

When thus Hurmuzd's days ended and the throne,
 That happy seat, remained unfilled, forthwith
 Arose a sound of drums; those murderers' cheeks
 Became like sandarac. Upon the road
 Bahrám Chúbína's standard came in sight
 Amid his troops, and that outrageous pair—
 Bandwí and Gustaham—fled from the palace,
 And hasted till they reached Khusrau Parwíz,
 Who, seeing their wan looks, knew that their hearts
 Contained some secret, else would they have quitted
 The master of the world? His cheeks became
 Like flowers of fenugreek but he revealed
 Naught to that savage pair. He bade his troops:—
 "Turn from the highway for a host approacheth.
 Take the long route across the unwatered plain,
 And let your bodies grow inured to pain."

C. 1893

§ 9

*How Bahrám Chúbína sent Troops after Khusrau
 Parwíz and how Bandwí contrived to rescue him
 from their Hands*

On entering the palace of the Sháh
 Bahrám Chúbína chose from his fierce host
 Six thousand wielders of the scimitar,
 Mailed, to pursue the king, and put Bahrám,
 The son of Siyáwush, in charge of those
 Famed, warlike troops, while on the other part
 Khusrau Parwíz took to the waste to 'scape
 His foes with life, and reached at length a hold
 With battlements of viewless height. Folk called it
 "The House of God"—a shrine, a blesséd spot,
 With bishops and a metropolitan,

A place for penitents. He there addressed
A holy man : " What food is there to hand ? "

A bishop said : " There are unleavened loaves
And watercress, my lord ! If such thou needest
Let it be none save ours."

The king forthwith
Alighted with his escort. That aspirant
With his two courtiers took in hand for prayer
The sacred twigs, then on the soft, blue¹ sand
They sat and ate in haste of what there was.
Thereafter he addressed the bishop thus :
" Hast thou no wine, old sir whose steps are blest ? "

He said : " We manufacture wine from dates ;
We make it in the heat of summer-time.
There is a little left, clear as rose-water,
And red as coral in the sun."

Forthwith
He brought a cup thereof and it eclipsed
The hue of Sol. Khusrau Parwíz drank three,
Partook of barley-bread and, when his wits
Were warmed with ruddy wine, slept with his head
Laid on Bandwí's lap on the yielding sand,
All sorrowful of soul and liver-pierced.
Just as he slept the senior bishop came.

C. 1894 " Black dust-clouds have arisen on the road,"
He said ; " behind them is a mighty host."

Khusrau Parwíz replied : " It is bad luck
That foes should seek us just as men and steeds
Are spent. The inevitable day hath come."

Then spake Bandwí the good at need : " Yon chief
Approacheth."

Said Khusrau Parwíz : " Good friend !
Direct us in the matter."

He rejoined :—
" I will devise escape for thee, O king !

¹ For the sake of the rhyme, probably.

In this strait, though I shall have sacrificed
My life to save the monarch of the world."

Khusrau Parwíz replied : " A sage of Chín
Hath uttered better things in this regard :—
' In Paradise shall be his future state
Who here hath tilled about a monarch's gate.
The plastering can not abide in place
When city-walls are levelled to their base.
When mighty cities perish out of hand.
Let not the hospitals be left to stand.'
If shift thou knowest use it ; holy God
Will save thee from the need of other help."

Bandwí said : " Let me have the crown of gold,
The earrings, girdle, and the robe from Chín,
Gold-woven and tulip-hued, and while I don them
Abide not thou. Go with thy troops apace
As sailors speed a vessel o'er the deep."

The youth did as Bandwí advised and thence
Companioned with the wind. When he had made
Shift thus to flee, Bandwí, the veteran,
Turned to the bishop, saying : " Ye must tarry
Unseen of all upon the mountain-top,"
Then went himself dust-swift within the shrine,
And with all speed shut fast the iron door,
Assumed the gold-embroidered robe and donned
The royal crown. He went upon the roof,
And thence unwillingly beheld a host
On every side. He waited till they came
Up to the hold to fight. At sight of him
With gold crown, earrings, torque, and belt all cried :—
It is Khusrau Parwíz with his new crown
And robes."

Bandwí, when certain that the troops
Had taken him to be the Sháh himself,
Went from the roof, donned his own clothes with
speed,

Then fearlessly returned and said : " Young braves !
 To whom shall I address me as your chief
 Because I have a message from the Sháh
 To give in presence of the mighty men ? "

C. 1895

The son of Siyáwush, on hearing this,
 Said : " I am chief and I am hight Bahrám."

Bandwí replied : " The world-lord saith : ' My
 journey

Hath much distressed me ; all our beasts are sore,
 Foundered and all amort with lengthy travel.

I reached this house of penitents for rest,
 But will at day-break give up worldly hopes,
 And take with you the longsome road that leadeth
 To great Bahrám Chúbína, and herein

I do not seek delay that heaven perchance
 May succour me. Mine ancestors were wont
 To keep the laws of honour and good faith,
 And through their long and fortunate careers
 They ne'er refused when subjects asked a boon.

So now that fortune is my foe I make
 An open breast to you, for from bright Sol
 To darksome dust the will of God is done.' "

The chief agreed and every one that heard
 The Sháh's words grieved for him. The troopers all
 Dismounted and kept guard on him that night.

Next day Bandwí went to the roof upon
 The side that faced Bahrám and said : " The Sháh
 Is praying and will do naught else to-day.
 He spent last night in prayer. Besides, the sun
 Is high, he must not suffer from the heat.
 Leave him in peace to-day. At dawn to-morrow
 He shall surrender."

" This may prove a trifle,"
 Bahrám said to his chiefs, " or else of moment.
 If we shall press him much he may be wroth
 And fall on us. He is a host himself,

A world-aspirant, shrewd and valorous.
 If he be slain in fight Bahrám Chúbína
 Will send too dust from us. 'Tis best to wait
 To-day, although our stores are running low,
 To see if he will yield without contention."

Thus was it till the night rose o'er the mountains,
 And her host gathered, then both far and wide
 The troops spread, kindling fires on every side.

§ 10

*How Bahrám, the Son of Siyáwush, took Bandwí and
 carried him to Bahrám Chúbína*

C. 1896

When earth grew sun-hued eloquent Bandwí
 Went to the roof and thus addressed Bahrám :—
 " Experienced one ! when dust rose from the plain
 Khusrau Parwíz at sight of you departed,
 He and his troops, in haste toward Rúm, and now,
 Wert thou to wing it eagle-like and soar
 Above the sun, thou wouldst not spy the Sháh
 Unless in Rúm where he hath aged by now ;
 But if ye grant me quarter I will come
 Forth to thy valiant chief and I will answer
 All questions asked of me about ourselves,
 But if not I will arm and send the dust
 In combat to the sun."

The youth's heart aged
 With grief when he heard this. " What will it profit,"
 He asked his comrades, " if I send the reek
 Up from Bandwí ? The better course will be
 To take him as he is with mind unclouded
 Before the paladin to tell whatever
 He knoweth of the Sháh and either lose