



THE

MIGHTY

: London :
Geo: Allen :

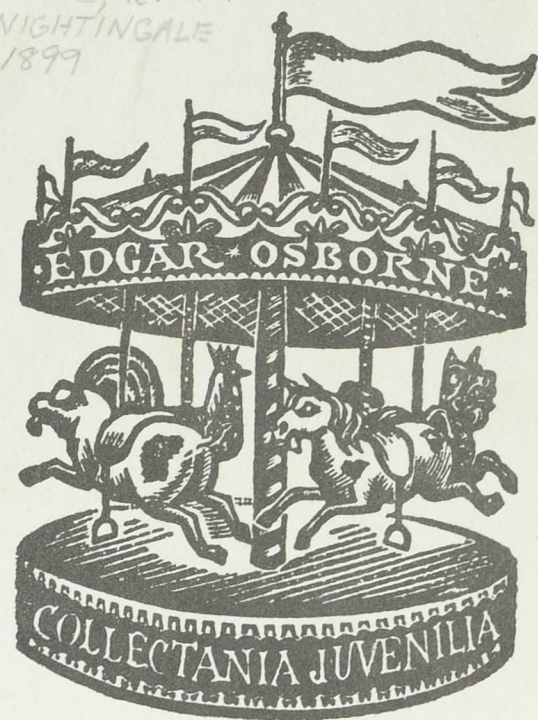
: Dished up on
China plates;
by R: ANDRE :

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ANDRE, RICHARD
NIGHTINGALE
1899



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To Roland
with
Aunt Maggie's love.

Xmas 99.





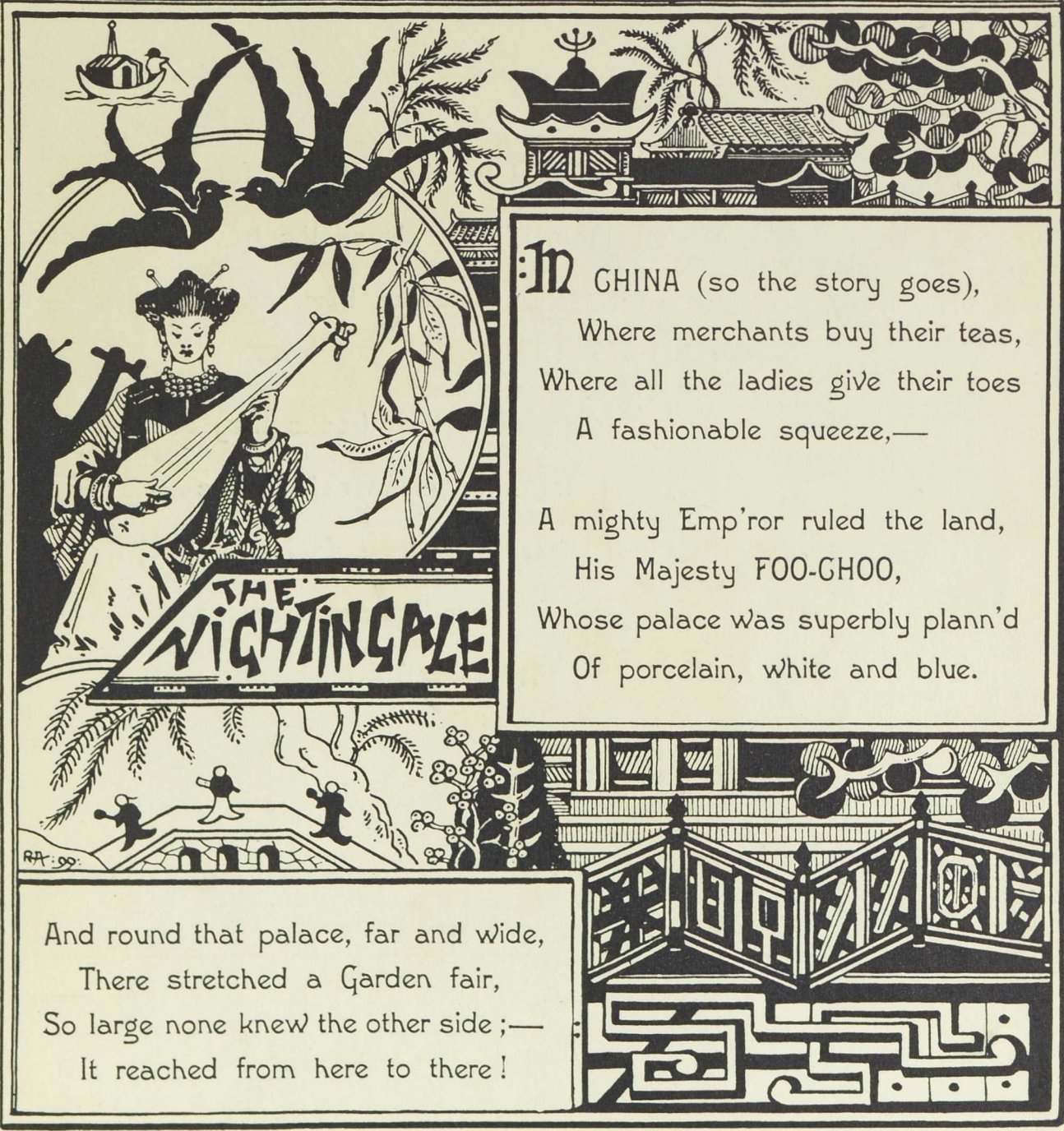
THE NIGHTINGALE:

