

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

-ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

A. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. What orders were given to the Light Brigade?

- A mistaken order was given to the Light Brigade cavalry to attack a field artillery unit of the Russian army.

2. How did the soldiers respond to the orders given?

- They complied with the given orders without disputing or debating on the wisdom of the order.

3. What happened as the Light Brigade rode back?

- As the Light Brigade rode back, they were decimated in number. Cannons stormed at with shot and shell from, right, left and behind them volleying and thundering.

4. How did the speaker remember the soldiers of the Light Brigade?

- The speaker remembers the soldiers of the Light Brigade with reverence and invokes the readers to celebrate and admire the bravery of the six hundred and also their sense of duty.

5. Which historical event is this poem based on?

- It is the Battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War. This attack took place on 15th October 1854.

B. ANSWER WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT:

1. *Half a league, half a league,*

Half a league onward,

a. What is the speaker referring to?

- The speaker is referring to the league ie., the Light Brigade, who are a British horse-mounted cavalry unit armed only with swords and lances.

b. What does half a league specify?

- Half a league specifies the measurement of distance that is a mile and a half.

c. What effect does the repetition of words have on the reader?

- The repetition of words emphasize that the six hundred were ready to sacrifice their lives without disputing their commander's orders. The repetition makes the idea clearer and more memorable.

2. *'Charge for the guns!' he said:*

Into the valley of Death.

a. What do you think the speaker is trying to convey in the first line?

- In the first line the speaker conveys that the horse mounted cavalry were commanded to attack the army with the artillery.

b. What is the tone used by the speaker?

- The speaker uses a commanding tone to order his men to attack the army (whose weapons were swords and lances) which had guns to reciprocate.

c. What is the 'valley of death'?

- 'Valley of Death' is referred to the Battle of Balaclava in the Crimean war where the charge led by Lord Cardigan reached the artillery battery and scattered some gunners but they were destroyed in the process as out of about 670 men, most of them were killed in the charge.

3. *"Was there a man dismayed?*

Not though the soldier knew

Someone had blundered."

a. Who is the man that the speaker is referring to?

- The man that the speaker's is referring to is someone in the high commanding place and whose wrong or mistaken order created havoc or the disaster.

b. What does the speaker mean in the second line?

- It was a death mission; someone had made a mistake. But the men simply obey; "Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die."

c. What is he referring to in the third line and what do you think their emotions would have been?

- The third line says that someone in the highest echelon had made a grave mistake. Whatever would have been their emotions, the men at no point would have questioned their commander's order. They bravely and dutifully obey the orders given to them.

C. THINK AND ANSWER:

1. Do you think the poem criticises or glorifies war? Give reasons for your answers.

- The poem commemorates the valiant action, dutifulness, loyalty and perseverance of the light brigade that fought this battle in the Crimean War. Yet the word "Someone had blunder'd" is a direct assault of

the poet and the common man at 'WAR'. The hideous repercussion of a mistaken command has shamed humanity.