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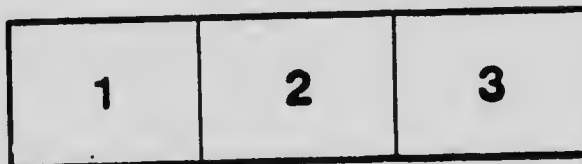
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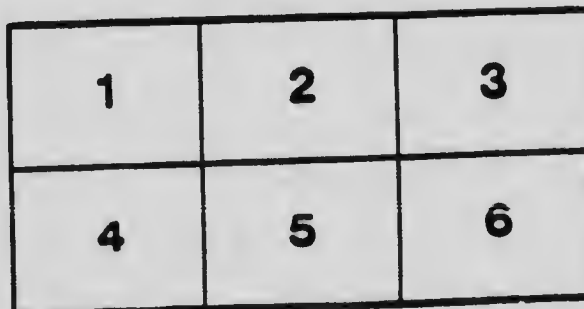
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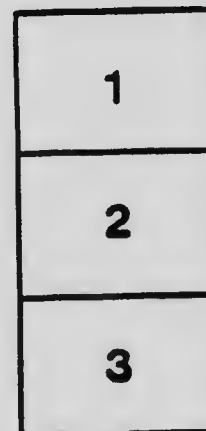
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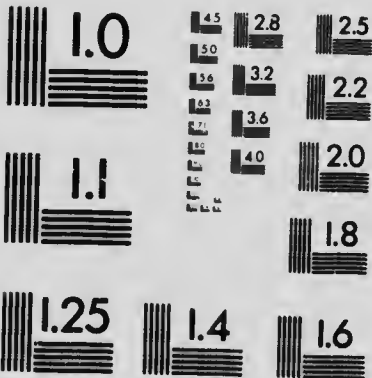
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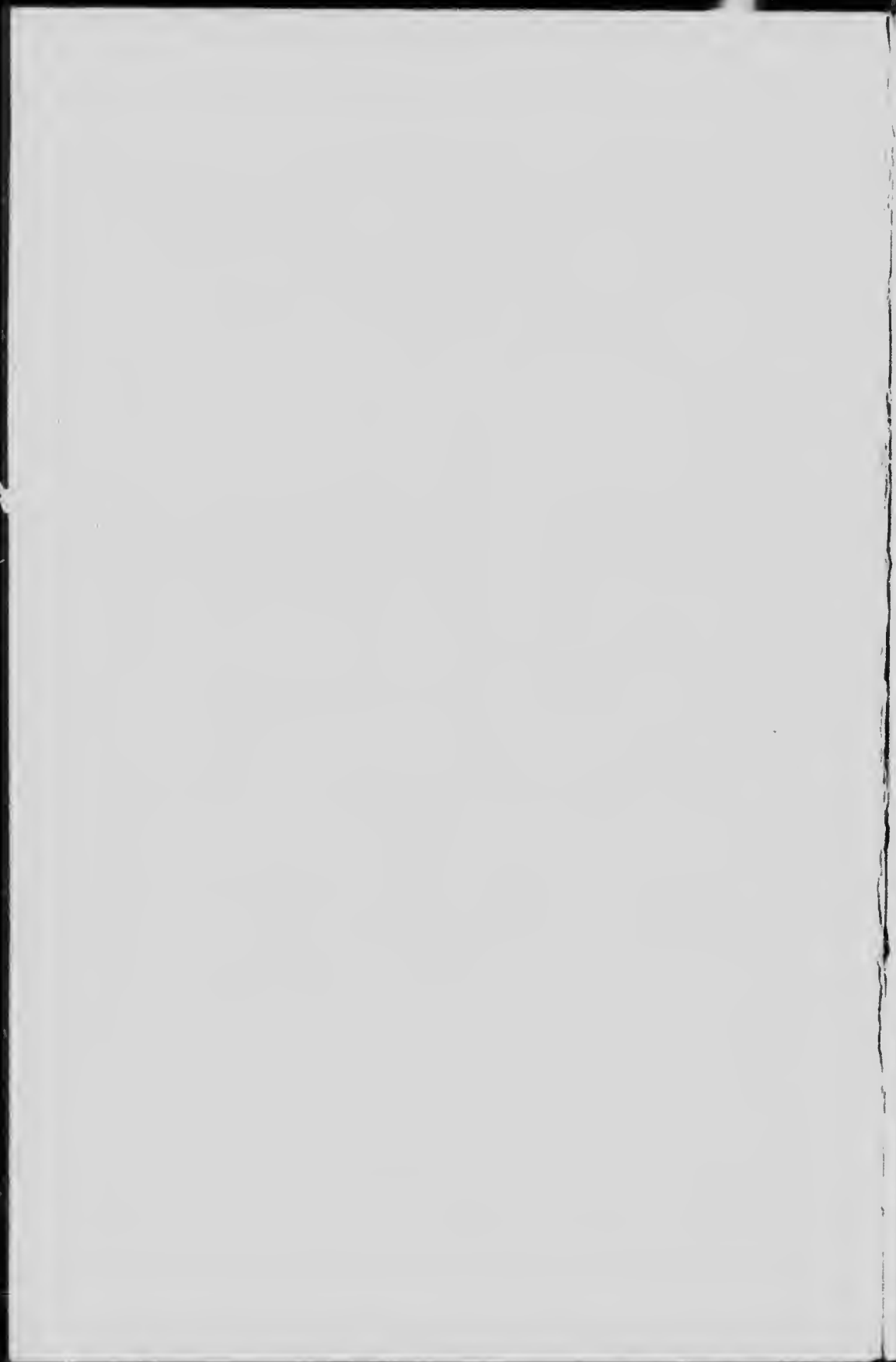
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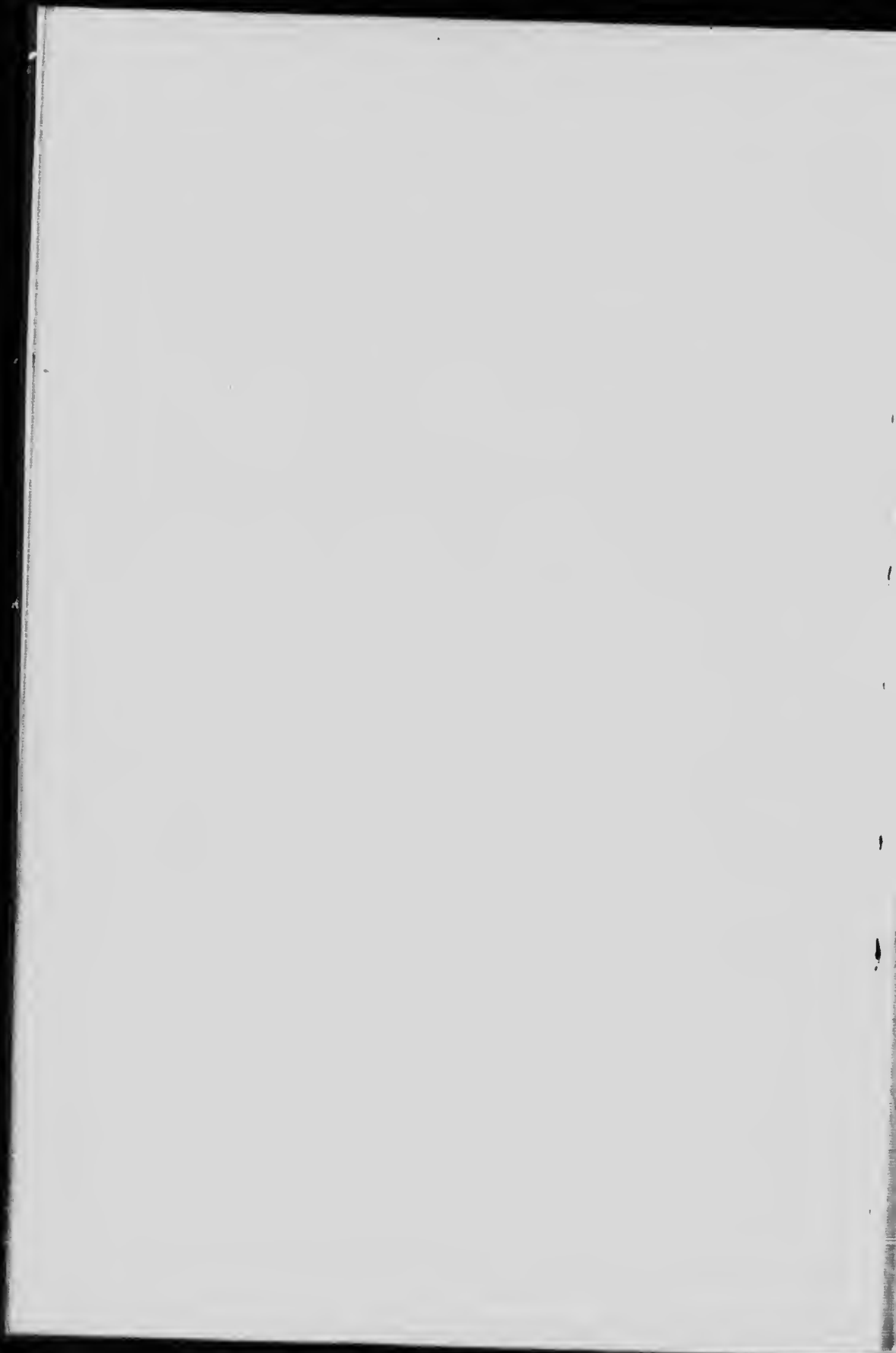
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THE TOILING  
OF FELIX





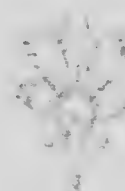




A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern surrounds the central text area.

# THE TOILING OF FELIX

BY  
HENRY VAN DYKE

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# THE TOILING OF FELIX

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A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern surrounds the central text area.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

**The Vision . . . . .** *Frontispiece*

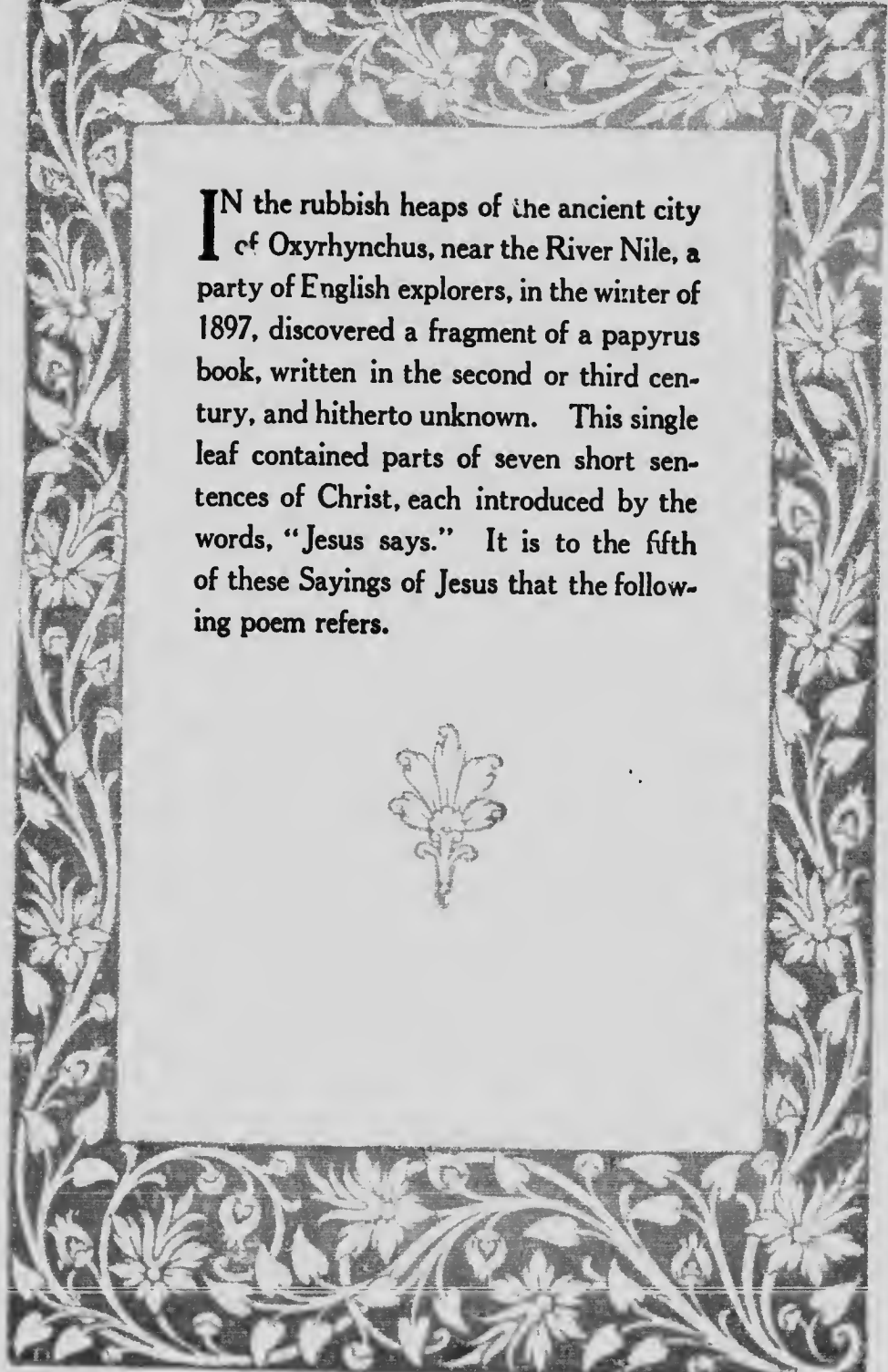
**The Student . . . . .** *Page 15*

**The Hermit . . . . .** *Page 35*

**The Worker . . . . .** *Page 45*







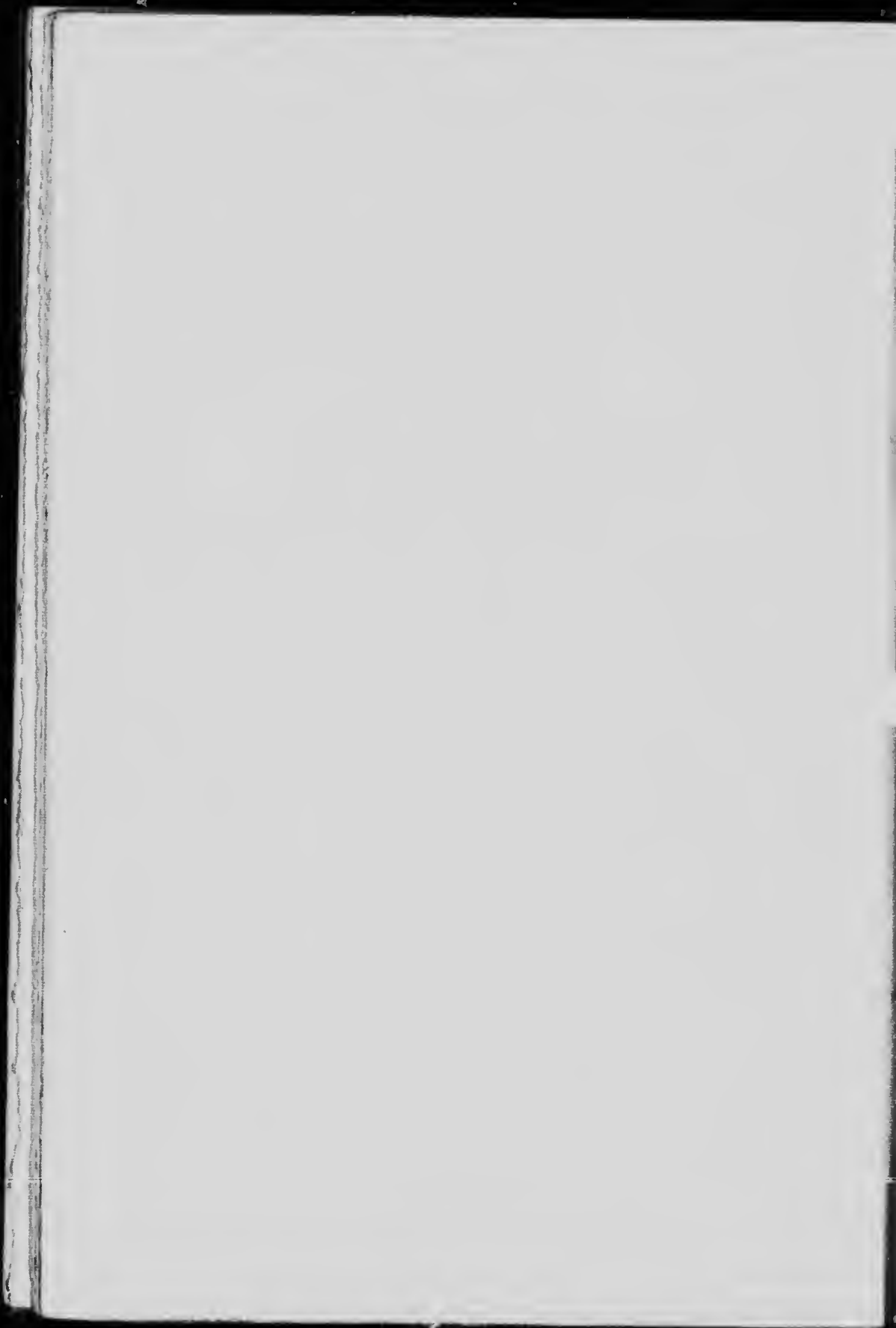
**I**N the rubbish heaps of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, near the River Nile, a party of English explorers, in the winter of 1897, discovered a fragment of a papyrus book, written in the second or third century, and hitherto unknown. This single leaf contained parts of seven short sentences of Christ, each introduced by the words, "Jesus says." It is to the fifth of these Sayings of Jesus that the following poem refers.

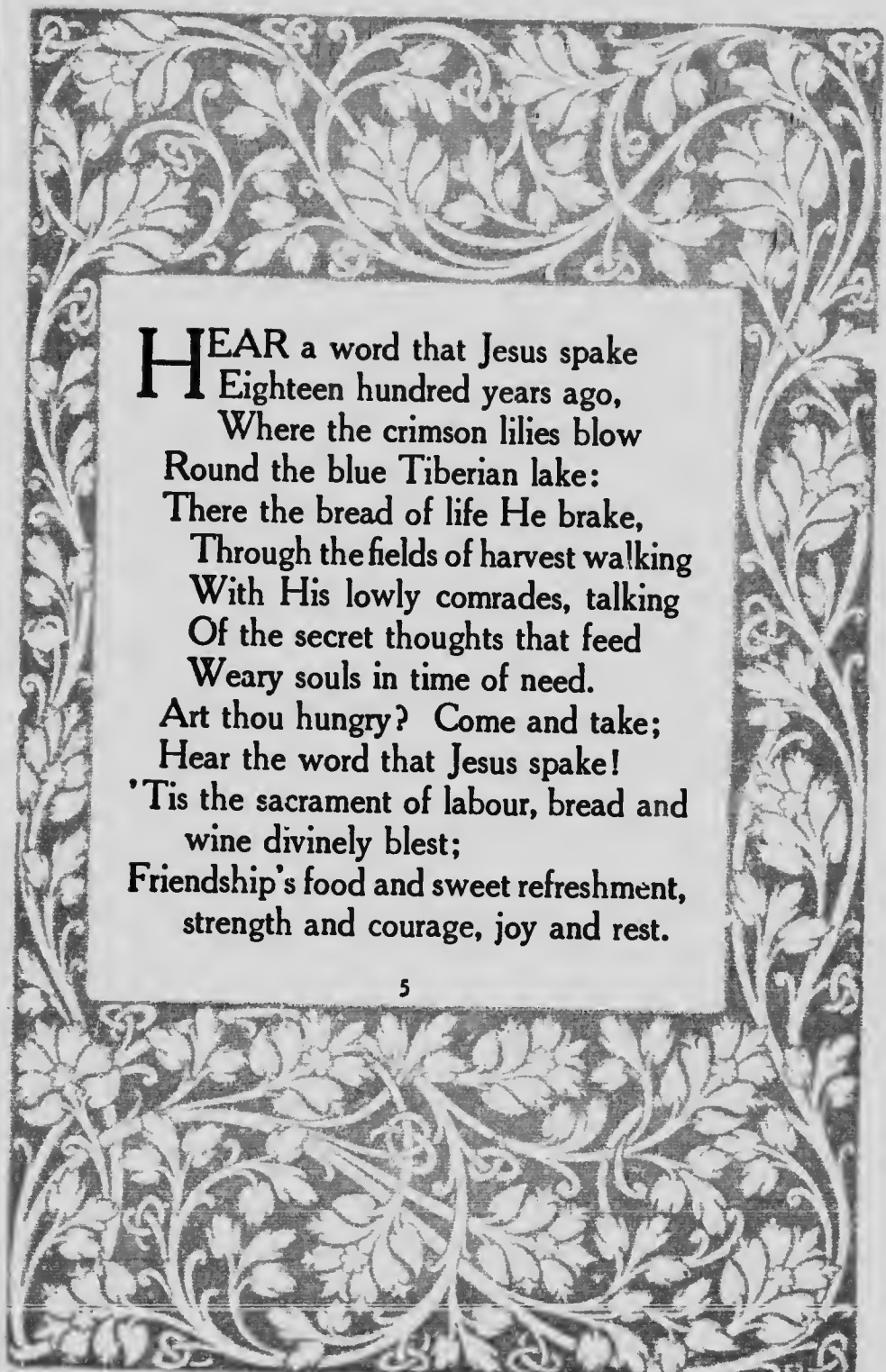




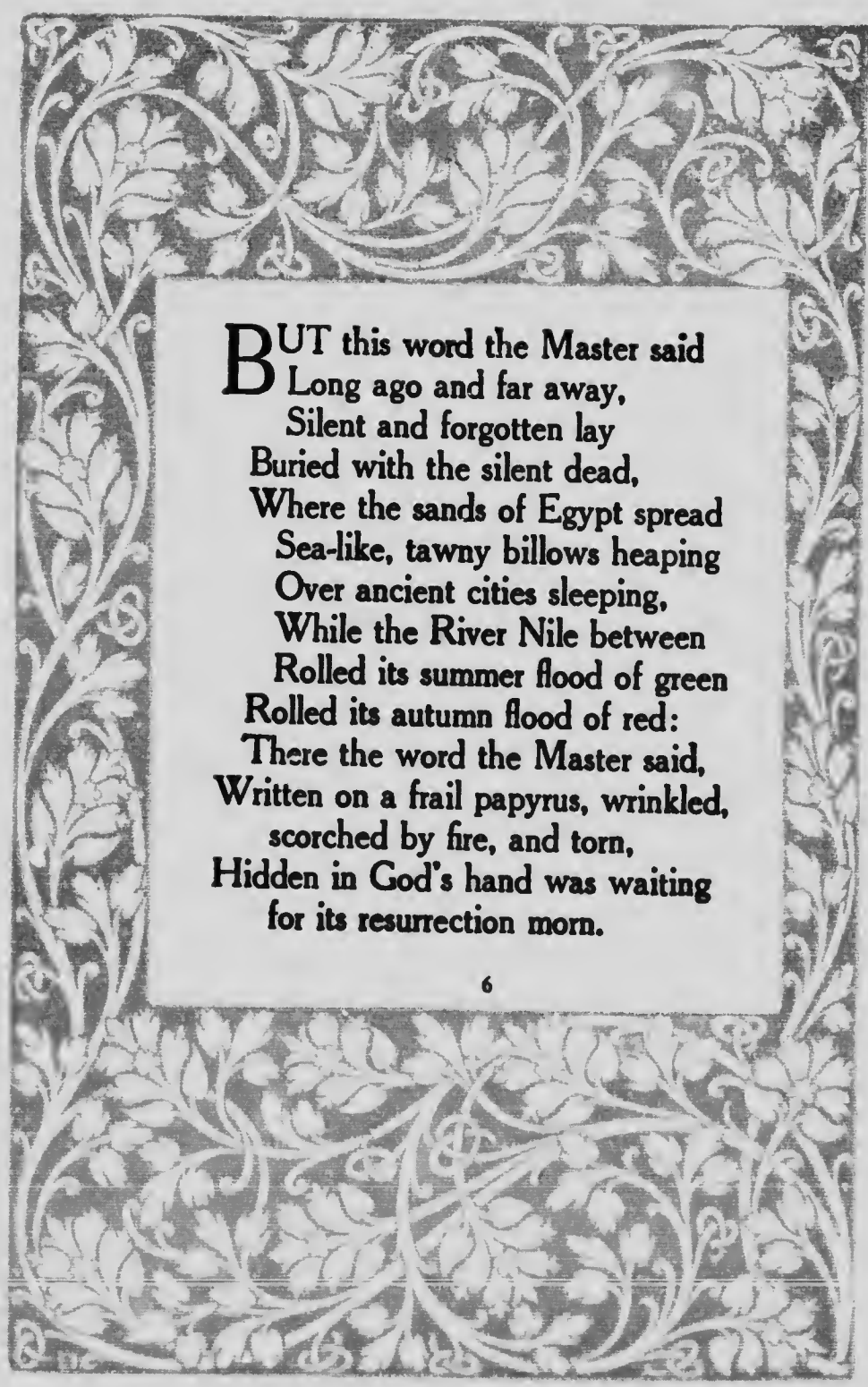
# PRELUDE





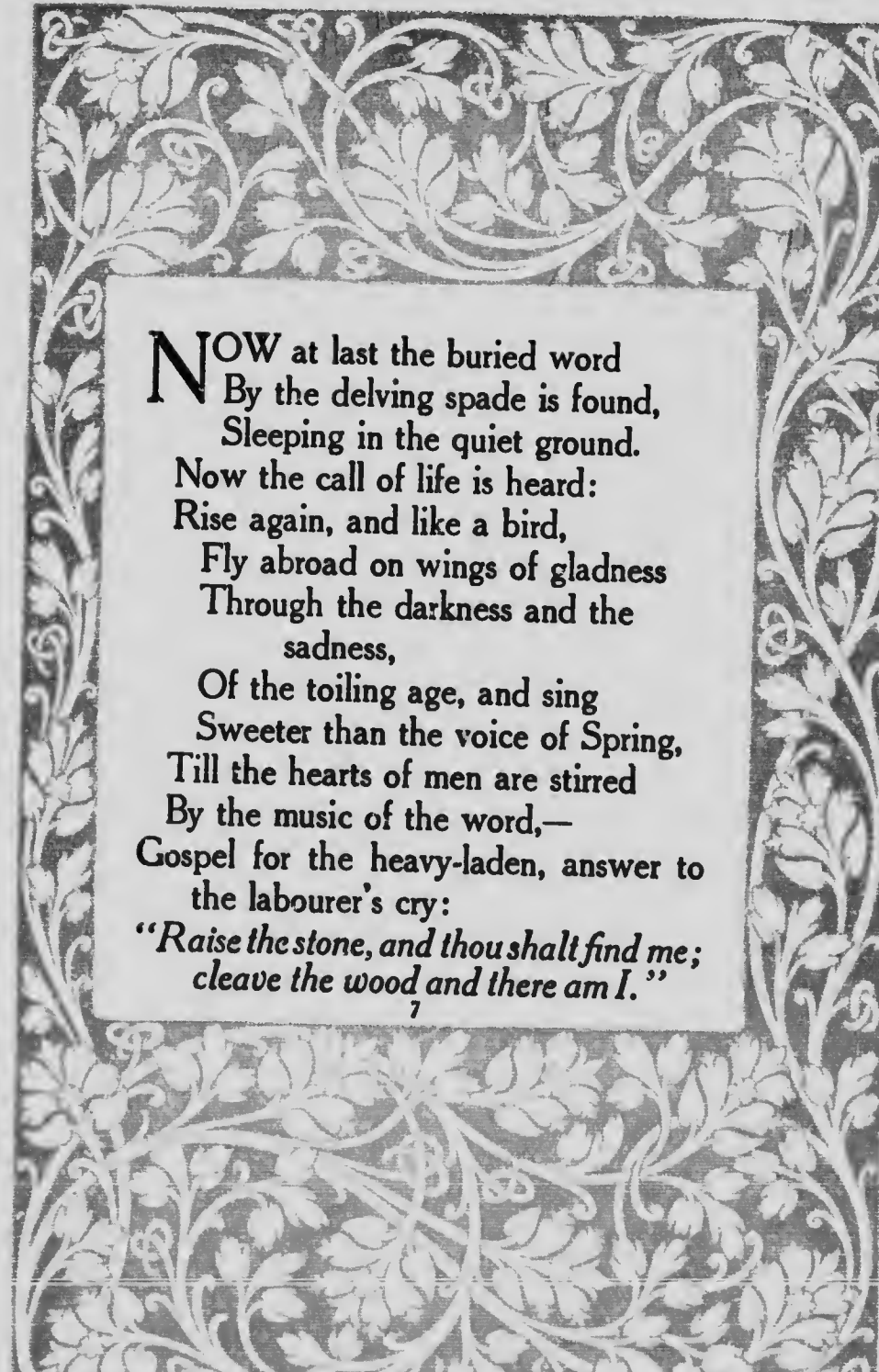


**H**EAR a word that Jesus spake  
Eighteen hundred years ago,  
Where the crimson lilies blow  
Round the blue Tiberian lake:  
There the bread of life He brake,  
Through the fields of harvest walking  
With His lowly comrades, talking  
Of the secret thoughts that feed  
Weary souls in time of need.  
Art thou hungry? Come and take;  
Hear the word that Jesus spake!  
'Tis the sacrament of labour, bread and  
wine divinely blest;  
Friendship's food and sweet refreshment,  
strength and courage, joy and rest.

