

Prick'd : as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase, 670
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands :—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd⁴¹
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal. 675
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,⁴²
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd and lov'd—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign. 680
And Sohrab bar'd that figure on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said :—
“How say'st thou ? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's ?” 685
He spoke : but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood
Speechless ; and then he utter'd one sharp cry—
O boy—thy father !—and his voice chok'd there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sunk down to earth. 690
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life : and life
Came back to Rustum, and he op'd his eyes, 695
And they stood wide with horror ; and he seiz'd

⁴¹ According to the original legend, Rustum left an amulet, or charm, with the mother of Sohrab. Arnold has altered this detail of the story, and substituted a seal for the amulet.

⁴² *griffin*. A mythical creature, half-lion, half-eagle, which was supposed to keep guard over hidden treasure. Just as in Roman mythology, Romulus and Remus were reared by a she-wolf, so in Persian mythology, Zal was reared by a griffin.