The Valiant Conscript

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How are you, boys? I'm just from camp and feel as brave as Caesar
The sound of bugle drum and fife has raised my Ebeneezer.
I'm full of fight, odds shot and shell, I'll leap into the saddle
And when the Yankees see me come, Lord how they will skedaddle!

cho: Hold your head up, Shanghai Shanks,
Don't shake your knees and blink so;
It is no time to dodge the act
Brave comrades, don't you think so?

I was a ploughboy in the field, a gawky lazy didger,
When came the conscript officer and took me for a sodger.
He put a musket in my hand and showed me how to fire it,
I marched and counter-marched all day. Lord, how I did admire it!

With corn and hog fat for my food, and digging, guarding, drilling,
I got as thin as twice-skimmed milk and was scarcely worth the killing.
And now I'm used to homely fare, my skin as tough as leather,
I do guard duty cheerfully in any kind of weather.

I'm brimful of fight, my boys, I would not give a "Thank 'ee"
For all the smiles the girls can give until I've killed a Yankee.
High private is a glorious rank, there's wide room for promotion;
I'll get a corporal's stripes some day when fortune's in the notion.

"tis true I have not seen a fight nor have I smelt gunpowder,
But then the way I'll pepper them will be a sin to chowder.
A sergeant's stripes I now will sport, perhaps be colour-bearer,
And then a captain--good for me, I'll be a regular tearer.

I'll then begin to wear the stars and then the wreaths of glory,
Until the army I command, and poets sing my story.
Our Congress will pass votes of thanks to him thast rose from zero;
The people in a mass will shout, "Hurrah! Behold the hero!"

(he fires his gun by accident)

What's that? Oh dear! A boiler's burst! A gaspipe has exploded!
Maybe the Yankees are hard by with muskets ready loaded.
Oh gallant soldiers, beat 'em back. I'll join you in the frolic
But I've a chill from head to foot, and symptoms of the colic.

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