The Sassanians (New Persia) [1]

By George Rawlinson

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22. Accession of Hormisdas IV

At the death of Chosroes the crown was assumed without dispute or difficulty by his son, Hormazd, who is known to the Greek and Latin writers as Hormisdas IV. Hormazd was the eldest, or perhaps the only, son borne to Chosroes by the Turkish princess, Fakim, who, from the time of her marriage, had held the place of sultana, or principal wife. His illustrious descent on both sides, added to the express appointment of his father, caused him to be universally accepted as king; and we do not hear that even his half-brothers, several of whom were older than himself, put forward any claims in opposition to his, or caused him any anxiety or trouble. He commenced his reign amid the universal plaudits and acclamations of his subjects, whom he delighted by declaring that he would follow in all things the steps of his father, whose wisdom so much exceeded his own, would pursue his policy, maintain his officers in power, and endeavor in all respects to govern as he had governed. When the mobeds attempted to persuade him to confine his favor to Zoroastrians and persecute such of his subjects as were Jews or Christians he rejected their advice with the remark that, as in an extensive territory there were sure to be varieties of soil, so it was fitting that a great empire should embrace men of various opinions and manners. In his progresses from one part of his empire to another he allowed of no injury being done to the lands or gardens along the route, and punished severely all who infringed his orders. According to some, his good dispositions lasted only during the time that he enjoyed the counsel and support of Abu-zurd-mihir, one of the best advisers of his father; but when this venerated sage was compelled by the infirmities of age to quit his court he fell under other influences, and soon degenerated into the cruel tyrant which, according to all the authorities, he showed himself in his later years.

Meanwhile, however, he was engaged in important wars, particularly with the Roman emperors Tiberius and Maurice, who, now that the great Chosroes was dead, pressed upon Persia with augmented force, in the confident hope of recovering their lost laurels. On the first intelligence of the great king's death, Tiberius had endeavored to negotiate a peace with his successor, and had offered to relinquish all claim on Armenia, and to exchange Arzanene with its strong fortress, Aphumon, for Daras; but Hormisdas had absolutely rejected his proposals, declared that he would surrender nothing, and declined to make peace on any other terms than the resumption by Rome of her old system of paying an annual subsidy. The war consequently continued; and Maurice, who still held the command, proceeded, in the summer of A.D. 579, to take the offensive and

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invade the Persian territory. He sent a force across the Tigris under Romanus, Theodoric, and Martin, which ravaged Kurdistan, and perhaps penetrated into Media, nowhere encountering any large body of the enemy, but carrying all before them and destroying the harvest at their pleasure. In the next year, A.D. 580, he formed a more ambitious project. Having gained over, as he thought, Alamundarus, the leader of the Saracens dependent on Persia, and collected a fleet to carry his stores, he marched from Circesium down the course of the Euphrates, intending to carry the war into Southern Mesopotamia, and perhaps hoping to capture Ctesiphon. He expected to take the Persians unawares, and may not unnaturally have looked to gain an important success; but, unhappily for his plans, Alamundarus proved treacherous. The Persian king was informed of his enemy's march, and steps were at once taken to render it abortive. Adarman was sent, at the head of a large army, into Roman Mesopotamia, where he threatened the important city of Callinicus in Maurice's rear. That general dared advance no further. On the contrary, he felt constrained to fall back, to give up his scheme, burn his fleet, and return hastily within the Roman frontier. On his arrival, he engaged Adarman near the city which he was attacking, defeated him, and drove him back into Persia.

In the ensuing spring, after another vain attempt at negotiation, the offensive was taken by the Persians, who, early in A.D. 581, crossed the frontier under Tam-chosro, and attacked the Roman city of Constantia, or Constantina. Maurice hastened to its relief; and a great battle was fought in the immediate vicinity of the city, wherein the Persians were completely defeated, and their commander lost his life. Further advantages might have been gained; but the prospect of the succession drew Maurice to Constantinople, where Tiberius, stricken with a mortal disease, received him with open arms, gave his daughter and the state into his care, and, dying soon after, left him the legacy of the empire, which he administered with success for above twenty years.

On quitting the East, Maurice devolved his command upon an officer who bore the very common name of Johannes, but was distinguished further by the epithet of Mustacon, on account of his abundant moustache. This seems to have been a bad appointment. Mustacon was unequal to the position. He gave the Persians battle at the conjunction of the Nymphius with the Tigris, but was defeated with considerable loss, partly through the misconduct of one of his captains. He then laid siege to Arbas, a strong fort on the Persian side of the Nymphius, while the main body of the Persians were attacking Aphumon in the neighboring district of Arzanene. The garrison of Arbas made signals of distress, which speedily brought the Persian army to their aid; a second battle was fought at Arbas, and Mustacon was again defeated, and forced to retire across the Nymphius into Roman territory. His incapacity was now rendered so clearly evident that Maurice recalled him, and gave the command of the army of the East to a new general, Philippicus, his brother-in-law.

The first and second campaigns of Philippicus, in the years A.D. 584 and 585, were of the most commonplace character. He avoided any general engagement, and contended himself with plundering inroads into the Persian territory on either side of the Upper Tigris, occasionally suffering considerably from want of water and provisions. The Persians on their part undertook no operations of importance until late in A.D. 585, when Philippicus had fallen sick. They then made attempts upon Monocartum and Martyropolis, which were unsuccessful, resulting only in the burning of a church and a monastery near the latter town. Neither side seemed capable of making any serious impression upon the other; and early the next year negotiations were resumed, which, however, resulted in nothing.

In his third campaign Philippicus adopted a bolder line of proceeding. Commencing by an invasion of Eastern Mesopotamia, he met and defeated the Persians in a great battle near Solachon, having first roused the enthusiasm of his troops by carrying along their ranks a miraculous picture of our Lord, which no human hand had painted. Hanging on the rear of the fugitives, he pursued them to Daras, which declined to receive within its walls an army that had so disgraced itself. The Persian commander withdrew his troops further inland; and Philippicus, believing that he had now no enemy to fear, proceeded to invade Arzanene, to besiege the stronghold of Chlomaron, and at the same time to throw forward troops into the more eastern parts of the country. He expected them to be unopposed; but the Persian general, having rallied his force and augmented it by fresh recruits, had returned towards the frontier, and, hearing of the danger of Arzanene, had flown to its defence. Philippicus was taken by surprise, compelled to raise the siege of Chlomaron, and to fall back in disorder. The Persians pressed on his retreat, crossed the Nymphius after him, and did not desist from the pursuit until the imperial general threw himself with his shattered army into the strong fortress of Amida. Disgusted and discredited by his ill-success, Philippicus gave over the active prosecution of the war to Heraclius, and, remaining at head-quarters, contented himself with a general supervision.

Heraclius, on receiving his appointment, is said to have at once assumed the offensive, and to have led an army, consisting chiefly or entirely of infantry, into Persian territory, which devastated the country on both sides of the Tigris, and rejoined Philippicus, without having suffered any disaster, before the winter. Philippicus was encouraged by the success of his lieutenant to continue him in command for another year; but, through prudence or jealousy, he was induced to intrust a portion only of the troops to his care, while he assigned to others the supreme authority over no less than one third of the Roman army. The result was, as might have been expected, inglorious for Rome. During A.D. 587 the two divisions acted separately in different quarters; and, at the end of the year, neither could boast of any greater success than the reduction, in each case, of a single fortress. Philippicus, however, seems to have been satisfied; and at the approach of winter he withdrew from the East altogether, leaving Heraclius as his representative, and returned to Constantinople.

During the earlier portion of the year A.D. 588 the mutinous temper of the Roman army rendered it impossible that any military operations should be undertaken. Encouraged by the disorganization of their enemies, the Persians crossed the frontier, and threatened Constantina, which was however saved by Germanus. Later in the year, the mutinous spirit having been quelled, a counter-expedition was made by the Romans into Arzanene. Here the Persian general, Maruzas, met them, and drove them from the province; but, following up his success too ardently, he received a complete defeat near Martyropolis, and lost his life in the battle. His head was cut off by the civilized conquerors, and sent as a trophy to Maurice.

The campaign of A.D. 589 was opened by a brilliant stroke on the part of the Persians, who, through the treachery of a certain Sittas, a petty officer in the Roman army, made themselves masters of Martyropolis. It was in vain that Philippicus twice besieged the place; he was unable to make any impression upon it, and after a time desisted from the attempt. On the second occasion the garrison was strongly reinforced by the Persians under Mebodos and Aphraates, who, after defeating Philippicus in a pitched battle, threw a large body of troops into the town. Philippicus was upon this deprived of his office, and replaced by Comentiolus, with Heraclius as second in command. The new leaders, instead of engaging in the tedious work of a siege, determined on re-establishing the Roman

prestige by a bold counter-attack. They invaded the Persian territory in force, ravaged the country about Nisibis, and brought Aphraates to a pitched battle at Sisarbanon, near that city. Victory seemed at first to incline to the Persians; Comentiolus was defeated and fled; but Horaclius restored the battle, and ended by defeating the whole Persian army, and driving it from the field, with the loss of its commander, who was slain in the thick of the fight. The next day the Persian camp was taken, and a rich booty fell into the hands of the conquerors, besides a number of standards. The remnant of the defeated army found a refuge within the walls of Nisibis. Later in the year Comentiolus recovered to some extent his tarnished laurels by the siege and capture of Arbas, whose strong situation in the immediate vicinity of Martyropolis rendered the position of the Persian garrison in that city insecure, if not absolutely untenable.