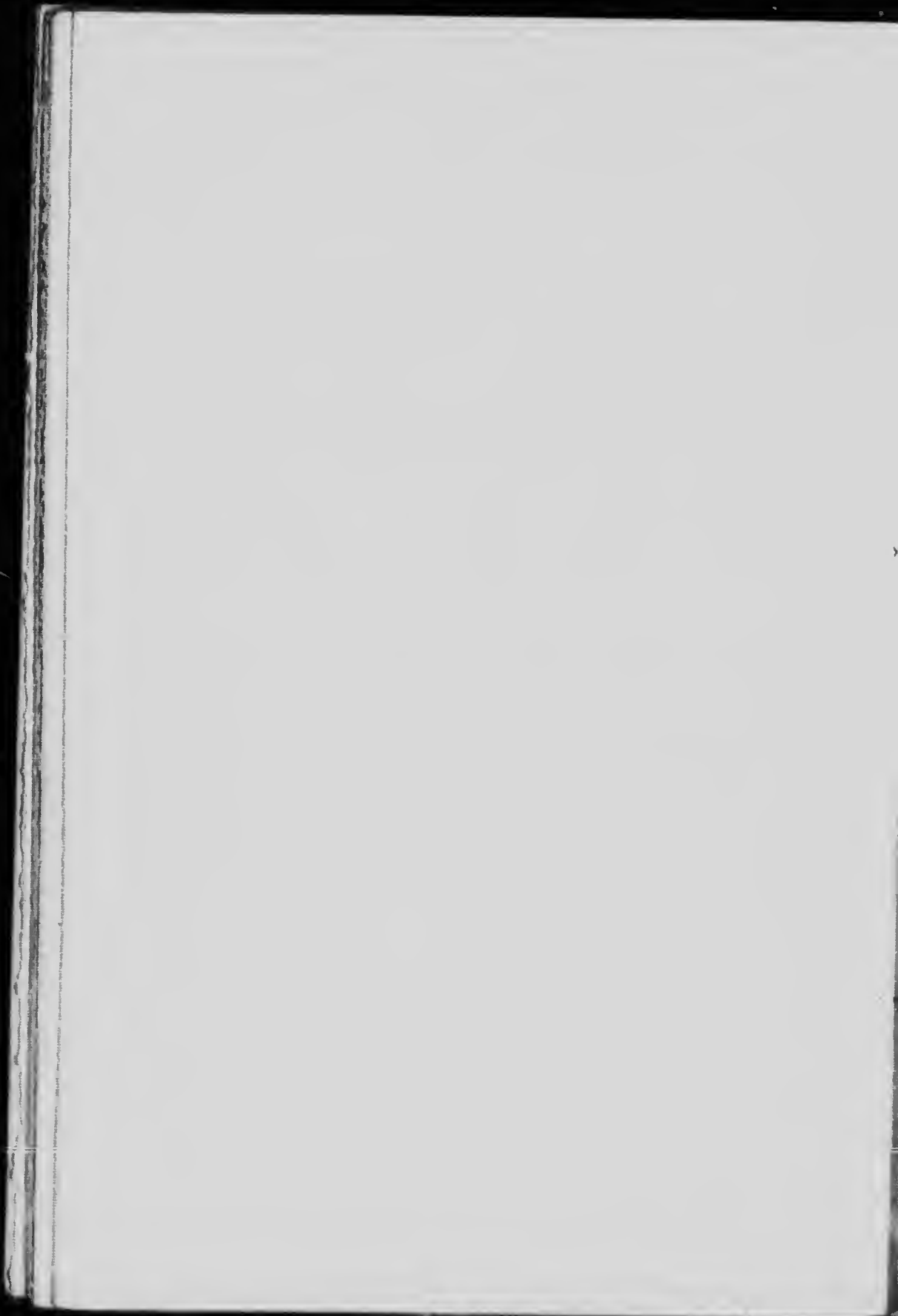


**B**UT this word the Master said  
Long ago and far away,  
Silent and forgotten lay  
Buried with the silent dead,  
Where the sands of Egypt spread  
Sea-like, tawny billows heaping  
Over ancient cities sleeping,  
While the River Nile between  
Rolled its summer flood of green  
Rolled its autumn flood of red:  
There the word the Master said,  
Written on a frail papyrus, wrinkled,  
scorched by fire, and torn,  
Hidden in God's hand was waiting  
for its resurrection morn.



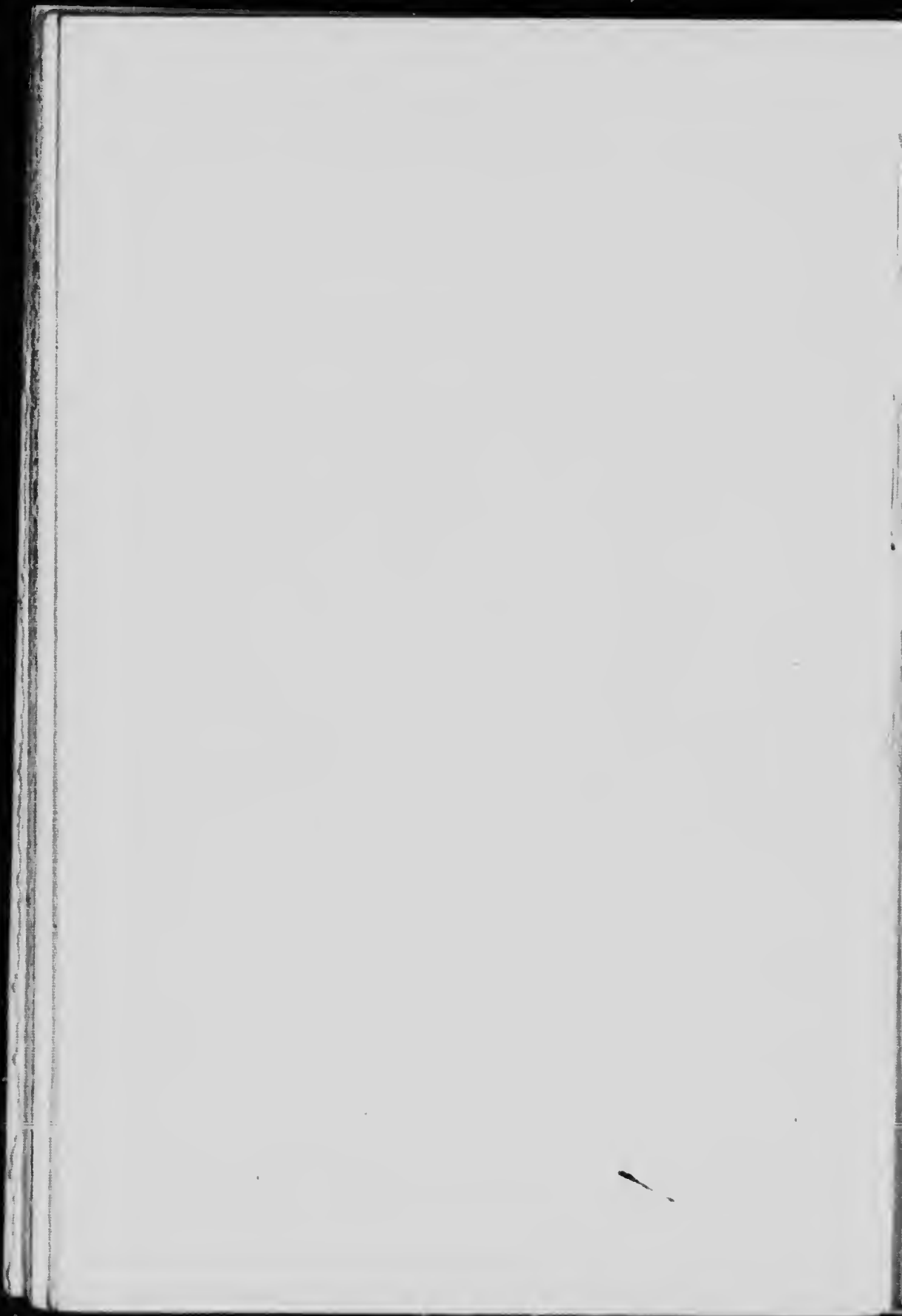


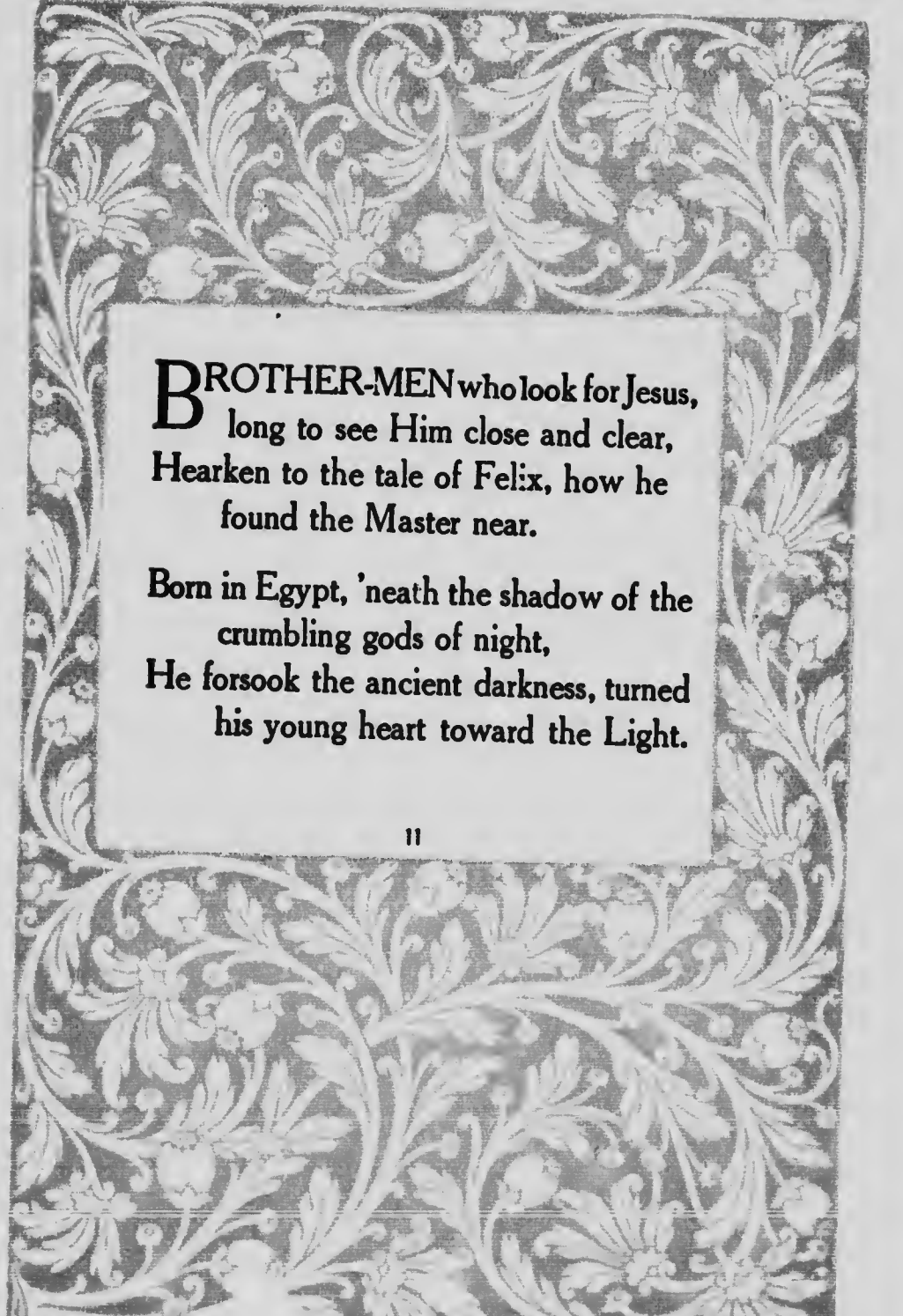
**N**OW at last the buried word  
By the delving spade is found,  
Sleeping in the quiet ground.  
Now the call of life is heard:  
Rise again, and like a bird,  
Fly abroad on wings of gladness  
Through the darkness and the  
sadness,  
Of the toiling age, and sing  
Sweeter than the voice of Spring,  
Till the hearts of men are stirred  
By the music of the word,—  
Gospel for the heavy-laden, answer to  
the labourer's cry:  
*“Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me;  
cleave the wood and there am I.”*



# LEGEND

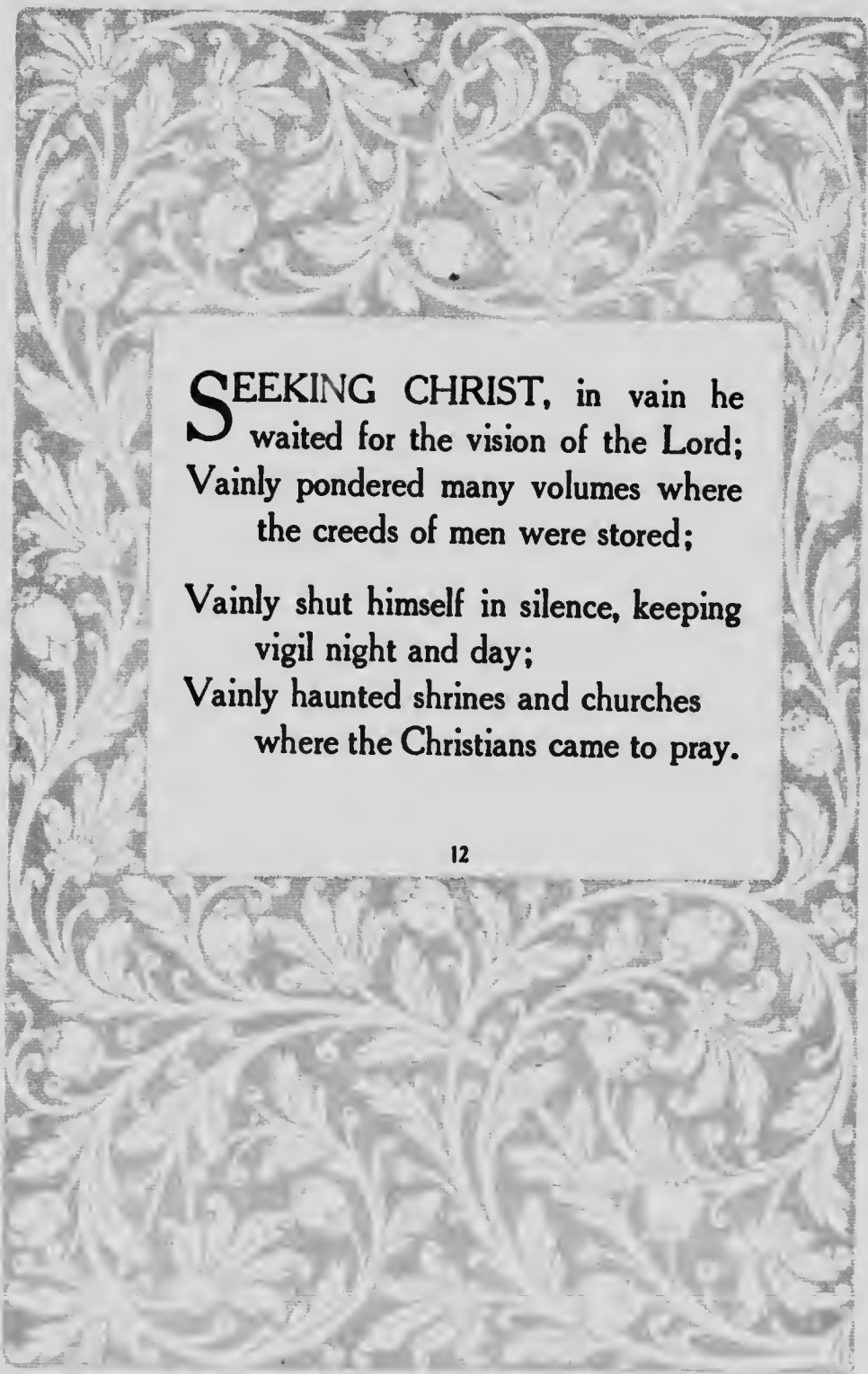




A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern in a light color against a dark background, framing the central text.

**B**ROTHER-MEN who look for Jesus,  
long to see Him close and clear,  
Hearken to the tale of Felix, how he  
found the Master near.

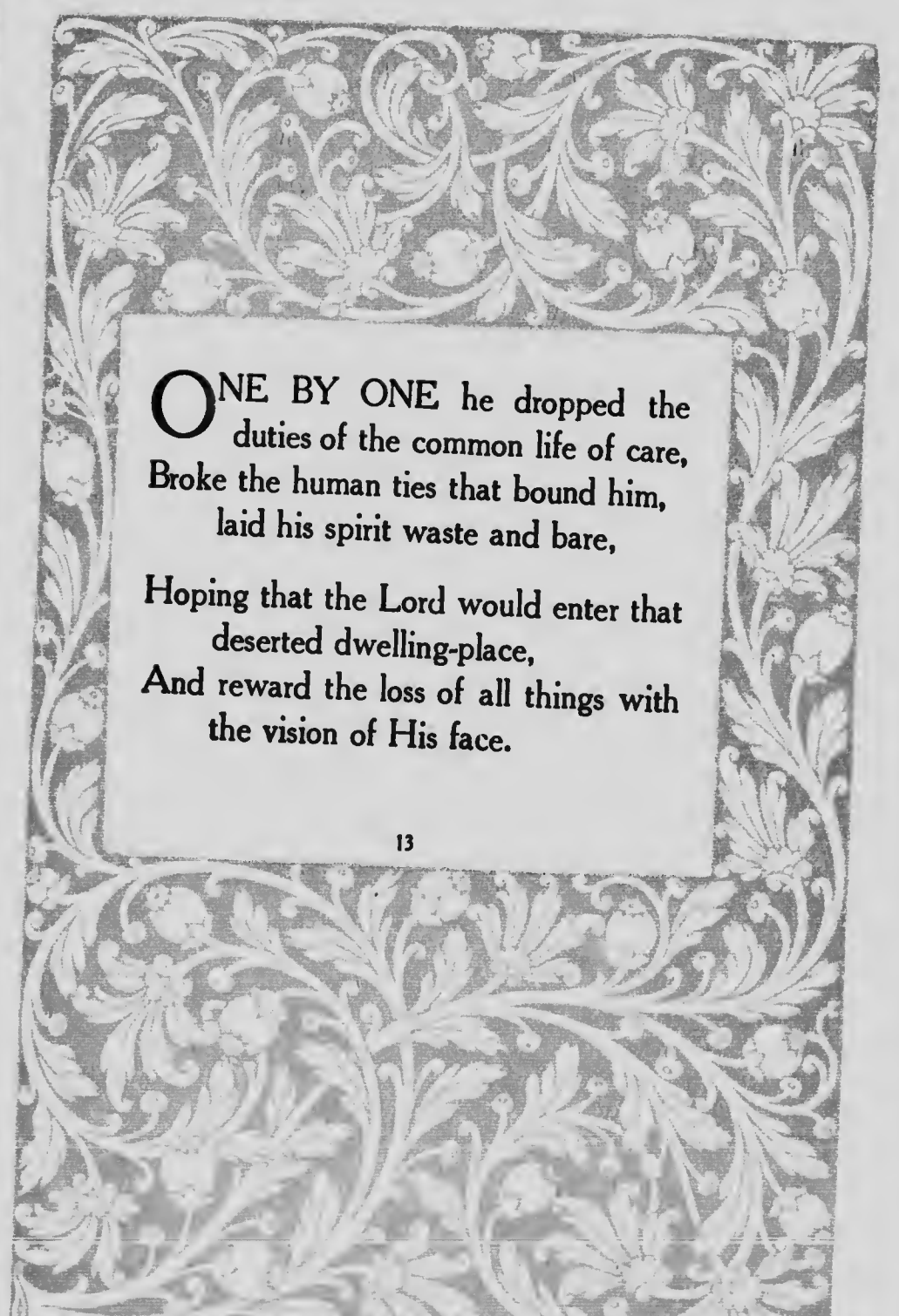
Born in Egypt, 'neath the shadow of the  
crumbling gods of night,  
He forsook the ancient darkness, turned  
his young heart toward the Light.



**S**EEKING CHRIST, in vain he  
waited for the vision of the Lord;  
Vainly pondered many volumes where  
the creeds of men were stored;

Vainly shut himself in silence, keeping  
vigil night and day;

Vainly haunted shrines and churches  
where the Christians came to pray.

A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern in a light color against a dark background, framing the central text.

**O**NE BY ONE he dropped the  
duties of the common life of care,  
Broke the human ties that bound him,  
laid his spirit waste and bare,

Hoping that the Lord would enter that  
deserted dwelling-place,  
And reward the loss of all things with  
the vision of His face.

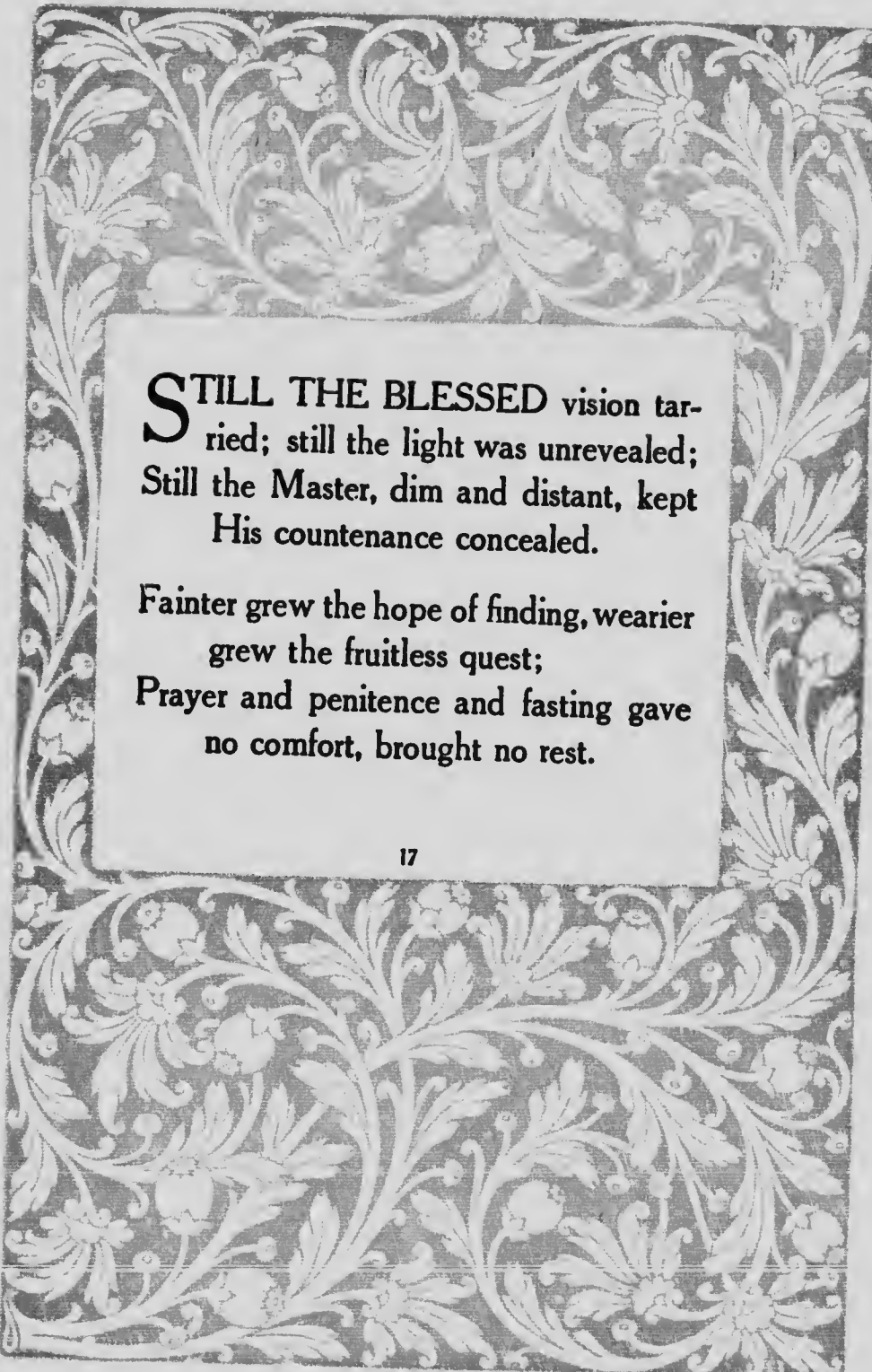
**S***EEKING CHRIST, in vain he  
waited for the vision of the Lord;  
Vainly pondered many volumes where  
the creeds of men were stored;*





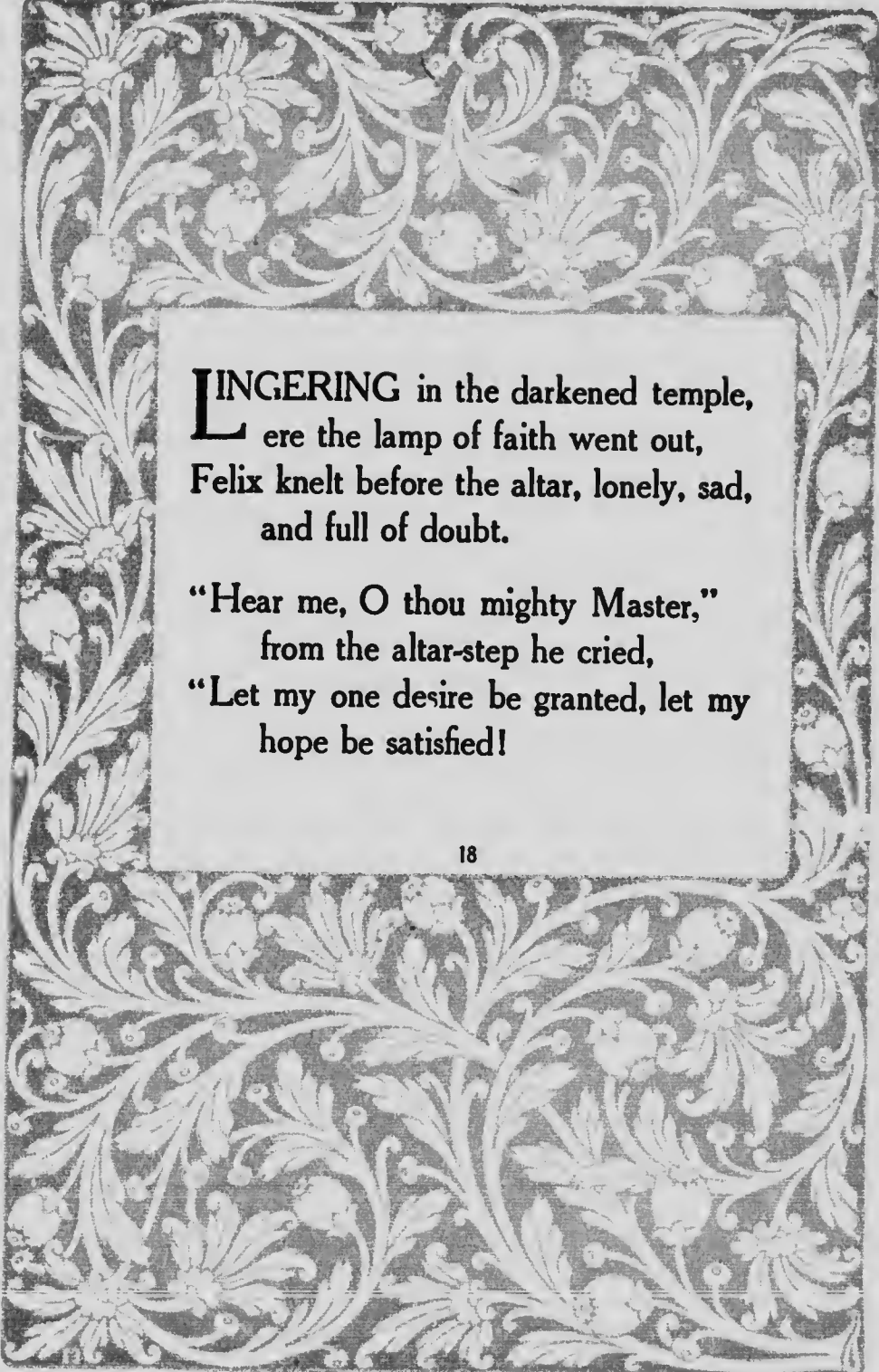






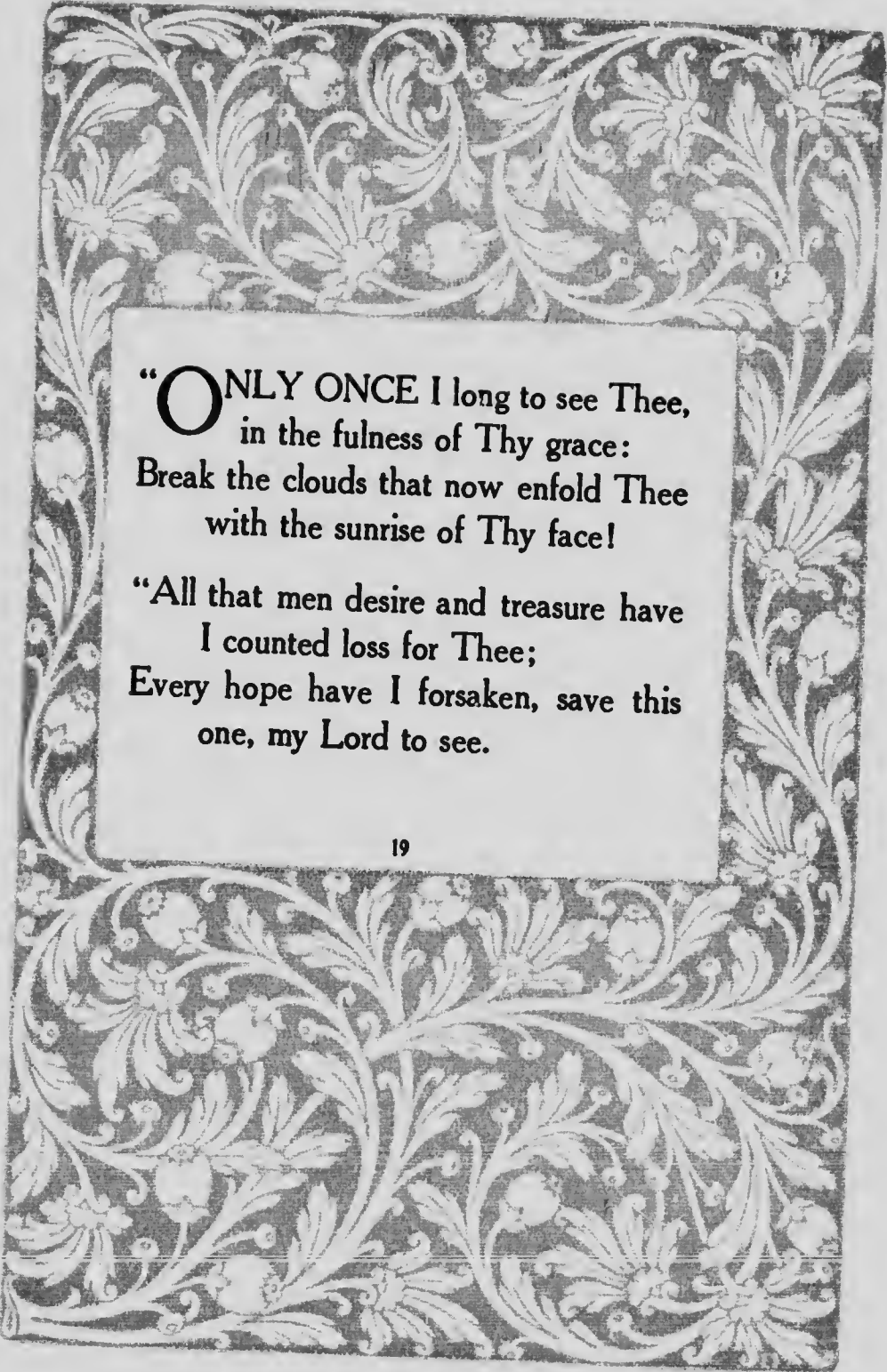
**S**TILL THE BLESSED vision tar-  
ried; still the light was unrevealed;  
Still the Master, dim and distant, kept  
His countenance concealed.

