

Anthony Sheridan

I fought at Sebastopol, Inkerman, Balaklava, and Alma. I belonged to the E troop of the 8th Hussars, under Colonel Shewell and Captain Lascelles. I went out with the 8th from Portsmouth, and I came back with them. We were under Lord Cardigan, and a pluckier soldier never drew a sword. — "Be good enough to tell me your experience of the charge," — Well, I dare say you know as much about that as I can tell you. However, you must know that we had been expecting something of the kind for several days. On the morning of that memorable day we stood with our horses saddled ready for any emergency. Lord Raglan and his staff were on the hills above us, surveying the Russians with their field-glasses, when they saw, as I supposed, the cowardly Turks leave their guns in the redoubt, and run for their lives. There were five guns left, and each one was loaded and not spiked when the Russians got up to them. Presently Captain Nolan, riding a horse of the 13th Light Dragoons, came up with a paper from Lord Raglan, and we imagined at once that we were to move. The order was for the 1st Division to charge on the guns left by the Turks, in order, as I suppose, that we might recover them from the enemy. Captain Nolan's words were, so it was reported, "My lord, charge on those guns." I know when I heard the order given at first I said, "God forgive me, but every man must do his duty." Well, we merely trotted at first, but when we came within cannon shot we put our horses into a canter.

Captain Nolan, unfortunately, was killed before we got to the redoubt. The Russians met us with a heavy cannonade. They had fired the five guns left by the Turks, so that when we got to the redoubt we found that it was empty, for the Russians had limbered up the guns and taken them to where their heavy artillery and main body were stationed, a mile further on. My opinion is that when we found the guns had been removed we ought to have stopped ; but poor Nolan was not there to explain matters, and somehow or other, the devil being in us, I suppose for fighting - our officers being all brave men, and I can't blame any of them - we went full gallop at the enemy. It was almost dark, with smoke and fog, and you did not know where you were until you ran against a Cossack. You know your blood soon gets warm when you are fighting, and it didn't take us long to find out that we had nothing to do but to give them a point as good as their cut. I got a cut with a sword on the forehead at the guns. It was not much, but it has left this scar here (pointing to his forehead). I remember it now. It was fearful. We were cut and shot at in all directions, and it was each man for himself. People ask me sometimes if I killed any one, but I'm not going to tell them, though I gave the Cossacks a great deal more than I got. If those Lancers had hemmed us in, it would have been all up with us. I was in the second line going out, but there were no lines coming in. As we were returning we saw the French on our left, whilst the Guards were coming up from Inkerman. It was a melancholy sight to see our poor fellows lying dead and dying all around us. I saw Lord Fitzgibbon, who was mortally wounded, pull out his purse and offer it to any one of us who would dismount and accept it, as his lordship did not like it to get into the hands of the Russians; but, lor! we did not think of money at such a moment as that. Life and honour were more precious to us than money, so I suppose the Russians got the English gold after all. Our men were heroes indeed. There was not a coward in the whole brigade. I remember a man

of the 17th Lancers riding to the charge in a curious dress. - What was that? - He was a butcher, and that morning was employed slaughtering cattle for the commissariat. When the order was given he rushed from his work, and said he'd be d----- if his regiment was going without him. Attired in a blood-bespattered smock-frock, he ran after and caught a stray horse, and then pulling over his head a red cap, something like those worn by foreign sailors, he took his place in the ranks, and amidst the laughter and jeers of his comrades dashed ahead. He was a big powerful fellow. I have forgotten his name, but he was seen doing good service amongst the Russians, who were evidently puzzled to understand to what corps he belonged.