Henry IV, Part 2

by William Shakespeare

Act IV, sc. 5. Line 177 – Verse

King Henry IV

O my son,

God put it in thy mind to take it hence,

That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,

Pleading so wisely in excuse of it!

Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed;

And hear, I think, the very latest counsel

That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,

By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways

I met this crown; and I myself know well

How troublesome it sat upon my head.

To thee it shall descend with bitter quiet,

Better opinion, better confirmation;

For all the soil of the achievement goes

With me into the earth. It seem'd in me

But as an honour snatch'd with boisterous hand,

And I had many living to upbraid

My gain of it by their assistances;

Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,

Wounding supposed peace: all these bold fears

Thou see'st with peril I have answered;

For all my reign hath been but as a scene

Acting that argument: and now my death

Changes the mode; for what in me was purchased,

Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort;

So thou the garland wear'st successively.

Yet, though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,

Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green;

And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,

Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;

By whose fell working I was first advanced

And by whose power I well might lodge a fear

To be again displaced: which to avoid,

I cut them off; and had a purpose now

To lead out many to the Holy Land,

Lest rest and lying still might make them look

Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,

Be it thy course to busy giddy minds

With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,

May waste the memory of the former days.

More would I, but my lungs are wasted so

That strength of speech is utterly denied me.

How I came by the crown, O God forgive;

And grant it may with thee in true peace live!