

But, if this one desire indeed rules all,  
 75 To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight!  
 Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,  
 O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!  
 But far hence seek him, for he is not here.  
 For now it is not as when I was young,  
 80 When Rustum was in front of every fray;  
 But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
 In Seistan,<sup>1</sup> with Zal,<sup>2</sup> his father old.  
 Whether that<sup>3</sup> his own mighty strength at last  
 Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,  
 85 Or in<sup>4</sup> some quarrel with the Persian King.<sup>5</sup>  
 There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forbodes  
 Danger or death awaits thee on this field.  
 Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
 To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
 90 To seek thy father, not seek single fights  
 In vain; — but who can keep the lion's cub  
 From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?  
 Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."  
 So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left  
 95 His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;

<sup>1</sup> *Seistan* (Sä-ēs-tän'). A region partly in modern eastern Persia and partly in south-western Afghanistan. It was so divided by British arbitration in 1872. The territory was held by Rustum's family, feudatory to the Persian kings.

<sup>2</sup> *Zal* (Zäl). According to the *Sháh Náme*, Zal was born with snow-white hair. This so displeased his father, Säm, that the child was exposed to death on the Elburz Mountains. He was miraculously preserved by a griffin, and was afterwards reclaimed by his repentant father. He later married the Princess Rudä'-beh of Seistan, and became the father of Rustum.

<sup>3</sup> *Whether that*. Either because.

<sup>4</sup> *Or in*. Or on account of.

<sup>5</sup> *Persian King*. For his name see line 223.