

ART. IV.—*Archery in Ancient Persia.—A Few Extraordinary Feats.*

(Read 24th January 1918.)

The subject of this paper is suggested by an interesting article on "Taxila as a Seat of Learning in the Pali Introduction. Literature," by Mr. Bimaha Charan Law in the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New Series Vol. XII, 1916, No. 11). Taxila was the place which "pupils from different parts of India used to visit for learning various arts and sciences." From a para. in the article, entitled "Archery," we learn, that archery also was taught at Taxila. Some feats in archery are specially mentioned, e.g., (a) that of bringing down a mango from the top of a tree; (b) piercing by one arrow four plantain plants kept on four sides. These feats remind one of such feats of archery among the ancient Persians, especially of the feats of King Bahramgour. I will speak on my subject under two heads: I, Archery among the ancient Persians as referred to in the Avesta and elsewhere, and II, A few feats of Archery, referred to by Firdousi and others.

I

Archery as referred to in the Avesta.

The ancient Iranians learned Archery from their very childhood. Herodotus says that "Beginning Archery among the ancient Iranians according to Herodotus, from the age of five years to twenty, they instruct their sons in three things only: to ride, to use the bow and to speak the truth."¹ Herodotus, in his account of Xerxes' expedition against the Greeks, thus speaks of the dress and arms of the ancient Persians:² "On their heads, they wore loose coverings, called tiaras; on the body, various coloured sleeved breast-plates, with iron scales like those of fish; and on their legs, loose trousers; and instead of shields, bucklers made of osiers;

1. Herodotus Bk. I, 136, Carey's translation (1889) p. 61.

2. *Ibid*, Bk. VII, 61, p. 433.

and, under them their quivers were hung. They had short spears, long bows and arrows made of cane and besides, daggers suspended from the girdle on the right thigh."

Prof. Jackson thus speaks of the evidence presented by the Archery as re- ancient monuments on the subject of bows, presented on the arrows and quivers: "The large quiver is ancient monu- prominent in the figures of the Dieulafoy-ments of Persia. archers and in the case of the sculptures on the Behistan rock. In both these instances the quiver is suspended from the back. . . . The quiver, merely as arrow-holder, is alluded to in Æschylus Persæ, 1001-3. . . . The bow appears in most of the sculptures and monuments, and is naturally mentioned as an important weapon in Iranian as in other ancient writers. On the monuments the bow is usually represented as strung and as suspended at the left shoulder. . . . The arrows are naturally mentioned again and again in connection with the bow. Herodotus says that the Persian arrows were made of reed; in the Iranian writings there seems to be no mention of the material from which the shaft is made, but the weighing and tipping of the arrow is described. In the Avesta (Vd. XIV, 9), the number of darts carried in the quiver is thirty."¹

The Avesta² gives a list of twelve weapons used by the ancient Archery as refer- Iranians. Therein we find "the fourth red to in the Aves- a bow, the fifth a quiver with shoulder- ta. belt and thirty brass-headed arrows."³ "Falcon-winged arrows" (*ishavascha érézifyô-parêna*) are mentioned in one place⁴ in connection with the bow. In another place⁵ we read of "vulture-feathered, gold-notched, lead-poised arrows." The Fravardin Yasht⁶ speaks of the Fravashis as affording protection against "well-aimed arrows" (*ishush hvâthakhtô*).

The Avesta word for a bow is *thanvarê*⁷ or *thanvara*⁸ or *thanvana*⁹ or *thanvarêti*¹⁰ (Sanskrit धनुः, धन्व, धनस) from the root *tan* (Sans. तन, P. تانودان *tanûdan*, Lat. *tendere*,

1 Prof. Jackson's article on "Herodotus VII, 61, or the Arms of the Ancient Persians illustrated from Iranian Sources," in the Volume of the Classical Studies in honour of Henry Drisler, (1894 pp. 95-125), p. 100.

