

Upon that reed-bed, set themselves to slay
Hogs in such numbers as to block the way.

§ 26

*How Sikandar reached the Land of Habash, fought, and
was victorious*

Departing thence the sun-like Sháh in haste
Came to the country of Habash and saw
A land as 'twere a raven's plume with men
Black-faced with eyes like lamps. A lusty crowd
Of able-bodied folk, large-limbed and naked,
Raised, when they saw afar the army's dust,
Their war-cry to the clouds. A thousand thousand
Assembled. All turned black before the Sháh.
They came on him and slaughtered many troops,
Transfixing them with bones instead of spears.
He bade his soldiers arm. Those lion-men
Discomfited the blacks, who charged unclad,
And slew above a thousand while the rest
Turned from the fray. Earth's face seemed like the sea
Of Chín with bloodshed. When the dales and deserts
Were smirched with gore, and slain piled everywhere,
The soldiers scattered fuel on the heaps,
And then Sikandar bade to kindle them.
When it was dark the wolves began to howl:
Sikandar donned his helmet and cuirass.
A pack approached, all big as buffaloes.
Their leader, larger than an elephant,
Had on its head a dusky horn. It slew
Full many a chief and, oft attacked, ne'er showed
Its back. With arrows they made shift to kill
At last that elephant-taking iron Hill.

C. 1332