

But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
And full of blood and battles is my age ;  
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied :—

"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man !  
But thou shalt yet have peace ; only not now ;  
Not yet : but thou shalt have it on that day,<sup>46</sup>  
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,  
Thou and the other peers of Kai-Khosroo,<sup>47</sup>  
Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

825

830

[*Rustum is left by the body of his son. The river Oxus flows on under the starlight into the Sea of Aral.*]

And Rustum gaz'd on Sohrab's face, and said :—  
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !  
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke ; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took  
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd  
His wound's imperious<sup>48</sup> anguish : but the blood  
Came welling from the open gash, and life  
Flow'd with the stream : all down his cold white side  
The crimson torrent pour'd, dim now, and soil'd,  
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets  
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,  
By romping children, whom their nurses call  
From the hot fields at noon : his head droop'd low,  
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay—  
White, with eyes clos'd ; only when heavy gasps,  
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,

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845

<sup>46</sup> This prophecy was not fulfilled. Rustum, according to the legend, met his death by treachery at the hand of his half-brother Shaghad.

<sup>47</sup> Kai Khosroo. The King of Persia, see line 220.

<sup>48</sup> imperious. demanding relief.