

**WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE
BATTLE OF DORKING:
REMINISCENCES OF A VOLUNTEER,
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE
VICTORY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649344208

What Happened After the Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a volunteer, being an account of the Victory at Tunbridge Wells by Charles John Stone

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHARLES JOHN STONE

**WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE
BATTLE OF DORKING:
REMINISCENCES OF A VOLUNTEER,
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE
VICTORY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

Rich^d Ashmole Bourne

Price Twenty-Five Cents.

What Happened After

THE BATTLE OF DORKING:

REMINISCENCES OF A VOLUNTEER.

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF

THE VICTORY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

NEW YORK:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS,
416 BROOME STREET.
1871.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE BATTLE OF DORKING.

"Is that your old sword, grandpapa?"

"Yes, my boy; that's the old sword I wore some fifty years ago, during the hard fighting that followed the invasion."

"May I take it down and look at it? How it is notched!"

"Ah! those notches could tell a tale or two; they were good hard blows, such as I rather doubt whether the lazy, luxurious young men of the present day could deliver."

"Oh! grandpapa, do tell us all about them—tell us the story of all the fighting."

"Surely you must have heard all about it. I believe I fight my battles over again, after dinner, till everybody is sick of the subject."

"But we are not sick of the subject, grandpapa. We don't dine with you every day, you know."

"Well, well; I suppose your generation hasn't heard so much about it as the last; so here goes. Shall I begin with the Battle of Dorking, where we got a regular licking, as you boys would call it?"

"No, no, grandpapa; tell us about a victory or two. I prefer them to the defeats."

"Ah! you ought to remember the defeats as well as the victories. Our self-confidence and carelessness about fifty years ago cost us a deal of bloodshed, money, and trouble, and a most disastrous commercial crisis; indeed, there are people to this day who say we are a ruined country through it. There's old What's-his-name, who was a volunteer in those days, who's always croaking about the condition of the nation. But, in my opinion, we are stronger and richer than ever. However, you don't want a disquisition on questions of that sort."

"No, grandpapa; let's have the fighting."

"It is difficult to describe the state of mind into which England was plunged by the great defeat in the neighborhood of Dorking, and the advance of the enemy on London. A very large party in the nation, especially amongst the trading classes, counselled submission. 'Make the best terms you can with the invader, and get rid of him,' they said; 'fighting is unbusiness-like.' But the old party in the country was the stronger. 'Submission!' said they. 'No; by Gad! the old British lion hasn't lost his teeth and cut his claws just yet. Submission! When we've the hardiest population in the whole world; and were acknowledged to be the finest fighters only some fifty years ago.' And the 'great heart of the nation,' as a popular paper of that time used to call it, did not palpitate with fear. The blood may have been chilled at the first sound of the enemy's guns on the green hills of Surrey; but it soon rushed through the veins of England with the old fiery energy of the Anglo-Saxon race, thoroughly aroused.

"In the north and midland counties, and in the west, the militia and volunteer corps set up their standards, figuratively speaking, and the recruits flocked in by hundreds. The stalwart miners of Northumberland and Durham, of Cornwall and the Welsh coal-districts; the great muscular navvies, and healthy agricultural laborers, the sharp mechanics of the manufacturing towns, and the yeomen, gentlemen, clerks—in fact, everybody rushed to arms. The principal difficulty was to find the arms to rush to. However, notwithstanding the confusion which reigned in governmental departments, the rifles and ammunition in store were conveyed safely out of reach of the enemy, and by giving the breech-loaders to the best shots, and serving out the old-fashioned muzzle-loading musket—then known as Brown Bess—to the others, for close-quarter shooting and bayonet work, we managed to present a creditable array. But the fear, of course, was, that our fellows would stand no more chance against the disciplined invader than the hasty levies of the French in the preceding year. But, you see, we had this great advantage—that our Englishmen, rough fellows though many of them were, became easily amenable to discipline, and required no teaching to render them calm and steady. And plenty of good officers turned up; for, owing to the purchase system which had prevailed in our army up to that time, promotion had been rapid in our regiments, and a very large number of English gentlemen had sufficient knowledge of the military art to be of good service in drilling the town lads and clodhoppers."

