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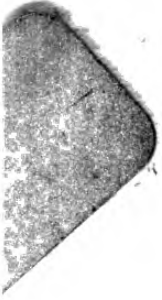
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THE HELICON SERIES. IV.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN  
AND  
THE SCHOLAR GIPSY









**“SAND-STREWN CAVERNS, COOL AND DEE  
WHERE THE WINDS ARE ALL ASLEEP**

**THE FORSAKEN MERMAN**

**AND**

**THE SCHOLAR GIPSY**

**BY MATTHEW ARNOLD**

**WITH WOODCUTS BY**

**ANNABEL KIDSTON**



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# THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

B



## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away ;  
Down and away below.  
Now my brothers call from the bay ;  
Now the great winds shorewards blow ;  
Now the salt tides seawards flow ;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.  
Children dear, let us away.  
This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.  
Call once yet.  
In a voice that she will know :  
“ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”



T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

Children's voices should be dear  
(Call once more) to a mother's ear :  
Children's voices, wild with pain  
Surely she will come again.  
Call her once and come away.

This way, this way.  
"Mother dear, we cannot stay."  
The wild white horses foam and fret.  
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away  
down.  
Call no more.  
One last look at the white-wall'd town,

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

And the little grey church on the windy  
shore,  
Then come down.  
She will not come though you call all  
day.  
Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday  
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?  
In the caverns where we lay,  
Through the surf and through the  
swell,  
The far-off sound of a silver bell ?  
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,  
Where the winds are all asleep ;

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

Where the spent lights quiver and gleam;  
Where the salt weed sways in the stream;  
Where the sea-beasts ranged all round



Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;  
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,  
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;  
Where great whales come sailing by,  
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

Round the world for ever and aye ?  
When did music come this way ?  
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday  
(Call yet once) that she went  
away ?  
Once she sate with you and me,  
On a red gold throne in the heart  
of the sea,  
And the youngest sate on her knee.  
She comb'd its bright hair, and she  
tended it well,  
When down swung the sound of the  
far-off bell.

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

She sigh'd, she look'd up through the  
clear green sea.

She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk  
pray

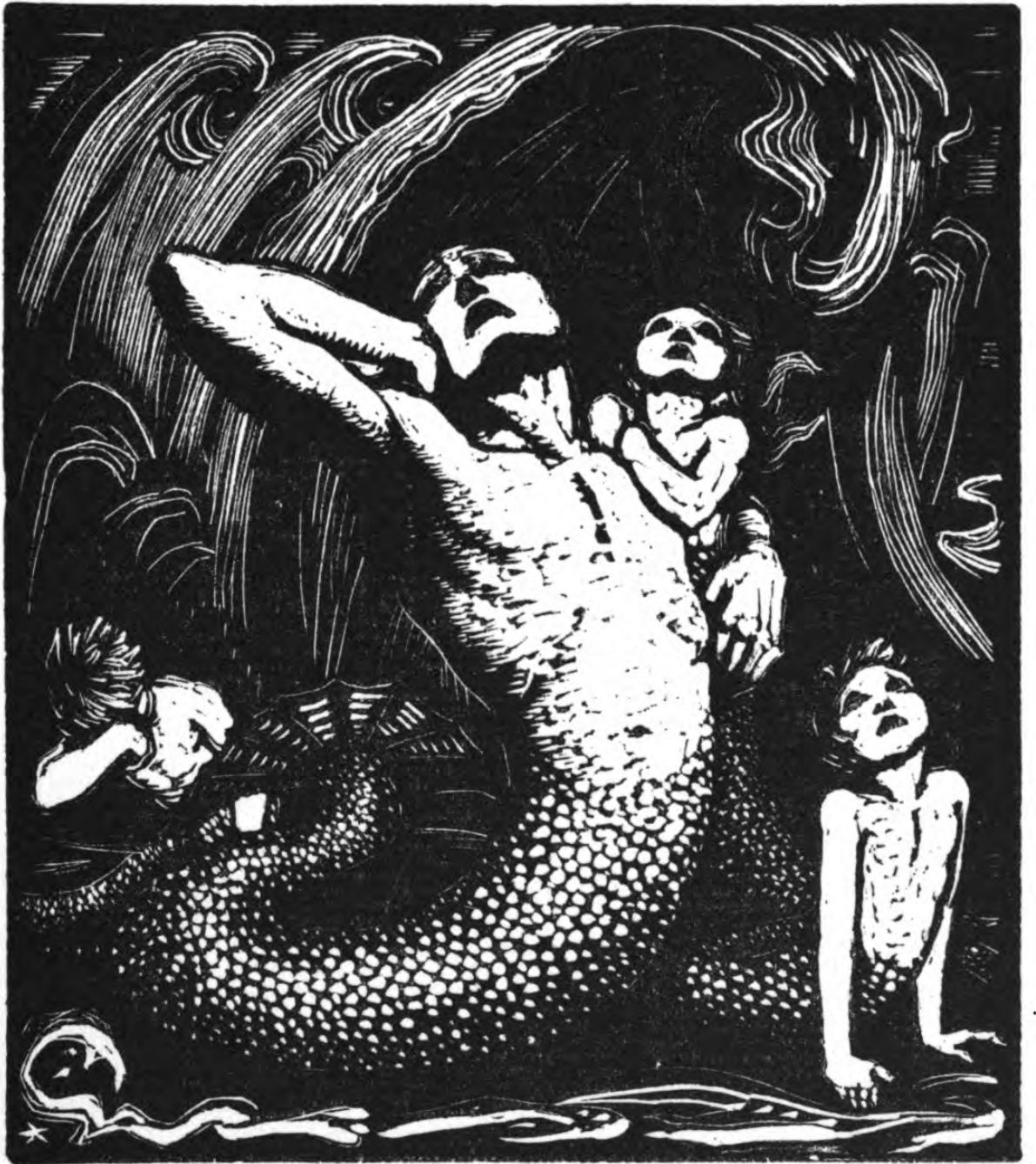
In the little grey church on the shore  
to-day.

