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POPULAR HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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HENRY V. was proclaimed king on the 21st of March, 1413. He was crowned at Westminster on the 9th of April, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A parliament, having been summoned by writ, met at Westminster on the 15th of May. There was nothing very noteworthy in its proceedings. The king met his Lords and Commons with an aspect of love and conciliation. He had taken not only the most generous, but the most prudent resolution towards those who had been considered dangerous to his house. He restored the son of Henry Percy to his family inheritance, and he liberated the earl of March from prison.

There were dangers, however, at home which the magnanimity of the king was not calculated to avert. The execrable laws against the preachers of the "new doctrines" had not prevented the tenets of Wycliffe from spreading through the nation, and beyond the narrow bounds of our island. It was a period of alarm for popes and prelates; and for all those who considered that the Church was properly built upon a foundation of worldly riches and dominion. John Huss, a Bohemian priest, had become acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe; and he boldly preached the same doctrines as early as 1405. The archbishop of Prague, in 1409, commanded all the writings of Wycliffe to be delivered up to him by members of the university of Prague, of which Huss was rector; and many of these treasured volumes were publicly burnt.

Huss continued to preach, in spite of the pope's excommunication, till he was silenced in 1413. In 1414, the Council of Constance held its first sitting, and Huss was summoned before it to declare his opinions. The brave man knew that he went at the risk of his life. He died at the stake in 1415. The same council decreed that the body of Wycliffe should be "taken from the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church." It was thirteen years before this miserable vengeance was carried into effect, by disinterring and burning our first English reformer's body, throwing his ashes into a brook. "The brook did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."* But in the first year of Henry V. the prelates sought to strike a more effectual terror into the followers of Wycliffe than could be accomplished by any insult to his memory. They resolved to take measures against one of the most powerful supporters of the Lollards, Sir John Oldcastle, called Lord Cobham. He had been the private friend of the king when prince of Wales; and Henry, in the honest desire, as we may believe, to avert the consequences of ecclesiastical vengeance, tried to induce Oldcastle to recant. He was inflexible; and the king then caused him to be arrested. On the 25th of September the undaunted knight was brought before the synod, and there pleaded his cause with a vigour and ability which have made him memorable amongst the martyrs of the Reformation. He was condemned as a heretic, and was handed over to the secular power. The king granted his ancient friend a respite of fifty days from the fiery penalty which awaited him; and during that period Oldcastle escaped from his prison in the Tower. The danger to which their leader had been exposed, and the severities which appeared preparing for those who held to their conscientious opinions, precipitated the Lollards into a movement which made the State as anxious for their suppression as was the Church. Rumours went forth of a fearful plot to destroy all religion and law in England; and, in the overthrow of king, lords, and clergy, to make all property in common. There can be little doubt that this rumoured plot was a gross exaggeration of some indiscreet assemblies for the purpose of petition. It was stated that in the fields of St. Giles, stretching to the Hampstead and Highgate hills

* Fuller.

—fields now covered with more human dwellings than all the London of the fifteenth century—twenty-five thousand insurgents were to meet under the command of Sir John Oldcastle. At midnight of the 7th of January, 1414, the king went forth from the city gates with a mighty array, to encounter this army of desperate rebels. He found about eighty persons. Others were surprised near Hornsey. Many of these unfortunate people were immediately executed; and Sir Roger Acton, a friend of Oldcastle, also suffered on the 10th of February. Henry proclaimed that the insurgents meant to destroy him and his brothers, to divide the realm into districts, and to elect Sir John Oldcastle president. These allegations appear too extravagant not to lead us to the belief that the conspiracy, if conspiracy there were, had for its sole object the mitigation of the penal laws against the preachers and receivers of Wycliffe's doctrines. Within a few months a pardon was proclaimed to all the Lollards for the conspiracy, excepting Oldcastle and eleven others. Still prosecutions went on; and it is remarkable that the king pardoned many so prosecuted, after they had been convicted. The general body of Lollards were grievously punished for the indiscretion of some of their number. A new Statute was passed, giving all judges and magistrates power to arrest all persons suspected of Lollardism; binding them by oath to do their utmost to root up the heresy; and enacting that in addition to capital punishment the lands and goods of such convicted heretics should be forfeited to the king. It was three years before the vengeance of the Church fell on Oldcastle. He was taken in 1418, while Henry was in France; and was burnt, under the declaration of the archbishop and his provincial synod that he was an incorrigible heretic.

