

Chapter XLVI: Troubles In Persia.--Part I.

Revolutions On Persia After The Death Of Chosroes On
Nushirvan.--His Son Hormouz, A Tyrant, Is Deposed.--
Usurpation Of Baharam.--Flight And Restoration Of Chosroes
II.--His Gratitude To The Romans.--The Chagan Of The Avars.-
-Revolt Of The Army Against Maurice.--His Death.--Tyranny Of
Phocas.--Elevation Of Heraclius.--The Persian War.--Chosroes
Subdues Syria, Egypt, And Asia Minor.--Siege Of
Constantinople By The Persians And Avars.--Persian
Expeditions.--Victories And Triumph Of Heraclius.

The conflict of Rome and Persia was prolonged from the death of Craesus to the reign of Heraclius. An experience of seven hundred years might convince the rival nations of the impossibility of maintaining their conquests beyond the fatal limits of the Tigris and Euphrates. Yet the emulation of Trajan and Julian was awakened by the trophies of Alexander, and the sovereigns of Persia indulged the ambitious hope of restoring the empire of Cyrus. [1] Such extraordinary efforts of power and courage will always command the attention of posterity; but the events by which the fate of nations is not materially changed, leave a faint impression on the page of history, and the patience of the reader would be exhausted by the repetition of the same hostilities, undertaken without cause, prosecuted without glory, and terminated without effect. The arts of negotiation, unknown to the simple greatness of the senate and the Caesars, were assiduously cultivated by the Byzantine princes;

and the memorials of their perpetual embassies [2] repeat, with the same uniform prolixity, the language of falsehood and declamation, the insolence of the Barbarians, and the servile temper of the tributary Greeks. Lamenting the barren superfluity of materials, I have studied to compress the narrative of these uninteresting transactions: but the just Nushirvan is still applauded as the model of Oriental kings, and the ambition of his grandson Chosroes prepared the revolution of the East, which was speedily accomplished by the arms and the religion of the successors of Mahomet.

[Footnote 1: *Missis qui... reposcerent... veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos, seque invasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro, per vaniloquentiam ac minas jaciebat. Tacit. Annal. vi. 31.* Such was the language of the Arsacides. I have repeatedly marked the lofty claims of the Sassanians.]

[Footnote 2: See the embassies of Menander, extracted and preserved in the tenth century by the order of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.]

In the useless altercations, that precede and justify the quarrels of princes, the Greeks and the Barbarians accused each other of violating the peace which had been concluded between the two empires about four years before the death of Justinian. The sovereign of Persia and India aspired to reduce under his obedience the province of Yemen or Arabia [3] Felix; the distant land of myrrh and frankincense, which had escaped, rather than opposed, the conquerors of the East. After the

defeat of Abrahah under the walls of Mecca, the discord of his sons and brothers gave an easy entrance to the Persians: they chased the strangers of Abyssinia beyond the Red Sea; and a native prince of the ancient Homerites was restored to the throne as the vassal or viceroy of the great Nushirvan. [4] But the nephew of Justinian declared his resolution to avenge the injuries of his Christian ally the prince of Abyssinia, as they suggested a decent pretence to discontinue the annual tribute, which was poorly disguised by the name of pension. The churches of Persarmenia were oppressed by the intolerant spirit of the Magi; [411] they secretly invoked the protector of the Christians, and, after the pious murder of their satraps, the rebels were avowed and supported as the brethren and subjects of the Roman emperor. The complaints of Nushirvan were disregarded by the Byzantine court; Justin yielded to the importunities of the Turks, who offered an alliance against the common enemy; and the Persian monarchy was threatened at the same instant by the united forces of Europe, of Aethiopia, and of Scythia. At the age of fourscore the sovereign of the East would perhaps have chosen the peaceful enjoyment of his glory and greatness; but as soon as war became inevitable, he took the field with the alacrity of youth, whilst the aggressor trembled in the palace of Constantinople. Nushirvan, or Chosroes, conducted in person the siege of Dara; and although that important fortress had been left destitute of troops and magazines, the valor of the inhabitants resisted above five months the archers, the elephants, and the military engines of the Great King. In the mean while his general Adarman advanced from Babylon, traversed the desert, passed the Euphrates, insulted the suburbs of Antioch, reduced to ashes the

