

Henry V, Act 4, Scene 3: Glory of War?

We would not die in that man's company

That fears his fellowship to die with us.

This day is called the feast of Crispian:

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,

Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,

And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

He that shall live this day, and see old age,

Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,

And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'

Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.

And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'

Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,

But he'll remember with advantages

What feats he did that day: then shall our names.

Familiar in his mouth as household words

Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,

Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,

Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.

This story shall the good man teach his son;

And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,

From this day to the ending of the world,

But we in it shall be remember'd;

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;

For he to-day that sheds his blood with me

Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,

This day shall gentle his condition:

And gentlemen in England now a-bed

Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,

And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks

That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

And those that leave their valiant bones in France,

Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,

They shall be famed; for there the sun shall greet

them,

And draw their honours reeking up to heaven;

Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,

The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.

Mark then abounding valour in our English,

That being dead, like to the bullet's grazing,

Break out into a second course of mischief,

Killing in relapse of mortality.

Let me speak proudly: tell the constable

We are but warriors for the working-day;

Our gayness and our gilt are all besmirch'd

With rainy marching in the painful field;

There's not a piece of feather in our host--

Good argument, I hope, we will not fly--

And time hath worn us into slovenry:

But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim;

And my poor soldiers tell me, yet ere night

They'll be in fresher robes, or they will pluck

The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads

And turn them out of service. If they do this,--

As, if God please, they shall,--my ransom then

Will soon be levied. Herald, save thou thy labour;

Come thou no more for ransom, gentle herald:

They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints;

Which if they have as I will leave 'em them,

Shall yield them little, tell the constable.

Comment [1]: Repetition of "we," "this day," "remembered" and "forget," and especially "men" and "manhood"

Comment [3]: Epic caesura

Comment [4]: War, like thought, is a working-man's job

Comment [5]: Chiasmus

Comment [6]: One syllable line

Comment [7]: Epic caesura

Comment [8]: Epic caesura

Comment [2]: Vile/ gentle

Comment [9]: One syllable lines