

1 Henry IV

1.1

*Enter King Henry, Lord John of Lancaster, and the
Earl of Westmorland, with other [lords]*

KING HENRY

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
To be commenced in strands afar remote.
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil 5
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.
No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flow'rets with the arme's hoofs
Of hostile paces. Those oppose's eyes,
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven, 10
All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery,
Shall now in mutual well-beseeming ranks
March all one way, and be no more opposed 15
Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies.
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ's
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross 20
We are impressed and engaged to fight
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were moulded in their mothers' womb
To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet 25
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed,
For our advantage, on the bitter cross.
But this our purpose now is twelve month old,
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go.
Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear 30
Of you, my gentle cousin Westmorland,
What yesternight our Council did decree
In forwarding this dear expedience.

WESTMORLAND

My liege, this haste was hot in question,
And many limits of the charge set down 35
But yesternight, when all athwart there came
A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glyndwŷr, 40
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,
A thousand of his people butchereð,
Upon whose dead corpse' there was such misuse,
Such beastly shameless transformation,
By those Welshwomen done as may not be 45
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

KING HENRY

It seems then that the tidings of this broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

WESTMORLAND

This matched with other did, my gracious lord,
For more uneven and unwelcome news 50
Came from the north, and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood day the gallant Hotspur there±±
Young Harry Percy±±and brave Archibald,
That ever valiant and approveð Scot,
At Holmedon met, 55
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour,
As by discharge of their artillery
And shape of likelihood the news was told;
For he that brought them in the very heat
And pride of their contention did take horse, 60
Uncertain of the issue any way.

KING HENRY

Here is a dear, a true industrious friend,
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse,
Stained with the variation of each soil
Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours; 65
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.
The Earl of Douglas is discomfited.
Ten thousand bold Scots, two-and-twenty knights,
Balked in their own blood did Sir Walter see

On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners Hotspur took 70
Mordake the Earl of Fife and eldest son
To beaten Douglas, and the Earl of Athol,
Of Moray, Angus, and Menteith;
And is not this an honourable spoil,
A gallant prize? Ha, cousin, is it not? 75

WESTMORLAND

In faith, it is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

KING HENRY

Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st me sin
In envy that my lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son±±
A son who is the theme of honour's tongue, 80
Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride±±
Whilst I by looking on the praise of him
See riot and dishonour stain the brow
Of my young Harry. O, that it could be proved 85
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged
In cradle clothes our children where they lay,
And called mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
But let him from my thoughts. What think you, coz, 90
Of this young Percy's pride? The prisoners
Which he in this adventure hath surprised
To his own use he keeps, and sends me word
I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.

WESTMORLAND

This is his uncle's teaching. This is Worcester, 95
Malevolent to you in all aspects,
Which makes him prune himself, and bristle up
The crest of youth against your dignity.

KING HENRY

But I have sent for him to answer this;
And for this cause awhile we must neglect 100
Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.
Cousin, on Wednesday next our Council we
Will hold at Windsor. So inform the lords.
But come yourself with speed to us again,
For more is to be said and to be done 105

Than out of anger can be uttereÁd.

WESTMORLAND I will, my liege.

*Exeunt [King Henry, Lancaster, and other
lords at one door; Westmorland
at another door]*