

Poetry.

THE CHARGE AT BALAKLAVA.

By ALFRED TENNYSON.

Half a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred,  
For up came an order which  
Some one had blundered.  
"Forward, the light Brigade!  
"Take the guns," Nolan said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward the light Brigade!"  
No man was there dismayed,  
Not though the soldier knew  
Some one had blundered:  
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.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,  
Flashed all in one in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army while  
All the world wondered.  
Plunged in the battery smoke,  
With many a desperate stroke,  
The Russian line they broke;  
Then they rode back, but  
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
Volleyed and thundered;  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
While the horse and hero fell,  
"Those who had fought so well  
Came from 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 wondered.  
Honor the charge they made!  
Honor the Light Brigade,  
Noble six hundred.

Select Gales.

From Chambers Edinburgh Journal.

AN OLD WOMAN'S REMINISCENCE.

"Do you remember, dear Aunt Ruth," I at length said, "that you once promised to tell me a story connected with that grand house and your own little cottage? Suppose you tell it to me on my birthday; it will be doubly pleasant to sit here and listen to you."

The calm, happy expression of Aunt Ruth's face, which I had never before seen disturbed, suddenly changed to one of intense sorrow; or rather, a quick thrill of pain seemed to follow my few words. This, however was only momentary: in another minute the placid tenderness so natural to her face resumed its sway, and I discovered no other sign of emotion as she answered.

"You shall have your wish my love," and then added in a low voice; "It is right that she should hear the promised history, and that I should tell it." The latter part of the speech the venerable lady rather murmured to herself than addressed to me; then drawing her thin white hands upon her lap, she commenced her narrative—which, however, I prefer putting into my own language, believing Aunt Ruth's natural modesty prevented her from doing justice to the heroine of the story.

"Walter is late this evening, Mildred, and yet I am almost certain that I saw him pass on the river an hour ago. I may be mistaken, but I wish you would run down to the old summer house, and see if the boat is moored. We ought to have got through a good portion of business to-night."

The speaker, a fine old man of some seventy winters, turned as he spoke towards a deep window, where a young and strikingly handsome woman sat resting her cheek upon her hand, and gazing with a look of abstraction upon the twilight shadows as they deepened over the broad river, flowing at the bottom of a long terrace walk in front of the house. Her father's voice suddenly recalled her dreamy thoughts, and raising hastily, she said:

"Yes, dear father, I shall enjoy a stroll to-night; and if the truant has not yet arrived, I can watch for him a little longer from the summer house. We do not know what may have detained Walter," she added, tenderly

raising the old man's hand to her lips; he knows your love of punctuality, and I am certain he would not wilfully keep you in suspense."

Mildred Vernon was the only child of a widowed parent. A beauty and an heiress, she was as might be supposed, not without a goodly string of admirers; of these her father's choice and her own affection fell upon a relative of her own, whom her father had brought up to his own calling—that of an East India merchant. Accustomed from boyhood to regard his cousin with affectionate admiration, Walter Vernon deemed it an easy task, at Mr Vernon's affectionate suggestion, to yield up a free heart to her keeping; and he agreed gratefully to the proposals made to him by his uncle, which ended in his being at twenty-one the promised husband of the beautiful Mildred, and the expectant heir to her father's immense fortune. To Mildred, however, whose ignorance of Mr. Vernon's previous influence with her cousin led her to believe that the declaration of his was as earnest and independent of extraneous circumstances as her own affection their engagement was very different, and for some time the happiness of her young life seemed without a cloud.

Situated in the remote corner of the grounds which surrounded Mr. Vernon's mansion, was a low thatched cottage, covered with monthly roses and honeysuckle up to lowly eaves, and surrounded by a galaxy of blossoms. This snug and roomy dwelling had for years been the abode of Roger Lee, Mr. Vernon's gardener. Here, too, his only child Alice was born; and here, some years after, the strong man and his young daughter wept together over the lifeless form of a beloved wife and mother; and the sympathy which had always existed between Mr. Vernon and his faithful servant seemed more firmly cemented by the melancholy sameness of their relative positions. The little Alice, from her motherless childhood, had been an object of interest to the worthy merchant.—Born in the autumn of the same year which made him a widowed father, Mr. Vernon looked upon her more in the light of a pretty playfellow to his own beautiful child, than as the daughter of his servant; and this kindly feeling was displayed in the liberality with which he provided an education for Alice Lee, better suited to her loveliness and natural elegance of mind, than to her mere conventional position.

