

C. 1872
 Of tymbals from both camps and Sol led forth
 To war. Then at the Sháh's command Bandwí
 And Gustaham put on their iron helms,
 And went with other chiefs of ardent soul
 Toward the canal¹ of Nahrawán, whereat
 The outpost came before Bahrám Chúbína,
 And said: "There is a force two bowshots off."

On hearing this he ranged his host and called
 His veterans and bestrode a piebald steed
 With musk-black tail—a noble caracoller
 With brazen hoofs. An Indian scimitar
 Sufficed to arm him, and its stroke was like
 The levin from the cloud. He urged his horse
 As 'twere a lightning-flash. That miscreant,
 Ízid Gashasp, was on his left. Withal
 There came Hamdán Gashasp² and Yalán-sína,
 All rage and enmity, while three bold Turks,
 Sprung from the Khán, made ready to take vengeance
 Upon Khusrau Parwíz and swore: "When we
 Shall see the Sháh out-distancing his troops,
 Him will we bring to thee in bonds or slain,
 And thy realm shall repose in peace."

On one side

There was Khusrau Parwíz and on the other
 The paladin, between was Nahrawán,
 While on both sides the armies watched them meet,
 And how the paladin the Sháh would greet.

§ 5

*How Khusrau Parwíz and Bahrám Chúbína met and
 parleyed*

Bahrám Chúbína and Khusrau Parwíz
 Thus met, one cheerful and the other grim.

¹ "Spring" in the original. ² Reading with P.

The world-lord rode an ivory grey and wore
 A gold and jewelled crown; his robe from Chín
 Was of brocade of gold. Gurdwí as guide
 Preceded him, Bandwí and Gustaham
 Were at his side, and therewithal Kharrád,
 Son of Barzín, who wore a helm of gold.
 They all were clad in iron, gold, and silver;
 Their golden girdles were occult with gems.
 Bahrám Chúbína paled with rage on seeing
 The king of kings and thus addressed his chiefs:—
 "This whoreson miscreant from low estate
 And boorish manner hath attained to manhood,
 Grown powerful and girt himself for action.
 The writing of the down is manifest
 Upon the ivory rondure of his face;
 So now he hath become Sháh Farídún
 With mace and crown and caught the imperial style,
 But speedily will this world end for him.
 This dark-souled bastard leadeth on his troops
 Like Núshírwán. Scan thoroughly his host
 To see if there be of it one of name.
 I cannot spy one warlike cavalier
 That could confront me for a single breath.
 Now shall he look upon the deeds of men,
 Steeds charging, scimitars, the dust of war,
 The clash of battle-axes, showers of arrows,
 The heroes' shouts, the captives, give and take.
 The elephants are driven from the field
 When I march forth to battle. At our voice
 The mountains melt and warriors lose their prowess.
 I take the rivers with my sword and turn
 Their waters into blood."

C. 1873

He spake and spurred

His pied steed, thou hadst said: "His flying eagle."
 He chose himself a narrow battlefield,
 The troops in wonder watching him, and thence'

Went on to Nahrawán and there confronted
The glorious Great with certain of Írán,
Armed for the conflict with Khusrau Parwíz,
Who said: "O noble chiefs! who recogniseth
Bahrám Chúbína?"

Said Gurdwí: "O king!
Observe the warrior on the piebald steed,
With white juppon, black baldrick, and who rideth
About among the troops."

He recognised
The man at sight and said: "Yon lengthy one,
Smoke-hued and riding on the noble piebald?"

Gurdwí replied: "The same and bent on ill."
"If thou shouldst question," said Khusrau Parwíz,
"That crook-back he would answer churlishly;
With that hooked nose and half shut eyes 'he hath,'
Thou wouldest say, 'a wrathful heart.' Thou seest
That he is wicked by his looks, God's foe.
I mark naught of submission in his head,
And that none will command him."

To Bandwí

And Gustaham he said thereafter: "I
Will give an illustration of this saw:—
'If 'neath the load the donkey will not pass
Then take the weighty burden to the ass.'
If some bold dív hath gulled Bahrám Chúbína
How should he see God's way? All hearts that ache
With greed are helped not by the advice of wisdom.
When thou goest forth to war debate is over.
We must consider all from first to last:
Who knoweth which will conquer in the fight,
Which host be doleful or illustrious?
Considering those troops so well arrayed,
And with a leader eager for the fray,
Such as Bahrám Chúbína is—a man
Grim as a lusty dív—and militants

Like ravening wolves, I will, with your consent,
So that disgrace may not attach to me,
Be first to make advances; 'twill be better
For me than showing slackness in the fight.
If I receive from him a fair reply
His late misdoings shall be obsolete;
I will bestow some corner of the world
Upon him and by bounty earn his thanks;
Our warfare and endeavours in the field
Shall end in peace—a gain to us. No doubt
The wisest course is safest. Good folk joy
When monarchs act as merchants do."

