of all the world, the Guide, and when Zarasp,
 The treasurer of Kai Khusrau, had come
 He gave Ázargashasp a treasure, clad
 In robes of honour all those archimages,
 And lavished drachms, dínárs, and precious things.
 Within the city to the mendicants,
 And those who earned their living by their toil,
 The Sháh gave wealth as well, and made the world
 Alive by justice and munificence,
 Then took his seat upon the Kaian throne,

V. 1397

¹ See p. 258.

Undid the audience-door and shut his lips.
 They wrote dispatches to the provinces,
 To every man of name and every chief;
 From west to east went letters to each place
 Wherein there was a chieftain known to fame:—
 “The scimitar of Kai Khusrau hath freed
 Earth’s surface from the evil of the Dragon;
 The Sháh, sustained by God the Conqueror,
 Hath neither rested nor relaxed his girdle;
 The soul of Siyáwush hath gained new life
 In him, the world’s whole surface is his slave.”

V. 1398

The Sháh bestowed much wealth upon the poor,
 Upon the devotees, and his own kin,
 Then said: “Ye men of name, illustrious lords!
 Bring from the city wife and little ones,
 With minstrels and provisions to the plain.”

Therewith he gave himself to minstrelsy.
 Then all the nobles of the royal seed,
 And all the kindred of Zarasp withal,
 Went to the temple of Ázargashasp,
 And there spent forty days with Kai Káús,
 With minstrels, harp, and wine. When the new moon
 Shone like a gold crown on a young king’s head,
 The mighty men betook themselves to Párs
 To rest from war and strife. In every city
 Along the road men gathered round the throne,
 Meanwhile the Sháh oped treasure-bags till all
 The folk grew rich, except the prodigal.

§ 46

The Death of Kai Káús

Káús, assured of peace of mind, declared
 The secrets of his heart to God: “O Thou
 Above all fortune and the Guide to good!

I had from Thee Grace, state, and majesty,
 With fortune, valour, throne, and diadem;
 None else, as Thou hast me, hast Thou endowed
 With treasure, throne, and an exalted name.
 I asked of Thee that some illustrious man
 Might gird his loins in wreak for Siyáwush,
 And saw my grandson, who is mine own Eye,
 Achieve at once my vengeance and his own.
 This atheling surpasseth other kings
 In wisdom, Grace, and height. Since fifty years
 Thrice told have made these musky locks of mine
 Like camphor, and the graceful Cypress boweth,
 I take it not amiss that life should cease.”

V. 1399

But little time elapsed and then his name
 Remained as his memorial in the world.
 Khusrau, the worldlord, left his throne and sat
 Upon the grimy dust. The Íránian nobles
 Went in funereal robes of blue and black,
 Without bright colours or perfumes, afoot,
 And spent two sennights mourning for the Sháh.
 They built a lofty hall ten lassos high
 To be the mausoleum of Káuś;
 This done, the royal officers brought out
 The finest lawn with black brocade of Rúm,
 And, having poured upon them aloes, musk,
 And camphor, wrapped the shrivelled corpse therein.
 They set him on a throne of ivory,
 Placed on his head a crown of musk and camphor,
 And when Khusrau had turned and left the throne
 They locked the portal of the place of sleep,
 And no man looked on Kai Káuś again:
 He rested from revenge and battlefield.

Such is the fashion of this Wayside Inn!
 Thou wilt not tarry here in toil for ever.

The man of lore, the mailèd paladin,
 Obtain remission from Death's clutches never;

Be we Zarduhsht himself, or be we king,
 Brick is our pillow, dust our cushioning.
 Be merry then, ensue what pleasureth thee,
 And afterward, when thou hast made that sure,
 Seek fame, but know this world thine enemy,
 The earth thy bed, the grave thy garniture.
 The Sháh bewailed his grandsire forty days,
 Refraining from all pleasure, crown, and state.
 The next day on the ivory throne he donned
 The heart-illuming crown. The troops assembled
 At court, the chiefs and magnates helmed with gold
 V. 1400 Blessed him with joy and strewed the crown with jewels.
 There was a festival throughout the world
 Because he sat victorious on the throne,
 And thus, till sixty years had passed away,
 The whole world was obedient to his sway.¹

§ 47

How Kai Khusrau fell into Melancholy

V. 1405 The Sháh's great soul became solicitous
 About God's dealings and his own high state :
 He said : " From Hind and Chín to Rúm each place
 Is prosperous ; withal, from west to east,
 Mount, desert, land, and sea have I made void
 Of foes ; the rule and throne of might are mine ;
 The world no longer dreadeth enemies.
 Full many a day hath passed above my head,
 And I have gained from God my full desire,
 Besides the vengeance that I had at heart,
 Yet let me not grow arrogant of soul,
 Corrupt in thought, an Áhriman in faith,
 And be an evil-doer like Zahhák,
 Jamshíd, or such an one as Túr or Salm.

¹ A spurious passage, describing how Kai Khusrau made Jahn king of Túrán, is omitted here.

Sprung from Káuś on one side, on the other
 Sprung from Túrán—all rancour and vainglory—
 I, like Káuś and like Afrásiyáb,
 That warlock froward even in his dreams,
 May grow an ingrate unawares to God,
 And fray mine own pure soul. His Grace will quit me,
 I shall incline to falsehood and unwisdom,
 And when I pass within the gloom, and when
 My head and diadem shall come to dust,
 I shall but leave a bad name in the world,
 And make an evil ending in God's sight.
 This face of mine, this colour of my cheeks
 Will fade, my bones be clad in dust, and all
 Accomplishment be lost. Ingratitude
 Will come instead, and in the other world
 My soul be dark. Another will assume
 My crown and throne, and tread my fortune down.
 A bad name will be my memorial;
 The roses of mine ancient toils will turn
 To thorns. Since now I have avenged my sire,
 And have adorned the world with goodliness,
 Have slain who should be slain, because they were
 Perverse and hostile to all holy God,
 No place remaineth—settlement or desert—
 That hath not read the legend on my sword;
 While all the mighty of the world obey me
 Albeit they be monarchs throned and crowned.
 Thanks be to God who gave to me the Grace,
 With feet and wings amid the change of fortune.
 And now I deem it better to depart
 To God in all my glory, and perchance
 The Almighty's messenger may, though unseen,
 And while I still am flourishing, convey
 My spirit to the dwelling of the just,
 Because this Kaian crown and throne will pass.
 None will excel me in success and fame,

V. 1406

In greatness, welfare, peace, and revelry,
 For I have heard and witnessed this world's secrets,
 Its good and ill both privy and apert;
 But still for husbandman and king alike
 There is a common end—the way to death.”

The Sháh gave orders to the chamberlain
 On duty: “Whoso cometh to the court
 Refuse admittance to him with fair words,
 Be courteous to him and refrain from harshness.”

Thus saying he departed to the pleasance
 With lamentations and with loins ungirt,
 Bathed, ere he prayed, his body and his head,
 And sought by wisdom's lamp the way of God,
 Then donned a new white robe and all devout
 With heart of hope paced toward the oratory,
 There prayed in secret to the holy Judge,
 And said: “O higher than pure soul, the Maker
 Of fire, of air, and dust! behold and grant me
 Much wisdom, and to know both good and ill.
 I will give praises to Thee while I live,
 And strive to better what I have done well.
 Forgive whatever I have done amiss;
 Let me not use my power frowardly;
 V. 1407 Keep from this soul of mine the ills of fortune,
 And all the machinations of the Dív,
 So that unlike Káuś, Zakhák, Jamshíd,
 I may not yield to passion's tyranny;
 And if he shut on me the door of virtue,
 And fraud and guile grow strong, let not his power
 Avail to the destruction of my soul,
 But bear it to the mansions of the just.
 Look down on me in answer to my prayer.”

He stood thus for a week both day and night
 In body, but his spirit was afar.
 Now when the sennight ended Kai Khusrau
 Began to totter, for his strength had failed,

And with the eighth day's coming he had gone
From oratory back to royal throne.

§ 48

*How the Nobles inquired why Khusrau had closed
his Court*

The paladins of the Íránian host
All marvelled at the conduct of the Sháh,
And divers were those famous warriors' thoughts.
Now, when the illustrious Sháh resumed the state,
The chamberlain came to the door and bade
Remove the curtain and admit the host.
Then came with folded arms the mighty men—
The cavaliers and men of lion-looks—
Such men as Tús, Gúdarz, and gallant Gív,
Gurgín, Ruhhám the Lion, and Bízhan,
Shídúsh and Zanga, son of Sháwarán,
With Faríburz and Gustaham and others,
Who, having seen the Sháh and done obeisance,
Disclosed to him their secret thoughts and said:—
“O Sháh! O brave! O head! O cypress-tree!
O ruler of the world and chief of chiefs!
No Sháh like thee hath filled the ivory throne;
From thee both sun and moon derive their light,
Thou dost exalt steed, mail, and saddle, and give
To glorious Ázargashasp fresh lustre.
Not fearing travail, toying not with wealth,
Thou makest toils more numerous than treasures.
We paladins are all of us thy slaves,
Dependent for our lives on sight of thee,
Who hast trod all thine enemies to dust,
And in this world hast no one left to fear.
Thine are the troops and treasure of all realms:
Where'er thou settest foot thou labourest.
We know no reason why the monarch's thoughts

Have grown so gloomy at this present time ;
 This is thy season to enjoy the world,
 Not to be sorrowful and fade away.
 If now the Sháh is vexed by any fault
 In us, so let him say that we may please him,
 And fill our cheeks with blood, our hearts with fire ;
 Or if he tell us of some secret foe
 All those that wear a royal crown themselves
 Will pledge their thrones and crowns to take the head
 Of that man off him, or to lose their own,
 What time they don the helmet of the brave.
 Let him inform us what the secret is,
 And then devise with us."

The noble Sháh

Replied : " O paladins, who seek the way !
 I am not harassed in the world by foes,
 My treasure is not squandered anywhere,
 The army doth not trouble me at all,
 Nor is there one in fault among yourselves.
 When on his foemen I avenged my sire,
 And decked the world with justice and the Faith,
 No single foot of darksome earth was left
 That had not read the inscription on my signet ;
 Return ye then your falchions to their scabbards,
 And wield the goblet not the scimitar ;
 Instead of twanging bows make ready flutes
 And harps with wine and colour and perfume,
 For we have done what there was need to do,
 And cleared the world of foes. For one whole week
 Have I been standing in the sight of God,
 Fulfilled with contemplation and good rede.
 I have a secret longing which I ask
 The Maker of the world to gratify,
 And will declare it when He answereth,¹
 And by His answer maketh glad my days.

V. 1409

¹ Reading with P.

Do ye too offer praises unto God,
 Entreating Him, who is the Source of power
 For good and ill, to grant this boon and blessing :
 Praise be to Him who hath revealed the way.
 When this is done ensue all happiness,
 And banish thoughts of evil from your hearts.
 Know that the restless sky, discerning not
 'Twixt fosterer and fostered, cherisheth
 The old and young alike, and we are witness
 Both to its justice and its tyranny."

The paladins departed from the Sháh,
 Their hearts distracted with their griefs. He bade
 The chamberlain : "Sit down behind the curtain,
 And let none, kin or alien, come to me."

At night he went forth to the place of prayer,
 Unclosed his lips before the almighty Judge,
 And said to Him : "O higher than the height,
 Thou who exaltest purity and goodness !
 Vouchsafe to be my guide to Paradise
 Or ever I shall quit this Wayside Inn ;
 May no perverseness turn my heart aside,
 But let my soul among the blest abide."

§ 49

How the Íránians summoned Zál and Rustam

Now when a week had passed, and Kai Khusrau
 Showed not his face, there rose much talk and clamour.
 The paladins assembled to a man—
 The lords, the sages, and the counsellors—
 Such as Gúdarz and Tús, son of Naudar,
 And there was much dispute of right and wrong,
 About the ways of autocratic Sháhs—
 Those that served God and those that did amiss—
 And all narrated stories of the great,

V. 1410

The nobles and the sages of the world.
 Gúdarz said unto Gív: "O fortune-favoured,
 The servant ever of the crown and throne!
 Thou didst sustain much travail for Írán,
 Abandoning thy country and thy kindred.
 A sorry matter now confronteth us—
 One that we cannot hold of small account.
 Thou needs must set forth for Zábulistán,
 Dispatch a mounted courier to Kábul,
 And say to Zál and Rustam: 'Kai Khusrau
 Hath turned himself from God and lost the way,
 Hath closed the door of audience to the nobles,
 And surely is in conclave with the Dív.
 We have asked questions and have made excuses,
 Appealing to his justice in the case;
 He listened much but answered not; we see
 His heart distraught, his head fulfilled with vapours,
 And fear that he will grow, like Sháh Káuś,
 Perverse, and that the Dív will make him err.
 Now ye are paladins more wise than we,
 With greater influence in all affairs,
 So whatsoever counsellors ye have—
 Men of Kannúj, Dambar, and Margh and Máí,
 Star-readers of Kábulistán and all
 The sages of Zábul—bring to Írán
 To treat this matter. All the realm is full
 Of rumours since the Sháh denieth speech
 And audience. Now that we have tried all means
 We look to Zál to set the matter right.'"

Gív, hearing this, chose out some valiant men,
 And went in dudgeon, brooding moodily,
 Toward Sístán. Arrived he told to Zál
 And Rustam those strange things that he had seen
 And heard; to noble Zál he sadly said:—
 "We have espoused much grief." He said to Rustam:—
 "Call from Kábul and summon from Zábul

The wise, the astrologers, and archimages
To bear us company."

Then all set face
Toward Zál and they departed for Írán.

V. 1411

The worldlord stood seven days in prayer, but when
The world-illuming sun shone on the eighth
The audience-chamberlain removed the curtain,
And Kai Khusrau sat on the throne of gold.
Then all the paladins and archimages
Approached. A multitude of prudent nobles
And counsellors stood there before the worldlord,
Who looked on them, received them graciously,
And, as the Kaians used, assigned them seats ;
But of those famous, loyal lieges none
Would take his seat or loose his folded arms ;
They oped their lips and said : " O turning Heaven !
O worldlord full of justice, bright of soul !
Thine are the power and Grace of majesty ;
From earth to sun and Fish all, all is thine.
We stand as slaves before thy presence, we
Thy paladins and faithful counsellors,
To ask why thou hast shut thy court to us.
Now time hath passed thus and our hearts are sore
And sad. If then the Sháh will tell this secret
To us his marchlords, who are all astray,
We will turn seas to land if they annoy him,
And change the robe of dust thereon to musk,
We will rase mountains if they be the cause,
And with our falchions cleave the hearts of foes,
While if the cure be wealth let not the Sháh
Be troubled in respect of cash and treasure ;
We all keep watch upon thy treasury,
And full of anguish weep at thy distress."

He made reply : " I need my paladins
Although my heart hath no anxieties
Respecting mastery and men and treasure.

V. 1412

No foeman hath appeared within the realm
 To cause me any care on his account ;
 But yet mine ardent heart hath one desire
 That I will not uproot therefrom, and now
 Throughout the dark night till the dawn of day
 I wait the consummation of my hopes,
 And when that cometh I will tell you all,
 And utter what as yet I leave unsaid.
 Go ye your ways victorious and glad,
 Dismissing such thoughts from your memories."

Then all the paladins, those noble men,
 Called blessings down on him, and grieved again.

§ 50

How Kai Khusrau saw Surúsh in a Dream

As soon as they had gone the wakeful Sháh
 Gave orders to the chamberlain, who closed
 The curtains and sat down beside the portal,
 Despairing of victorious Kai Khusrau.
 The worldlord went before the Lord most high,
 Entreating Him that He would be his guide,
 And said : " Almighty Ruler of the heaven,
 Who kindest goodness, charity, and justice !
 This sovereignty advantageth me not
 Unless I am in favour with my Lord ;
 But whether I have acted well or ill
 Bestow on me a seat in Paradise."

Thus stood he pleading for five sennights' space
 Before the presence of the Lord most high.
 One night the Sháh slept not for suffering
 Until the moon had risen, then he slept
 But with his mind awake—that spouse of wisdom—
 And dreamed that blest Surúsh thus whispered him :—
 " O Sháh, the favourite of the stars and fortune,

Who much hast handled armlet, crown, and throne!
 Now hast thou won thy whole desire, if thou
 Art instant in abandoning the world.
 Near to the throne of God, the holy Judge,
 Shalt thou have place; abide not in this gloom.
 Bestow thy treasures on the worthiest,
 And let another have the Wayside Inn.
 Thou shalt grow rich by bounteously entreating
 The mendicants and those of thine own kindred.
 Know that the man who hath escaped the clutch
 Of misadventure, or the dragon's breath—
 Each that hath suffered travail for thy sake—
 Endured the toil that he might win the spoil.
 Give then thy havings to the worthiest,
 Because thou wilt not tarry here for long,
 And choose as ruler for the throne a man
 That will not hurt an ant upon the ground.¹
 When thou hast given away the world rest not,
 Because the season of dispatch hath come
 To thee. Luhrásp hath fitting excellence;
 Resign to him the kingship, throne, and girdle.
 The place that thou hast sought from God is thine,
 Ascend without death and depart thou thither."

He spake much else in secret to the Sháh,
 Who marvelled at the message and, what time
 He wakened from his slumber, all fordone,
 Saw that the oratory ran with sweat!
 He wept and, with his face upon the ground,
 Made his thanksgiving to the Omnipotent,
 And said: "If I shall pass away forthwith
 I shall attain from God my heart's desire."

He went to occupy the ivory throne,
 And carried in his hand a robe unworn,
 And, having donned that raiment, sat him down,
 A Sháh without an armlet, torque, or crown.

¹ Cf. Vol. i. p. 201 and note.