Half an hour before the conversation between Mr. Vernon and his daughter, which we have already related, Alice Lee might have been seen gazing as anxiously on the broad river as the young heiress herself.—Pushing back the diamond paned casement until it rested upon a ledge of roses and green leaves, she bent over the low window sill till her golden curls touched the flowers which clustered round. Suddenly she started up as the gentle sound of oars met her ear; and raising a face glowing with love and hope, Alice passed quickly from her cottage parlor into the box-bordered walk which led to the river.

"Sweet Alice, am I not punctual?" exclaimed a clear melancholy voice, as a young man elegantly dressed in the fashionable costume of the day, bounded up the broad oaken steps which led from the river, and stood beside the gardener's daughter.

"Yes, dear Walter; very punctual; and yet I thought you long, and have been waiting so anxiously for the sound of oars. But you look sad and anxious, Walter. What has troubled you?"

The young man's brow grew darker, and then flushed to a deep crimson, as he gazed with passionate earnestness upon the sweet upturned face which rested upon his shoulder, and then exclaimed: "Dear one would you desire to hear the cause of my sorrow, if you knew that such knowledge must make you a partaker of it? Can your love bear this test, my Alice?"

"O Walter!" murmured Alice reproachfully, as she hid her tearful face on his bosom. "Dear, dear Walter, can you not trust my love?"

"I do trust your love, my own sweet Alice, and this only adds to my self reproach; because Alice" and the speaker bent his head lower over the drooping form which clung to him so fondly—"it will soon be a sin for us to love each other at all; for unconscious till too late of the nature of my feelings towards you, I have promised to marry my cousin."

Alice Lee raised her head, and gazing for a moment into her lover's face, as if to read there a contradiction to the words he had spoken, sprang from the still circling arm which had supported her and as pale as the white roses which clustered round the arbor where they had seated, she appeared to wait in stupid silence for an explanation.

Another moment, and the rustle of a lady's dress caused the bewildered girl to turn her eyes from the stern look of sorrow which

was so plainly portrayed in her companion's face, to encounter an expression equally fearful on the beautiful features of the intruder! Like some fair statue on whose lineaments the intensity of hopeless despair was traced by a master chisel, stood Mildred Vernon. Her large dark eyes were fixed upon the young pair before her with the expression of agony which seemed to overpower their sorrow in sympathy with hers. The quick perception of Alice seemed at once to understand, and gliding from the seat where she had crouched in her sudden grief, she took the passive hand which hung by Mildred's side and raising it to her lips, exclaimed wildly: "Forgive him dearest lady; only forgive Walter—he will love you. O! he does love you already, as you deserve. See he is weeping! He does not love me now; that is past, dear lady; and you will forgive him, and be his wife!"

Pale and lifeless the unhappy speaker sunk at the feet of her rival, who appeared suddenly recalled to her usual self-possession. In a calm voice, she bade Walter carry the fainting Alice to an adjoining summer house, where she watched with intense solicitude for the first sign of recovery. Then beckoning her cousin Walter to her side, she placed Alice Lee's hand in his, and without trusting herself to look into his face, said slowly: "You must tell Alice, Walter, that you are not going to marry your cousin; that you may love her without sin; and that tomorrow I will tell her so myself. You may not like to see my father to night; tomorrow I will prepare him for an interview. There; now see this poor girl to her home."

Passing rapidly on to the house, Mildred Vernon sought in the solitude of her own chamber, upon her bended knees, that consolation which her crushed heart so sorely needed; and she arose at length, strengthened and confirmed in the generous self-sacrifice her noble impulsive nature had at once suggested. The cup, indeed, contained a bitter draught; but she resolved to drain it to the very dregs, believing that in the end it would prove a wholesome medicine, which in time might bring back some degree of peace to her troubled spirit.

"Your engagement with Walter at an end! What on earth do you mean, child? I always gave you credit for knowing your own mind a little better than most women. Give me your reason for this behavior, Mildred."

Mildred was silent for a moment, as if struggling with some inward emotion, the signs of which were painfully visible on her fine features, as, with a sudden effort, she said firmly: "Even at the risk of losing what I prize so dearly, your good opinion, my dear father, I can assign no reason than the one already given—namely, that our marriage, if persisted in, would be a source of misery to both of us. Pray believe that this is not grounded upon mere caprice: deep searching into my own heart, and a clear knowledge of Walter's feelings, have alone led me to decide thus. Only let me ask this favor, dearest father, and the beautiful girl clasped the old man tenderly around his neck, and bent fondly over him—"that you will not alter your pecuniary arrangements with Walter in consequence of this change in my views. Let him be as much your heir as he would have been had he married your only daughter."