2 Vendidad XIV 9.

3 S. B. E. (1880) Vol. IV, p. 169.

4 Vend. XVII 9, 10; *Ibid*, p. 188.

5 Meher Yasht (Yt. X), 129, *Vide* Prof. Jackson's above article, p. 105.

6 Yt. XIII, 72.

7 Vendidad XVII, 9, 10. 8 Vend. XIV, 9. 9 Meher Yasht (Yt. X, 39). 10, *Ibid* 128.

Fr. e-tendre, Guj. तानवु *Tānvun* to stretch. The bow-string is *jya*, Sans. ज्या Pers. ۛ; The material of the bow-string was cow-gut (*gavaṣṇahē snāvya jya*).¹

For the arrow we find the following words in the Avesta :

- (a) *ainghimana*² from the root *ah* or *aḡ* (Sans. अस) to throw.
- (b) *aḡti*³ from root *aḡ* to throw.
- (c) *ishu*⁴ (Sans. इषु) from the root *ish*, Sans. इष to throw.
- (d) *tigra*⁵ Pers. تیر from foot *tij* Sans. तिज to sharpen (from which root 'tij,' come the English words, stimulate, instigate).

As to the material of the arrows, we read of the arrows being vulture-feathered, gold-pointed or yellow-pointed, horn-handled and iron-bladed (*kahrkāḡô-parēnanām*, *zaranyô-zafṛām*, *ḡravī stayām*, *ayangaḥēna sparēgha*).⁶

We learn from the Avesta and Pahlavi books, that the Symbolic signi- weapons of war which an Iranian soldier fication of a bow (rathaēshtâr) carried, were metaphorically and arrow. or symbolically taken to be the weapons of a priest(Āthravan) to fight against evil. In the Khorshed Yasht (Yt.VI 5) one praises the *vazra* or *gurz*, i.e., the mace, for striking it upon the heads of the Daēvas or evil-doers. So, in the case of the bow and arrow, they are taken to be symbolical for mental perfection and the spirit of liberality. We read in the Minoherad the following question and answer :

The question is " How is it possible to make Aûharmazd, the arch-angels, and the fragrant, well-pleasing heaven more fully for oneself ? And how is it possible to make Aharman, the wicked, and the demons confounded ? " In reply, it is said, that that can be done " when they make the spirit of wisdom a protection for the back, and wear the spirit of contentment on the body, like arms and armour and valour, and make the spirit of truth a shield, the spirit of thankfulness a club, the spirit of complete mindfulness a bow, and the spirit of liberality an arrow . . . " ⁷

1 *Ibid.* 123.

2 Yacna LVII, 28.

3 Meher Yasht. (Yt. X, 113).

4 Meher Yasht, (Yt. X 24).

5 Tir Yasht, (Yt. VIII) 6.

6 Meher Yasht, (Yt. X, 129).

7 Chap. XLIII. 1-12. West S.B.E., XXIV, pp. 83-84.

The fact, that the bow and arrow were held as symbols for some mental qualities or virtues, is illustrated by some semi-religious Achæmenian sculptures. There, in the midst of some religious associations, a king is represented as drawing his bow with all his possible strength. That signifies, that one must do his level best in his line of life and do good to others. Dr. Bartholomæ has very suggestively put this figure on some of his Iranian publications with the words under it: "Wie du kannst so wolle" i.e., "Wish as thou canst." The signification is: The more you draw your bow with all your possible strength, the more distant will the arrow go. So, put forth all possible energy in your work and the result will be proportionately good.

II

Some Extraordinary Feats in Archery.

We will now describe some feats of archery, attributed to king Bahramgour by Firdousi and other Persian writers. Bahramgour was a typical Iranian, possessing masterly skill in archery. The poet thus refers to him in the words of a translator.

"The Lion and the Lizard keep

The Courts where Jamsheyd gloried and drank deep ;
And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep."

His name was Bahram, but he was called Bahram Gour, because he was very fond of killing the gour, گور i.e., the wild ass in the hunt.

