

Before Gav, saying : “ Woe for thee, young world-
lord ! ”

Addressing then his lips to give advice
He said to Gav : “ Exalted king ! what profit
This grief and mourning ? He hath passed away ;
What was to be hath been. Thou mayst thank God
In one regard—that thy hand slew him not.
I told my lord all that would be as vouched
By Mars and Saturn, sun and moon : ‘ This youth
Will bear him so in fight that he will end
His days,’ and now his work is as the wind,
And he hath gone through ignorance and haste,
While all this mighty host is full of grief
And anger, and all eyes are fixed on thee.
Content thyself, make us contented too,
And thus contenting do what wisdom would ;
For when the soldiers shall behold their king
Afoot and weeping on the way for grief,
His lustre will be minished in their eyes,
And e’en the basest will wax insolent
Toward him, for the king is like a cup
Filled with rose-water : may the blast not strike him ! ”

Gav hearkened to that prudent sage’s rede.
A proclamation went forth from the host :—
“ Ye men of name and warriors of the king !
Let no one tarry on the battlefield,
For yon host is disjoined not now from this ;
Both must be one in act and in acclaim.
Be all ’neath my protection and preserve
For me the memory of my high-souled brother.”

Then called he all the chiefs, on his eyelashes
Let fall his own heart’s blood, made for Talhand
A narrow coffin out of ivory
And gold, of turquoise and teak-wood, and swathed
His brother’s face with glossy silk of Chín.
Thus passed away that famous chief of Hind.

They sealed the coffin-lid with gums and pitch,
 With musk and camphor. Then Gav marched away
 In haste and tarried at no stage for long.

The princes' mother slept not, rested not,
 And fasted after they had chosen their field
 Of battle. Ever on the road she kept
 A watch and passed each day in bitterness,
 So when the host's dust went up from the road
 The wakeful watchman saw it from the look-out,
 And thence too saw the flag of Gav appear,
 While all the realm's face was o'erspread with troops.
 He gazed from two miles off in hope to see
 The elephant and standard of Talhand,
 But failed to recognise them mid the host.
 He hurried off a horseman from the look-out
 To say : "The army cometh from the mountains,
 And Gav is there with all his company,
 But I see not Talhand, his elephant,
 Or flag, or yet his chiefs with golden boots."

C. 1743

His mother poured down blood, which drenched her
 breast,

From her eyelashes. When news came : "That Light
 Of empire is bedimmed, the atheling,
 Talhand, hath died on saddle-back and left
 To Gav his seat upon the throne of kingship,"
 She hurried to the palace of Talhand,
 And ofttimes dashed her head against its walls.
 She rent her raiment, tore her cheeks, flung fire
 On hall and treasury, and burnt up all
 The palace and the throne of majesty.
 Thereafter she upreared a mighty pyre
 To burn herself, as is the use of Hind,
 And by her sorrow illustrate its Faith.

When tidings of his mother came to Gav
 He urged his speedy charger on and came,
 Embraced her closely, and entreated her,

With blood upon his eyelids, saying thus :—
 “ O loving mother ! hearken to my words,
 Because we have transgressed not in this fight.
 It was not I or my companions,
 Or warrior of this noble host, that slew him.
 None durst breathe harshly on him : he was slain
 Beneath the process of his evil star.”

His mother answered him : “ Thou wicked man !
 On thee will come high heaven’s malison ;
 Thy brother hast thou slain for crown and throne,
 And no good man will call thee fortunate.”

“ O loving mother ! ” thus he answered her,
 “ Thou oughtest not to think such ill of me,
 But be content and I will tell thee all
 The case of king and host and battlefield,
 For who would dare to go to fight with him ?
 Who ever contemplated such dispute ?
 Now by the Judge that fashioned sun and moon,
 Night, day, and all the process of the sky,
 The signet-ring and throne, the steed and mace,
 The sword and crown, shall see me never more
 Unless I clear this matter up, and turn
 Thy heart from harshness into tenderness,
 By proving to thy clear soul that the hand
 Of none hath put a period to his life.
 What man in all the world can ’scape from death,
 Though he be clad upon with steel and helm ?
 For when the bright lamp faileth none may count
 Another breath however brave he be.
 If what I prove to thee content thee not,
 By God, the Lord of all, my purpose is
 To burn my body in the fire and gladden
 My foemen’s souls.”

