

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

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What Happened After the Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer. Being an Account of the victory at tunbridge wells by Charles John Stone

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CHARLES JOHN STONE

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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.