

God's way from day to day. Know that in public  
 And private also 'tis the one thing needful  
 Because the world will not abide with any.  
 Observe my rede and walk in righteous ways.  
 My heart forebodeth that my time hath come."

He bade his children both farewell and said:—  
 "Forget not mine advice."

Then in the palace  
 The bells rang out, and on the elephants  
 The clarions blared, as with his gentle tongue  
 And kindly heart Sám journeyed toward the west.  
 His children bore him company three stages  
 With minds instructed and with tearful cheeks,  
 Then Sám went on while Zál marched to Sístán  
 And there in lion Rustam's company  
 Spent day and night in bout and revelry.

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## § 31

*How Rustam slew the White Elephant*

It came to pass that as they spent a day  
 In revel in a garden with their friends,  
 While harp-strings ran the gamut of sweet sounds  
 And all the chiefs were one in merriment,  
 They quaffed red wine from crystal cups until  
 Their heads were dazed, and then Zál bade his son:  
 "My child of sun-like Grace! make ready robes  
 Of honour for thy warriors, and steeds  
 For those of high degree."

So Rustam gave

Gold, many Arab steeds caparisoned  
 And other gifts, and all went richer home.  
 Zál, as his wont was, sought the bower, while Rustam  
 Reeled to his chamber, laid him down and slept.

Shouts rose outside his door: "The chief's white  
elephant

Hath broken loose, and folk are in its danger!"

He heard, and urged by hardihood ran forth,  
Snatched up Sám's mace and made toward the street.  
The keepers of the gate opposed him, saying:—  
"We fear the chieftain, 'tis a darksome night,  
The elephant is loose! Who can approve  
Thy going forth?"

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Wroth at the speaker's words  
The matchless Rustam smote him on the nape:  
His head rolled from him. Rustam turned toward  
The others but they fled the paladin,  
Who boldly went up to the gate and smashed  
The chains and bolts with blows that well befitted  
One of such noble name, went forth like wind  
With shouldered mace excitedly, approached  
The mighty beast and roared out like the sea.  
He looked and saw a Mountain bellowing,  
The ground beneath it like a boiling pot,  
Saw his own nobles fleeing in dismay,  
Like sheep that spy a wolf, roared like a lion  
And went courageously against the beast,  
Which seeing him charged at him like a mountain.  
And reared its trunk to strike, but Rustam dealt it  
A mace-blow on the head; the mountain-form  
Stooped; Mount Bístún shook to its core and tumbled  
At one blow vile and strengthless. Thus it fell,  
That bellowing elephant, while matchless Rustam  
Went lightly to his place again and slept.

Now when the sun ascended from the east,  
Bright as the cheeks of those who ravish hearts,  
Zul heard of Rustam's deeds, how he had knocked  
The dust out of the roaring elephant,  
Had with a single mace-blow broken its neck

And cast its body to the ground. He cried :—  
 " Woe for that mighty elephant, which used  
 To bellow like the dark blue sea! How often  
 Hath that strong beast charged and o'erthrown a host, V. 233  
 Yet conquer howsoe'er it might in battle  
 My son hath bested it!"

He summoned Rustan,  
 Kissed him upon his head and hands and neck,  
 And said: " O lion's whelp! thy claws have grown  
 And thou art brave indeed! Youth as thou art  
 Thou hast no peer in stature, Grace, and valour;  
 So ere thy spreading fame shall thwart thine action  
 Take vengeance for the blood of Narímán.  
 Speed forth to Mount Sipand where thou wilt see  
 A cloud-capt stronghold four leagues square, whereover  
 The eagle hath not soared. 'Tis full of herbage  
 And water, gold and money, men and beasts.  
 Both trees and husbandmen abound there; none  
 Hath seen a place like that. The All-Provider  
 Hath furnished workmen of all sorts, and fruit-trees.  
 There is but one approach; 'tis through a gate  
 As high as heaven, and Narímán, who bore  
 The ball from all the chiefs, approached the stronghold  
 By order of Sháh Farídún and held  
 The road. The siege went on both night and day  
 With stratagems and spells above a year,  
 Until the foe hurled down a rock and earth  
 Possessed the paladin no more. The host  
 Retreated to the Sháh. When Sám was told :— V. 234  
 'The valiant Lion hath had fight enough,'  
 He wailed with growing grief, and having mourned  
 A week in anguish called the host together.  
 He marched against that hold with troops that covered  
 The waste and desert, and for months and years  
 Beleaguered it in vain. . None issued forth

And none went in, but though the gate was shut  
 So long the foe lacked not a stalk of hay,  
 And Sám forewent his vengeance in despair.  
 Now is the time, my son! for artifice.  
 Go with a caravan in merry pin,  
 So that the watchmen may not find thee out,  
 And when thou occupiest Mount Sipand  
 Destroy those evil-doers, root and stem.  
 Since thou art yet unknown thou mayst succeed."

Then Rustam answered: "I will do thy bidding  
 And soon provide a physic for the ache."

Said Zál to him: "My prudent son! give ear.  
 Don camel-drivers' clothes and from the plain  
 Fetch camels to make up a caravan.  
 Disguise thyself and carry naught but salt,  
 For that is precious there. The folk know nothing  
 Of greater value. Though the castle towereth  
 Above its gate they have no salt to eat,  
 So all will run to greet thee when they see  
 Loads of it coming unexpectedly."

### § 32

#### *How Rustam went to Mount Sipand*

v. 235 Then Rustam made him ready for the fray,  
 Concealed his mace within a load of salt  
 And took some wise and valiant men withal.  
 He hid the arms within the camels' loads  
 And merry at the artifice sped on  
 To Mount Sipand. When he arrived the watchman  
 Saw him and hastened to the castellan.  
 "A caravan," he said, "with many drivers  
 Hath come, and if my lord doth ask their business,  
 To me it seemeth that they carry salt."