

§ 16

How Rustam divided the Spoil

"Disarm," said Rustam to the Íránians.
 "Before the All-conquering we need not mace,
 Or belt or treasure. Stoop ye all your heads
 To darksome dust, then crown them, for the chiefs
 Are minished not by one for whom our hearts
 Would now be mourning. When the tidings reached
 The world's king he repeated them to me
 Forthwith : 'The chieftain Tús hath gained the moun-
 tains,
 Defeated by Pírán and by Húmán !'
 The Sháh's words robbed me of my wits, my brain
 Seethed for the fray, while for Gúdarz, Bahráin,
 And for Rívníz my heart turned ebon-black.
 I sped forth from Írán without delay
 Intent upon the fight, but when I saw
 The Khán, the men of name and warriors,
 Especially Kámús, his Grace and stature,
 Such shoulders and such limbs, such hands and mace,
 Why then methought : 'My time is o'er !' For since
 I girt me as a man I have not looked
 In my long life on better men or arms
 Assembled anywhere. I have invaded
 Mázandarán, a land of dívs, where nights
 Are dark and maces massive, yet my heart
 Forwent its courage never and I said :—
 'I tender neither heart nor life.' Howbeit
 In this campaign my days were plunged in gloom,
 My heart—the lustre of the world—was darkened !
 If now we fall in sorrow in the dust
 Before all-holy God it will be well,
 For He hath given strength, success, and aid
 From Saturn and the sun. Long be it so.

God grant that fear may never fall on us!
 Let men too bear the Sháh the news forthwith,
 Let him adorn his throne, set on his head
 The royal cap, give great gifts to the poor,
 And may their blessings be upon his soul.
 Now put we off our mail and rest in peace.
 No doubt both grief and longing pass away,
 And fate is counting up our every breath,
 But still 'tis good to add up cups of wine,
 And not to stare at yon unloving sky:
 Quaff we till midnight then, and let our talk
 Be of the mighty men, with thanks to God,
 The Conqueror, from whom are manhood, fortune,
 And prowess; we should not possess our hearts
 Too much in sorrow and laboriousness
 In this our Wayside Inn."

The nobles blessed him,
 And said: "May crown and signet lack thee never!
 All honour to the stock, the native worth,
 And mother that brought forth a son like thee.
 A man of elephantine Rustam's strain
 Is more exalted than the turning sky.
 Thou knowest what thou hast achieved through love
 For us. Let heaven rejoice because thou livest.
 We were as good as slain, our days were done,
 But now we live and light the world through thee."

Then having bade to fetch the elephants,
 Crown, ivory throne, and golden torques, he brought
 Forth royal wine and goblets, and first gave:—
 "The monarch of the world," and when he grew
 Blythe in his cups they parted glad and gay.

When Luna rent the robe of night and set
 Its turquoise throne in heaven the scouts dispersed
 About the plains and hills, and when the rust
 Of night's rest passed, when day's bright Falchion
 showed,