dished up on
China plates.
By R. ANDRÉ:



: London :
: George Allen :
: 156 Charing Cross Road :
: 1899 :





IN CHINA (so the story goes),
 Where merchants buy their teas,
 Where all the ladies give their toes
 A fashionable squeeze,—

 A mighty Emp'ror ruled the land,
 His Majesty FOO-GHOO,
 Whose palace was superbly plann'd
 Of porcelain, white and blue.

And round that palace, far and wide,
 There stretched a Garden fair,
 So large none knew the other side;—
 It reached from here to there!

THE NIGHTINGALE

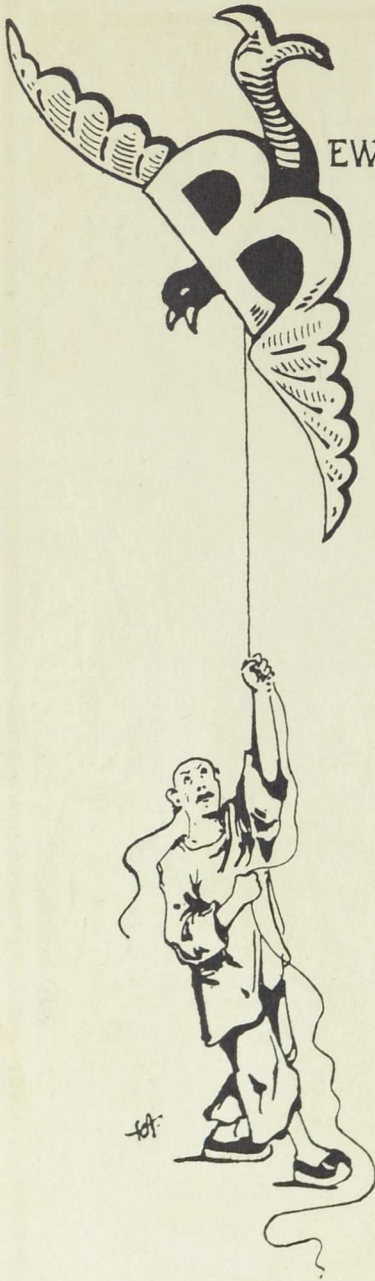


ATTRACTED by the Garden's fame,
 From distant climes the trav'lers came,
 By steamer, bike, and rail ;
 Pagodas in their books they drew,
 The Dragon china rich in hue
 (Declaring all they said was true),
 In an appendix measured too
 Th' IMPERIAL pig-tail.

Yet in the volumes that they wrote,
 Quoth they, "All wonders fail
 Before that little songster's note,
 The Chinese Nightingale."



THE NIGHTINGALE



EWITGHED by such a happy theme,

The scribblers could not shrink
From blotting paper by the ream,
And wallowing in ink.

For in the thickest bamboo shade,

When all the world was still,
This sweet wee bird such music made
That ev'ry author's pen was stayed
To hearken to its trill.