city of Apamea, and laid the spoils of Syria at the feet of his master, whose perseverance in the midst of winter at length subverted the bulwark of the East. But these losses, which astonished the provinces and the court, produced a salutary effect in the repentance and abdication of the emperor Justin: a new spirit arose in the Byzantine councils; and a truce of three years was obtained by the prudence of Tiberius. That seasonable interval was employed in the preparations of war; and the voice of rumor proclaimed to the world, that from the distant countries of the Alps and the Rhine, from Scythia, Maesia, Pannonia, Illyricum, and Isauria, the strength of the Imperial cavalry was reenforced with one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers. Yet the king of Persia, without fear, or without faith, resolved to prevent the attack of the enemy; again passed the Euphrates, and dismissing the ambassadors of Tiberius, arrogantly commanded them to await his arrival at Caesarea, the metropolis of the Cappadocian provinces. The two armies encountered each other in the battle of Melitene: [412] the Barbarians, who darkened the air with a cloud of arrows, prolonged their line, and extended their wings across the plain; while the Romans, in deep and solid bodies, expected to prevail in closer action, by the weight of their swords and lances. A Scythian chief, who commanded their right wing, suddenly turned the flank of the enemy, attacked their rear-guard in the presence of Chosroes, penetrated to the midst of the camp, pillaged the royal tent, profaned the eternal fire, loaded a train of camels with the spoils of Asia, cut his way through the Persian host, and returned with songs of victory to his friends, who had consumed the day in single combats, or ineffectual skirmishes. The darkness of the

night, and the separation of the Romans, afforded the Persian monarch an opportunity of revenge; and one of their camps was swept away by a rapid and impetuous assault. But the review of his loss, and the consciousness of his danger, determined Chosroes to a speedy retreat: he burnt, in his passage, the vacant town of Melitene; and, without consulting the safety of his troops, boldly swam the Euphrates on the back of an elephant. After this unsuccessful campaign, the want of magazines, and perhaps some inroad of the Turks, obliged him to disband or divide his forces; the Romans were left masters of the field, and their general Justinian, advancing to the relief of the Persarmenian rebels, erected his standard on the banks of the Araxes. The great Pompey had formerly halted within three days' march of the Caspian: [5] that inland sea was explored, for the first time, by a hostile fleet, [6] and seventy thousand captives were transplanted from Hyrcania to the Isle of Cyprus. On the return of spring, Justinian descended into the fertile plains of Assyria; the flames of war approached the residence of Nushirvan; the indignant monarch sunk into the grave; and his last edict restrained his successors from exposing their person in battle against the Romans. [611] Yet the memory of this transient affront was lost in the glories of a long reign; and his formidable enemies, after indulging their dream of conquest, again solicited a short respite from the calamities of war. [7]

[Footnote 3: The general independence of the Arabs, which cannot be admitted without many limitations, is blindly asserted in a separate dissertation of the authors of the Universal History, vol. xx. p.

196--250. A perpetual miracle is supposed to have guarded the prophecy in favor of the posterity of Ishmael; and these learned bigots are not afraid to risk the truth of Christianity on this frail and slippery foundation. * Note: It certainly appears difficult to extract a prediction of the perpetual independence of the Arabs from the text in Genesis, which would have received an ample fulfilment during centuries of uninvaded freedom. But the disputants appear to forget the inseparable connection in the prediction between the wild, the Bedoween habits of the Ismaelites, with their national independence. The stationary and civilized descendant of Ismael forfeited, as it were, his birthright, and ceased to be a genuine son of the "wild man" The phrase, "dwelling in the presence of his brethren," is interpreted by Rosenmuller (in loc.) and others, according to the Hebrew geography, "to the East" of his brethren, the legitimate race of Abraham--M.]

[Footnote 4: D'Herbelot, *Biblioth. Orient.* p. 477. Pocock, *Specimen Hist. Arabum*, p. 64, 65. Father Pagi (*Critica*, tom. ii. p. 646) has proved that, after ten years' peace, the Persian war, which continued twenty years, was renewed A.D. 571. Mahomet was born A.D. 569, in the year of the elephant, or the defeat of Abrahah, (Gagnier, *Vie de Mahomet*, tom. i. p. 89, 90, 98;) and this account allows two years for the conquest of Yemen. * Note: Abrahah, according to some accounts, was succeeded by his son Taksoum, who reigned seventeen years; his brother Mascouh, who was slain in battle against the Persians, twelve. But this chronology is irreconcilable with the Arabian conquests of Nushirvan the Great. Either Seif, or his son Maadi Karb, was the native prince placed

on the throne by the Persians. St. Martin, vol. x. p. 78. See likewise
Johannsen, Hist. Yemanae.--M.]

