

My dear Mr Ministry: I have just read
your notice of Gung & Sullivan and
your fair Cavalry friend Smith's
criticisms on the ~~London~~ Cavalry
charge. Your friend Smith probably
never saw an infantry subaltern
try to command a company of
cavalry and does not know how
a "dough-boy" ^{"horse-tastic"} mixes things up
when he is in a hurry. I do, be-
cause I have been there and I
know that is a first rate sample
of what results from a fair theoret-
ical knowledge of one arm of
the service and long ^{experience} ~~and~~ ~~use~~
learned ~~service~~ in another.

As to the charge itself, the
width of the road, &c, I am assured

almost as well fortified as ^{in better} ~~as much as~~ ^{as} Scott was
when he heard the club men
^{who did not know he was the author,}
of Edinburgh, declare that it was
impossible for King James to have
ridden from Coitaulagh Ford
to Stirling Castle ^{in the time}
allowed him in the Lady of the
Lake.

"Oh no, it was not" he replied
I did it myself before I wrote
the poem!"

Now ^{while I did not take as much trouble}
^{as it happens} the twenty-
two men did go through the regi-
ment marching in column one third
^{supposed to be one} of it, ^{they were advancing upon} the road, and the others just
an one leading into it. The fact was
recorded in General Orders and the
baron of Hume granted ^{the man who did} ~~for doing~~
it. The reason ~~was~~ of its ~~success~~

the attack succeeded
~~and~~ ~~placement~~ was at that time
said to be in the peculiar form
character of ~~of the ground,~~
~~the~~ sharp incline, the
tired horses of the enemy, the fact
that they had few sabres, the confus-
ion produced by the front ranks
in seeking to ~~escape~~ and the
close proximity of the division
they were trying to pass ^{around}, without
being detected. Of course, the
first shot put an end to all
hope of their getting in our rear
without being ~~observed~~ observed. Any
one who recalls the old stage
files of central Kentucky and
Tennessee, will see that ten or
even eleven files ^{are} by no means
an impossibility in them. At
all events, the man who made

the charge has always stoutly
maintained that was the way it
was done. I know he got through,
saw him get his ribbon and
believe he knew as much about
the matter as anybody, though
I will admit that when a man
tries to tell how he got out of a
tight place of that ^{kind} ~~sort~~ he is
very apt to get into a tighter
one of another. ^{sort} The surprising
thing about it to my mind, ^{has always been} ~~is~~
that a man should ever have
thought of ^{making} such a break-neck
dash ^{down such a hill as that,} instead of cutting to the
words upon the left ^{steadfastly over the the camp} and ^{essence the horse} letting
the horses look out for themselves.
However, "impossible" things were often

done in those days; sometimes
by many men and sometimes
by few. Only think what a series
of impossibilities Lieutenant
Cushing performed and got through
almost without a scratch.

Of course in such a narrative
one is not tied down to literal
fact but I think a novelist dishonors
his craft when his delineation
becomes an impossibility, granting his
expressed conditions. It is a curi-
ous fact that the charge of improbability
or impossibility, so far as my works are
concerned, has always been made in re-
spect to very stubborn facts, until I
have come almost to believe that only
stern realities are esteemed really
improbable by those who are most best
qualified to judge. Yrs