Such was the condition of affairs in the western provinces of the Persian Empire, when a sudden danger arose in the east, which had strange and most important consequences. According to the Oriental writers, Hormisdas had from a just monarch gradually become a tyrant; under the plea of protecting the poor had grievously oppressed the rich; through jealousy or fear had put to death no fewer than thirteen thousand of the upper classes, and had thus completely alienated all the more powerful part of the nation. Aware of his unpopularity, the surrounding tribes and peoples commenced a series of aggressions, plundered the frontier provinces, defeated the detachments sent against them under commanders who were disaffected, and everywhere brought the empire into the greatest danger. The Arabs crossed the Euphrates and spread themselves over Mesopotamia; the Khazars invaded Armenia and Azerbijan; rumor said that the Greek emperor had taken the field and was advancing on the side of Syria, at the head of 80,000 men; above all, it was quite certain that the Great Khan of the Turks had put his hordes in motion, had passed the Oxus with a countless host, occupied Balkh and Herat, and was threatening to penetrate into the very heart of Persia. The perilous character of the crisis is perhaps exaggerated; but there can be little doubt that the advance of the Turks constituted a real danger. Hormisdas, however, did not even now quit the capital, or adventure his own person. He selected from among his generals a certain Varahran or Bahram, a leader of great courage and experience, who had distinguished himself in the wars of Anushirwan, and, placing all the resources of the empire at his disposal, assigned to him the entire conduct of the Turkish struggle. Bahram is said to have contented himself with a small force of picked men, veterans between forty and fifty years of age, to have marched with them upon Balkh, contended with the Great Khan in several partial engagements, and at last entirely defeated him in a great battle, wherein the Khan lost his life. This victory was soon followed by another over the Khan's son, who was made prisoner and sent to Hormisdas. An enormous booty was at the same time despatched to the court; and Bahram himself was about to return, when he received his master's orders to carry his arms into another quarter.

It is supposed, by some that, while the Turkish hordes were menacing Persia upon the north-east, a Roman army, intended to act in concert with them, was sent by Maurice into Albania, which proceeded to threaten the common enemy in the north-west. But the Byzantine writers know of no alliance at this time between the Romans and Turks; nor do they tell of any offensive movement undertaken by Rome in aid of the Turkish invasion, or even simultaneously with it. According to them, the war in this quarter, which certainly broke out in A.D. 589, was provoked by Hormisdas himself, who, immediately after his Turkish victories, sent Bahram with an army to invade Colchis and Suania, or in other words to resume the Lazic war, from which Anushirwan had desisted

twenty-seven years previously. Bahram found the province unguarded, and was able to ravage it at his will; but a Roman force soon gathered to its defence, and after some manoeuvres a pitched battle was fought on the Araxes, in which the Persian general suffered a defeat. The military results of the check were insignificant; but it led to an internal revolution. Hormisdas had grown jealous of his too successful lieutenant, and was glad of an opportunity to insult him. No sooner did he hear of Bahram's defeat than he sent off a messenger to the camp upon the Araxes, who deprived the general of his command, and presented to him, on the part of his master, a distaff, some cotton, and a complete set of women's garments. Stung to madness by the undeserved insult, Bahram retorted with a letter, wherein he addressed Hormisdas, not as the son, but as the daughter of Chosroes. Shortly afterwards, upon the arrival of a second messenger from the court, with orders to bring the recalcitrant commander home in chains, Bahram openly revolted, caused the envoy to be trampled upon by an elephant, and either by simply putting before the soldiers his services and his wrongs, or by misrepresenting to them the intentions of Hormisdas towards themselves, induced his whole army with one accord to embrace his cause.

The news of the great general's revolt was received with acclamations by the provinces. The army of Mesopotamia, collected at Nisibis, made common cause with that of Albania; and the united force, advancing on the capital by way of Assyria, took up a position upon the Upper Zab river. Hormisdas sent a general, Pherochanes, to meet and engage the rebels; but the emissaries of Bahram seduced his troops from their allegiance; Pherochanes was murdered; and the insurgent army, augmented by the force sent to oppose it, drew daily nearer to Ctesiphon. Meanwhile Hormisdas, distracted between hate and fear, suspecting every one, trusting no one, confined himself within the walls of the capital, where he continued to exercise the severities which had lost him the affections of his subjects. According to some, he suspected his son, Chosroes, of collusion with the enemy, and drove him into banishment, imprisoning at the same time his own brothers in-law, Bindoes and Bostam, who would be likely, he thought, to give their support to their nephew. These violent measures precipitated the evils which he feared; a general revolt broke out in the palace; Bostam and Bindoes, released from prison, put themselves at the head of the malcontents, and, rushing into the presence-chamber, dragged the tyrant from his throne, stripped him of the diadem, and committed him to the dungeon from which they had themselves escaped. The Byzantine historians believed that, after this, Hormisdas was permitted to plead his cause before an assembly of Persian nobles, to glorify his own reign, vituperate his eldest son, Chosroes, and express his willingness to abdicate in favor of another son, who had never offended him. They supposed that this ill-judged oration had sealed the fate of the youth recommended and of his mother, who were cut to pieces before the fallen monarch's eyes, while at the same time the rage of the assembly was vented in part upon Hormisdas himself, who was blinded, to make his restoration impossible. But a judicious critic will doubt the likelihood of rebels, committed as were Bindoes and Bostam, consenting to allow such an appeal as is described by Theophylact; and a perusal of the speeches assigned to the occasion will certainly not diminish his scepticism. The probability would seem to be that Hormisdas was blinded as soon as committed to prison, and that shortly afterwards he suffered the general fate of deposed sovereigns, being assassinated in his place of confinement.

The deposition of Hormisdas was followed almost immediately by the proclamation of his eldest son, Chosroes, the prince known in history as "Eberwiz" or "Parviz," the last great Persian monarch. The rebels at Ctesiphon had

perhaps acted from first to last with his cognizance: at any rate, they calculated on his pardoning proceedings which had given him actual possession of a throne whereto, without their aid, he might never have succeeded. They accordingly declared him king of Persia without binding him by conditions, and without negotiating with Bahram, who was still in arms and at no great distance.

Before passing to the consideration of the eventful reign with which we shall now have to occupy ourselves, a glance at the personal character of the deceased monarch will perhaps be expected by the reader. Hormuzd is pronounced by the concurrent voice of the Greeks and the Orientals one of the worst princes that ever ruled over Persia. The fair promise of his early years was quickly clouded over; and during the greater portion of his reign he was a jealous and capricious tyrant, influenced by unworthy favorites, and stimulated to ever-increasing severities by his fears. Eminence of whatsoever kind roused his suspicions; and among his victims were included, besides the noble and the great, a large number of philosophers and men of science. His treatment of Bahram was at once a folly and a crime--an act of black ingratitude, and a rash step, whereof he had not counted the consequences. To his other vices he added those of indolence and effeminacy. From the time that he became king nothing could drag him from the soft life of the palace; in no single instance did he take the field, either against his country's enemies or his own. Miserable as was his end, we can scarcely deem him worthy of our pity, since there never lived a man whose misfortunes were more truly brought on him by his own conduct.

The coins of Hormisdas IV. are in no respect remarkable. The head seems modelled on that of Chosroes, his father, but is younger. The field of the coin within the border is somewhat unduly crowded with stars and crescents. Stars and crescents also occur outside the border, replacing the simple crescents of Chosroes, and reproducing the combined stars and crescents of Zamasp. The legend on the obverse is _Auhramazdi afzud_, or sometimes _Auhramazi afzun_; on the reverse are commonly found, besides the usual fire-altar and supporters, a regnal year and a mint-mark. The regnal years range from one to thirteen; the number of the mint-marks is about thirty.

23. Accession of Chosroes II

The position of Chosroes II. on his accession was one of great difficulty. Whether actually guilty of parricide or not, he was at any rate suspected by the greater part of his subjects of complicity in his father's murder. A rebel, who was the greatest Persian general of the time, at the head of a veteran army, stood arrayed against his authority. He had no established character to fall back upon, no merits to plead, nothing in fact to urge on his behalf but that he was the eldest son of his father, the legitimate representative of the ancient line of the Sassanidae. A revolution had placed him on the throne in a hasty and irregular manner; nor is it clear that he had ventured on the usual formality of asking the consent of the general assembly of the nobles to his coronation. Thus perils surrounded him on every side; but the most pressing danger of all, that which required to be immediately met and confronted, was the threatening attitude of Bahram, who had advanced from Adiabene to Holwan, and occupied a strong position not a hundred and fifty miles from the capital. Unless Bahram could be conciliated or defeated, the young king could not hope to maintain himself in power, or feel that he had any firm grasp of the sceptre.

Under these circumstances he took the resolution to try first the method of conciliation. There seemed to be a fair opening for such a course. It was not he, but his father, who had given the offence which drove Bahram into rebellion, and almost forced him to vindicate his manhood by challenging his detractor to a trial of strength.

Bahram could have no personal ground of quarrel with him. Indeed that general had at the first, if we may believe the Oriental writers, proclaimed Chosroes as king, and given out that he took up arms in order to place him upon the throne. It was thought, moreover, that the rebel might feel himself sufficiently avenged by the death of his enemy, and might be favorably disposed towards those who had first blinded Hormisdas and then despatched him by the bowstring. Chosroes therefore composed a letter in which he invited Bahram to his court, and offered him the second place in the kingdom, if he would come in and make his submission. The message was accompanied by rich presents, and by an offer that if the terms proposed wera accepted they should be confirmed by oath.

