

a period of thirty-six centuries. It is to Persian literature what the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are to the Greek, and the *Aeneid* to the Latin. It was gathered from the traditions of the country, and describes the most romantic and marvellous adventures with a vividness and a wealth of color peculiar to oriental writings. The chief hero of the *Sháh Náme*h is the strong and valorous Rustum; and the most dramatic of his adventures is the one recorded in Arnold's poem.

Rustum was the son of Zal, champion of Seistan, a district of Persia. While a mere child, he killed a raging elephant. After succeeding to the place of his father and choosing his famous steed Ruksh (or Raksh), he performed prodigious feats in defence of his kings and native country. He found a spring in a burning desert, slew a dragon eighty feet long, killed an enchantress, and achieved other similar triumphs. While hunting, on a certain occasion, in the hostile land of Turan, he lost his faithful steed, and during his search for it he was received with honor by the king of Samengán, a neighboring Turanian city. At the royal palace he met the beautiful princess Takmineh, and married her. Being summoned home before the birth of his son, Rustum left for him a bracelet by which he was to be able to recognize him. When Sohrab, the son, was born, his mother, fearing that the child might be taken away to Iran, pretended that it was a daughter. Sohrab grew up unknown to his father, and became a great warrior. On learning that his father was the renowned Rustum, he became ambitious to see him and to help make him King of Persia. He collected a large army and set out in search of him. His purpose was to fight his way against the Persians until Rustum should be sent against him, when he