Fainter grew the hope of finding, wearier  
grew the fruitless quest;  
Prayer and penitence and fasting gave  
no comfort, brought no rest.



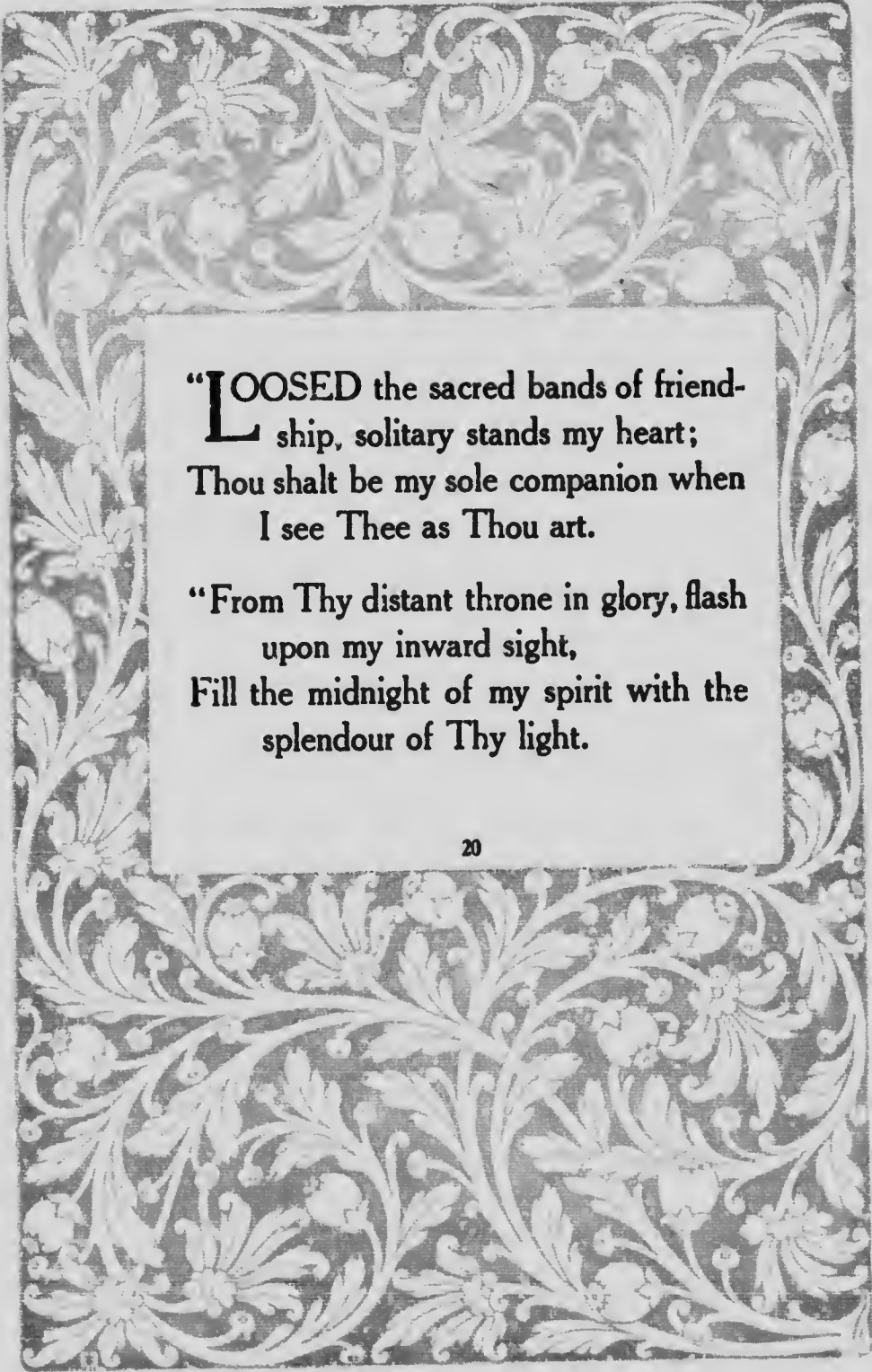
**L**INGERING in the darkened temple,  
ere the lamp of faith went out,  
Felix knelt before the altar, lonely, sad,  
and full of doubt.

“Hear me, O thou mighty Master,”  
from the altar-step he cried,  
“Let my one desire be granted, let my  
hope be satisfied!



**O**NLY ONCE I long to see Thee,  
in the fulness of Thy grace:  
Break the clouds that now enfold Thee  
with the sunrise of Thy face!

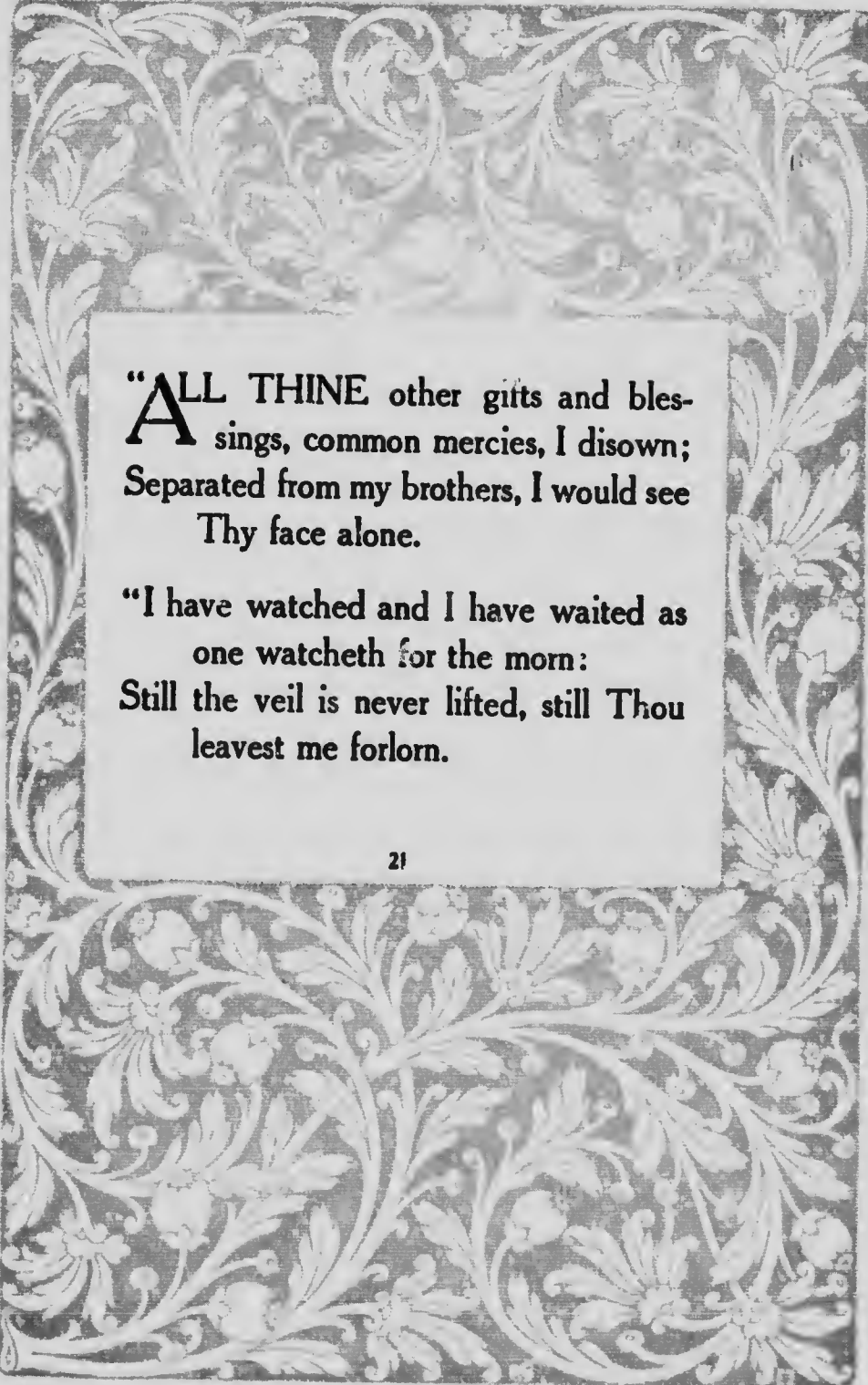
"All that men desire and treasure have  
I counted loss for Thee;  
Every hope have I forsaken, save this  
one, my Lord to see.



**L**OOSSED the sacred bands of friend-  
ship, solitary stands my heart;  
Thou shalt be my sole companion when  
I see Thee as Thou art.

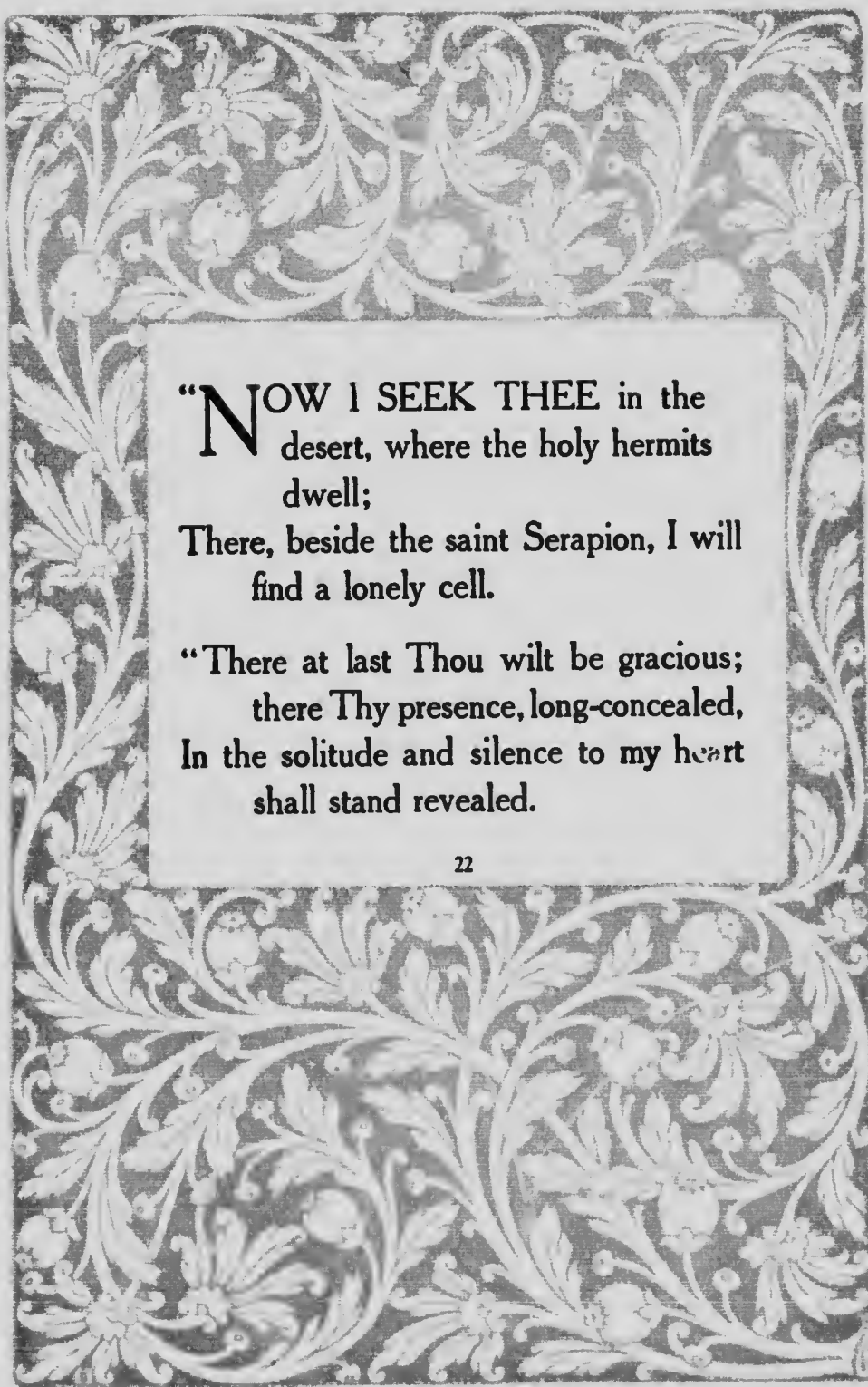
“From Thy distant throne in glory, flash  
upon my inward sight,  
Fill the midnight of my spirit with the  
splendour of Thy light.





**A**LL THINE other gifts and blessings,  
common mercies, I disown;  
Separated from my brothers, I would see  
Thy face alone.

"I have watched and I have waited as  
one watcheth for the morn:  
Still the veil is never lifted, still Thou  
leavest me forlorn.

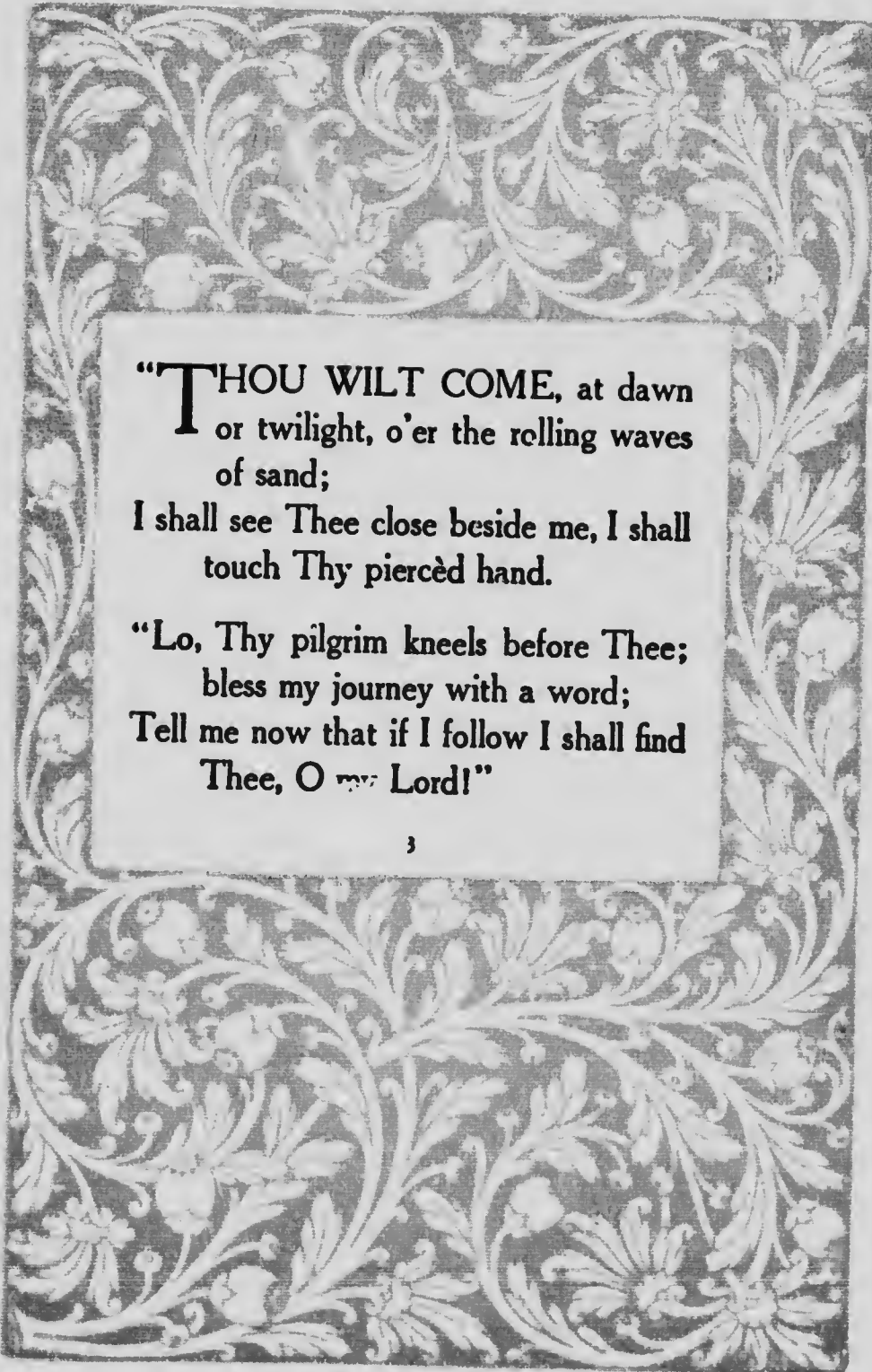


**N**OW I SEEK THEE in the  
desert, where the holy hermits  
dwell;

There, beside the saint Serapion, I will  
find a lonely cell.

“There at last Thou wilt be gracious;  
there Thy presence, long-concealed,  
In the solitude and silence to my heart  
shall stand revealed.

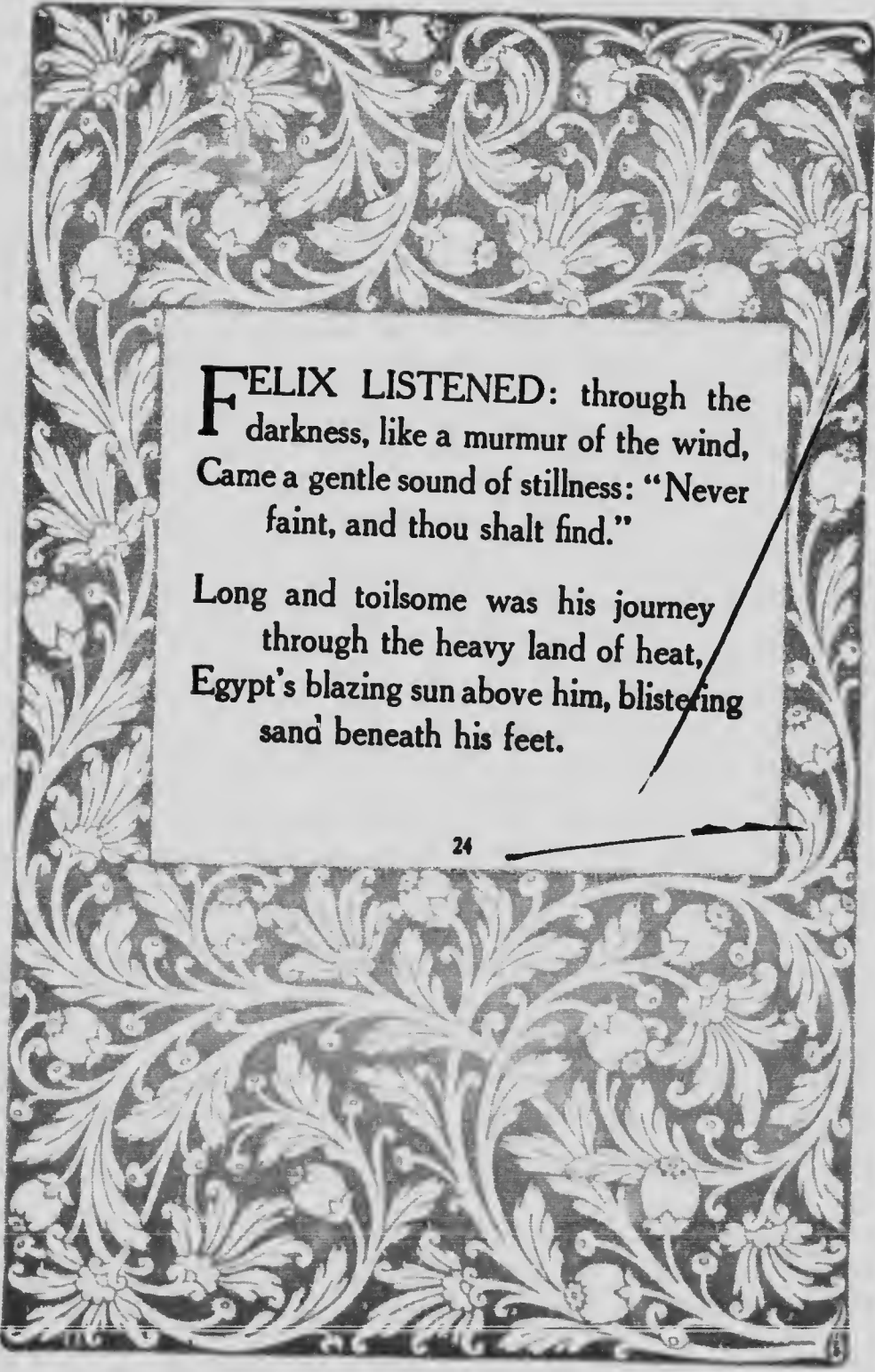




**T**HOU WILT COME, at dawn  
or twilight, o'er the rolling waves  
of sand;

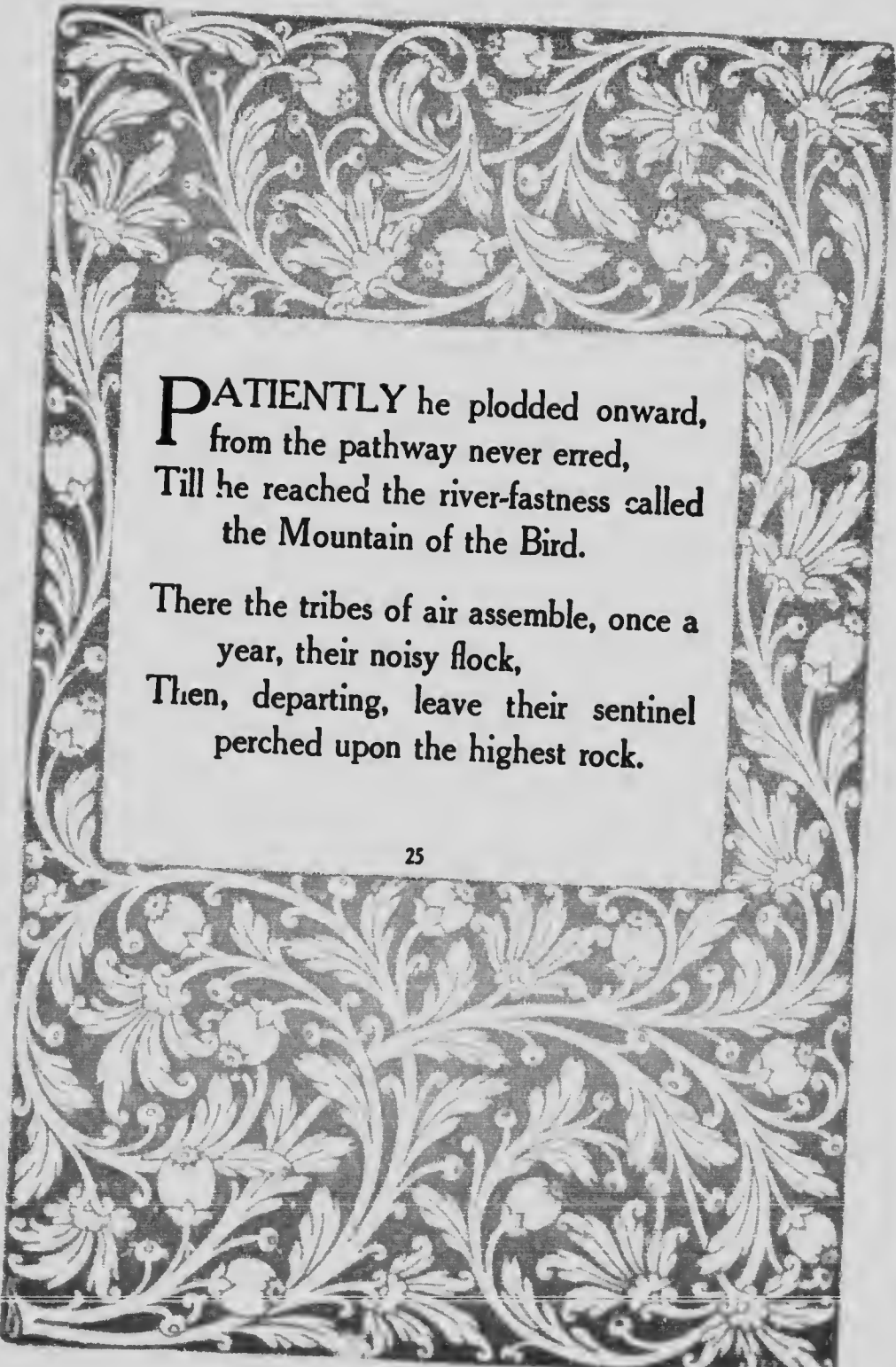
I shall see Thee close beside me, I shall  
touch Thy piercèd hand.

“Lo, Thy pilgrim kneels before Thee;  
bless my journey with a word;  
Tell me now that if I follow I shall find  
Thee, O my Lord!”



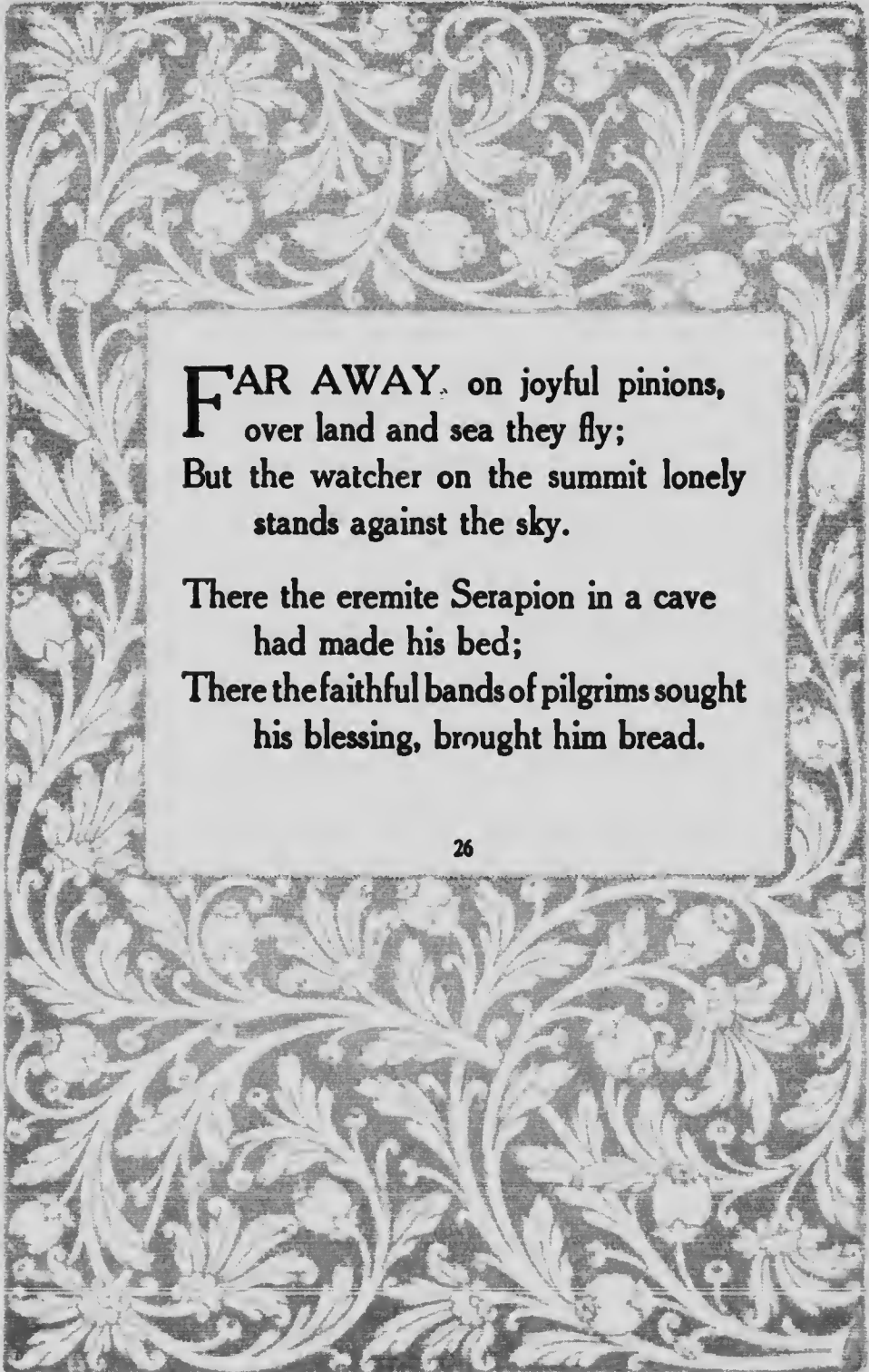
**FELIX LISTENED:** through the  
darkness, like a murmur of the wind,  
Came a gentle sound of stillness: "Never  
faint, and thou shalt find."

