

To God for my pure soul and help me thus,  
 For prayer is all in all. Behold and see  
 If there be any in earth's round whose soul  
 Is stricken not at death."

He sealed and closed  
 The letter, and bade men on speedy steeds  
 Convey these tidings from Bábil to Rúm :—  
 "The Grace of king of kingship is bedimmed !"

Now when the army was aware thereof  
 The world was darkened to the chiefs, who set  
 Their faces toward the throne of majesty,  
 And all the world was full of hue and cry.

## § 37

*How Sikandar's Life ended and how they carried  
 his Coffin to Iskandariya*

On hearing how the army was bestead,  
 And knowing that his time was near, Sikandar  
 Bade carry from the palace to the field  
 His throne. The troops bewailed his malady  
 When they beheld the Sháh's pale face. The plain  
 Was one great cry ; they seethed as on quick fire.  
 All said : "What misadventure for the Rúmans  
 To lose their king ! Ill fortune is upon us,  
 And field and fell henceforth are desolate ;  
 Our foes have won their wish and gained their goal ;  
 The world becometh bitter to us now ;  
 In public and in private we shall wail !"

With failing voice said Cæsar : "Be devout,  
 Wise, modest, and heed all my last requests,  
 If ye would prosper both in soul and body.  
 When I have gone the work is left for you,  
 And fortune is not dealing ill with me."

C. 1358

He spake, his life departed, and that Sháh

So famous, that host-shatterer, passed away.  
 A cry went up from all the host and split  
 The ears of heaven. The soldiers all strewed dust  
 Upon their heads and strained their hearts' blood  
 through

The lashes of their eyes. They fired his palace,  
 And docked a thousand steeds, reversing all  
 Their saddles. Thou hadst said: "The earth lamenteth!"  
 They bore the golden bier out to the plain,  
 And wailing pierced the sky. A prelate laved  
 The corpse with clear rose-water, and besprinkled  
 Thereon pure camphor. Of gold-woven brocade  
 They made his winding-sheet, while all bewailed him,  
 And, having shrouded thus that noble form  
 Beneath brocade of Chín, they covered it  
 With honey to the feet and then sealed down  
 The lid of that strait coffin: passed away  
 That Tree so fruitful and so shadowing!  
 Thou bidest not within this Hostel. Why  
 Toy then with crown or cling to treasury?

Now when they raised the coffin from the plain,  
 And passed it on from hand to hand, two voices—  
 A Rúman and a Persian—rose, and all  
 The talk was of the coffin. All the Persians  
 Said thus: "He should be buried in Írán  
 Where are the ashes of the kings of kings:  
 Why should ye speed the coffin round the world?"

One of the Rúman counsellors replied:—  
 "It is not fitting here to bury him.  
 If ye will hear my rede aright Sikandar  
 Should pass back to the soil wherefrom he sprang."

A Persian said withal: "Howe'er ye talk  
 This will reach no fair ending. I will show you  
 A field commemorating Sháhs of old.  
 Wise ancients call it Khurm. It hath a lake  
 And forest, and in answer to thy questions