

In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
 A heap of fluttering feathers—never more  
 Shall the lake glass her, flying over it ;  
 Never the black and dripping precipices  
 Echo her stormy screams as she sails by—  
 As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,  
 So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood  
 Over his dying son, and knew him not.”

It was quite considerate in the poet by his repetition of the first of the simile, after the lengthy description of the eagle, to relieve the reader from the necessity of going back to search for the end of the broken thread. Together with the above-mentioned defect, there is a lack of taste in the comparison of Sohrab, as he walked to meet Rustum, first, “to a poor drudge with numb, blackened fingers;” then, “to some young cypress, tall, dark and straight.” The latter would not be so conspicuous if allowed to stand alone in its strength and simplicity ; but, alas! the information is furnished of that same young cypress throwing

“Its slight, dark shadow on the moonlit turf,  
 By midnight, to a bubbling fountain’s sound—”

Certainly this is a beautiful scene of quiet and rest, excellent in itself, but one which is in no way suggested by that of hot, burning sand and “black tents clustering like bee-hives.”

The poetic diction is marred by the wrong accentuation of many words ; the ever-recurring use of the insignificant word “and” ; also, by the occurrence of commonplace expressions. How clearly shown is the contrast between a poetical and a prosaical expression, particularly when one directly follows the other :

“The frost flowers the whitened window panes,”

while the rich woman looks upon the drudge, and

“Wonders how she lives and what the thoughts  
 Of that poor drudge may be.”

It may thus be justly concluded from portions of the poem that Matthew Arnold, although glowing, perhaps, with the beauty or importance of a truth, has failed to express it in fluent and natural, but has rather used stilted and commonplace, language ; and that, consequently, there is wanting smoothness and melody of expression.