

Thomas Wroots

I was a private in the D troop of the 11th Hussars under Captain Douglas and Captain Dallas. Was anything said when the order was given to Lord Cardigan? — Well, I did not say anything. I thought more than I said. There was no time to say anything. I was right in the centre of the squadron. Just after we started I got pushed out — that is, me and my mare got pushed out of the line. I cried out, "Let me come up - let me come up." Just then the Russians commenced firing, and in half a second there was room enough for an omnibus to come up. The charge was a regular "Derby." I was near a man named Morton at one time. He was wounded in the right arm, and the pain was so great that he shrieked out fearfully. He asked me to undo his sword knot so as to pull his sword off and thus get his arm clear, but something, I can't tell exactly what, just then happened, and I had to ride on, for there was death all round. Another man near me was shot in the left side, and I should think he rode fifty yards, then all at once he tumbled to his left and came down on the ground like a lump of clay — just like a lump of clay, that is the only description I can give of it. His charger, like many others, galloped away. These things happened on the way down. There was too much confusion to say what did take place at the guns. You may depend upon it we had to do something, or, else not a soul of us ever would have got away. One of the things I remember was that some of the horses without riders held back, some went forward like mad, and some followed us right in. I recollect in our retreat hearing Lord George Paget say, "For God's sake, 11th and 4th, do halt, and show them a front" — that is when they were peppering us from the right and left. Some one said, "There's the Lancers; let us go and form on them, and we will show them a good front." In place of that it turned out to be a Polish regiment of Lancers. We got near them, but they did not seem to stir. I saw one fellow, however, run up behind one of our sergeants — I think his name was Hudson - and catch him right in the middle of the back with his lance. He was not killed then; the ambulance brought him in afterwards, but he soon died. I saw the captain of the Lancers quite plain. He said something to his men, and they all turned threes right, and took up their places. It was then that their own artillery fired into them. We got past them, and my belief is they took pity on us and let us pass them without touching us. We were "beauties," being covered with blood, dirt, and grime when we got back again. Every man that Cruikshank, one of our officers, met, he gave a glass of grog to.