[Footnote 411: Persarmenia was long maintained in peace by the tolerant
administration of Mejej, prince of the Gnounians. On his death he was
succeeded by a persecutor, a Persian, named Ten-Schahpour, who attempted
to propagate Zoroastrianism by violence. Nushirvan, on an appeal to
the throne by the Armenian clergy, replaced Ten-Schahpour, in 552, by
Veschnas-Vahram. The new marzban, or governor, was instructed to repress
the bigoted Magi in their persecutions of the Armenians, but the Persian
converts to Christianity were still exposed to cruel sufferings. The
most distinguished of them, Izdbouzid, was crucified at Dovin in the
presence of a vast multitude. The fame of this martyr spread to the
West. Menander, the historian, not only, as appears by a fragment
published by Mai, related this event in his history, but, according
to M. St. Martin, wrote a tragedy on the subject. This, however, is
an unwarrantable inference from the phrase which merely means that he
related the tragic event in his history. An epigram on the same subject,
preserved in the Anthology, Jacob's Anth. Palat. i. 27, belongs to
the historian. Yet Armenia remained in peace under the government of
Veschnas-Vahram and his successor Varazdat. The tyranny of his successor
Surena led to the insurrection under Vartan, the Mamigonian, who
revenged the death of his brother on the marzban Surena, surprised
Dovin, and put to the sword the governor, the soldiers, and the Magians.
From St. Martin, vol x. p. 79--89.--M.]

[Footnote 412: Malathiah. It was in the lesser Armenia.--M.]

[Footnote 5: He had vanquished the Albanians, who brought into the field 12,000 horse and 60,000 foot; but he dreaded the multitude of venomous reptiles, whose existence may admit of some doubt, as well as that of the neighboring Amazons. Plutarch, in Pompeio, tom. ii. p. 1165, 1166.]

[Footnote 6: In the history of the world I can only perceive two navies on the Caspian: 1. Of the Macedonians, when Patrocles, the admiral of the kings of Syria, Seleucus and Antiochus, descended most probably the River Oxus, from the confines of India, (Plin. Hist. Natur. vi. 21.) 2. Of the Russians, when Peter the First conducted a fleet and army from the neighborhood of Moscow to the coast of Persia, (Bell's Travels, vol. ii. p. 325--352.) He justly observes, that such martial pomp had never been displayed on the Volga.]

[Footnote 611: This circumstance rests on the statements of Evagrius and Theophylaci Simocatta. They are not of sufficient authority to establish a fact so improbable. St. Martin, vol. x. p. 140.--M.]

[Footnote 7: For these Persian wars and treaties, see Menander, in Excerpt. Legat. p. 113--125. Theophanes Byzant. apud Photium, cod. lxiv p. 77, 80, 81. Evagrius, l. v. c. 7--15. Theophylact, l. iii. c. 9--16 Agathias, l. iv. p. 140.]

The throne of Chosroes Nushirvan was filled by Hormouz, or Hormisdas,

the eldest or the most favored of his sons. With the kingdoms of Persia and India, he inherited the reputation and example of his father, the service, in every rank, of his wise and valiant officers, and a general system of administration, harmonized by time and political wisdom to promote the happiness of the prince and people. But the royal youth enjoyed a still more valuable blessing, the friendship of a sage who had presided over his education, and who always preferred the honor to the interest of his pupil, his interest to his inclination. In a dispute with the Greek and Indian philosophers, Buzurg [8] had once maintained, that the most grievous misfortune of life is old age without the remembrance of virtue; and our candor will presume that the same principle compelled him, during three years, to direct the councils of the Persian empire. His zeal was rewarded by the gratitude and docility of Hormouz, who acknowledged himself more indebted to his preceptor than to his parent: but when age and labor had impaired the strength, and perhaps the faculties, of this prudent counsellor, he retired from court, and abandoned the youthful monarch to his own passions and those of his favorites. By the fatal vicissitude of human affairs, the same scenes were renewed at Ctesiphon, which had been exhibited at Rome after the death of Marcus Antoninus. The ministers of flattery and corruption, who had been banished by his father, were recalled and cherished by the son; the disgrace and exile of the friends of Nushirvan established their tyranny; and virtue was driven by degrees from the mind of Hormouz, from his palace, and from the government of the state. The faithful agents, the eyes and ears of the king, informed him of the progress of disorder, that the provincial governors flew to their prey

with the fierceness of lions and eagles, and that their rapine and injustice would teach the most loyal of his subjects to abhor the name and authority of their sovereign. The sincerity of this advice was punished with death; the murmurs of the cities were despised, their tumults were quelled by military execution: the intermediate powers between the throne and the people were abolished; and the childish vanity of Hormouz, who affected the daily use of the tiara, was fond of declaring, that he alone would be the judge as well as the master of his kingdom.