§ 51

How Zál admonished Kai Khusrau

V. 1414 Now on the sixth week Zál and Rustam came
 In discontentment and distress of heart.
 The Íránians when they were advised thereof
 Made haste, heart-broken too, to go to them.
 When Rustam had appeared in sight with Zál,
 Together with the prowest archimages,
 All those who were the kinsmen of Zarasp
 Urged on their steeds to go and welcome them,
 While all the nobles with the golden boots
 Advanced with Káwa's standard. When Gúdarz
 Reached matchless Rustam tears ran down his cheeks;
 The faces of the advancing troops were wan;
 All hearts were seared and troubled for Khusrau.
 The Íránians spake to Zál and Rustam thus:—
 "The Sháh hath erred by counsel of Iblís.
 The audience-chamber is completely thronged,
 But none beholdeth him by night or day.
 They ope the door of audience once a week,
 And thither go we but, O paladin!
 Quite other now is Kai Khusrau than when
 Thou usedst to behold him bright and happy
 Of soul. The straight-stemmed Cypress-tree is bent,
 The red Rose hath the colour of the quince.
 I know not that the evil eye hath seen him,
 Or why his rosy face is withered so,
 Unless the Íránians' fortune hath grown dim,
 Or stars have brought on him this decadence;
 Or whether 'tis the fear of holy God
 That causeth in his heart such melancholy;
 Or if the Dív hath made him err and wrecked
 Once and for all the world."

Brave Zál replied:—

“The Sháh hath grown aweary of the throne.
 There are such things as health and suffering,
 Distress and gladness too have each their time.
 Have not your heart so greatly sorrowful,
 For sorrow casteth down the blithest soul.
 We will speak much to him and counsel him,
 And by our counsel bring his star success.”

V. 1415

The wayfarers made haste to court. The curtain
 Was drawn aside. They were admitted gladly
 In order due—Zál, elephantine Rustam,
 Tús and Gúdarz and all their company,
 And then Gurgín, Bízhan, and Gustaham
 With all the warriors of their retinue.
 The king of kings, when he beheld Zál's face,
 And heard the voice of Rustam at the curtain,
 Rose to his feet in wonder from the throne,
 And standing greeted Zál and clasped his hand.
 As for the wise men from Zábul, Kannúj,
 Dambar, and from Kábul, he greeted each,
 And courteously entreated them, assigning
 To each his place and to the Íránians
 The highest. Zál did reverence and spake thus:—
 “Live happily while month and year endure!
 Of all the famous chiefs that we can call
 To mind from Minúchihr to Kai Kubád,
 As well as Zav, son of Tahmásp, Káuś—
 Great men and Sháhs whose steps were fortunate—
 And Siyáwush, who was as mine own son,
 Endowed with stature, dignity, and Grace,
 None have I seen with Grace, renown, and wisdom
 Such as the Sháh's, and may he reign for ever
 Victorious, intrepid, just, and wise.
 Thou hast pervaded all the world with justice,
 And come again in triumph and in joy.
 What king but is as dust beneath thy feet?
 What bane for which thy name is not a cure?

V. 1416

Received have I some most unwelcome news,
 And thereupon have made all haste to come.
 One from Írán declared : 'The conquering Sháh
 Hath bid the audience-chamberlain to leave
 The curtain down and hide our monarch from us.'
 I like an eagle or a ship at sea
 Have come in all haste, since the Íránians grieve,
 That I might ask the monarch of the world
 About the secret matter on his mind.
 The readers of the stars, the mighty men
 Whom I saw chief within their provinces,
 Have come with Indian tablets from Kannúj,
 Dambar, and Margh and Mái to ascertain
 The secret of the sky, and why the Sháh
 Withdraweth his affection from Írán.
 Now all well-being resteth on three things,
 With which the throne of royalty is safe ;
 The three are treasure, toil, and valiant men :
 Without them glory, rule, and fight are not.
 A fourth is that we offer praise to God,
 And make our prayers before Him night and day,
 Because He is His servant's succourer,
 One who restraineth the injurious.
 We will bestow much wealth upon the poor,
 Though it should cost us what we value most,
 That He may make thy spirit bright again
 With wisdom for the armour of thy brain."¹

§ 52

How Kai Khusrau answered Zál

Khusrau gave ear, then made a sage reply :
 "Old man of honest brain!" he said to Zál,
 "Right goodly are thy counsels and thy speech.

¹ Reading with P.

Since Minúchihhr was on the throne till now
Thou hast been kindly and benevolent,
While Rustam of the elephantine form,
That man of name, the pillar of the Kaians
And people's joy, became the fosterer
Of Siyáwush and source of good to him.
Troops that have looked on Rustam's iron mace,
His breast, his helmet, and his lion-limbs,
Have often fled before the fight, and dropped
Their bows and arrows on the plains and dales ;
He helped mine ancestors to seek revenge,
And was their glorious minister and guide.
Were I to tell thy toils the tales would last
A hundred generations and be fresh,
And were inquiry made of thy good deeds
My praise would only be disparagement.
Next, as to what thou askest of my case
In thus refusing audience and lamenting,
I will inform thee of each circumstance
That thou mayst know the matter point by point :
By God, I have no wish on earth but one—
To quit this wretched world. Five sennights now
Have passed while I have stood to supplicate
The Judge and Guide to pardon past offences,
To brighten my dark moon, convey me hence,
And leave on earth no pain or grief through me.
I must not quit the right and turn aside
Like former Sháhs. I have attained my wish,
And must dispatch because glad news hath come.
Whenas mine eyes were sleeping yester-morn
Surúsh, the blessèd, came to me from God,
And said : ' Prepare, for 'tis thy time to go,
Thy watching and distress are overpassed.'
So now mine audiences, care for the host,
For crown and throne and belt, are at an end."

The paladins were troubled in their hearts

About the Sháh and knew not what to do,
 Zál, when he heard the monarch's words, was wroth
 And from his liver drew a deep, cold sigh;
 He said to the Íránians: "This is bad!
 No wisdom still abideth in his brain;
 Since first I girt a girdle round my loins
 I have attended at the Kaians' throne,
 V. 1418 But never saw I one who spake like this!
 Yet may we not ignore what he hath said,
 Or give assent thereto in any way,
 When he is holding forth in such a strain.
 He may have been in conclave with the Dív,
 And thus his head is turned away from God.
 Húshang and Farídún, God's worshippers,
 Ne'er laid their hands on such a branch as this.
 I will declare to him the honest truth
 E'en at the cost of life."

The Íránians said:—
 "No Kaian e'er spake thus! We are with thee
 In what thou say'st to him. May God prevent
 His wandering from use and precedent."

§ 53

How Zál rebuked Kai Khusrau

Zál heard their words, then rose and said: "Khusrau,
 Thou upright chief! list to the words of one
 Advanced in years, one who hath seen the world,
 And answer not if he adviseth ill.
 Though honest speech be bitter it will bar
 The door of ruin by its bitterness.
 Take therefore in good part the honest words,
 Which I will speak before this company:
 Born wast thou in the country of Túrán;
 There was thy fountain-head and there thy home;

Thou hadst on one side great Afrásiyáb,
 Who never dreamed of aught but sorcery,
 For grandsire, on the other base Káuś
 With wrinkled visage and deceitful heart.
 From west to east the greatness and the sway,
 The crown and belt, were his. Now he was fain
 To pass the sky and count the circling stars,
 And though I counselled him at large thereon,
 And spake with bitterness as I do now,
 He was not profited by all my counsels,
 And seared and grieved I turned away from him.
 He soared and came down headlong to the dust,
 But holy God vouchsafed to spare his life.
 On coming home he was ungrateful still ;
 His heart was awed, but war was in his thoughts.
 Thou with a hundred thousand swordsmen mailed,
 And armed with ox-head maces, didst go forth,
 As 'twere a lion roused, to levy war,
 And rank upon the desert of Khárazm.
 Thou wentest forth, the champion of thy host,
 To fight afoot against the valiant Shída.
 If he had got the upper hand of thee
 Thou wouldst have brought the great Afrásiyáb
 Upon Írán ; the Íránians' wives and children
 Had perished ; none had girt him for revenge ;
 But God vouchsafed deliverance from his hand,
 Had mercy on thee and confirmed thy counsels.
 Thou slewest him whom there was cause to fear,
 Him who was thankless to the almighty Judge ;
 But when I said : ' It is the time for peace,
 The time for robes, for largess, and for goblet ;
 The king and host will rest from toil, and we
 Shall have our souls refreshed for months and years,'
 This grievous business came upon Írán,
 And more than ever filled our hearts with sorrow,
 For thou hast put from thee the way of God,

V. 1419

And ta'en to evil paths and frowardness.
 Thy person will not profit by this wrong,
 Nor will it please the Maker of the world.
 If thou art bent on such a course, O Sháh !
 No one will go about to do thy bidding,
 And then thou wilt repent thee of thine acts.
 Consider ! Do not what the dīvs command.
 Moreover if thou seekest thus their way
 The Worldlord will withdraw from thee the Grace,
 Thou wilt be left in misery and sin,
 And men will never hail thee Sháh again ;
 God is our Refuge ; therefore turn to God,
 Because He is our Guide to what is good.
 If thou rejectest this my counselling,
 And trustest unto wicked Áhriman,
 Thou wilt retain no homage and no fortune,
 No royal majesty, no crown, no throne.
 V. 1420 May wisdom be the leader of thy soul,
 Because the way in front of us is long.
 Mayst thou be prudent, may thy counsels prosper,
 And may thy brain be steadfast and devout."

Whenas the words of Zál had reached their end
 The heroes all assented, saying thus :—
 "The old man saith what we too think is best,
 It is not right that truth should be supprest."

§ 54

How Kai Khusrau answered and how Zál excused himself

When Kai Khusrau had hearkened to their words
 He was a while anangered and breathed hard,
 Then spake deliberately : "O veteran Zál,
 Whose manhood reacheth countless years ! if I
 Speak coldly to thee here before the folk
 The Worldlord never will approve that wrong

In me. Moreover Rustam will be grieved,
 And through his grief loss will befall Írán;
 Moreover should I reckon up his toils
 They would be more e'en than his famous treasures.
 He hath enshielded me with his own body,
 And suffered not our foes to eat or sleep,
 So I will answer thee with kindness,
 And will not break thy heart with cruel words."

Khusrau then cried aloud: "O noble men
 Whose fortunes never slumber! I have heard
 What Zál hath said in presence of you all.
 By God, the almighty Lord, I am afar
 Both from the way and bidding of the Dív;
 My soul inclineth God-ward, for in Him
 I have beheld my remedy for care.
 Mine ardent heart hath looked upon this world,
 My breast is troubled by the woes thereof."

He said to Zál: "Forbear thine anger, thou
 Shouldst speak in measured words. First, for thy
 saying:—

'None wise and shrewd hath issued from Túrán,
 Worldlord and son of Siyáwush am I,
 A prudent monarch of the Kaian stock,
 The grandson of the worldlord Kai Káuś—
 The love-inflaming, wise, and fortunate—
 And through my mother from Afrásiyáb,
 Whose wrath deprived us both of food and sleep.
 Sprung thus from Farídún and from Pashang,
 I shame not at my birth because the sea
 Could not have purged the Lions of Írán
 Of fears inspired by Afrásiyáb.
 Next for the carriage which Káuś once made
 To raise his head above the sovereignty,
 Know that no blame attacheth to a king
 For lofty aims. Now that I have avenged
 My father and have decked the world with goodness,

Have slain my foes, and all who were on earth
 The common source of outrage and injustice,
 No work remaineth for me here below ;
 The miscreants have not a monarch left.
 Now whensoever I meditate awhile
 On kingship and long rule I go the way
 Of Kai Káuś and of Jamshíd, and lose
 My footing as they did. I fear that I,
 As soon as icy age shall come upon me,
 Shall, like impure Zakhák and daring Túr,
 Whose outrages revolted all the world,
 Be haled to Hell. Again, thou saidst : 'Thou foughtest
 With Shída like a lusty crocodile.'
 The reason was—I saw no cavalier
 In all Írán who would engage with him,
 Or on engaging would not shrink and prove
 Of little worth with Shída as a foe,
 And so I battled for Írán in person ;
 Bright is his star who hath the Grace divine.
 For these five sennights both by night and day
 Have I unclosed my lips with orisons
 If so the Worldlord, the all holy God,
 Might free me from this grief and this dark earth,
 And now aweary of host, crown, and throne
 I have returned in haste to make all ready.
 Thou son of Sám, old and illustrious,
 Said'st that the Dív had laid a snare for me,
 That darkly and perversely I have left
 The way, grown vile of soul and black of heart !
 I do not know what chastisement divine
 Thou thinkest due to me for life misspent."

V. 1422

Zál was confounded when he heard these words,
 And could not look the monarch in the face.
 Then with a cry he rose upon his feet,
 And said : " O Sháh, thou worshipper of God !
 I have been rash and foolish while thou art

A holy man, and one divinely wise.
 Forgive me if the Dív hath led me wrong.
 I have been living for unnumbered years
 With loins girt up in presence of the Sháhs,
 But never saw I one who sought of God,
 The Judge of sun and moon, what thou hast sought.
 Now Kai Khusrau hath come to be the teacher :
 Be evil fortune ever far from him.
 I would not lose Khusrau ; yet, though my soul
 Is dark, let wisdom witness to my words
 That to his faithful lieges of Írán
 The Sháh's act overrideth all their grief,
 So that with us there is desire to part
 From our just judge, beneficent Khusrau."

V. 1423

The Sháh, when he had heard Zál's words, approved
 The excuse thus proffered by his loyal liege,
 Reached forth and clasped in his the old man's hand,
 And made him take his seat upon the throne ;
 The sun-faced Sháh was ware that naught could move
 His liege to speak such words excepting love.

§ 55

How Kai Khusrau gave his last Charge to the Íránians

The Sháh spake afterward to Zál, and said :—
 " Now gird ye, every one of you, your loins,
 Thou, Rustam, Tús, Gúdarz and Gív and all
 The others that are men of name and courage !
 Bear ye the camp-enclosure from the city
 Out on the plain with our victorious standard ;
 Take thither all the tents and the pavilions
 To furnish an encampment ; there assemble
 The chieftains' flags, the elephants, and troops,
 And make a splendid feast-stead."

Rustam did

As said the Sháh. They brought the camp-enclosure
 Forth to the plain, and all the Íránians
 Girt up their loins to do as they were bidden.
 The earth was filled with tents from hill to hill—
 Tents white and sable, violet and blue—
 While Káwa's flag was in the midst and made
 The world look yellow, red, and violet.
 They pitched Zál's tent-enclosure on the plain
 Hard by the Sháh before the army. Rustam,
 The paladin, was stationed on the left
 With shrewd chiefs from Kábul. In front were Tús,
 Gúdarz, and Gív, Bízhan the warrior,
 V. 1424 And brave Gurgín, and, in the rear, Shápúr
 With Gustaham and nobles in attendance.
 The king of kings sat on the golden throne,
 With ox-head mace, on one side Zál and Rustam—
 A stately Elephant and Lion grim—
 Upon the other Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív,
 Gurgín, Farhád, and valorous Shápúr,
 While every eye was fixed upon the face
 Of Kai Khusrau to know what he would say
 About the host. He raised his voice and said :—
 "Ye famous men of action! every one
 That is possessed of rede and wisdom knoweth
 That good and ill will pass away alike;
 We all must go, and this world passeth too:
 What need for all this travail, grief, and care?
 'Tis well to go now while we have our troops,
 We must not go as though impuissant;
 For us the bull is still within its hide,
 And elsewhere are reward and retribution.
 Be all of you in fear of holy God,
 And put no confidence in this dark earth,
 Because the day of each of us will pass,
 And time is reckoning our every breath.
 From glorious Húshang to Sháh Káús

Of all that had the throne, the crown, and Grace
 Naught but the name remaineth to the world,
 And no one readeth rescripts from the dead.
 Of them full many showed ingratitude,
 And trembled for their error in the end.
 A bondslave am I even as they were ;
 And striven though I have with pains, and I
 Have striven and endured exceeding toil,
 I realise that here is none abiding.
 Now from this Wayside Inn have I uprooted
 My heart and soul, and lifted them o'er care
 And toil ; now have I won my whole desire,
 And turned my back upon the Kaian throne.
 To every one that hath borne toil with me
 Will I give treasure equal to his wish,
 And speak to God, who heareth what is good,
 For them whom I approve. I give the Iránians
 My treasures and mine implements of war.
 To every prince among you I will give
 A province. Of my purses, slaves, and steeds
 Have I bethought me ; I produce a list
 And now bestow them, for I go my way,
 And clear my heart of this obscurity.
 Put forth your hands in gladness to the feast,
 One sennight eat and drink, and pray that I
 May quit this Wayside Hostel and abide
 Afar from toil."

V. 1425

When he announced his purpose
 The warriors were all astound at him,
 And one among them said : "The Sháh is mad,
 And wit is as a stranger to his heart !
 I know not what will come to him, or where
 The crown and throne will find repose !"

Anon

V. 1426

The warriors departed band by band ;
 Plains, dales, and mountains were all troops. The sounds

Of piping and of neighing steeds ascended
 Above the very sky, as thou wouldst say;
 Thereat the spirits of the Íránians rose,
 And for one week none thought of griefs and woes.

§ 56

*How Kai Khusrau appointed Gúdarz to be his
 Mandatary*

The Sháh the eighth day sat upon the throne
 Without his armlets, mace, and golden helm,
 And since the time when he must pass was near
 They oped the portal of the treasury,
 Which done he made Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
 His mandatary, saying: "See to all
 The world's affairs—the public and the secret.
 There is a season for amassing wealth
 With labour, and a time for lavishing.
 Look to the ruined caravansaries,
 As well as to the bridges on our borders;
 The dried up cisterns, those within Írán
 And those constructed by Afrásiyáb;
 The children motherless, the womenfolk
 That have no husbands and are destitute,
 With those that come to want in their old age;
 Moreover close not thou the treasury's door
 To such as strive to hide their sufferings.
 Bestow and live in fear of evil days;
 See to the cities that are lying waste—
 The lurking-dens of leopards and of lions.
 Next as to places where the Cult of Fire
 Prevailed, but which are waste and priestless now,
 As well as every one in indigence,
 Who in his early days gave liberally,
 And all the wells grown old and waterless,

Make all these flourish through this hoard of gold
And silver. Think drachms vile; remember death."

