

By paths that thou hast never trodden or brag
Before the Sháh so recklessly."

Bízhan,

Shrewd, though impulsive, and of sleepless fortune,
Replied in anger: "My victorious sire!
Impute not weakness to me in thy thoughts,
But bear with what I tell thee: I am young
In enterprise but I am old in counsel,
And I, Bízhan, who am the son of Gív,
The army-shatterer, will behead the boars."

The Sháh rejoiced thereat, invoked God's blessing,
Bade him depart, and said: "Thou man of worship!
Thou art a buckler ever 'gainst all ill.
The lord that hath such lieges as thou art
Would be a fool to fear a foe."

He then

Said to Gurgín son of Mílád: "Bízhan
Is ignorant of the road toward Irmán,
So bear him company with mule and steed
To show the way and be his help in need."

§ 3

How Bízhan went to fight the wild Boars

Bízhan made ready for his setting forth,
Girt him, and set a casque upon his head.
He took with him Gurgín son of Mílád
To help in battle and in time of need,
And left the court with cheetahs and with hawks
To hunt withal upon his longsome journey.
Like foaming lion he fared and took the heads
From onager and antelope; the plain
Was thick with wild sheep torn; their hearts and
breasts
Felt the warm impress of the cheetah's claws.

His lasso ringed the necks of onagers,
 He seemed like Tahmúras who bound the Dív,
 While overhead the pheasants clutched by falcons
 Dyed jasmine-leaves with blood. Thus sped the twain,
 And thought the road a garden, till they reached
 The forest that had caused the Sháh's concern.
 Now when Bízhan cast eyes thereon the blood
 Boiled in him with excitement, while the boars
 Roamed freely, knowing not: "Bízhan hath mounted."
 On drawing near the forest to attack
 He spake thus to Gurgín son of Mílád:—
 "Go thou inside or stand aside, and when
 I go to shoot the boars seek yonder pool.
 Then, when a tumult riseth from the wood,
 Take up thy mace, be ware, and with one blow
 Behead each boar escaping."

V. 1070

But Gurgín,

The warrior, answered: "Such was not the compact
 With our young Sháh. Thou hadst the jewels, silver,
 And gold, and didst adventure for this field;
 Ask but mine aidance then to show the way."

Bízhan heard with amaze, his outlook darkened,
 But lion-like he went inside the forest,
 Undaunted strung his bow, roared mightily
 As 'twere a cloud in spring, and brought the leaves
 Down like a shower of rain, then sword in hand
 Like some mad elephant he chased the boars
 While they rushed at him, tusking up the earth.
 Then came one boar, a very Áhriman,
 Whose tushes cut through trees like files through
 stone,

And rent his hauberk while the reek of fight
 Rose o'er the mead. Bízhan's sword smote the boar
 And clave its elephantine form. The beasts
 So fierce before grew fox-like; all were stained
 With blood from sword-cuts; they had had enough

Of combating. Bízhan cut off their heads,
 And tied them to his charger's saddle-straps,
 That he might lay the tusks before the Sháh ;
 And furthermore, in order to display
 His courage to the Íránian chiefs, he flung
 Some headless trunks, like mountains, on a wain,
 And buffalos were wearied with the strain.

§ 4

How Gurgín beguiled Bízhan

- V. 1071 Malevolent Gurgín, the insensate one,
 Apart drew near the forest sullenly,
 And all the wood gloomed in his eyes albeit
 He praised Bízhan and made a show of joy.
 That matter grieved his heart, he feared disgrace,
 And Áhriman seduced him. He was fain
 To do Bízhan a mischief; 'twas his wish,
 And so ordained. He thought not of the Maker,
 But he that diggeth pitfalls in the way
 Hath reason to walk warily himself.
 Gurgín for his own profit and renown
 Spread out his nets upon the young man's path,
 And said: "O paladin, thou Heart of combat,
 And Soul of wisdom! many an enterprise
 Like this thou wilt achieve through thy high fortune
 And God's support. Now I must tell thee somewhat,
 For I have been here often in past time
 With Rustam and with Gív and Gustaham,
 With Gazhdaham and Tús son of Naudar.
 How many a feat of prowess done by us
 Hath heaven witnessed on this spacious plain—
 V. 1072 Feats that have raised our reputations high,
 And rendered us the dearer to Khusrau!
 There is a pleasure-ground not far away,