The Charge of the Light Brigade

Author Unknown

Forward the Light!

Such was the order given during a great battle to the leader of a band of six hundred British soldiers. Forward! And there in front was a line of cannon ready to shoot them down as they came, while on the hills on either side of the valley were the guns and riflemen of the Russians.

"Surely someone has blundered! My men are sent to certain death," thought the leader of the Light Brigade.

"Forward! Attack!"

The order was repeated, and with the obedience of well-trained soldiers the Brigade started.

"Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred."

On every side thundered the enemy's guns, and shot and shell fell thick and fast, but on through all rode the brave horsemen, on till they reached the cannon at the end of the valley. The smoke of the enemy's fire closed round and hid them from their watching comrades, but now and again the scarlet lines could be seen cutting down those who tried to stop their charge.

"Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd."

And then only, when the strange order had been obeyed, when their duty had been nobly done in the face of death, did the Light Brigade—all that was left of it—turn to ride back. Alas! there were not then six hundred. Barely two hundred brave men, wounded, and blackened by smoke and powder, reached the British camp. The rest of the noble band lay dead or dying in the valley of Death.

"When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!"

The Charge of the Light Brigade

by Alfred Tennyson

1.
Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
"Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

2.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder' d:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die,
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

3.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

4.
Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not

Not the six hundred.

5.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

6.
When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

Sources:

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