The Charge Of The Light Brigade

Alfred Lord Tennyson

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.

'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.

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.

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!

Author Notes

At the Battle of Balaclava in 1854 during the Crimean War, the ‘Light Brigade’, consisting of British cavalry regiments, charged down a narrow valley against Russian Troops who had captured British guns. The Russians were at the end of the valley as well as on each side of it. The attack should never have been made, for it had no chance of success: It was due to a blunder brought on by misunderstanding an order sent by the commander-in-chief. The obedience and courage of the soldiers, of whom less than a third survived, won great fame for the Light Brigade. This poem first appeared on December 9, 1854 in The Examine