The reply of Bahram was as follows: "Bahram, friend of the gods, conqueror, illustrious, enemy of tyrants, satrap of satraps, general of the Persian host, wise, apt for command, god-fearing, without reproach, noble, fortunate, successful, venerable, thrifty, provident, gentle, humane, to Chosroes the son of Hormisdas (sends greeting). I have received the letter which you wrote with such little wisdom, but have rejected the presents which you sent with such excessive boldness. It had been better that you should have abstained from sending either, more especially considering the irregularity of your appointment, and the fact that the noble and respectable took no part in the vote, which was carried by the disorderly and low-born. If then it is your wish to escape your father's fate, strip off the diadem which you have assumed and deposit it in some holy place, quit the palace, and restore to their prisons the criminals whom you have set at liberty, and whom you had no right to release until they had undergone trial for their crimes. When you have done all this, come hither, and I will give you the government of a province. Be well advised, and so farewell. Else, be sure you will perish like your father." So insolent a missive might well have provoked the young prince to some hasty act or some unworthy show of temper. It is to the credit of Chosroes that he restrained himself, and even made another attempt to terminate the quarrel by a reconciliation. While striving to outdo Bahram in the grandeur of his titles, he still addressed him as his friend. He complimented him on his courage, and felicitated him on his excellent health. "There were certain expressions," he said, "in the letter that he had received, which he was sure did not speak his friend's real feelings. The amanuensis had evidently drunk more wine than he ought, and, being half asleep when he wrote, had put down things that were foolish and indeed monstrous. But he was not disturbed by them. He must decline, however, to send back to their prisons those whom he had released, since favors granted by royalty could not with propriety be withdrawn; and he must protest that in the ceremony of his coronation all due formalities had been observed. As for stripping himself of his diadem, he was so far from contemplating it that he looked forward rather to extending his dominion over new worlds. As Bahram had invited him, he would certainly pay him a visit; but he would be obliged to come as a king, and if his persuasions did not produce submission he would have to compel it by force of arms. He hoped that Bahram would be wise in time, and would consent to be his friend and helper."

This second overture produced no reply; and it became tolerably evident that the quarrel could only be decided by the arbitrament of battle. Chosroes accordingly put himself at the head of such troops as he could collect, and marched against his antagonist, whom he found encamped on the Holwan River. The place was favorable for an engagement; but Chosroes had no confidence in his soldiers. He sought a personal interview with Bahram, and renewed his offers of pardon and favor; but the conference only led to mutual recriminations, and at its close both sides appealed to arms. During six days the two armies merely skirmished, since Chosroes

bent all his efforts towards avoiding a general engagement; but on the seventh day Bahram surprised him by an attack after night had fallen,a threw his troops into confusion, and then, by a skilful appeal to their feelings, induced them to desert their leader and come over to his side. Chosroes was forced to fly. He fell back on Ctesiphon; but despairing of making a successful defence, with the few troops that remained faithful to him, against the overwhelming force which Bahram had at his disposal, he resolved to evacuate the capital, to quit Persia, and to throw himself on the generosity of some one of his neighbors. It is said that his choice was long undetermined between the Turks, the Arabs, the Khazars of the Caucasian region, and the Romans. According to some writers, after leaving Ctesiphon, with his wives and children, his two uncles, and an escort of thirty men, he laid his reins on his horse's neck, and left it to the instinct of the animal to determine in what direction he should flee. The sagacious beast took the way to the Euphrates; and Chosroes, finding himself on its banks, crossed the river, and, following up its course, reached with much difficulty the well-known Roman station of Circesium. He was not unmolested in his retreat. Bahram no sooner heard of his flight than he sent off a body of 4000 horse, with orders to pursue and capture the fugitive. They would have succeeded, had not Bindoes devoted himself on behalf of his nephew, and, by tricking the officer in command, enabled Chosroes to place such a distance between himself and his pursuers that the chase had to be given up, and the detachment to return, with no more valuable capture than Bindoes, to Ctesiphon.

Chosroes was received with all honor by Probus, the governor of Circesium, who the next day communicated intelligence of what had happened to Comentiolus, Prefect of the East, then resident at Hierapolis. At the same time he sent to Comentiolus a letter which Chosroes had addressed to Maurice, imploring his aid against his enemies. Comentiolus approved what had been done, despatched a courier to bear the royal missive to Constantinople, and shortly afterwards, by the direction of the court, invited the illustrious refugee to remove to Hierapolis, and there take up his abode, till his cause should be determined by the emperor. Meanwhile, at Constantinople, after the letter of Chosroes had been read, a serious debate arose as to what was fittest to be done. While some urged with much show of reason that it was for the interest of the empire that the civil war should be prolonged, that Persia should be allowed to waste her strength and exhaust her resources in the contest, at the end of which it would be easy to conquer her, there were others whose views were less selfish or more far-sighted. The prospect of uniting the East and West into a single monarchy, which had been brought to the test of experiment by Alexander and had failed, did not present itself in a very tempting light to these minds. They doubted the ability of the declining empire to sway at once the sceptre of Europe and of Asia. They feared that if the appeal of Chosroes were rejected, the East would simply fall into anarchy, and the way would perhaps be prepared for some new power to rise up, more formidable than the kingdom of the Sassanidae. The inclination of Maurice, who liked to think himself magnanimous, coincided with the views of these persons: their counsels were accepted; and the reply was made to Chosroes that the Roman emperor accepted him as his guest and son, undertook his quarrel, and would aid him with all the forces of the empire to recover his throne. At the same time Maurice sent him some magnificent presents, and releasing the Persian prisoners in confinement at Constantinople, bade them accompany the envoys of Chosroes and resume the service of their master. Soon afterwards more substantial tokens of the Imperial friendship made their appearance. An army of 70,000 men arrived under Narses; and a subsidy was advanced by the Imperial treasury,

amounting (according to one writer) to about two millions sterling.

But this valuable support to his cause was no free gift of a generous friend; on the contrary, it had to be purchased by great sacrifices. Chosroes had perhaps at first hoped that aid would be given him gratuitously, and had even regarded the cession of a single city as one that he might avoid making. But he learnt by degrees that nothing was to be got from Rome without paying for it; and it was only by ceding Persarmenia and Eastern Mesopotamia, with its strong towns of Martyropolis and Daras, that he obtained the men and money that were requisite.

Meanwhile Bahram, having occupied Ctesiphon, had proclaimed himself king, and sent out messengers on all sides to acquaint the provinces with the change of rulers. The news was received without enthusiasm, but with a general acquiescence; and, had Maurice rejected the application of Chosroes, it is probable that the usurper might have enjoyed a long and quiet reign. As soon, however, as it came to be known that the Greek emperor had espoused, the cause of his rival, Bahram found himself in difficulties: conspiracy arose in his own court, and had to be suppressed by executions; murmurs were heard in some of the more distant provinces; Armenia openly revolted and declared for Chosroes; and it soon appeared that in places the fidelity of the Persian troops was doubtful. This was especially the case in Mesopotamia, which would have to bear the brunt of the attack when the Romans advanced. Bahram therefore thought it necessary, though it was now the depth of winter, to strengthen his hold on the wavering province, and sent out two detachments, under commanders upon whom he could rely, to occupy respectively Anatho and Nisibis, the two strongholds of greatest importance in the suspected region. Miraduris succeeded in entering and occupying Anatho. Zadesprates was less fortunate; before he reached the neighborhood of Nisibis, the garrison which held that place had deserted the cause of the usurper and given in its adhesion to Chosroes; and, when he approached to reconnoitre, he was made the victim of a stratagem and killed by an officer named Rosas. Miraduris did not long survive him; the troops which he had introduced into Anatho caught the contagion of revolt, rose up against him, slew him, and sent his head to Chosroes.

The spring was now approaching, and the time for military operations on a grand scale drew near. Chosroes, besides his supporters in Mesopotamia, Roman and Persian, had a second army in Azerbijan, raised by his uncles Bindoes and Bostam, which was strengthened by an Armenian contingent. The plan of campaign involved the co-operation of these two forces. With this object Chosroes proceeded early in the spring, from Hierapolis to Constantina, from Constantina to Daras, and thence by way of Ammodion to the Tigris, across which he sent a detachment, probably in the neighborhood of Mosul. This force fell in with Bryzacius, who commanded in these parts for Bahram, and surprising him in the first watch of the night, defeated his army and took Bryzacius himself prisoner. The sequel, which Theophylact appears to relate from the information of an eye-witness, furnishes a remarkable evidence of the barbarity of the times. Those who captured Bryzacius cut off his nose and his ears, and in this condition sent him to Chosroes. The Persian prince was overjoyed at the success, which no doubt he accepted as a good omen; he at once led his whole army across the river, and having encamped for the night at a place called Dinabadon, entertained the chief Persian and Roman nobles at a banquet. When the festivity was at its height, the unfortunate prisoner was brought in loaded with fetters, and was made sport of by the guests for a time, after which, at a signal from the king, the guards plunged their swords into his body, and despatched him in the sight of the feasters. Having amused his guests with this delectable interlude, the amiable

monarch concluded the whole by anointing them with perfumed ointment, crowning them with flowers, and bidding them drink to the success of the war. "The guests," says Theophylact, "returned, to their tents, delighted with the completeness of their entertainment, and told their friends how handsomely they had been treated, but the crown of all (they said) was the episode of Bryzacius."

Chosroes next day advanced across the Greater Zab, and, after marching four days, reached Alexandrian a position probably not far from Arbela, after which, in two days more, he arrived at Chnaethas, which was a district upon the Zab Asfal, or Lesser Zab River. Here he found himself in the immediate vicinity of Bahram, who had taken up his position on the Lesser Zab, with the intention probably of blocking the route up its valley, by which he expected that the Armenian army would endeavor to effect a junction with the army of Chosroes. Here the two forces watched each other for some days, and various manoeuvres were executed, which it is impossible to follow, since Theophylact, our only authority, is not a good military historian. The result, however, is certain. Bahram was out-manoeuvred by Chosroes and his Roman allies; the fords of the Zab were seized; and after five days of marching and counter-marching, the longed-for junction took place. Chosroes had the satisfaction of embracing his uncles Bindoes and Bostam, and of securing such a reinforcement as gave him a great superiority in numbers over his antagonist.