Long and toilsome was his journey  
through the heavy land of heat,  
Egypt's blazing sun above him, blistering  
sand beneath his feet.



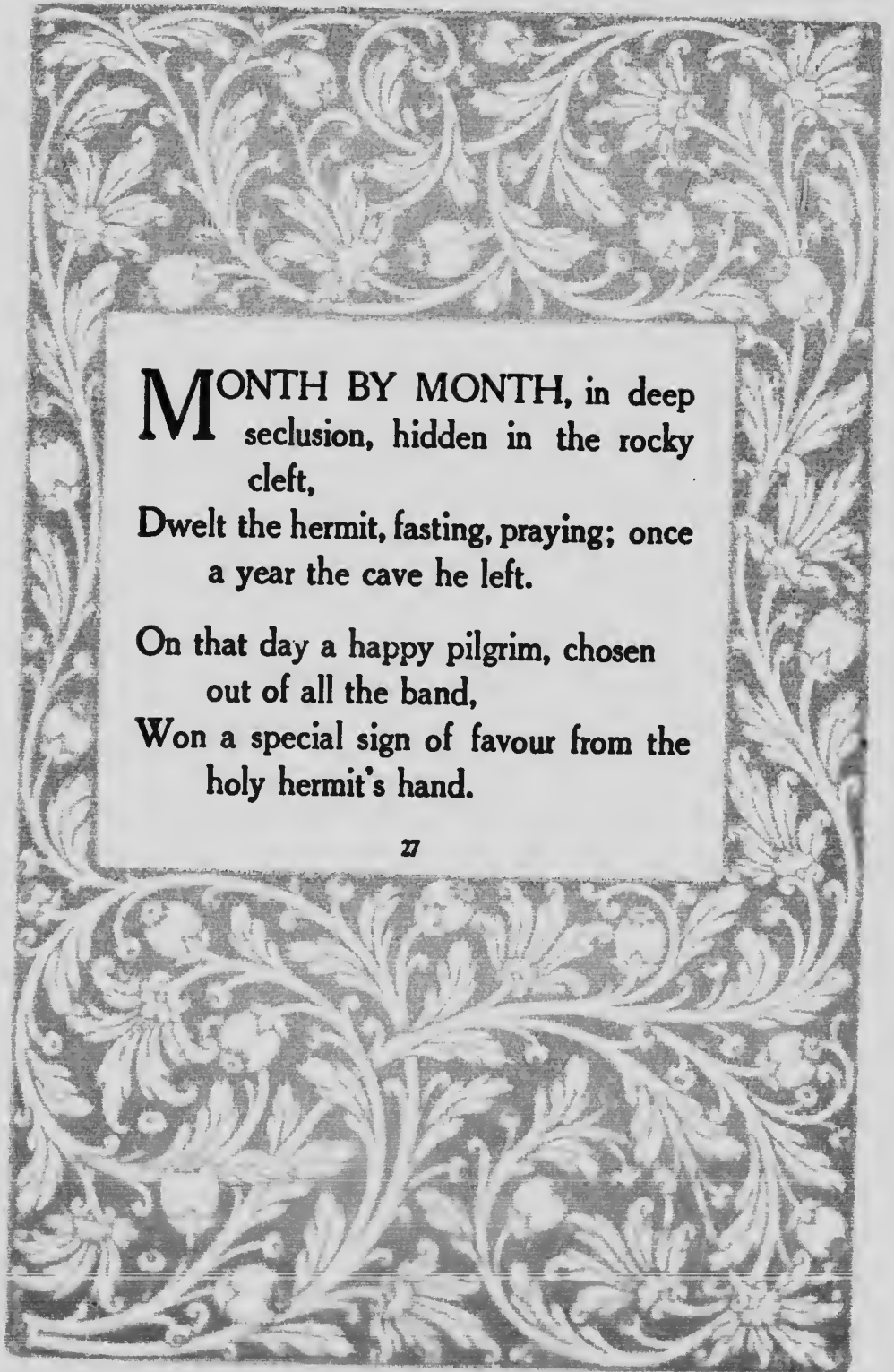
**P**ATIENTLY he plodded onward,  
from the pathway never erred,  
Till he reached the river-fastness called  
the Mountain of the Bird.

There the tribes of air assemble, once a  
year, their noisy flock,  
Then, departing, leave their sentinel  
perched upon the highest rock.



**F**AR AWAY, on joyful pinions,  
over land and sea they fly;  
But the watcher on the summit lonely  
stands against the sky.

There the eremite Serapion in a cave  
had made his bed;  
There the faithful bands of pilgrims sought  
his blessing, brought him bread.



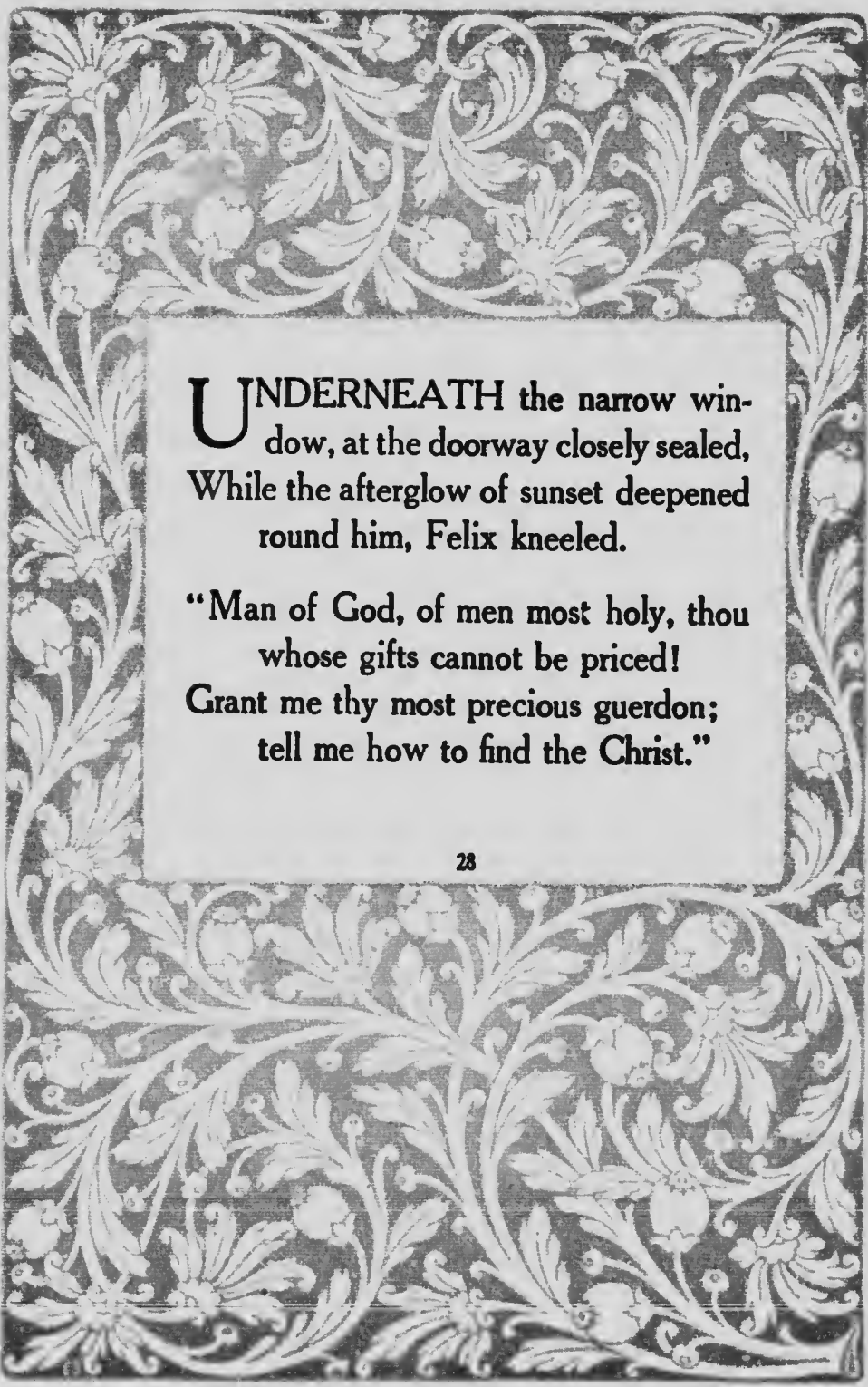
**M**ONTH BY MONTH, in deep  
seclusion, hidden in the rocky  
cleft,

Dwelt the hermit, fasting, praying; once  
a year the cave he left.

On that day a happy pilgrim, chosen  
out of all the band,

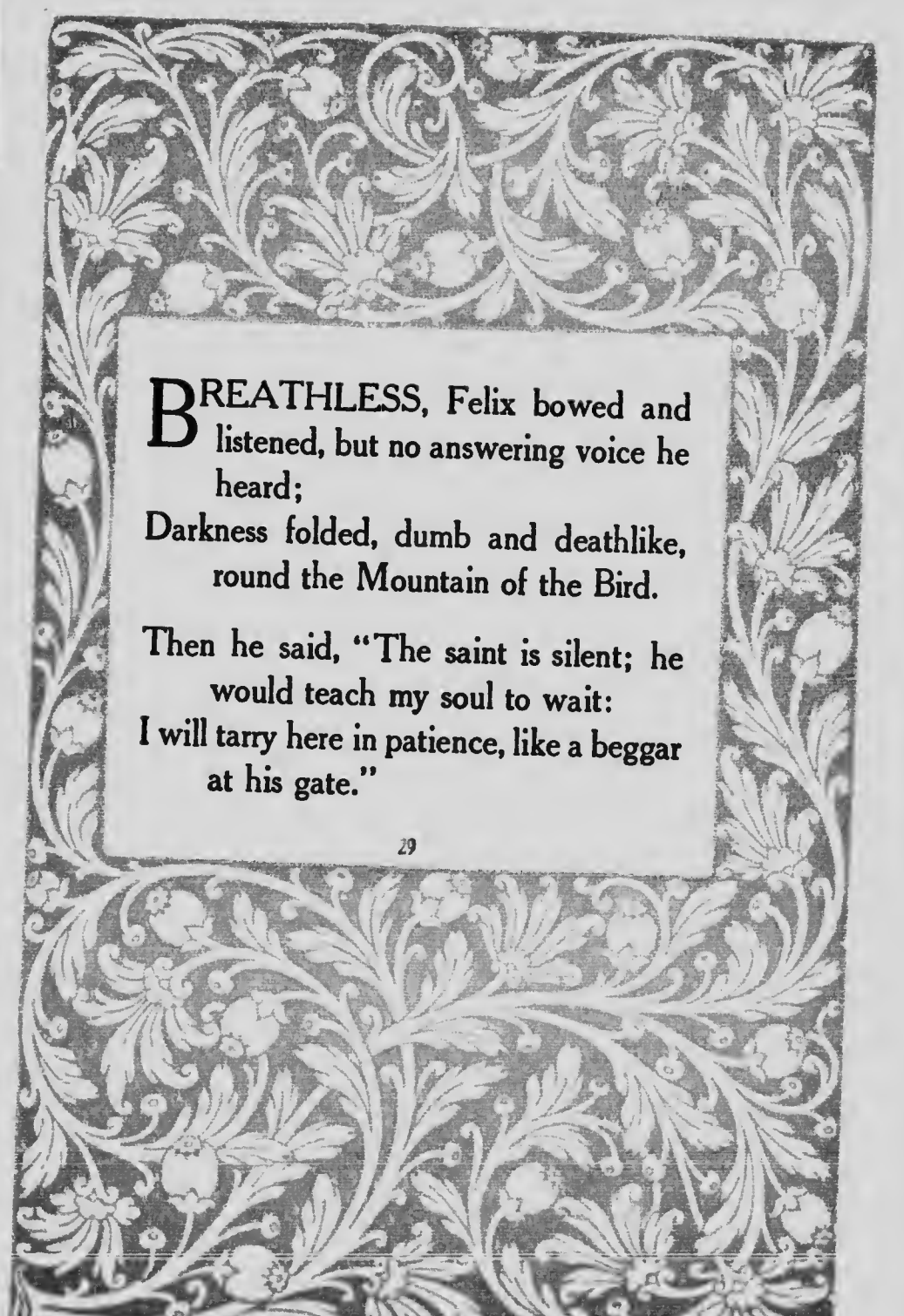
Won a special sign of favour from the  
holy hermit's hand.





**U**NDERNEATH the narrow win-  
dow, at the doorway closely sealed,  
While the afterglow of sunset deepened  
round him, Felix kneeled.

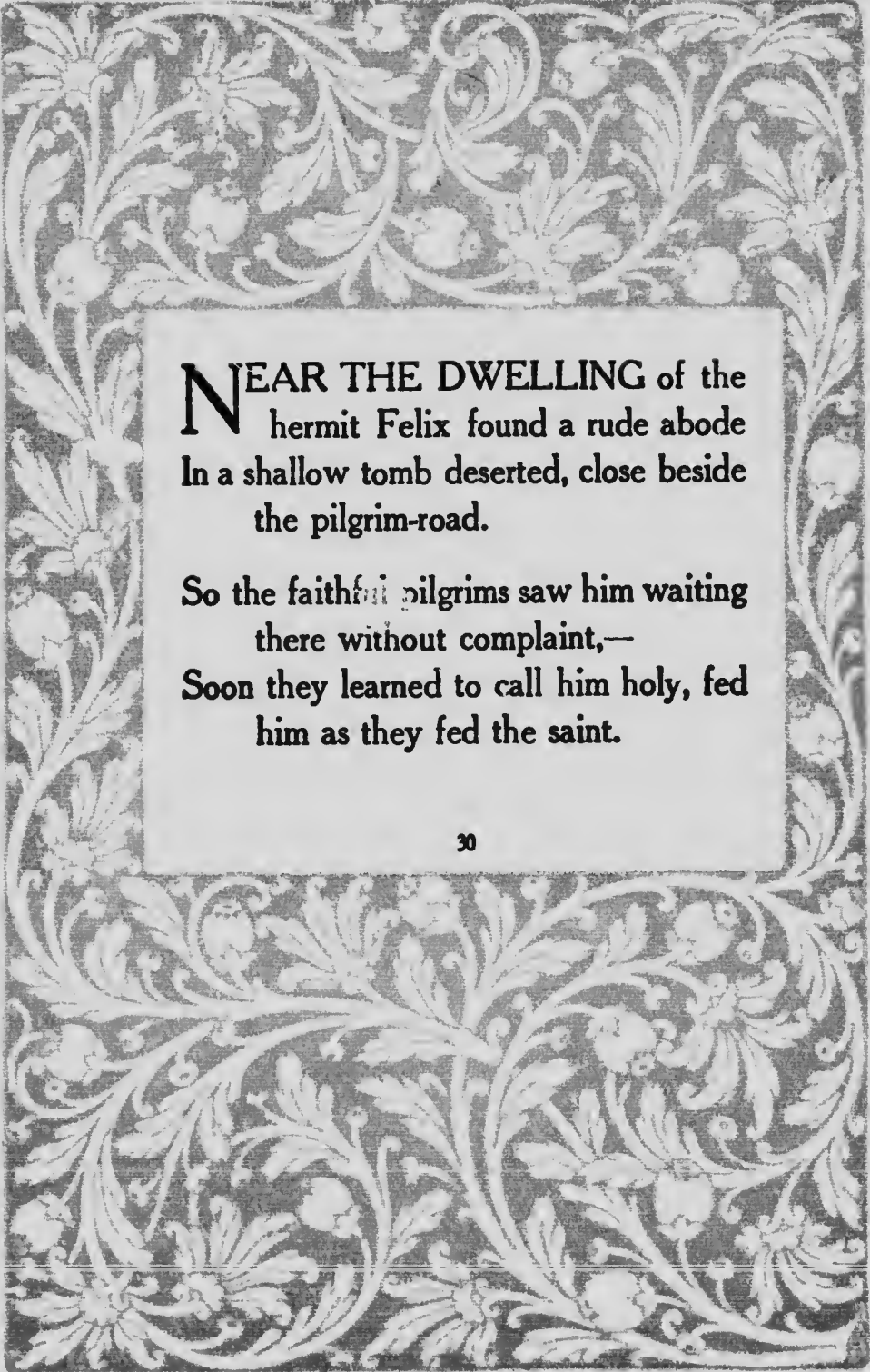
“Man of God, of men most holy, thou  
whose gifts cannot be priced!  
Grant me thy most precious guerdon;  
tell me how to find the Christ.”



**B**REATHLESS, Felix bowed and  
listened, but no answering voice he  
heard;

Darkness folded, dumb and deathlike,  
round the Mountain of the Bird.

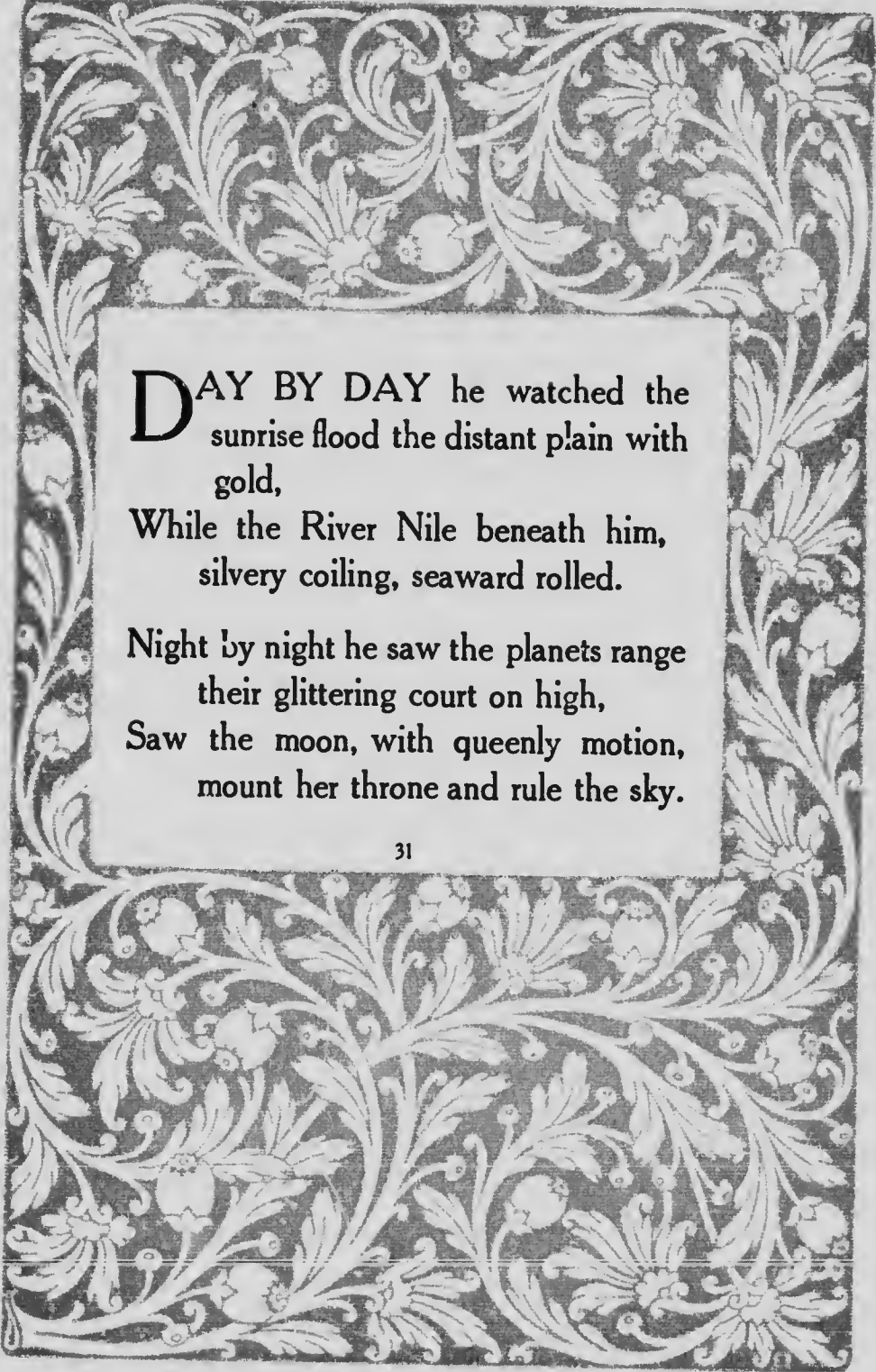
Then he said, "The saint is silent; he  
would teach my soul to wait:  
I will tarry here in patience, like a beggar  
at his gate."



**N**EAR THE DWELLING of the  
hermit Felix found a rude abode  
In a shallow tomb deserted, close beside  
the pilgrim-road.

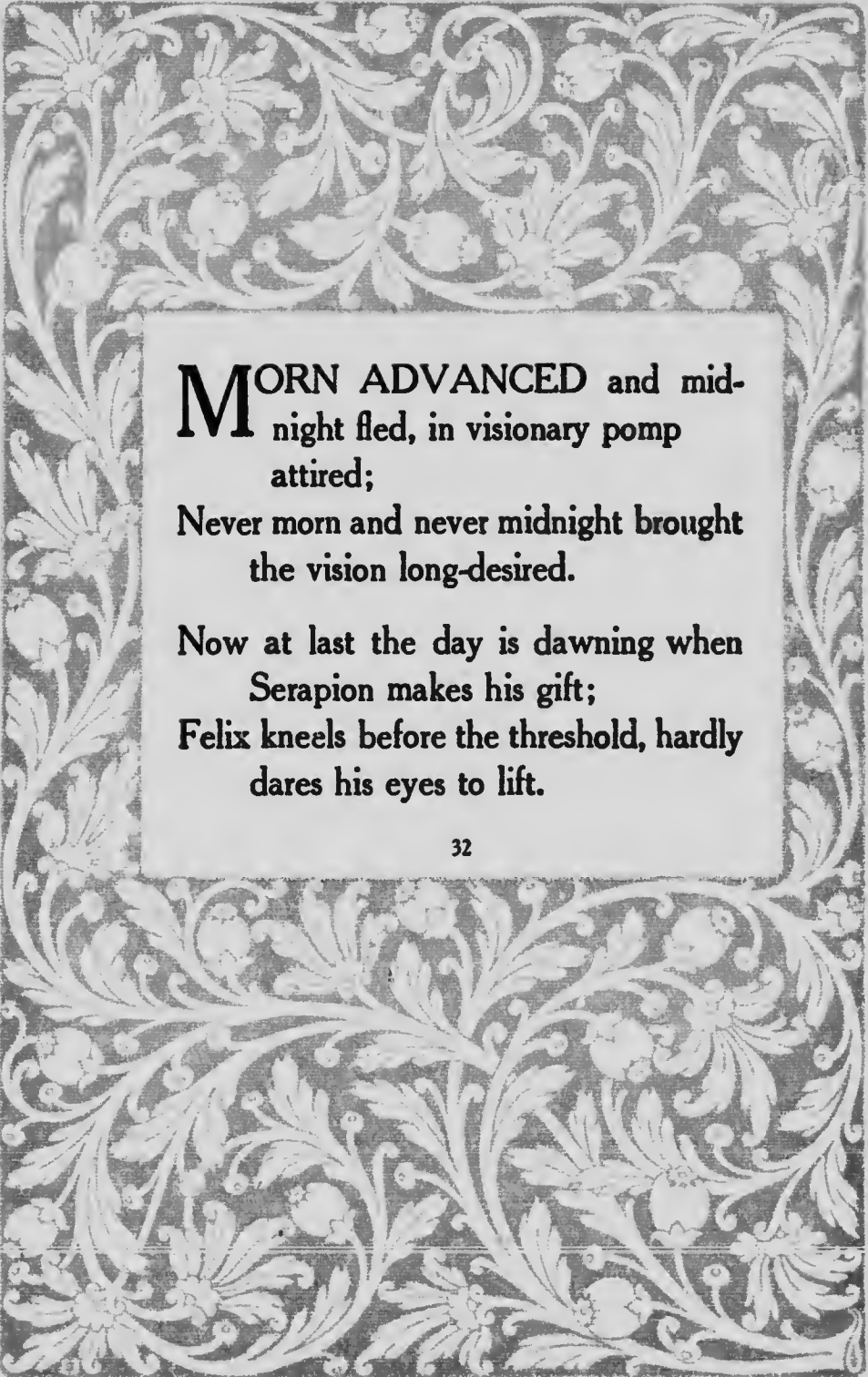
So the faithful pilgrims saw him waiting  
there without complaint,—  
Soon they learned to call him holy, fed  
him as they fed the saint.





**D**AY BY DAY he watched the  
sunrise flood the distant plain with  
gold,  
While the River Nile beneath him,  
silvery coiling, seaward rolled.

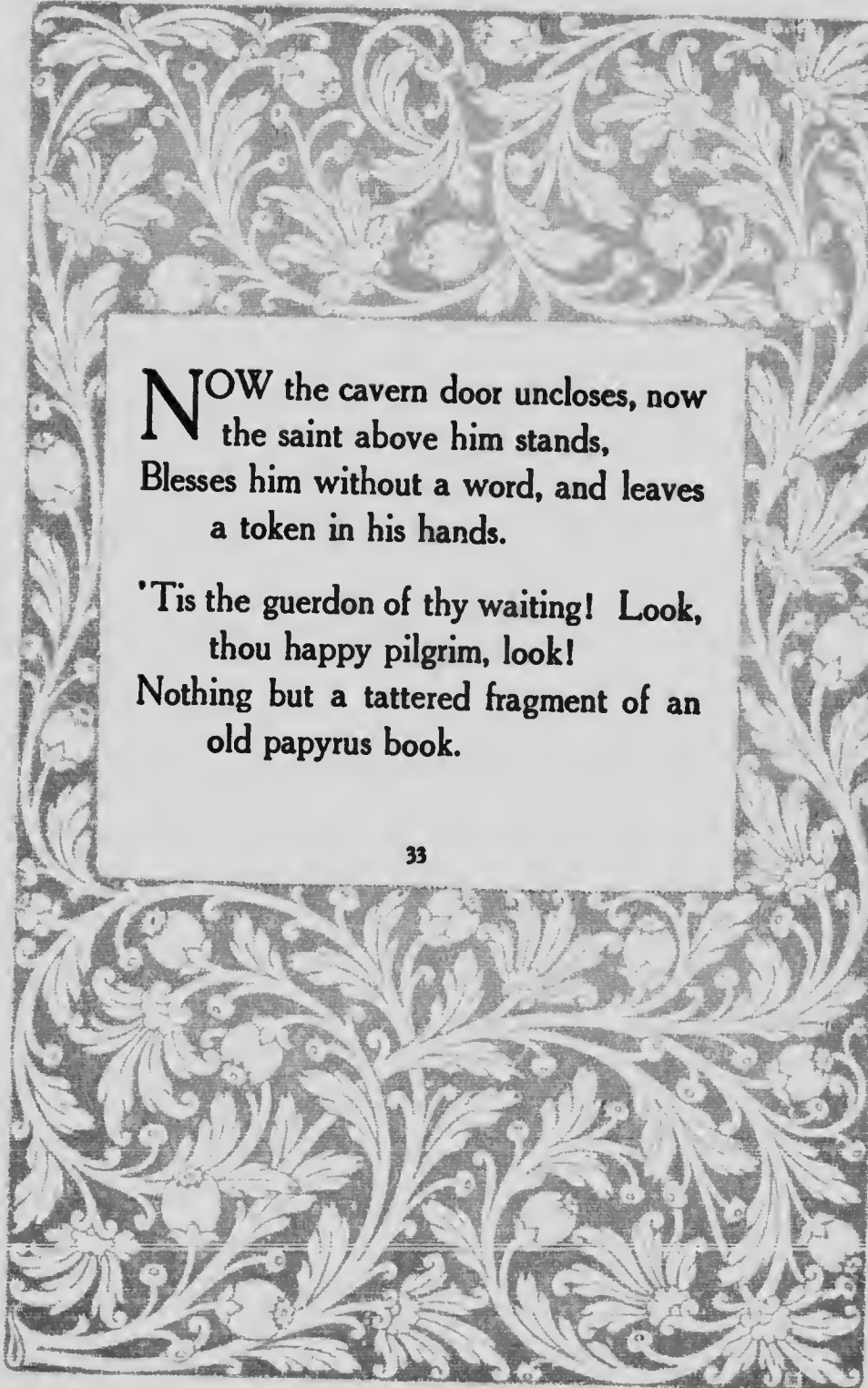
Night by night he saw the planets range  
their glittering court on high,  
Saw the moon, with queenly motion,  
mount her throne and rule the sky.