Sir John Malcolm, one of the distinguished past-Presidents of our Society, and a Governor of our city, thus describes an anecdote of one of Bahramgour's hunting feats in archery as heard by him during one of his visits of Persia, at a known hunting seat of Bahram.

"Baharam, proud of his excellence as an archer, wished to display it before a favourite lady. He carried her to the plain; an antelope was soon found, asleep. The monarch shot an arrow with such precision as to graze its ear. The animal awoke, and put his hind hoof to the ear, to strike off the fly by which he conceived himself annoyed. Another arrow fixed his hoof to his horn. Baharam turned to the lady, in expectation of her praises: she coolly observed, *Neeko kurden z pur kurden est*; "Practice makes perfect." Enraged at this uncourtly observation, the king ordered her to be sent into the mountains to perish.

Her life was saved by the mercy of a minister, who allowed her to retire to a small village on the side of a hill. She lodged in an upper room, to which she ascended by twenty steps. On her arrival she bought a small calf, which she carried up and down the stairs every day. This exercise was continued for four years; and the increase of her strength kept pace with the increasing weight of the animal. Baharam, who had supposed her dead, after a fatiguing chase stopped one evening at this village. she was a young woman carrying a large cow up a flight of twenty steps. He was astonished, and sent to inquire how strength so extraordinary had been acquired by a person of so delicate a form. The lady said she would communicate her secret to none but Baharam; and to him only on his condescending to come alone to her house. The king instantly went; on his repeating his admiration of what he had seen, she bade him not lavish praises where they were not due: 'Practice makes perfect,' said she, in her natural voice, and at the same time lifted up her veil. Baharam recognised and embraced his favourite. Pleased with the lesson she had given him, and delighted with the love which had led her to pass four years in an endeavour to regain his esteem, he ordered a palace to be built on the spot, as a hunting-seat, and a memorial of this event."¹

The story, as given by Firdousi, says, that the woman in the Firdousi's version of this story. story was neither Bahram's favourite wife nor his queen. She was a favourite flute-player. The place of the story was Arabia and the time his boyhood when he was under the tutelage of Naamân (نعمان) at the Court of Manzar (منذر). The story, as heard by Malcolm, seems to be another version of it. Firdousi's story runs as follows:² Baharâm, who was a very clever hand in hunting, went one day to the chase with Âzdeh, a woman of Roum, who was his favourite flute-player. He came across two antelopes, one male and the other female. Baharâm asked Âzdeh "Which of the two you wish me to aim at?" She replied, "A brave man never fights with antelopes, so you better turn with your arrows the female into a male and the male into a female. Then, when an antelope passes by your side, you aim at him an arrow, in such a way, that it merely touches his ear without hurting it, and that when he lays down his ear over the shoulder and raises his foot to scratch it, you aim another arrow in such a way as to pierce the head, the shoulder and the foot all at the same time." Baharâm had with him an arrow with two points. He aimed it

1 Malcolm's History of Persia, 2nd ed. (1839), Vol. I, p. 94, n. 1.

2 Vide my paper on "The Education among the Ancient Iranians," p. 14.

at the male in such a way that it carried away his two horns and gave him the appearance of a female. Then he threw two arrows at the female antelope in such a clever way, that they struck her head and struck themselves over it, so as to give her the appearance of a male with two horns. Then he aimed his arrow at another antelope, so as to merely touch his ears. The animal raised his foot to scratch his ear, when Baharâm aimed at him another arrow, so cleverly, that he hit the head, the ear and the foot all at the same time. The woman thereupon shed tears from her eyes, saying, it was inhuman on the part of Baharâm to have so killed the poor animal. This enraged Baharâm, who had done all this at her bidding. He said: 'It is all a deceit on your part. If I had failed in doing what you ordered me to do, my family would have been put to shame.' With these words he immediately killed her.

Madame Dieulafoy, in her "La Perse, La Chaldee et La Sui-
siane" (p. 357), gives a painting illustrating
Madame Dieulafoy's painting. the above story. She found it decorating a
door-frame in a house which she occupied
in the valley of Eclid. Her painting entitled "Rencontre de
Baharam et de son ancienne favourite" gives us a picture of
the favourite woman in the story, carrying the calf on her back
over the steps.

