

I gave a casket to thy treasurer :
Now let the Sháh vouchsafe to ask for it."

The Sháh said to his treasurer : " He asketh
For that which he consigned to thy safe keeping.
Restore it that we may examine it,
And haply cease to live a life of care."

The treasurer produced and gave the casket
Back to the minister. The Sháh inquired :—
" What is there in it under lock and seal ? "

He made reply : " The blood of mine affliction,
And parts of shame dissevered by the roots.
To me thou gavest Ardawán's own daughter
Until thou shouldst require her corpse of me.
I slew her not because she was with child,
And I feared God, but sacrificed my manhood,
When thou didst give that order, and cut off
My parts of shame that none might slander me,
Or plunge me into infamy. Thy son
Hath been in keeping of thy minister
Seven years. No other king hath son like him,
And his sole semblance is the moon in heaven.
In love I gave to him the name Shápúr,
And may his fortune jubilate the sky.
His mother too is with him, educating
The prince her son."

The world's king marvelled at him,
Began to muse upon that child, then said :—

" O shrewd of heart and well advised ! much toil
Hast thou endured ! I will not let it age
With thee. Select a hundred of his years,
Like him in face and stature, breast and limb,
And all in like garb, neither worse nor better.
Send them to play at polo on the ground,
And furnish balls. When those fair youths are there
My soul will yearn for love upon my child,
My heart will be a witness to the truth,

And make me know my son."

At break of day

The minister arrived and brought the boys
 In dress, in stature, and in mien so like
 As not to be distinguished. Thou hadst said :—
 "A holiday is toward in the park,
 And prince Shápúr is in the thick of it,"
 For when the youth began to play he bore
 The ball off from the rest so that Ardshír,
 On coming to the ground, accompanied
 By young and old, and looking at the boys,
 Could from his bosom heave a deep, cold sigh,
 Could point his son out to his minister,
 And say: "Behold a young Ardshír is yonder!"

The counsellor replied: "O Sháh! thy heart
 Hath testified to thine own son, but wait
 Till yon fair children drive the ball anear thee."

Then Sháh Ardshír bade an attendant: "Go,
 And drive the ball from them that I may see
 Which boy will come forth bravely midst the brave,
 As though a lion, and bear off the ball
 Before my very eyes, regarding none
 Of all this company, for such will be,
 Past doubt, my very son in blood and body,
 In limbs and race."

The servant did his bidding,

And drove the ball before the cavaliers.
 The boys as swift as arrows followed it,
 But, when they neared Ardshír, came to a stand,
 Albeit unwillingly. Shápúr alone,
 That Lion, still came on, seized, and bore off
 The ball before his sire, and then, withdrawing,
 Restored it to the boys. The Sháh's heart joyed,
 As when an old man groweth young again,
 The horsemen raised the young prince from the ground,
 And passed him on from hand to hand until

The king of kings could clasp him to the breast,
 And bless the Judge of all. He kissed Shápúr
 On head and face and eyes, and said: "Such wonders
 Should not be hidden. I ne'er dreamed of this,
 For I presumed him slain just as God greatened
 My kingship and increased my monuments
 Within the world! Thou canst not shun His bidding
 Though thou shouldst raise thy head above the sun."

C. 1397

He called for gold and many precious stones
 Out of his treasury. They poured them forth
 And sifted ¹ musk and ambergris withal
 Upon Shápúr until his head was hidden
 With gold, and none could see his face for jewels.
 The Sháh heaped gems too on his minister,
 Set him upon a seat inlaid with gold,
 And gave him wealth enough to furnish all
 His house and halls. The Sháh then bade the daughter
 Of Ardawán to go in peace and joy
 Back to the palace, pardoned all her fault,
 And cleansed his Moon of rust. He had all men
 Of parts within the city brought to teach
 The boy to write the ancient tongue, to wear
 The mien of royal haughtiness, to wheel
 His steed in battle, and thus mounted show
 His spear-point to the enemy, to quaff,
 Give largess, entertain at feasts, array
 The host, and all the toil and work of war.
 He had a new die struck for all the coinage
 Both gold and silver, large and small alike;
 On one side was his own name, on the other
 That of his great wazír—one held in honour
 As an experienced man and counsellor.
 Both names appeared on documents. The Sháh
 Gave him the ring, the signet, and the rule,
 Bestowed a treasure on the poor that lived

¹ Reading with T.