

Memorials of London 1415

Letter from King Henry the Fifth, announcing the capture of Harfleur.

3 Henry V. A.D. 1415. Letter-Book I. fol. cxliii. (Norman French.)

"On the King's behalf.

"Very dear and trusty, and well-beloved.—We do greet you oftentimes, in signifying unto you, for your consolation, that we are in very good health as to our person, thanks be to God who grants unto us the same, and that, after our arrival on this side, we came before our town of Harefleu (Harfleur) on Saturday, the 17th day of August last past, and laid siege thereto, in manner as we have written heretofore in our other letters sent to you. And by the good diligence of our faithful lieges at this time in our company, and the strength and position of our cannon, and other our ordnance, the people who were within the town made great urgency to have divers parleys with us; yet this notwithstanding, it was our full purpose to make assault upon the town on Wednesday the 18th day of this month of September; but those within the town had perceived it, and made great instance, with means which they had not employed theretofore, to have conference with us. And to avoid the effusion of human blood on the one side and on the other, we inclined to their offer, and thereupon we made answer unto them, and sent to them the last conclusion of our will; to the which they agreed, and for the same we do render thanks unto God, for we thought that they would not have so readily assented to the said conclusion.

And on the same Wednesday there came by our command out of the said town the Sieurs de Gaucourt, d'Estouteville, Hankeville, and other lords and knights, who had the governance of the town, and delivered hostages; and all those, as well the lords and knights as the hostages, of whom some are lords and knights, and some notable burgesses, were sworn upon the body of Our Saviour that they would make unto us full deliverance of our said town, and submit the persons and goods therein to our grace, without any condition, if they should not by the Sunday then next ensuing, at one of the clock in the afternoon, have been rescued by battle given to us by our adversary of France, or his eldest son, the Dauphin. And thereupon, we gave our letters of safe conduct to the said Sieur de Hankeville and others, to the number of twelve persons, to go to our said adversary, and his son, to declare unto them the treaty so made. The which Sieur de Hankeville, together with the others of his company, returned on the day, at eight of the clock in the forenoon, into our said town, without any rescue being offered by our said adversary, his son, or any other of their party; and the keys of the town were then fully delivered and rendered into our hand, and all those within were submitted to our grace without any condition, as above stated; praised be our Creator for the same; and we have put in our said town our very dear uncle, the Earl of Dorset; and have made him Captain thereof, with a sufficient staff of people, as well of the one rank as the other.

And we do will that you render humble thanks unto our Lord Almighty for this news; and do hope by the divine power, and the good labour and diligence of our faithful people on this side, to do our duty still further in gaining our right in these parts; and we do desire also, that by those passing between us you will certify us from time to time as to news as regards yourselves. And may Our Lord have you in His holy keeping. Given under our Signet, in our said town of Harflu (Harfleur), the 22nd day of the said month of September."

'Memorials: 1415', in *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries*, ed. H T Riley (London, 1868), pp. 601-624 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life/pp601-624> [accessed 25 July 2015]