About the same time he received intelligence of another most important success. Before quitting Daras, he had despatched Mebodes, at the head of a small body of Romans, to create a diversion on the Mesopotomian side of the Tigris by a demonstration from Singara against Seleucia and Ctesiphon. He can hardly have expected to do more than distract his enemy and perhaps make him divide his forces. Bahram, however, was either indifferent as to the fate of the capital, or determined not to weaken the small army, which was all that he could muster, and on which his whole dependence was placed. He left Seleucia and Ctesiphon to their fate. Mebodes and his small force marched southward without meeting an enemy, obtained possession of Seleucia without a blow after the withdrawal of the garrison, received the unconditional surrender of Ctesiphon, made themselves masters of the royal palace and treasures, proclaimed Chosroes king, and sent to him in his camp the most precious emblems of the Persian sovereignty. Thus, before engaging with his antagonist, Chosroes recovered his capital and found his authority once more recognized in the seat of government.

The great contest had, however, to be decided, not by the loss and gain of cities, nor by the fickle mood of a populace, but by trial of arms in the open field. Bahram was not of a temper to surrender his sovereignty unless compelled by defeat. He was one of the greatest generals of the age, and, though compelled to fight under every disadvantage, greatly outnumbered by the enemy, and with troops that were to a large extent disaffected, he was bent on resisting to the utmost, and doing his best to maintain his own rights. He seems to have fought two pitched battles with the combined Romans and Persians, and not to have succumbed until treachery and desertion disheartened him and ruined his cause. The first battle was in the plain country of Adiabene, at the foot of the Zagros range. Here the opposing armies were drawn out in the open field, each divided into a centre and two wings. In the army of Chosroes the Romans were in the middle, on the right the Persians, and the Armenians on the left. Narses, together with Chosroes, held the central position: Bahram was directly opposed to them. When the conflict began the Romans charged with such fierceness that Bahram's centre at once gave way; he was obliged to retreat to the foot of the hills, and take up a position on their slope. Here the

Romans refused to attack him; and Chosroes very imprudently ordered the Persians who fought on his side to advance up the ascent. They were repulsed, and thrown into complete confusion; and the battle would infallibly have been lost, had not Narses come to their aid, and with his steady and solid battalions protected their retreat and restored the fight. Yet the day terminated with a feeling on both sides that Bahram had on the whole had the advantage in the engagement; the king _de facto_ congratulated himself; the king _de jure_ had to bear the insulting pity of his allies, and the reproaches of his own countrymen for occasioning them such a disaster.

But though Bahram might feel that the glory of the day was his, he was not elated by his success, nor rendered blind to the difficulties of his position. Fighting with his back to the mountains, he was liable, if he suffered defeat, to be entangled in their defiles and lose his entire force. Moreover, now that Ctesiphon was no longer his, he had neither resources nor _point d'appui_ in the low country, and by falling back he would at once be approaching nearer to the main source of his own supplies, which was the country about Rei, south of the Caspian, and drawing his enemies to a greater distance from the sources of theirs. He may even have thought there was a chance of his being unpursued if he retired, since the Romans might not like to venture into the mountain region, and Chosroes might be impatient to make a triumphal entry into his capital. Accordingly, the use which Bahram made of his victory was quietly to evacuate his camp, to leave the low plain region, rapidly pass the mountains, and take up his quarters in the fertile upland beyond them, the district where the Lesser Zab rises, south of Lake Urumiyeh.

If he had hoped that his enemies would not pursue him, Bahram was disappointed. Chosroes himself, and the whole of the mixed army which supported his cause, soon followed on his footsteps, and pressing forward to Canzaca, or Shiz, near which he had pitched his camp, offered him battle for the second time. Bahram declined the offer, and retreated to a position on the Balarathus, where, however, after a short time, he was forced to come to an engagement. He had received, it would seem, a reinforcement of elephants from the provinces bordering on India, and hoped for some advantage from the employment of this new arm. He had perhaps augmented his forces, though it must be doubted whether he really on this occasion outnumbered his antagonist. At any rate, the time seemed to have come when he must abide the issue of his appeal to arms, and secure or lose his crown by a supreme effort. Once more the armies were drawn up in three distinct bodies; and once more the leaders held the established central position. The engagement began along the whole line, and continued for a while without marked result. Bahram then strengthened his left, and, transferring himself to this part of the field, made an impression on the Roman right. But Narses brought up supports to their aid, and checked the retreat, which had already begun, and which might soon have become general. Hereupon Bahram suddenly fell upon the Roman centre and endeavored to break it and drive it from the field; but Narses was again a match for him, and met his assault without flinching, after which, charging in his turn, he threw the Persian centre into confusion. Seeing this, the wings also broke, and a general flight began, whereupon 6000 of Bahram's troops deserted, and, drawing aside, allowed themselves to be captured. The retreat then became a rout. Bahram himself fled with 4,000 men. His camp, with all its rich furniture, and his wives and children, were taken. The elephant corps still held out and fought valiantly; but it was surrounded and forced to surrender. The battle was utterly lost; and the unfortunate chief, feeling that all hope was gone, gave the reins to his horse and fled for his life. Chosroes sent ten thousand men in pursuit, under Bostam, his uncle; and this detachment overtook the

fugitives, but was repulsed and returned. Bahram continued his flight, and passing through Rei and Damaghan, reached the Oxus and placed himself under the protection of the Turks. Chosroes, having dismissed his Roman allies, re-entered Ctesiphon after a year's absence, and for the second time took his place upon the throne of his ancestors.

The coins of Bahram possess a peculiar interest. While there is no numismatic evidence which confirms the statement that he struck money in the name of the younger Chosroes, there are extant three types of his coins, two of which appear to belong to the time before he seated himself upon the throne, while one--the last--belongs to the period of his actual sovereignty. In his preregnal coins, he copied the devices of the last sovereign of his name who had ruled over Persia. He adopted the mural crown in a decided form, omitted the stars and crescents, and placed his own head amid the flames of the fire-altar. His legends were either _Varahran Chub_, "Bahram of the mace," or _Varahran, maljcan malka, mazdisn, bagi, ramashtri_, "Bahram, king of kings, Ormazd-worshipping, divine, peaceful."

The later coins follow closely the type of his predecessor, Hormisdas IV., differing only in the legend, which is, on the obverse, _Varahran afzun_, or "Varahran (may he be) greater;" and on the reverse the regnal year, with a mint-mark. The regnal year is uniformly "one;" the mint-marks are Zadracarta, Iran, and Nihach, an unknown locality.

24. Second Reign of Chosroes II

The second reign of Chosroes II., who is commonly known as Chosroes Eberwiz or Parwiz, lasted little short of thirty-seven years--from the summer of A.D. 591 to the February of A.D. 628. Externally considered, it is the most remarkable reign in the entire Sassanian series, embracing as it does the extremes of elevation and depression. Never at any other time did the Neo-Persian kingdom extend itself so far, or so distinguish itself by military achievements, as in the twenty years intervening between A.D. 602 and A.D. 622. Seldom was it brought so low as in the years immediately anterior and immediately subsequent to this space, in the earlier and in the later portions of the reign whose central period was so glorious.

Victorious by the help of Rome, Chosroes began his second reign amid the scarcely disguised hostility of his subjects. So greatly did he mistrust their sentiments towards him that he begged and obtained of Maurice the support of a Roman bodyguard, to whom he committed the custody of his person. To the odium always attaching in the minds of a spirited people to the ruler whose yoke is imposed upon them by a foreign power, he added further the stain of a crime which is happily rare at all times, and of which (according to the general belief of his subjects) no Persian monarch had ever previously been guilty. It was in vain that he protested his innocence: the popular belief held him an accomplice in his father's murder, and branded the young prince with the horrible name of "parricide."

It was no doubt mainly in the hope of purging himself from this imputation that, after putting to death the subordinate instruments by whom his father's life had been actually taken, he went on to institute proceedings against the chief contrivers of the outrage--the two uncles who had ordered, and probably witnessed, the execution. So long as the success of his arms was doubtful, he had been happy to avail himself of their support, and to employ their talents in the struggle against his enemies. At one moment in his flight he had owed his life to the self-devotion of Bindoes; and both the brothers had merited well of him by the efforts which they had made to bring Armenia over to his cause, and to levy a powerful army for him in that region. But to clear his own character it was necessary that he should forget the ties both of blood and gratitude, that he should sink the kinsman in the sovereign, and the debtor in

the stern avenger of blood. Accordingly, he seized Bindoes, who resided at the court, and had him drowned in the Tigris. To Bostam, whom he had appointed governor of Rei and Khorassan, he sent an order of recall, and would undoubtedly have executed him, had he obeyed; but Bostam, suspecting his intentions, deemed it the wisest course to revolt, and proclaim himself independent monarch of the north country. Here he established himself in authority for some time, and is even said to have enlarged his territory at the expense of some of the border chieftains; but the vengeance of his nephew pursued him unrelentingly, and ere long accomplished his destruction. According to the best authority, the instrument employed was Bostam's wife, the sister of Bahram, whom Chosroes induced to murder her husband by a promise to make her the partner of his bed.

Intrigues not very dissimilar in their character had been previously employed to remove Bahram, whom the Persian monarch had not ceased to fear, notwithstanding that he was a fugitive and an exile. The Khan of the Turks had received him with honor on the occasion of his flight, and, according to some authors, had given him his daughter in marriage. Chosroes lived in dread of the day when the great general might reappear in Persia, at the head of the Turkish hordes, and challenge him to renew the lately-terminated contest.

