

Cholera Camp

Bellowhead

We've the cholera in camp, and it's worse than 40 fights
And we're dying in the wilderness, the same as Israelites
It's before us and behind us and we cannot get away
And the doctor's just reported that we've ten more today

Oh strike your camp and go, the bugle's calling
The rains are falling
The dead are bushed and stoned to keep them safe below
The band are doing all they can to cheer us
The chaplain's gone and prayed to God to hear us, to hear us
Oh Lord, for it's the killing of us all

Since August, when it started, it's been sticking to our tail,
And they've had us out by marches and they've had us back by rail
But it runs as fast as troop trains, and we cannot get away,
And the sick-list to the Colonel makes ten more today.

And there ain't no fun in women nor there ain't no bite to drink.
It's much too wet for shootin'; we can only march and think.
And at evening, down the nullahs, we can hear the jackals say,
"Get up, you rotten beggars, you've ten more today!"

Oh strike your camp and go...

And 'twould make a monkey cough to see our way of doing things
Lieutenants taking companies and captains taking wings,
And Lances acting Sergeants, eight file to obey
Oh yes, there's lots of quick promotion on ten deaths a day!

And our Colonel's white an' twitterly and he gets no sleep nor food,
He just mucks about in hospital where nothing does no good.
And 'e sends us 'eaps o' comforts, all bought from 'is pay --
But there aren't much comfort 'andy on ten deaths a day.

So strike your camp and go...

And our Chaplain, he's got a banjo, and a skinny mule he rides,
And the stuff 'e says and sings, oh Lord, it makes us split our sides!
With his black coat-tails a-bobbin' to Ta-ra-ra Boom-der-ay!
Oh he's the proper sort o' padre for ten deaths a day.

We've the cholera in camp, we've got it 'ot and sweet.
But it ain't no Christmas dinner, but it's served and we must eat.
We've gone beyond the funkin', 'cause we've found it doesn't pay,
An' we're rockin' round the Districk on ten deaths a day!

So strike your camp and go, the bugle's calling
The rains are falling
The dead are bushed and stoned to keep them safe below
And them that do not like it, they can lump it
And them that cannot stand it, they can jump it
For we've got to die somewhere, some way, somehow...
So we might as well begin to do it now!

So, Number One, let down the tent-pole slow
Knock out the pegs and hold the corners, oh
Furl up the flies, fold up the ropes, and stow!

Oh strike, oh strike your camp and go!