As to the treasure which was called "The Bride,"
Stored by Káús within the town of Tús,
He bade Gúdarz: "Give it to Gív, to Zál,
And to the lord of Rakhsh."

He reckoned up

His wardrobe and bestowed the whole on Rustam.
The armlets also and the chieftains' torques,
The massive maces and the coats of mail,
He gave to Gustaham—a just award.
Then, choosing from the steeds and saddlery,
He gave a herd of horses highly bred,
And then at large, to Tús the general.
He gave Gúdarz his gardens, rosaries,
And certain palaces the which he named.
The body-armour that he treasured so—
That precious armour worn in his campaigns—
He had bestowed complete on gallant Gív
What time he grew weary of the throne.
A palace, camp-enclosure with the tents,
Pavilions, stalls, and horses he presented
To Faríburz, son of Káús, as well
As coats of mail and helms and Rúman casques.
A torque which was more bright than Jupiter,
Together with two radiant rings of ruby,
Engraven with the worldlord's name and known
Throughout the world, "These," said he to Bízhan,
"Receive as a memorial of me,
And sow not any seed but that of good."

Then said he to the Íránians: "My time
Approacheth, and I long afresh to go;
Make your requests of me for what ye need,
For this assembly must be broken up."

The chiefs were overcome by grief, they wept,
And burned in anguish for the king of kings.

“To whom now will the Sháh,” inquired they all,
 “Bequeath the crown as his memorial?”

§ 57

How Zál asked of Kai Khusrau a Patent for Rustam

V. 1428

When Zál, that loyal liege, had heard the Sháh
 He kissed the ground, then springing to his feet
 Spake out, and said: “O monarch of the world!
 Let me disclose to thee my heart’s desire.
 What for Írán’s sake Rustam hath achieved
 In combats, travails, and campaigns thou knowest.
 When Kai Káuś went to Mázandarán—
 A lengthy march of many toilsome leagues—
 And when the dívs had put him into ward,
 Together with the proud Gúdarz and Tús,
 Then matchless Rustam, having heard thereof,
 Went to Mázandarán in haste alone.
 Through desert and through gloom, midst dívs and
 lions,
 Enchanters and fierce dragons, in distress
 And toil he cut his way, and reached the Sháh;
 He rent the White Div’s flank, he tore the reins
 Both of Púlád,¹ son of Ghundí, and Bíd,
 And plucked off Sanja’s head. His war-cry reached
 High heaven. Káuś went to Hámávarán,
 And there folk made him fast in heavy bonds
 With Tús, Gúdarz, and Gív—those gallant hearts
 And wary warriors. But matchless Rustam
 Marched thither with a mighty host and chieftains,
 The chosen of Írán and of Zábul,
 And freed Káuś, Gúdarz, and Gív and Tús.
 When Rustam slew Suhráb—a son unmatched
 Mid high and low alike throughout the world—

¹ The texts have Úlád, but cf. Vol. ii. pp. 44, 54, 64, 93.

When waging battle for Káuś, the Sháh,
 He wept in agony for months and years;
 And when he fought Kámús in after-times
 His valour sent the dust up to the clouds.
 However I might speak about his acts
 The tale of them would never reach an end.
 Now if the Sháh is tired of crown and throne
 What leaveth he this loyal lion-heart?"

"His actions," such was Kai Khusrau's reply,
 "On our behalf, his fightings and his toil,
 Who knoweth save the almighty Lord of Heaven—
 He that revealeth justice, peace, and love?
 Yet Rustam's fame is manifest to all,
 And he hath none to match him in the world."

V. 1429

He ordered that a scribe should come to him
 With paper, musk, and spicery. They wrote
 A patent from the monarch of the earth,
 The exalted Kai Khusrau, the pure in Faith,
 For elephantine Rustam, that brave chieftain,
 Praised for his valour in all companies,
 The foremost of the world, a lord thereof,
 A chieftain, vigilant, and valiant,
 A conquering leader and the Light of hosts,
 Assigning him the province of Nímruz.
 They sealed the patent with the golden signet,
 As was the usance of just Kai Khusrau,
 Who gave the deed to him, commending him,
 And saying: "May the earth be blessed in Rustam."

Then to the chieftains that had journeyed thither
 With Zál, the son of Sám the cavalier,
 And astrolabes upon their bosoms bare,
 He gave robes, gold, and silver—each his share.

§ 58

How Kai Khusrau gave a Patent to Gív

Zál, seeing this, gave thanks exceedingly
 To that victorious and discerning Sháh.
 When Zál resumed his seat Gúdarz arose,
 He urged a just request, and thus he said :—
 “Victorious Sháh! we never yet have seen
 A master of the throne to equal thee.
 From Minúchihr as far as Kai Kubád,
 And from Káuś until thy noble self,
 We have girt up our loins before the chiefs,
 And have not had a single day’s repose.
 My sons and grandsons numbered seventy-eight ;
 Now eight remain ; the rest have passed away.
 Moreover watchful Gív for seven years
 Was in Túrán, deprived of food and rest ;
 Upon the waste he lived on onager,
 And wore the skins of game. The Sháh, when he
 Came to Írán, had seen what toils Gív bare
 For him. He wearieſh of crown and throne,
 And Gív expecteth kindness at his hands.”

V. 1430

Khusrau replied : “He hath done better still,
 And may a thousand blessings rest upon him,
 The Master of the world be his ally,
 And may his foemen’s rose be full of thorns.
 My havings great and small are in thy hand.
 May health of body and of mind be thine.”

He made a grant of Kum and Ispahán—
 The seat of nobles and the home of chiefs.
 The scribe wrote out with musk and ambergris
 On silk the great king’s letter, who impressed
 His golden seal thereon, blessed it, and said :—
 “May God be well contented with Gúdarz,
 And may his foemen’s hearts be filled with smoke !”

He thus addressed the Íránians : “ Know ye this,
That gallant Gív, who hath the thews of chieftains
And lion’s claws, is my memorial
To be your succour after I am gone.
Submit yourselves to his authority,
And not transgress the counsels of Gúdarz.”

The chieftains of that race with one accord
Renewed their blessings on their sovereign lord.

§ 59

How Kai Khusrau gave a Patent to Tús

Whenas Gúdarz resumed his seat Tús rose,
Came, kissed the ground before Khusrau, and said :—
“ O monarch ! live for ever. May ill’s hand
Be ever far from thee. Of all these nobles
I only am derived from Farídún ;
We were the royal house till came Kubád.
Before the Íránians have I girt my girdle,
And never loosed that bondage from my loins.
Upon Mount Hamáwan the breastplate galled
My body ; it was all I had to wear ;
And in that war of wreak for Siyáwush
I was each night the watchman of the host.
I could not save the army at Ládán,
But was myself within the Dragon’s breath.
When in Hámávarán Káuś was bound
There were chains also on the neck of Tús,
And in Mázandarán I was in bonds
With him, and was in dudgeon for his sake.
I, whether I behaved me well or ill,
Served in all places as his general.
I never anywhere dispersed the host,
And no one ever made complaint of me.
The Sháh is tired of treasury and throne,

And is about to quit this Wayside Inn;
 What dost thou bid me do? What power is mine?
 Thou knowest both my virtues and my faults."

The Sháh made answer: "Thou hadst greater hardships

Than these from fate. Keep Káwa's standard still,
 Be general and wear the golden boots.
 Thy portion of the world is Khurásán;
 None of these nobles will molest thee there."

They wrote a patent out to that effect
 Before the magnates and the mighty men;
 Khusrau then sealed it with the golden signet,
 And gave to Tús a golden torque and girdle,
 Invoking blessings on him fervently:—
 "May my heart never more be wroth with thee."

§ 60

How Kai Khusrau gave the Kingship to Luhrásp

The king of kings, when he had ordered thus
 The matter of the chiefs, went to his throne.
 Now of the chiefs Luhrásp remained, whose name
 None read upon the roll of royalty,
 And him the Sháh required Bízhan to bring
 Before the presence with his helmet on.
 The worldlord when he saw Luhrásp arose,
 Saluted him with outstretched hands and then,
 V. 1432 Descending from the famous ivory throne,
 Took from his head the heart-illuming crown,
 Resigned it to Luhrásp and hailed him Sháh
 Of all the Íránian realm, and said to him:—
 "May this thy crown prove fortunate to thee;
 Be all the world thy slave. On thee have I,
 Since mine exceeding toil and pain are over,
 Bestowed the crown of kingship and the treasure.

Speak naught but what is just henceforth, for thou
 Through justice wilt be conquering and glad.
 Make not the Dív the comrade of thy soul
 If thou wilt keep thy fortune vigorous ;
 Be prudent and without offence, and set
 For evermore a watch upon thy tongue."

He said to the Íránians: "Let your hearts
 Be joyful in his fortune and his throne."

The Íránians were amazed, they raged like lions,
 And said: "Must we salute Luhrásp as Sháh?"

Then from among them Zál rose to his feet
 To speak the righteous counsels of his heart,
 And said on this wise: "O exalted king!
 Thou mayest make dust precious, but may dust,
 Dust only, fill the head of that man's fortune,
 And antidotes prove poison in his mouth,
 Who sayeth that Luhrásp is Sháh by right.
 We never will consent to such injustice.
 Whenas he came Írán-ward with Zarasp
 I saw him poor, and owning but one horse;
 Thou sentest him to battle with the Aláns,
 Providing him with army, flag, and belt.
 His birth I know not; I have seen no merit
 In him; I never heard of such a monarch.
 Though nobles of the royal race abound
 The Sháh hath not remembered one of them!"

When Zál, the son of Sám, had spoken thus
 The whole assembly sided with the speaker,
 And from the Íránians rose a shout: "O Sháh!
 Henceforth we will not gird our loins or seek
 To fight at all upon the battlefield
 If now the king exalteth thus Luhrásp."

V. 1433

Khusrau, when he had heard the words of Zál,
 Replied: "Restrain thyself and be not wroth,
 For whoso speaketh that which is not just
 Will only get the smother of the fire,

Since God approveth not of ill from us,
 And bad men writhe 'neath time's vicissitudes,
 While he whom God createth for high fortune,
 Fit to be monarch and adorn the throne,
 Endowed with modesty, Faith, birth, and Grace
 Will flourish, conquer, and rejoice in justice.
 The Maker is my witness when I say
 That all these qualities are in Luhrásp.
 He is descended from Húshang the worldlord,
 A noble of discernment and clean hands,
 A scion of Pashín and Kai Kubád,
 Well stocked with knowledge, righteous in his
 thoughts.

He will cut off the sorcerers from the earth,
 And manifest the way of holy God,
 His counsels will renew the age's youth,
 And as he is his stainless son will be.
 God said to me: 'Look thou upon Luhrásp,'
 And I have acted only as He bade.
 Now do ye homage to him as your Sháh,
 And as ye love me slight not mine advice,
 For if a man transgress my parting counsel
 I shall esteem his past exertions wind.
 One such as that will give no praise to God,
 And fear from all sides will assail his heart."

As soon as Zál had heard these righteous words
 He reached out, set his fingers to the ground,
 And in the act of homage smeared his lips
 With grimy dust, then hailed Luhrásp as Sháh,
 And said to that world's lord: "Mayst thou be
 happy.

Far from thee ever be the hand of ill.
 Who save the Sháh, victorious and noble,
 Knew that Luhrásp was of the royal race?
 As I swore fealty my lips got smeared
 With grimy dust: account it not a fault."

The great men showered jewels on Luhrásp,
 And hailed him as the Sháh. When Kai Khusráu
 Had thus achieved the matter of the kingship
 He thought next of the folk and told the Íránians:—
 “To-morrow ye will go the selfsame path,
 And I, on quitting this vile dust, will pray
 To holy God that we be reunited.”

In taking leave he kissed the face of each ;
 The lashes of his eyes were full of tears ;
 He pressed each warrior closely to his breast,
 And bitterly exclaimed : “ Oh ! would that I
 Could bear this company along with me ! ”

A cry rose from the army of Írán :—
 “ The sun hath wandered from its way in heaven ! ”
 Men, children, and the women in their bowers,
 On mountain, in bázár, and midst the throng,
 Were raising wails and lamentable cries,
 And every quarter sorrowed for the Sháh,
 While all the chieftains bent them with their heads
 Upon the ground and rent their robes in grief ;
 The earth was in convulsion everywhere,
 And all the mighty men were in amazement.

The Sháh then spake to the Íránians,
 And said : “ Heed, every one of you, this counsel,
 All ye that are possessed of Grace and birth !
 Be happy in the justice of your lord.
 And now will I take order for my soul
 That I may pass with honour, for my heart
 Hath not been set upon this Wayside Inn :
 Know that Surúsh hath come to be my guide.”

He spake and bade to bring night-hued Bihzád,
 While lamentations went up from the host ;
 He reached the palace, overcome with woe,
 His noble cypress-stature bending low.

§ 61.

How Kai Khusrau farewelled his Women

V. 1435 He had four sun-like damsels; none had seen
 Their faces e'en in dreams. He called those Idols
 Forth from their bowers and told his purpose,
 saying:—

“I am about to leave this place of sojourn,
 But be not sad or sorry. Ye henceforth
 Will see me not, for tired of this ill earth
 I shall depart to God, the holy Judge,
 And see no way whereby I may return.”

Thereat the sun-faced four became distraught,
 And wailed for anguish, misery, and love;
 They tore their faces, they plucked out their hair,
 And broke their gay and scented ornaments,
 Then as each one regained her self-control
 She cried out with a lamentable voice:—

“Remove us also from this Wayside Inn,
 And guide us to the attainment of this good.”

The noble Sháh made answer to them thus:—

“Ye too will go upon a way like this.
 Where are the sisters of Jamshíd the worldlord?
 Where are the nobles with their gloryings?
 Where is the daughter of Afrásiyáb—
 My mother who came hither o'er Jíhún?
 Where is Túr's daughter, Máh Áfríd, whose like
 None ever saw? Their beds are brick and dust;
 I know not if they be in Heaven or Hell.
 The talons and the teeth of Death will close
 On crown and helm alike, wear which we may;
 Hence one should be adorned with righteousness,
 For that not even death will take from us.

V. 1436 Seek not to make me sorry to depart,
 Because the way is bright before mine eyes.”

He cried aloud and called to him Luhrásp
 To whom he spake much of the womenfolk,
 And said: "These are mine Idols, and they are
 The glory of my garden. Keep them here
 Together in this home while thou remainest,
 And when God calleth thee let not thy soul,
 Through any act of thine, be shamed before Him,
 Or feel itself disgraced before two kings
 When thou beholdest me with Siyáwush."

Luhrásp assented unto Kai Khusrau
 In all, and answered: "How should I behold them
 In their seclusion?"

Kai Khusrau then girt
 His loins, and went back to the Íránian chiefs;
 He said: "Go home again with all dispatch;
 Let not your hearts be seared and smoked for me,
 Nor feel at home with this world, for it hath
 Its glooms though yet unseen. For evermore
 Be ye both great and happy. Never think
 Of me except for good. Be jocund all,
 Rejoice in God, and when ye have to pass
 Be it a day for smiles and happiness."

Then all the nobles of the Íránian host
 Bent to the ground before him, saying thus:—
 "The counsels of the Sháh will we hold fast
 As life itself as long as life shall last."

§ 62

*How Kai Khusrau went to the Mountains and vanished
 in the Snow*

Khusrau commanded that Luhrásp should come,
 And said to him: "My day hath passed. Go thou,
 Maintain the usage of the royal throne,
 And in the world sow but the seed of good.

Whenever thou hast any times of ease
 Boast not about thy treasures and thy crown ;
 Know this that when thy day of darkness cometh
 The way before thee is the way to God.
 Seek after and perform whate'er is just,
 And hold the persons of the great in honour."

V. 1437

Luhrásp alighted quickly from his steed,
 And kissed the ground with signs of sore distress.
 Khusrau said : "Fare thee well and be thyself
 The warp and woof of justice."

From Írán

Went chieftains with the Sháh, great, shrewd, and
 valiant,

As Zál and Rustam, as Gúdarz and Gív,
 The brave Bízhan and gallant Gustaham ;
 The seventh was Faríburz, son of Káuś,
 The eighth famed Tús. The host marched troop on
 troop

Till from the waste they reached a mountain-top,
 And tarried there a sennight to draw breath
 And wet their lips, exclaiming at the Sháh,
 And labour which they could not understand,
 While every archimage said privily :—
 "None in the world e'er told of such a case !"

Whenas the sun arose above the hills
 A multitude collected from all parts,
 And five score thousand of the Íránians,
 Both men and women, went before the Sháh
 In grief; the mount was full of wails and cries,
 And e'en the flints were moved. The people all
 Said to Khusrau : "O Sháh ! what aileth thee
 That thy shrewd heart is seared and full of smoke ?
 If thou hast taken umbrage at the host,
 Or holdest this crown worthless, tell us so,
 Quit not Írán nor give this ancient world
 A youthful Sháh. We are thy horse's dust,

And worship thine Ázargashasp. Oh! whither
 Are all thy knowledge, rede, and senses fled?
 Surúsh came never thus to Siyáwush!
 We all will offer up our prayers to God,
 With supplications in the Fane of Fire,
 If haply holy God may pardon us,
 And thine own priestly heart illumine us still."