He therefore sent an envoy into Turkestan, well supplied with rich gifts, whose instructions were to procure by some means or other the death of Bahram. Having sounded the Khan upon the business and met with a rebuff, the envoy addressed himself to the Khatun, the Khan's wife, and by liberal presents induced her to come into his views. A slave was easily found who undertook to carry out his mistress's wishes, and Bahram was despatched the same day by means of a poisoned dagger. It is painful to find that one thus ungrateful to his friends and relentless to his enemies made, to a certain extent, profession of Christianity. Little as his heart can have been penetrated by its spirit, Chosroes seems certainly, in the earlier part of his reign, to have given occasion for the suspicion, which his subjects are said to have entertained, that he designed to change his religion, and confess himself a convert to the creed of the Greeks. During the period of his exile, he was, it would seem, impressed by what he saw and heard, of the Christian worship and faith; he learnt to feel or profess a high veneration for the Virgin; and he adopted the practice, common at the time, of addressing his prayers and vows to the saints and martyrs, who were practically the principal objects of the Oriental Christians' devotions. Sergius, a martyr, hold in high repute by the Christians of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, was adopted by the superstitious prince as a sort of patron saint; and it became his habit, in circumstances of difficulty, to vow some gift or other to the shrine of St. Sergius at Sergiopolis, in case of the event corresponding to his wishes. Two occasions are recorded where, on sending his gift, he accompanied it with a letter explaining the circumstances of his vow and its fulfilment; and even the letters themselves have come down to us, but in a Greek version. In one, Chosroes ascribes the success of his arms on a particular occasion to the influence of his self-chosen patron; in the other, he credits him with having procured by his prayers the pregnancy of Sira (Shirin), the most beautiful and best beloved of his wives. It appears that Sira was a Christian, and that in marrying her Chosroes had contravened the laws of his country, which forbade the king to have a Christian wife. Her influence over him was considerable, and she is said to have been allowed to build numerous churches and monasteries in and about Ctesiphon. When she died, Chosroes called in the aid of sculpture to perpetuate her image, and sent her statue to the Roman Emperor, to the Turkish Khan, and to various other potentates.

Chosroes is said to have maintained an enormous seraglio; but of these secondary wives, none is known to us even by name, except Kurdiyeh, the sister of Bahram and widow of Bostam, whom she murdered at Chosroes's suggestion.

During the earlier portion of his reign Chosroes seems to have been engaged in but few wars, and those of no great importance. According to the Armenian writers, he formed a design of depopulating that part of Armenia which he had not ceded to the Romans, by making a general levy of all the males, and marching them off to the East, to fight against the Ephthalites; but the design did not prosper, since the Armenians carried all before them, and under their native leader, Smbat, the Bagratunian, conquered Hyrcania and Tabaristan, defeated repeatedly the Koushans and the Ephthalites, and even engaged with success the Great Khan of the Turks, who came to the support of his vassals at the head of an army consisting of 300.000 men. By the valor and conduct of Smbat, the Persian dominion was re-established in the north-eastern mountain region, from Mount Demavend to the Hindu Kush; the Koushans, Turks, and Ephthalitos were held in check; and the tide of barbarism, which had threatened to submerge the empire on this side, was effectually resisted and rolled back.

With Rome Chosroes maintained for eleven years the most friendly and cordial relations. Whatever humiliation he may have felt when he accepted the terms on which alone Maurice was willing to render him aid, having once agreed to them, he stifled all regrets, made no attempt to evade his obligations, abstained from every endeavor to undo by intrigue what he had done, unwillingly indeed, but yet with his eyes open. Once only during the eleven years did a momentary cloud arise between him and his benefactor. In the year A.D. 600 some of the Saracenic tribes dependent on Rome made an incursion across the Euphrates into Persian territory, ravaged it far and wide, and returned with their booty into the desert. Chosroes was justly offended, and might fairly have considered that a _casus belli_ had arisen; but he allowed himself to be pacified by the representations of Maurice's envoy, George, and consented not to break the peace on account of so small a matter. George claimed the concession as a tribute to his own amiable qualities; but it is probable that the Persian monarch acted rather on the grounds of general policy than from any personal predilection.

Two years later the virtuous but perhaps over-rigid Maurice was deposed and murdered by the centurion, Phocas, who, on the strength of his popularity with the army, boldly usurped the throne. Chosroes heard with indignation of the execution of his ally and friend, of the insults offered to his remains, and of the assassination of his numerous sons, and of his brother. One son, he heard, had been sent off by Maurice to implore aid from the Persians; he had been overtaken and put to death by the emissaries of the usurper; but rumor, always busy where royal personages are concerned, asserted that he lived, that he had escaped his pursuers, and had reached Ctesiphon. Chosroes was too much interested in the acceptance of the rumor to deny it; he gave out that Theodosius was at his court, and notified that it was his intention to assert his right to the succession. When, five months after his coronation, Phocas sent an envoy to announce his occupation of the throne, and selected the actual murderer of Maurice to fill the post, Chosroes determined on an open rupture. He seized Lilius, the envoy, threw him into prison, announced his intention of avenging his deceased benefactor, and openly declared war against Rome.

The war burst out the next year (A.D. 603). On the Roman side there was disagreement, and even civil war; for Narses, who had held high command in the East ever since he restored Chosroes to the throne of his ancestors, on hearing of the death of Maurice,

took up arms against Phocas, and, throwing himself into Edessa, defied the forces of the usurper. Germanus, who commanded at Daras, was a general of small capacity, and found himself quite unable to make head, either against Narses in Edessa, or against Chosroes, who led his troops in person into Mesopotamia. Defeated by Chosroes in a battle near Daras, in which he received a mortal wound, Germanus withdrew to Constantia, where he died eleven days afterwards. A certain Leontius, a eunuch, took his place, but was equally unsuccessful. Chosroes defeated him at Arxamus, and took a great portion of his army prisoners; whereupon he was recalled by Phocas, and a third leader, Domentziolus, a nephew of the emperor, was appointed to the command. Against him the Persian monarch thought it enough to employ generals. The war now languished for a short space; but in A.D. 605 Chosroes came up in person against Daras, the great Roman stronghold in these parts, and besieged it for the space of nine months, at the end of which time it surrendered. The loss was a severe blow to the Roman prestige, and was followed in the next year by a long series of calamities. Chosroes took Tur-abdin, Hesen-Cephas, Mardin, Capher-tuta, and Amida. Two years afterwards, A.D. 607, he captured Harran (Carrhse), Ras-el-ain (Resaina), and Edessa, the capital of Osrhoene, after which he pressed forward to the Euphrates, crossed with his army into Syria, and fell with fury on the Roman cities west of the river. Mabog or Hierapolis, Kenneserin, and Berhoea (now Aleppo), were invested and taken in the course of one or at most two campaigns; while at the same time (A.D. 609) a second Persian army, under a general whose name is unknown, after operating in Armenia, and taking Satala and Theodosiopolis, invaded Cappadocia and threatened the great city of Caesarea Mazaca, which was the chief Roman stronghold in these parts. Bands of marauders wasted the open country, carrying terror through the fertile districts of Phyrgia and Galatia, which had known nothing of the horrors of war for centuries, and were rich with the accumulated products of industry. According to Theophanes, some of the ravages even penetrated as far as Chalcedon, on the opposite side of the straits from Constantinople; but this is probably the anticipation of an event belonging to a later time. No movements of importance are assigned to A.D. 610; but in the May of the next year the Persians once more crossed the Euphrates, completely defeated and destroyed the Roman army which protected Syria, and sacked the two great cities of Apameia and Antioch.

Meantime a change had occurred at Constantinople. The double revolt of Heraclius, prefect of Egypt, and Gregory, his lieutenant, had brought the reign of the brutal and incapable Phocas to an end, and placed upon the imperial throne a youth of promise, innocent of the blood of Maurice, and well inclined to avenge it. Chosroes had to consider whether he should adhere to his original statement, that he took up arms to punish the murderer of his friend, and benefactor, and consequently desist from further hostilities now that Phocas was dead, or whether, throwing consistency to the winds, he should continue to prosecute the war, notwithstanding the change of rulers, and endeavor to push to the utmost the advantage which he had already obtained. He resolved on this latter alternative. It was while the young Heraclius was still insecure in his seat that he sent his armies into Syria, defeated the Roman troops, and took Antioch and Apameia. Following up blow with blow, he the next year (A.D. 612) invaded Cappadocia a second time and captured Csesarea Mazaca. Two years later (A.D. 614) he sent his general Shahr-Barz, into the region east of the Antilibanus, and took the ancient and famous city of Damascus. From Damascus, in the ensuing year, Shahr-Barz advanced against Palestine, and, summoning the Jews to his aid, proclaimed a Holy War against the Christian misbelievers, whom he

threatened to enslave or exterminate. Twenty-six thousand of these fanatics flocked to his standard; and having occupied the Jordan region and Galileee, Shahr-Barz in A.D. 615 invested Jerusalem, and after a siege of eighteen days forced his way into the town, and gave it over to plunder and rapine. The cruel hostility of the Jews had free vent. The churches of Helena, of Constantine, of the Holy Sepulchre, of the Resurrection, and many others, were burnt or ruined; the greater part of the city was destroyed; the sacred treasuries were plundered; the relics scattered or carried off; and a massacre of the inhabitants, in which the Jews took the chief part, raged throughout the whole city for some days. As many as seventeen thousand or, according to another account, ninety thousand, were slain. Thirty-five thousand were made prisoners. Among them was the aged Patriarch, Zacharius, who was carried captive into Persia, where he remained till his death.

