

The Properly Scholarly Attitude

By Adelaide Crapsey

The poet pursues his beautiful theme;
The preacher his golden beatitude;
And I run after a vanishing dream—
The glittering, will-o'-the-wispish gleam
Of the properly scholarly attitude—
The highly desirable, the very advisable,
The hardly acquirable, properly scholarly attitude.

I envy the savage without any clothes,
Who lives in a tropical latitude;
It's little of general culture he knows.
But then he escapes the worrisome woes
Of the properly scholarly attitude—
The unceasingly sighed over, wept over, cried over,
The futilely died over, properly scholarly attitude.

I work and I work till I nearly am dead,
And could say what the watchman said—that I could!
But still, with a sigh and a shake of the head,
"You don't understand," it is ruthlessly said,
"The properly scholarly attitude—
The aye to be sought for, wrought for and fought for,
The ne'er to be caught for, properly scholarly attitude—"

I really am sometimes tempted to say
That it's merely a glittering platitude;
That people have just fallen into the way,
When lacking a subject, to tell of the sway
Of the properly scholarly attitude—
The easily preachable, spread-eagle speechable,
In practice unreachable, properly scholarly attitude.