The king of kings astonished called the archmagés
 Forth from the throng, and said: "Here all is well;
 Ye must not weep at happiness like this.

Praise God, be happy, and acknowledge Him,
 For soon we meet again; mourn not my going."

V. 1438

Then to the chiefs he said: "Turn, all of you,
 Back from this mountain-top without your Sháh,
 Because the way is longsome, waterless,
 And hard, devoid of grass and foliage.
 Relieve yourselves of going to and fro,
 And make your souls a path toward the Light.
 Yon desert none may pass who hath not Grace
 And lofty stature."

Three proud warriors
 Attended to the bidding and turned back—
 Zál, Rustam, and the old Gúdarz—all men
 Of lofty aims, farsightedness, and heed,
 But Tús and Gív and Faríburz, Bízhan,
 And gallant Gustaham, would not return.
 They went together for one day and night,
 Distressed by reason of the waste and drouth;
 At length a spring was seen upon the way,
 And thither went the aspiring Kai Khusrau.
 They lighted from their steeds by that clear spring,
 Partook of food, and drew their breath awhile.
 The Sháh addressed the marchlords thus, and said:—
 "Here let us make our sojourn for the night,
 And talk at large together of the past,
 For henceforth nobody will see me more.

What time the radiant sun shall raise its flag,
 And turn the darksome earth to liquid gold,
 Then is the time when I shall pass away,
 And haply with Surúsh for company;
 My heart will I pluck out if darkening
 It turneth from this path."

As night advanced

The famous Kaian went before his God,
 Bathed, head and body, in the limpid stream,
 Reciting to himself the Zandavasta,
 And thus addressed those famous men of lore:—
 "Farewell for ever! When the sky shall bring
 The sun again ye shall not look on me
 Henceforth save in your dreams. Moreover be not
 Here on the morrow on these arid sands,
 Although the clouds rain musk, for from the moun-
 tains
 Will rise a furious blast and snap the boughs
 And leafage of the trees, a storm of snow
 Will shower down from heaven's louring rack,
 And toward Írán ye will not find the track."

V. 1439

§ 63

How the Paladins were lost in the Snow

The chieftains' heads were heavy at the news,
 The warriors slept in pain, and when the sun
 Rose o'er the hills the Sháh had disappeared.
 They roamed thence seeking him and set their faces
 Toward the sands and waste. They saw no trace
 Of Kai Khusrau and turned back from the way
 Like men insane, heart-straitened all and anguished,
 The ground well trodden but the Sháh not found.
 Lamenting, sorrowful of heart, afflicted,
 They came back to the spring and lighting there

They each farewelled the monarch of the world.
 Then Fariburz repeated what Khusrau
 Had said. "Be wisdom and his pure soul mates,"
 He added, but the heroes answered thus,
 Not doing honour to his words at heart:—
 "The earth is soft and warm, the sky is clear.
 We cannot travel wearied as we are.
 When we have rested, eaten, and reposed
 Beside the spring, it will be time to go."

They all of them alighted by the spring,
 And made Khusrau the subject of their talk.
 "None will behold a wonder such as this,"
 They said, "however long his life may last!
 When saw we such a passing of a Sháh?
 We have not heard the chiefs e'en tell of such.
 Alas for his high fortune and his counsel,
 His majesty, his mien, and noble bearing!
 The wise will laugh at such a tale as this,
 That any one should go alive to God!
 Who knoweth what on earth hath chanced to him?
 What shall we say? Ears will not bear to hear!"

V. 1440

Giv thus addressed those chiefs: "No warrior
 Will hear of one like him for manliness,
 For justice, generosity, and parts,
 For stature and demeanour, fame and birth.
 He was an Elephant amid the host
 In battle, and in feast a crownèd moon."

Thereafter they partook of what there was,
 And, having eaten, quickly went to sleep.
 Meanwhile there came up storm and cloud, the sky
 Became as 'twere a lion's hide, and when
 The snow had hoisted sail upon the earth
 The lances of the nobles disappeared!
 They tarried in the snow, I know not why,
 And under it they struggled for a while,
 And made a hollow space, but at the last

Strength failed them and they yielded up sweet life.

Now Rustam, Zál, and divers cavaliers
 Abode for three days weeping on the mountain,
 But on the fourth day when the world's light shone
 They said: "A long affair—this tarrying
 Mid rocks and mountains! If the Sháh hath vanished,
 Blown from among us like a breath of air,
 Where are the other nobles gone? Perchance
 They heeded not the counsel that he gave."

V. 1441

They stayed a sennight on the mountain-height,
 And by the sennight's end were all distraught,
 All woe-begone, lamenting, and consuming
 As on fierce fire. Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,
 Shed tears, plucked out his hair, and tore his cheeks,
 Exclaiming: "None e'er saw such ills as come
 Upon me from the offspring of Káuís!
 I once possessed a host of sons and grandsons;
 Each wore a crown, and they were worldlords all.
 They all were slain avenging Siyáwush;
 My race hath had its day, for now the rest
 Have disappeared. Whoever saw such marvels
 As have befallen me?"

Zál spake at large:—

"Be God's just dealing and thy wisdom mates!
 Perchance they may return and find the path
 Whenas the highway showeth from the snow;
 But we may not abide upon the mountain,
 There is no food and we must needs depart;
 We will dispatch some on the way afoot;
 One day they will find traces of the band."

They left the mountain, weeping for distress,
 And every one had some one to recall—
 A kinsman, son, or friend, or else the Sháh,
 Himself as 'twere a cypress in the garden.
 The world is always thus; it will not stay
 E'en with the best for ever. This it may

Exalt from dust, that from the throne remove,
 Not that in anger and not this in love;
 'Tis but the fashion of the sky above!
 Where are those warriors and world-ruling kings?
 Oh! banish if thou canst such questionings.

§ 64

*How Luhrásp had Tidings of the Disappearance of
 Kai Khusrau*

When from the troops escorting Kai Khusrau
 Luhrásp had tidings how the Sháh had fared
 He sat with crown of gold upon the throne,
 The heroes with their golden girdles came,
 And, when the illustrious men and chief estates
 Had ta'en their seats, Luhrásp looked round, arose,
 Spake with good feeling and straightforwardness,
 And said: "O leaders of the host! ye all
 Have heard the parting counsels of the Sháh.
 Whoe'er rejoiceth not at mine accession
 Hath not the counsels of Khusrau in mind.
 All that he said and bade me will I do,
 Will strive for good, and carry out his will.
 Do ye too not reject his last request,
 Or keep your secret counsels hid from me.
 The man is guilty in the sight of God,
 That heedeth not the last requests of Sháhs,
 And therefore whatsoe'er ye have in mind
 Of good and ill ye must reveal to me."

Zál answered: "Kai Khusrau gave thee the name
 Of Sháh. Accepting his last words and bidding
 My foot shall stray not from the limits set.
 Thou art the Sháh; we are thy lieges all,
 And we will not transgress thy rede and orders.
 I, Rustam, and the people of Zábul,

Will never wash our hands of love to thee.
 Whoe'er he be that taketh not this course
 Shall find no good thing left within his reach."

Luhrásp, when he had heard the words of Zál,
 Applauded him, and then embracing him
 Spake thus: "God grant that justice and the right
 May never prove your loss and injury,
 For He created you with this intent
 That toils and ills might vanish. Kai Khusrau—

V. 1443

The worldlord, the beloved of time and fortune—
 Ere he departed gave to you Nímruz.
 Now in addition take what else ye need.
 'Tis not for me to share with you my wealth;
 I and my kin and kingdom are all yours."

Then said he to Gúdarz: "Speak out thy mind,
 Whate'er it be, thou chief of paladins!"

Gúdarz made answer: "I am left alone,
 For I have lost Bahrám, Bízhan, and Gív."

Then overcome by anguish for his kin
 He cried out in a lamentable voice:—
 "Woe for the hero Gív of brazen form,
 And that aspiring wielder of the sword
 Bízhan!"

He spake and rent from head to foot
 His robe of Chín and tunic made in Rúm,
 And said thus to the nobles: "Blest is he
 Whose mate is dust. I give assent to all
 That Zál hath said, I have no secrets from him.
 Thou art the Sháh, and we are all thy lieges:
 We will keep fealty and do thy will."

The chiefs with one consent called blessings down,
 And bent their heads in homage to the ground,
 While at their words Luhrásp, refreshed at heart,
 Drew himself up and was another man.
 He chose himself a most auspicious day
 Whereon to set the crown upon his head,

And, just as Farídún of glorious birth
 First put the crown on in the month wherein
 They celebrate the hocktide of Mihrgán,
 Luhrásp selected that same day and month—
 The time of the Autumnal Equinox.
 He had the hall of Kai Khusrau adorned,
 And in his hands Írán took added lustre.

V. 1444

Such is the world—all ups and downs—and so
 One man is glad, another is brought low;
 From it are joy and grief; its How and When
 And Why are all beyond our human ken.
 Completed is the tale of Kai Khusrau,
 The acts of Sháh Luhrásp engross us now;
 His crown and court alike I celebrate,
 And place him in his seat upon the state
 By the triumphant grace of our great king.

The author of our hopes and fears is he,
 To his well-wishers' hearts all good doth bring,

And to the ill-disposed calamity.

Hearts that have been rust-eaten by the brine
 Of speech will be refurbished by old wine.
 When eld hath stolen on a man good sooth!
 Wine that hath waxen old will give him youth.
 Faint hearts when quaffing turn to men of might,
 And foxes in their cups like lions fight;
 In wine too thou wilt show thy quality,
 And to thine own locked door thyself be key.

XIV

LUHRÁSP

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS

ARGUMENT

Gushtásp, the son of Luhrásp, dissatisfied with his position at the court of his father who, mindful of his obligations to Kai Khusrau, reserves his chief favours for the descendants of Kai Káuś, quits Írán in dudgeon and takes refuge in the land of Rúm, where Cæsar's daughter falls in love with him and marries him. Gushtásp achieves great quests in his adopted country and, returning to Írán, is reconciled to his father who resigns the throne in his favour.

NOTE

For Luhrásp see Vol. II. p. 8 *seq.*

The romantic legend that occupies practically the whole of this reign was partially extant with certain variations in the days of Alexander the Great, some thirteen centuries before Firdausi wrote. Athenæus in his *Deipnosophistæ*¹ quotes the following story from Chares of Mytilene, who was an official (*ἐπισάγγελός*) at the court of Alexander the Great, and wrote an anecdotal history of him and of his campaigns in ten books, of which only fragments are extant in the writings of Athenæus and other authors: "We must not be astonished at some folk having fallen in love with others upon mere hearsay of their beauty when Chares of Mytilene in the tenth book of his anecdotal history of Alexander affirms that some have dreamt of those whom they never saw and fallen in love with them in consequence. He writes as follows: 'Hystaspes had a younger brother named Zariadres and they were both very good-looking. The people of the country say that

¹ Book xiii. c. 35, ed. A. Meineke.

they were the children of Aphrodite and Adonis. Hystaspes was king of Media and of the lower lands thereabout, while Zariadres ruled over the country above the Caspian Gates up to the river Tanais.¹ Now the daughter of Omartes, the chief of the Marathi, a people that dwelt beyond the Tanais, was named Odatis. She, as the histories tell us, dreamt of Zariadres and fell in love with him while in like fashion he fell in love with her. Thus for a long time they loved each other through the phantasies of sleep alone. Odatis was the most beautiful woman in Asia, and Zariadres too was very good-looking; but when he sent to Omartes to ask Odatis in marriage her father refused because he had no sons and desired to marry her to some one at his own court. Soon after he convoked the magnates of the realm, his kindred and his friends, and held a marriage-feast without announcing on whom he intended to bestow his daughter. When they were revelling he sent for Odatis and said to her before all the guests: "O Odatis, my daughter! we are engaged in celebrating your marriage-festival, so now look about you, scan those who are here, then take a golden goblet, fill it and give it to him unto whom you would like to be married, for you shall be his wife." But Odatis, having looked about her, went away in tears, for she wanted to see Zariadres whom she had informed concerning her marriage-festival. Meanwhile Zariadres, who was encamped on the Tanais, had left his army there, had crossed the river secretly with his chariot-driver only, had driven through the city by night, and covered a distance of some eight hundred stadia without a pause. When he reached the town where the marriage-festivities were taking place he left the chariot with the charioteer hard by and went on alone dressed in Scythian garb. When he reached the palace he saw Odatis by the table in tears and filling the goblet very slowly. He got close to her and said: "Here am I as you asked me, Odatis—I, Zariadres!" She looked and saw a handsome man, like him of whom she had dreamed, and overjoyed gave him the goblet. He seized her, bore her off to his chariot, and fled away with her. The attendants and handmaids, who wotted of the love between the pair, held their peace, and when her father called for her said they knew not whither she had gone. This love-story of theirs is rife among the barbarians of Asia and greatly admired. They have pictures of it in their temples, palaces, and private houses, and many magnates in those parts give their daughters the name of Odatis."

It seems clear that in the brothers Hystaspes and Zariadres of the story we have the brothers Gushtásp and Zarir of the

¹ The Don.

Sháhnáma. In the poem the framework of the story is different and the account has become much elaborated. The scene is changed from Scythia to Róm and the chief actor is Gushtásp himself. The dream is confined to the lady's side and a posy is substituted for the goblet, so that we lose the pretty picture of Odatis standing by the table in tears and pouring out the wine as slowly as possible in the forlorn hope of her lover appearing. Still the identity of the legend in Athenæus with that in the Sháhnáma seems fairly obvious.

The method of contracting marriage as illustrated by the above story was known in ancient India as "Swyamvara" or "Self" or "Maiden's Choice." We read in the Mahábhárata: "The large-eyed daughter of Kuntibhoja, Prithá by name, was endued with beauty and every accomplishment. . . . Her father . . . invited . . . the princes and kings of other countries and desired his daughter to elect her husband from among his guests. . . . The amiable daughter of Kuntibhoja, of faultless features, beholding Pándu—that best of men—in that assembly, became very much agitated. And advancing with modesty, all the while quivering with emotion, she placed the nuptial garland round Pándu's neck. . . . Then . . . the bride's father caused the nuptial rites to be performed duly."¹

§§ 14 and 15. The Khazars, who dwelt between the Caucasus and the Don and Volga rivers, had frequent political relations with the Eastern Roman, the Sásánian, and the Muhammadan empires till they were absorbed by Russia in Firdausi's lifetime.

The principal Íránian characters of this reign—Luhrásp himself, Gushtásp, and Zarír—appear in the *Zandavasta* as *Aurvat-aspa*, *Vistaspa*, and *Zairi-vairi* respectively, but the allusions to them in that work are concerned with the events recorded in the next reign, that of Gushtásp, which will appear in Vol. V. of this translation.

§ I

How Luhrásp built a Fire-temple at Balkh

V. 1445 Now when Luhrásp sat on the ivory throne,
 And donned the crown that brighteneth the heart,
 He praised the Maker and besought Him much,
 Then said: "Have hope in God, the righteous Judge;

¹ RM, *Adi Parva*, § CXII. See too § CII.

Hold Him in fear and awe; the Artist He
 Of yon revolving sky, and magnifieth
 The Glory of His slave. When He created
 Earth, with its seas and mountains, He outspread
 High heaven over it, one turning swiftly,
 The other fixed; the Artist gave thereto
 No feet to move withal. The sky is like
 The polo-stick, we, bandied to and fro
 By profit and by loss, are like the ball.
 Amid thy pleasures Death with sharpened claws
 Is crouching like a fierce and angry lion;
 So let us quit the lust of covetise,
 Acknowledging our ignorance meanwhile,
 And from this crown of kingship, this high throne,
 Ensue but justice, peace, and goodly counsels,
 Lest haply in this Wayside Inn our lot
 Should prove but vengeance, travail, and a curse.
 I will do more than Kai Khusrau enjoined,
 And banish from my heart revenge and greed.
 This do and justice will bring happiness,
 Be peaceable and have no thoughts of vengeance."

V. 1446

The mighty of the world called blessings down
 Upon him, hailed him monarch of the earth,
 And great Luhrásp had quiet, wisdom, wealth,
 And all his heart's desire continually.
 Thereafter he sent envoys unto Rúm,
 To Hind, to Chín, and other peopled lands,
 And all the men that were possessed of knowledge,
 And those that practised divers useful arts,
 From all the marches and the provinces
 Went to the Sháh's court and abode at Balkh
 A while at leisure tasting of the salts
 And sours of knowledge. He erected there
 A city with its streets, bázárs, and quarters,
 In each whereof there was a place to hold
 The feast of Sada, round a Fane of Fire,

And there he built Barzín, for so they call
That glorious temple and magnificent.

§ 2

How Gushtásp quitted Luhrásp in Wrath

He had two sons, as 'twere two moons, well worthy
Of sovereignty, of throne, and diadem,
One hight Gushtásp, the other hight Zarír,
Who conquered lions, in all knowledge passed
Their father, and in valour raised their heads
Above the other troops. There were besides
Among those in attendance on Luhrásp
Two princes, both of whom he held in honour,¹
Men of high rank whose steps were fortunate,
The grandsons of the worldlord Kai Káuś.
The soul of Sháh Luhrásp rejoiced in them,
And thereby grew neglectful of Gushtásp,
Who took it in bad part, but folly still
Possessed Luhrásp, and so as time went on
The son was full of dudgeon with the father.
It was so that one day in Párs they set
The throne 'neath blossom-shedding trees. Luhrásp
Invited certain chieftains of the host,
Who at the table called for cups of wine,
And made his heart rejoice. Gushtásp too drank,
Then rose and said: "O just and righteous Sháh!
Blest be thy sitting on the royal throne,
And may thy name live on for evermore!
God hath bestowed upon thee casque and girdle,
Besides the crown of upright Kai Khusrau.
Now I am here a slave before thy gate,
A servant of thy star and diadem,
I hold not one a man of those that come

V. 1447

¹ Inserted from T.

