

“For I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven’s unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke, too—
I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father’s spear.”

Also, in referring to his death, the same thought appears:

“For like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden and swift and like a passing wind;
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.”

Rustum at the last lamented the fact that he had spent all his life in staying his bitterest foes. He wished that he might have rest, with the ocean waves flowing over him. Sohrab uttered words, with the prophetic instinct of the dying, to the effect that he would have peace on the day when returning home over the salt blue sea. Notice the characteristic reply:

“Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure.”

In regard to the poetic diction, to the manner and style, faults are here and there detected. One writer has said that the style should involve and display the subject-matter as the drapery in a consummate statue folds over and around the figure. In this poem there is not perfect fidelity to the thought in its fullness and importance. In the first place, long-drawn similes are found at the most critical moments. These, being ambiguous, distract the attention from the main thought and become tedious. For illustration:

“As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off; anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that he checks
His pinion, and with short, uneasy sweeps,
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying with the arrow in her side,