The Cross found by Helena, and believed to be "the True Cross," was at the same time transported to Ctesiphon, where it was preserved with care and duly venerated by the Christian wife of Chosroes.

A still more important success followed. In A.D. 616 Shahr-Barz proceeded from Palestine into Egypt, which had enjoyed a respite from foreign war since the time of Julius Caesar, surprised Pelusium, the key of the country, and, pressing forward across the Delta, easily made himself master of the rich and prosperous Alexandria. John the Merciful, who was the Patriarch, and Nicetas the Patrician, who was the governor, had quitted the city before his arrival, and had fled to Cyprus. Hence scarcely any resistance was made. The fall of Alexandria was followed at once by the complete submission of the rest of Egypt. Bands of Persians advanced up the Nile valley to the very confines of Ethiopia, and established the authority of Chosroes over the whole country--a country in which no Persian had set foot since it was wrested by Alexander of Macedon from Darius Codomannus.

While this remarkable conquest was made in the southwest, in the north-west another Persian army under another general, Saina or Shahen, starting from Cappadocia, marched through Asia Minor to the shores of the Thracian Bosphorus, and laid siege to the strong city of Chalcedon, which lay upon the strait, just opposite Constantinople. Chalcedon made a vigorous resistance; and Heraclius, anxious to save it, had an interview with Shahen, and at his suggestion sent three of his highest nobles as ambassadors to Chosroes, with a humble request for peace. The overture was ineffectual. Chosroes imprisoned the ambassadors and entreated them cruelly; threatened Shahen with death for not bringing Heraclius in chains to the foot of his throne; and declared in reply that he would grant no terms of peace--the empire was his, and Heraclius must descend from his throne. Soon afterwards (A.D. 617) Chalcedon, which was besieged through the winter, fell; and the Persians established themselves in this important stronghold, within a mile of Constantinople. Three years afterwards, Ancyra (Angora), which had hitherto resisted the Persian arms, was taken; and Rhodes, though inaccessible to an enemy who was without a naval force, submitted.

Thus the whole of the Roman possessions in Asia and Eastern Africa were lost in the space of fifteen years. The empire of Persia was extended from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Egean and the Nile, attaining once more almost the same dimensions that it had reached under the first and had kept until the third Darius. It is difficult to say how far their newly acquired provinces wore really subdued, organized, and governed from Ctesiphon, how far they were merely overrun, plundered, and then left to themselves. On the one hand, we have indications of the existence of terrible disorders and of something approaching to anarchy in parts of the conquered territory during the time that

it was held by the Persians; on the other, we seem to see an intention to retain, to govern, and even to beautify it. Eutychius relates that, on the withdrawal of the Romans from Syria, the Jews resident in Tyre, who numbered four thousand, plotted with their co-religionists of Jerusalem, Cyprus, Damascus, and Galilee, a general massacre of the Tyrian Christians on a certain day. The plot was discovered; and the Jews of Tyre were arrested and imprisoned by their fellow-citizens, who put the city in a state of defence; and when the foreign Jews, to the number of 26,000, came at the appointed time, repulsed them from the walls, and defeated them with great slaughter. This story suggests the idea of a complete and general disorganization. But on the other hand we hear of an augmentation of the revenue under Chosroes II., which seems to imply the establishment in the regions conquered of a settled government; and the palace at Mashita, discovered by a recent traveller, is a striking proof that no temporary occupation was contemplated, but that Chosroes regarded his conquests as permanent acquisitions, and meant to hold them and even visit them occasionally.

Heraclius was now well-nigh driven to despair. The loss of Egypt reduced Constantinople to want, and its noisy populace clamored for food. The Avars overran Thrace, and continually approached nearer to the capital. The glitter of the Persian arms was to be seen at any moment, if he looked from his palace windows across the Bosphorus. No prospect of assistance or relief appeared from any quarter. The empire was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic Coast. It is not surprising that under the circumstances the despondent monarch determined on flight, and secretly made arrangements for transporting himself and his treasures to the distant Carthage, where he might hope at least to find himself in safety. His ships, laden with their precious freight, had put to sea, and he was about to follow them, when his intention became known or was suspected; the people rose; and the Patriarch, espousing their side, forced the reluctant prince to accompany him to the church of St. Sophia, and there make oath that, come what might, he would not separate his fortunes from those of the imperial city.

Baffled in his design to escape from his difficulties by flight, Heraclius took a desperate resolution. He would leave Constantinople to its fate, trust its safety to the protection afforded by its walls and by the strait which separated it from Asia, embark with such troops as he could collect, and carry the war into the enemy's country. The one advantage which he had over his adversary was his possession of an ample navy, and consequent command of the sea and power to strike his blows unexpectedly in different quarters. On making known his intention, it was not opposed, either by the people or by the Patriarch. He was allowed to coin the treasures of the various churches into money, to collect stores, enroll troops, and, on the Easter Monday of A.D. 622, to set forth on his expedition.

His fleet was steered southward, and, though forced to contend with adverse gales, made a speedy and successful voyage through the Propontis, the Hellespont, the Egean, and the Cilician Strait, to the Gulf of Issus, in the angle between Asia Minor and Syria. The position was well chosen, as one where attack was difficult, where numbers would give little advantage, and where consequently a small but resolute force might easily maintain itself against a greatly superior enemy. At the same time it was a post from which an advance might conveniently be made in several directions, and which menaced almost equally Asia Minor, Syria, and Armenia. Moreover, the level tract between the mountains and the sea was broad enough for the manoeuvres of such an army as Heraclius commanded, and allowed him to train his soldiers by exercises and sham fights to a familiarity with the sights and sounds and

movements of a battle. He conjectured, rightly enough, that he would not long be left unmolested by the enemy. Shahr-Barz, the conqueror of Jerusalem and Egypt, was very soon sent against him; and, after various movements, which it is impossible to follow, a battle was fought between the two armies in the mountain country towards the Armenian frontier, in which the hero of a hundred fights was defeated and the Romans, for the first time since the death of Maurice, obtained a victory. After this, on the approach of winter, Heraclius, accompanied probably by a portion of his army, returned by sea to Constantinople.

The next year the attack was made in a different quarter. Having concluded alliances with the Khan of the Khazars and some other chiefs of inferior power, Heraclius in the month of March embarked with 5000 men, and proceeded from Constantinople by way of the Black Sea first to Trebizond, and then to Mingrelia or Lazica. There he obtained contingents from his allies, which, added to the forces collected from. Trebizond and the other maritime towns, may perhaps have raised his troops to the number of 120,000, at which we find them estimated. With this army, he crossed the Araxes, and invaded Armenia. Chosroes, on receiving the intelligence, proceeded into Azorbijan with 40,000 men, and occupied the strong city of Canzaca, the site of which is probably marked by the ruins known as Takht-i-Suleiman. At the same time he ordered two other armies, which he had sent on in advance, one of them commanded by Shahr-Barz, the other by Shahen, to effect a junction and oppose themselves to the further progress of the emperor. The two generals were, however, tardy in their movements, or at any rate were outstripped by the activity of Heraclius, who, pressing forward from Armenia into Azerbijan, directed his march upon Canzaca, hoping to bring the Great King to a battle. His advance-guard of Saracens did actually surprise the picquets of Chosroes; but the king himself hastily evacuated the Median stronghold, and retreated southwards through Ardelan towards the Zagros mountains, thus avoiding the engagement which was desired by his antagonist. The army, on witnessing the flight of their monarch, broke up and dispersed. Heraclius pressed upon the flying host and slew all whom he caught, but did not suffer himself to be diverted from his main object, which was to overtake Chosroes. His pursuit, however, was unsuccessful. Chosroes availed himself of the rough and difficult country which lies between Azerbijan and the Mesopotamian lowland, and by moving from, place to place contrive to baffle his enemy. Winter arrived, and Heraclius had to determine whether he would continue his quest at the risk of having to pass the cold season in the enemy's country, far from all his resources, or relinquish it and retreat to a safe position. Finding his soldiers divided in their wishes, he trusted the decision to chance, and opening the Gospel at random settled the doubt by applying the first passage that met his eye to its solution. The passage suggested retreat; and Heraclius, retracing his steps, recrossed the Araxes, and wintered in Albania.

The return of Heraclius was not unmolested. He had excited the fanaticism of the Persians by destroying, wherever he went, the temples of the Magians, and extinguishing the sacred fire, which it was a part of their religion to keep continually burning. He had also everywhere delivered the cities and villages to the flames, and carried off many thousands of the population. The exasperated enemy consequently hung upon his rear, impeded his march, and no doubt caused him considerable loss, though, when it came to fighting, Heraclius always gained the victory. He reached Albania without sustaining any serious disaster, and even brought with him 50,000 captives; but motives of pity, or of self-interest, caused him soon afterwards to set these prisoners free. It would have been difficult to feed and house them through the

long and severe winter, and disgraceful to sell or massacre them.