The factions of the Burgundians and Armagnacs were carrying on their desolating contests in France, when Henry V. came to the throne. Henry IV. had endeavoured to avail himself of their distractions by siding with one or the other party as best suited his policy. His son adopted a bolder course. When the treaty of Bretigny was violated by the French, Edward III. re-assumed the title of king of France, and went to war again to assert his pretended right. There had been several renewed truces between the two kingdoms, but no pacification, and no decided settlement of the contested claims. The unhappy condition of the French nation was an encouragement to the ambition of the young king of England, who had been trained from his earliest years in war

and policy. An embassy was sent to Paris to negotiate for a prolongation of the truce. Then was suggested a pacification, by the marriage of Henry of England with Katherine, the youngest daughter of the insane Charles VI. It was also proposed to the duke of Burgundy that his daughter should be queen of England. But the Orleanists were now supreme. Within a year from his accession Henry suddenly put in a claim to the crown of France, in renewal of the old claim of Edward III. Upon the rejection of this claim the king of England made demands far more unreasonable than were agreed to by his great-grandfather, when the peace of Bretigny was concluded. The French government consented to give up all the ancient territories of the duchy of Aquitaine, and to marry the daughter of Charles VI. to Henry, with a dowry of six hundred thousand crowns. An embassy was sent to France, when the amount of the proposed dowry was increased to eight hundred thousand crowns; and the demand of Henry for the cession of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou was rejected. The French then sent an embassy to England, when Henry demanded Normandy and all the territories ceded by the peace of Bretigny, under the threat that he would otherwise take arms to enforce his claim to the crown of France. On the 16th of April, 1415, he announced at a great council his determination to recover "his inheritance." He had previously obtained a supply from parliament "for the defence of the kingdom of England and the safety of the seas;" and the supply was thus limited, although the king had avowed his intention to that parliament of making a claim to the kingdom of France. Historians are of opinion that the lords spiritual, with the new archbishop, Chicheley, as their organ, had urged the king to this decision, to divert the attention of the people from those questions of the doctrine and discipline of the Church which had become so formidable. The probability is, that Henry having become an instrument in their hands for putting down by terror those new doctrines which had spread from England to the continent, they were ready in return to gratify his personal ambition by advocating his designs upon France. Whatever admiration we may feel for the bravery, fortitude, and self-reliance of Henry, we must rank him amongst the guilty possessors of kingly power; and make a large abatement from the vaunted generosity of one "who lay in wait for the best opportunity of aggrandising himself at the expense of his distracted neighbours; as if nations were only more numerous gangs of banditti, instead of

being communities formed only for the observance and enforcement of justice."*

At the council on the 17th of April the king appointed his brother, the duke of Bedford, to be lieutenant of the kingdom during his absence. The next day he declared what should be the payment for the lords and knights who should be retained for his voyage to France, with the daily payment of each man-at-arms and each archer. The rate of pay was, for a duke, 13s. 4d. per day; for an earl, 6s. 8d.; for a baron, 4s.; for a knight, 2s.; for every other man-at-arms, 1s.; and for an archer, 6d. Great nobles and others contracted to furnish large bodies of troops at this rate, well and sufficiently mounted, armed, and arrayed. But the first quarter's wages were required to be paid in advance, and pledges were given for the payment of the second quarter. Contracts were made for carpenters and other artisans, for waggons, and bows and arrows. The king pledged jewels for the performance of some of these contracts, and he raised large sums as loans upon jewels and plate. Ships and sailors were impressed. Surgeons were provided. Many officers of the royal household were to attend upon the king, with no fewer than fifteen minstrels. On the 18th of June Henry set out from Westminster, going in procession to St. Paul's, accompanied by the mayor, and citizens in their guilds. At Winchester he waited the arrival of an embassy from France. According to one French historian, Laboureur, Henry haggled about terms in the spirit of an usurer. The archbishop of Bourges, who was of the embassy, is accused by our chroniclers of having replied to the king with improper boldness. Neither concession nor plain-speaking would avail. The ambassadors returned to Paris on the 26th of July, and reported that all Henry's peaceable professions covered malice and dissimulation. On the 24th of July the king made his will, concluding with these words in his own autograph: "This is my last will, subscribed with my own hand, R. H. Jesu mercy and gremery Ladie Marie help." Within a day or two a conspiracy against him was discovered, which, according to some accounts, was instigated by the French court. The conspirators were, the king's cousin, Richard, earl of Cambridge, brother to the duke of York (Rutland); Lord Scrope, who was Henry's familiar friend; and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. A jury was summoned for their trial by the sheriff of Southampton, who found Cambridge and Grey guilty of treason, and Scrope of having concealed the knowl-

