

they met, the last being fatal to Sohrab, who, when dying, warned his conqueror to dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son. The father was wild with grief when shown the proof of this fact: the seal which Sohrab's mother had placed on her son's arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. Sohrab died. Rustum, heart-broken, burned his tents and goods and fulfilled his dying son's requests.

There are two facts which reconcile us to the improbability of this tale: (1) Rustum had no idea that his son existed, because the mother of Sohrab had written to him that the child was a daughter. (2) Rustum fought under a feigned name which was not an uncommon usage in the chivalrous combat of those days.

In consideration of this, Matthew Arnold has shown poetic power by building on an unsteady foundation a towering structure. There is a lack of truth and seriousness in the supposed facts regarding Sohrab and Rustum, but yet there is much truth and seriousness in the portrayal of the characters of these two heroic chieftains. How often was Rustum on the verge of discovering the truth, yet how adroitly was its revelation evaded! Thus the story, by the very reason of its improbability, has gained an interest, stimulated poetic conception and attained completion.

The poem "Sohrab and Rustum" possesses that something which ennobles life, and fills time with serious thoughts of the purpose of life. It has a soul of beauty and power which makes it live. It has an intense human element which reaches to the very depths of our sympathies for the unfortunate. The recognition of their failings and virtues is the more possible to us because the author has made them so like ourselves. When Sohrab's heart throbbed with joy on finding his long-sought parent, do not ours, also, beat faster in time with his? Can we realize the satisfaction which filled his brave young heart so completely as when writhing in the pangs of death he said:

"I find

My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*