

“ O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
 Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd !
 Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men 640
 Have told thee false ;—thou art not Rustum's son.

For Rustum had no son : one child he had—
 But one—a girl : who with her mother now
 Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
 Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.” 645

But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath ; for now
 The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
 And he desired to draw forth the steel,
 And let the blood flow free, and so to die ;
 But first he would convince his stubborn foe— 650
 And, rising sternly on one arm, he said :—

*[Sohrab discloses the mark by which he was to be known. “ O boy—
 thy father !”]*

“ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ?
 Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
 And Falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
 I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear 655
 That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
 That she might prick it on the babe she bore.”

He spoke : and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks ;
 And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand,
 Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand, 660
 That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud :
 And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
 And in a hollow voice he spake, and said :—

“ Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
 If thou shew this, then art thou Rustum's son.” 665

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd
 His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm,
 And shew'd a sign in faint vermilion points