**M**ORN ADVANCED and mid-  
night fled, in visionary pomp  
attired;

Never morn and never midnight brought  
the vision long-desired.

Now at last the day is dawning when  
Serapion makes his gift;  
Felix kneels before the threshold, hardly  
dares his eyes to lift.



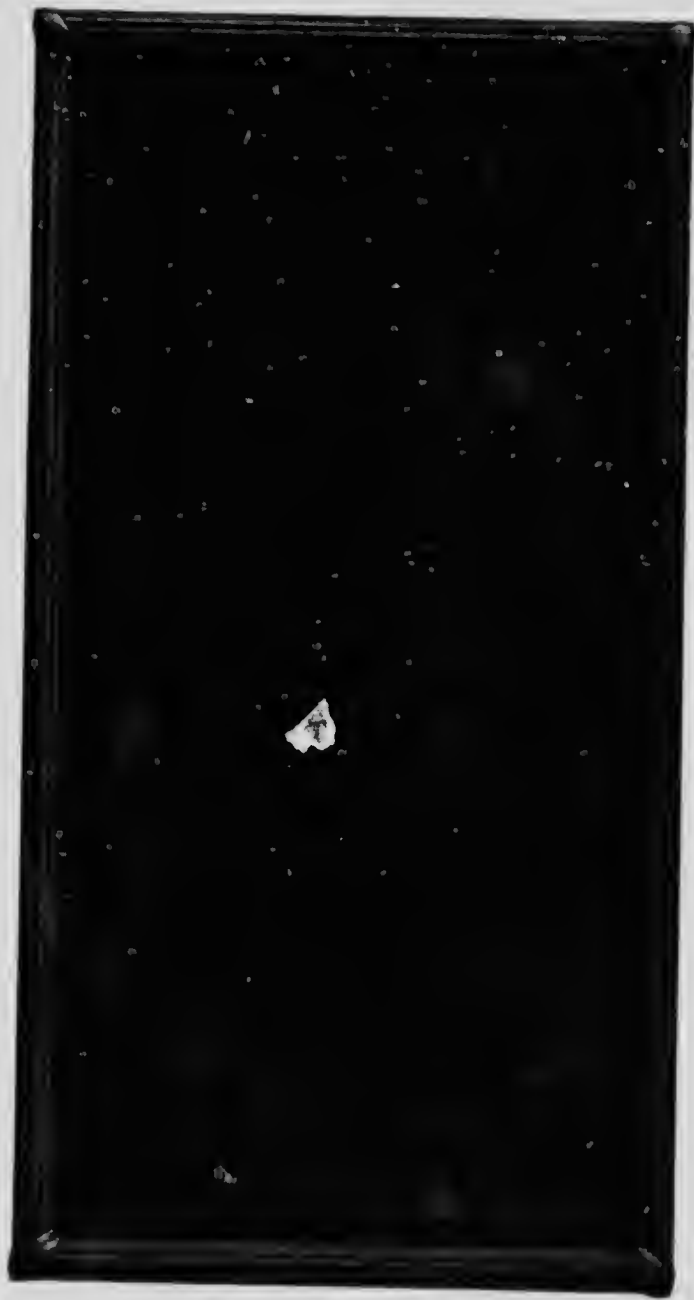
**N**OW the cavern door uncloses, now  
the saint above him stands,  
Blesses him without a word, and leaves  
a token in his hands.

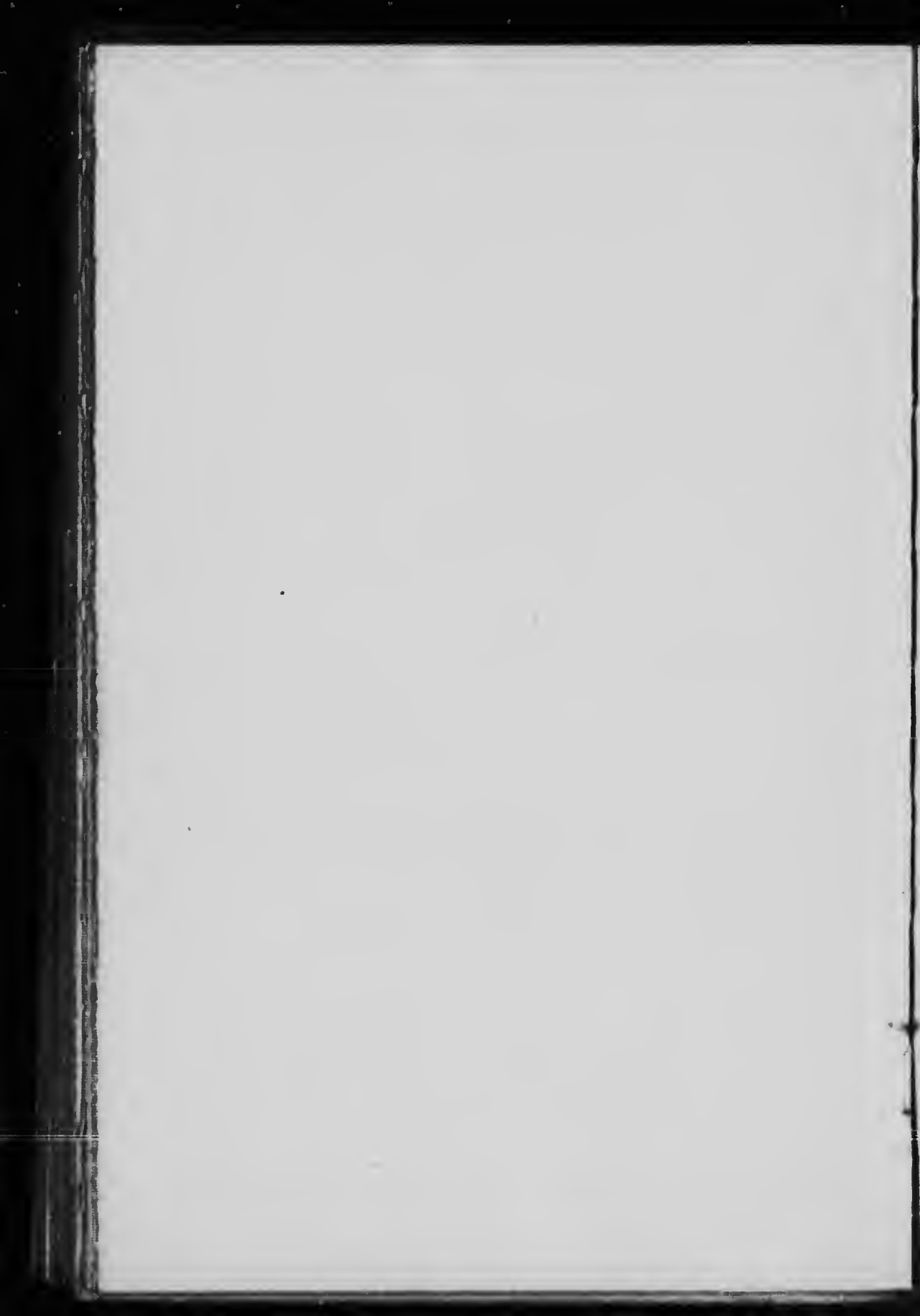
'Tis the guerdon of thy waiting! Look,  
thou happy pilgrim, look!  
Nothing but a tattered fragment of an  
old papyrus book.

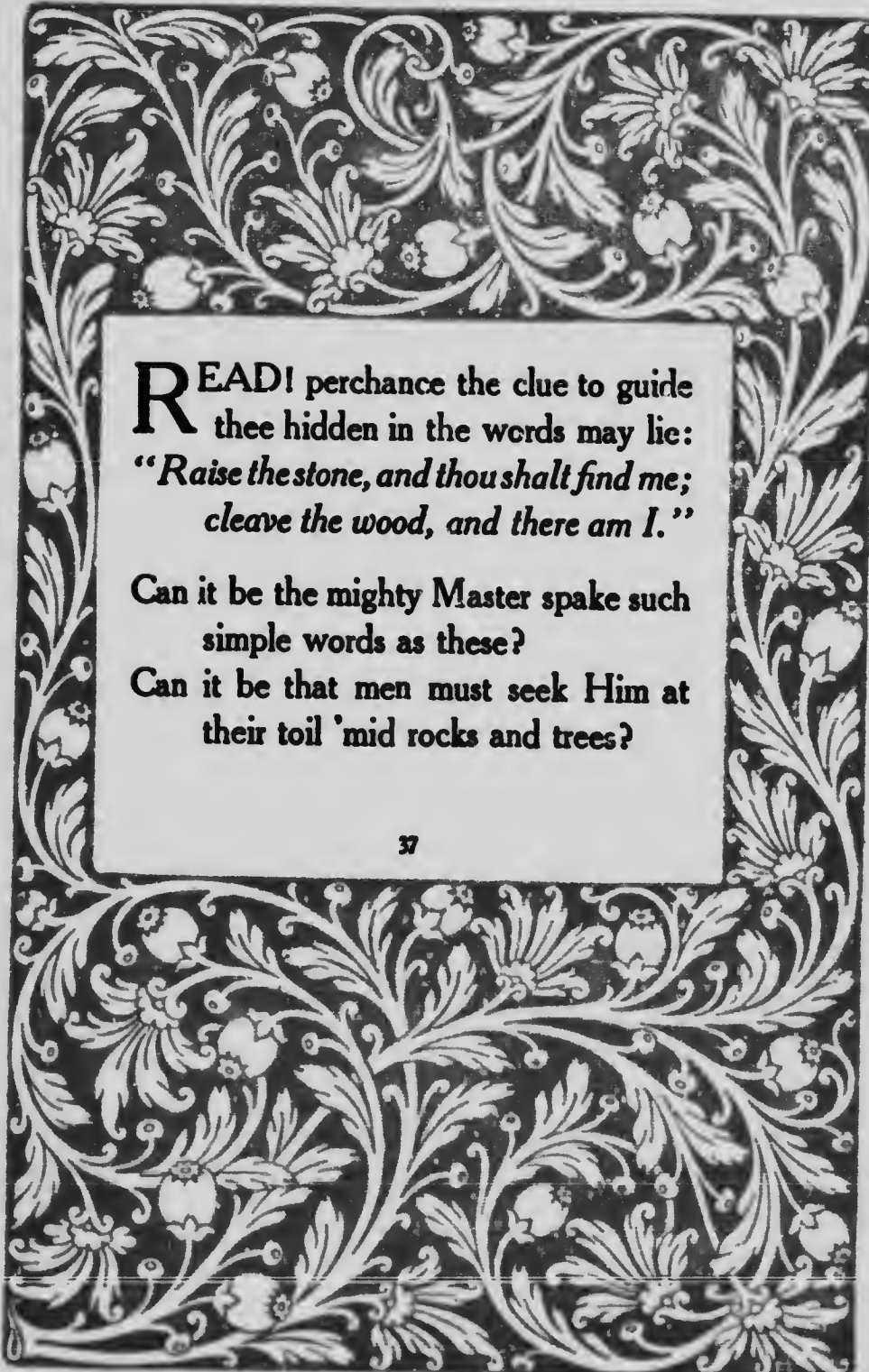
**M**ORN ADVANCED and mid-  
night fled, in visionary pomp  
attired;

*Never morn and never midnight brought  
the vision long-desired.*







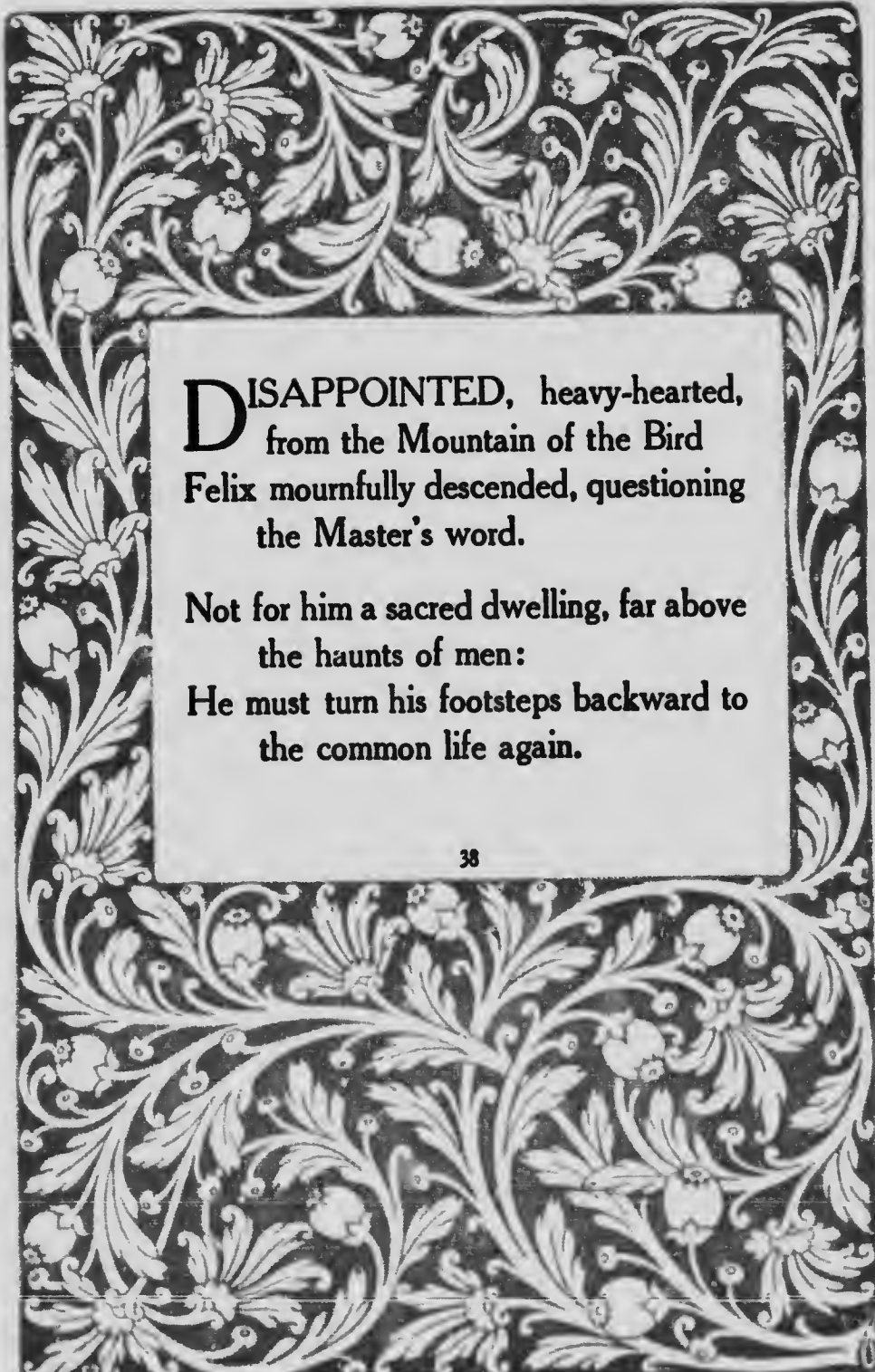


**R**EAD! perchance the clue to guide  
thee hidden in the words may lie:  
*“Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me;  
cleave the wood, and there am I.”*

Can it be the mighty Master spake such  
simple words as these?

Can it be that men must seek Him at  
their toil 'mid rocks and trees?



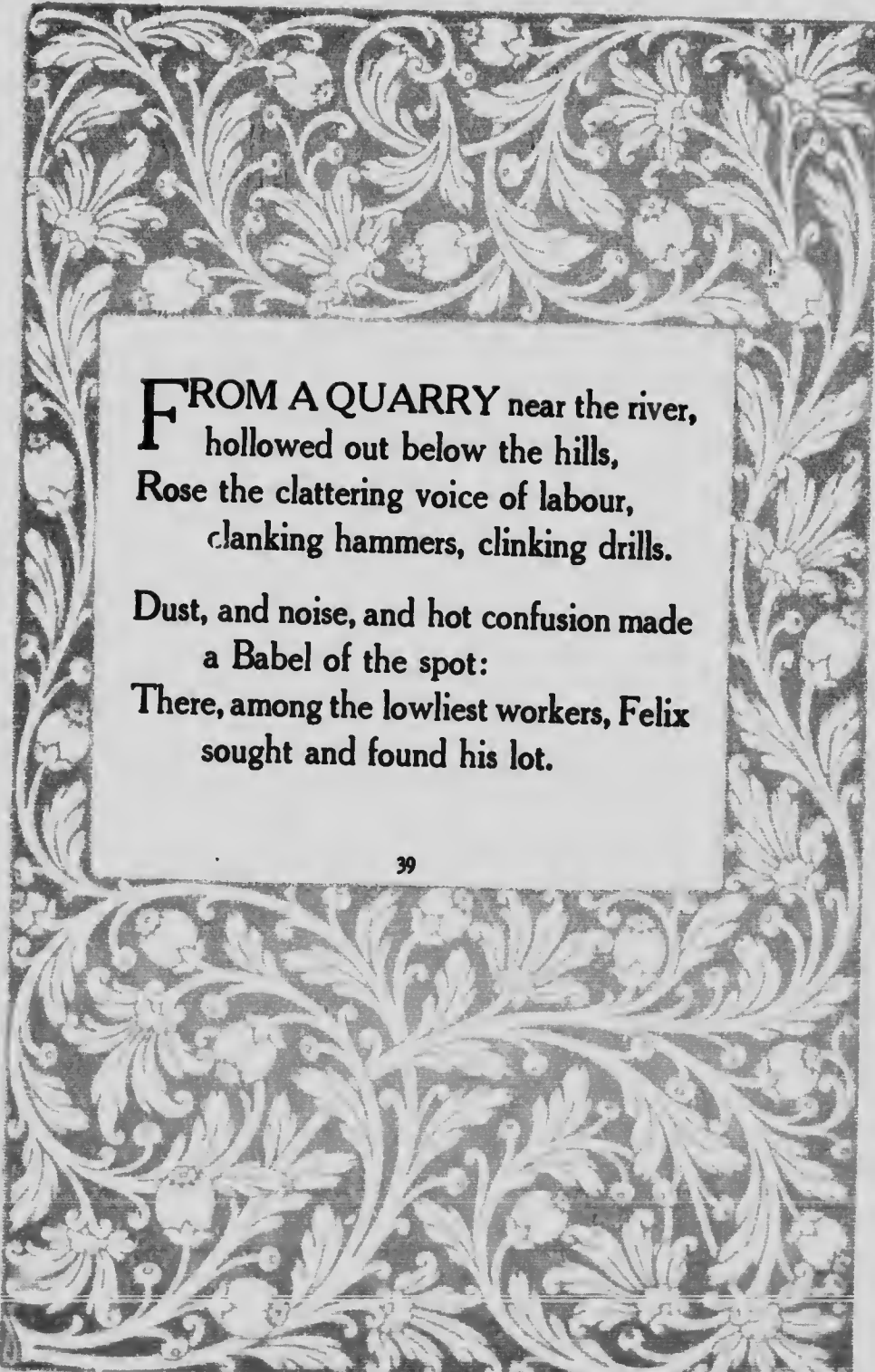


**D**ISAPPOINTED, heavy-hearted,  
from the Mountain of the Bird  
Felix mournfully descended, questioning  
the Master's word.

Not for him a sacred dwelling, far above  
the haunts of men:

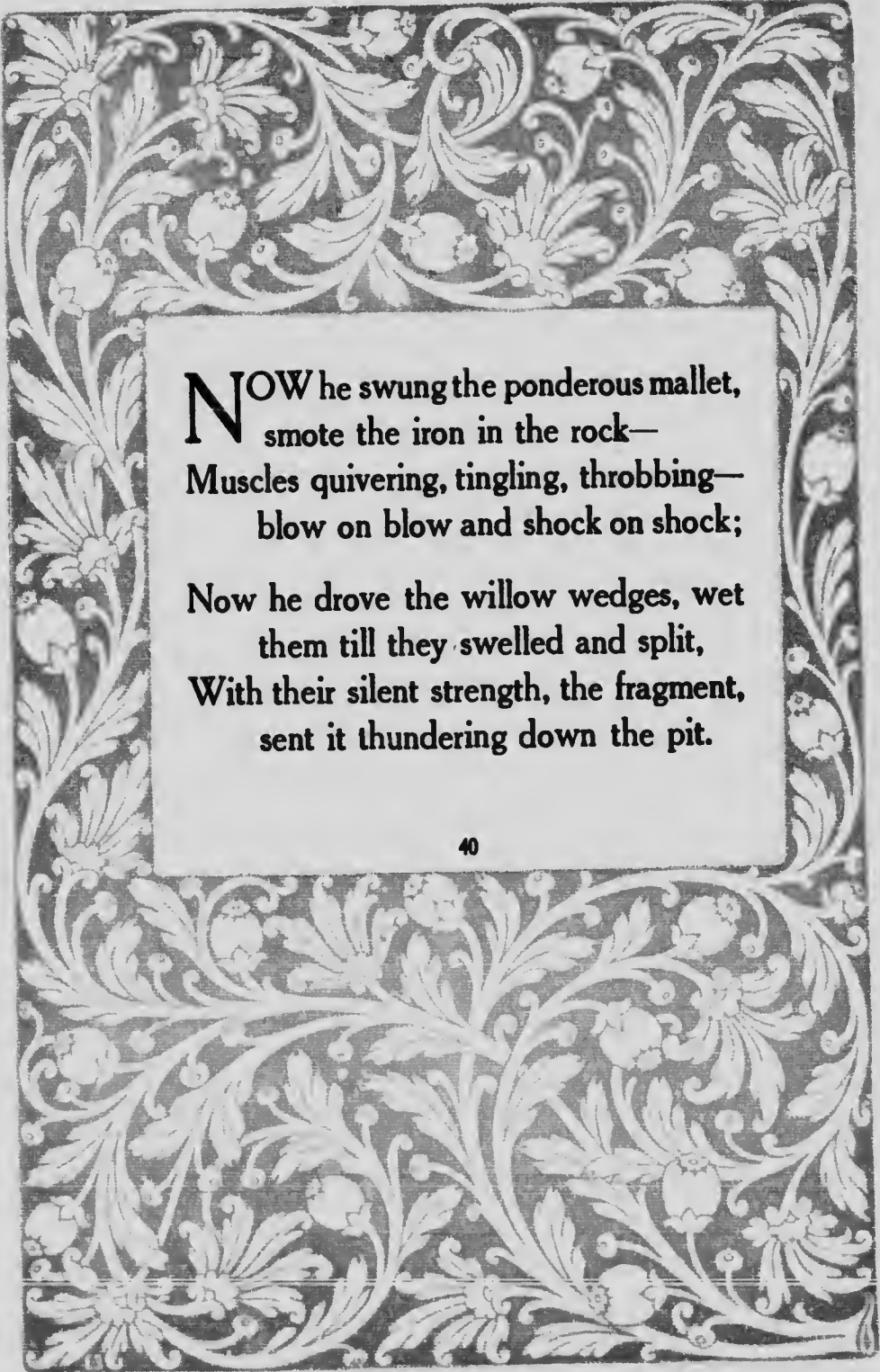
He must turn his footsteps backward to  
the common life again.





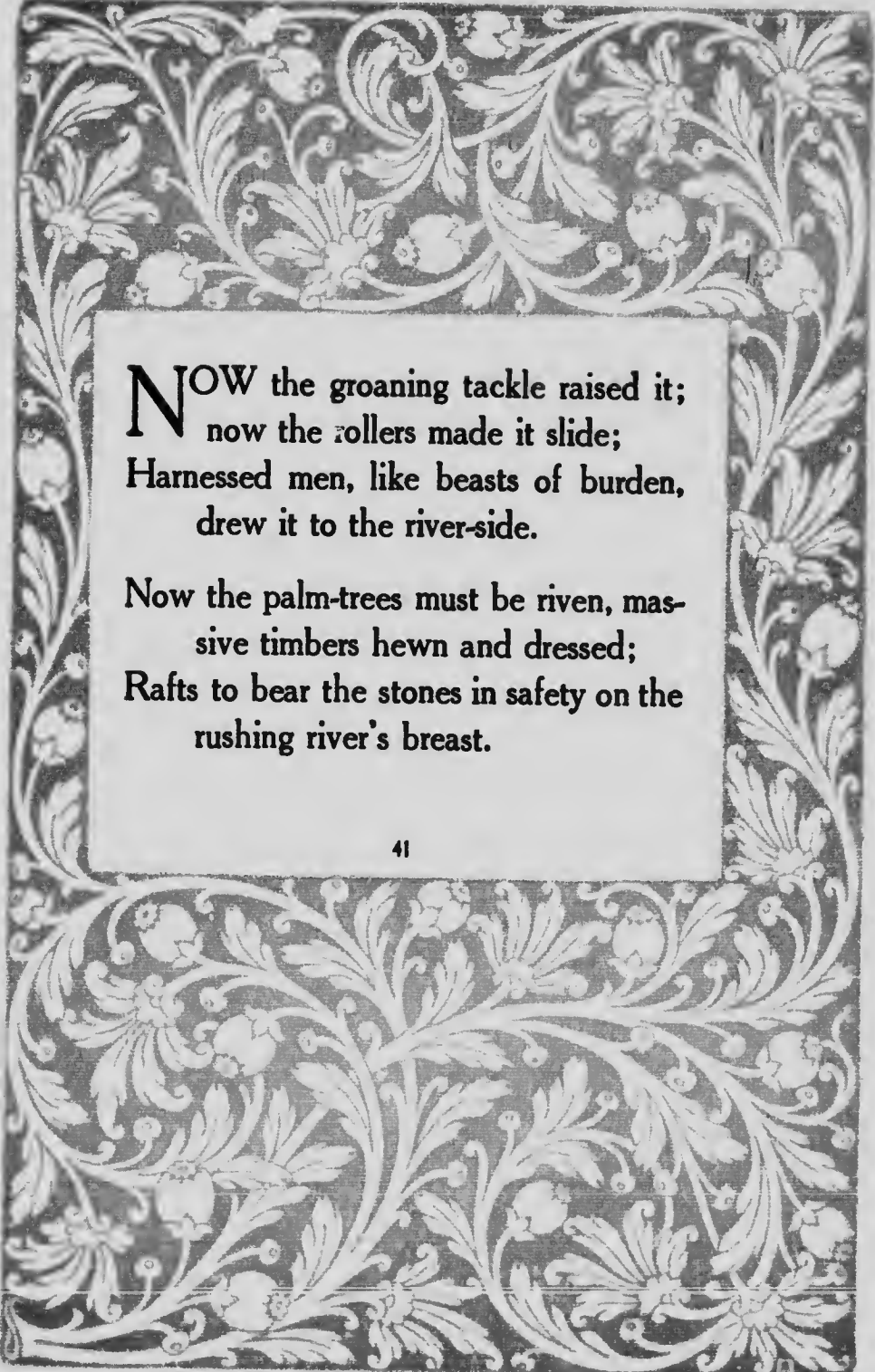
**F**ROM A QUARRY near the river,  
hollowed out below the hills,  
Rose the clattering voice of labour,  
clanking hammers, clinking drills.

Dust, and noise, and hot confusion made  
a Babel of the spot:  
There, among the lowliest workers, Felix  
sought and found his lot.