The books were here, the books were there,

The books were all around ;
They came in parcels marked "WITH GARE,"
All exquisitely bound.



THE NIGHTINGALE



HIS country then is all the rage?"

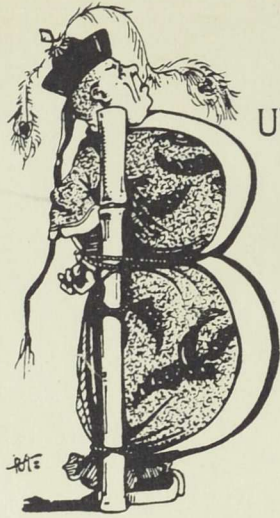
Smiled FOO-GHOO in his glee,
While thumbing each too flatt'ring page
That filled his library.

As new editions tumbled in
By barrow-loads a-pace,
The Emp'ror's smile became a grin
That broadened on his face.

Yet when about the bird he read,
Sore puzzled was the Royal head
That such sweet song could be—
"Search for this wonder, high and low!
By spillikins and chopsticks, go!
And catch this thing for me!"



THE NIGHTINGALE



BUT not a soul about the Court
 Knew whither to proceed;
 A simple little bird was thought
 A trifling thing indeed.

All forms of Luxury and Art
 To them were common joys;
 But Nature was a thing apart,
 Her works but vulgar toys.

Upstairs and down, the slaves, and cooks,
 Neglected their affairs;
 The learned scholar dropped his books;
 The Priest forgot his prayers,



THE NIGHTINGALE



THE BUTTONS gold, blue, white, and red,
That topped each courtier's puzzled head,
Went nodding to and fro;
As mandarins with futile pains
Kept cudgelling their empty brains,
And asking where to go.

At last out spoke a little maid,
"I know the bird," said she—
"The EMPEROR must be obeyed!
I'll guide you to the woodland shade!
Who comes along with me?
The Nightingale need not be paid,
For Nature's songs are free."



THE NIGHTINGALE



HE Mandarin NINGPO bravely cried,
 "Good luck my search attend!
 This little maid shall be my guide,
 Philosopher, and friend!"

The maid tripped lightly on her way,
 The Nightingale to find;
 The journey lasted all the day,
 Fat NINGPO lagged behind.

At last he cried, "Oh, music sweet!
 I'm sure I hear it now!"
 The maid replied, "Your vocal treat
 Proceeds from yonder cow!"



THE NIGHTINGALE



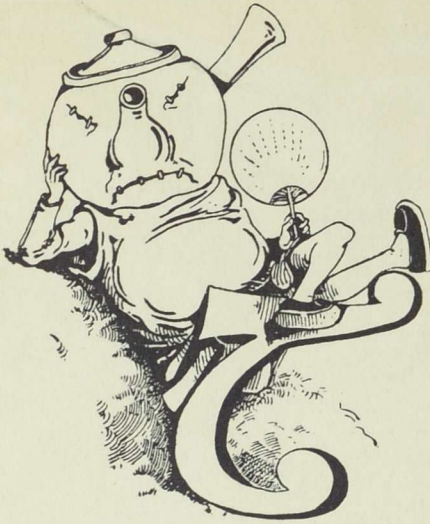
NINGPO crawled on through swamp
and dale,
O'er moorland waste, and hill;
"When shall we hear the Nightin-
gale?"
"A wee bit farther still."

Anon, he cried, "Tones sweet and
clear,
Of which I am so fond!"
The maid laughed out, "The frogs
you hear,
The Music of the pond!"

The sun was sloping to the West,
The Mandarin NINGPO,
Who trudged along his very best,
Could now no further go.



THE NIGHTINGALE



HEN he collapsed against the trees,
 Footsore, and faint, and pale:
 “But,” cried the maiden, “if you please,
 There *is* the Nightingale!

“And there she sits! Come more this way,
 And you will hear her sing——”
 “That vulgar dicky-bird in grey?
 That *plain* and simple thing?”

“The ways of Nature are absurd,
 Despite her common dress:
 I’m sure that operatic bird,
 Will be a grand success!”



