

King Henry and his barons. The English, on the contrary, made their wills, and passed the night in devotion. Sickness, famine, and the smallness of their numbers, depressed their spirits; but their courage rose when they thought on Cressy and other victories, and on the gallant spirit of their king. Henry himself visited all their quarters, and he ordered bands of music to play all through the night to cheer their drooping spirits.

Before sunrise, on the 25th of October, 1415, being St. Crispin's day, the English army, having heard mass, stood in order of battle. The king, wearing a helmet of polished steel, wreathed with a crown of sparkling stones, rode on a grey pony from rank to rank, inspecting and encouraging them. Hearing an officer say to another that he wished a miracle would transfer thither some of the good knights who were sitting idle at home, he declared aloud that "he would not have a single man more, as if God gave them the victory, it would be plainly due to His goodness; if he did not, the fewer that fell, the less the loss to their country." Three French knights now came, summoning them to surrender. The king ordered them off and cried out, "Banners, advance." The archers fell on their knees on the ground, then rose and ran on with a shout. They halted, and poured their hail of arrows on the first division of the French; and when they had thrown it into some confusion, they slung their bows behind their backs, and grasping their swords and battle-axes, killed the constable and his principal officers, and routed the whole division. They then advanced to attack the second division, led by the Duke of Alençon. Here the resistance was obstinate. Alençon forced his way to the royal standard, killed the Duke of York, and cleft the crown in the helmet of the king; but he was slain, and the division, turned and fled. Henry was advancing to attack the third division, when word came that a large force was falling on the rear. The king gave hasty orders to put the prisoners to death, and numbers had perished before it was discovered that it was a false alarm, caused by an attempt of some peasantry to plunder the baggage. The slaughter was then stopped, but this cruel act tarnished the victory which was already won, for the third division offered but a slight resistance.

When Montjoy, the French king-at-arms, appeared, "To whom," said Henry, "doth the victory belong?" "To you, sir." "And what castle is that I see at a distance?" "It is called the castle of Agincourt." "Then," said the king, "be this battle known to posterity by the name of the battle of Agincourt." The prime nobility of France were taken