Before me on the day of fight save Rustam,
 The son of Zál, the son of Sám the horseman,
 For none is able to contend with him.
 Now when Khusrau grew weary of the world
 He gave the crown to thee and passed away.
 If then I am of noble birth appoint me
 Successor to the crown and Kaian throne,
 And I will be a slave before thee still,
 As I am now, and hail thee sovereign."

Luhrásp made answer: "O my son! give ear,
 For vehemence commendeth not the noble,
 While I recall the advice of Kai Khusrau,
 That thou mayst acquiesce in what is just.
 'If,' said that righteous king to me, 'a weed
 Infesteth any garden in the spring,
 And findeth water, it will grow and spoil
 That garden utterly.' Thou art still young:
 Aspire not thus; speak weighty, measured words."

Gushtásp, on hearing, left his father's presence
 With dolorous heart and livid face, exclaiming:—
 "Then cherish strangers and neglect thine offspring."

He had three hundred horsemen as retainers,
 All warriors and ready for the fray.
 Alighting from his steed he summoned these
 To tell them all the secrets of his heart;
 He said: "Make ready to depart to-night,
 And cease to think, or look, upon this court."

One asked him saying: "Whither goest thou?
 Where wilt thou shelter when thou settest forth?"

He said: "With those of Hind. The monarch there
 Affecteth me. I have his letter written
 On silk with ink musk-scented. Thus he saith:—
 'If thou wilt come to me I am thy servant,
 Will do thy bidding and be thine ally.'"

Whenas night came he mounted with his men,
 And started, full of choler, mace in hand.

Luhrásp, who had the news thereof at dawn,
 Was grieved and all his joy was at an end.
 He summoned to him veterans from the host,
 And told the case to them in fitting terms.
 "Behold," said he, "that which Gushtásp hath done,
 And filled my heart with pain, my head with dust!
 I cherished him until he had grown up,
 And was unparalleled in all the world,
 But even as I said 'He beareth fruit,'
 The tree itself departed from my garden!"

He spake and for a while sat deep in thought,
 Then ordered that Zarír should come and said:—
 "Choose out a thousand valiant cavaliers,
 Equipped for war. Toward Hindústán speed ye,
 And may that land of warlocks cease to be."

§ 3

How Gushtásp returned with Zarír

Gushtásp, the atheling, with tearful eyes
 Fared onward wrathfully before his men
 In haste until he reached Kábul, and looked
 Upon its trees and blossoms, grass and streams.
 Alighting at that jocund place they stayed
 One day and breathed themselves. The mountain-tops
 Were full of game, the streams like wine and milk.
 At night he bade the drawers bring forth wine,
 And carry lights down to the river-side;
 But when the world-illuming sun o'ershone
 The mountains they departed from the woods
 With hawk and cheetah.

In hot haste Zarír
 Went in pursuit, with scarcely halts for rest,
 Till, as the warriors with Gushtásp returned
 From hunting, rose the neigh of steeds. He heard,

And said: "'Tis from the charger of Zarír—
None other—for it hath a lion's voice.
If he hath come he hath not come alone,
But with a gallant host in company."

Now as he spake dust azure-dim appeared,
A standard too charged with an elephant,
And leading all the rest Zarír the chief
Came onward as it were a rushing wind.
He saw and hurried weeping toward Gushtásp
Afoot with thanks and praises to the Maker.
The brothers clasped each other tenderly,
And as they fared along the field they wept.
Then prince Gushtásp, the warrior, called the captains,
Who sitting with him canvassed all the case,
And one said: "Hero of the golden girdle!
The readers of the stars, all whom we know
To be expert among the Íránians,
Foretell in thee another Kai Khusrau
Predestined to ascend the royal throne.
We cannot then consent that thou shouldst be
The subject of the king of Hindústán.
His people are not worshippers of God,
And thou and they will ne'er be in accord,
Consider then if wisdom could consent
To make the Sháh the subject of the Rája!
Thou hast the fairest treatment from thy father;
I know not wherefore thou shouldst feel aggrieved."

V. 1450

Gushtásp replied: "O seeker of renown!
I am not held in honour by my sire,
Who keepeth for the offspring of Káuś
His kindness, majesty, and royal crown.
There is no place with him for us; he meaneth
No better for us than complete subjection,
Yet for thy sake will I return although
My heart is full of choler at Luhrásp.
If he shall give to me the Íránian crown

I will adore him as idolaters
 Adore their idols, but if otherwise
 I will desert his court, no moon of his
 Shall light my heart. I will elude his search,
 And will abandon everything to him—
 Both land and wealth.”

This said, he left that land,
 And went back to the noble Sháh. Now when
 Luhrásp had news thereof he with the chiefs
 And many followers went to meet Gushtásp.
 The atheling beheld his father's face
 Again and, having lighted from his steed,
 Did reverence. Luhrásp embraced him warmly,
 And readily accepted his excuses,
 Exclaiming: “ May the moon's crown be thine own,
 The Dív's hands shortened that they may not reach
 thee,
 For, like a bad king's evil minister,
 He is for ever teaching thee bad ways.
 As for the kingship—crown and throne are mine
 In name, but love and fealty, rule and fortune
 Are thine.”

Gushtásp replied: “ My sovereign!
 I am but as a servant at thy gate.
 If thou abasest me I will obey,
 And stake my heart upon my fealty.”

V. 1451

The great men that were with him on his journey
 Went to the palace of the Sháh rejoicing.
 He had his jewelled banquet-hall prepared,
 They spread the board and served delicious wines;
 They made a feast so splendid that the stars
 Rained from the firmament upon the throne,
 And every chieftain was bemused and wore
 A coronal of roses on his head.
 Yet still Luhrásp found pleasure in the race
 Of Kai Káu's, remembering Kai Khusrau,

And still Gushtásp aggrieved shed tears of blood,
 Consulting on all points with his adviser,
 To whom he said: "Strive wisely as I may
 I cannot find a remedy herefor.
 If I depart with horsemen then my father
 Will send a chieftain after me with troops,
 Will in some way divert me from my journey,
 And ply me with appeals and with advice,
 While if I go alone I shall be shamed,
 And have besides a grudge against Luhrásp,
 Who joyeth in the offspring of Káuś,
 And loveth not his own. If I depart
 Without an escort, and a questioning
 Arise, will any take me for a king?"

§ 4

How Gushtásp set off for Rúm

At night he put the saddle on Shabdíz,
 A charger of his father's, donned a tunic
 Of cloth of gold of Chín, stuck in his crown
 An eagle's plume, and took whate'er he needed
 Both of dínárs and royal jewelry.
 He left Írán for Rúm, for since the father
 Preferred to reign the son preferred to range.
 On hearing what Gushtásp had done Luhrásp
 Was troubled, all his joy was at an end.
 He called to him Zarír and all the sages,
 Held talk with them at large about Gushtásp,
 And said to them: "This lion-man will bring
 Crowned heads to dust. What are your views herein?
 What course do ye advise? Treat it not lightly."

V. 1452

An archmage said: "O fortune's favourite!
 A crown and throne are very dear to men.
 None else hath had a son such as Gushtásp,

No man of name e'er heard of such an one.
 Dispatch in quest of him to every quarter
 Some valiant nobles that are good at need ;
 Then, if he shall return, deal gently with him,
 Do what is right, and banish selfishness,
 Because the Kaian crown beholdeth many,
 Such as thou art, but loveth no one long.
 Bestow upon Gushtásp a host of men,
 And set the noble crown upon his head.
 We nowhere see a cavalier like him,
 Save Rustam that illustrious paladin,
 While in respect of stature, wisdom, looks,
 And sense, ear hath not heard of such another.'

Luhrásp sent chiefs and sought through all the world
 To find his son. They went their various ways,
 But in the end returned despairingly,
 Because they journeyed under sluggish stars.
 Luhrásp had all the censure for his share,
 The grief and travail were Gushtásp's affair.

§ 5

How Gushtásp arrived in Rím

Gushtásp dismounted when he reached the shore,
 And there Híshwí—a man advanced in years,
 Frank, vigilant, respected, prosperous,
 Who was employed as toll-collector—saw him.
 Gushtásp saluting said : " May thy pure soul
 Be wisdom's mate ! A rising scribe am I,
 Come from Írán, discreet, of ardent spirit,
 And heedful. It will be a lasting favour
 To ferry me across."

V. 1453

Híshwí replied :—

"Crown, mail, and plunder are the things for thee ;
 Tell me the truth and try not thus to cross ;

Give me a present or declare thyself;
Where are the mien and manners of a scribe?"

Gushtásp said: "I have nothing to conceal;
Moreover I will give thee what thou wilt—
This coronet, sword, charger, or *dínárs*."

The man accepted some *dínárs* with joy,
Set sail, and took across the atheling.

There was a city in the land of Rúm
Above three leagues in breadth. Salm was the founder
Of that great seat where dwelt the valiant Cæsars.
Gushtásp, as soon as he arrived thereat,
Sought out a lodging in that busy place,
And walked about the district for a week
Among the people there to seek employment
Till, having eaten or bestowed his all,
He went in dudgeon, sighing heavily.
He tramped the city for a while, passed through
A hall, and entering a public office,
Addressed the chief clerk thus: "O friend in need!
A scribe of some pretensions from Írán
Am I, and can perform the office-work
To thy content."

The scribes in that department
Looked one upon another saying thus:—
"A pen of steel would weep, a sheet of paper
Scorch, at a man like this! A lofty charger
Is what he needeth under him, with bow
Upon his arm and lasso at his saddle."

They cried: "We want no scribe here. Go thy
ways."

V. 1454

Gushtásp departed thence heart-sorrowful
With pallid cheeks and, heaving deep, cold sighs,
Sought Cæsar's master of the herds, a man
Brave, wise, and generous, by name Nastár.
Gushtásp saluted him, was well received
And seated by the master, who inquired:—

“Who art thou that in mien and countenance
Art like a king?”

Gushtásp said: “Noble sir!

A horseman am I and a bold rough-rider.

If thou wilt take me I will prove of use,

- And stand beside thee too in stress and trouble.”

Nastár said: “Go thy way. Thou art a stranger,
And hast no standing. Here are desert, sea,
And steeds at large! How then can I entrust
The herds to one unknown?”

On hearing this

Gushtásp went off in dudgeon. Thou hadst said:—

“His skin hath burst upon him!” He exclaimed:—

“A man will fare the worse for his desire

To be a source of trouble to his father.”

He went in haste to Cæsar's cameleers,

Saluted him that was the chief and said:—

“Be thine an ardent and discerning mind!”

That wise man, when he saw Gushtásp, advanced

To meet him, offered him a place, and spread

A carpet, bringing out what food he had.

Gushtásp said: “Prosperous, bright-hearted friend!

Entrust to me one of thy caravans,

Assigning me such wages as thou wilt.”

V. 1455 “O lion-man!” replied the camel-keeper,

“This occupation is not fit for thee;

Shouldst thou engage in such a work as mine?

’Tis better to apply to Cæsar’s court,

He will enfranchise thee from such a business,

And if the way is longsome I have camels,

Such as thou wilt approve, and men as guides.”

Gushtásp gave thanks to him and turned away.

Full of distress he started for the city,

His sufferings lying heavy on his heart,

And turned his steps toward the smiths’ bázár.

There was a noted smith by name Búráb,

Skilled in the trade, the farrier to the court,
 Of influence with Cæsar ; he employed
 Some thirty-five apprentices and workmen
 Accustomed to the hammer and the iron.
 Gushtásp sat in the shop until the master
 Grew weary of him, and exclaimed : " Good fellow !
 What wouldst thou in my shop ? "

Gushtásp replied :—

" O prosperous man ! I am not one to turn
 My head away from hammers and hard work.
 If thou wilt make me one of thine assistants
 I will excel them all at smithery."

Búráb, when he had heard Gushtásp thus speak,
 Received him in apprenticeship, and heating
 A mighty mass of metal in the fire
 Made haste to place it glowing on the anvil.
 They gave a heavy hammer to Gushtásp,
 And all the smiths flocked round, but when he smote
 He smashed the iron and the anvil also,
 And made himself the talk of the bázár.
 Búráb, alarmed, exclaimed : " Young man ! no anvil,
 Stone, fire, or bellows will withstand thy blows ! "

Gushtásp, on hearing this, flung down the hammer
 In dudgeon, left the smith and went off hungry,
 Without a glimpse of food or where to lodge ;
 But neither do the days of toil and stress,
 Nor those of ease and wealth and happiness,
 Abide with any. Good and evil here
 Are transient, and the sage is of good cheer.

V. 1456

§ 6

How a Village-chief entertained Gushtásp

Gushtásp was sorrowful and railed at heaven
 Because in this world he had nought but bane.

Hard by the city he beheld a hamlet,
Trees, flowers, and streams—a gladsome spot for
youth.

Beside the water was a mighty tree,
Its shade impervious to the sun's bright rays,
And in that shade the young man sat him down,
And fretted in his trouble and depression.
He spake on this wise: "O almighty Judge!
Grief is the lot assigned to me by fortune.
My star, I see, is evil, but I know not
Why 'tis that evil cometh on my head."

A nobleman of that fair hamlet passed,
Beheld the outcast weeping tears of blood,
His chin supported by his hand, and said:—
"O noble youth! why art thou sorrowful
And dark of soul? If thou wilt visit me
Thou for a while shalt be my gladsome guest;
These sorrows may be lessened to thy heart,
And dried the arrowy lashes of thine eyes."

Gushtásp replied: "My lord! first let me know
Thy lineage."

The householder made answer:—

"What is the purpose of thy questioning?
Descended am I from Sháh Farídún,
The warrior—no paltry ancestor."

Gushtásp, on hearing this, arose and went
With him. The chief reached home and had his
hall

Decked to receive his guest, he held Gushtásp
As though he were a brother, and the time
Passed leaving not a wish unsatisfied.

A while elapsed with matters in this stay
Until month after month had passed away.

§ 7

The Story of Katáyún the Daughter of Cæsar

V. 1457

Now at that time 'twas Cæsar's policy,
Whenever he possessed a daughter grown
To womanhood, well favoured by the stars,
And he perceived that she was fit to wed,
To gather to his palace all the magnates,
The sages, and the counsellors—all those
Of competent degree and high estate
Among the nobles—and the moon-faced damsel
Would roam her father's hall to seek a spouse,
But so surrounded by her waiting-maids
That men could view not e'en her lofty crown.
He had three daughters then within his bower,
Like roses in the spring, tall, fair, and gentle,
Wise, modest, and well seen in everything.
The eldest was the princess Katáyún,
The wise, the merry, and high-spirited.
One night she dreamed that all the country shone
With sunlight. There appeared a throng of men,
The Pleiades among them and a stranger—
A wanderer of mournful heart and wise,
In height a cypress and in looks a moon,
Whose seat was as a king's upon his throne—
And Katáyún held out to him a posy,
A posy bright and sweet, which he accepted.
As soon as day dawned, and the sun arose,
The nobles woke, and Cæsar called together
A vast assembly of the great and brave,
Who sat rejoiced. The fairy-faced princess
Was summoned, and appeared with sixty handmaids,
A bunch of fresh narcissus in her hand,
And roamed about until she grew weary,
But no one of the throng found favour with her.

V. 1458 She went back from the hall to her apartments
 In state, but wept; her heart yearned for a husband.
 Meanwhile earth grew as dark as ravens' wings
 Until the Lamp rose o'er the mountain-tops;
 Then Cæsar bade that all the wealthy nobles
 Among his lieges in the land of Rúm
 Should meet together in his lofty palace,
 That some one might find favour by his beauty.
 Now when the tidings came to every chieftain,
 To high and low alike, the same good friend
 Said to Gushtásp: "How long wilt thou be hidden?
 Come! It may be that looking on the palace
 And throne of greatness may abate thy grief
 Of heart."

Gushtásp thereat set forth with him,
 And sat down in the palace but apart,
 Aggrieved, and sore. Shrewd-hearted slaves appeared,
 Then Katáyún with rosy-cheeked attendants.
 She roamed the hall with slaves before and after,
 And when from far she saw Gushtásp she said:—
 "The meaning of my dream is manifest,"
 And set the rich and splendid coronal
 Upon his glorious brow. On seeing this
 The minister, her tutor, came in haste
 To Cæsar, saying: "She hath chosen one
 In stature like a cypress in the orchard,
 With cheeks like rosebuds, and such neck and shoulders
 That whosoever seeth is astonished!
 Thou wouldest say: 'Here is the Grace of God,'
 And yet we do not know him!"

Cæsar answered:—

V. 1459 "Forbid it, Heaven! that a child of mine
 Should wrong her race. If I give him my daughter
 My head will be abased in ignominy;
 We must behead them both within the palace."
 The bishop said: "Tis not so grave a case,

And hath occurred to many chiefs before thee.
 Thou saidest to thy daughter: 'Choose a husband.'
 Thou saidest not: 'Choose an illustrious prince,'
 And she hath taken him that pleaseth her;
 Show then submission to the will of God.
 This was the custom of thine ancestors,
 Those eminent, God-fearing, holy men,
 And Rúm hereon is founded; take not thou
 A new way when the land is prospering;
 It would not be auspicious. Speak not so,
 And by untrodden paths forbear to go."

§ 8

How Cæsar gave Katáyún to Gushtásp

As soon as Cæsar heard this he determined
 To give his precious daughter to Gushtásp,
 To whom he said: "Go with her as thou art,
 I will not give thee treasure, crown, or signet."

Gushtásp, on seeing that, was all astound;
 He oft invoked the Maker of the world,
 And spake to that exalted damsel, saying:—
 "O thou who hast been delicately nurtured!
 What hath induced thee to make choice of me
 Amid these many chiefs and famous crowns?
 Thy chosen is an alien, and thou
 Wilt have no wealth with him but live in travail.
 Select an equal from these noble men,
 And so retain the favour of thy father."