* Mackintosh, "History of England," vol. i. p. 362.

edge of their purposes. Cambridge and Scrope claimed to be tried by their peers. By the lords then at Southampton, who formed a court for their trial, they were convicted; and they suffered death on the 5th of August. Grey had been previously executed.

The truce with France expired on the 2nd of August. On the beach of Southampton are collected men at arms, mounted archers, foot-archers, miners, gunners, armourers, and all the various attendants of a feudal army. There, under the walls of the old castle, shallow vessels float up to the river's banks, and with little preparation horses and men step on to the crowded decks. Fifteen hundred of such vessels are gathered together, and drift with the tide to the broader Solent. Fifteen hundred sails to bear an army, slowly and insecurely to Normandy, that would have been carried with far greater speed and safety by thirty of such vessels as now steam from that Southampton river. The king is at Porchester Castle. On the 10th of August, being Saturday, he goes on board his own ship, The Trinity, lying between Southampton and Portsmouth. His sail is set; the little craft, varying from three hundred tons to twenty tons, collect around The Trinity; and on Sunday they put to sea. On Tuesday, about noon, the royal ship enters the mouth of the Seine; and the fleet casts anchor about three miles from Harfleur.

The "Roll of the Men-at-arms that were at the Battle of Agincourt," and "The Retinue of Henry V. in his first Voyage," exhibit very clearly the nature of the force that was landed near Harfleur on the 14th of August.* The duke of Clarence, the duke of Gloucester, and the duke of York, had together 540 men-at-arms, bannerets, knights, and esquires; and 1720 horse-archers. The earl of Dorset, and the earl of Arundel had each 100 men-at-arms, and 300 horse-archers. The earl of March was there, with 60 men-at-arms, and 160 horse-archers. There is little doubt that the conspiracy, which was discovered at Southampton, was for the purpose of placing him, the legitimate heir of the crown, upon the throne; but the king, merciless as he was to the chief movers of the plot, granted a pardon to the earl of March, and gave him the honour of fighting by his side in this perilous warfare. The unhappy earl of Cambridge was to have been in that expedition, with

* These lists are published in "The History of the Battle of Agincourt," by Sir N. H. Nicolas, 1827. In this volume are collected all the documents which have relation to this event, as well as the contemporary narratives; the most valuable of which is that of a priest who accompanied the expedition, being a Latin MS. in the Cottonian MSS. of the British Museum, first translated and published by Sir N. H. Nicolas.

