Sam Small's Christman Pudding

Sam Small's Christman Pudding
(Stanley Holloway)

'Twere Christmas Eve in the trenches,
In Spain, in Peninsular War
And Sam Small were cleaning 'is musket,
A thing that he'd ne'er done before.
For they'd had an inspection that mornin'
And Sam had gone down in disgrace.
For when Sergeant 'had looked down the barrel ---
A sparrer flew out in 'is face!

The sergeant reported the matter
To Leftenant Byrd, then and there.
Said Leftenant " 'Ow jolly disgusting.
The Duke must be told of this 'ere!"
The duke were upset when he 'eard it.
'E said, "I'm astonished, I am.
I must make a most drastic example.
There'll be no Christmas pudding for Sam!"

When Sam were informed of his sentence
Surprise rooted 'im to the spot.
'Twere far worse than 'e 'ad expected---
'E thought as he'd merely be shot.
So Sam sat there, cleanin' 'is musket
And polishing barrel and butt
While the pudding 'is mother 'ad sent 'im
Lay there, on the ground, near 'is foot.

Now the sector that Sam's lot were 'olding
Ran about a place called Badajoz
Where the Spaniards 'ad put up a bastion,
And Oh! what a bastion it was.
They pounded away all that morning,
Bombarding as 'ard as they could,
And the Duke brought 'is own private cannon;
But that weren't a ha'pporth of good.

The Duke said, "Sam. Put dahn thy musket.
And help me to lay this gun true."
Said Sam, "Ye'd be best askin' favors
Of them as ye give puddin' to."
The Duke looked at Sam so reproachful

And "Don't take it that way." says he,
"Us generals have got to be ruthless.
It hurt me more than it did thee."

Sam sniffed at these words, kind of septic
Then looked at the Duke's private gun,
And said "We best put in two charges.
We'll never bust bastion wi' one."
Sam tipped cannon ball out of muzzle,
Then took out the wadding and all,
Filled barrel chock full of powder,
Then picked up and replaced the ball.

Sam sighted once, right along barrel,
And said,"Righto Duke! Let 'er fly!"
The cannon nigh jumped off its trunnions!
And oop went the bastion, sky-high!
The Duke, 'e weren't 'arf elated,
He danced all around in great glee,
And said, "Sam. For thy gallant action
Ye can 'ot up yer puddin' for tea."

Sam bent down to pick up 'is puddin'
But it weren't nowhere about
In the place where 'e thought 'e 'ad left it
Were the cannonball 'e 'ad tipped out!
Sam saw in a flash what 'ad 'appened.
By an unprecedented mis'ap
The puddin' 'is mother 'ad sent 'im
'Ad blown Badajoz off the map!

Which is why cannoneers wear to this day
A badge, which they think's a grenade.
But it's not. It's a brass reproduction
Of the puddin' Sam's mother once made.

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