But Katáyún replied: "Misdoubting one!
 Rage not against the process of the sky.
 If I am satisfied with thee and fortune
 Why seekest thou crown, throne, and diadem?"

They left the palace, Katáyún in pain,
 Gushtásp with sighs, and reached the village-chief

- V. 1460 In grievous plight; he made a home for them
 Within the village, furnished it superbly,
 And said: "Content you and be prosperous."
 Gushtásp, beholding these things, offered thanks
 To that kind friend of his, the pious chieftain.
 Now Katáyún had trinkets numberless,
 And ample stores of gems and jewelry.
 From these she chose a stone, such that the eye
 Of expert never had beheld the like,
 And this they carried to a jeweller,
 Who lavished on it praises numberless,
 And gave therefor six thousand gold dínárs.
 They purchased what was suitable or needful,
 And lived upon the cash that they had raised,
 At whiles rejoicing and at whiles in tears.
 Gushtásp's whole occupation was the chase;
 He spent all day with arrows in his quiver.
 Once, when returning from the hunting-field,
 His road lay by Híshwí. He had with him
 All kinds of game. He pricked along. His quiver
 Was full. All that he had of great and small
 He carried to Híshwí¹ who, when he saw,
 Ran forth in high delight to welcome him,
 And, having spread a carpet, brought out food.
 Gushtásp reposed him for a while and ate,
 Then went back swift as dust to Katáyún.
 Since he had formed a friendship with Híshwí,
 On whose discretion he relied, he used,
 Whenever he went forth to hunt gazelles,
 To give that friend two-thirds; the other third
 Went to the chief or other village-magnate,
 V. 1461 And thus the master of the house and he
 Lived in the closest bonds of amity.

¹ Gushtásp, with an eye to the future, wisely ingratiates himself with Híshwí. Cf. p. 340.

§ 9

How Mírín asked in Marriage Cæsar's second Daughter

There was a certain Rúman hight Mírín,
Rich, noble, wise, and prosperous withal.
He sent a message unto Cæsar saying:—
“A man am I of rank, wealth, and renown.
Bestow on me thy daughter Dilánjám,
And give thy name and crown new life through me.”

“No more such marriages for me,” said Cæsar,
“For Katáyún and that ignoble man
Have stayed me. Now who seeketh such alliance,
Or wisheth to exalt his head before me,
Must carry out some mighty enterprise
That folk may call him brave among the great;
So will he prove both famous in the world
And helpful to ourselves. Let such an one
Go to the forest of Fáskún and bathe
Heart, hand, and thoughts in blood. There will he see
A wolf as huge as any elephant,
Of dragon-form and mighty as the Nile.
It hath two horns; its tushes are like boar's.
The elephants themselves dare not approach it,
But they, the lions, tigers, and the brave
Among the people, all avoid the wood.
Whoe'er shall rend that wolf's hide shall become
My son-in-law, my comrade, and my friend.”

Mírín said thus: “Within this noble land,
Since first the Maker laid the base of Rúm,
Mine ancestors have ne'er engaged in combat
Unless with chiefs and with the massive mace.
Now what with me would Cæsar? Speaketh he
Thus out of malice? I will practise craft,
And take all prudent counsel.”

V. 1462

So that worthy

Departed to his palace, and considered
 The matter every way. He brought and set
 Before him writings, tables of the stars,
 And his own horoscope, and there he saw
 Upon this wise: "At such and such a time
 A famous man will come forth from Írán,
 And by his hand three weighty enterprises,
 That balk the chiefs of Rúm, will be achieved.
 He will become the son-in-law of Cæsar,
 A diadem on that imperial head.
 Within the realm two wild beasts will appear,
 Inflicting general calamity,
 And both of them will perish by his hand:
 He will not be afraid for all their might."

Mírín had heard the case of Katáyún,
 How she had mated with the bold Gushtásp,
 And how Híshwí and that famed village-chief
 Were both of them regarding him with favour,
 So hurried to Híshwí, told what had passed
 And of the wonders that philosophers
 Of Rúm predicted would befall the land.
 Híshwí replied: "Be pleased to tarry here
 With us to-day in friendship and good will.
 The man whereof thou speakest is a person
 Illustrious mid the great, and all his days
 He giveth to the chase, he heedeth not
 The throne of him who ruleth o'er the West.
 He came not yesterday to me to gladden
 My gloomy soul, but presently will come
 Back from the hunting-field and doubtlessly
 His way will lie by us."

He furnished wine
 And boon-companions. Mid perfumes and flowers
 They sat with golden goblets. Now when they
 Had drained four cups that valiant cavalier
 Appeared afar. The twain descried his dust,

And went to meet him on the field. Mírín,
 When he beheld Gushtásp, said to Híshwí:—
 “This man hath not his equal in the world!
 He is a noble warrior by birth
 To have such limbs, such neck, and excellence.”

V. 1463

Híshwí returned reply: “This noble man
 Is lion-hearted on the battlefield.
 His prowess, modesty, high birth, and wisdom
 Surpass his looks.”

When he drew near, the twain
 Advanced afoot dust-swift to welcome him;
 Híshwí prepared a place where they might sit
 Beside the water and then called in haste
 To spread the board afresh and brought out wine
 To have another bout with his new comrades.
 When cheeks were flushed with rosy wine he thus
 Addressed Gushtásp: “Great man! thou call’st me
 friend

On earth, and knowest not another such.
 Mírín the warrior—a man of name
 And puissant—hath just appealed to me.
 He is a scribe both learned and well-advised,
 He taketh reckoning of the stars above,
 Discourseth of philosophers of Rúm,
 Of regions populous and desolate,
 And furthermore is of the stock of Salm,
 Can tell his ancestors from sire to sire,
 And hath the scimitar that Salm was wont
 To carry all his years. He is right valiant,
 A gallant rider, and a hero-taker,
 And bringeth down the eagle with his arrow.
 He wisheth further to obtain distinction
 By making an affinity with Cæsar,
 To whom he spake; but when he heard the answer
 His heart was verily perturbed thereby,
 For ‘In the forest of Fáskún thou’lt find,’

V. 1464

So Cæsar said, 'a wolf huge as a camel,
 And if it shall be slaughtered by thy hand
 Thou shalt be my most honoured guest in Rúm,
 Shalt be a worldlord and my son-in-law;
 Then all the world will yield to me my rights.'
 Now if thou wilt assist us I will be
 Thy slave and he will be thy noble kinsman."

Gushtásp said: "Good! Agreed. Where is the forest?

What is this beast that frayeth small and great?"

"It is a savage wolf," replied Híshwí,
 "Whose head is higher than a lusty camel's.
 It hath two tusks like elephant's, with eyes
 Like jujubes, and a hide like indigo;
 Its horns are like two beams of ebony,
 And in its rage it will bear off a horse.
 Upon this quest full many famous chiefs
 Have gone with heavy maces, but returned
 Successful, worsted, and with melting hearts."

Gushtásp replied: "Bring me that sword of Salm's
 Together with a noble, fiery steed.
 I call that beast a dragon not a wolf,
 Do thou too deem it so."

Mírín departed,
 And chose a sable charger from his stalls,
 With costly mail and Rúman casque; he took
 That splendid sword of diamond-sheen which Salm
 Had tempered both in poison and in blood,
 Chose also many presents from his treasures,
 And five of every kind of precious jewels.
 Whenas the sun had rent its pitch-hued robe,
 And left its bower, Mírín, the ambitious one,
 Departed from his palace in all haste,
 And reached Híshwí just as Gushtásp returned
 From hunting, and Híshwí observing him
 Went with Mírín to welcome him. Both marvelled

To see his charger and his scimitar.
 Gushtásp, when he had looked upon the presents,
 Chose for himself the steed and sword, and gave
 Híshwí the rest which pleased his soaring soul.
 Gushtásp arrayed himself as quick as dust,
 And mounted on the charger with his bow
 Upon his arm, his lasso at the saddle—
 A noble cavalier and stately steed.
 Híshwí went with him and Mírín withal,
 The aspiring one, who had invoked his aid.
 Their hearts were full, they hurried on and soon
 Were hard upon the forest of Fáskún.

V. 1465

§ 10

How Gushtásp slew the Wolf

When forest and wolf's haunt were near, Mírín,
 Who feared that fierce beast, showed Gushtásp its lair,
 Then turned back with Híshwí, grieved, with full heart,
 And weeping tears of blood. Thus said Híshwí:—
 "We shall not see that noble man return.
 Woe for that breast and arm and neck of his!
 Woe for his courage, puissance, and mace!"

Now when Gushtásp was drawing near the wood
 His warlike heart was full of anxious thought;
 He lighted from his noble charger, prayed
 Before the Master of the world, and said:—
 "O holy Fosterer of all, who sheddest
 Thy lustre o'er the processes of time!
 Do thou assist me to o'ercome this beast.
 Have mercy on the soul of old Luhrásp,
 For if this monster, which the ignorant
 Have termed a wolf, shall triumph over me,
 My sire will wail when he hath heard the tidings,
 Will never rest again but be distraught,

V. 1466 Like those that are insane, and everywhere
 Be questing and lamenting; while if I,
 In sheer dismay, shall shun this evil beast
 I may not face the folk for very shame."

He mounted, raised the battle-cry, and grasped
 The scimitar of Salm; with bow hung ready
 Upon his arm he made his way with caution
 And throbbing heart till he was near the spot,
 And then he thundered like a cloud in spring.
 Now when the wolf beheld him from the wood
 It sent a roar up to the darksome clouds,
 And like a lion or a savage leopard
 Tore with its claws the ground. Gushtásp, on seeing
 The monster, took in hand and drew his bow,
 And showering arrows from it swift as wind
 He made it as it were a cloud in spring.
 When wounded by the arrows of Gushtásp
 The beast became yet fiercer for the pain.
 It fell, but leaping to its feet came on—
 A lusty monster—butting with its horns,
 Stag-like, with smarting body and in wrath,
 Closed with the charger, gored its sable loins,
 And ripped it up from testicles to navel.
 The atheling drew from his waist the sword,
 Dismounted, smote the beast full on the head,
 And clave asunder back and breast and shoulder;
 Then in the presence of the Lord of beasts,
 Lord of omniscience and of good and ill,
 Made his thanksgiving to the Omnipotent,
 And thus he said: "O Thou who madest fortune!
 Thou pointest out the way to them that err,
 And art the just, supreme, and only God.
 We prosper and we triumph in Thy name;
 All Grace and knowledge are at Thy disposal."

V. 1467 He left the place of prayer, wrenched out the tusks,
 The two long tusks, and going from the forest

Alone fared onward till he reached the sea
 Whereby Híshwí was sitting and Mírín
 In anguish, deep in converse of the past ;
 Their talk was of Gushtásp and of the wolf :—
 “ Woe for that brave and gallant cavalier
 Now in his arduous fight and stained with blood
 In that wolf’s clutch ! ”

Whenas Gushtásp appeared
 Afoot, all bloody, and with cheeks like flower
 Of fenugreek, they rose with sad exclaims,
 Embraced him mournfully, their cheeks all wan,
 The lashes of their eyes like clouds in spring,
 And cried : “ How went thy battle with the wolf ?
 Our hearts were bleeding at thine enterprise.”

Gushtásp made answer saying : “ My good friends !
 Is there no fear of God in Rúm, that thus
 A savage monster is allowed to live
 Within the kingdom for a length of years,
 Destroying all the people in its path,
 And holding Cæsar as a pinch of dust ?
 But I have cleft it with Salm’s scimitar,
 So now all fear and dread for you are over.
 Go and behold this wonder while yet warm,
 See how the hide is rent upon the monster !
 Thou’lt say : ‘ There is a mighty elephant
 Inside, as long and broad as is the forest ! ’ ”

Then both ran thither brightened by his words,
 And saw the wolf as ’twere an elephant
 With lion’s claws and indigo in hue,
 But cleft from head to midriff by the blow ;
 That one skin would have held two mighty lions.
 Thereafter they invoked full many a blessing
 Upon that glorious Sun of earth, and went
 Glad-hearted from the wood, and came again
 Before that Lion of the fight to whom
 Mírín brought many presents, such as he

V. 1468

Esteemed befitting, but Gushtásp accepted
 Naught but another steed and made for home.
 When, journeying from the sea, he reached his dwelling,
 Observant Katáyún came forth to him,
 And asked : " Where didst thou get that coat of mail,
 Because thou wentest out to hunt ? "

He said :—

" A wealthy company from mine own city
 Gave me this coat of mail, the sword, and helmet,
 With many a greeting from my kith and kin."

Then Katáyún brought wine as 'twere rose-water
 For scent, and feasted with her spouse till bed-time.
 The happy couple slumbered happily,
 But constantly he started in his sleep,
 While dreaming of his battle with the wolf
 That seemed a lusty dragon. Then to him
 Said Katáyún : " What aileth thee to-night
 To be thus terrified when no one touched thee ? "

He said : " I dreamed about my throne and fortune."
 Then Katáyún perceived that he was born
 Of royal race—a king by heart and nature,
 A grandee, but concealed the fact from her,
 And would not look to Cæsar for advancement.

Gushtásp said : " Moon-faced one of cypress stature,
 With silvern breast and odorous of musk !
 Prepare for us to journey to Írán,
 To journey to the dwelling of the brave.
 Thou shalt behold those glorious fields and fells,
 And therewithal the just and generous Sháh."

" Speak not so foolishly," said Katáyún,
 " Nor rashly undertake such enterprises,
 But have an understanding with Híshwí
 When going. He may ferry thee. The world
 Renewed its youth when he conveyed thee hither ;
 But I shall tarry here in longsome grief,
 Not knowing how I shall behold thee more ! "

They wept upon their couch o'er what might chance,
No fire was needed, they were burned with sorrow ;
Yet when the circling sun rose in the sky
The young folks, wide awake and full of hope,
Arose from that soft couch and questioned saying :—
“ What aspect will the heaven wear for us,
And will the world prove harsh to us or loving ? ”

Mírín for his part went as swift as wind
To Cæsar, saying : “ O illustrious lord !
Our losses by the wolf have reached an end,
The monster's body filleth all the forest,
And thou mayst see the wonder if thou wilt.
The beast attacked me with a furious charge,
And gat a sword-stroke from my hand, whereby
From head to midriff it was cleft asunder,
And terror filled the Dív's heart at the blow.”

The words made Cæsar heighten, his shrunk cheek
Glowed as he bade men go with wains and oxen
To fetch the wolf. They found the mighty beast
Cut down from head to midriff with the sword,
And when they haled it forth among the meadows
Thou wouldst have said the very hill-tops shook.
The world was there to gaze upon that wolf,
That wolf ? That monstrous, fierce, and lusty dív !
When Cæsar saw the elephantine form
Of that fierce brute, he clapped his hands for joy,
And, summoning the bishop to the palace,
Bestowed his daughter on Mírín that day.
They wrote to the patricians, notables,
And prelates of the kingdom thus : “ Mírín,
That Lion and that man of high degree
In Rúm, hath set it from that fierce wolf free.”

§ II

How Ahran asked Cæsar's third Daughter in Marriage

V. 1470 Exalted mid the warriors of Rúm
 Was one—a chieftain younger than Mírín,
 A man of haughty nature named Ahran,
 Of brazen body and illustrious race.
 He sent a message unto Cæsar saying :—
 “O famous monarch! I surpass Mírín
 In treasure, prowess, swordsmanship, and all;
 Give me thy youngest daughter as my spouse,
 And make thy realm and crown revive through me.”

But Cæsar said: “Thou surely must have heard
 What I have sworn by Him that watcheth o'er us
 That this girl shall not choose her spouse, but I
 Will quit the custom of mine ancestors.
 Thou must perform some action like Mírín's
 That we may stand on an equality.
 Infesting Mount Sakíla is a dragon,
 Which is that region's bale the whole year through;
 If thou wilt rid the land thereof, my daughter,
 My treasure, and my kingdom are thine own.
 It matcheth with the lion-quelling wolf:
 Its venom-breath is Áhriman's own snare.”

Ahran replied: “I will perform thy hest,
 And pledge my soul to execute thy will.”
 Then to his friends: “The blow that slew the wolf
 Was from the scimitar of one of valour.
 How could Mírín accomplish such a deed?
 But Cæsar thinketh one man like another.
 I will go ask Mírín; that shifty one
 May haply tell the shift that he employed.”

So to the palace of Mírín he went
 Like dust, with one before him to announce him.
 Mírín sat in a chamber, which the Moon

Throughout her orbit hath not one to match.
 The ambitious man was in a warrior's garb,
 And crowned with an imperial diadem.
 The servant said: "Ahran, the elephantine,
 Is coming with a train of followers."

Mírín thereat adorned his chamber more,
 While all his worthiest servants went to meet
 Ahran. Mírín, on seeing him, embraced him,
 And then began to pay him compliments.
 When nobody remained within the hall,
 Save those two chieftains sitting on the throne,
 Ahran said to Mírín: "Come tell me this,
 And, whatsoe'er I ask, dissemble not.
 My heart is set on making Cæsar's daughter,
 Who is the chief princess of Rúm, my wife;
 But when I asked him he returned this answer:—
 'First battle with the dragon on the mountain.'
 If thou wilt tell me how thou didst destroy
 The wolf thou wilt assist me mightily."

Mírín was troubled and considered thus:—
 "If I tell not Ahran what that young hero
 Achieved, the matter still will get abroad.
 The sum of manliness is being upright,
 And dark, deceitful ways are cause for tears.
 I will inform him. Haply that brave horseman
 May lay the dragon's head upon its breast.
 Ahran will be my friend and back me up,
 Our enemies will only clutch the wind;
 Then will we raise this horseman's heart in dust,
 And this affair will for a time be hidden."¹

He thus addressed Ahran: "I will inform thee
 About the wolf, but first of all require
 A mighty oath that thou wilt not reveal
 This secret night or day, but shut thy lips."