50 men-at-arms and 160 horse-archers. Of his men, 3 lancers and 6 archers fought at Agincourt. Other great earls were there,—Suffolk, Oxford, Huntingdon, and the Earl-Marshal, with men-at-arms and archers, horse and foot, in due proportion. Bannerets were there,—names memorable amongst England's chivalry, each leading 20 or 30 men-at-arms, and a larger number of archers. Then came an honoured roll of the knights and esquires of the land,—the worthy companions of Cornwall, and Erpingham, and Hungerford, and Umfreville,—some three hundred in number, each with his little band of lancers and archers; the yeomen of their manors; picked men, who went forth with stout limbs and resolved spirit, caring little for the abstract justice of the cause for which they were to fight, but knowing that they would have a due proportion of the "gaignes de guerres."† This army, then, landed in small boats, and took up a position on the hill nearest Harfleur. No resistance was offered to the landing. The constable of France, d'Albret, was at Rouen, with a large number of troops. But he stirred not. The hardy people of the coast suffered the English to leap on their shores, as if they came in peace and friendship. The landing-place was rough with large stones; and there was a dyke and wall between the shore and the marsh towards the town. The entrance into the marsh was very difficult; and "the resistance of the smallest number of people would have sufficed to drive back many thousands."‡ The army rested in its position till Saturday, the 17th, and then moved to the siege of Harfleur, in three battalions. The town was surrounded with embattled walls, and with ditches, filled to a great depth and breadth by the waters of the Seine. There were three gates, strongly defended by bulwarks. After the landing of Henry, the garrison was reinforced on the side which the English had not then invested. But the town was very quickly encompassed on all sides; the duke of Clarence having made a circuitous march, and taken a position on the hill opposite to that which the king occupied. The port was strictly blockaded towards the sea. After a demand for the surrender of the place, which was stoutly refused, the siege commenced. We now hear of guns as well as engines in an English siege. There is a belief that cannon had been employed at Cressy; and some sort of ordnance had certainly been occasionally in use in the middle of the fourteenth century. At Harfleur the king battered the bulwarks, and the walls and towers on every side, by the stones which

* The produce of pillage or ransoms.

† From "the Priest's" narrative.

his guns and engines cast. Two attempts were made to undermine the town; but there were counter-mines; and the miners met and fought underground. The siege went on with various fortune; but the besieged showed no symptom of surrender. Disease now began to make frightful ravages in the English camp. On the 15th of September died Richard Courtenay, bishop of Norwich; and on the 18th the earl of Suffolk. Henry's men were perishing around him by dysentery; and he resolved to storm the town. The garrison, however, agreed to surrender on the 22nd of September, if they were not previously relieved. No relief came. The civil distractions of France had at first deprived the government of all energy. There was no preparation for resistance. There was no money in the royal treasury. Suddenly a tax was imposed; and the impost was collected from the clergy and the people by armed men. "What can the English do more to us?" exclaimed the unhappy victims of misrule. Harfleur was yielded up on that 22nd of September, with great ceremony. Henry sat upon a throne under a pavilion of silk, erected on the hill opposite the town. From the pavilion to Harfleur a line of English soldiers was formed; and through their ranks came the governor with a deputation, and he laid the keys of the town at the feet of the king. The siege had lasted thirty-six days. On the 23rd, Henry entered the town, and went barefoot to the church of St. Martin, to offer a solemn thanksgiving for his success. The bulk of the inhabitants,—women, children, and poor—were compelled to depart, but without any indignity; and the principal burghers, with many knights and gentlemen, were allowed to leave the place, making oath to surrender themselves at Calais in the following November. Henry now sent a challenge to the Dauphin of France to meet him in single combat—the old unmeaning defiance of chivalry. On the 5th of October, the king held a council. The success at Harfleur had been bought at a terrible cost. Besides a large number killed in the siege, a much greater number of the army had died of dysentery in that district of overflowing marshes. Five thousand more were so sick that they were unable to proceed. Many had deserted. Comparing the various accounts of contemporary chroniclers, it is "morally impossible to form any other conclusion than that the English army which quitted Harfleur did not exceed nine thousand fighting men."* At the Council of the 5th of October, Henry was strongly urged to return, with the remnant

* Narrative of Sir N. H. Nicolas, p. ccxcix., ed. 1827.

