

2 Henry IV

1.3

Enter the Archbishop of York, Thomas Mowbray the Earl Marshal, Lord Hastings, and Lord Bardolph

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Thus have you heard our cause and known our means,

And, my most noble friends, I pray you all
Speak plainly your opinions of our hopes.
And first, Lord Marshal, what say you to it?

MOWBRAY

I well allow the occasion of our arms, 5
But gladly would be better satisfied
How in our means we should advance ourselves
To look with forehead bold and big enough
Upon the power and puissance of the King.

HASTINGS

Our present musters grow upon the file 10
To five-and-twenty thousand men of choice,
And our supplies live largely in the hope
Of great Northumberland, whose bosom burns
With an incenseAd fire of injuries.

LORD BARDOLPH

The question then, Lord Hastings, standeth thus: 15
Whether our present five-and-twenty thousand
May hold up head without Northumberland.

HASTINGS

With him we may.

LORD BARDOLPH Yea, marry, there's the point;

But if without him we be thought too feeble,
My judgement is, we should not step too far 20
Till we had his assistance by the hand;
For in a theme so bloody-faced as this,
Conjecture, expectation, and surmise
Of aids uncertain should not be admitted.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph, for indeed 25
It was young Hotspur's case at Shrewsbury.

LORD BARDOLPH

It was, my lord; who lined himself with hope,
Eating the air on promise of supply,
Flatt'ring himself with project of a power
Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts; 30
And so, with great imagination
Proper to madmen, led his powers to death,
And winking leapt into destruction.

HASTINGS

But by your leave, it never yet did hurt
To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope. 35

LORD BARDOLPH

Yes, if this present quality of war±±
Indeed the instant action, a cause on foot±±
Lives so in hope; as in an early spring
We see th'appearing buds, which to prove fruit
Hope gives not so much warrant as despair 40
That frosts will bite them. When we mean to build
We first survey the plot, then draw the model;
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we rate the cost of the erection,
Which if we find outweighs ability, 45
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices, or, at least, desist
To build at all? Much more in this great work±±
Which is almost to pluck a kingdom down
And set another up±±should we survey 50
The plot of situation and the model,
Consent upon a sure foundation,
Question surveyors, know our own estate,
How able such a work to undergo,
To weigh against his opposite; or else 55
We fortify in paper and in figures,
Using the names of men instead of men,
Like one that draws the model of an house
Beyond his power to build it, who, half-through,
Gives o'er, and leaves his part-created cost 60
A naked subject to the weeping clouds,
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.

HASTINGS

Grant that our hopes, yet likely of fair birth,

Should be stillborn, and that we now possessed
The utmost man of expectation, 65
I think we are a body strong enough,
Even as we are, to equal with the King.

LORD BARDOLPH

What, is the King but five-and-twenty thousand?

HASTINGS

To us no more, nay, not so much, Lord Bardolph;
For his divisions, as the times do brawl, 70
Are in three heads: one power against the French,
And one against Glyndwŷr, perforce a third
Must take up us. So is the unfirm King
In three divided, and his coffers sound
With hollow poverty and emptiness. 75

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

That he should draw his several strengths together
And come against us in full puissance
Need not be dreaded.

HASTINGS

If he should do so,
He leaves his back unarmed, the French and Welsh
Baying him at the heels. Never fear that. 80

LORD BARDOLPH

Who is it like should lead his forces hither?

HASTINGS

The Duke of Lancaster and Westmorland;
Against the Welsh, himself and Harry Monmouth;
But who is substituted 'gainst the French
I have no certain notice.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Let us on, 85
And publish the occasion of our arms.
The commonwealth is sick of their own choice;
Their over-greedy love hath surfeited.
An habitation giddy and unsure
Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart. 90
O thou fond many, with what loud applause
Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke,
Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!
And being now trimmed in thine own desires,
Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him 95
That thou provok'st thyself to cast him up.

So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard;
And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,
And howl'st to find it. What trust is in these times? 100
They that when Richard lived would have him die
Are now become enamoured on his grave.
Thou that threw'st dust upon his goodly head,
When through proud London he came sighing on
After th'admireÁd heels of Bolingbroke, 105
Cri'st now, `O earth, yield us that king again,
And take thou this!' O thoughts of men accursed!
Past and to come seems best; things present, worst.

[MOWBRAY]

Shall we go draw our numbers and set on?

HASTINGS

We are time's subjects, and time bids be gone. 110
Exeunt