Ahran accepted what Mírín proposed,

¹ Reading with P.

And swore the mighty oath. Mírín set pen
 To paper, wrote a letter to Híshwí,
 V. 1472 And said: "Ahran, who is akin to Cæsar,
 An atheling possessed of throne and treasure,
 And just withal, demandeth Cæsar's daughter,
 The youngest and the only one remaining,
 In marriage; Cæsar maketh of the dragon
 A snare to catch Ahran and take his head;
 Ahran hath come to me to ask assistance,
 And I, to help him, have revealed the secret
 About the wolf and that brave cavalier,
 Who, having done so well for me, no doubt
 Will do as well for him too, will create
 Two princes in the land, and crown two Suns."

Ahran departed with the schemer's letter
 And sought Híshwí. As he approached the sea
 The veteran ran to meet him, welcomed him,
 Received the flattering letter, loosed the band,
 And said thus to Ahran: "Dost thou not know
 That 'tis our friends who desolate our gardens?
 A youth—an alien and a man of name—
 Made his own life a ransom for Mírín,
 And yet may not escape, strive as he will,
 Against the dragon. Be my guest to-night,
 Here set thy candle, and enjoy the sea.
 When that fame-seeking hero cometh hither
 To-morrow, I will tell him what thou wilt."

They lit the surface of the sea with candles,
 And called for wine and meat, till topaz dawn
 Rose in the vault of lapis-lazuli;
 V. 1473 Then by the sea the famed Ahran beheld
 A warrior-horseman coming in the distance.
 As he drew near both went with joy to meet him.
 Dismounting he requested meat and wine
 From famed Híshwí who made all haste to say:—
 "Rejoice, illustrious man, both day and night!

Behold this warrior of Cæsar's kindred—
 The darling of the ever turning sky.
 Not only is he of imperial race,
 But he hath wealth, Grace, fame, and everything.
 He fain would be the son-in-law of Cæsar,
 And would have one to guide in that emprise.
 He hath no equal save in Cæsar's kindred ;
 A youth is he with Grace and thews and stature.
 He asked for Cæsar's daughter's hand in marriage,
 And he was answered by a new expedient,
 For Cæsar said : ' Be thou a dragon-catcher ;
 If thou art of my race display thy prowess.'
 Before the mighty men by night and day
 No name except Mírin's is on his lips,
 And only those will illustrate his throne
 Who are in fame and fortune like Mírin.
 Near is a lofty mountain, once a place
 For mirth and feasting ; now upon the summit
 There is a dragon feared by all in Rúm.
 It draweth down the vulture from the sky,
 Up from the deep the savage crocodile ;
 Its poison and its fume consume the ground,
 And all the region is unblest by heaven.
 Now if by hand of thine it should be slain
 The deed would be a wonder in the world ;
 Nathless, if holy God shall be thy helper,
 And if the sun revolve as thou desirest,
 Thou with thy stature, form, and might of hand
 Mayst lay that dragon with the scimitar."

V. 1474

He said : " Go make a sword five cubits long,
 Including hilt, toothed like a serpent's teeth
 Upon both sides, and pointed sharp as thorn.
 The sword must be of finely tempered steel,
 Of watered metal and exceeding keen.
 Provide me too a mace, a barded steed,
 A gleaming glaive and royal garniture.

By God's victorious fortune and decree
Will I suspend that dragon from a tree."

§ 12

*How Gushtásp slew the Dragon and how Cæsar gave his
Daughter to Ahran*

Ahnan departed and prepared whatever
Gushtásp required of him. When all was ready
The hero mounted, and with his companions
Set forward. When Híshwí saw Mount Sakíla
He pointed with his finger, breathing hard,
And when the sun shot out its rays on high
He and Ahnan turned and retraced their steps.
Gushtásp remained before the mountain-lair
Of that fierce worm and, having hung his helmet
Upon his saddle, thinking dragon's breath
And death but trifles, drew anear the mountain,
And gave a shout that made the dragon quake.
Now when it looked upon that lofty form
It strove to suck Gushtásp in with its breath,
While he rained arrows on it swift as hail,
And thick as petals from pomegranate-bloom.
V. 1475 It closed with him. Invoking all his powers
The young man thrust his sword adown its jaws,
And called upon the Judge who giveth good.
The dragon gnashed its teeth upon the sword
Deep in its maw, while blood and venom flowed
And drenched the mount until the brute grew weak.
Then, scimitar in hand, the Lion clove
The dragon's head and strewed the rock with brains.
Dismounting next that lucky warrior
Prized out a couple of the dragon's teeth,
And thence departing washed his head and body;
Then as he wallowed in the dust he raised

His voice before the Lord, the Victory-giver,
 Who had bestowed on him such mastery
 O'er wolf and lusty dragon, saying: "Luhrásp
 And glorious Zarír had had enough,
 Both soul and body, of Gushtásp, yet I
 By shrewdness, courage, and sheer strength have flung
 A dragon such as this upon the dust!
 My lot from fortune is but travail, hardship,
 And bane spread out instead of antidote.
 If the Omnipotent shall grant me life
 To look once more upon the monarch's face,
 Then will I say: 'What hath the throne availed me?
 I sought the throne and fortune disappeared.'"

With tearful cheeks he mounted on his steed,
 Still grasping in his hand his glittering sword,
 And coming to Híshwí and to Ahran
 Informed them of that marvel, saying: "The dragon
 Proved naught before this trenchant blade of mine.
 Ye were afraid of that great dragon's breath,
 And in the matter of the wolf, but I
 Am more distressed by fight with valiant captains,
 Exalted and equipped with massive maces,
 Than by contending with a crocodile
 That cometh from the depths to fight with me.
 Seen have I many a dragon such as this,
 And never turned my back thereon in fight."

V. 1476

They heard him—young in speech but old in know-
 ledge—
 And those two nobles came and revered him:—
 "O Lion! never will be born of woman
 One brave as thou. The Master of the world
 Aid thee whose might hath done the deed for us."

Ahran produced abundance of rich gifts,
 With noble steeds caparisoned. Gushtásp
 Accepted for himself a sword, a bay,
 A bow, ten wooden arrows, and a lasso,

Bestowing everything that still remained—
 New raiment and dínárs—upon Híshwí.
 Gushtásp said: "Nobody must know this matter,
 Or be aware that I have seen the dragon,
 Or hearkened to the howling of the wolf."

He went thence merrily to Katáyún.
 Ahran fetched wains and oxen, and consigned
 The carcase of the dragon to his servants.
 He said: "Convey it unto Cæsar's court
 In presence of the great men of the host."

He went himself before the wains and oxen
 To Cæsar. When they gat the news in Rúm
 The veterans hurried forth and, when the oxen
 Descended from the mountain to the plain,
 A shout rose from the concourse at that stroke,
 And that grim dragon burdening ox and wagon.
 V. 1477 They cried: "This is a stroke of Áhriman's,
 And not Ahran's own sword and scimitar!"

They brought forth from the palace Cæsar's throne,
 And called the great and wise. Then o'er the dragon
 They held high revelry from dawn till dark.
 The next day when the sun had crowned the sky,
 And when the teaks were gilded with its rays,
 The bishop came at the command of Cæsar,
 Who seated him upon the golden throne.
 Then the patricians and the presbyters,
 So far as they were men of any standing,
 Assembled in the presence of the prelate,
 Of Cæsar, of his veterans, and advisers,
 To marry Cæsar's daughter to Ahran,
 Her loving mother giving her consent.

Then Cæsar, after all the folk had gone,
 Spake thus, his heart still thrilling with delight:—
 "This is my day of days! High heaven illumeth
 My heart, for none will see in all the world
 'Midst great and small two sons-in-law like mine."

They wrote a letter unto all the chiefs,
 Possessing throne and diadem, and said :—
 “The dragon fierce and towering wolf are slain ;
 Two mighty heroes’ hands their lives have ta’en.”

§ 13

How Gushtásp displayed his Prowess on the Riding-ground

In Cæsar’s palace was a belvedere
 As lofty as his own resplendent throne,
 And on the riding-ground both sons-in-law
 Were wont to entertain his gladsome heart
 With polo, javelin-play, and archery,
 And wheeling to display their horsemanship ;
 Thou wouldst have said : “They are consummate
 riders.”

It came to pass at length that Katáyún,
 Who always took the lead, came to Gushtásp,
 And said : “O thou that sittest moodily !
 Why is it that thy heart is plunged in grief ?
 There are two chieftains in the land of Rúm,
 Enjoying treasures, crowns, and diadems ;
 One slew the dragon mid no little peril,
 And never showed his back, the other rent
 The wolf’s hide ; Rúm is ringing with his fame.
 Now on the riding-ground these two send dust
 To heaven ! Go see, for Cæsar will be there :
 It may perchance relieve thy melancholy.”

V. 1478

Gushtásp replied : “My beauty ! what remembrance
 Or interest can Cæsar have in me ?
 He keepeth thee and me outside the city,
 How then should he be friendly if we meet ?
 Yet notwithstanding if it be thy counsel
 I will not disregard it, O my guide !”

Gushtásp bade put the saddle on a steed

That rolled the earth up under it. He came
 To Cæsar's riding-ground and watched the polo,
 Then asking for a stick and ball he cast
 The ball amid the throng and urged his steed ;
 The warriors paused, not one could see the ball,
 His stroke had made it vanish in mid air !
 How could the cavaliers recover it ?
 Not one was minded to renew the game,
 The Rúmans' faces paled and all was din
 And clamour. Then they turned to archery.
 Some gallant cavaliers advanced, and when
 Gushtásp the hero saw them, " Now," he said,
 " Must I display my prowess."

So he flung

The polo-stick away and gripped the bow.
 Both string and arrow were astound at him.

V. 1479

When Cæsar looked upon that noble man,
 With such a grasp, such shoulders, and long stirrups,
 He asked and said : " Whence is this cavalier,
 Who wheeleth on such wise to right and left ?
 Full many noble warriors have I seen,
 But never heard of cavalier like that.
 Call him that I may ask him who he is—
 An angel or a mortal seeking fame."

They called Gushtásp to Cæsar whose ill mind
 Was troubled. Cæsar said : " Brave cavalier,
 Head of the proud and coronal of war !
 What is thy name ? Tell me thy race and country."

Gushtásp made no reply concerning this,
 But answered thus : " A wretched stranger I
 Whom Cæsar drave aforetime from the city.
 When I became his son-in-law he banned me,
 And no one readeth on his roll my name,
 For Cæsar treated Katáyún with harshness
 Because of all the world she chose a stranger,
 Yet only followed custom in the matter,

And was disgraced albeit she did well.
 Within the forest that pernicious wolf,
 And on the mountain that ferocious dragon,
 Lost through my blows their heads, to which emprises
 My prompter was Híshwí. The teeth moreover
 Are at my house, the blows that my sword dealeth
 Are proof besides. Let Cæsar ask Híshwí;
 The matter is still recent, not outworn."

Whenas Híshwí had come and brought the teeth
 He told to Cæsar what had passed, who framed
 His tongue to make apology: "Injustice
 Is over, youth! Now where is Katáyún,
 My well-beloved? Well mayst thou call me tyrant!"

Indignant with Mírín and with Ahran
 He said: "Things cannot be concealed for ever."

Then mounting on his windfoot steed he went
 To ask forgiveness of his prudent daughter,
 And said: "O pure, well-fortuned child of mine!
 Thou art my right eye in the world. My heart
 Hath no wish but for thee. I prithee ask
 Of him who is thy husband and companion
 To tell the secret of his home and kindred,
 For otherwise he will not speak the truth
 To us."

V. 1480

She answered: "I have questioned him,
 But never saw him on the skirt thereof.
 He talketh not before me of his secret,
 And he is reticent to every one.
 He answereth not with candour to my questions,
 And only saith: 'My name is Farukhzád.'
 But I suspect that he is nobly born,
 For he is fond of fight and valiant."

Then Cæsar parted palace-ward and heaven
 Turned for a while with matters in this stay
 Until the morning when Gushtásp, whose head
 Was full of wisdom, rose and went to him,

Who, when he saw Gushtásp, was mute but gave him
 A seat upon the famous golden throne,
 V. 1481 Called for a signet, belt, and jewelled crown,
 Befitting princes, from the treasury,
 And having kissed him placed it on his head,
 Recounted his achievements in the past,
 And said to those concerned: "Be diligent,
 Both young and old! Do fully the commands
 Of Farukhzád and not transgress herein."

This order was dispatched on every hand
 To all the ruling men throughout the land.

§ 14

How Cæsar wrote to Ilyás and demanded Tribute

Now Cæsar's nearest neighbour was Khazar,
 Whose folk made dark his days. Ilyás, the son
 Of veteran Mihrás, was chief thereof,
 And Cæsar wrote to him, thou wouldst have said:—
 "He dipped his pen in blood": "Thou, O Khazar!
 Hast lived on us and flouted us for long,
 But now the day of thy delight is over.
 Send me a heavy tribute and a fine,
 With many of thy chiefs as hostages,
 Else Farukhzád like some mad elephant
 Will come and make the surface of thy realm
 Bare as my hand."

Ilyás perused the letter,
 Then dipped his pen-point into gall and answered:—
 "Such power was not in Rúm in days of yore,
 And if I ask not you to pay me tribute,
 Why then rejoice therefor, both field and fell.
 Are ye so heartened by this single horseman,
 Who sheltered with you? Know him for a snare
 Of Áhriman's and, though an iron mountain,

Still but one man ; so do not trouble him
With this campaign for I shall not be long."

When news came to Mírín and to Ahran
About Ilyás, and how he spread his toils
Mírín dispatched a message unto Cæsar :—
"No dragon this to let himself be snared,
Nor yet a wolf to perish by a sleight,
And be convulsed by being smeared with poison ;
Ilyás, when he is raging in the battle,
Will make the atheling weep tears of blood.
Mark how completely this proud warrior
Will quail before him on the battlefield."

V. 1482

Concerned was Cæsar when he heard their
words ;

He withered at their dark designs and said
To Farukhzád : "A man of might art thou,
As 'twere a gem upon the head of Rúm.
Know that Ilyás is one to conquer lions,
A brazen-bodied, elephantine horseman.
If thou hast strength to fight against him say so,
But seek not to deceive me through vain-glory,
For if thou art not able to withstand him
I will deal with him in a kindly sort,
Divert him from his purpose by mine unction,
And lavish on him words and subsidies."

Gushtásp said : "Why this talk and questioning ?
When I shall plunge my charger in the dust
I shall not fear the marches of Khazar ;
But in the day of fight we must not reckon
Upon Mírín and on Ahran, for they
Will show their hatred, devilry, and guile ;
So, when the foe arriveth from that coast,
Do thou with one son guard me. Then will I,
Strong in the only God—the Conqueror—
Lead on the troops, annihilate Ilyás,
His throne, his crown, his host, and majesty,

Will grasp his girdle, take him from his saddle,
Raise him aloft and dash him to the ground."

V. 1483 One day what time the sun was up, and streams
Reflected in their depths its golden shield,
The brazen trumpets sounded from Khazar,
And dust rose sunward. Noble Cæsar bade
Gushtásp: "Lead forth the host."

He left the city,
Marched with his peers and warriors to the plain,
Armed with an ox-head mace, and as he went
Looked like a lofty cypress by a stream;
He chose upon the plain a battlefield,
And sent the dust to heaven. Anon Ilyás
Observed the breast and bearing of Gushtásp,
His whirling mace and battle-ax, and sent
A horseman to beguile his subtle mind.
The horseman came and said: "Exalted chieftain!
Be not so proud of Cæsar for thou art
Thyself his cavalier, his Spring, and hero.
Withdraw thee from between the embattled lines.
Why art thou thus with lips afoam? Ilyás
In battle is a lion, one that sendeth
The dust up cloudward with his scimitar.
If thou desirest presents he hath treasure;
Gall not thy hands with travailing for wealth.
Choose where thou wilt to rule, it shall be thine;
I will be thy companion and thy subject,
And never break my faith."

Gushtásp replied:
"It is too late and things have gone too far.
Thou wast the person to begin this quarrel,
And now thou turnest back on thine own word;
But nothing that thou sayest will avail,
'Tis time for battle and the grip of war."

The messenger returned like wind and told
The answer to Ilyás, but time for fighting

Was not, the sun was sinking rapidly,
Night hid the pallid orb with ebony.

§ 15

How Gushtásp fought with Ilyás and slew him

When Sol had issued from his bower, and mounted
Upon the throne of Sagittarius,

V. 1484

The realm of Rúm became like sandarach,

The roar of trump and drum and clash of arms

Rose from the armies on both sides, the field

Of battle was as 'twere a stream of blood ;

Then Cæsar came on quickly on the right,

Set his two sons-in-law to guard the baggage,

And his own son Sakíl upon the left :

The elephants and drums remained with Cæsar.

The din of battle went up from both hosts :

Thou wouldst have said : " The sun and moon contend."

Gushtásp kept moving up and down the line,

His steed a Crocodile, his sword a Dragon ;

Thereat Ilyás said to his warriors :—

" This is why Cæsar hath demanded tribute ;

He hath a Dragon such as this at court,

And therefore is thus minded."

When Gushtásp

Beheld Ilyás he said : " Now is the time

To show accomplishment."

Both cavaliers

Rushed on with lances and mail-piercing shafts.