Tabari¹ describes another archery-feat of Behramgour: "One
day Behramgour, when he was in Arabia in
Another hunt- his boyhood with the Arab King Manzar,
ing feat of Beh- his boyhood with the Arab King Manzar,
ramgour accord- went a -hunting. He saw a wild ass running.
ing to Tabari. It was being overtaken by a lion. The lion
was on the point of devouring the ass. Behram then threw
an arrow with such dexterity that it passed through the lion
and the ass, and killed them both at the same time. Manzar
is said to have ordered this hunting scene to be painted on the
walls of the palace where Behramgour lived.

The Avesta speaks of a famous archer whose arrow went along
an enormous distance. He is referred to in
Ere k h s h a, a famous Iranian the Tir Yasht, the Yasht in honour of Tir or
archer. Tishtrya, the star Sirius, whose enormous
speed is compared to that of the arrow (*tir*) thrown by him on a
historical occasion. We read as follows:

Tishtrim stârem raêventem kharenanghantem yazamaidê yô
avavat khshvâewô vazâiti avi zrayô vouru-kashem yatha tigrish
mainivação yim anghat Erekhshô khshaviwi-ishush khshviwi-
ishvatemô Airyanâm Airyô Khshaothat hacha garôit khanvan-

¹ Tabari par Zotenberg, Vol. II, pp. 111-12.

tem avi gairîm (Tir Yasht. Yt. VIII, 6. We read the same passage again later on (s. 37) in the same yasht with the addition of two words "âçu-khshavaêwem khshviwi-vâzem," i.e., "swift-running and swift-going" as further adjectives for Tishtrya).

Translation.—We invoke the brilliant shining star Tishtrya which moves as fast towards the Vourukasha (the Caspian) Sea, as the mental arrow (i.e., the arrow whose speed cannot be measured but only mentally conceived) which was of Erekhsha, the swift Iranian, the swiftest (Iranian) archer among all the Iranians (who threw it) from the Khshaotha mountain to the Khanvant mountain.

The feat of archery by a great Iranian archer referred to here, is that of throwing an arrow from one mountain to another distant mountain. We are not in a position, on the authority of Avesta or Pahlavi books, to identify the two mountains—Khshaotha and Khanvant—and the distance between them. But the Arab historian Tabari helps us in this matter, and throws much light upon this passage of the Avesta, which otherwise would have remained much obscure. We learn the following details from this historian.¹

Minocheher, the Iranian king who was fighting in a war with Afrâsiâb, the Turanian king, was besieged in the fort of Amoul in the province of Tabaristan.² The siege lasted long, because Minocheher and his army could get and grow in the fort, all the articles of food except pepper. The want of pepper which grew in Hindustan was, on the advice of the sages of Minocheher, met by the use of ginger and of a plant named *term* (*طرم*) which grew there. So, the siege lasted for ten years. According to Tabari, Minocheher, the besieged sovereign, even sent a few things as presents to Afrâsiâb. He says : " Minocheher remained in the castle, and was not once (during the ten years) obliged to procure either clothing or food from any other place ; for he possessed there such a superfluity of garments, carpets, herbs, and vegetables of every kind that he occasionally sent some as presents to Afrâsiâb ; thus saying ' how longsoever you may continue before the gates of this city, I cannot suffer any injury, defended by so strong a castle.' "³ At the end of ten years, Afrâsiâb raised the siege, because there was a great loss of life in his troops, owing to sickness, resulting from the great humidity of the air round the besieged mountain. Both the

¹ I follow Tabari, traduit par Zotenberg, Vol. I pp. 278-80. Partie, I, Chap. 68.

² The Pahlavi Bundelesh speaks of this fortress as situated on the mountain of Pâdashkhvârgar. Chap. XXXI, 21-22. Vide my Bundelesh, pp. 170-72.