"O king!"

Said Gustaham, "live happily while time
Shall last. Thou scatterest gems in talk and art
More wise. Do what thou willest. Thou art just,
And yon slave is unjust; thy head is full
Of brains and his of wind."

Khusrau Parwíz,

On hearing this, advanced before his troops,
Held distant parle with brave Bahrám Chúbína,
And sought for feast in war-time. Thus he said:—
"Illustrious man! what business hast thou here
Upon the battlefield? Thou art as though
The jewel of the court, the wealth of throne
And diadem, the army's prop in war-time,
And as a bright light at our festivals.
Thou art ambitious, brave, and servest God;
Ne'er may the Almighty take His hand from thee.
I have considered of thy case, approved
Thine acts, will entertain thee and thy troops,
And make my soul glad by the sight of thee.
I will appoint thee general of Írán,
As is but right, and I will pray to God
For thee."

When brave Bahrám Chúbína heard

He gave his black-tailed, piebald steed the rein,
 Saluted from his seat, paused, and replied :—
 “ In good case, blithe, and fortunate am I,
 And may the day of greatness ne'er be thine,
 Who knowest not kingship whether just or not.
 The Aláns' king in the conduct of his kingship
 Is being helped by the unfortunate !
 I have considered of thy case and suppléd
 A lasso for thy sake. I will erect
 Forthwith a lofty gibbet, make thy hands
 Fast in the coils, and hang thee up thereon
 As thou deservest, giving thee a glimpse
 Of fortune's bitterness.”

Khusrau Parwíz

C. 1875

Heard and his cheeks became like fenugreek.
 He knew : “ Bahrám Chúbína will not yield,
 And part with crown and throne,” and thus replied :—
 “ Ingrate ! No good man would speak thus. When
 guests
 Come to thy house from far dost thou revile them
 At feasting-time ? This note is not the wont
 Of Sháhs or of the exalted cavaliers.
 No Arab and no Persian e'er have acted
 Like this in thirty centuries. The wise
 Would shame hereat, so go not thou about
 The door of thanklessness. When guests give thee
 A glorious greeting one must be a div
 To answer as thou dost. Ill days, I fear,
 Await thee for thou knowest that thy counsels
 Are troubled. Thy resource is in the hands
 Of that Great King who liveth ever more,
 Whose word is law. Thou sinnest in His sight,
 And art ingrate, with person in disgrace,
 And heart in fear. In calling me the king
 Of the Aláns thou takest but one side
 Of my descent unless I am unworthy

Of king of kingship and the cap of power
 As having for my grandsire Núshírwán,
 And for my sire Hurmuzd. Whom knowest thou
 More worthy ? ”

Said Bahrám Chúbína : “ Wretch,
 And mad in deed and word ! first, for thy talk
 Of guests : thou art thyself new-fangled though
 Thy talk is of the past. What have the words
 Of Sháhs to do with thee ? Thou art no sage,
 Or valiant cavalier. Thou wast the Aláns' king,
 And now though thou art chief thou art withal
 Inferior to the slave of slaves. Thou art
 A fruitless evil-doer in the world ;
 No Sháh art thou or fit to lead the mighty ;
 But me men bless as Sháh. I will not let thee
 Set foot on earth. Moreover, when I said :—
 ‘ Thou art ill-starred, unfit for rule and kingship,’
 I said it, worthless Sháh ! and may the state
 Be never thine ! because the Íránians
 Are foes of thine, will struggle to uproot thee,
 Will rend the, skin and veins, and give the dogs
 Thy bones to eat.”

Khusrau Parwíz replied :—
 “ Knave ! why so fierce and haughty, for foul words
 Disgrace a man ? But from the very first
 Thy disposition hath been thus ; clear wisdom
 Is severed from thy brain. Blest is the noble
 That eateth wisdom's fruits ! Fey divs discourse
 At large. I would not have a paladin
 Like thee made weak and ruined by his temper.
 I prithee banish anger from thy heart,
 Be not so moved and charm away thy wrath.
 Remember God, the just Possessor ; base
 Thy wisdom on His justice. Thou hast now
 A height before thee higher than Bístún,
 And if a king shall ever come of thee

C. 1876