

Danny Deever

Peter Bellamy / Rudyard Kipling

1. "What are the bugles blowin' for?",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?"
Said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
2. For they're hangin' Danny Deever,
You can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square -
They're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off
An' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever
In the mornin'.
3. "What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
4. They are hangin' Danny Deever,
They are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by
'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute
For a sneakin' shootin' hound.
O they're hangin' Danny Deever
In the mornin'!
5. "'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
6. They are hangin' Danny Deever,
You must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' -
You must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county
An' the Regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever
In the mornin'.

7. "What's that so black agin the sun?",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?",
Said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now",
The Colour-Sergeant said.
8. For they're done with Danny Deeever,
You can 'ear the quickstep play.
The regiment's in column,
An' they're marchin' us away.
Ho! the young recruits are shakin',
An' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deeever
In the mornin'.

"Danny Deeever" is a setting of the poem by Rudyard Kipling in **Departmental Ditties, Barrack Room Ballads and Other Verses**. Peter Bellamy used the melody of "Derwentwater's Farewell" for this setting.

Kipling wrote the poem in 1890, it may, however, have been started before then. Generally ascribed as being set in India its detail does somewhat match an execution at Lucknow in 1887. There is no evidence that Kipling ever saw a military hanging. That he was well informed on the details is borne out by the closeness of his description of events and mood to that given in an eyewitness account of the execution of a Private Flaxman, of the 2nd Battalion, The Leicestershire Regiment, for the willful murder of a lance-sergeant of the 1st Battalion. The execution took place at Lucknow in India on January 10, 1887. The garrison paraded at 8:15 a.m. and the band played the "Dead March in Saul" as the condemned man was marched onto the parade ground with his coffin on a gun carriage in front of him. After the execution, the garrison was marched off parade past the scaffold on which the corpse of the executed man still hung.

The poem was first published in the first number of W.E. Henley's weekly **Scots Observer** (later to become the **National Observer**) on February 22, 1890 followed by publication in the **Allahabad The Week's News** and the **New York Tribune**, March 23, 1890. It was first collected in **Departmental Ditties, Barrack Room Ballads and Other Verses** (1890). The verses are written as a 'question and answer' sequence, a traditional English ballad form. Charles Carrington identified "Barnacle Bill the Sailor" as a basis for the structure. If so, Kipling has dispensed with the traditional thrice repeated question and incorporated question, answer and commentary in what was originally the eight-line response.

While the standard notation is set in the key of G, the dulcimer tablature is in the key of D. It was recorded by Peter Bellamy and The Young Tradition.