³ Ousley's Travels III, p. 301.

kings then made peace on the condition, that their frontiers may be fixed. It was arranged, that Minocheher may select the best of his Iranian archers, and direct him to throw an arrow from a peak of the Demavand.¹ The place, *i.e.*, a line extending both ways from the place where the arrow fell, may serve as the boundary line for the country under dispute. Minocheher found one Āresh to be the best archer in his country. He asked him to throw an arrow with all his force. He did so, and the arrow crossed the province of Tabaristan, Nishâpour, Sarakhs, Merv, and fell on the banks of the river Jehoun (جیحون). It was an extraordinary feat to throw an arrow hundreds of miles away. Afrâsiâb had to stand true to the condition and to accept the boundary thus fixed.

I give below the passage from a recent text of Tabari² which gives a simple narration of the story. His version saves the story from any kind of improbability in the matter of an enormous distance.

ازین سری جیحون سواری زیر اندازی نیکو سخت تیری اندازد
آنجا که آن تیر بر زمین افتد حد ایرانیان باشد و بردو ملک برین
عهد بستند و صلحنامه بنوشتند پس آرش را اختیار کردند و آرش
مردی بود که از وی زیر انداز تر نبود و بر تلی شد که دران حدود
ازان بلند تر کوهی نیست و تیری را نشان کردند و بینداخت ببول
جیحون بر زمین آمد و آن چیز خدایی و افراسیاب ازان غمگین شد
که چندان پادشاهی بمنوچهر بایست دادن

Translation.—A horseman, who may be a good archer, may throw a strong arrow from this side of the Jehoun, and that place, where the arrow falls, may form the boundary of the Iranians. Both the kings bound themselves in this agreement and wrote a treaty. Then they chose Āresh. Āresh was a man than whom there was no better archer. He went over a hill, than which there was no higher mountain in that region. They made a mark over the arrow and he (then) threw it; and it fell on the ground on the bank of the Jehoun (Oxus). It was a divine thing (*i.e.*, a miracle) and Afrâsiâb became sorry, as he had to give up the sovereignty of that much country to Minocheher.³

¹ One must understand, that the names Elburz and Demavand were, at times, used for a very long range of mountains in Persia.

² Ousley also refers to the story from Tabari. Ousley's Travels in Persia, Vol. III, pp. 300, 333.

³ Munshi Naval Kishore's Text of 1874, p. 115, l. 24 et seq.

Mirkhond also refers to this feat in his *Rauz-at-us-Safa* on the authority of *Târikh Maogân*. We read there as follows:¹

مشروط بر آنکه آرش از سر کوه دماوند تیري اندازد، و جا که آن تیر فرود آید فاصله میان دو مملکت آن متصل بود و آرش بر قلعه جبل دماوند رفته و تیري بجانب مشرق افکنده از شست رها کرد و آن تیر از وقت طلوع آفتاب تا نیمروز در حرکت بود و بهنگام استوا بر گذار جیستون افتاده هر چند این صورت از عقل بعید است اما چون متون اخبار بدین خبر ناطق بود ثبت گشت

Translation.—"It was stipulated, that Ārish should ascend Mound Damâvend, and from thence discharge an arrow towards the east; and that the place in which the arrow fell should form the boundary between the two kingdoms. Ārish thereupon ascended the mountain, and discharged towards the east an arrow, the flight of which continued from the dawn of day until noon, when it fell on the banks of the Jihûn. As this incident, though so remote from probability, has been invariably recorded in the text of all historians, it is therefore mentioned here."²

