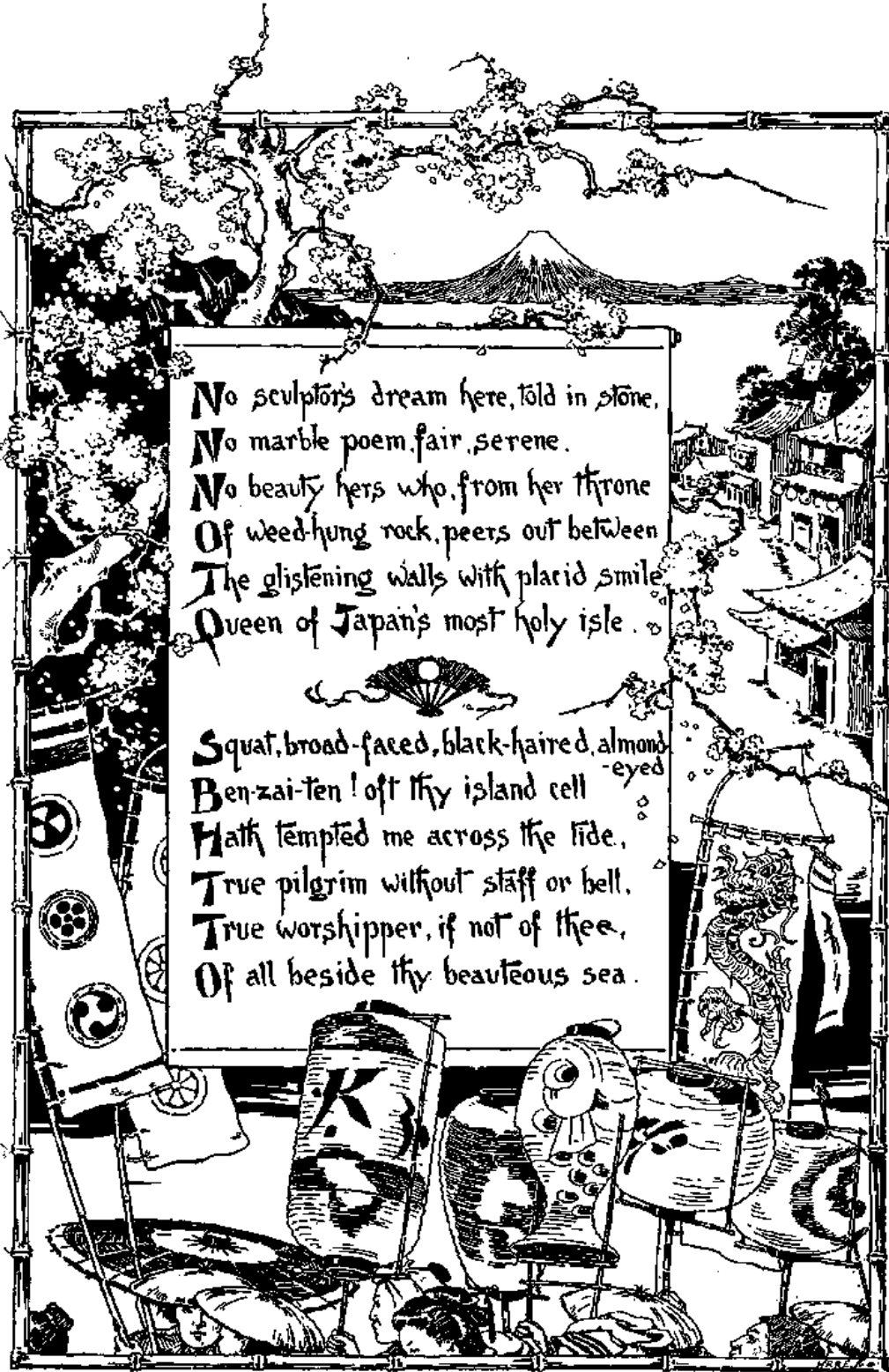


AT
BEN-ZAI-TEN'S
SHRINE

No classic goddess this, whose shrine,
Hewn in the wall of island cave,
Sparkles with gems of ocean brine,
While endless chant of wind and wave
Mingles with prayers of toil-worn men
Humbling themselves to Ben-zai-ten.



No sculptor's dream here, told in stone,
No marble poem, fair, serene.
No beauty hers who, from her throne
Of weed-hung rock, peers out between
The glistening walls with placid smile
Queen of Japan's most holy isle.