No sooner had Ilyás discharged an arrow,

In hope to give the first wound, than Gushtásp

Struck at his foeman's hawberk with a spear,

And in a moment pierced his warrior-form,

Dismounted him like one bemused, reached out,

And, having clutched his hand, haled him along,

V. 1485

Bore him away before the cavaliers,
 And gave him up to Cæsar. Then Gushtásp
 Led on the host in mass against the foe,
 Advancing like a blast. What multitudes
 He slew and captured, while the world looked on
 Astound! Perceiving all the Rúman forces,
 In full pursuit he turned and came with triumph
 And exaltation into Cæsar's presence,
 Who, seeing him approaching, went attended
 To welcome him, right gladly kissed the hero
 On head and eyes, and greatly thanked the Maker.
 Thence they returned with joy. The general
 Assumed the crown of greatness while all Rúm
 Came gladly to the presence of the king,
 And brought him many a gift and offering.

§ 16

How Cæsar demanded from Luhrásp Tribute for Írán

Heaven turned awhile with matters in this stay,
 Concealed its purposes, and made no sign,
 Till Cæsar spake thus to Gushtásp: "Great chieftain!
 Consider wisely what I say; 'tis matter
 Requiring thought. I will dispatch an envoy,
 Experienced and noble, to Luhrásp
 To say to him: 'Thou hast without dispute
 The treasures of the great and half the world.
 If thou wilt pay me tribute for thy land
 Both wealth and worship shall continue thine;
 But if not I will send a host from Rúm,
 Such that thou wilt not see the land for horse-hoofs.'"

 "'Tis thine," Gushtásp made answer, "to determine,
 For all the world is underneath thy feet."

There was a nobleman Kálús by name,
 Wise, learnèd, well advised, and powerful;

Famed Cæsar called that sage and said: "Depart,
 And tell the Sháh: 'If thou wilt pay me tribute,
 Perform my bidding, and submit thyself,
 Thou mayest keep the Íránian crown and throne,
 And thou shalt be a conquering worldlord still;
 If not, behold forthwith a mighty host
 Of Rúmans and the spearmen of the desert!
 Their battle-shout shall rise above the plain,
 Victorious Farukhzád shall be their leader;
 I will make all your country desolate,
 The lurking-place of leopards and of lions.'" "

The envoy came as swift as wind; his head
 Was full of wisdom and his heart of justice;
 On drawing near the mighty Sháh he saw
 The portal and the splendid audience-chamber,
 And when the chamberlain was 'ware he came
 With stately step before the monarch, saying:—
 "There is an ancient statesman at the gate;
 In sooth he is an envoy sent by Cæsar,
 A cavalier with whom are many spearmen,
 And seeketh audience of the Sháh."

Luhrásp,

On hearing this, sat on the ivory throne,
 And donned the crown that gladdeneth the heart,
 While all the great men of the kingdom sat
 Below him, happy in their high estate.
 The monarch gave command to raise the curtain,
 And introduce the envoy cordially,
 Who, coming near the throne, called blessings down
 Thereon, did reverence and, himself a man
 Of wisdom and of justice, gave the message
 Of noble Cæsar. At his words the Sháh
 Was grieved and raged against this turn of fortune.
 They had a splendid banquet-hall prepared,
 And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.
 The Sháh sent tapestries of cloth of gold,

With raiment and with provand ; but at night
Lay down distracted by anxiety,
"The spouse of pain and grief," as thou hadst said.

V. 1487

Now when the sun sat on the golden throne,
And dark night tore its visage with its nails,
The monarch called Zarír who spake at large.
They cleared the hall of strangers, introduced
The envoy for an audience, and Luhrásp
Addressed him thus : " O man fulfilled with wisdom !
May thy soul have no other sustenance. .
I will interrogate thee. Answer truly,
And pander not to guile if thou art wise.
Such puissance was not heretofore in Rúm,
And Cæsar was submissive to the Sháhs,
Yet now he sendeth and requireth tribute
Of every realm, demanding throne and state !
Ilyás, who ruled the kingdom of Khazar,
A warrior with the Grace, hath Cæsar taken
A captive, binding him and all his host.
From whom hath Cæsar learned the path of glory ? "

The envoy said : " I went, wise Sháh ! to ask
For tribute to the marches of Khazar,
And bare much travail in the embassy,
But no one ever questioned me in this wise.
Yet hath the Sháh entreated me so kindly
That I must not essay to misinform him.
A cavalier, who taketh with his hands
The lion from the wood, hath come to Cæsar ;
On battle-days he laugheth at the brave,
In banquet he is mighty at the goblet.
In fight, in feast, and on the hunting-day
The eye ne'er looked on such a cavalier.
Upon him Cæsar hath bestowed his daughter,
The goodliest and dearer than the crown.
This cavalier hath made his mark in Rúm
By vanquishing a dragon ; furthermore

A wolf, like elephant upon the plain,
Such that e'en Cæsar dared not pass that way,
He overthrew, prized out the teeth thereof,
And kept Rúm scathless."

V. 1488

Said Luhrásp: "Truth-speaker!
Whom doth that lover of the fray resemble?"

The envoy answered: "Thou wouldst say at once:—

'In countenance he favoureth Zarír.'

And further: 'It is brave Zarír himself
In height, appearance, courtesy, and counsel.'

Whenas Luhrásp heard this his visage cleared.
He showed much kindness to that man of Rúm,
And gave him many slaves and many purses,
So that on leaving he was well content,
But said the Sháh: "Give Cæsar this reply:—
'I march against thee as an enemy.'"

§ 17

How Zarír carried a Message from Luhrásp to Cæsar

Luhrásp mused long, then called Zarír, and said:—

"This man must be thy brother, therefore take
Thy measures instantly and tarry not.

If thou delayest all is over with us;

Rest not and order out no halting steed.

Take throne, a led horse, and the golden boots,

Take Káwa's standard and the crown withal,

For I will give to him the sovereignty,

And lay no obligation on his head.

March on thy saving mission to Halab,
But speak before the troops of battle only."

The worshipful Zarír said to Luhrásp:—

"I will discover all the mystery;

If 'tis Gushtásp he is both liege and lord,

And all the other lords are but his lieges."

V. 1489

This said, he chose a noble company,
 The great, illustrious grandsons of Káuś
 And of Gúdarz, son of Kishwád, as well
 As those who were descended from Zarasp—
 Bahráṃ the lion-queller and Rívníz—
 And those exalted grandsons of brave Gív
 The athelings Shírúya and Ardshír,
 Two doughty Lions, offspring of Bízhan,
 Both haughty warriors of stainless birth.
 These chieftains went, each with two steeds, and shone
 Bright as Ázargashasp. None stopped to rest
 Until they reached the marches of Halab,
 And filled the world with trumpets, gongs, and tumult.
 They raised the glorious standard, pitched the tents
 And tent-enclosures, then Zarír committed
 The host to proud Bahráṃ, and journeyed on
 As one that is the bearer of a message,
 Or bringeth monarchs tidings of great joy,
 With five wise, prudent warriors of his meiny,
 And when he had arrived at Cæsar's court,
 The chamberlain descried him from the gate.
 Now Cæsar with the wise Gushtásp was sitting
 In dudgeon in the palace and, on hearing
 The chamberlain's announcement, granted audience.
 Gushtásp joyed at the coming of Zarír,
 Who at his entry seemed a lofty cypress,
 And sitting by the throne gave Cæsar greeting,
 And complimented all the Rúmans present.
 Then Cæsar said: "Thou slightest Farukhzád,
 And heedest not the rules of courtesy."

The blest Zarír replied: "He is a slave,
 Who, weary of his service, left our court,
 And now he hath attained position here."

Gushtásp made no reply, but of a truth
 His thoughts were on Írán. Shrewd-minded Cæsar
 Grew serious as he heard the young man's words,

And thought: "He must be speaking truth and yet
The truth alone is hidden."

Then Zarír

V. 1490

Declared to him the message of Luhrásp,
Which ran thus: "If just judges grow unjust
I will make Rúm my seat, and leave behind
A scanty population in Írán.
Set forth, O warrior! prepare for battle,
And tarry not when thou hast heard my words.
Írán is not Khazar and I myself
Am no Ilyás, whose people thou hast robbed
Of him."

Then Cæsar answered: "I am ready
For battle always. Since thou art an envoy,
Depart. We will prepare to take the field."

The glorious Zarír was sore distressed
At hearing this, and stayed not long to rest.

§ 18

*How Gushtásp returned with Zarír to the Land of Írán
and received the Throne from Luhrásp*

On his departure Cæsar asked Gushtásp:—
"Why madest thou no answer to Zarír?"

Gushtásp replied: "When I was with the Sháh
What deeds I did both troops and people tell.
The best course is for me to go and hold
A parley with them. I will get for thee
All that thou wishest, and will make thy fame
Shine in the world."

"Thou art more wise than I,"
Said Cæsar, "and canst best achieve our ends."

Gushtásp on that bestrode his eager steed,
And, crown on head, approached Zarír his brother.
Now when the Íránian host beheld Gushtásp,

V. 1491 Luhrásp's most glorious son, they went afoot
To welcome him, but in distress and tears,
Yet thankfully for their long toils were shortened.

Zarír, of discord weary, came to him
Afoot. Gushtásp embraced his well loved brother,
And with his first words sought to make excuse.
They sat upon the throne in company
With warriors, chiefs, and great men of Írán,
And blest Zarír said to Gushtásp: "Mayst thou
Companion with the throne while life shall last!
Our father's head is hoar, thy heart is young.
Why dash the expectations of the old?
The throne is but affliction at his age,
He hath become a devotee of God,
And herewithal he sendeth unto thee
The crown and treasure; let thy hardships cease.
His words were these: 'Írán is all thine own,
The throne, the army, and the crown are thine.
For me a corner of the world sufficeth,
Because the throne of greatness is another's;
Thy brother bringeth thee the glorious crown,
The earrings, torque, and throne of ivory.'"

Gushtásp rejoiced to see his father's throne,
And, sitting down upon it, crowned his head.
The grandsons of the worldlord Kai Káús,
And all the prosperous scions of Gúdarz,
Bahrám too and Shápúr,¹ Rívníz, and such
As were of high degree, with brave Ardshír,
Son of Bízhan, who was their general,
A lion-taking chief, and all the host,
Hailed him as Sháh and named him king of earth,
While all the warriors stood before his presence
With girded loins. Gushtásp perceived their love
And earnestness, and sent to Cæsar saying:—
"Thy business with Írán hath been achieved,

¹ Reading with P.

For matters have attained a pass indeed ;
 Zarír and all the army are in hopes
 That thou wilt come alone and feast with us.
 We all will join in league with thee and make
 Our souls the pledges of our loyalty ;
 So, if it irk thee not, come to the plain,
 For fortune hath accomplished thy desire."

V. 1492

The envoy, having entered Cæsar's presence,
 Declared what he had seen and heard ; then Cæsar
 Bestrode without delay a windfoot steed,
 And sped as swiftly as an autumn-blast
 Until he reached the warriors of Írán.
 He saw upon the ivory throne and crowned
 With turquoise crown Gushtásp who, coming forward,
 Embraced him tenderly, and spake at large.
 Then Cæsar, knowing him to be Gushtásp,
 The lustre of the Sháh's throne, praised him greatly,
 And showed him all respect. They took their seats,
 And Cæsar made excuses for the past
 In great amazement at that wondrous fortune.
 Gushtásp accepted all the monarch's words
 And, having clasped his head in fond embrace,
 Said to him: "When the sky becometh dark,
 And it is well to set the lamps-alight,
 Send to me her who chose me for her husband,
 For she hath borne exceeding pain and travail."

Ashamed and weary Cæsar went away
 To reckon with his own ill bent at large.
 He sent to Katáyún a store of wealth—
 A ruddy coronet, five gems, a thousand
 Young Rúman slaves, both boys and girls, a torque
 That was one mass of jewels fit for kings,
 Five camels' burden of brocade of Rúm,
 And, in the charge of all that wealth, a sage,
 Who, having carried them before Gushtásp,
 Accounted to his treasurer for all.

V. 1493

Upon the troops and chieftains of Írán,
 Upon the scions of the mighty men,
 And every notable and valiant swordsman,
 Did Cæsar then bestow both arms and money,
 With presents to the captains every one.
 He oped the portal of the treasuries,
 With praise to Him who made both earth and time.
 As soon as Katáyún had joined the Sháh
 The roar of kettledrums rose from the court,
 The troops began to march toward Írán,
 And horses' dust to overcast the sky.
 The Sháh turned Cæsar's rapid charger round
 When he had gone two stages on the march,
 Made him retrace his steps with oaths of friendship,
 And sent him Rúm-ward with good wishes, saying:—
 "I will not while I live ask any tribute
 Of Rúm; that country is a joy to me."

He journeyed on till he approached Írán,
 Approached the monarch of the brave. The Sháh,
 On hearing that Zarír came with Gushtásp,
 His brother, that fierce Lion, went with all
 The chiefs, great men, and warriors of Írán
 To welcome them. Gushtásp alighted quickly,
 And homaged joyfully Luhrásp who seeing
 His son embraced him, grievously deploring
 The tyranny of heaven. Whenas they reached
 The royal palace at their journey's end,
 Like Sol in Pisces, said Luhrásp to him:—
 "Look not askance, the Maker so ordained,
 And thus perchance 'twas written o'er thy head
 That thou shouldst be an exile from thy kingdom."

V. 1494

Luhrásp then kissed Gushtásp and, having crowned
 him,
 Did homage to him and rejoiced in him.
 Then said Gushtásp: "O Sháh! God grant that time
 May never look on me deprived of thee."

Thou art the king; I am thy liege and I
Will trample on the fortune of the foe.
May all thine ends be prosperous. God grant
Thy fame may never perish, for the world
Abideth not with any one and each,
While in the body, hath full many a toil."

Such is this fickle world! With might and main
From sowing seeds of ill therein refrain.
One day a man may be in want of bread,
Another day may be a king instead.
The righteous Judge, and only God, I pray
That from this world I may not pass away
Till in my goodly tongue I shall have told
This story of the kings in days of old;
Then let mine honoured body go to dust,
And my poetic spirit join the just.



IV

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¹ The Hystaspes of legend (see pp. 314 *seq.*), not necessarily the father of Darius I.

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¹ Cf. Vol. ii. p. 418 *note*.

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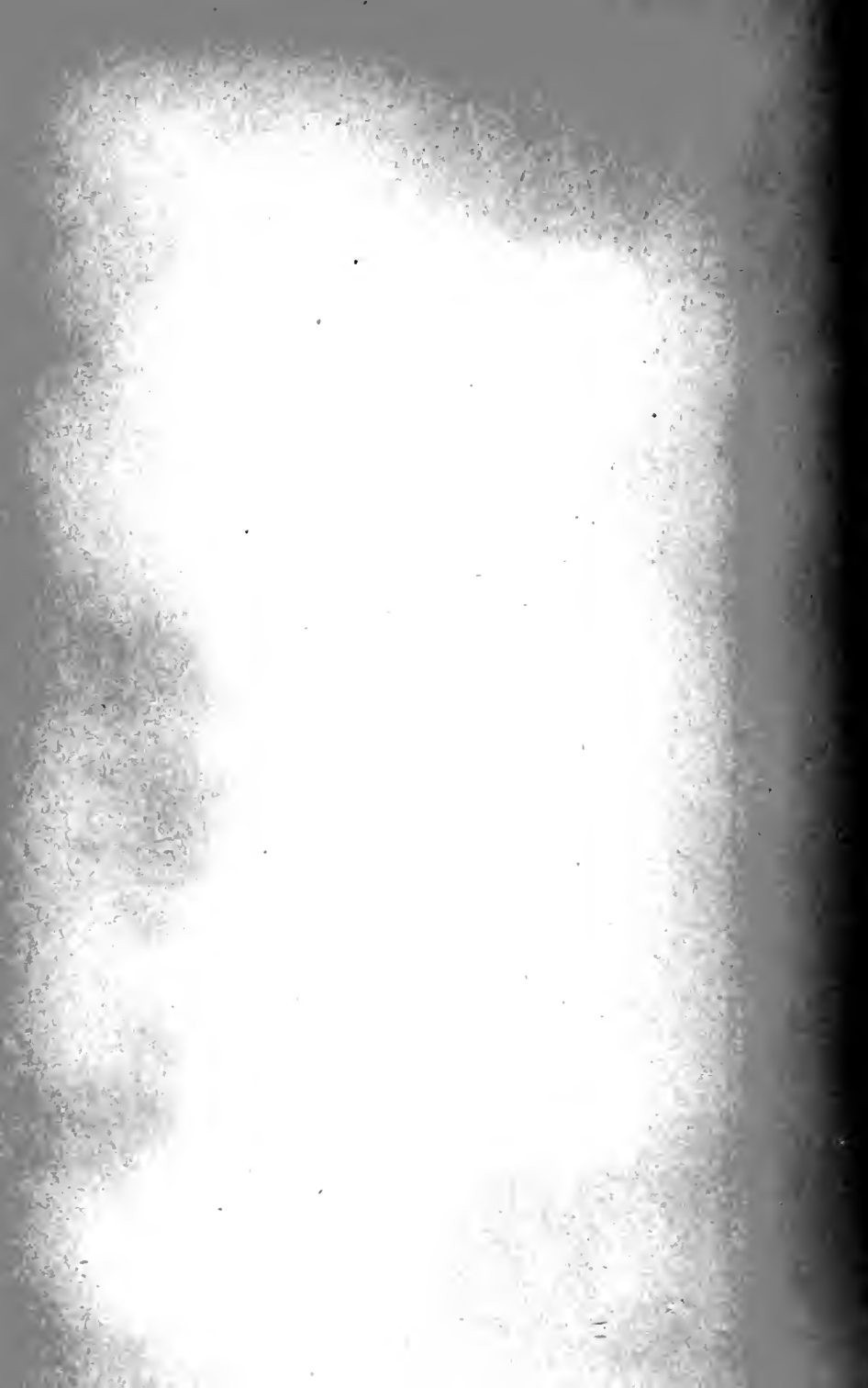
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