



The Brus, Book Twelve, Lines 40-86

The following translation largely follows the version rendered by b A.A.M. Duncan (*The Bruce*, Canongate, 1997) but with some variation intended to represent more modern turns of phrase.

And when the king saw him (Bohun)  
Moving towards him in sight of his comrades  
He hastily turned his horse towards him  
And when Sir Henry saw the king  
Come on quite unabashed  
He rode at him full speed  
He thought to beat him easily  
And have him at the disadvantage  
Because the king was lightly horsed  
So they closed on one another  
Sir Henry missed the noble king  
And he (the king) stood in his stirrups  
With an axe both hard and good  
Struck him such a great blow  
That neither hat or helmet could stop  
The heavy clout he gave  
So he cleaved the head to the brains  
The hand-axe shaft broke in two  
And he (Bohun) fell to the ground  
Dead and devoid of all strength now  
This was the first blow of the battle  
And was done mightily too  
And when the king's men saw this  
At the first encounter  
Done without any hesitation or fear  
Kill a knight with a single blow  
They were so encouraged  
That they advanced boldly forward  
When the Englishmen saw them stoutly advance  
They were left downcast  
Especially because the king  
Had so quickly slain such a good knight  
So they now all of them withdrew  
And not one dared to fight  
For fear of the king's might  
And when the king's men saw  
The (English) formation withdraw  
The (Scots) made a great shout at them

And the English quickly fled  
And those who pursued them slew  
Some of those they overtook  
But to tell the truth, those were few  
Because horses' hooves got most away  
But no matter how few died there  
They were severely beaten  
And rode away with a great deal more shame  
Than when they came from home.