'Twill be Easter-time in the world—  
ah me !

And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here  
with thee."

I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the  
waves.

Say thy prayer, and come back to the  
kind sea-caves."



**“THE SEA GROWS STORMY, THE LITTLE ONES MOAN.”**



T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

She smiled, she went up through the  
surf in the bay.  
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?  
“ The sea grows stormy, the little ones  
moan.  
Long prayers ”, I said, “ in the world  
they say.  
Come ”, I said, and we rose through the  
surf in the bay.  
We went up the beach, by the sandy  
down  
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the  
white-wall'd town.



T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

Through the narrow paved streets, where  
all was still,



To the little grey church on the windy  
hill.  
From the church came a murmur of folk  
at their prayers,

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

But we stood without in the cold blowing  
airs.

We climb'd on the graves, on the stones,  
worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the  
small leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar ; we saw her  
clear :

“ Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are  
here.

Dear heart,” I said, “ we are long  
alone.

The sea grows stormy, the little ones  
moan.”

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

But, ah, she gave me never a look,  
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book.

Loud prays the priest ; shut stands  
the door.

Come away, children, call no more.

Come away, come down, call no more.

Down, down, down.

Down to the depths of the sea.

She sits at her wheel in the humming  
town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings : “ O joy, O joy,  
For the humming street, and the child  
with its toy.

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

For the priest, and the bell, and the holy  
well.

For the wheel where I spun,  
And the blessed light of the sun.”  
And so she sings her fill,  
Singing most joyfully,  
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,  
And the whizzing wheel stands still.  
She steals to the window, and looks at  
the sand ;  
And over the sand at the sea ;  
And her eyes are set in a stare ;  
And anon there breaks a sigh,  
And anon there drops a tear

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

From a sorrow-clouded eye,  
And a heart sorrow-laden,  
A long, long sigh.  
For the cold strange eyes of a little  
Mermaid, .  
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;  
Come, children, come down.  
The salt tide rolls seaward.  
Lights shine in the town.  
She will start from her slumber  
When gusts shake the door ;  
She will hear the winds howling,  
Will hear the waves roar.