In every word, and in every action, the son of Nushirvan degenerated from the virtues of his father. His avarice defrauded the troops; his jealous caprice degraded the satraps; the palace, the tribunals, the waters of the Tigris, were stained with the blood of the innocent, and the tyrant exulted in the sufferings and execution of thirteen thousand victims. As the excuse of his cruelty, he sometimes condescended to observe, that the fears of the Persians would be productive of hatred, and that their hatred must terminate in rebellion but he forgot that his own guilt and folly had inspired the sentiments which he deplored, and prepared the event which he so justly apprehended. Exasperated by long and hopeless oppression, the provinces of Babylon, Susa, and Carmania, erected the standard of revolt; and the princes of Arabia, India, and Scythia, refused the customary tribute to the unworthy successor of Nushirvan. The arms of the Romans, in slow sieges and frequent inroads, afflicted the frontiers of Mesopotamia and Assyria: one of their generals professed himself the disciple of Scipio; and the soldiers were

animated by a miraculous image of Christ, whose mild aspect should never have been displayed in the front of battle. [9] At the same time, the eastern provinces of Persia were invaded by the great khan, who passed the Oxus at the head of three or four hundred thousand Turks. The imprudent Hormouz accepted their perfidious and formidable aid; the cities of Khorassan or Bactriana were commanded to open their gates the march of the Barbarians towards the mountains of Hyrcania revealed the correspondence of the Turkish and Roman arms; and their union must have subverted the throne of the house of Sassan.

[Footnote 8: Buzurg Mihir may be considered, in his character and station, as the Seneca of the East; but his virtues, and perhaps his faults, are less known than those of the Roman, who appears to have been much more loquacious. The Persian sage was the person who imported from India the game of chess and the fables of Pilpay. Such has been the fame of his wisdom and virtues, that the Christians claim him as a believer in the gospel; and the Mahometans revere Buzurg as a premature Mussulman. D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 218.]

[Footnote 9: See the imitation of Scipio in Theophylact, l. i. c. 14; the image of Christ, l. ii. c. 3. Hereafter I shall speak more amply of the Christian images--I had almost said idols. This, if I am not mistaken, is the oldest of divine manufacture; but in the next thousand years, many others issued from the same workshop.]

Persia had been lost by a king; it was saved by a hero. After his

revolt, Varanes or Bahram is stigmatized by the son of Hormouz as an ungrateful slave; the proud and ambiguous reproach of despotism, since he was truly descended from the ancient princes of Rei, [10] one of the seven families whose splendid, as well as substantial, prerogatives exalted them above the heads of the Persian nobility. [11] At the siege of Dara, the valor of Bahram was signaled under the eyes of Nushirvan, and both the father and son successively promoted him to the command of armies, the government of Media, and the superintendence of the palace. The popular prediction which marked him as the deliverer of Persia, might be inspired by his past victories and extraordinary figure: the epithet Giubin [1111] is expressive of the quality of dry wood: he had the strength and stature of a giant; and his savage countenance was fancifully compared to that of a wild cat. While the nation trembled, while Hormouz disguised his terror by the name of suspicion, and his servants concealed their disloyalty under the mask of fear, Bahram alone displayed his undaunted courage and apparent fidelity: and as soon as he found that no more than twelve thousand soldiers would follow him against the enemy; he prudently declared, that to this fatal number Heaven had reserved the honors of the triumph. [1112] The steep and narrow descent of the Pule Rudbar, [12] or Hyrcanian rock, is the only pass through which an army can penetrate into the territory of Rei and the plains of Media. From the commanding heights, a band of resolute men might overwhelm with stones and darts the myriads of the Turkish host: their emperor and his son were transpierced with arrows; and the fugitives were left, without counsel or provisions, to the revenge of an injured people. The patriotism of the Persian general was stimulated by

his affection for the city of his forefathers: in the hour of victory, every peasant became a soldier, and every soldier a hero; and their ardor was kindled by the gorgeous spectacle of beds, and thrones, and tables of massy gold, the spoils of Asia, and the luxury of the hostile camp. A prince of a less malignant temper could not easily have forgiven his benefactor; and the secret hatred of Hormouz was envenomed by a malicious report, that Bahram had privately retained the most precious fruits of his Turkish victory. But the approach of a Roman army on the side of the Araxes compelled the implacable tyrant to smile and to applaud; and the toils of Bahram were rewarded with the permission of encountering a new enemy, by their skill and discipline more formidable than a Scythian multitude. Elated by his recent success, he despatched a herald with a bold defiance to the camp of the Romans, requesting them to fix a day of battle, and to choose whether they would pass the river themselves, or allow a free passage to the arms of the great king. The lieutenant of the emperor Maurice preferred the safer alternative; and this local circumstance, which would have enhanced the victory of the Persians, rendered their defeat more bloody and their escape more difficult. But the loss of his subjects, and the danger of his kingdom, were overbalanced in the mind of Hormouz by the disgrace of his personal enemy; and no sooner had Bahram collected and reviewed his forces, than he received from a royal messenger the insulting gift of a distaff, a spinning-wheel, and a complete suit of female apparel. Obedient to the will of his sovereign he showed himself to the soldiers in this unworthy disguise they resented his ignominy and their own; a shout of rebellion ran through the ranks; and the general accepted their oath of fidelity

