

1 Henry IV

4.2

Enter Sir John Oldcastle and Russell

SIR JOHN Russell, get thee before to Coventry; fill me a bottle of sack. Our soldiers shall march through. We'll to Sutton Coldfield tonight.

RUSSELL Will you give me money, captain?

SIR JOHN Lay out, lay out. 5

RUSSELL This bottle makes an angel.

SIR JOHN *[giving Russell money]* An if it do, take it for thy labour; an if it make twenty, take them all; I'll answer the coinage. Bid my lieutenant Harvey meet me at town's end. 10

RUSSELL I will, captain. Farewell.

Exit

SIR JOHN If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet. I have misused the King's press damnably. I have got in exchange of one hundred and fifty soldiers three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but 15 good householders, yeomen's sons, enquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns, such a commodity of warm slaves as had as lief hear the devil as a drum, such as fear the report of a caliver worse than a struck fowl or a hurt wild 20 duck. I pressed me none but such toasts and butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have bought out their services; and now my whole charge consists of ensigns, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies±±slaves as ragged as Lazarus 25 in the painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores±±and such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust servingmen, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen, the cankers of a calm world and a long peace, ten times 30 more dishonourable-ragged than an old feazed ensign; and such have I to fill up the rooms of them as have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come

from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A 35
mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had
unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies.
No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march
through Coventry with them, that's flat. Nay, and the
villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had 40
gyves on, for indeed I had the most of them out of
prison. There's not a shirt and a half in all my company;
and the half-shirt is two napkins tacked together and
thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without
sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my 45
host at Saint Albans, or the red-nose innkeeper of
Daventry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough
on every hedge.

Enter Prince Harry and the Earl of Westmorland

PRINCE HARRY How now, blown Jack? How now, quilt?

SIR JOHN What, Hal! How now, mad wag? What a devil 50
dost thou in Warwickshire? My good lord of
Westmorland, I cry you mercy! I thought your honour
had already been at Shrewsbury.

WESTMORLAND Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I
were there, and you too; but my powers are there 55
already. The King, I can tell you, looks for us all. We
must away all night.

SIR JOHN Tut, never fear me. I am as vigilant as a cat to
steal cream.

PRINCE HARRY I think to steal cream indeed, for thy theft 60
hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose
fellows are these that come after?

SIR JOHN Mine, Hal, mine.

PRINCE HARRY I did never see such pitiful rascals.

SIR JOHN Tut, tut, good enough to toss, food for powder, 65
food for powder. They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush,
man, mortal men, mortal men.

WESTMORLAND Ay, but Sir John, methinks they are
exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly.

SIR JOHN Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they 70
had that, and for their bareness, I am sure they never
learned that of me.

PRINCE HARRY No, I'll be sworn, unless you call three

fingers in the ribs bare. But sirrah, make haste. Percy
is already in the field.

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Exit

SIR JOHN What, is the King encamped?

WESTMORLAND He is, Sir John. I fear we shall stay too
long.

[Exit]

SIR JOHN

Well, to the latter end of a fray
And the beginning of a feast
Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest.

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Exit