T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

We shall see, while above us  
The waves roar and whirl,  
A ceiling of amber,  
A pavement of pearl.  
Singing, " Here came a mortal,  
But faithless was she.  
And alone dwell for ever  
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,  
When soft the winds blow ;  
When clear falls the moonlight ;  
When spring-tides are low :  
When sweet airs come seaward

## T H E F O R S A K E N M E R M A N

From heaths starr'd with broom ;  
And high rocks throw mildly  
On the blanch'd sands a gloom :  
Up the still, glistening beaches,  
Up the creeks we will hie ;  
Over banks of bright seaweed  
The ebb-tide leaves dry.  
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,  
At the white, sleeping town ;  
At the church on the hill-side—  
And then come back down.  
Singing, " There dwells a loved one,  
But cruel is she.  
She left lonely for ever  
The kings of the sea."

**THE SCHOLAR GIPSY**





## THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from  
the hill ;  
Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled  
cotes :  
No longer leave thy wistful flock  
unfed,  
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their  
throats,  
Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot  
another head.  
But when the fields are still,  
And the tired men and dogs all gone  
to rest,  
And only the white sheep are  
sometimes seen

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Cross and recross the strips of moon-  
blanch'd green ;  
Come, Shepherd, and again  
renew the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of  
late,  
In this high field's dark corner, where  
he leaves  
His coat, his basket, and his earthen  
cruse,  
And in the sun all morning binds the  
sheaves,  
Then here, at noon, comes back his  
stores to use ;

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Here will I sit and wait,  
While to my ear from uplands far  
away  
The bleating of the folded flocks is  
borne ;  
With distant cries of reapers in the  
corn—  
All the live murmur of a summer's  
day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-  
reap'd field,  
And here till sun-down, Shepherd,  
will I be.

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Through the thick corn the scarlet  
poppies peep,  
And round green roots and yellowing  
stalks I see  
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils  
creep :  
And air-swept lindens yield  
Their scent, and rustle down their  
perfumed showers  
Of bloom on the bent grass where  
I am laid,  
And bower me from the August sun  
with shade ;  
And the eye travels down to  
Oxford's towers :

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's  
book—



Come, let me read the oft-read tale  
again,  
The story of that Oxford scholar  
poor

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Of pregnant parts and quick inventive  
brain,  
Who, tired of knocking at Prefer-  
ment's door,  
One summer morn forsook  
His friends, and went to learn the  
Gipsy lore,  
And roam'd the world with that  
wild brotherhood,  
And came, as most men deem'd, to  
little good,  
But came to Oxford and his  
friends no more.

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

But once, years after, in the country  
lanes,

Two scholars whom at college erst he  
knew

Met him, and of his way of life  
enquired.

Whereat he answer'd, that the Gipsy  
crew,

His mates, had arts to rule as they  
desired

The workings of men's brains ;  
And they can bind them to what  
thoughts they will :

“ And I ”, he said, “ the secret of  
their art,



T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

When fully learn'd, will to the world  
impart :  
But it needs happy moments for  
this skill ”.

This said, he left them, and return'd no  
more,  
But rumours hung about the country-  
side  
That the lost Scholar long was seen  
to stray,  
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and  
tongue-tied,  
In hat of antique shape, and cloak  
of grey,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

The same the Gipsies wore.  
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst  
in spring :  
At some lone alehouse in the Berk-  
shire moors,  
On the warm ingle bench, the  
smock-frock'd boors  
Had found him seated at their  
entering.

But, mid their drink and clatter, he  
would fly :  
And I myself seem half to know thy  
looks,

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

And put the shepherds, Wanderer,  
on thy trace ;  
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare  
the rooks  
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet  
place ;  
Or in my boat I lie  
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer  
heats,  
Mid wide grass meadows which the  
sunshine fills,  
And watch the warm green-muffled  
Cumner hills,  
And wonder if thou haunt'st their  
shy retreats.



**“TRAILING IN THE COOL STREAM THY FINGERS WET.”**



T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired  
ground.  
Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders  
blithe,  
Returning home on summer nights,  
have met  
Crossing the stripling Thames at  
Bab-lock-hithe,  
Trailing in the cool stream thy  
fingers wet,  
As the slow punt swings round :  
And leaning backwards in a pensive  
dream,  
And fostering in thy lap a heap of  
flowers

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Pluck'd in shy fields and distant  
woodland bowers,  
And thine eyes resting on the  
moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen  
no more.