and vows of revenge. A second messenger, who had been commanded to bring the rebel in chains, was trampled under the feet of an elephant, and manifestos were diligently circulated, exhorting the Persians to assert their freedom against an odious and contemptible tyrant. The defection was rapid and universal; his loyal slaves were sacrificed to the public fury; the troops deserted to the standard of Bahram; and the provinces again saluted the deliverer of his country.

[Footnote 10: Ragae, or Rei, is mentioned in the Apocryphal book of Tobit as already flourishing, 700 years before Christ, under the Assyrian empire. Under the foreign names of Europus and Arsacia, this city, 500 stadia to the south of the Caspian gates, was successively embellished by the Macedonians and Parthians, (Strabo, l. xi. p. 796.) Its grandeur and populousness in the ixth century are exaggerated beyond the bounds of credibility; but Rei has been since ruined by wars and the unwholesomeness of the air. Chardin, Voyage en Perse, tom. i. p. 279, 280. D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Oriental. p. 714.]

[Footnote 11: Theophylact. l. iii. c. 18. The story of the seven Persians is told in the third book of Herodotus; and their noble descendants are often mentioned, especially in the fragments of Ctesias. Yet the independence of Otanes (Herodot. l. iii. c. 83, 84) is hostile to the spirit of despotism, and it may not seem probable that the seven families could survive the revolutions of eleven hundred years. They might, however, be represented by the seven ministers, (Brisson, de Regno Persico, l. i. p. 190;) and some Persian nobles, like the kings

of Pontus (Polyb l. v. p. 540) and Cappadocia, (Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxi. tom. ii. p. 517,) might claim their descent from the bold companions of Darius.]

[Footnote 1111: He is generally called Baharam Choubeen, Baharam, the stick-like, probably from his appearance. Malcolm, vol. i. p. 120.--M.]

[Footnote 1112: The Persian historians say, that Hormouz entreated his general to increase his numbers; but Baharam replied, that experience had taught him that it was the quality, not the number of soldiers, which gave success. * * * No man in his army was under forty years, and none above fifty. Malcolm, vol. i. p. 121--M.]

[Footnote 12: See an accurate description of this mountain by Olearius, (Voyage en Perse, p. 997, 998,) who ascended it with much difficulty and danger in his return from Ispahan to the Caspian Sea.]

As the passes were faithfully guarded, Hormouz could only compute the number of his enemies by the testimony of a guilty conscience, and the daily defection of those who, in the hour of his distress, avenged their wrongs, or forgot their obligations. He proudly displayed the ensigns of royalty; but the city and palace of Modain had already escaped from the hand of the tyrant. Among the victims of his cruelty, Bindoes, a Sassanian prince, had been cast into a dungeon; his fetters were broken by the zeal and courage of a brother; and he stood before the king at the head of those trusty guards, who had been chosen as the ministers

of his confinement, and perhaps of his death. Alarmed by the hasty intrusion and bold reproaches of the captive, Hormouz looked round, but in vain, for advice or assistance; discovered that his strength consisted in the obedience of others; and patiently yielded to the single arm of Bindoes, who dragged him from the throne to the same dungeon in which he himself had been so lately confined. At the first tumult, Chosroes, the eldest of the sons of Hormouz, escaped from the city; he was persuaded to return by the pressing and friendly invitation of Bindoes, who promised to seat him on his father's throne, and who expected to reign under the name of an inexperienced youth. In the just assurance, that his accomplices could neither forgive nor hope to be forgiven, and that every Persian might be trusted as the judge and enemy of the tyrant, he instituted a public trial without a precedent and without a copy in the annals of the East. The son of Nushirvan, who had requested to plead in his own defence, was introduced as a criminal into the full assembly of the nobles and satraps. [13] He was heard with decent attention as long as he expatiated on the advantages of order and obedience, the danger of innovation, and the inevitable discord of those who had encouraged each other to trample on their lawful and hereditary sovereign. By a pathetic appeal to their humanity, he extorted that pity which is seldom refused to the fallen fortunes of a king; and while they beheld the abject posture and squalid appearance of the prisoner, his tears, his chains, and the marks of ignominious stripes, it was impossible to forget how recently they had adored the divine splendor of his diadem and purple. But an angry murmur arose in the assembly as soon as he presumed to vindicate his conduct, and to applaud the victories

