

Thou shalt be slave for life to thine apprentice,  
 And, further, pay him twice in every month  
 Three score drachms from thy savings. With thy  
     goods  
 He shall be entertainer and make laugh  
 The hearts of noble men."

Then to the high priest :—

"The king that disregardeth this world's doings,  
 How can he know what man is truly great,  
 Or how discern the evil from the good ?" <sup>1</sup>

So now, O sage that seekest wisdom's way !  
 If thou must have a saw hear what I say :—  
 "Avoid all avarice if man thou be,  
 Or be indeed below humanity."

§ 12

*How Bahrám slew a Dragon and went to a Yokel's House*

C. 1513

Bahrám abode a season with his lords,  
 With sparkling wine, with cup, and minstrelsy.  
 Spring came, the ground seemed Paradise, the air  
 Sowed tulips on earth's face, all tracts grew full  
 Of game, and in the brooks the waters seemed  
 Like wine and milk. The deer and onager  
 Paced in the dales or clustered on the sward,  
 The blackbirds haunted all the river-banks,  
 And all around them bent pomegranate-blooms.  
 "'Tis long," the nobles said to Sháh Bahrám Gúr,  
 "Since we have hunted onager."

He answered :—

"Choose we a thousand horsemen from the host,  
 And let them bring the cheetahs and the hawks,

<sup>1</sup> In C the next section begins here. We follow the arrangement in P.

The falcons and the noble peregrines,  
Go to Túrán and pass a month in hunting."

The royal hunter went. He found the world  
All hues and scent. His gallant chieftains swept it  
For onager, gazelle, and mountain-sheep—  
A labour that extended o'er two days—  
What while Bahrám had wine in hand; the third,  
When Sol illumed its crown, when earth grew golden,  
And hill and stream became as ivory,  
The valiant Sháh went to the chase and saw  
A dragon like a lion. From its head  
Hair hung down to the ground, and it had breasts  
Like those of women. Then Bahrám Gúr strung  
His bow and shot forthwith a poplar arrow  
Against the dragon's chest. He shot another  
Straight at its head, and gore and venom flowed  
Adown its front. The king dismounted, drew  
His sword, and carved up all the dragon's breast.  
It had gulped down a youth and frozen him  
In blood and bane. Bahrám bewailed him sorely  
What while the venom blinded his own eyes.  
He took the corpse out of the dragon's maw,  
Ne'er may its head and breast unite again.  
He rode off dizzied, suffering, and longing  
For sleep and water, reached a settlement,  
Arriving at a house-door from the waste,  
And saw a woman shouldering a pitcher.  
She veiled her face from him. He said to her :—  
"Can I lodge here or must I toil on still?"

She said: "Brave horseman! treat this house as  
thine."

On hearing this he rode his courser in.  
His hostess called her husband. "Bring a wisp,"  
She said, "and rub his steed. At feeding-time  
Feed from the sack."

She went to her own chamber, C. 1514