THE NIGHTINGALE



HE great FOO-GHOO invites your song
 So wasted in the wood ;
 Your music by the courtly throng
 Were better understood."

"With pleasure," said the Nightingale ;
 "I shall be charmed to sing ;

My voice was never known to fail,
 I'll carol to the king !"

Then back in triumph went the three
 Beneath the moonlit sky ;
 And NINGPO chuckled in his glee,
 "A wise old boy am I !"



THE NIGHTINGALE



AND SO THE NIGHTINGALE was brought
Before the Emperor and Court.

“I never heard,” declared the Prince,
“Such dulcet notes before or since!”

The world of fashion ev'ry night

Encored with might and main ;

The great FOO-GHOO from sheer delight
Grew Royally insane.

The ladies, clapping, bruised their hands ;

With shouting, lords grew hoarse ;

The fav'rite military bands

Were voted loud and coarse.



THE NIGHTINGALE

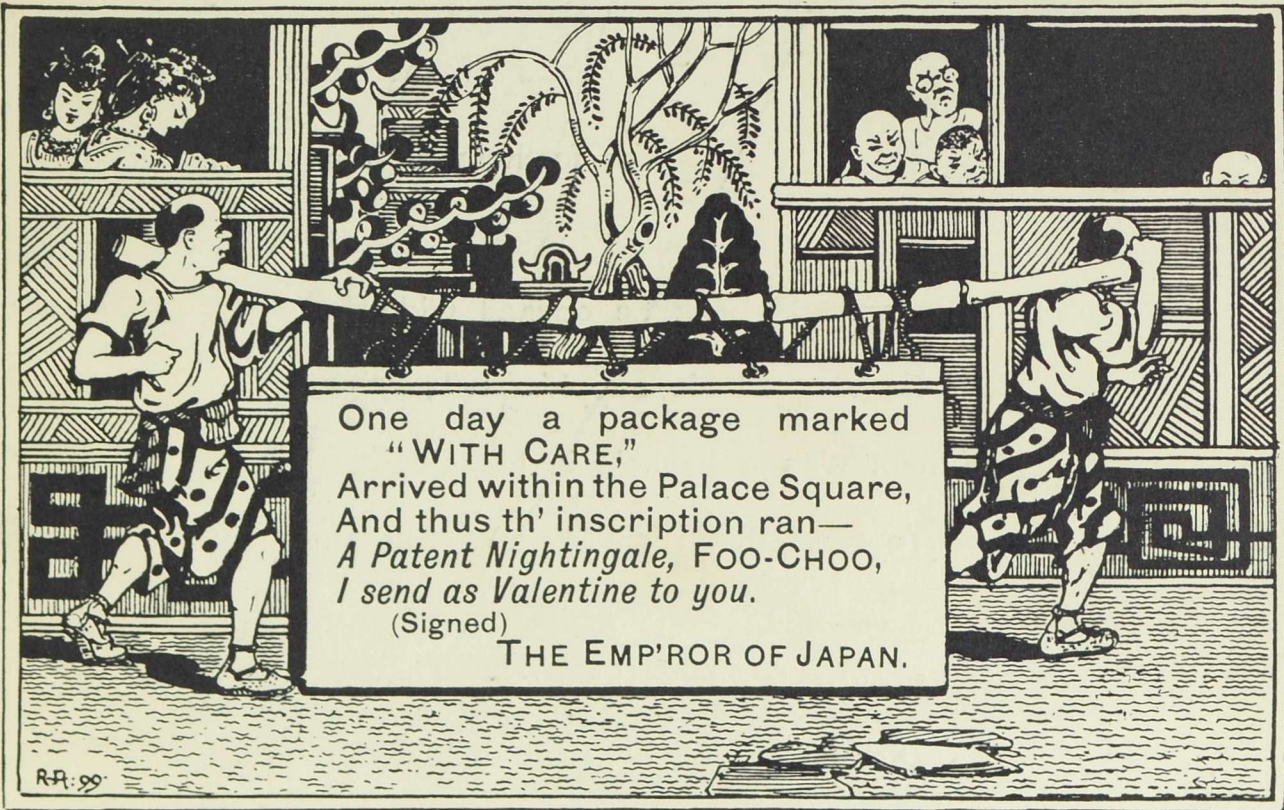
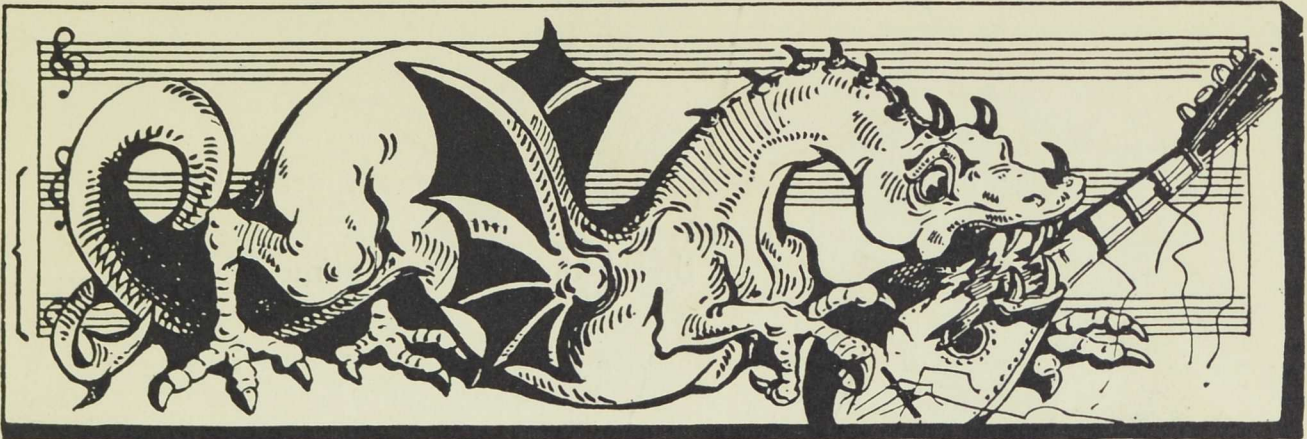