This extraordinary marvellous feat of archery has been attempted to be explained in various ways. Ousley thus speaks on the subject: "As that golden arrow, of such classical celebrity, which wafted Arbais through the air, has been the subject of much learned conjectural explanation, so we find that some have attributed the exploit of Āresh to magick, or to the assistance of an angel; whilst other ingenious commentators divest the story of its most marvellous circumstances and suppose the arrow to express figuratively, that the Persians invaded and by their skill in archery, obtained possession of the enemy's country; that Āresh was the successful general; that he determined the boundaries; and that by the magick characters inscribed on his wonderful arrow, nothing more is understood than the written orders which he dispatched with the utmost expedition to the farthest borders of Persia. Others, however, are willing to interpret the story more literally; and on the authority of different chronicles, Dowlet Shah informs us that the arrow was so contrived as to contain a chymical (chemical) mixture of quicksilver and other substances, which, when heated by the sun, augmented the original force of projection in such a manner that it reached to Marv."³

¹ Naval Kishore's *Text of Mirkhond's Rauz-ut-us-Safa*, Vol. I, p. 166, l. 18.

² *History of the Early Kings of Persia*, translated from the original Persian of Mirkhond, by David Shea (1832) p. 175.

³ Ousley's *Travels in Persia*, Vol. III, pp. 333-34.

Ousley speaks of "that golden arrow of such classical celebrity which wafted Abaris through the air." We learn as follows of this Abaris: "Abaris, son of Southas, was a Hyperborean priest of Apollo and came from the country about the Caucasus to Greece, while his own country was visited by a plague. In his travels through Greece, he carried with him an arrow as the symbol of Apollo. . . . He is said to have ridden on his arrow, the gift of Apollo, through the air.¹" May I suggest, that this classical Abaris is the same as Iranian Ârish? (a) The similarity of name suggests this thought. (b) Again Abaris (Aris) is said to have come to Greece from the country about the Caucasus. Now, the Mount Damâvend in the Iranian story is a peak of the Elburz, which itself is a mountain in the range of the Caucasus. (c) Dr. James MacDonald, in his article on Druidism,² speaks of Abaris "the mysterious Hyperborean philosopher" as the friend of Pythagoras. According to him, Pythagoras was instructed by the Druids who are spoken of as "a class of priests corresponding to the Magi or the wise men of the ancient Persians." The learning of Pythagoras, is, by some, connected with Persia and Persian sages. So, this also suggests the connection of the classical Abaris with the Iranian Arish.

The improbability of the story seems to be fortunately well explained to some extent by Tabari. He says: "Some persons maintain, that this arrow, by virtue of the good fortune of Minocheher, happened to strike a vulture in the air, and that this bird fell and died on the banks of the Jehoun; that they afterwards found the arrow and carried it to Tabaristan."³ Another way in which the improbability is sought to be explained is, that, by mistake, one place is mistaken for another bearing the same name. As we will see later on, the particular place whence this arrow was thrown, was according to some writers, Amel or Amoul. Now, there are two Amouls, one in the Transoxania near the river Jehoun, another in the west. The arrow was possibly thrown from the Transoxanian Amoul which was latterly mistaken to be the western Amoul, thus creating a cause for improbability.⁴

The Ârish mentioned in the works of the above Arab oriental writers is the Erekhsh of the Avesta. The Parsis observe a festival called the Jashan-i-Tirangân or Tirangân, on Tir the thirteenth day of their month Tir. The word Tir, in the names of the day, the month and the festival, means an arrow in

¹ Dr. Smith's Classical Dictionary.

² Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol. VII, p. 473.

³ I translate from the French translation of Zotenberg I., p. 280. Naya Kishore's Text does not give this portion. ⁴ Vide Ousley's Travels, Vol. III, pp. 333-34.

Pahlavi, Pazend and Persian. The Farhang-i-Jehangiri, as pointed out by Ousley,¹ says, that the festival was meant to commemorate the above feat of the arrow by the Persian archer. According the Albiruni, the festival was celebrated for two reasons. One of these was for the celebration of the above extraordinary feat. He says as follows :

