

Henry V

3.1

Alarum. Enter King Harry [and the English army, with] scaling ladders

KING HARRY

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears, 5
Then imitate the action of the tiger.
Stiffen the sinews, conjure up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage.
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect,
Let it pry through the portage of the head 10
Like the brass cannon, let the brow o'erwhelm it
As fearfully as doth a galleon rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swilled with the wild and wasteful ocean.
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide, 15
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height. On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof,
Fathers that like so many Alexanders
Have in these parts from morn till even fought, 20
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument.
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest
That those whom you called fathers did beget you.
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen, 25
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear
That you are worth your breeding±±which I doubt not,
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes. 30
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot.
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge

Cry, 'God for Harry! England and Saint George!'
Alarum, and chambers go off. Exeunt