

Fled pierced with arrows and his soul all gloom,
 While Sháh Ardshír was instant in pursuit,
 With blaring trumpets and with arrow-rain,
 Until they reached the city of Istakhr,
 Seat of the fame and glory of Bahman.

The Sháh's fame filled the world, and countless troops
 Flocked to him. He was shown the many hoards
 Of treasure that Pápak had toiled to gather.
 Ardshír gave them in largess. When at length
 He marched from Párs it was with growing strength.

§ 9

*How Ardawán led forth his Host for Battle with Ardshír
 and was slain.*

When news reached Ardawán fear filled his heart,
 And gloom his mind. He said : " A lord of counsel
 Told me this secret of the lofty sky,¹
 But can one 'scape by pains unthought of ills ?
 I did not fancy that Ardshír would prove
 To be ambitious and a lion-taker."

He oped his treasury, gave rations out,
 Bound on the baggage, and led forth the host ;
 Contingents came from Gíl and from Dílám :
 The army's dust rose moon-ward while the Sháh²
 Led forth a host that barred the wind. Two bow-shots
 Divided power from power ; snakes found no rest,
 Such was the din of drum and clarion,
 The clangour of the gongs and Indian bells.
 The armies shouted and the banners waved,
 While blue steel falchions scattered heads around.

The battle lasted thus for forty days,
 The world was straitened to the common folk,

¹ See p. 219.

² *I.e.* Ardshír.

C. 1378 The plain grew mountain-like with all the slain,
 The wounded were aweary of their life.
 At last there rose a mighty, sable cloud,
 And men could strive no more. A frightful storm
 Succeeded, and the warriors lost all heart.
 The mountains echoed and the plain was rent
 While air reverberated. Then the troops
 Of Ardawán were frayed and all exclaimed
 With one consent: "This storm hath come from God
 On Ardawán; this host will need our tears."

So all the wise one day, when fight was fiercest,
 Asked quarter, and Ardshír charged from the centre;
 Arose a clashing while the arrows showered.
 Amidmost of the mellay Ardawán
 Was ta'en, and for his crown gave up sweet life.
 The hand of one Kharrád seized on his bridle,
 And bare him captive to the atheling.
 Ardshír saw him from far. King Ardawán
 Lit from his steed, his body arrow-pierced,
 His soul all gloom, and Sháh Ardshír commanded
 The deathsman: "Go, seize on the great king's foe,
 Cleave him asunder with thy sword, and make
 Our evil-wishers quail."

So did the deathsman:
 That famous monarch vanished from the world.
 Such is the usage of the ancient sky:
 The lot of Ardawán Ardshír too found;
 Him whom it raiseth to the stars on high
 It giveth likewise to the sorry ground!
 Two sons of him by whom Árash's seed
 Thus had been brought to shame were taken too.
 The noble Sháh Ardshír imprisoned them
 With fetters on their feet. Two elder sons
 Succeeded in escaping from the fight,
 And were not taken in the net of bale.
 They went in tears to Hindústán, and thou