"What is the purchase system, grandpapa?"

"Oh, I'll tell you about that another time. It was the custom in the last century for officers in the army to purchase their promotion. As I was saying, there were plenty of officers to be found when they were wanted, and very speedily three large armies were advancing on London, which was still held by the enemy. You may imagine that the total stoppage of business in the capital, and its occupation by the enemy, were producing most appalling disasters and confusion. On the whole, I believe the invaders behaved civilly towards the Londoners, but of course they lived at free quarters, and took care to 'requisition' the place very liberally. They believed that England would be glad to purchase peace under any circumstances, and at any price, and they intended, I fancy, simply to hold the capital till we had agreed to their terms. I forget exactly what they were, but they were not agreeable, I remember. But the few weeks' respite which we thus obtained was of marvelous advantage to us, and the foreigners were astonished to find that armies were gradually gathering around them, and that England seemed to be rather taking spirit than losing it. In fact, their position suddenly became critical. They had kept their communications open at first through Worthing, where they had established a fortified camp, and had maintained a carefully guarded line across Sussex and Surrey to London.

"Now, the winds and waves which, on one or two occasions have been very kind to old England, had appeared, at this juncture of our history, quite to have deserted us, and to be bestowing their favors on the other

side. But at length a turn came, and some severe weather much troubled their fleet, and sent a few ships to be banged to pieces on our coast. And then our fleet, our dispersed ships, collected, and, taught by misfortune, went at them again. One of their principal vessels was blown to pieces by their own torpedoes, and, as two could play at that game, by which they had gained such an advantage before, and we, as I said before, had obtained experience by disaster, we managed altogether to pretty nearly destroy the whole lot of them; and our invaders found themselves isolated. The main body of them was in London, and another large force was near Worthing, which had had the mortification of observing the punishment of their fleet. Besides these, there were others, forming a sort of chain, in fortified positions between these two points. But remember, my boys, that I am talking of fifty years ago—it's difficult to remember all that took place. Ah! I remember in '71, there was that wonderful trial—the—the Tichborne—yes, that was the name—the Tichborne case, which turned a good deal upon memories of——”

“Never mind about that, grandpapa; tell us what you were doing yourself all this time, while the enemy were being beaten. We want to know about the notches on the sword.”

“Don't be impatient; I'm coming to my own share of events as well as I can.”

“You were an officer in the Militia, weren't you, grandpapa?”

“Yes, my boy; I had left Oxford a year or two be-

fore, and become a student-at-law in the Inner Temple. By the by, how different those places were in those days! The University of Oxford was still under the command of the grand old Church of England, and men became advocates without any test beyond payment of money, eating a certain number of dinners, and attending a few lectures—but the profession maintained its high character without educational tests. I was always a Conservative, and did my best to keep them as ——”

“Please, grandpa, tell us about Oxford and the Inner Temple another day; we want to hear about the fighting now.”

“You young rascal! you ought to allow an old man to be a little discursive. Well, as I was saying, I was to be a lawyer, but my father made me a very good allowance, and I voted the law a nuisance. In fact, if I had had my own way I should have got a commission in the army; however, I did obtain the nearest thing to it, that is to say, a commission in the Militia. I obtained a lieutenantcy in one of the Middlesex regiments, and had been out for two or three annual trainings when these events occurred. Ah! the Militia then was not what it is now; we had all the material of good soldiers, but simply we had not sufficient time allowed us to learn our business. I got attached to a regiment of the line for a month, I remember, and had another month's drill in a school of instruction.”

“Never mind about the school of instruction, grandpapa; we have too much of school when we are not at home for the holidays.”