IMPERIAL singers in disgrace
Were promptly lodged in
gaol ;

As Prima Donna in their place
Now sang the Nightingale.

So Time went on, and
still her fame
Through all the kingdom
grew ;

Her dulcet notes were still the same,
But always fresh and new.



THE NIGHTINGALE



HE package opened, great surprise

Upset the Mandarins most wise :

The bird began to sing !

A bird with diamonds for eyes,

And rubies of enormous size,

For feathers on his wing !

His emerald beak he opened wide,

He wagged his sapphire tail ;

(There was a keyhole in his side

To wind this Nightingale.)

The sweetest valse he warbled out,

The most enchanting strain !

Then paused : until the Emp'ror's shout

Of "Wind it up again !"



THE NIGHTINGALE



DANCING mania seized the Court,
 They tripped it, high and low,
 And FOO-GHOO madly joined the
 sport
 On most fantastic toe.

The former bird, once loved so well,
 They now disdained to hear ;
 Her voice? a crack'd discordant bell!
This song, so sweet and clear!

And so they one and all agreed,
 The new melodious toy
 Was found a beauteous thing indeed,
 A never-ending joy!



THE NIGHTINGALE



UT, suddenly, one fatal night

A whirring noise was heard;

The wheels were not exactly right,

A something ailed the bird.

He feebly closed his ruby wing,

He dropped his sapphire tail,

He dumbly gasped—he broke his spring,

This worn-out Nightingale!

And grief prevailed about the Court,

A grief all classes share;

In vain are cunning workmen sought,

None can the toy repair.



THE NIGHTINGALE



THEY oil the wheels, they file, and screw;

On paper work the sum;

They say the thing is good as new,

But still the bird is dumb!

The Watchmaker is called in vain,

He shakes his puzzled head;

The bird will never sing again,

Its harmony is dead!