Maidens who from the distant ham-  
lets come

To dance around the Fyfield elm  
in May,

Oft through the darkening fields have  
seen thee roam,

Or cross a stile into the public way.

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Oft thou hast given them store  
Of flowers — the frail - leaf'd, white  
anemone—

Dark bluebells drench'd with dews  
of summer eves—

And purple orchises with spotted  
leaves—

But none has words she can  
report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-  
time's here

In June, and many a scythe in sun-  
shine flames,



T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Men who through those wide fields  
of breezy grass  
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt  
the glittering Thames,  
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher  
pass,  
Have often pass'd thee near  
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown:  
Mark'd thy outlandish garb, thy  
figure spare,  
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft ab-  
stracted air ;  
But, when they came from bath-  
ing, thou wert gone.

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

At some lone homestead in the Cumner  
hills,  
Where at her open door the housewife  
darns,  
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on  
a gate  
To watch the threshers in the mossy  
barns.  
Children, who early range these  
slopes and late  
For cresses from the rills,  
Have known thee watching, all an  
April day,  
The springing pastures and the  
feeding kine ;

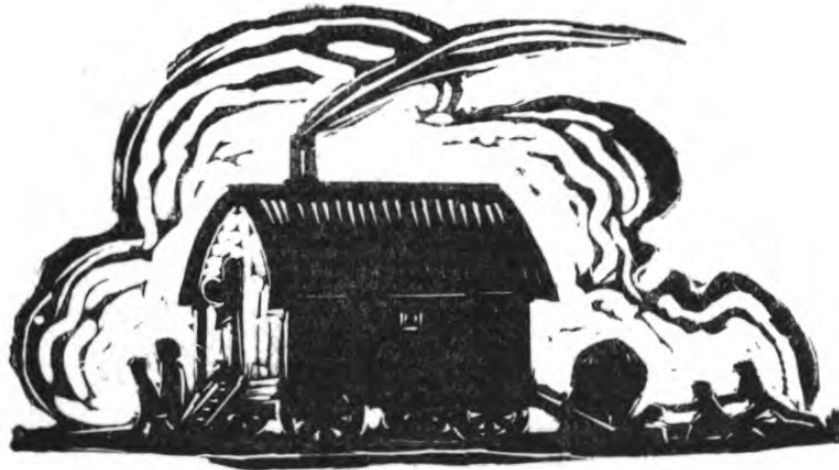
T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

And mark'd thee, when the stars  
come out and shine,  
Through the long dewy grass  
move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood,  
Where most the Gipsies by the turf-  
edged way  
Pitch their smoked tents, and every  
bush you see  
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds  
of grey,  
Above the forest ground call'd  
Thessaly—

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

The blackbird picking food  
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears  
at all ;



So often has he known thee past him  
stray

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Rapt, twirling in thy hand a  
wither'd spray,  
And waiting for the spark from  
Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway  
chill  
Where home through flooded fields  
foot-travellers go,  
Have I not pass'd thee on the  
wooden bridge  
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with  
the snow,  
Thy face towards Hinksey and its  
wintry ridge ?

T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

And thou hast climb'd the hill  
And gain'd the white brow of the  
Cumner range,



Turn'd once to watch, while thick  
the snowflakes fall,  
The line of festal light in Christ-  
Church hall—

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Then sought thy straw in some  
sequester'd grange.

But what—I dream ! Two hundred  
years are flown  
Since first thy story ran through  
Oxford halls,  
And the grave Glanvil did the tale  
inscribe  
That thou wert wander'd from the  
studious walls  
To learn strange arts, and join a  
Gipsy tribe :  
And thou from earth art gone

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Long since, and in some quiet church-  
yard laid ;  
Some country nook, where o'er thy  
unknown grave  
Tall grasses and white flowering  
nettles wave—  
Under a dark red-fruited yew-  
tree's shade.