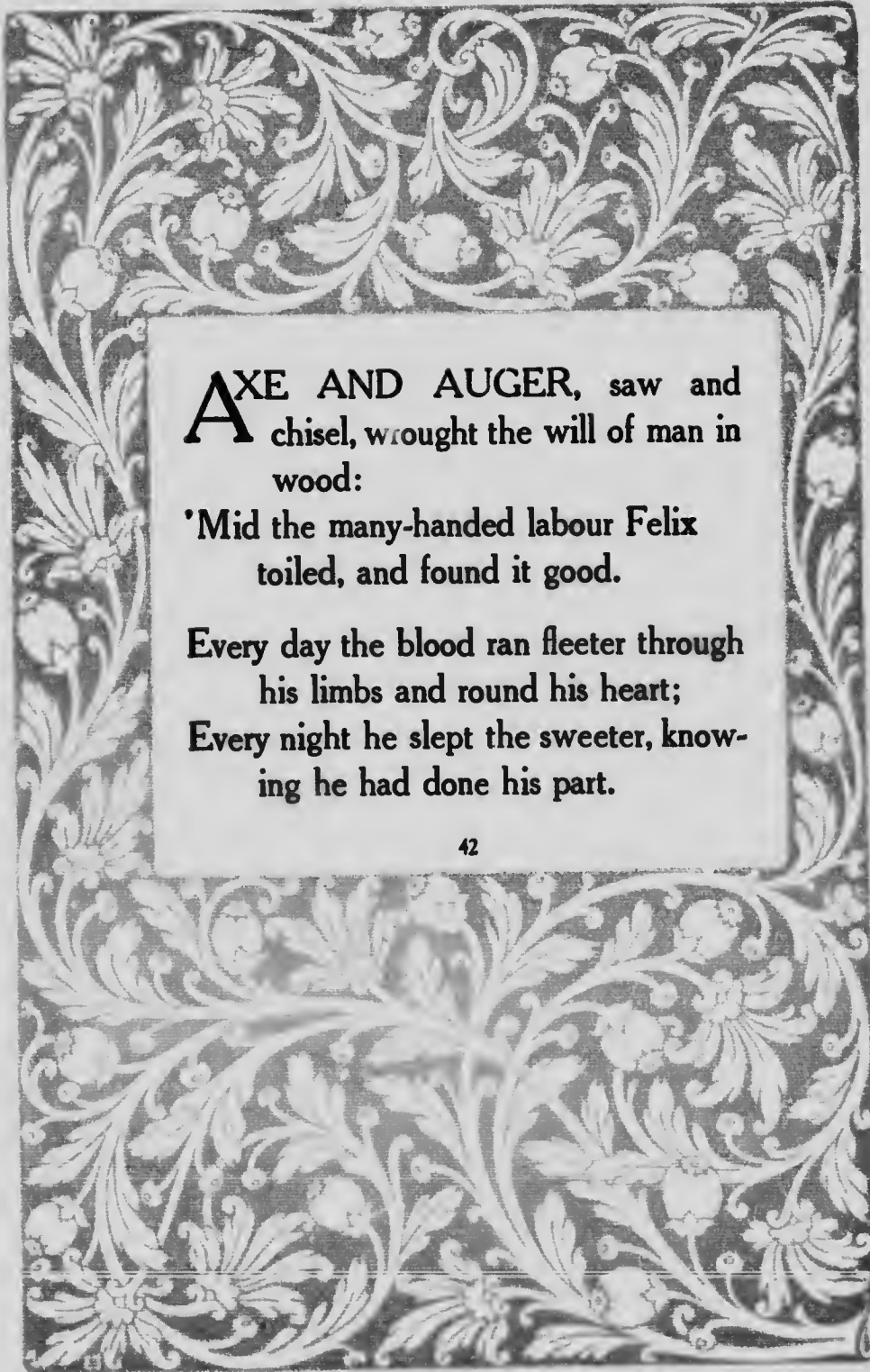
**N**OW he swung the ponderous mallet,  
smote the iron in the rock—  
Muscles quivering, tingling, throbbing—  
blow on blow and shock on shock;

Now he drove the willow wedges, wet  
them till they swelled and split,  
With their silent strength, the fragment,  
sent it thundering down the pit.



**N**OW the groaning tackle raised it;  
now the rollers made it slide;  
Harnessed men, like beasts of burden,  
drew it to the river-side.

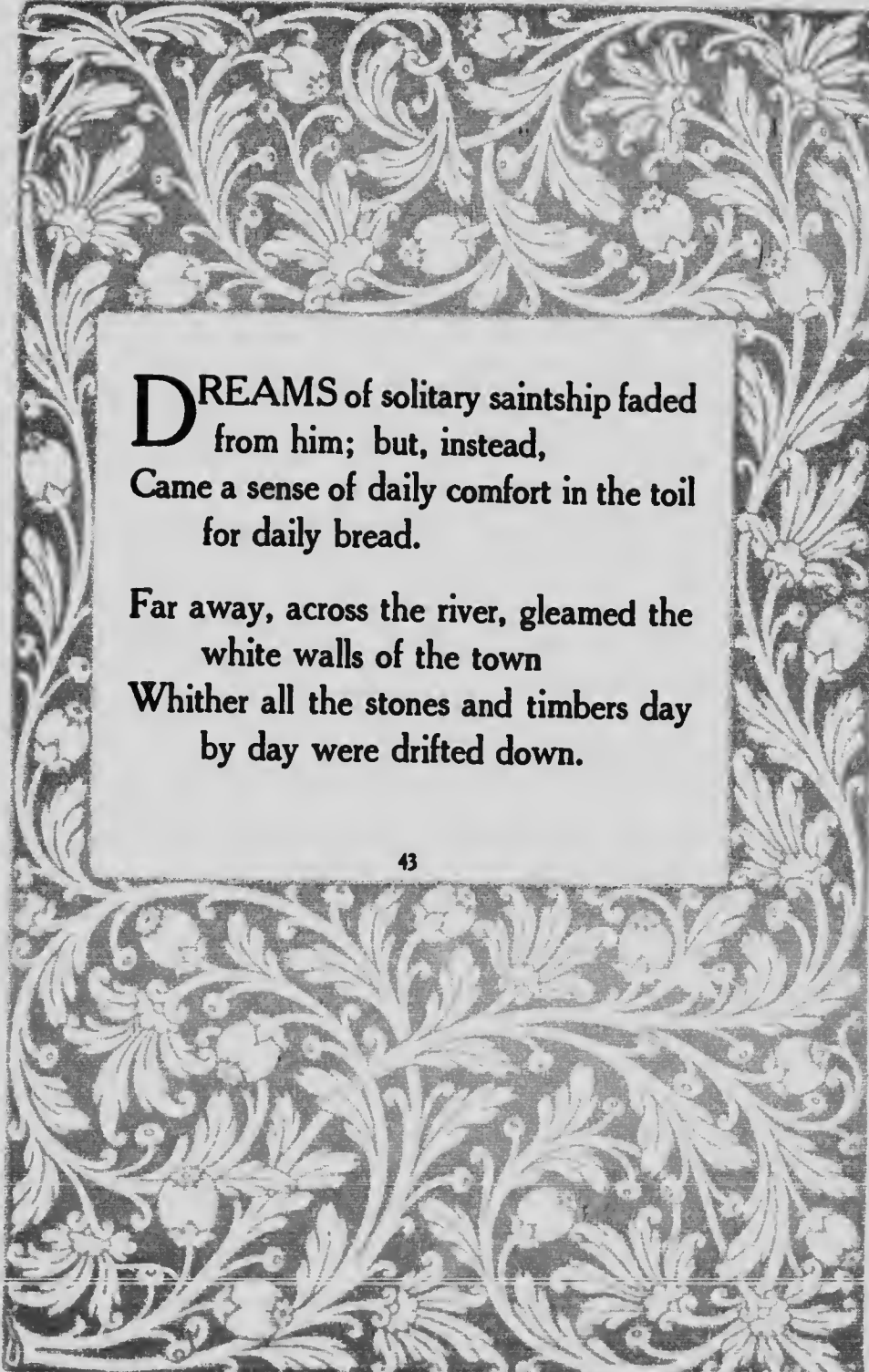
Now the palm-trees must be riven, mas-  
sive timbers hewn and dressed;  
Rafts to bear the stones in safety on the  
rushing river's breast.



**A**XE AND AUGER, saw and  
chisel, wrought the will of man in  
wood:

'Mid the many-handed labour Felix  
toiled, and found it good.

Every day the blood ran fleeter through  
his limbs and round his heart;  
Every night he slept the sweeter, know-  
ing he had done his part.



**D**REAMS of solitary saintship faded  
from him; but, instead,  
Came a sense of daily comfort in the toil  
for daily bread.

Far away, across the river, gleamed the  
white walls of the town  
Whither all the stones and timbers day  
by day were drifted down.



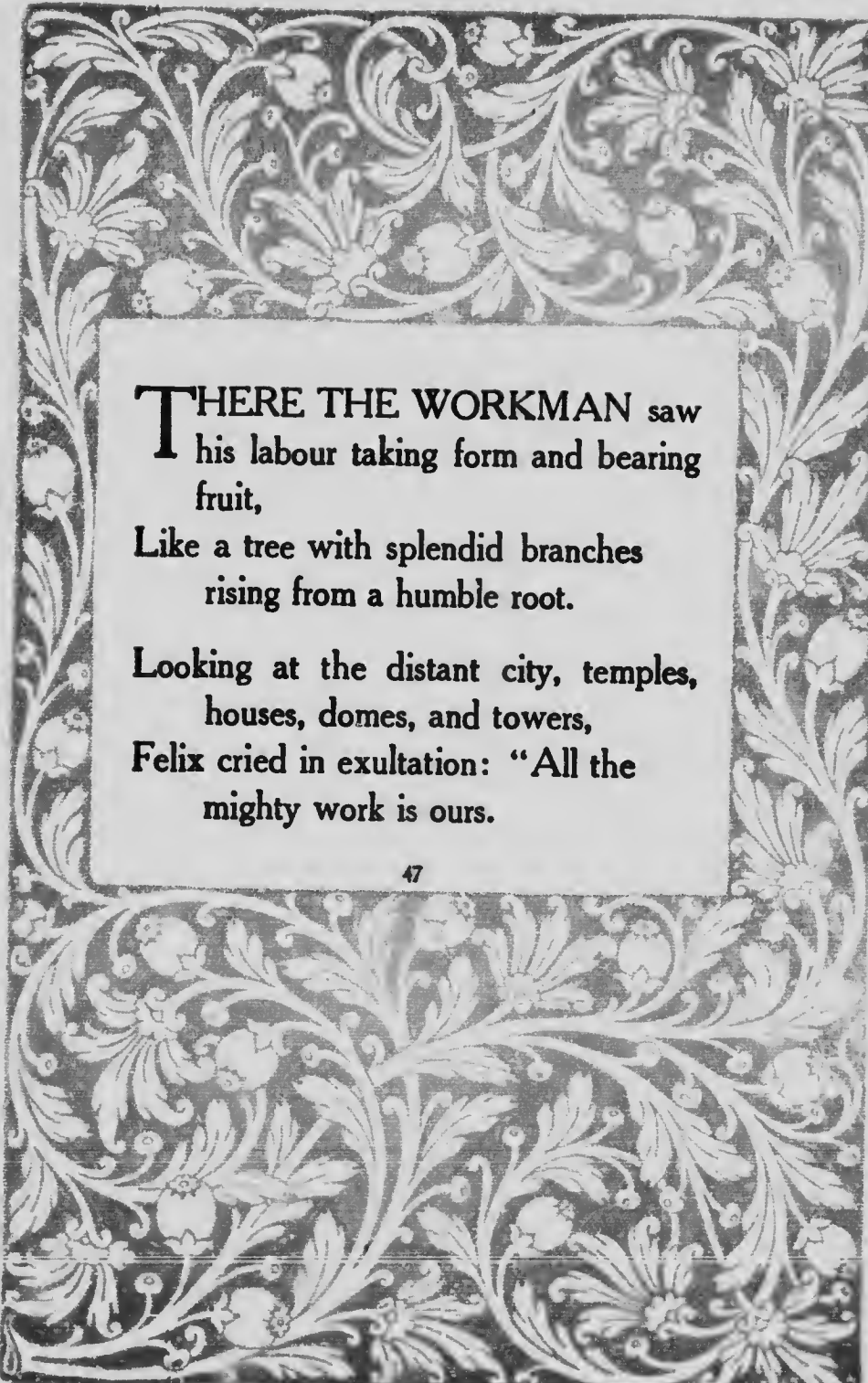
***D**REAMS of solitary saintship  
faded from him; but, instead,  
Came a sense of daily comfort in the  
toil for daily bread.*







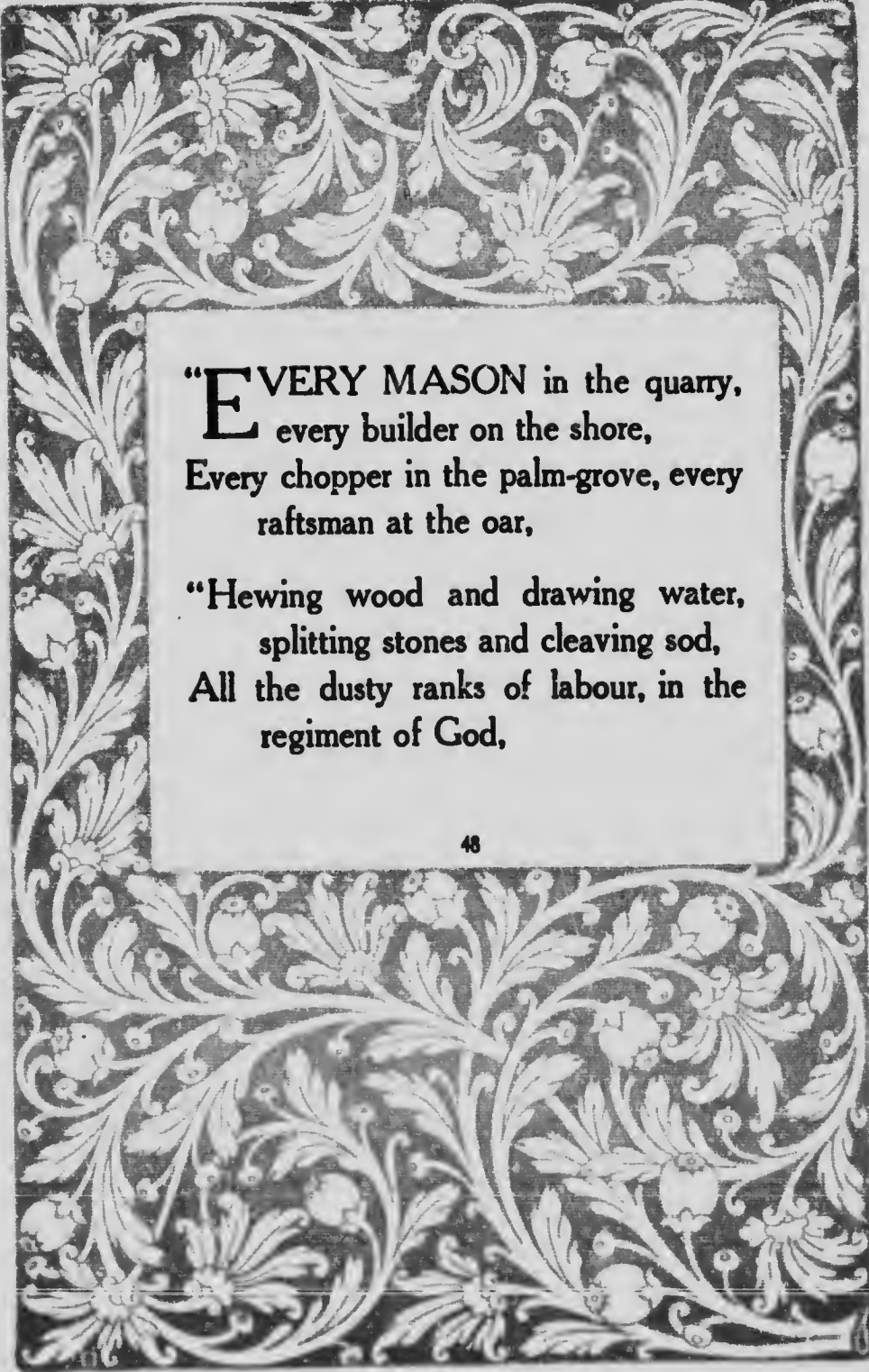




**T**HERE THE WORKMAN saw  
his labour taking form and bearing  
fruit,


Like a tree with splendid branches  
rising from a humble root.

Looking at the distant city, temples,  
houses, domes, and towers,  
Felix cried in exultation: "All the  
mighty work is ours.



**“EVERY MASON** in the quarry,  
every builder on the shore,  
Every chopper in the palm-grove, every  
raftsman at the oar,

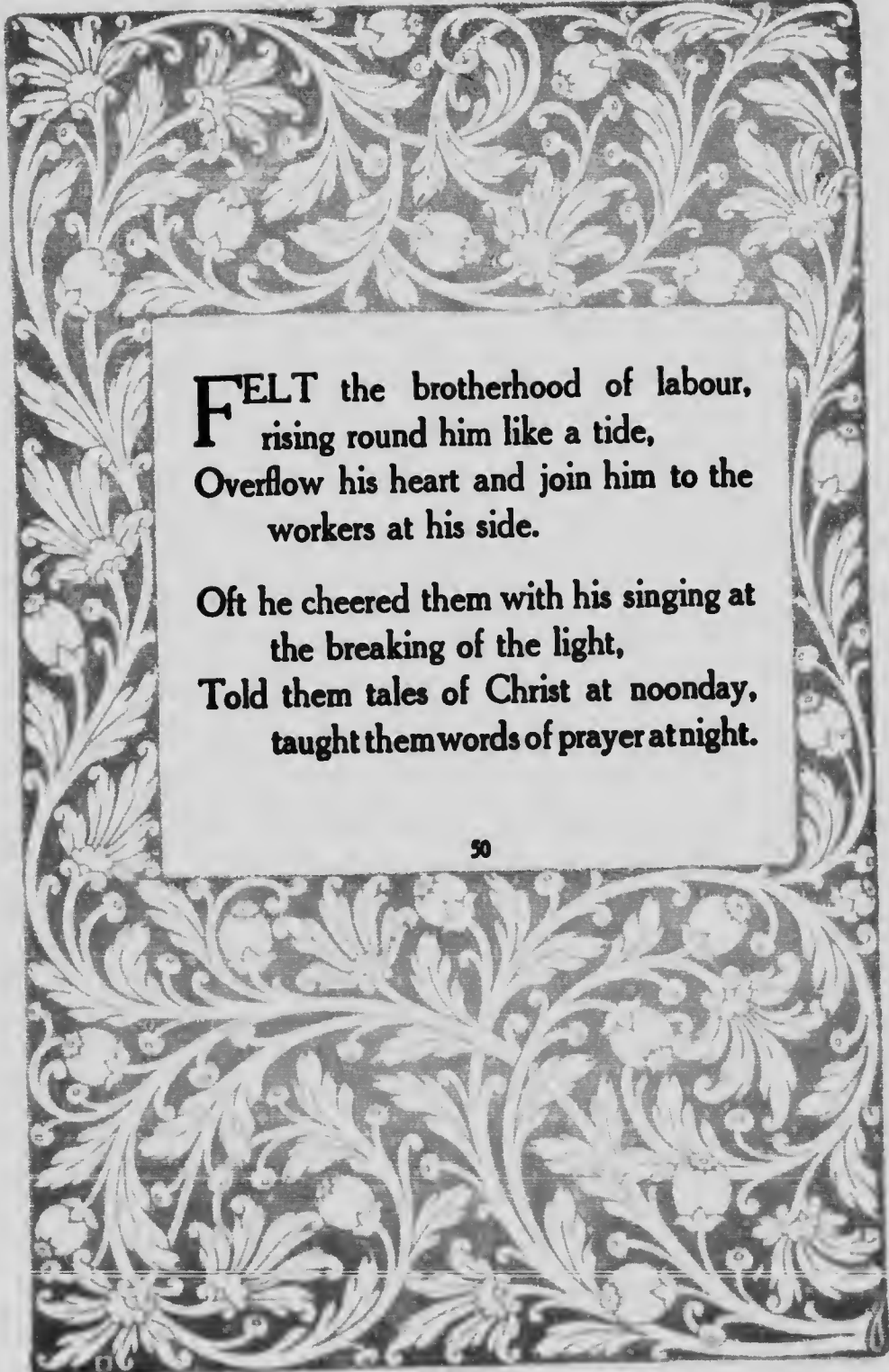
“Hewing wood and drawing water,  
splitting stones and cleaving sod,  
All the dusty ranks of labour, in the  
regiment of God,

A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern in white on a dark background, framing the central text.

**M**ARCH TOGETHER toward  
His triumph, do the task His  
hands prepare:

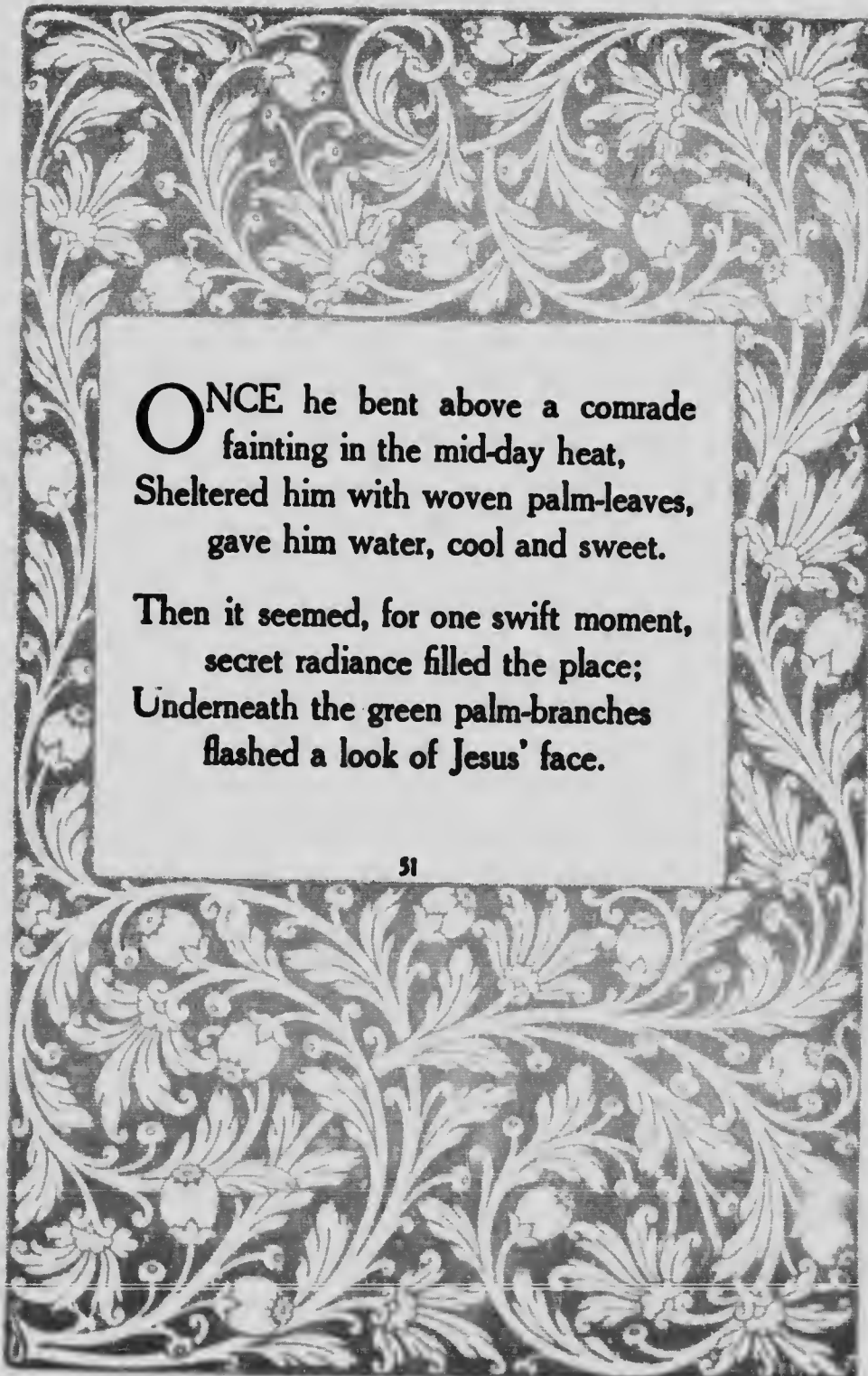
Honest toil is holy service; faithful work  
is praise and prayer."

While he bore the heat and burden  
Felix felt the sense of rest  
Flowing softly like a fountain, deep  
within his weary breast;



**F**ELT the brotherhood of labour,  
rising round him like a tide,  
Overflow his heart and join him to the  
workers at his side.

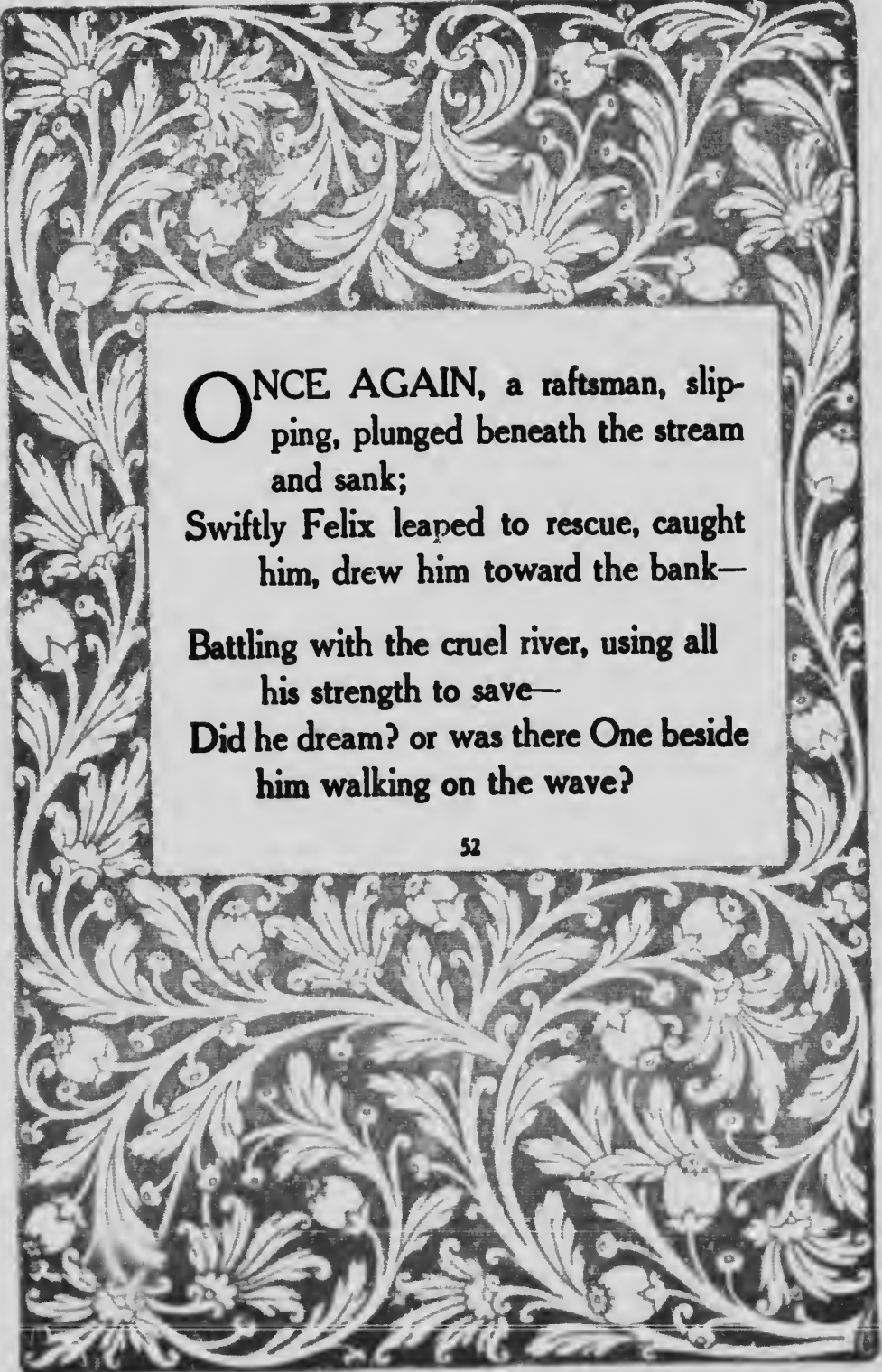
Oft he cheered them with his singing at  
the breaking of the light,  
Told them tales of Christ at noonday,  
taught them words of prayer at night.



**O**NCE he bent above a comrade  
fainting in the mid-day heat,  
Sheltered him with woven palm-leaves,  
gave him water, cool and sweet.

Then it seemed, for one swift moment,  
secret radiance filled the place;  
Underneath the green palm-branches  
flashed a look of Jesus' face.