In the year A.D. 624 Chosroes took the offensive, and, before Heraclius had quitted his winter quarters, sent a general, at the head of a force of picked troops, into Albania, with the view of detaining him in that remote province during the season of military operations. But Sarablagas feared his adversary too much to be able very effectually to check his movements; he was content to guard the passes, and hold the high ground, without hazarding an engagement. Heraclius contrived after a time to avoid him, and penetrated into Persia through a series of plains, probably those along the course and about the mouth of the Araxes. It was now his wish to push rapidly southward; but the auxiliaries on whom he greatly depended were unwilling; and, while he doubted what course to take, three Persian armies, under commanders of note, closed in upon him, and threatened his small force with destruction. Heraclius feigned a disordered flight, and drew on him an attack from two out of the three chiefs, which he easily repelled. Then he fell upon the third, Shahen, and completely defeated him. A way seemed to be thus opened for him into the heart of Persia, and he once more set off to seek Chosroes; but now his allies began to desert his standard, and return to their homes; the defeated Persians rallied and impeded his march; he was obliged to content himself with a third, victory, at a place which Theophanes calls Salban, where he surprised Shahr-Barz in the dead of the night, massacred his troops, his wives, his officers, and the mass of the population, which fought from the flat roofs of the houses, took the general's arms and equipage, and was within a little of capturing Shahr-barz himself. The remnant of the Persian army fled in disorder, and was hunted down by Heraclius, who pursued the fugitives unceasingly till the cold season approached, and he had to retire into cantonments. The half-burnt Salban afforded a welcome shelter to his troops during the snows and storms of an Armenian winter.

Early in the ensuing spring the indefatigable emperor again set his troops in motion, and, passing the lofty range which separates the basin of Lake Van from the streams that flow into the upper Tigris, struck that river, or rather its large affluent, the Bitlis Chai, in seven days from Salban, crossed into Arzanene, and proceeding westward recovered Martyropolis and Amida, which had now been in the possession of the Persians for twenty years. At Amida he made a halt, and wrote to inform the Senate of Constantinople of his position and his victories, intelligence which they must have received gladly after having lost sight of him for above a twelvemonth. But he was not allowed to remain long undisturbed. Before the end of March Shahr-Barz had again taken the field in force, had occupied the usual passage of the Euphrates, and threatened the line of retreat which Heraclius had looked upon as open to him. Unable to cross the Euphrates by the bridge, which Shahr-barz had broken, the emperor descended the stream till he found a ford, when he transported his army to the other bank, and hastened by way of Samosata and Germanicaea into Cilicia. Here he was once more in his own territory, with the sea close at hand, ready to bring him supplies or afford him a safe retreat, in a position with whose advantages he was familiar, where broad plains gave an opportunity for skilful maneuvers, and deep rapid rivers rendered defence easy. Heraclius took up a position on the right bank of the Sarus (Syhuri), in the immediate vicinity of the fortified bridge by which alone the stream could be crossed. Shahr-Barz followed, and ranged his troops along the left bank, placing the archers in the front line, while he made preparations to draw the enemy from the defence of the bridge into the plain on the other side. He was so far successful that the Roman occupation of the bridge was endangered; but Heraclius, by his personal valor and by almost

superhuman exertions, restored the day; with his own hand he struck down a Persian of gigantic stature and flung him from the bridge into the river; then pushing on with a few companions, he charged the Persian host in the plain, receiving undaunted a shower of blows, while he dealt destruction on all sides. The fight was prolonged until the evening and even then was undecided; but Shahr-Barz had convinced himself that he could not renew the combat with any prospect of victory. He therefore retreated during the night, and withdrew from Cilicia. Heraclius, finding himself free to march where he pleased, crossed the Taurus, and proceeded to Sebaste (Sivas), upon the Halys, where he wintered in the heart of Cappadocia, about half-way between the two seas. According to Theophanes the Persian monarch was so much enraged at this bold and adventurous march, and at the success which had attended it, that, by way of revenging himself on Heraclius, he seized the treasures of all the Christian churches in his dominions, and compelled the orthodox believers to embrace the Nestorian heresy. The twenty-fourth year of the war had now arrived, and it was difficult to say on which side lay the balance of advantage. If Chosroes still maintained his hold on Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor as far as Chalcedon, if his troops still flaunted their banners within sight of Constantinople, yet on the other hand he had seen his hereditary dominions deeply penetrated by the armies of his adversary; he had had his best generals defeated, his cities and palaces burnt, his favorite provinces wasted; Heraclius had proved himself a most formidable opponent; and unless some vital blow could be dealt him at home, there was no forecasting the damage that he might not inflict on Persia by a fresh invasion. Chosroes therefore made a desperate attempt to bring the war to a close by an effort, the success of which would have changed the history of the world. Having enrolled as soldiers, besides Persians, a vast number of foreigners and slaves, and having concluded a close alliance with the Khan of the Avars, he formed two great armies, one of which was intended to watch Heraclius in Asia Minor, while the other co-operated with the Avars and forced Constantinople to surrender. The army destined to contend with the emperor was placed under the command of Shahen; that which was to bear a part in the siege of Constantinople was committed to Shahr-Barz. It is remarkable that Heraclius, though quite aware of his adversary's plans, instead of seeking to baffle them, made such arrangements as facilitated the attempt to put them into execution. He divided his own troops into three bodies, one only of which he sent to aid in the defence of his capital. The second body he left with his brother Theodore, whom he regarded as a sufficient match for Shahen. With the third division he proceeded eastward to the remote province of Lazica, and there engaged in operations which could but very slightly affect the general course of the war. The Khazars were once more called in as allies; and their Khan, Ziebel, who coveted the plunder of Tiflis, held an interview with the emperor in the sight of the Persians who guarded that town, adored his majesty, and received from his hands the diadem that adorned his own brow. Richly entertained, and presented with all the plate used in the banquet, with a royal robe, and a pair of pearl earrings, promised moreover the daughter of the emperor (whose portrait he was shown) in marriage, the barbarian chief, dazzled and flattered, readily concluded an alliance, and associated his arms with those of the Romans. A joint attack was made upon Tiflis, and the town was reduced to extremities; when Sarablagas, with a thousand men, contrived to throw himself into it, and the allies, disheartened thereby, raised the siege and retired.

Meanwhile, in Asia Minor, Theodore engaged the army of Shahen; and, a violent hailstorm raging at the time, which drove into the enemy's face, while the Romans were, comparatively speaking, sheltered from its force, he succeeded in defeating his

antagonist with great slaughter. Chosroes was infuriated; and the displeasure of his sovereign weighed so heavily upon the mind of Shahen that he shortly afterwards sickened and died. The barbarous monarch gave orders that his corpse should be embalmed and sent to the court, in order that he might gratify his spleen by treating it with the grossest indignity.

At Constantinople the Persian cause was equally unsuccessful. Shahr-Barz, from Chalcedon, entered into negotiations with the Khan of the Avars, and found but little difficulty in persuading him to make an attempt upon the imperial city. From their seats beyond the Danube a host of barbarians--Avars, Slaves, Gepidas, Bulgarians, and others--advanced through the passes of Heemus into the plains of Thrace, destroying and ravaging. The population fled before them and sought the protection of the city walls, which had been carefully strengthened in expectation of the attack, and were in good order. The hordes forced the outer works; but all their efforts, though made both by land and sea, were unavailing against the main defences; their attempt to sap the wall failed; their artillery was met and crushed by engines of greater power; a fleet of Slavonian canoes, which endeavored to force an entrance by the Golden Horn, was destroyed or driven ashore; the towers with which they sought to overtop the walls were burnt; and, after ten days of constantly repeated assaults, the barbarian leader became convinced that he had undertaken an impossible enterprise, and, having burnt his engines and his siege works, he retired. The result might have been different had the Persians, who were experienced in the attack of walled places, been able to co-operate with him; but the narrow channel which flowed between Chalcedon and the Golden Horn proved an insurmountable barrier; the Persians had no ships, and the canoes of the Slavonians were quite unable to contend with the powerful galleys of the Byzantines, so that the transport of a body of Persian troops from Asia to Europe by their aid proved impracticable. Shahr-Barz had the annoyance of witnessing the efforts and defeat of his allies, without having it in his power to take any active steps towards assisting the one or hindering the other.

The war now approached its termination; for the last hope of the Persians had failed; and Heraclius, with his mind set at rest as regarded his capital, was free to strike at any part of Persia that he pleased, and, having the prestige of victory and the assistance of the Khazars, was likely to carry all before him. It is not clear how he employed himself during the spring and summer of A.D. 627; but in the September of that year he started from Lazica with a large Roman army and a contingent of 40,000 Khazar horse, resolved to surprise his adversary by a winter campaign, and hoping to take him at a disadvantage. Passing rapidly through Armenia and Azerbijan without meeting an enemy that dared to dispute his advance, suffering no loss except from the guerilla warfare of some bold spirits among the mountaineers of those regions, he resolved, notwithstanding the defection of the Khazars, who declined to accompany him further south than Azerbijan, that he would cross the Zagros mountains into Assyria, and make a dash at the royal cities of the Mesopotamian region, thus retaliating upon Chosroes for the Avar attack upon Constantinople of the preceding year, undertaken at his instigation. Chosroes himself had for the last twenty-four years fixed his court at Dastagherd in the plain country, about seventy miles to the north of Ctesiphon. It seemed to Heraclius that this position might perhaps be reached, and an effective blow struck against the Persian power. He hastened, therefore, to cross the mountains; and the 9th of October saw him at Chnaethas, in the low country, not far from Arbela, where he refreshed his army by a week's rest. He might now easily have advanced along the great post-road which connected Arbela with Dastagherd and Ctesiphon; but he had probably by this time