of his reign. He defined the duties of a king, and the Persian nobles listened with a smile of contempt; they were fired with indignation when he dared to vilify the character of Chosroes; and by the indiscreet offer of resigning the sceptre to the second of his sons, he subscribed his own condemnation, and sacrificed the life of his own innocent favorite. The mangled bodies of the boy and his mother were exposed to the people; the eyes of Hormouz were pierced with a hot needle; and the punishment of the father was succeeded by the coronation of his eldest son. Chosroes had ascended the throne without guilt, and his piety strove to alleviate the misery of the abdicated monarch; from the dungeon he removed Hormouz to an apartment of the palace, supplied with liberality the consolations of sensual enjoyment, and patiently endured the furious sallies of his resentment and despair. He might despise the resentment of a blind and unpopular tyrant, but the tiara was trembling on his head, till he could subvert the power, or acquire the friendship, of the great Bahram, who sternly denied the justice of a revolution, in which himself and his soldiers, the true representatives of Persia, had never been consulted. The offer of a general amnesty, and of the second rank in his kingdom, was answered by an epistle from Bahram, friend of the gods, conqueror of men, and enemy of tyrants, the satrap of satraps, general of the Persian armies, and a prince adorned with the title of eleven virtues. [14] He commands Chosroes, the son of Hormouz, to shun the example and fate of his father, to confine the traitors who had been released from their chains, to deposit in some holy place the diadem which he had usurped, and to accept from his gracious benefactor the pardon of his faults and the government of a province. The rebel might

not be proud, and the king most assuredly was not humble; but the one was conscious of his strength, the other was sensible of his weakness; and even the modest language of his reply still left room for treaty and reconciliation. Chosroes led into the field the slaves of the palace and the populace of the capital: they beheld with terror the banners of a veteran army; they were encompassed and surprised by the evolutions of the general; and the satraps who had deposed Hormouz, received the punishment of their revolt, or expiated their first treason by a second and more criminal act of disloyalty. The life and liberty of Chosroes were saved, but he was reduced to the necessity of imploring aid or refuge in some foreign land; and the implacable Bindoes, anxious to secure an unquestionable title, hastily returned to the palace, and ended, with a bowstring, the wretched existence of the son of Nushirvan.

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[Footnote 13: The Orientals suppose that Bahram convened this assembly and proclaimed Chosroes; but Theophylact is, in this instance, more distinct and credible. * Note: Yet Theophylact seems to have seized the opportunity to indulge his propensity for writing orations; and the orations read rather like those of a Grecian sophist than of an Eastern assembly.--M.]

[Footnote 14: See the words of Theophylact, l. iv. c. 7., &c. In answer, Chosroes styles himself in genuine Oriental bombast.]

[Footnote 15: Theophylact (l. iv. c. 7) imputes the death of Hormouz

to his son, by whose command he was beaten to death with clubs. I have followed the milder account of Khondemir and Euty chius, and shall always be content with the slightest evidence to extenuate the crime of parricide. Note: Malcolm concurs in ascribing his death to Bundawee, (Bindoes,) vol. i. p. 123. The Eastern writers generally impute the crime to the uncle St. Martin, vol. x. p. 300.--M.]

While Chosroes despatched the preparations of his retreat, he deliberated with his remaining friends, [16] whether he should lurk in the valleys of Mount Caucasus, or fly to the tents of the Turks, or solicit the protection of the emperor. The long emulation of the successors of Artaxerxes and Constantine increased his reluctance to appear as a suppliant in a rival court; but he weighed the forces of the Romans, and prudently considered that the neighborhood of Syria would render his escape more easy and their succors more effectual. Attended only by his concubines, and a troop of thirty guards, he secretly departed from the capital, followed the banks of the Euphrates, traversed the desert, and halted at the distance of ten miles from Circesium. About the third watch of the night, the Roman praefect was informed of his approach, and he introduced the royal stranger to the fortress at the dawn of day. From thence the king of Persia was conducted to the more honorable residence of Hierapolis; and Maurice dissembled his pride, and displayed his benevolence, at the reception of the letters and ambassadors of the grandson of Nushirvan. They humbly represented the vicissitudes of fortune and the common interest of princes, exaggerated the ingratitude of Bahram, the agent of the evil