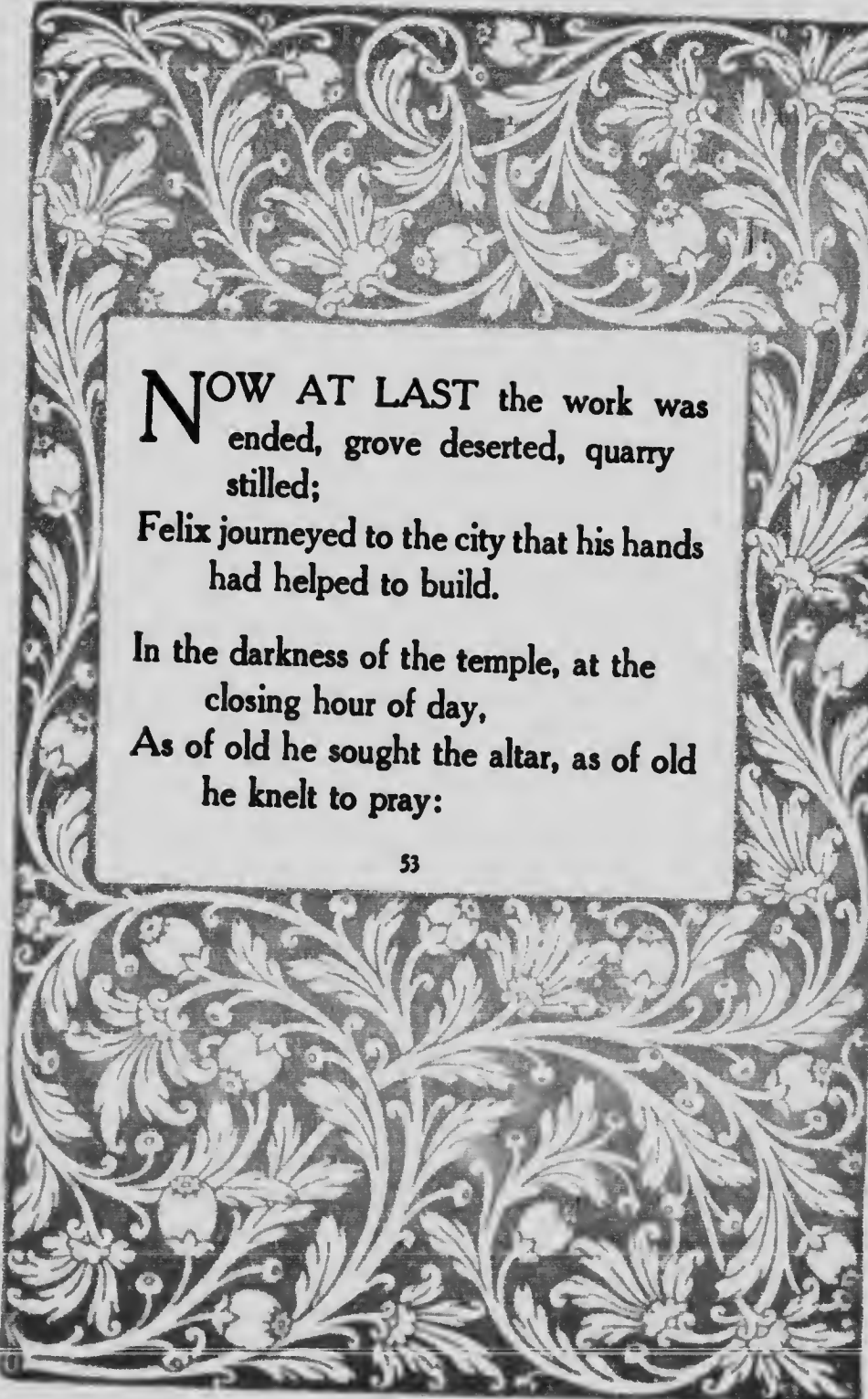


**O**NCE AGAIN, a raftsman, slipping,  
plunged beneath the stream  
and sank;

Swiftly Felix leaped to rescue, caught  
him, drew him toward the bank—

Battling with the cruel river, using all  
his strength to save—

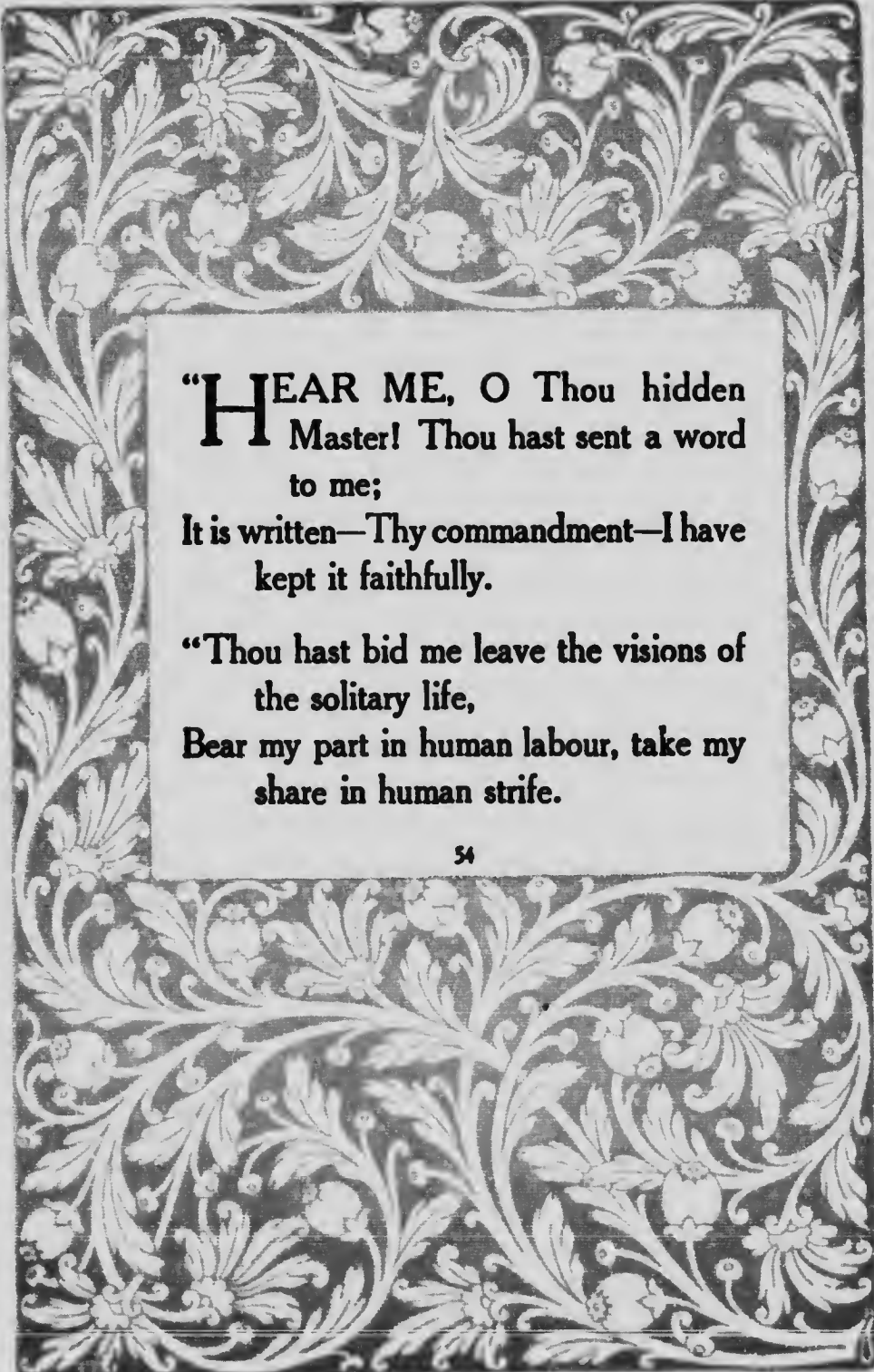
Did he dream? or was there One beside  
him walking on the wave?



**N**OW AT LAST the work was  
ended, grove deserted, quarry  
stilled;

Felix journeyed to the city that his hands  
had helped to build.

In the darkness of the temple, at the  
closing hour of day,  
As of old he sought the altar, as of old  
he knelt to pray:

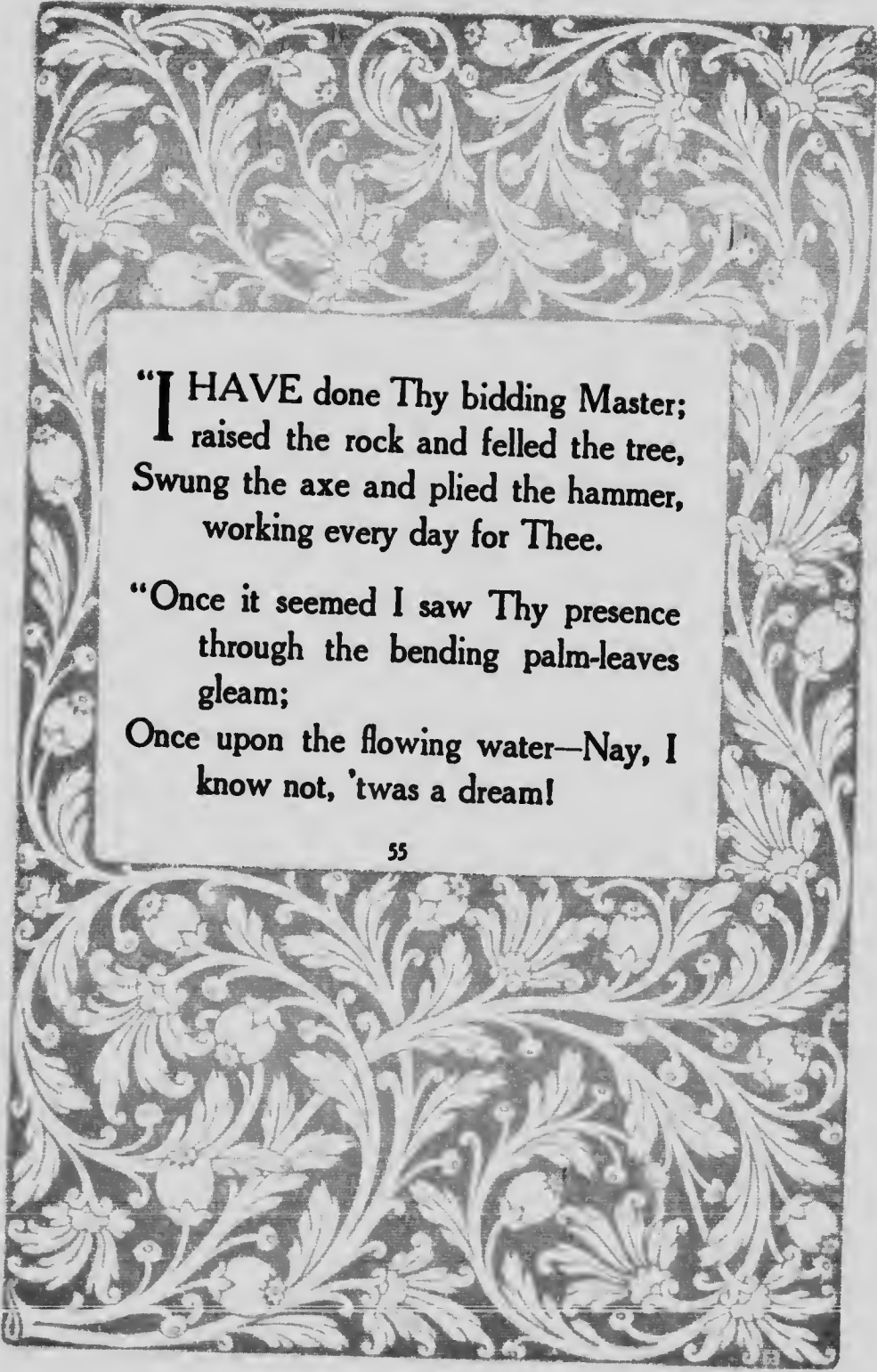


**H**EAR ME, O Thou hidden  
Master! Thou hast sent a word  
to me;

It is written—Thy commandment—I have  
kept it faithfully.

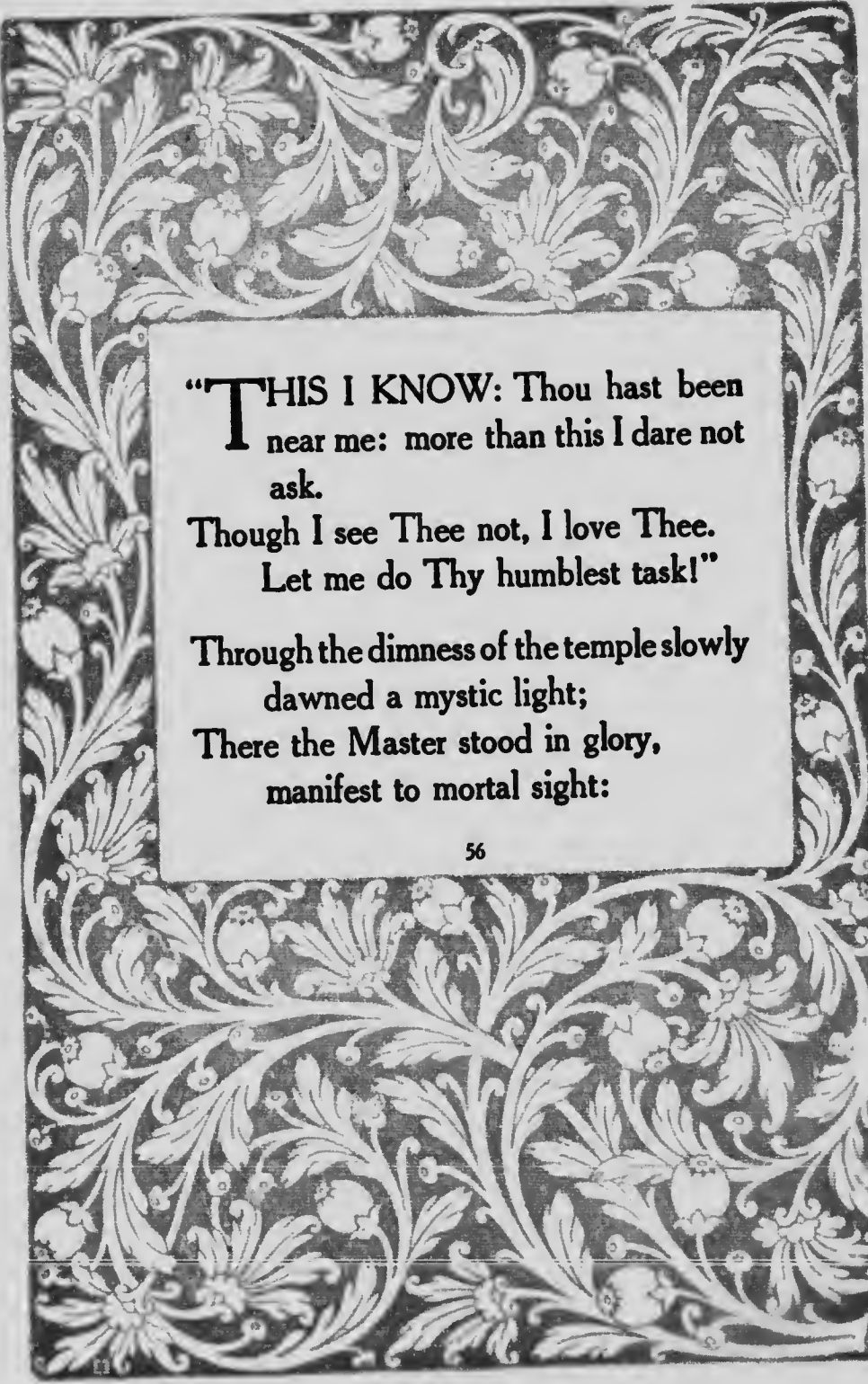
“Thou hast bid me leave the visions of  
the solitary life,  
Bear my part in human labour, take my  
share in human strife.



A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern in a light color against a dark background, framing the text.

**I** HAVE done Thy bidding Master;  
I raised the rock and felled the tree,  
Swung the axe and plied the hammer,  
working every day for Thee.

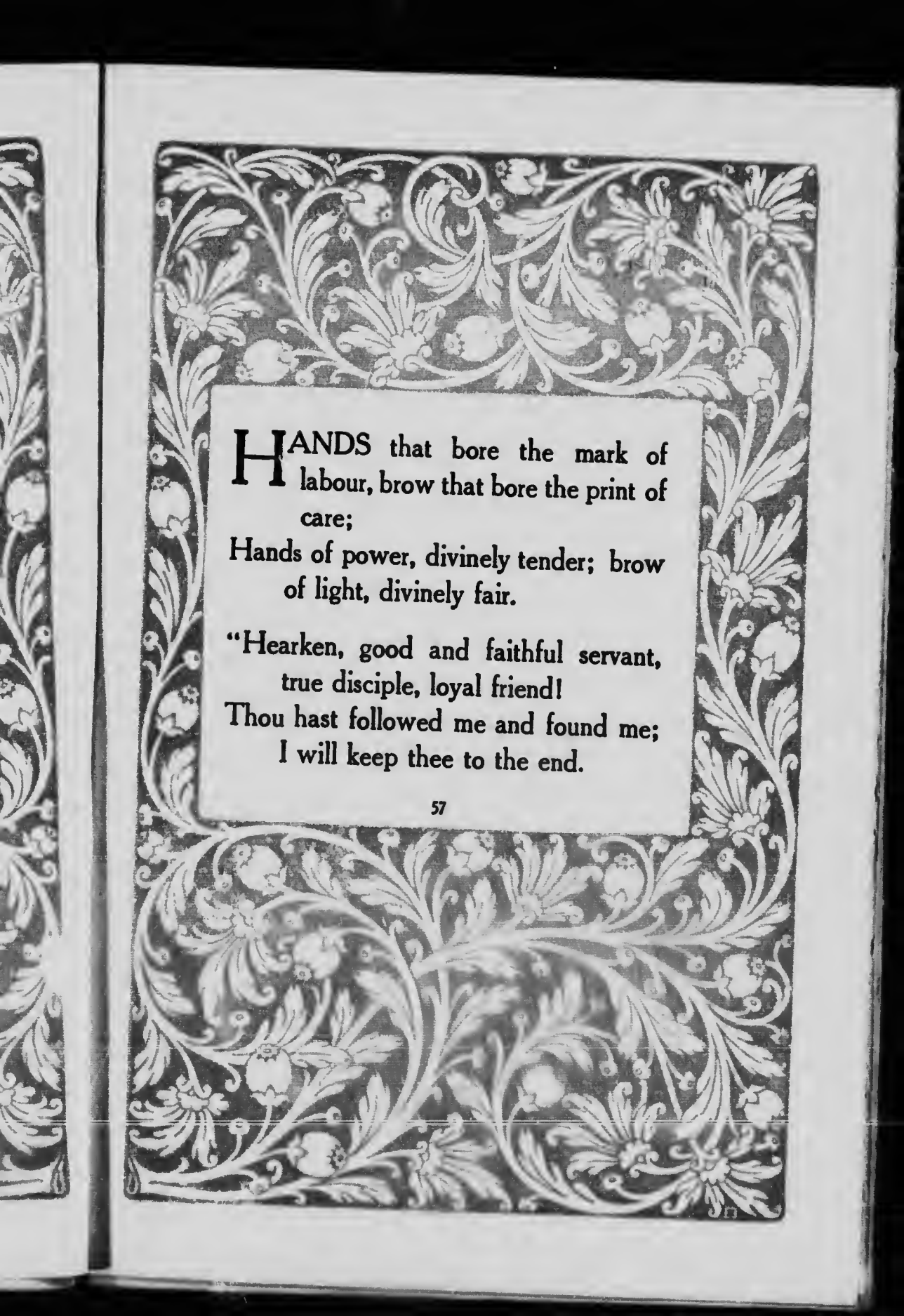
“Once it seemed I saw Thy presence  
through the bending palm-leaves  
gleam;  
Once upon the flowing water—Nay, I  
know not, ’twas a dream!



**T**HIS I KNOW: Thou hast been  
near me: more than this I dare not  
ask.

Though I see Thee not, I love Thee.  
Let me do Thy humblest task!"

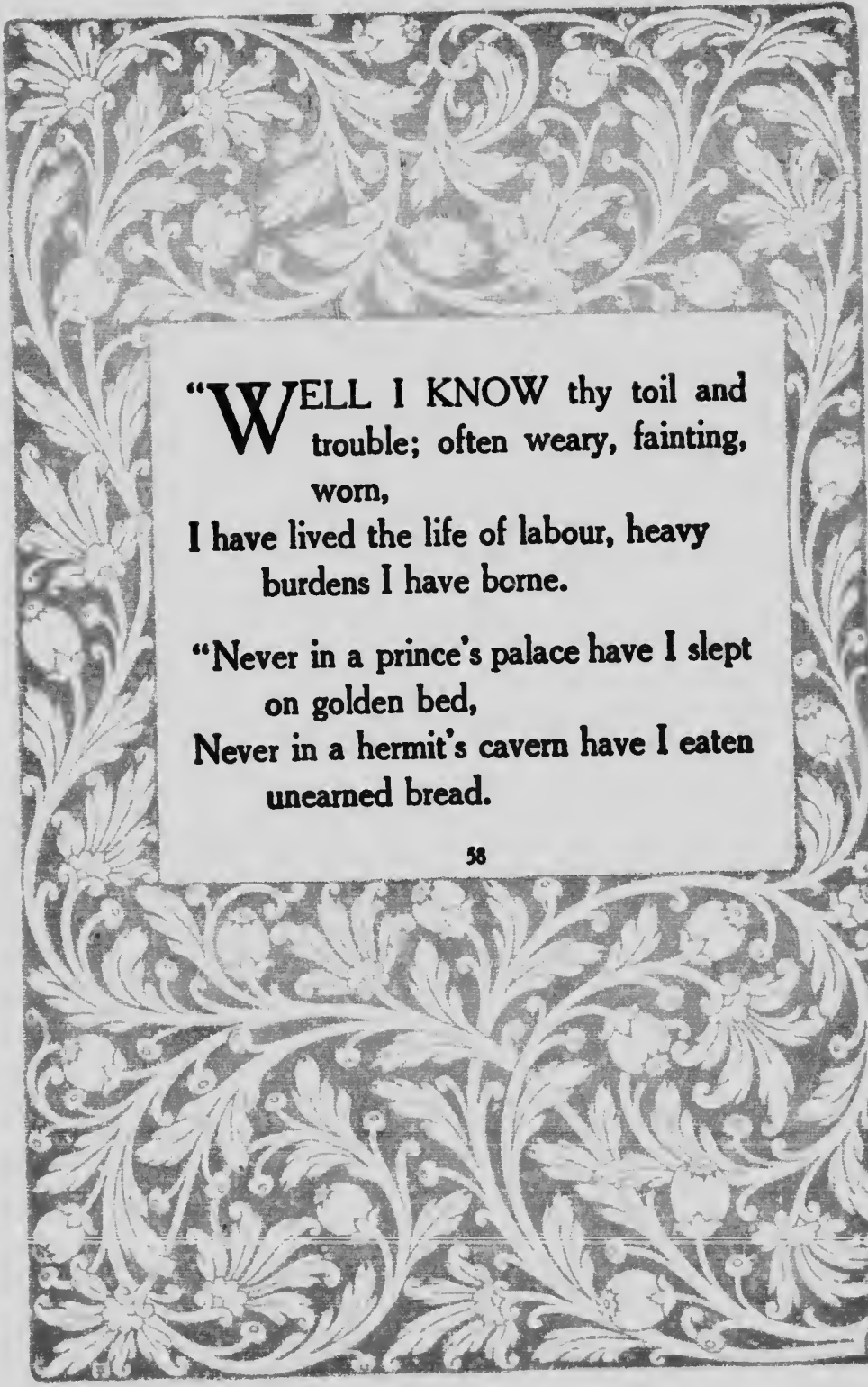
Through the dimness of the temple slowly  
dawned a mystic light;  
There the Master stood in glory,  
manifest to mortal sight:

A decorative border with intricate floral and vine patterns surrounds the text. The design features stylized leaves, flowers, and scrolling vines, creating a rich, textured frame.

**H**ANDS that bore the mark of  
labour, brow that bore the print of  
care;

Hands of power, divinely tender; brow  
of light, divinely fair.

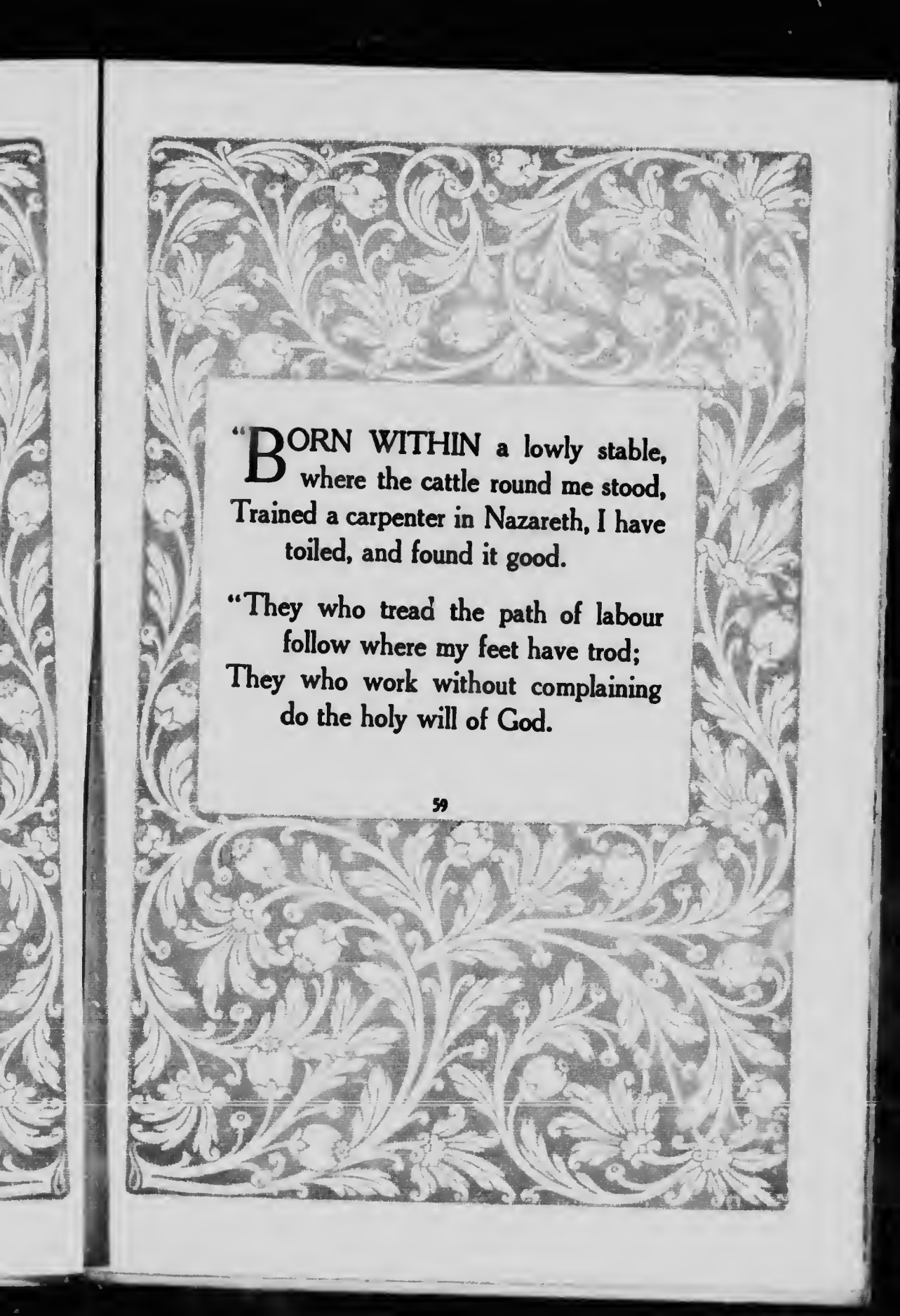
“Hearken, good and faithful servant,  
true disciple, loyal friend!  
Thou hast followed me and found me;  
I will keep thee to the end.



**W**ELL I KNOW thy toil and  
trouble; often weary, fainting,  
worn,

I have lived the life of labour, heavy  
burdens I have borne.

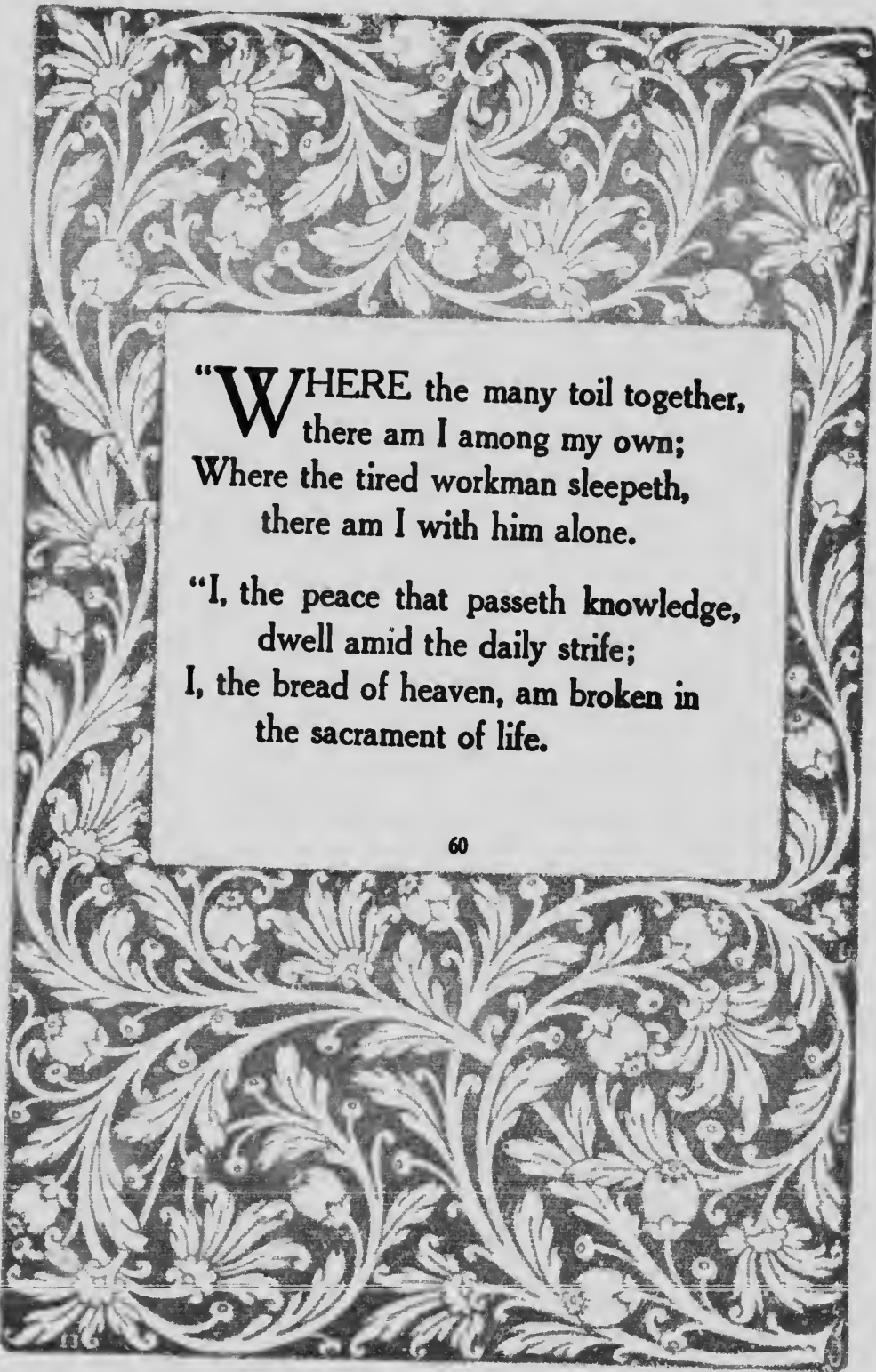
“Never in a prince’s palace have I slept  
on golden bed,  
Never in a hermit’s cavern have I eaten  
uncarned bread.

