

For 'tis the White Div that I go against—
 That Elephant of war, full of resource,
 And compassed by a host of warriors.
 If he shall catch my body with his noose
 A shameful sorry plight will long be yours,
 But if the Lord and my good star shall aid me
 Our country and our throne will we restore,
 And this our royal Tree shall fruit once more."

§ 12

THE SEVENTH COURSE

How Rustam slew the White Div

He went girt up—all battle and revenge;
 He took Ulád and made Rakhsh go like wind.
 As soon as Rakhsh had reached the seven mountains,
 With all their troops of valiant dívs, the chieftain
 Drew near the abysmal cave, saw them on guard,
 And spake thus to Ulád: "Thou hast been faithful,
 So now that we must act point out the way."

V. 352

Ulád made answer: "When the sun is hot
 The dívs will sleep and thou wilt overcome them;
 So bide thy time and thou wilt see no dívs,
 Except some few on duty, and may'st triumph
 If He that giveth victory shall aid thee."

So Rustam paused till noon, then, having bound
 Ulád fast with the lasso, mounted Rakhsh,
 Unsheathed his warlike Crocodile, and shouted
 His name like thunder, came like flying dust
 Among the troops, and parted heads from trunks.
 None sought for glory by withstanding him.
 Thence radiant as the sun he went to seek
 The White Div, found a pit like Hell, but saw not
 The sorcerer for the murk. There sword in hand

V. 353 He paused ; no room was there for fight or flight.
 He rubbed his eyelids, bathed his eyes, and searched
 The cave till in the gloom he saw a Mountain
 That blotted all within, with sable face
 And hair like lion's mane—a world to see !
 Now Rustam hasted not to slay the dív
 Asleep, but roused him with a leopard's roar.
 He charged at Rustam, like a gloomy mountain
 With iron helm and brassards, seized a millstone
 And drave at him like smoke. The hero quailed,
 And thought: " Mine end is come!" Yet like a
 lion

Enraged he struck full at the dív and lopped
 From that enormous bulk a hand and foot,
 So mighty was he with his trenchant sword !
 As 'twere some lofty-crested elephant
 And lion in its wrath the maimed dív closed
 With Rustam, and one-footed wrecked the cave.
 They wrestled, tearing out each other's flesh,
 Till all the ground was puddled with their blood,
 And Rustam thought: " If I survive this day
 I ne'er shall die."

The White Dív also thought:—
 " Life hath no hopes for me, for, should I scape
 This Dragon's claws, maimed as I am and torn,
 None great or small within Mázandarán
 Will look at me."

V. 354 Such was his wretched comfort !
 But still they wrestled, streaming blood and sweat,
 While elephantine Rustam in God's strength
 Strove mightily in anguish and revenge,
 Till sore bestead, bold Lion that he was,
 He reached out, clutched the dív, raised him neck-
 high,
 And dashed the life-breath from him on the ground,
 Then with a dagger stabbed him to the heart

And plucked the liver from his swarthy form :
 The carcase filled the cave, and all the world
 Was like a sea of blood. Then Rustam freed
 Úlád, put back the lasso in the straps,
 And, giving him the liver of the dív
 To carry, went back to Sháh Kai Káús.
 "O Lion!" said Úlád, "thou hast subdued
 The world beneath thy sword, and I myself
 On my bruised body bears thy lasso's marks,
 So now I hope that thou wilt keep thy promise,
 For lion-fierceness and a royal mien
 Sort not with broken faith."

V. 355

"I give thee all
 Mázandarán," he answered. "I have yet
 Long toils before me, many ups and downs,
 For I must hale its monarch from his throne
 And fling him in a ditch, behead a myriad
 Of sorcerer-dívs with my relentless sword,
 And then, it may be, tread the ground again,¹
 But if not I will still keep faith with thee."

He reached Káús while all in gladness cried:—
 "The chief of ardent spirit hath returned!"
 And ran to him with thanks and praise past count.
 He said: "O Sháh, thou seeker after knowledge!
 Rejoice, thy foe is slain. I have ripped out
 The White Dív's liver, and his king hath naught
 To hope from him. What would my lord the Sháh?"

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Káús blessed Rustam. "Ne'er may crown and host
 Lack thee," he said. "The mother of such offspring
 Must not be mentioned but in terms of praise.
 Now may a thousand blessings be on Zál,
 And on the country of Zábulistán,
 Because they have produced so brave a chief.
 In sooth the age hath not beheld thy like,

¹ In war-time he would ride, and he had sworn to ride till he had triumphed. Cf. p. 44.