

Of undried aloe-wood with golden clasps.

The tale of how the paladin had slain  
His son went everywhere and all the world  
Was full of grief, while Rustam sorrowed long,  
But in the end perforce resigned himself.

The world hath many an act like this in mind,  
On every soul it setteth many a brand,

For who possesseth sense and wit combined  
The treachery of fortune to withstand?

The Íránians hearing burned with grief. Húmán,  
For his part, went back to Túrán and told  
Afrásiyáb, who was all wonderment  
And speculation touching that event.

### § 25

#### *How Suhráb's Mother received the Tidings of his Death*

A cry rose from Túrán: "Suhráb hath fallen  
Upon the battlefield!" The tidings reached  
The king of Samangán, who rent his robes.  
The tidings reached Tahmína: "Brave Suhráb  
Hath perished, stricken by his father's sword!"  
She seized her robe and rent it, and her form—  
That goodly gem—shone forth. She raised a cry  
Of wail and woe, and swooned at whiles. She coiled  
Her hair like twisted lassos round her fingers  
And plucked it out. The blood ran down her face.  
At times she sank fordone. She strewed dark dust  
Upon her head, gnawed pieces from her arms,  
Flung fire upon her head and scorched herself,  
And burned her musky tresses. "Where art thou,"  
She cried, "who wast thy mother's soul, but art  
Now only dust and blood? I scanned the road,  
I said: 'I may have tidings of Suhráb  
And Rustam.' Then I mused and said: 'Already

Hast thou been round the world to find thy father,  
 Hast found him, and art speeding home again.  
 How could I know, my son! that news would come  
 That he had pierced thy liver with his sword?  
 He had no pity for that face of thine,  
 Thy stature, mien, and arms, he pitied not  
 Thy girdlestead but clave it with his blade.  
 I used to nurse the body of my boy  
 Through days of brightness and through weary nights,  
 And now 'tis drowned in blood! A winding-sheet  
 Is all the cover of his stainless form.  
 Whom shall I clasp upon my bosom now?  
 Who is there that will rid me of my grief?  
 Whom shall I call upon to take thy place?  
 To whom impart my pain and misery?  
 Woe for his soul and body, eye and lustre,  
 That dwell in dust instead of hall and garden!  
 O warrior, shelter of the host! thou soughtest  
 Thy sire and in his place hast found thy grave.  
 Hope turned in thee to dolorous despair,  
 And now thou sleepest scorned and miserable  
 Amid the dust. Before he drew his dagger  
 And gashed thy silvern side why didst not thou  
 Show him the token that thy mother gave thee?  
 Why didst thou not declare thyself to him?  
 Thy mother told thee how to know thy sire:  
 How was it that thou didst not trust her words?  
 Without thee she is as the captives are—  
 All travail, anguish, misery, and sighing.  
 Why went I not with thee that wast to be  
 The warriors' cynosure? He would have known me  
 Though far away and welcomed both of us,  
 Cast down his sword and never pierced thy side."

This said she tore herself, plucked out her hair,  
 And smote her lovely visage with her palms.  
 She filled the eyes of all the folk with hail,

So grievous were her moans and lamentations.  
 At length while all hearts ached she fell a-swoon,  
 V. 519 Fell as one falleth dead upon the ground,  
 And thou hadst said: "Her blood is turned to ice."  
 She roused, thought of her son, and wailed afresh,  
 Her very heart's blood crimsoning her tears.  
 She fetched his crown, wept o'er it and his throne,  
 Exclaiming in her grief: "O royal Tree!"  
 She brought his wind-foot charger forth, that charger  
 Which he had prized so in his happy days,  
 And clasped and kissed its head, to folk's amazement,  
 And nuzzled on its hoofs, while her blood fell  
 And reddened all the ground. She took his robe  
 And clasped it to her body like her son,  
 She fetched his jerkin, coat of mail, and bow,  
 His spear, his falchion, and his massive mace.  
 She fetched his saddle with the reins and buckler,  
 And dashed her head thereon. She fetched his lasso,  
 And flung its eighty cubits out before her.  
 She fetched his helm and breastplate, and exclaimed:—  
 "O warrior-lion!" drew his sword and docked  
 His charger's mane and tail. She gave the poor  
 His goods—the silver, gold, and harnessed steeds.  
 V. 520 She locked the palace, rooted up the throne,  
 Then brought it down and dashed it to the ground.  
 She blacked the chambers' doors, sent up the dust  
 From porch and palace, gave to desolation  
 The banquet-hall that he had left for battle,  
 Assumed the weeds of woe all stained with blood,  
 By day and night lamented him with tears,  
 Died broken-hearted in a year, and joined  
 Her warrior-son.

Said eloquent Bahrám:—

"Dote not upon the dead; thy proper care  
 Is for thine own departure to prepare,  
 Since here thou canst not stay. So dally not.