“ On the 13th, or Tir-Rôz, there is a feast Tiragân, so called on account of the identity of the name of the month and the day. Of the two causes to which it is traced back, one is this, that Afrâsiâb, after having subdued Erânshahr, and while besieging Minôcihr in Tabaristân, asked him some favour. Minôcihr complied with his wish, on the condition that he (Afrâsiâb) should restore to him a part of Erânshahr as long and as broad as an arrow-shot. On that occasion there was a genius present called Isfandarmadh ; he ordered to be brought a bow and an arrow of such a size as he himself had indicated to the arrow-maker, in conformity with that which is manifest in the Avestâ. Then he sent for Ârish, a noble, pious, and wise man, and ordered him to take the bow and to shoot the arrow. Ârish stepped forward, took off his clothes, and said : “ O King, and ye others, look at my body. I am free from any wound or disease. I know that when I shoot with this bow and arrow I shall fall to pieces, and my life will be gone, but I have determined to sacrifice it for you.” Then he applied himself to the work, and bent the bow with all the power God had given him ; then he shot, and fell asunder into pieces. By order of God the wind bore the arrow away from the mountain of Rûyân and brought it to the utmost frontier of Khurâsân between Farghâna and Tabaristân ; there it hit the trunk of a nut-tree that was so large that there had never been a tree like it in the world. The distance between the place where the arrow was shot and that where it fell was 1,000 Farsakh. Afrâsiâb and Minôcihr made a treaty on the basis of this shot that was shot on this day. In consequence people made it a feast-day ”.²

In a Persian book giving an account of the ancient Iranian feasts,³ wherein this feast of Triangân is referred to, the feat of the above archer is thus spoken of :

ازان خوانند آرشرا کمانگیر
که از آمول بمر و انداخت او تیر

1 Vol. III, p. 333.

2 “ The Chronology of Ancient Nations ” of Albiruni translated by Dr. C. E. Sachau (1879) p. 205.

3 *Vide* my lecture on “ Zoroastrian Festivals,” in my Gujarati “ Lectures and Sermons on Zoroastrian Subjects,” Part III, p. 133.

The above story, as given in this Persian book, runs as follows: "This Jashan is called 'Tirgân-ê-Mehin,¹ i.e., the great Tirgân Jashan. This Jashan falls on the day Tir of the month Tir. It was on this day that King Manucheher made peace with the Turânian King Afrâsiâb, on condition, that Afrâsiâb should give up to Manucheher so much of his dominions as would cover the distance of a fast-flying arrow. Then ingenious persons made an arrow with great contrivance and it was put into the bow by Arish standing on a mountain near Tabristan and thrown in the direction of the rising sun, the heat of which carried the arrow to the boundary line of Takhârestân. In the words of a poet 'Arish is called Kamân-Gir, i.e., a reputed archer, on this account, that he threw an arrow from Amel to Marv.' They say, that on this day (i.e., the Tirgân Jashan), the country covered by the flight of that arrow was given to Manucheher, and the day was passed in revelry and rejoicing."¹

According to this version of the story, the ingenuity consisted in the preparation of the arrow with such materials, as would be chemically acted upon by the heat of the rising sun.

The Mujmul-al Tawarikh speaks of a Arish Shîvâtîr (ارش شیدواتیر) Here Shîvâtîr is the Persian form of Shepâk-tîr, which is the Pahlavi rendering of the word Khshviwi-ishu in the above Avesta passage of the Tir Yasht.²

In the Shâh-nâmeh of Firdousi, we often come across the words Tir-i Âreshi (تیر ارشی) i.e., the arrow of Aresh. This shows, that the name of Arish (Av. Erekhsha) and his arrow have become proverbial. Among several uses of this kind, we have the following in the accounts of the battle which Arjâsp fought with Zarir. بزیر پی آنکه هست آنشی : که سامین گرز. Here, Sam is referred to as the best mace-man and Arish as the best archer. We find from Firdousi³ that Behram Chobin traced his descent from this great archer.

1 Spiegel Memorial Volume, edited by me, pp. 206-7. Paper on "A few Parsee festivals (Jashans) according to an old Parsee manuscript," by Ervad Manekji Rustamji Unvala.

2 Études Iraniennes, par Darmesteter, Tome, II, pp. 220-21.

3 Mohl, small edition, VII, pp. 26 and 30.