of his force, to England by sea. He was told that "the multitude of the French were continually increasing, and very likely might hem them in on every side, as sheep in pens." So writes the priest; and he adds that the king determined to march to Calais, "relying upon the divine grace and the righteousness of his cause, piously considering that victory consists not in multitudes." It is easy to blame Henry for this determination; to call it "rashness, and total recklessness of consequences;"* but it must not be forgotten that if the king had returned to England with the loss of two-thirds of his army, and with no success but the capture of a town that could not long be held, he risked the loss of that popular support which the general belief of his intrepidity had won for him from his early years. He had set his life upon a cast; and he must play out the game. On the 8th of October he commenced his extraordinary march. With eight days' provisions the little army went forth from Harfleur, in three battalions, on the road to Calais. Henry's policy was an honourable exception to the devastation which accompanied the marches of the great Edward and the Black Prince. He published a proclamation, "that no one, under pain of death, should burn, lay waste, or take anything, excepting victuals and necessaries." The line of march was, at no great distance from the coast, towards the Somme. Passing by Fécamp, the army reached Arques, near the Dieppe, on the 11th. A few shots were fired from the castle, but the passage through the town was not contested. The English began to believe that they should reach Calais without molestation. "For some firmly asserted," says the observant priest, "that considering the civil discord and deadly hatred subsisting between the French princes and the duke of Burgundy, the French would not draw themselves out from the interior parts of the country and their strongholds, lest, while thus drawing themselves out, the forces of the duke of Burgundy should either follow them, or against their will usurp the possession of their estates." At Eu, the English army was attacked, but the assailants were repulsed without difficulty. On Sunday, the 13th, they reached Abbeville. Now the imminent danger that was before this daring band was too manifest to be concealed. The chroniclers of his great-grandfather's exploits had made Henry familiar with the circumstances of his passage of the Somme. To the ford of Blanchetaque an English army was again led. The causeway leading to the ford was broken down; and a

* Nicolas.

great body of French was said to be collected on the opposite bank of the river. Without any certain information, Henry directed his march by the Somme above Abbeville, seeking for another passage. The bridges and causeways were all destroyed; and broad marshes added to the difficulty of finding a ford. The slender stock of provisions was now becoming exhausted. After a march of seven days they passed Amiens, and slept that night at the village of Boves. It was the time of vintage, and there was abundance of wine in open casks, and a little bread. The supply of wine was as dangerous to the safety of the army as its privations, and Henry forbade his men to fill their bottles. It was the 17th of October before they reached a plain near Corby. Here the king executed a soldier who had stolen the pix out of a church—an incident which Shakspeare has not overlooked. Here, too, he gave the famous order that each archer should provide himself with a stake, sharpened at each end, to plant in the ground when about to be attacked by cavalry. On the 18th, they were quartered near Nesle, a walled town about twenty-four miles above Amiens, and four miles from the nearest part of the Somme. Here the welcome news was brought that a ford had been discovered. Before the river could be reached, a marsh had to be crossed. The position was one of danger, and there was no choice but to make for the river, at all hazards. There were two fords, approached by narrow causeways, partly destroyed. The damaged portions were filled up with broken doors and windows from the neighbouring houses. The king was indefatigable in his personal exertions, superintending the repairs of the causeways, and the orderly passage of men and horses. It was dark before the whole army had crossed. "We passed a joyful night," says the priest, "in the next farmhouses, which had been left by the French on our first arrival over the water."

The English army had been for a month investing Harfleur before the French government was roused from its inactivity. On the 10th of September, the king of France took the Oriflamme at St. Denis, and departed for Normandy. He had arrived at Rouen with his son, when the news of the fall of Harfleur reached the court. He was soon surrounded by princes and great lords with their men-at-arms. It was known that the constable of France was watching the passages of the Somme; and that the English, in ascending the left bank, were sustaining great privations. The weather was wet and tempestuous. The princes and nobles believed