C. 1744

On hearing this, his mother
 Had ruth upon his form majestic,
 Lest that young hero should consume in fire

His body barely handselled of its soul,
 And therefore said to him : " Show me the way
 That prince Talhand died on his elephant.
 Unless the matter be made clear to me
 My fond heart still will burn."

Gav sought his palace

In sorrow, summoned his experienced sage,
 Told what had passed and how his mother's words
 Had angered him until he swore to burn.
 They sat down and took counsel by themselves.
 The sage spake thus : " My gracious sovereign !
 We cannot by ourselves achieve thy wish.
 Call we the famed and wise, both old and young,
 Among the shrewdest seekers of the way
 From every side—Kashmír, Dambar, Margh, Máí."

Gav sent off cavaliers to every quarter,¹
 Wherever there was any sage of leading.
 They all came to the portal of the king,
 Came to that famous court. He held a session
 Of wise men and of magnates learned and shrewd.
 Gav's sage described the battlefield and how
 The prince and host had fought. They all conversed
 With that sharp-witted man about the sea,
 About the trench and letting in the water.
 That darksome night not one among them slept,
 But all held talk together. When the din
 Of kettledrum ascended from the plain
 Those men of wisdom called for ebony,
 And two of them—ingenious councillors—
 Constructed of that wood a board foursquare
 To represent the trench and battlefield,
 And with both armies drawn up face to face.
 A hundred squares were traced upon the board,
 So that the kings and soldiers might manœuvre.
 Two hosts were carved of teak and ivory,

¹ Reading with P.

And two proud kings with crowns and Grace divine.
 Both horse and foot were represented there,
 And drawn up in two ranks in war-array,
 The steeds, the elephants, the ministers,
 And warriors charging at the enemy,
 All combating as is the use in war,
 One in offence, another in defence.
 The king was posted at the army's centre,
 With at one hand his loyal minister.
 C. 1745 Next to the twain were placed two elephants,
 Supporting thrones the hue of indigo.
 Next to the elephants two camels stood,
 Whereon two men of holy counsel sat.
 Next to the camels there were placed two steeds,
 With riders valiant on the day of battle,
 And each wing ended in a warrior-ruk, h
 His liver's blood a-foam upon his lips.
 The footman's move was always to advance,
 That he might be of aidance in the fray,
 Till, having passed across the battlefield,
 He sat—a minister—beside the king ;
 The minister might quit not too in battle
 His king by more than by a single square,
 While o'er three squares the noble elephant
 Could move and for two miles survey the field.
 The camel likewise moved three squares and raged
 And snorted on the field of fight. The horse
 Made too a three squares' move, but in the move
 Alighted on a square of diverse hue.
 The warrior-ruk might traverse every way,
 And charge across the battle at his will.
 They all contended in their proper lists,
 And each observed the limits of his move.
 When one of them beheld the king in fight,
 Then would he shout and say : " Avaunt, O king !"
 Whereat the king would change his square till he

Was straitened where he stood. When rukh and horse,
 And minister and elephant and troops,
 Had blocked the way for him on every side
 The king would look forth o'er that field foursquare,
 And see his men o'erthrown, their faces lined,
 Escape cut off by water and by trench,
 With foes to right and left and front and rear,
 And being moveless and fordome would die,¹
 For so the process of the heaven decreed.

King Gav, the great and good, affected much
 The game of chess suggested through Talhand ;
 His mother studied it. Her heart was filled
 With anguish for that prince. Both night and day
 She sat possessed by passion and by pain,
 With both her eyes intent upon the game.
 Her whole desire and purpose centred there ;
 Her mind was full of anguish for Talhand.
 She kept for ever shedding tears of blood,
 With chess to medicine her sufferings,
 And thus she fared and neither ate nor stirred
 Until her life had reached its period.

So now my tale is done that I heard told
 With other stories of the days of old.

§ 4

*How Núshírwán sent Barzwí, the Leech, to Hindústán to fetch a
 wondrous Drug, and how Barzwí brought back the Book of
 Kalila and Dimna*

Mark what Shádán, son of Barzín, revealed—
 A matter that till then had been concealed :—
 When Núshírwán was king of kings, and may
 His fame endure throughout eternity,
 He sought for sages learned in all lore

C. 1746

¹ Sháh mát (check mate).