A decorative border with a repeating floral and vine pattern in a light color against a dark background, framing the text.

**B**ORN WITHIN a lowly stable,  
where the cattle round me stood,  
Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have  
toiled, and found it good.

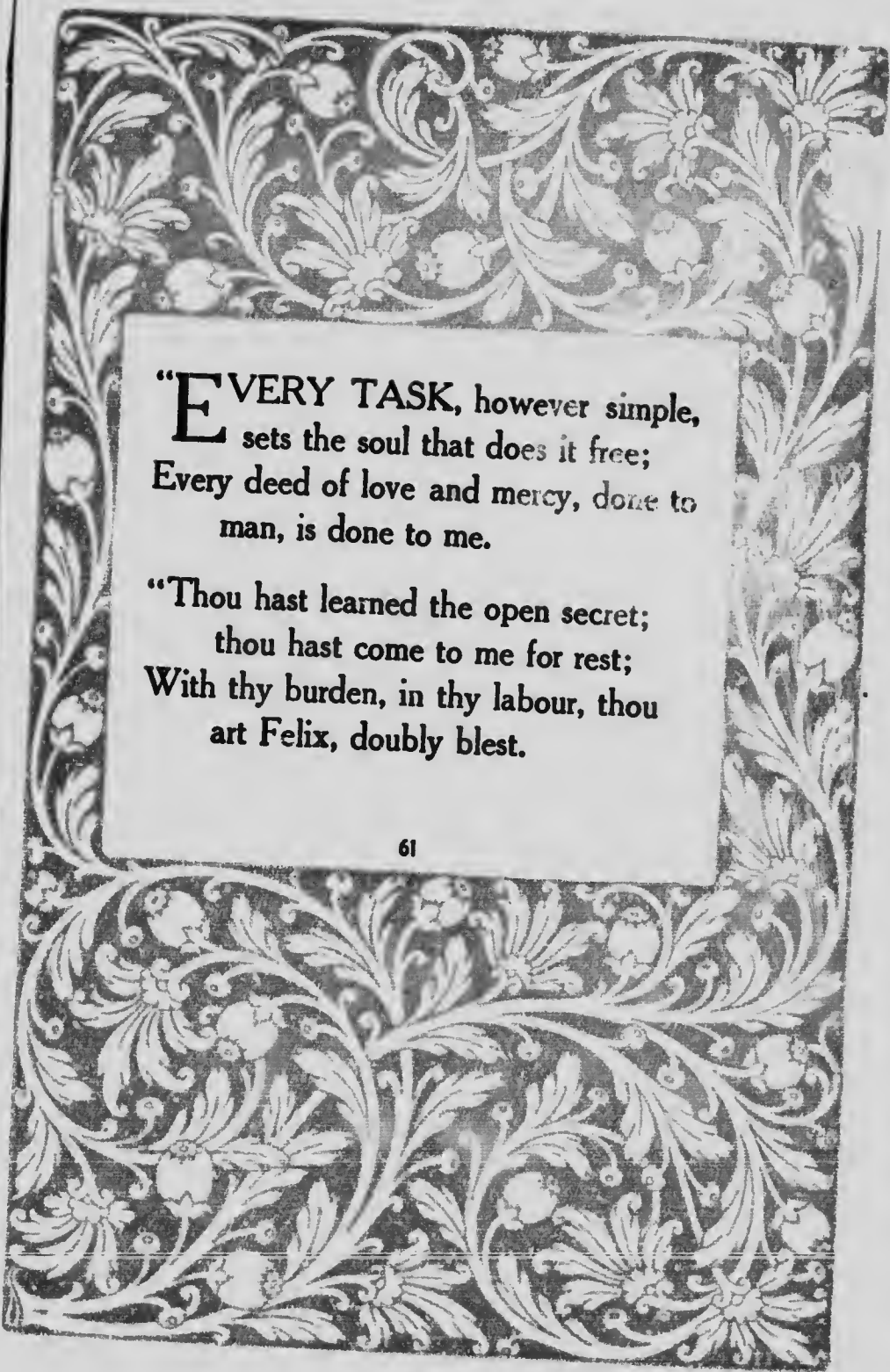
“They who tread the path of labour  
follow where my feet have trod;  
They who work without complaining  
do the holy will of God.





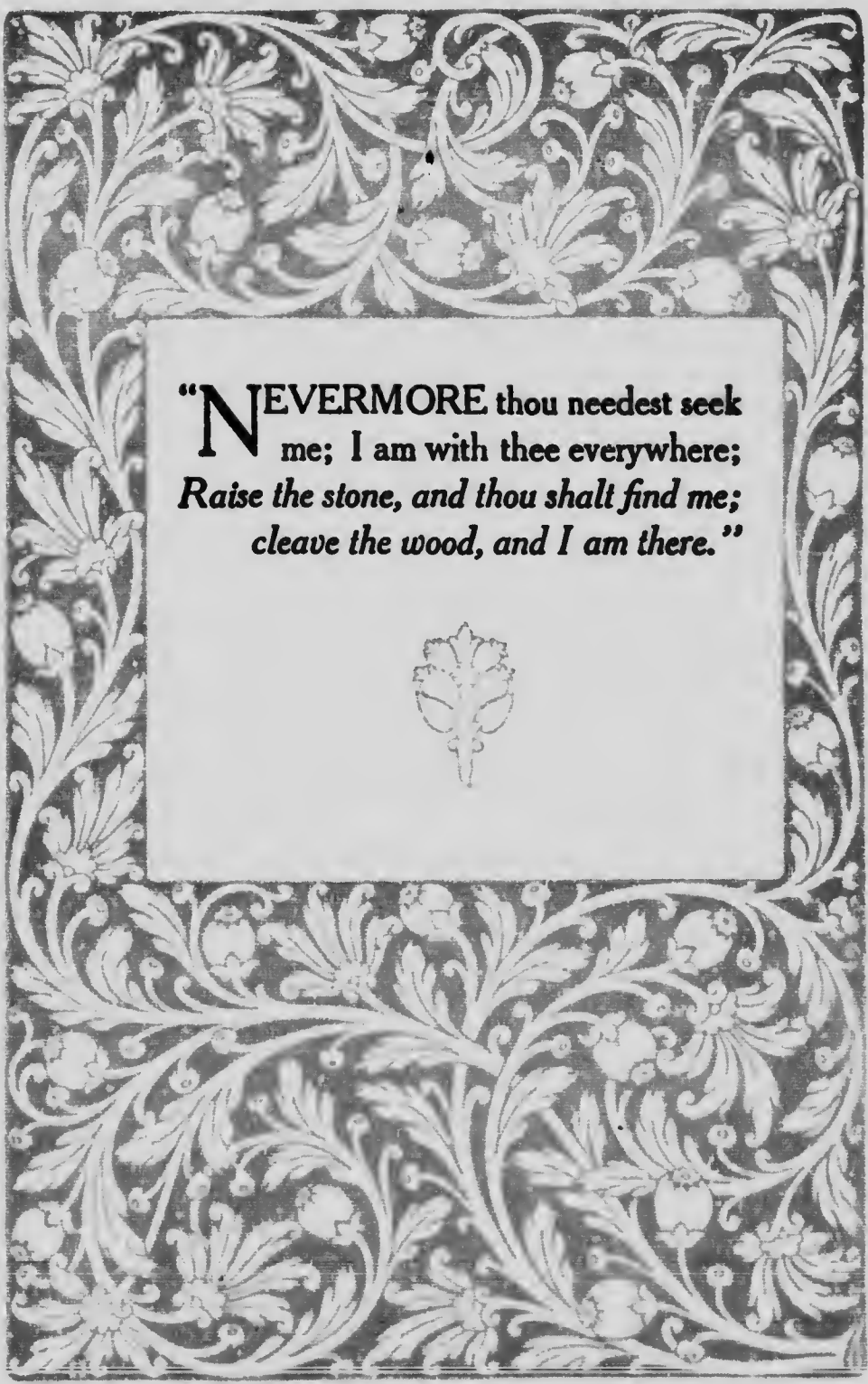
**W**HERE the many toil together,  
there am I among my own;  
Where the tired workman sleepeth,  
there am I with him alone.

"I, the peace that passeth knowledge,  
dwell amid the daily strife;  
I, the bread of heaven, am broken in  
the sacrament of life.



**E**VERY TASK, however simple,  
sets the soul that does it free;  
Every deed of love and mercy, done to  
man, is done to me.

“Thou hast learned the open secret;  
thou hast come to me for rest;  
With thy burden, in thy labour, thou  
art Felix, doubly blest.



**N**EVERMORE thou needest seek  
me; I am with thee everywhere;  
*Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me;  
cleave the wood, and I am there.*"

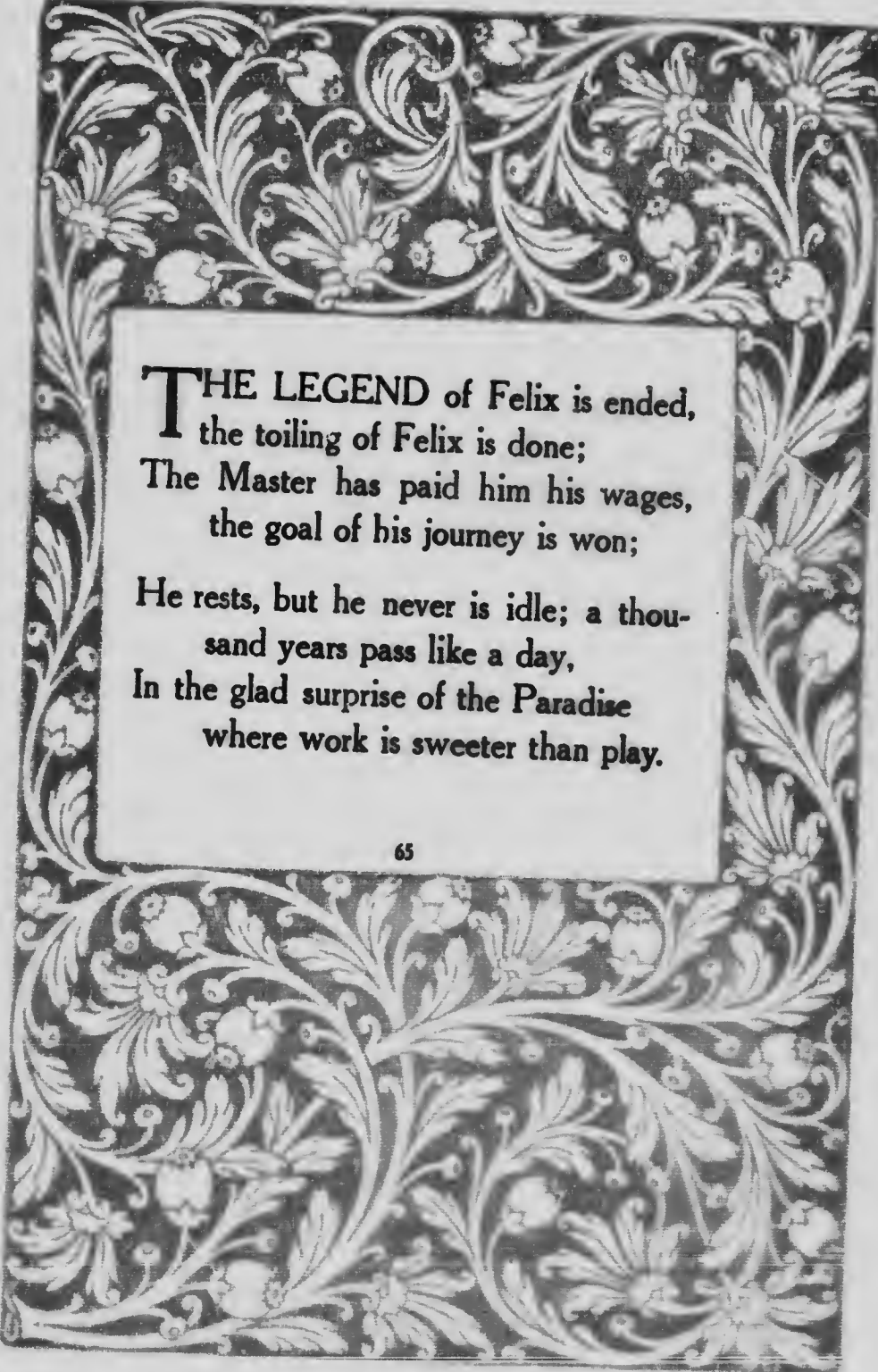




ENVOY

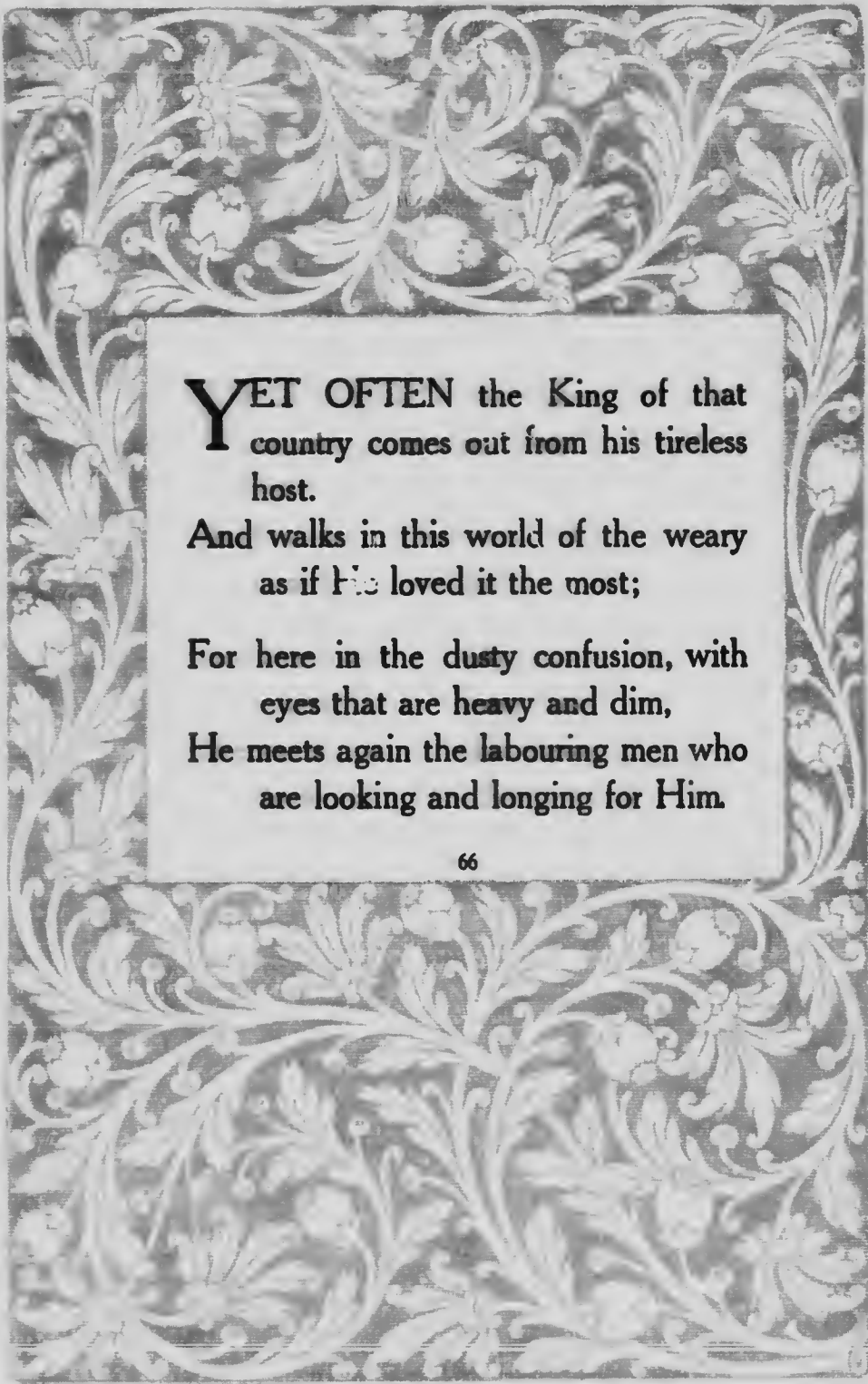






**T**HE LEGEND of Felix is ended,  
the toiling of Felix is done;  
The Master has paid him his wages,  
the goal of his journey is won;

He rests, but he never is idle; a thou-  
sand years pass like a day,  
In the glad surprise of the Paradise  
where work is sweeter than play.

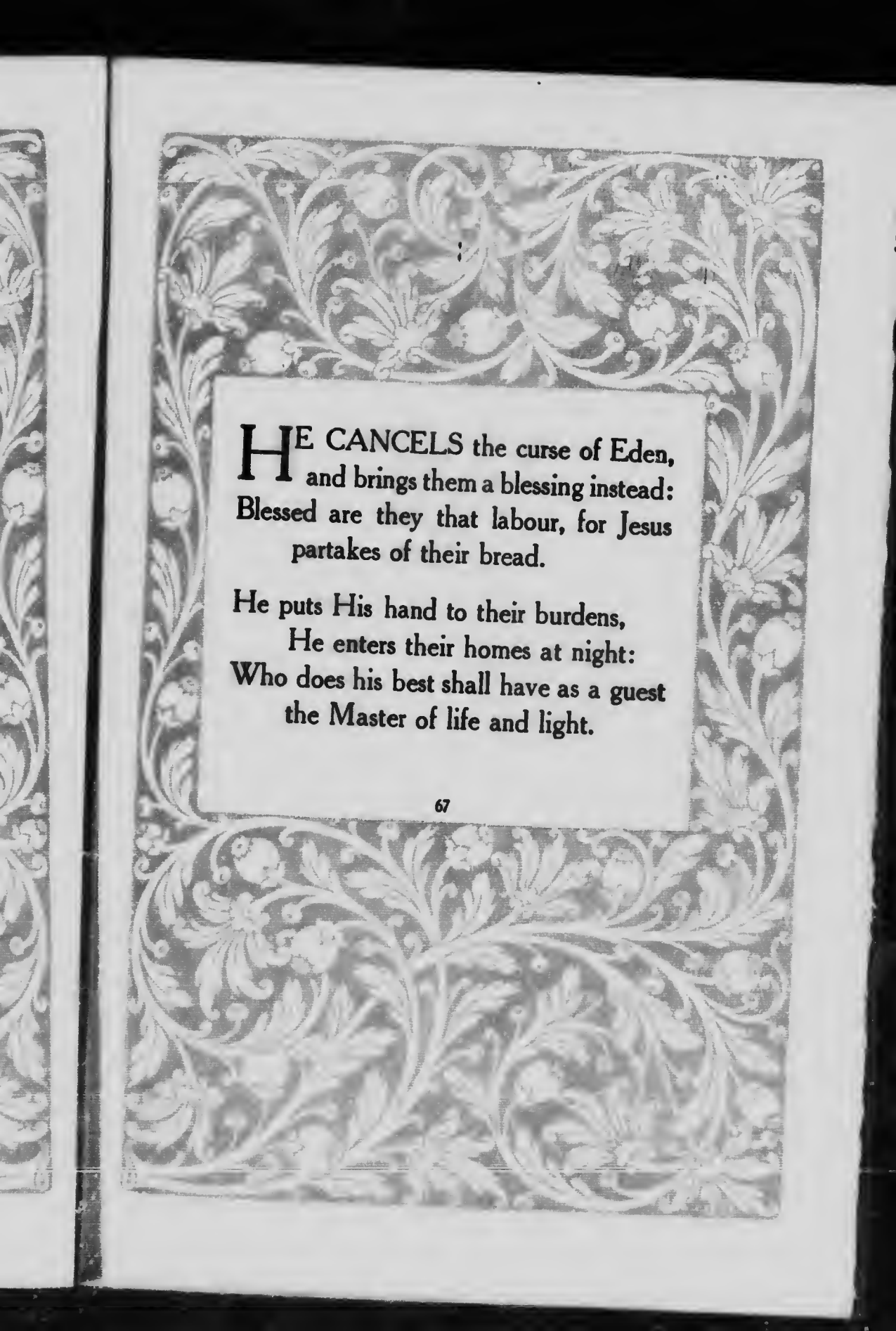


**Y**ET OFTEN the King of that  
country comes out from his tireless  
host.

And walks in this world of the weary  
as if He loved it the most;

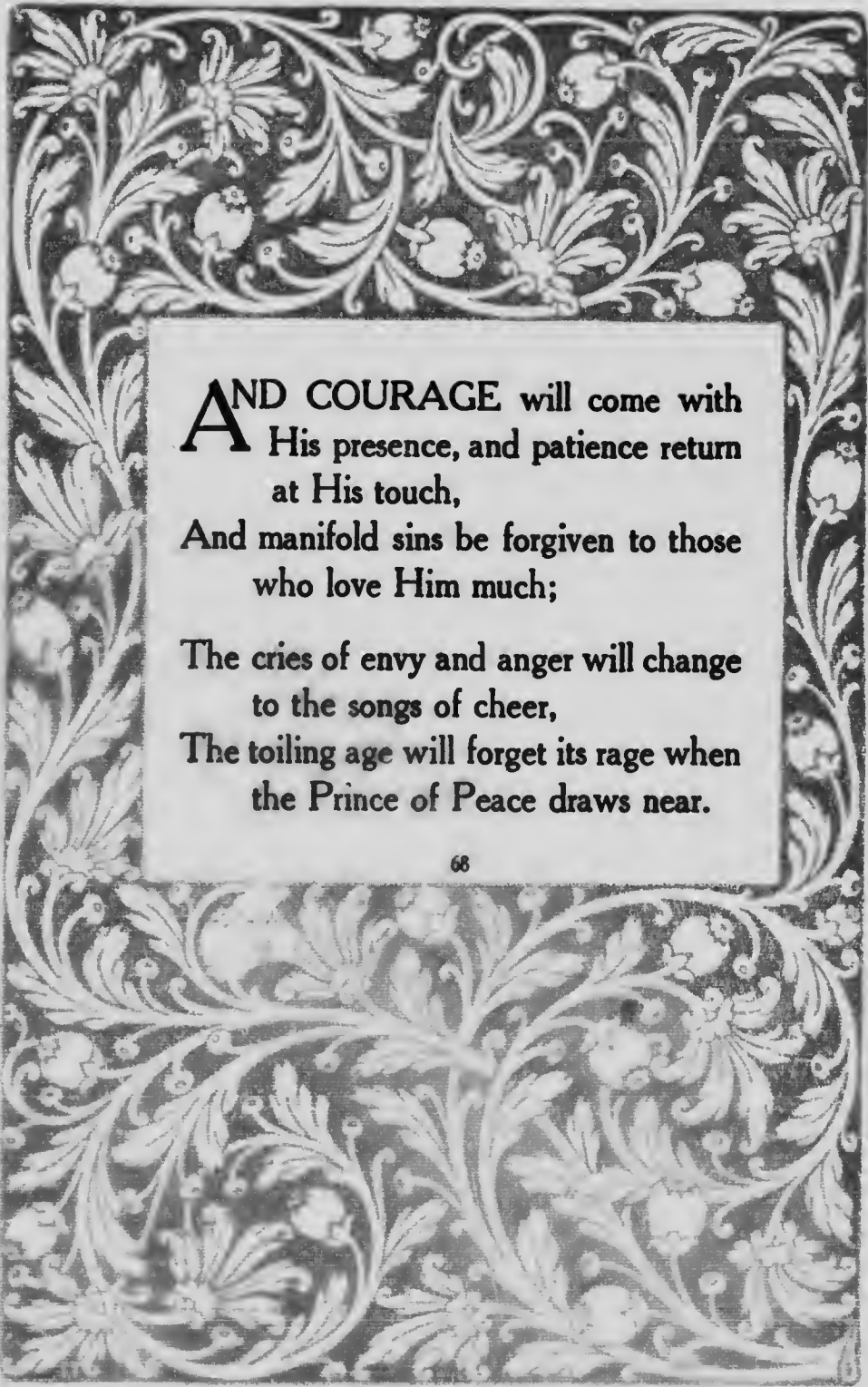
For here in the dusty confusion, with  
eyes that are heavy and dim,

He meets again the labouring men who  
are looking and longing for Him.

A decorative border with intricate floral and vine patterns surrounds the text. The border is composed of repeating motifs of leaves, flowers, and scrolling vines, creating a rich, textured frame.

**H**E CANCELS the curse of Eden,  
and brings them a blessing instead:  
Blessed are they that labour, for Jesus  
partakes of their bread.

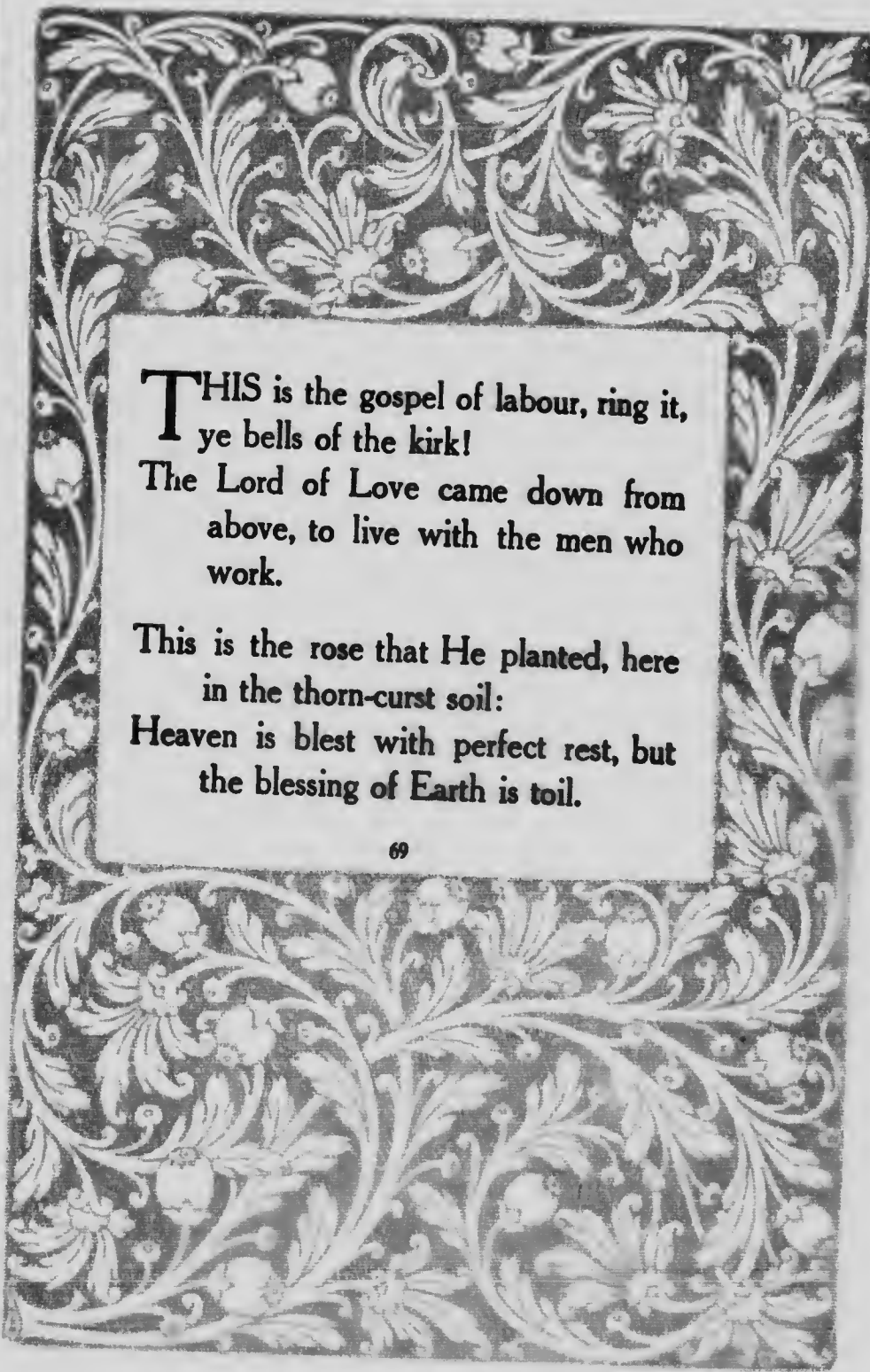
He puts His hand to their burdens,  
He enters their homes at night:  
Who does his best shall have as a guest  
the Master of life and light.



**A**ND COURAGE will come with  
His presence, and patience return  
at His touch,  
And manifold sins be forgiven to those  
who love Him much;

The cries of envy and anger will change  
to the songs of cheer,  
The toiling age will forget its rage when  
the Prince of Peace draws near.



A decorative border with intricate floral and vine patterns surrounds the text. The design features stylized leaves, flowers, and scrolling vines, creating a rich, textured frame.

**T**HIS is the gospel of labour, ring it,  
ye bells of the kirk!  
The Lord of Love came down from  
above, to live with the men who  
work.

This is the rose that He planted, here  
in the thorn-curst soil:  
Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but  
the blessing of Earth is toil.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY  
HERBERT MOORE

THE DECORATIONS  
BY  
EDWARD B. EDWARDS







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