

The elephants? The fight extendeth miles.  
 Draw from the centre and the towers, spread wide  
 To right and left."

He ordered Jahn, no novice,  
 To quit his post with mighty men and lead  
 Ten thousand cavaliers and veteran,  
 All lancers dight for combat, toward the left,  
 And thither sped that lion-warrior.  
 When Kai Khusrau perceived that Turkman battle,  
 And how it hid the sun, he turned toward  
 His own chiefs—heroes of the fray—and bade them  
 Shine on the left like Sol in Aries.

They set off with ten thousand noble troops,  
 Mailed and with ox-head maces. Next he bade  
 Shammákh of Súr: "Among our men of name  
 Select ten thousand youthful combatants,  
 Unsheathe your swords between the embattled lines,  
 And stoop your heads upon your saddle-bows."

The hosts so grappled that thou wouldst have said:—  
 "They are one mass!" From both sides rose a crash,  
 Blood ran down from the fight in streams; they led  
 The elephants with towers aside; the world  
 Became like Nile. When both to right and left  
 Dust rose, that refuge of the host—the worldlord—  
 Called for his armour and advanced with Rustam  
 With shouts and fury from the centre. Trump  
 And tymbal sounded. On one hand was Tús,  
 The chief, with Káwa's flag. The paladins,  
 That wore the golden boots, all left their stations  
 With smarting hearts and formed the Sháh's left wing,  
 While battle-loving Rustam and Zawára,  
 His brother, set their faces toward the right.  
 The veteran Gúdarz, son of Kishwád,  
 With many noble chiefs, supported Rustam,  
 As did Zarasp and prudent Manúshán.  
 The din of war rose from the scene of strife.

None will behold a fight like that. The sand  
 Was strewn with killed and wounded—those whose day  
 Was done. Men saw not how to cross the field  
 For slain. The waste was as Jíhún with blood,  
 One man lay headless and another headlong.  
 The cries of horse and rider rose above  
 The tymbals' din. "The mountains' hearts are split,"  
 Thou wouldst have said, "and earth is fledged with  
 horsemen."

Here heads lay trunkless, there were headless trunks,  
 While massive maces clashed. The sun was fain  
 To flee before the flash of trenchant swords  
 And falchions. Thou hadst said: "A murky cloud  
 Hath risen raining blood upon the field."

Fartús was slain upon the Turkman left  
 By Faríburz, the son of Sháh Káuś,  
 While on the right Kuhflá, who himself  
 Was equal to a hundred elephants,  
 Fell by the hand of Minúchihr. With noon  
 Came storm and cloud. The world-illuming sun  
 Was veiled, earth darkened and the eyes of men  
 Were troubled. As the sun began to sink  
 The Turkman monarch's heart was moved by terror  
 As cavaliers from every kingdom, march,  
 Domain, and principality, pressed on,  
 While with the various mail and diverse flags  
 The world was yellow, red, and violet.

When Garsíwaz behind the king saw this  
 He brought his troops up; to the right he sent  
 A noble band—men one in soul and body—  
 Another to the left, and spread his chiefs  
 On all sides—forty thousand cavaliers,  
 And chosen mighty men, that drew the sword.  
 He hastened to Afrásiyáb who, seeing  
 His brother's face, took courage and advanced.  
 Rose war-din, air was veiled with feathered shafts.