principle, and urged, with specious argument, that it was for the advantage of the Romans themselves to support the two monarchies which balance the world, the two great luminaries by whose salutary influence it is vivified and adorned. The anxiety of Chosroes was soon relieved by the assurance, that the emperor had espoused the cause of justice and royalty; but Maurice prudently declined the expense and delay of his useless visit to Constantinople. In the name of his generous benefactor, a rich diadem was presented to the fugitive prince, with an inestimable gift of jewels and gold; a powerful army was assembled on the frontiers of Syria and Armenia, under the command of the valiant and faithful Narses, [17] and this general, of his own nation, and his own choice, was directed to pass the Tigris, and never to sheathe his sword till he had restored Chosroes to the throne of his ancestors. [1711] The enterprise, however splendid, was less arduous than it might appear. Persia had already repented of her fatal rashness, which betrayed the heir of the house of Sassan to the ambition of a rebellious subject: and the bold refusal of the Magi to consecrate his usurpation, compelled Bahram to assume the sceptre, regardless of the laws and prejudices of the nation. The palace was soon distracted with conspiracy, the city with tumult, the provinces with insurrection; and the cruel execution of the guilty and the suspected served to irritate rather than subdue the public discontent. No sooner did the grandson of Nushirvan display his own and the Roman banners beyond the Tigris, than he was joined, each day, by the increasing multitudes of the nobility and people; and as he advanced, he received from every side the grateful offerings of the keys of his cities and the heads of his enemies. As soon as Modain was freed

from the presence of the usurper, the loyal inhabitants obeyed the first summons of Mebodes at the head of only two thousand horse, and Chosroes accepted the sacred and precious ornaments of the palace as the pledge of their truth and the presage of his approaching success. After the junction of the Imperial troops, which Bahram vainly struggled to prevent, the contest was decided by two battles on the banks of the Zab, and the confines of Media. The Romans, with the faithful subjects of Persia, amounted to sixty thousand, while the whole force of the usurper did not exceed forty thousand men: the two generals signalized their valor and ability; but the victory was finally determined by the prevalence of numbers and discipline. With the remnant of a broken army, Bahram fled towards the eastern provinces of the Oxus: the enmity of Persia reconciled him to the Turks; but his days were shortened by poison, perhaps the most incurable of poisons; the stings of remorse and despair, and the bitter remembrance of lost glory. Yet the modern Persians still commemorate the exploits of Bahram; and some excellent laws have prolonged the duration of his troubled and transitory reign.

[Footnote 16: After the battle of Pharsalia, the Pompey of Lucan (l. viii. 256--455) holds a similar debate. He was himself desirous of seeking the Parthians: but his companions abhorred the unnatural alliance and the adverse prejudices might operate as forcibly on Chosroes and his companions, who could describe, with the same vehemence, the contrast of laws, religion, and manners, between the East and West.]

[Footnote 17: In this age there were three warriors of the name of Narses, who have been often confounded, (Pagi, Critica, tom. ii. p. 640:) 1. A Persarmenian, the brother of Isaac and Armatius, who, after a successful action against Belisarius, deserted from his Persian sovereign, and afterwards served in the Italian war.--2. The eunuch who conquered Italy.--3. The restorer of Chosroes, who is celebrated in the poem of Corippus (l. iii. 220--327) as *excelsus super omnia vertico agmina.... habitu modestus.... morum probitate placens, virtute verendus; fulmineus, cautus, vigilans, &c.*]

[Footnote 1711: The Armenians adhered to Chosroes. St. Martin, vol. x. p. 312.--M.]

[Footnote 1712: According to Mivkhond and the Oriental writers, Bahram received the daughter of the Khakan in marriage, and commanded a body of Turks in an invasion of Persia. Some say that he was assassinated; Malcolm adopts the opinion that he was poisoned. His sister Gourdieh, the companion of his flight, is celebrated in the Shah Nameh. She was afterwards one of the wives of Chosroes. St. Martin. vol. x. p. 331.--M.]

The restoration of Chosroes was celebrated with feasts and executions; and the music of the royal banquet was often disturbed by the groans of dying or mutilated criminals. A general pardon might have diffused comfort and tranquillity through a country which had been shaken by the late revolutions; yet, before the sanguinary temper of Chosroes is

blamed, we should learn whether the Persians had not been accustomed either to dread the rigor, or to despise the weakness, of their sovereign. The revolt of Bahram, and the conspiracy of the satraps, were impartially punished by the revenge or justice of the conqueror; the merits of Bindoes himself could not purify his hand from the guilt of royal blood: and the son of Hormouz was desirous to assert his own innocence, and to vindicate the sanctity of kings. During the vigor of the Roman power, several princes were seated on the throne of Persia by the arms and the authority of the first Caesars. But their new subjects were soon disgusted with the vices or virtues which they had imbibed in a foreign land; the instability of their dominion gave birth to a vulgar observation, that the choice of Rome was solicited and rejected with equal ardor by the capricious levity of Oriental slaves. But the glory of Maurice was conspicuous in the long and fortunate reign of his son and his ally. A band of a thousand Romans, who continued to guard the person of Chosroes, proclaimed his confidence in the fidelity of the strangers; his growing strength enabled him to dismiss this unpopular aid, but he steadily professed the same gratitude and reverence to his adopted father; and till the death of Maurice, the peace and alliance of the two empires were faithfully maintained. [18] Yet the mercenary friendship of the Roman prince had been purchased with costly and important gifts; the strong cities of Martyropolis and Dara [1811] were restored, and the Persarmenians became the willing subjects of an empire, whose eastern limit was extended, beyond the example of former times, as far as the banks of the Araxes, and the neighborhood of the Caspian. A pious hope was indulged, that the church as well as the state

