

Calibre Fifty-four - song lyrics

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CALIBRE FIFTY-FOUR.

By Will Carleton.

"Say, General, say!" the courier said,
(A boy of thirteen years),
"Our regiment's scant of powder and lead;
Most out, the Colonel fears.
The men, they have held the ground, while I
This message swiftly bore,
Be quick, and send 'em a fresh supply!
It's calibre fifty-four."

"Now you are young." the General said,
"To run so stern a race;
Some older man might come instead.
Through such a dangerous place."
"They couldn't be spared," the boy began;
"I'm youngest of the corps;
And so-but, say, be quick old man!
It's calibre fifty-four."

"Now you are hurt," the General said,
"There's blood here on your breast.
Go back to the rear and take my bed,
And have some needful rest."
"Not much!" said the boy, with half-hid sneer;
"I can't be spared no more;
My regiment's nowhere nigh the rear-
It's calibre fifty-four."

"But where's your horse?" the General said,
"Afoot you can not be?"
"Oh, a cannon ball tore off his head,
And didn't come far from me;
And bullets warbled around, you bet,
(One through my right arm tore);
But I'm a horse, and a colt to let!
I'm calibre fifty-four."

"Your parents, boy?" the General said,
"Where are they?-dead, it seems."
"Oh, they are what the world calls dead,
But come to me in dreams;
They tell me to be brave alway,
As father was before;
Then mother kisses me-but say!
It's a calibre fifty-four."

"They'll soon be there," the General said,
"Those cartridges you claim;
My staff's best horse you'll ride, instead
Of that on which you came."
Away the boy, his spurs sharp set,
Across the field of gore,
Still shouting back, "Nov don't forget!
It's calibre fifty-four."-Harper's Weekly.