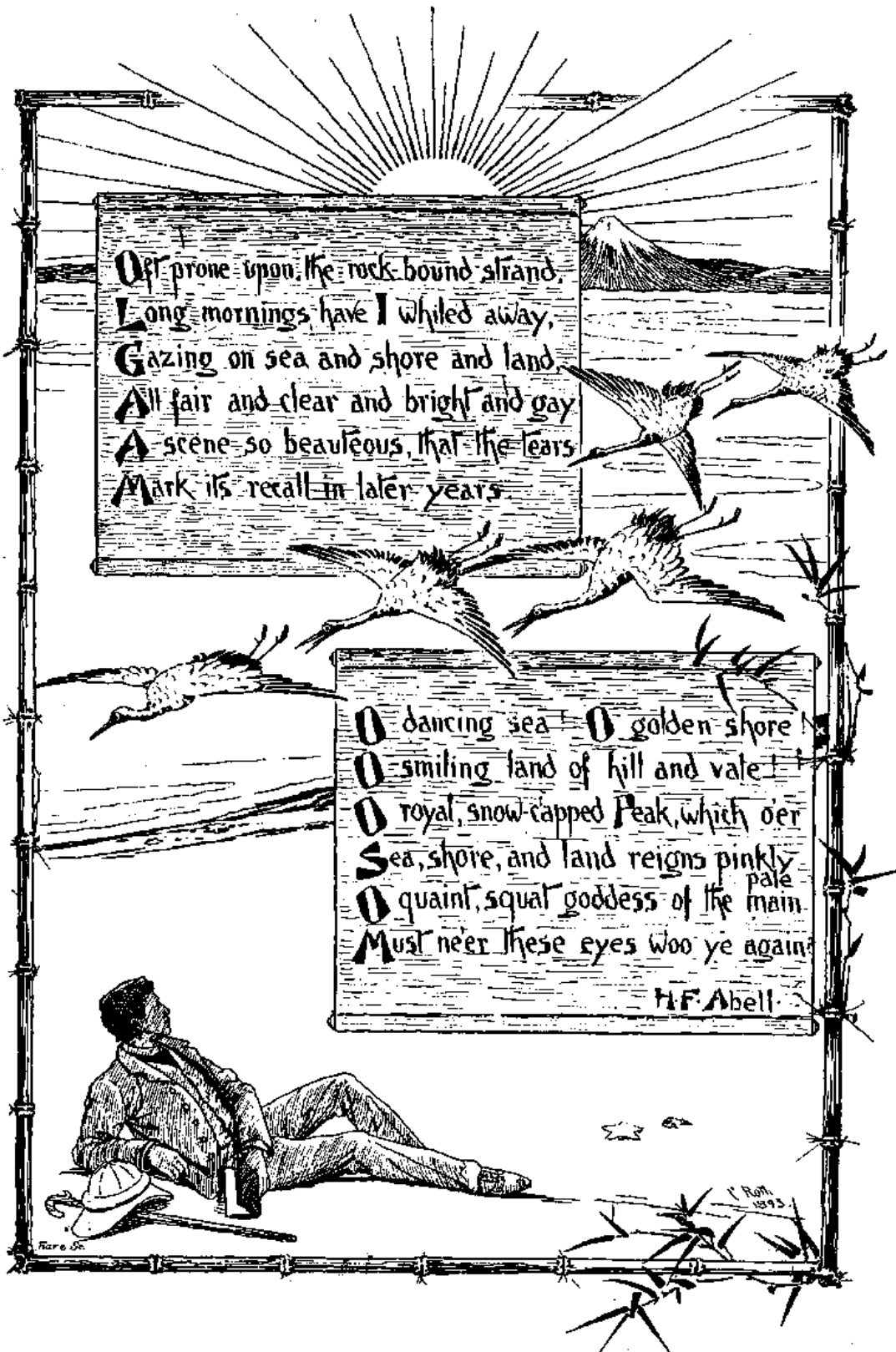
Squat, broad-faced, black-haired, almond
Benzai-ten! oft thy island cell ^{-eyed}
Hath tempted me across the tide,
True pilgrim without staff or bell,
True worshipper, if not of thee,
Of all beside thy beautiful sea.



Oft have I watched thy pilgrims creep
In white-clad, sandalled crowds along
Fair Inoshima's rugged steep,
With tinkling bell and tuneless song:
Old, young, rich, poor, fair maids, ^{soul} men,
All bound for thy shrine, Benzai-ten!



A mumbled prayer, an offering laid,
A long obeisance, - all is done,
For debts like these are quickly paid
Here, where Life's all-pervading tone
Is - Fret not, vex not, laugh and sing,
And make the best of everything!



Oer prone upon the rock-bound strand,
 Long mornings have I whiled away,
 Gazing on sea and shore and land,
 All fair and clear and bright and gay
 A scene so beautiful, that the tears
 Mark its recall in later years

O dancing sea! **O** golden shore!
O smiling land of hill and vale!
O royal, snow-capped Peak, which o'er
 Sea, shore, and land reigns pinkly
O quaint, squat goddess of the ^{pale} main.
 Must ne'er these eyes woo ye again!

H.F. Abell

From 1893

H.F. Abell "At Ben-zai-ten's Shrine." Illustrated by C.Roth
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