might triumph in this revolution: but if Chosroes had sincerely listened to the Christian bishops, the impression was erased by the zeal and eloquence of the Magi: if he was armed with philosophic indifference, he accommodated his belief, or rather his professions, to the various circumstances of an exile and a sovereign. The imaginary conversion of the king of Persia was reduced to a local and superstitious veneration for Sergius, [19] one of the saints of Antioch, who heard his prayers and appeared to him in dreams; he enriched the shrine with offerings of gold and silver, and ascribed to this invisible patron the success of his arms, and the pregnancy of Sira, a devout Christian and the best beloved of his wives. [20] The beauty of Sira, or Schirin, [21] her wit, her musical talents, are still famous in the history, or rather in the romances, of the East: her own name is expressive, in the Persian tongue, of sweetness and grace; and the epithet of Parviz alludes to the charms of her royal lover. Yet Sira never shared the passions which she inspired, and the bliss of Chosroes was tortured by a jealous doubt, that while he possessed her person, she had bestowed her affections on a meaner favorite. [22]

[Footnote 18: Experimentis cognitum est Barbaros malle Roma petere reges quam habere. These experiments are admirably represented in the invitation and expulsion of Vonones, (Annal. ii. 1--3,) Tiridates, (Annal. vi. 32-44,) and Meherdates, (Annal. xi. 10, xii. 10-14.) The eye of Tacitus seems to have transpierced the camp of the Parthians and the walls of the harem.]

[Footnote 1811: Concerning Nisibis, see St. Martin and his Armenian authorities, vol. x p. 332, and Memoires sur l'Armenie, tom. i. p. 25.--M.]

[Footnote 19: Sergius and his companion Bacchus, who are said to have suffered in the persecution of Maximian, obtained divine honor in France, Italy, Constantinople, and the East. Their tomb at Rasaphe was famous for miracles, and that Syrian town acquired the more honorable name of Sergiopolis. Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. v. p. 481--496. Butler's Saints, vol. x. p. 155.]

[Footnote 20: Evagrius (l. vi. c. 21) and Theophylact (l. v. c. 13, 14) have preserved the original letters of Chosroes, written in Greek, signed with his own hand, and afterwards inscribed on crosses and tables of gold, which were deposited in the church of Sergiopolis. They had been sent to the bishop of Antioch, as primate of Syria. * Note: St. Martin thinks that they were first written in Syriac, and then translated into the bad Greek in which they appear, vol. x. p. 334.--M.]

[Footnote 21: The Greeks only describe her as a Roman by birth, a Christian by religion: but she is represented as the daughter of the emperor Maurice in the Persian and Turkish romances which celebrate the love of Khosrou for Schirin, of Schirin for Ferhad, the most beautiful youth of the East, D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient. p. 789, 997, 998. * Note: Compare M. von Hammer's preface to, and poem of, Schirin in which he gives an account of the various Persian poems, of which he has

endeavored to extract the essence in his own work.--M.]

[Footnote 22: The whole series of the tyranny of Hormouz, the revolt of Bahram, and the flight and restoration of Chosroes, is related by two contemporary Greeks--more concisely by Evagrius, (l. vi. c. 16, 17, 18, 19,) and most diffusely by Theophylact Simocatta, (l. iii. c. 6--18, l. iv. c. 1--16, l. v. c. 1-15:) succeeding compilers, Zonaras and Cedrenus, can only transcribe and abridge. The Christian Arabs, Euty chius (Annal. tom. ii. p. 200--208) and Abulpharagius (Dynast. p. 96--98) appear to have consulted some particular memoirs. The great Persian historians of the xvth century, Mirkhond and Khondemir, are only known to me by the imperfect extracts of Schikard, (Tarikh, p. 150--155,) Texeira, or rather Stevens, (Hist. of Persia, p. 182--186,) a Turkish Ms. translated by the Abbe Fourmount, (Hist. de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. vii. p. 325--334,) and D'Herbelot, (aux mots Hormouz, p. 457--459. Bahram, p. 174. Khosrou Parviz, p. 996.) Were I perfectly satisfied of their authority, I could wish these Oriental materials had been more copious.]