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse  
of hours.  
For what wears out the life of mortal  
men ?  
'Tis that from change to change  
their being rolls :



T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
Exhaust the energy of strongest  
souls,  
And numb the elastic powers.  
Till having used our nerves with  
bliss and teen,  
And tired upon a thousand schemes  
our wit,  
To the just-pausing Genius we  
remit  
Our worn-out life, and are—what  
we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou  
perish, so ?

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one*  
desire :  
Else wert thou long since number'd  
with the dead—  
Else hadst thou spent, like other men,  
thy fire.  
The generations of thy peers are  
fled,  
And we ourselves shall go ;  
But thou possessest an immortal lot,  
And we imagine thee exempt from  
age  
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's  
page,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Because thou hadst—what we,  
alas, have not.

For early didst thou leave the world,  
with powers  
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,  
Firm to their mark, not spent on  
other things ;  
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid  
doubt,  
Which much to have tried, in much  
been baffled, brings.  
O Life unlike to ours !  
Who fluctuate idly without term or  
scope,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Of whom each strives, or knows  
for what he strives,  
And each half lives a hundred  
different lives ;  
Who wait like thee, but not, like  
thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven:  
and we,  
Light half-believers of our casual  
creeds,  
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly  
will'd,  
Whose insight never has borne fruit  
in deeds,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Whose vague resolves never have  
been fulfill'd ;  
For whom each year we see  
Breeds new beginnings, disappoint-  
ments new ;  
Who hesitate and falter life away,  
And lose to-morrow the ground won  
to-day—  
Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await  
it too ?

Yes, we await it, but it still delays,  
And then we suffer ; and amongst us  
One,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Who most has suffer'd, takes de-  
jectedly  
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;  
And all his store of sad experience  
he  
Lays bare of wretched days ;  
Tells us his misery's birth and growth  
and signs,  
And how the dying spark of hope  
was fed,  
And how the breast was sooth'd,  
and how the head,  
And all his hourly varied ano-  
dynes.

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

This for our wisest : and we others pine,  
And wish the long unhappy dream  
    would end,  
    And waive all claim to bliss, and  
    try to bear  
With close-lipp'd Patience for our only  
    friend,  
    Sad Patience, too near neighbour to  
    Despair :  
    But none has hope like thine.  
Thou through the fields and through  
    the woods dost stray,  
Roaming the country-side, a truant  
    boy,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Nursing thy project in unclouded  
joy,  
And every doubt long blown by  
time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and  
clear,  
And life ran gaily as the sparkling  
Thames ;  
Before this strange disease of modern  
life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts,  
was rife—



T H E S C H O L A R G I P S Y

Fly hence, our contact fear !  
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering  
wood !  
Averse, as Dido did with gesture  
stern  
From her false friend's approach in  
Hades turn,  
Wave us away, and keep thy  
solitude.

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
With a free onward impulse brush-  
ing through,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

By night, the silver'd branches of the  
glade—  
Far on the forest skirts, where none  
pursue,  
On some mild pastoral slope  
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit  
pales,  
Freshen thy flowers, as in former  
years,  
With dew, or listen with enchanted  
ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the  
nightingales.

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

But fly our paths, our feverish contact  
fly !