“Oh, give me music, bid them play

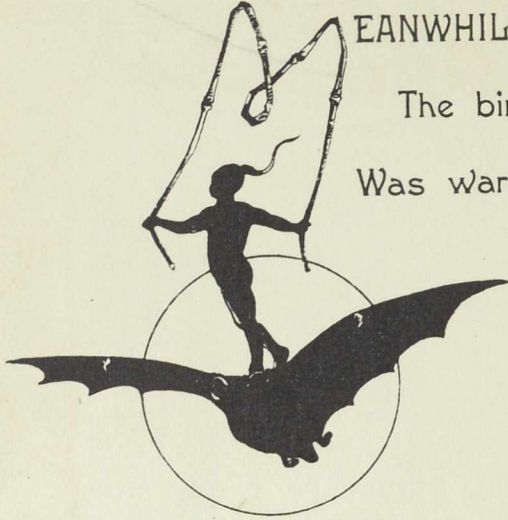
On banjo, flute, or drum!”

The Emp'ror cried, “I must be gay

My broken toy is dumb!”



THE NIGHTINGALE

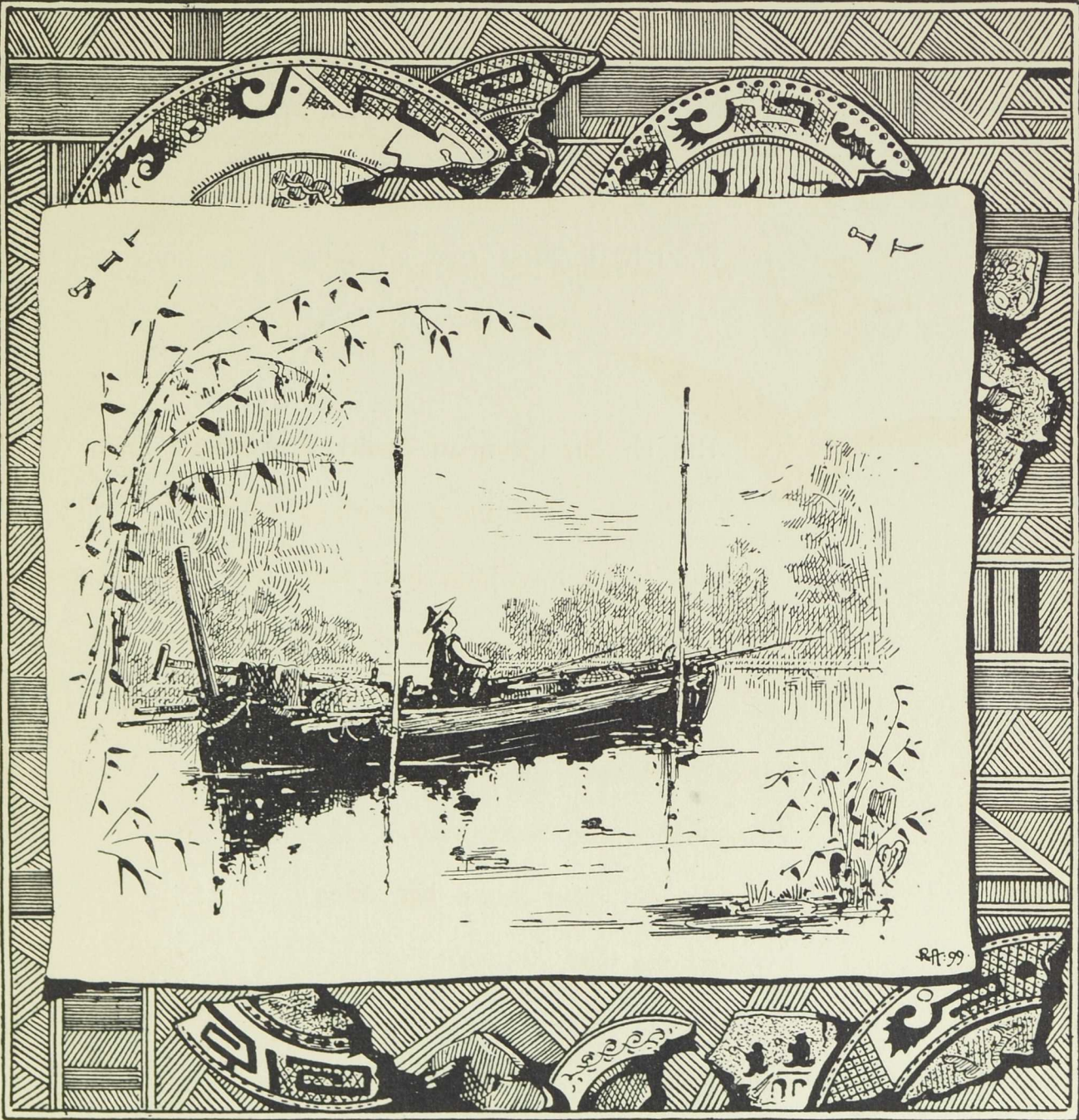


EANWHILE, within her native wood.

