

I like the devotess who worship God,
 Will run toward thee with mine arms outstretched,
 And, like a servant before a king,
 Gird up my loins to make thee fair return.
 Bear yet this will thy portion shall be great
 In goods and treasure."

Bird-like to the boughs

She flew for wood, with arms full watched the sun,
 And thought: "Oh! when will night rise o'er the
 hills?"

When Sol had vanished and dark night had led
 Its army o'er the mountain-tops what time
 The world, its features hidden, taketh rest,
 Maníza went and set a-blaze a fire,
 That scorched the eye of pitch-black night, and listened
 To hear the clanging of the kettledrum
 Which told that Rakhsh the brazen-hoofed had come.

§ 24

How Rustam took Bizhan out of the Pit

v. 1124

Then Rustam buckled on his Ruman mail,
 With prayers for succour and support to Him,
 Who is the Lord of sun and moon, and said:—
 "Oh! may the eyes of evil men be blinded,
 And may I have the strength to save Bizhan."

At his command the warriors girt themselves
 With girdles of revenge, put on their steeds
 The poplar saddles, and prepared for combat;
 Then matchless Rustam led them toward the fire.
 When he approached the boulder of Akwan,
 Approached that pit of sorrow, smart, and anguish,
 "Dismount," he told the seven warriors,
 "And strive to clear the pit's mouth of the stone."
 They strove in vain and sorely galled their hands.

Now while their sweat ran, for the stone stood still,
 The lion-chief alighted, hitched his skirt
 Of mail beneath his belt and, asking strength
 From God its source, grasped, raised, and hurled the
 boulder

Back to the forest of the land of Chín :
 Earth shook thereat. Then asked he of Bizhan
 With lamentable cries : " How camest thou
 To such a luckless plight ? Thy portion here
 Was wont to be all sweetness ; why hast thou
 Received then from the world a cup of poison ? "

Bizhan replied : " How fared the paladin
 Upon the way ? Thy greeting reached mine ear,
 And this world's poison was made sweet to me.
 Such as thou seest is my dwelling-place,
 Mine earth is iron and my heaven stone,
 While through exceeding anguish, hardship, sorrow,
 And toil I have renounced this Wayside Inn."

V. 1125

Said Rustam : " God had pity on thy life,
 And now, O man wise and magnanimous !
 There is one thing that I desire of thee :
 Grant pardon to Gurgín son of Mílád
 For my sake, putting from thee hate and malice."

He answered : " O my friend ! how shouldst thou
 know

What conflicts have been mine ? And know'st thou not,
 O noble lion-man ! that which Gurgín
 Hath done to me ? If I behold him ever
 My vengeance shall bring Doomsday down on him."

" If thou show'st malice and wilt not attend
 To what I say," said Rustam, " I will leave thee
 Bound in the pit, and mount, and hie me home."

When Rustam's answer reached the captive's ear
 A wail went up from that strait prison-house
 As he replied : " The wretchedest am I
 Of warriors, of my kindred, and my people !

I must put up to-day too with the wrong—
 The great wrong—which Gurgín hath done to me !
 Yea I will do so and will be content ;
 My heart shall rest from taking vengeance on him."

Then Rustam let his lasso down the pit,
 And drew up thus Bízhan with fettered feet,
 With naked body, with long hair and nails,
 And wasted by affliction, pain, and want,
 His form blood-boltered, and his visage wan
 By reason of those bonds and rusty fetters.
 Now Rustam cried aloud when he beheld
 Bízhan with body hidden by the iron,
 And putting forth his hands he snapped the chains
 And bonds, and freed Bízhan from ring and fetter.
 They went toward Rustam's house ; on one side of him
 Bízhan rode, on the other side Manízha.
 The youthful pair sat in their sorry plight,
 And told their story to the paladin.
 Then Rustam bade them bathe the young man's head,
 And clothed him in new robes. When afterward
 Gurgín approached and, prone upon the dust,
 Sought to excuse his evil deeds, and writhed
 For words so ill-advised, Bízhan condoned
 The matter. Then they loaded up the camels,
 And put the saddles on the steeds, while Rustam
 Assumed his favourite mail and mounted Rakhsh.
 The warriors drew forth their scimitars
 And massive maces, sent the baggage on,
 And dight themselves for strife. Ashkash the shrewd—
 The army's Ear—went with the baggage-train.

Then matchless Rustam bade Bízhan : " Away,
 And journey with Manízha and Ashkash,
 For in my vengeance on Afrásiyáb
 To-night I shall not eat, repose, or sleep.
 Now will I do such exploits at his gate
 That on the morn his troops shall laugh at him.