they had now nothing to dread from the presumption of king Henry. The citizens of Paris offered to send six thousand men well armed. The old duke de Berri, who had fought at Poitiers sixty years before, urged the acceptance of the offer. The duke of Alençon and the young chivalry would have nothing to do with these common people—"What do we want of these shopkeepers? We have already three times the number of the English." The princes sent to Henry three officers of arms, to tell him that, being resolved to fight him, they desired him to name a day and a place for the battle. The king of England replied that, having set out from his town of Harfleur, he was on his way to England; and that, resting in no town or fortress, they might find him any day and hour in the open field.* Onward marched Henry by Peronne, the roads being found trodden "as if the French had gone before him in many thousands." On the 24th,—the fourth day after they had crossed the Somme,—the English army arrived at Blangy, in perfect discipline. A branch of the Canche, the Ternoise was here crossed without difficulty. The French army was on the rising ground about a league distant. From Blangy there is a gentle ascent towards the village of Maisoncelles. "When we reached the top of the hill," says the priest, "we saw three columns of the French emerge from the upper part of the valley, about a mile from us; who at length being formed into battalions, companies, and troops, in multitudes compared with us, halted a little more than half a mile opposite to us, filling a very wide field, as if with an innumerable host of locusts,—a moderate sized valley being betwixt us and them." Nothing can be more accurate than this description of the locality. We have stood upon this ascent, having left the little river and the bridge of Blangy about a mile distant. Looking back, there is a range of gentle hills to the east, in the direction of St. Pol, from which the French army marched. Emerging "from the upper part of the valley," the French army would fill "a very wide field"—the plain of Agincourt. When Henry had crossed the river and ascended the hill, he expected instant battle. He formed his troops, and went about exhorting them to do their duty. Walter Hungerford, according to our good priest's account, regretted that they had not with them ten thousand English archers. The solemn answer of the king, relying upon God for victory, has been given by the priest. Other burning words,—the version of the poet—have superseded the dialogue of the chroniclers. The sun was setting; and there was no

* See Barante, tom. iii.

attack. At Maisoncelles, now a long straggling village amidst trees, about a mile and a half from Blangy, the king took up his quarters for the night. In the gloomy twilight "a white way" had been found to this village. The noise of the French was heard as they took up their quarters, each vociferating for his servant or his comrade. Henry commanded the strictest silence. It was a night of dread to those who knew how many thousand enemies were close at hand. There was little sleep. The armourers were at work; the priests were confessing their penitents. In the French camp the confident knights played at dice, the stakes being the ransoms of their expected prisoners.

The route to Calais lay through the plain of Agincourt. The village of Agincourt now consists of a number of straggling mud-built cottages, and a farm or two, with a church of the beginning of the last century. It is covered by a wood towards the plain. Opposite Agincourt is another village, Tramecourt, also covered by a wood. The plain of Agincourt is a considerable table-land, now fully cultivated, and expanding into an open country after we have passed between the two woods. The village of Maisoncelles is about a mile from this field. Henry rose with the dawn on that 25th of October the feast of St. Crispin; and he heard three masses. He was fully armed; and he wore a crown on his head of extraordinary magnificence. He mounted a small gray horse, and drew up his men upon the open ground near Maisoncelles, then covered with young corn. His little band was formed in one line, the men-at-arms in the centre, with wings on the left and right, the archers being posted between the wings, with their stakes fixed before them. A party that went into the village of Agincourt found no armed men there. Another party of archers were concealed in the village of Tramecourt. The French army was in three lines, completely covering the route to Calais. The advanced guard of about eight thousand knights and esquires, and five thousand five hundred archers and cross-bow men, was composed of the greater part of the French nobility. The main body was crowded in prodigious numbers, the lines, according to the lowest estimate, being twenty men in depth. The men-at-arms wore coats of steel reaching to their knees, and heavy leg-armour, with other encumbering panoply. The contemporary chroniclers, both French and English, differ greatly as to the number of the French army. The lowest estimate is fifty thousand fighting men; the highest, one hundred and fifty thousand. The probability is