"And what becomes of my daughter? If she is satisfied to be a porting beauty for her cousin's sake, might not her future husband reasonably regard this preference of a once favored lover with something nearly akin to jealousy?"

"Dear father, do not pain me by speaking thus. In giving up Walter, I give up all thought of marriage. My dear mother's fortune is an ample one for a spinster—is it not, sir? Nay, you almost promised not to visit the sin of my fickleness, as you term it, upon Walter; so make me happy now by ratifying that promise."

Mildred's soft, clear voice faltered perceptibly, in spite of her efforts to appear calm; and when Mr. Vernon raised his head, and looked up into her face, he saw that she had been weeping.

"Come, my Mildred, no tears. We will say no more about your marrying, my sweet child; and as to this other matter, it shall be arranged nearly as you would have it—only my Mildred must be mistress of this old house; that cannot be Walter's now."

Mr. Vernon kept his word; and when, a year after the events just related, his nephew followed him to the grave, he returned to find himself master of the princely fortune he believed to have forfeited by his inconstancy. Some months later Walter led his gentle Alice to a handsome home in the city, where his happiness might have been complete but for the painful knowledge that his happiness

was built upon the blighted hopes of her to whom he owed all his prosperity.

In accordance with her father's wish and the provisions of his will, Mildred Vernon still kept up her establishment at Battersea, living a life of quiet usefulness and benevolence until all traces of her sorrow seemed to have been chased away. Mildred had sedulously avoided meeting her cousin after the death of her father; and she had not seen Alice since the fatal scene which opened her eyes to her lover's real feeling towards herself. The sudden news of the entire failure of one of Walter's business speculations at length roused her more active efforts. Determined at any sacrifice, to secure the comforts of her beloved cousin, Mildred decided upon mortgaging her estate to its full value, and thus, in some measure, relieving him from his embarrassments. This generous idea was no sooner conceived than executed; and a second time in his life Walter found himself saved from comparative ruin by the woman he had so cruelly wronged.

Years passed on; the mortgage upon the old mansion was at length closed, and it passed into the hands of a stranger, while its once wealthy mistress retired to the cottage of old Roger Lee, which with a large portion of garden, she had managed to retain, and here, with one faithful attendant, her days fled by as peacefully as when she was surrounded by the luxuries of fortune.

Not until Alice sorrowed over the lifeless form of her husband did Mildred conquer her feelings sufficiently to visit her. She did then forget and conquer them; and to it was her earnest sympathy and active diligence, that the widow of Walter Vernon, and her daughter Mildred, were indebted for a more comfortable maintenance than the embarrassed state of the merchant's affairs would allow.

Mildred lives to see this orphaned namesake the wife of a rich and worthy citizen, and to find her own reward in the peace of a good conscience and the affection and reverence of the grandchildren of her early and only love—Walter Vernon.

Such was Aunt Ruth's story of her own checkered life; for my readers will have long since guessed that she was the beautiful and generous Mildred Vernon of my tale. It is a tale, however, that is not a fiction. Romantic as is the love devotion of our heroine, and unnatural as is the facility with which the father yields to her wishes, there are many who will be able to strip the narrative of its thin disguises, and detect in it an episode of real life.

Miscellaneous.

SOUP AT THE CIRCUS.—A rather unique performance at the Parisian Hippodrome is thus described:

"The introductory piece was a sort of recipe for making soup in the most approved style. The first who entered the arena was a cook, with a huge knife four feet long. Directly following him were four boys, dressed in red tights and close-fitting shirts, with caps of green leaves, to represent as many radishes. There was no mistaking them for any other vegetable. Behind them rode four turnips. Then came carrots, pumpkins, squashes, and several ladies representing the different species of salads. Then came beets, melons, leeks and mushrooms—the whole being covered in the rear by several boys representing red peppers. It was as odd an exhibition as we have seen, and rendered interesting by the singularly close manner in which nature was imitated by the dressing and general making of the different vegetables. A child at one side, six years old, called out as they passed, the name of each vegetable represented.

