

Against Ardshír the feathers would have pierced him.
 No monarch, such as he is, in our days
 Can overthrow the Worm."

Then to the archmages
 The Sháh read out the script on that sharp arrow.
 The hold was two leagues off! The nobles' hearts
 Were straitened, but they all evoked upon
 The Glory of earth's king God's benison.

§ 15

*How Ardshír heard about the Worm and made
 Shift to slay it*

The Sháh mused much that night about the Worm
 And, when the sun displaced the moon, set forth
 With all his army from the sea and hurried
 Toward Párs. The foe pursued him, seized the roads,
 And slaughtered all the chieftains, but the Sháh
 Escaped with his own meiny while behind him
 The foe cried: "May the Worm's luck light its throne."

All said; "A marvel—one for all to ponder!" C. 1387
 Now as he fled in fear o'er hill and plain
 He saw a spacious city, and they urged
 Like wolves their steeds. As he approached he saw
 A house and at the door two stranger youths.
 There halted he and his. The honest pair
 Asked him: "Whence come ye so unseasonably,
 So dusty from the road, and travel-worn?"

He said: "Ardshír hath come this way, and we
 Lagged on the route. He fleeth from the Worm,
 Haftwád, and that base man's ignoble crew."

The youths had ruth upon him; they grew sad
 And dark of soul, made him dismount and greeted
 His nobles well, prepared him pleasant quarters,
 And furnished food that was acceptable.