that they were ten times as many as the English. Their position was between the two woods of Agincourt and Tramecourt, in a space much too confined for the movements of such a vast body. The woods as they at present exist show that the position was a disadvantageous one; and it was probably more disadvantageous if the woods were then more extensive. The two armies passed several hours without a movement on either side. According to Monstrelet, Sir Thomas Erpingham, a knight grown gray with age and honour, at last flung his truncheon in the air, and called "Nestrocque!" ("now strike!") and then dismounted, as the king and others had done. The English then knelt down, invoking the protection of God; and each man put a small piece of earth into his mouth, in remembrance that they were formed of dust, and to dust should return. Shouting the national "hurrah!" they kept advancing. The archers, without armour, in jackets and loose hose, some even barefoot, went boldly on to meet the mailed chivalry. Their bow-strings were drawn. The French stooped as the deadly shafts flew amongst them. Many were slain. Onward rushed the thousands of horsemen to break the line of the hardy yeomen. The sharpened stakes were planted in the earth; and the archers shrank not from the charge. The arrows again flew; and the horses becoming unmanageable from their wounds, the knights were driven back upon the van, which they threw into confusion. The king now advanced with his main body. A deadly conflict ensued. The archers threw away their bows, and fought with sword and bill. The second French line was soon reached; and here again the contest became more a slaughter than a battle. The enormous numbers of the French were the chief cause of their destruction. Their heavy armour was an incumbrance instead of a defence. The rear division, after the overthrow of the first and second division, took to flight. In three hours this terrible fight was over. The priest, who was "sitting on horseback among the baggage, in the rear of the battle," thus describes the slaughter of the French on this day of Agincourt: "When some of them in the engagement had been killed, and fell in the front, so great was the undisciplined violence and pressure of the multitude behind, that the living fell over the dead, and others also, falling on the living, were slain; so that, in three places, where the force and host of our standards were, so great grew the heap of the slain, and of those who were overthrown among them, that our people ascended the very heaps, which had increased higher than a man,

and butchered the adversaries below with swords, axes, and other weapons. And when at length, in two or three hours, that front battle was perforated and broken up, and the rest were driven to flight, our men began to pull down the heaps, and to separate the living from the dead, proposing to keep the living as slaves, to be ransomed." Few were left alive for ransom. A clamour arose that the French, collecting in various parts of the field, were coming upon the wearied victors. The baggage, according to Monstrelet, was being plundered. In the momentary alarm, Henry commanded a massacre of all the prisoners. The French chroniclers mention this horrible circumstance in terms of sorrow rather than of blame. The hasty instinct of self-preservation dictated the order. The day before the battle the king had discharged, upon their parole, all the prisoners he had brought with him. His nature was not cruel. He stopped the carnage when he found that the danger was imaginary.

On the part of the English, the duke of York and the earl of Oxford were slain, with some hundreds of inferior degree. The estimates of this loss are very conflicting. Our own chronicles make it absurdly small. Monstrelet says the loss of the English was sixteen hundred; and so St. Remy, another French historian. Of the chivalry of France, the flower perished. Seven of the princes of the blood had fallen. With the duke of Alençon, Henry had fought in person, and was beaten down, having a portion of his crown struck off. The king could not save his gallant enemy, who fell before Henry's guards. Eight thousand gentlemen of France perished in that field of carnage, of whom a hundred and twenty were nobles bearing banners. Between Agincourt and Tramecourt is a small enclosed piece of ground, which we saw planted with potatoes in the summer of 1856, where great numbers of the illustrious dead were buried. It is kept sacred to their memories; and here it is now proposed, four hundred and fifty years after the eventful day, to erect a monumental chapel. The whole plain is covered with the teeming crops of fruitful France. There is nothing to tell of that time of bloodshed and terror. Now and then, indeed, the upturned soil gives forth evidence of the presence of the dead. In 1816 an English officer of the Army of Occupation found relics of the slain, with many coins of Charles V. and Charles VI. A peasant now living in one of the farm-cottages of Agincourt, shows a large thin gold coin of Charles VI., which he found in his field-labours. The herald of France was taken in the battle. "Montjoie," said

Henry, "to whom is the victory—to me or to the king of France?" "To you, and not to him," said Montjoie. "And how is this castle called?" "The castle of Agincourt." "Well," said the king, "they will long speak of the battle of Agincourt." They will speak of it, as long as England's history endures, as one of the most wonderful examples of bravery and fortitude, and heroic daring, of which a people may be justly proud. But they will also speak of it as a fearful sacrifice of human life to a false ambition, which had no object beyond the assertion of an indomitable will, and no permanent results beyond the perpetuation of hatred and jealousy between nation and nation.

Henry slept that night of the 25th of October at Maisoncelles. On the next day, he, with the duke of Orleans and many other noble prisoners, went his unmolested way to Calais.