"As soon as they were all in the ring, the cook commenced to mix them together, by riding in every direction. At four points in the circle stood four different vegetables of enormous size: one was a mammoth melon—another a big pumpkin—the third an immense carrot—and the fourth a beet. As the cook rode around, he stuck his long knife in each, and cutting a string which held them up, they all expanded, and out jumped a monkey from each, dressed a la cook, and cut for home like good fellows on their hind legs. It was a comical scene, and delighted the young folks amazingly."

RETROR.—"If I were so unlucky as to have a stupid son, I would certainly, by all means make him a parson," said an officer. A clergyman who was in the company calmly replied, "You think differently from your father."

RECOLLECT.—"Recollect, sir," said a tavern keeper to a coach passenger who had only a glass of water, and not remembering the waiter—"Recollect, sir, if you lose your purse, you didn't pull it out here!"

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

This great question has been settled at Rome, and the world is consequently supposed to be much wiser now, in one august particular, than it was before. In the Grand Convocation at Rome, the number of "votes" was 576, including proxies, and about 120 bishops actually present. Of these, 540 pronounced by acclamation for the new dogma; 32 voices questioned the appropriateness of such a discussion, just now; while only 4 votes protested both against the dogma and against the right of the Holy See to decide a question of that importance without a regular council.—Commenting upon this affair, the New York Express says:—

"Votes"—vulgar votes—in these days, thus solve the most awful mysteries of divinity,—solve it, too, as it seems to us, with the same sang froid that we settle the commonest political questions of the day here, at home. Now, all this may be right and Right Reverend. We do not cry it all down as something very like a blasphemous and most revolting presumption,—a presumption of man to sit in solemn judgment upon his Maker,—in order to determine whether speaking after the manner of men—the Son of God was conceived humanly or otherwise. If the Bible is all as dark as midnight on that point,—the Fates help us if we are to get light only from the Pio Ninos, the Timons and the Fitzpatricks of the day,—that is all.

THE SAD RESULT OF IGNORANCE.—The Detroit Advertiser relates an instance of an ox being killed and a sled broken to pieces by a railroad car, and all because the ox could not understand French. The team, consisting of one English and one French ox, drawing a heavy load of wood, and driven by a French driver, was crossing the track when the express train of cars made its appearance. The driver, in great excitement, immediately ordered his oxen to "chuck," (the French for "haw.") The French ox understood him, and turning off the track saved himself from injury; but the English ox, having never studied the language, pressed further on, and was instantly killed. This case should be a warning to farmers to have their oxen properly educated.

HAD HIM THAT TIME.—The Boston (Mass.) Post, tells the following:—"Rev. Mr. Foster, of Salem, Mass., was a facetious man, and usually ready at joke and repartee. He had a parishioner, a carpenter by trade, pretty well stocked with ready wit, and withal, somewhat given to boasting. One day, while at work for his minister, hewing a stick of timber, the carpenter was boasting in his usual style of the marvels that he could perform. The Pastor, to put an extinguisher upon him, said, "Governor, (his nickname,) do you think you could make a devil?" "Make a devil!" responded the Governor, "why yes, oh yes!" (his broad-axe moving a little more rapidly,) "here, put up your foot—you wait the least alteration of any man I ever saw!" It was rare that the minister came off second best in such encounters, but he did this time.

ORIGIN OF THE AMERICAN FLAG.—A few weeks since, a paragraph going the rounds, inquired when the present United States flag was adopted. The Cincinnati Gazette replies thus: The following is the original resolution adopting the Stars and Stripes: In Congress, June 16, 1777: Resolved, that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternately red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white, in a blue field, representing a new constellation." As new States were added to the Union, from time to time, new stripes were added to the flag, till the number had increased to fifteen or twenty. At length, about thirty years ago, the stripes were reduced by an act of congress to the original number of thirteen.

A Southerner gave a dinner party to a few friends, who happened to converse about Sambo's power of head endurance, the gentleman said he owned a negro whom no one in the party could knock down or injure by striking on the head. A strong burly fellow, laughed at the idea, and as Sam, the colored fellow, was about entering with the candles, the gentleman stood behind the door, and as he entered, Sam's head received a powerful sockdologer. The candles flickered a little but Sambo passed quietly on merely exclaiming: "Gentlemen be careful of de elbows, or de lights will be distinguished."

IMPROVED PIANO.—It is stated that a Frenchman named M. Alexander, has invented a contrivance for giving the piano a prolonged sound. For many years this has been sought for in vain. It was impossible to obtain a sustained note, like the human voice or the violin. The invention is said to be very simple.