

Alfred Tennyson (1809-92)

1 *The Charge of the Light Brigade*

I

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
'Forward, the Light Brigade! 5  
Charge for the guns!' he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade!' 10  
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: 15  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them 20  
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 25  
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air

Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while 30  
    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 35  
    Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back, but not  
    Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them, 40  
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 45  
Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
    Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade? 50  
O the wild charge they made!  
    All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made!  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
    Noble six hundred! 55

*1854*

(From *The Poetical Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*.  
London: Macmillan, 1899)