The bird of sober hue
Was warbling to the solitude,
Her refrain always new.

She perched beside the placid lake,
And sang at close of day;
Her springs were made too well to break,
Her works do not give way.

The Court, so fickle in its choice,
About a toy goes mad,
The lonely fisher hears *her* voice
Re-echo, and is glad.



THE NIGHTINGALE



TIME passed. The Emp'ror FOO-GHOO

Lay on his couch of pain :

Though doctors tried all drugs they knew,

Prescriptions were in vain.

The Monarch's mind is ill at ease,

He struggles in despair ;

Whichever way he turns, he sees

A silent shadow there.

The shadow stood the whole night long ;

But, in the morn so still,

The Nightingale poured out her song,

Perched by the window-sill.



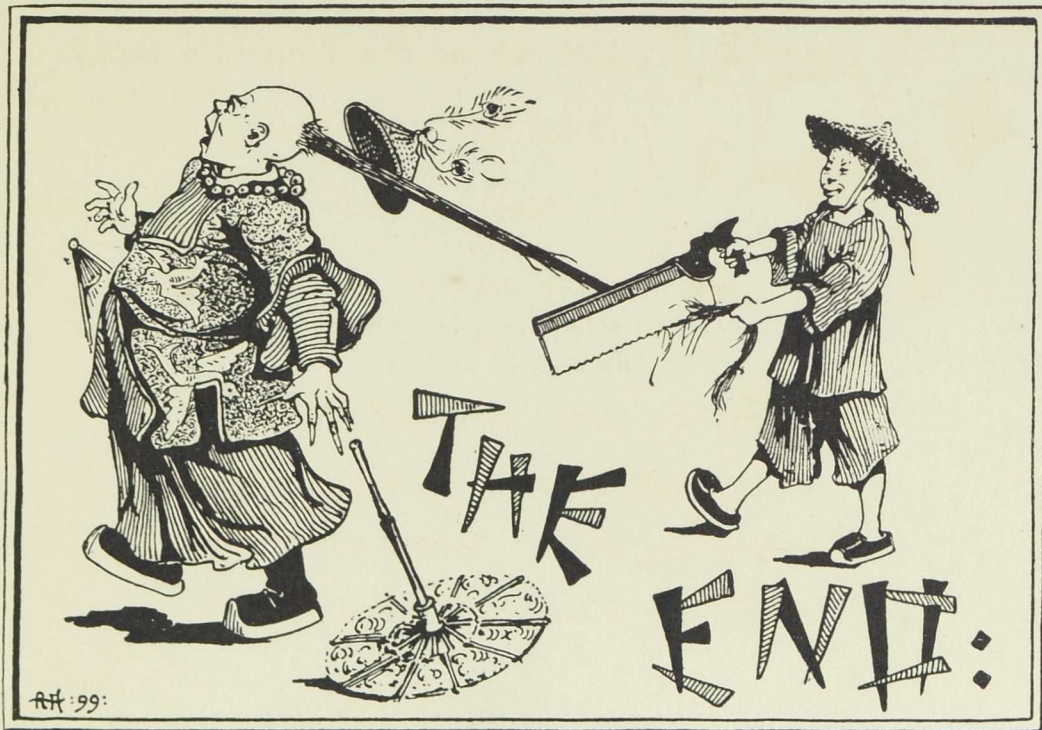
THE NIGHTINGALE



CALM fell on the Emp'ror's face;
 And, with the growing day,
 The Phantom, fading from his place,
 Like vapour passed away.

The Emp'ror slept: and still the bird
 Poured out unceasing song:
 The Emp'ror woke: "Upon my word,"
 Said he, "I feel quite strong!

"Thanks, little bird! such blessed calm
 Thy sweetness can impart,
 That I have learned how Nature's charm
 Far, far, outrivals ART."



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