For strong the infection of our mental  
strife,

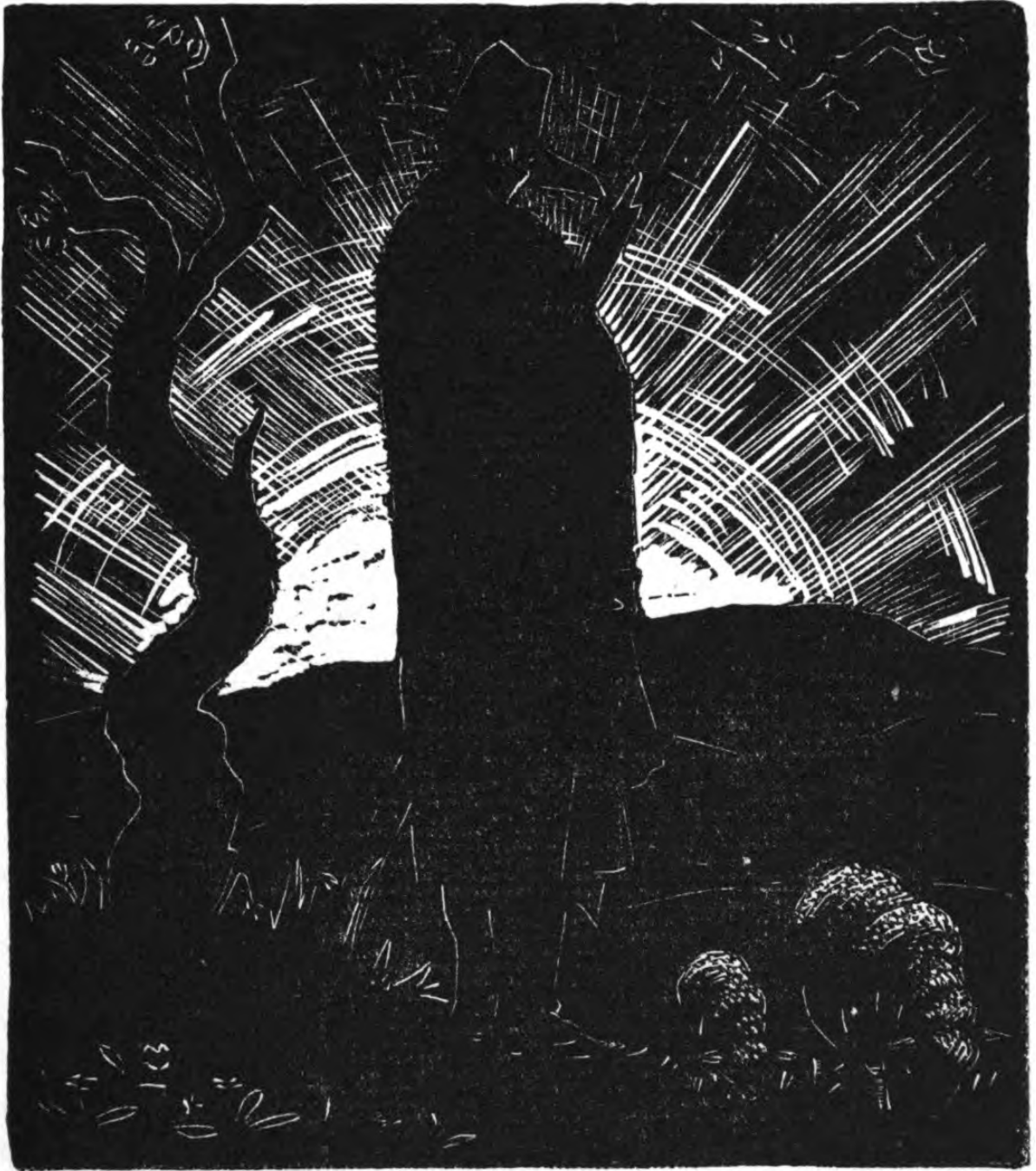
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet  
spoils for rest ;

And we should win thee from thy own  
fair life,

Like us distracted, and like us  
unblest.

Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd  
thy powers,

And thy clear aims be cross and  
shifting made :



**“ON SOME MILD PASTORAL SLOPE EMERGE.”**



T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

And then thy glad perennial youth  
would fade,  
Fade, and grow old at last and  
die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech  
and smiles !  
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from  
the sea,  
Descried at sunrise an emerging  
prow  
Lifting the cool - hair'd creepers  
stealthily,  
The fringes of a southward-facing  
brow

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

Among the Ægean isles :  
And saw the merry Grecian coaster  
    come,  
    Freighted with amber grapes, and  
    Chian wine,  
Green bursting figs, and tunnies  
    steep'd in brine ;  
And knew the intruders on his  
    ancient home,

The young light-hearted Masters of the  
    waves ;  
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook  
    out more sail,

T H E   S C H O L A R   G I P S Y

And day and night held on indig-  
nantly  
O'er the blue Midland waters with  
the gale,  
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,  
To where the Atlantic raves  
Outside the Western Straits, and un-  
bent sails  
There, where down cloudy cliffs,  
through sheets of foam,  
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians  
come ;  
And on the beach undid his  
corded bales.







