

BANZAI!

THERE lept upon a breach and laughed
A royally maniac man.
A bitter craft
Is mine, he saith,
O soldiers of Japan!
I am the brothel-knave of death,
The grimly courtesan.

Now who will up and kiss her lips,
Or grip her breast and bone?
The subtle life she shears and snips
Is harder gained than gone;
The lover's laughter whom she clips
Is but a dying groan.

She lieth not on a gilded bed
In the city without the city.
One kiss is hers full rank and red—
Do you sip at her lip? Hell hangs on her fangs!
She loves; love laughs at pity!

Then who will up to taste her mouth?
Who on her mount and ride?
Look to the North, the West, the South!

There is carnage vulture-eyed.
Then who will suck the breath of death,
The swift and glittering bride?
The bride that clings as a snare with springs
To the warrior's stricken side?

A shudder struck the hidden men
As the maniac's mouthings ceased.
Then, kindling, rose a roar:
"Spread, spread the furtive feast!
The wine of agony pour!
The fruit of valour pluck!
The meat of murder suck!

"Sweet are the songs of her throat!
Soft are the strokes of her fan!
She hath love by rime and rote,
She is subtle and quick to man!
She danceth? Say she doth float!
Rapture is gold in her eyes!
She sigheth honey-sweet sighs
Of the glory of Japan!
Red are her lips and large,
The delicate courtesan!"

Then the officer's voice
Caught in his throat for joy.
Like birds in spring that rejoice,
Clearly and softly the boy
Whispered: "Now, let us charge!"

Then leaping sheer o'er trench and mound,
They rise as a single man ;
They bound like antelopes over the ground
For the glory of Japan.

With glittering steel they wheel—they reel?
They are steady again and straight!
The dull brute Christians red with the weal
Of the knout—they will not wait!
The ringing cries of the victors peal
In, in at the captured gate!

.
Then o'er the field the maniac passed
And closed the dead men's eyes.
“They are sleeping close with death at last!”
The wanton warrior cries.
But he who saw the dead man's jaw
Grind at the last was aware
That the harlot's kiss was Paradise
That the soldier tasted there.
And beyond the magnificent joy of death
Shears through the sky, as a flame
Ripping the air, the lightning breath
Of the nation's resonant fame.
Hail! to the Hachiman deed well done!
To the virile strength of a man!
To the stainless blaze of the Rising Sun
The glory of Japan!