received information of the movements of the Persians, and was aware that by so doing he would place himself between two fires, and run the chance of being intercepted in his retreat. For Chosroes, having collected a large force, had sent it, under Ehazates, a new general, into Azerbijan; and this force, having reached Canzaca, found itself in the rear of Heraclius, between him and Lazica. Heraclius appears not to have thought it safe to leave this enemy behind him, and therefore he idled away above a month in the Zab region, waiting for Ehazates to make his appearance. That general had strict orders from the Great King to fight the Romans wherever he found them, whatever might be the consequence; and he therefore followed, as quickly as he could, upon Heraclius's footsteps, and early in December came up with him in the neighborhood of Nineveh. Both parties were anxious for an immediate engagement, Rhazates to carry out his master's orders, Heraclius because he had heard that his adversary would soon receive a reinforcement. The battle took place on the 12th of December, in the open plain to the north of Nineveh. It was contested from early dawn to the eleventh hour of the day, and was finally decided, more by the accident that Rhazates and the other Persian commanders were slain, than by any defeat of the soldiers. Heraclius is said to have distinguished himself personally during the fight by many valiant exploits; but he does not appear to have exhibited any remarkable strategy on the occasion. The Persians lost their generals, their chariots, and as many as twenty-eight standards; but they were not routed, nor driven from the field. They merely drew off to the distance of two bowshots, and there stood firm till after nightfall. During the night they fell back further upon their fortified camp, collected their baggage, and retired to a strong position at the foot of the mountains. Here they were joined by the reinforcement which Chosroes had sent to their aid; and thus strengthened they ventured to approach Heraclius once more, to hang on his rear, and impede his movements. He, after his victory, had resumed his march southward, had occupied Nineveh, recrossed the Groat Zab, advanced rapidly through Adiabene to the Lesser Zab, seized its bridges by a forced march of forty-eight (Roman) miles, and conveyed his army safely to its left bank, where he pitched his camp at a place called Yesdem, and once more allowed his soldiers a brief repose for the purpose of keeping Christmas. Chosroes had by this time heard of the defeat and death of Rhazates, and was in a state of extreme alarm. Hastily recalling Shahr-Barz from Chalcedon, and ordering the troops lately commanded by Rhazates to outstrip the Romans, if possible, and interpose themselves between Heraclius and Dastaghord, he took up a strong position near that place with his own army and a number of elephants, and expressed an intention of there awaiting his antagonist. A broad and deep river, or rather canal, known as the Baras-roth or Barazrud, protected his front; while at some distance further in advance was the Torna, probably another canal, where he expected that the army of Rhazates would make a stand. But that force, demoralized by its recent defeat, fell back from the line of the Torna, without even destroying the bridge over it; and Chosroes, finding the foe advancing on him, lost heart, and secretly fled from Dastagherd to Ctesiphon, whence he crossed the Tigris to Guedeseer or Seleucia, with his treasure and the best-loved of his wives and children. The army lately under Rhazates rallied upon the line of the Nahr-wan canal, three miles from Ctesiphon; and here it was largely reinforced, though with a mere worthless mob of slaves and domestics. It made however a formidable show, supported by its elephants, which numbered two hundred; it had a deep and wide cutting in its front; and, this time, it had taken care to destroy all the bridges by which the cutting might have been crossed. Heraclius, having plundered the rich palace of Dastagherd, together with several less splendid royal residences, and having on the 10th of January

encamped within twelve miles of the Nahrwan, and learnt from the commander of the Armenian contingent, whom he sent forward to reconnoitre, that the canal was impassable, came to the conclusion that his expedition had reached its extreme limit, and that prudence required him to commence his retreat. The season had been, it would seem, exceptionally mild, and the passes of the mountains were still open; but it was to be expected that in a few weeks they would be closed by the snow, which always falls heavily during some portion of the winter. Heraclius, therefore, like Julian, having come within sight of Ctesiphon, shrank from the idea of besieging it, and, content with the punishment that he had inflicted on his enemy by wasting and devastation, desisted from his expedition, and retraced his steps. In his retreat he was more fortunate than his great predecessor. The defeat which he had inflicted on the main army of the Persians paralyzed their energies, and it would seem that his return march was unmolested. He reached Siazurus (_Shehrizur_) early in February, Barzan (_Berozeh_) probably on the 1st of March,176 and on the 11th of March Canzaca, where he remained during the rest of the winter.

Chosroes had escaped a great danger, but he had incurred a terrible disgrace. He had fled before his adversary without venturing to give him battle. He had seen palace after palace destroyed, and had lost the magnificent residence where he had held his court for the last four-and-twenty years. The Romans had recovered 300 standards, trophies gained in the numerous victories of his early years. They had shown themselves able to penetrate into the heart of his empire, and to retire without suffering any loss. Still, had he possessed a moderate amount of prudence, Chosroes might even now have surmounted the perils of his position, and have terminated his reign in tranquillity, if not in glory. Heraclius was anxious for peace, and willing to grant it on reasonable conditions. He did not aim at conquests, and would have been contented at any time with the restoration of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. The Persians generally were weary of the war, and would have hailed with joy almost any terms of accommodation. But Chosroes was obstinate; he did not know how to bear the frowns of fortune; the disasters of the late campaign, instead of bending his spirit, had simply exasperated him, and he vented upon his own subjects the ill-humor which the successes of his enemies had provoked. Lending a too ready ear to a whispered slander, he ordered the execution of Shahr-Barz, and thus mortally offended that general, to whom the despatch was communicated by the Romans. He imprisoned the officers who had been defeated by, or had fled before Heraclius. Several other tyrannical acts are alleged against him; and it is said that he was contemplating the setting aside of his legitimate successor, Siroes, in favor of a younger son, Merdasas, his offspring by his favorite wife, the Christian Shirin, when a rebellion broke out against his authority. Gurdanaspa, who was in command of the Persian troops at Ctesiphon, and twenty-two nobles of importance, including two sons of Shahr-Barz, embraced the cause of Siroes, and seizing Chosroes, who meditated flight, committed him to "the House of Darkness," a strong place where he kept his money. Here he was confined for four days, his jailers allowing him daily a morsel of bread and a small quantity of water; when he complained of hunger, they told him, by his son's orders, that he was welcome to satisfy his appetite by feasting upon his treasures. The officers whom he had confined were allowed free access to his prison, where they insulted him and spat upon him. Merdasas, the son whom he preferred, and several of his other children, were brought into his presence and put to death before his eyes. After suffering in this way for four days he was at last, on the fifth day from his arrest (February 28), put to death in some cruel fashion, perhaps, like St. Sebastian, by being transfixed with arrows. Thus perished miserably the second

Chosroes, after having reigned thirty-seven years (A.D. 591-628), a just but tardy Nemesis overtaking the parricide.

The Oriental writers represent the second Chosroes as a monarch whose character was originally admirable, but whose good disposition was gradually corrupted by the possession of sovereign power. "Parviz," says Mirkhond, "holds a distinguished rank among the kings of Persia through the majesty and firmness of his government, the wisdom of his views, and his intrepidity in carrying them out, the size of his army, the amount of his treasure, the flourishing condition of the provinces during his reign, the security of the highways, the prompt and exact obedience which he enforced, and his unalterable adherence to the plans which he once formed." It is impossible that these praises can have been altogether undeserved; and we are bound to assign to this monarch, on the authority of the Orientals, a vigor of administration, a strength of will, and a capacity for governing, not very commonly possessed by princes born in the purple. To these merits we may add a certain grandeur of soul, and power of appreciating the beautiful and the magnificent, which, though not uncommon in the East, did not characterize many of the Sassanian sovereigns. The architectural remains of Chosroes, which will be noticed in a future chapter, the descriptions which have come down to us of his palaces at Dastagherd and Canzaca, the accounts which we have of his treasures, his court, his seraglio, even his seals, transcend all that is known of any other monarch of his line. The employment of Byzantine sculptors and architects, which his works are thought to indicate, implies an appreciation of artistic excellence very rare among Orientals. But against these merits must be set a number of most serious moral defects, which may have been aggravated as time went on, but of which we see something more than the germ, even while he was still a youth. The murder of his father was perhaps a state necessity, and he may not have commanded it, or have been accessory to it before the fact; but his ingratitude towards his uncles, whom he deliberately put to death, is wholly unpardonable, and shows him to have been cruel, selfish, and utterly without natural affection, even in the earlier portion of his reign. In war he exhibited neither courage nor conduct; all his main military successes were due to his generals; and in his later years he seems never voluntarily to have exposed himself to danger. In suspecting his generals, and ill-using them while living, he only followed the traditions of his house; but the insults offered to the dead body of Shahen, whose only fault was that he had suffered a defeat, were unusual and outrageous. The accounts given of his seraglio imply either gross sensualism or extreme ostentation; perhaps we may be justified in inclining to the more lenient view, if we take into consideration the faithful attachment which he exhibited towards Shirin. The cruelties which disgraced his later years are wholly without excuse; but in the act which deprived him of his throne, and brought him to a miserable end--his preference of Merdasas as his successor--he exhibited no worse fault than an amiable weakness, a partiality towards the son of a wife who possessed, and seems to have deserved, his affection.

The coins of the second Chosroes are numerous in the extreme, and present several peculiarities. The ordinary type has, on the obverse, the king's head in profile, covered by a tiara, of which the chief ornament is a crescent and star between two outstretched wings. The head is surrounded by a double pearl bordering, outside of which, in the margin, are three crescents and stars. The legend is _Khusrui afzud_, with a monogram of doubtful meaning. The reverse shows the usual fire altar and supporters, in a rude form, enclosed by a triple pearl bordering. In the margin, outside the bordering, are four crescents and stars. The legend is merely the regnal year and a mint-mark. Thirty-four

mint-marks have been ascribed to Chosroes II.

A rarer and more curious type of coin, belonging to this monarch, presents on the obverse the front face of the king, surmounted by a mural crown, having the star and crescent between outstretched wings at top. The legend is _Khusrui mallean malka--afzud_. "Chosroes, king of kings--increase (be his)." The reverse has a head like that of a woman, also fronting the spectator, and wearing a band enriched with pearls across the forehead, above which the hair gradually converges to a point. A head very similar to this is found on Indo-Sassanian coins. Otherwise we might have supposed that the uxorious monarch had wished to circulate among his subjects the portrait of his beloved Shirin.