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Hogarth moralized

Hogarth, William

London, 1831

The Invasion.

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THE INVASION.

FRANCE.



THE settled* enmity between England and France, together with the dastardly disposition of the one and the brave spirit of the other, have given occasion for frequent triumph on our side, and dejection of spirit on theirs. This, added to the good pay of our soldiery, and the trifling pittance their government allows, has given rise to many sarcastic strokes against them, which whether they deserve or not, has been attended with this good consequence, that the mean opinion we thereby entertain of their strength and valour,

* [Let us hope that in the present day we may read for "settled enmity" *settled amity*.]

and our natural love of liberty dreading a despotic yoke, have whetted the courage of Britain to such an edge, that our enemies now fear to approach us. It was under this notion of things that Mr. Hogarth designed the following prints, as a contrast the one to the other, strongly describing the natural disposition of the two nations, the one preparing the attack, the other making ready to defend.

Behold then a scene in France, representing an embarkation of the French troops, in order to invade England! Remark their unwillingness to go, by the necessity the officers are in of goading them on with the point of their spon-toons! The fore-ground of this plate exhibits to our view a forlorn cabaret, or ale-house, whose sign is a wooden-shoe, with a board, on which is written, "Soup-meagre a la sabot royal," Soup-meagre at the royal wooden-shoe. A broth made of herbs and fat, (far unlike the rich gravy soups of England) meat being there to the poor as great a rarity as here a joint of venison; this is intimated by the neck bones of beef, void of flesh, hanging within the window; by the weak, emaciated figures of the meagre Frenchmen; and by the general joy they shew at the sight of their colours, on which is written in large letters, "Vengeance, avec le bon bier et bon beuf d'Angleterre." Vengeance, with the good beer and good beef of England; and to which that officer is pointing, by way of encouragement, who is roasting a brace or two of frogs before the fire. It may probably be wondered at, why a gentleman should be thus meanly employed, when so near a public-house, but when we are told that frogs are a dainty, which every one knows not how to dress, the wonder will immediately cease. Though the soldiers relish not this expedition, the clergy seem greatly to enjoy it, eager for an opportunity of exercising their studied

persecution : This we are given to understand by a sledge of instruments preparing to be put on board, which contains scourges, gibbets, wheels, and other engines of torture, intended for a British Inquisition. Among these are an image of St. Anthony, and a plan of a monastery, proposed to be built at Blackfriars. Thus are we taught what dreadful steps our enemies would take, could they once obtain a footing on our island; the merciless disposition of popish bigotry being well described by the secret satisfaction the priest enjoys in feeling the sharpness of the persecuting axe. Happy then are we, under the mild government of a prince, who labours to protect our religion and laws from the tyrannical encroachments of black superstition and arbitrary sway! One thing more we learn from the plate before us, which is, that notwithstanding the British subjects are but a handful in comparison to those of France, yet by our native prowess and the justness of our cause, we have with continual success reduced their men to so small a number, that they are glad to make shift with real invalids, and their women are obliged to manure the land themselves.*

* Beneath this plate are engraved the following lines.

With lanthorn jaws and croaking gut,
See how the half-starv'd French-men strut,
And call us English dogs!

But soon we'll teach these bragging foes,
That Beef and Beer give heavier blows
Than soup and roasted frogs.

The priests, inflam'd with righteous hopes,
Prepare their axes, wheels and ropes,
To bend the stiff-neck'd sinner;

But should they sink in coming over,
Old-Nick may fish 'twixt France and Dover,
And catch a glorious dinner.

ENGLAND.



As a contrast to the last plate, observe here the jovial sons of liberty at their general rendezvous! Take notice of the stout-hearted peasant enlisting in defence of his country! Lest the shortness of his stature should exclude him from the service, he is deceiving the serjeant by rising on his toes, ambitious of bearing the honourable name of soldier. See here before us a well-built ale-house, the scene of joy and noble living, known by the sign of the late gallant Duke of Cumberland, who by his warlike genius became a terror to his foes. Beneath this sign is written—not *Soup-meagre a la sabot royal*, but “Roast and boiled every day.” Before the door is a table spread, on which is a buttock of beef and

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a half-gallon-pot of Stingo. At this festive board mirth takes the lead and valour crowns the feast. This we learn from the song, "Britannia rules the waves," upon the table, and by the boy lying at his ease and playing "God save the King" upon his fife; but more particularly from the collected attention of the soldier and sailor to the horrid ugly figure of the French King, which a grenadier is dawbing on the wall: his putting into his mouth the words, "You take a my fine ships, you be de pirate, you be de teef, me send my grand armies, and hang you all," produces from the tar a roar of approbation, and a more particular attention from the soldier, giving their girls an opportunity of indulging a wicked thought, by measuring the breadth of the painter's shoulder.

The mere cast of the eye upon these plates, one would imagine, should be sufficient to enliven the heart of a Briton, and inspire him with that love for his native country, as to make him heroically stand forth in the cause of liberty, and despise the least infringement of it.*

* The lines annexed to this plate are,

See John the soldier, Jack the tar,
With sword and pistol arm'd for war,

Should Mounsir dare come here!

The hungry slaves have smelt our food;
They long to taste our flesh and blood,
Old England's Beef and Beer.

Britons, to arms! and let 'em come;
Be you but Britons still, STRIKE HOME,
And lion-like attack 'em.

No Pow'r can stand the deadly stroke,
That's giv'n from hands and hearts of Oak,
With Liberty to back 'em.



O THE ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND, &c.

Though the government of France is more attentive to its military establishment than any one thing else, yet what is very extraordinary, it is wanting in the most essential point to support it, that of making a sufficient allowance to the soldiery; the pay of a common man being no more than five sols, (two pence half-penny English) a day, out of which two sols, or one penny, is kept back towards the purchasing of shoes, stockings, &c. On the sum then of three half-pence a day, with the further advantage only of bread, fire, candle and lodging, (there being barracks in every town) are they obliged to subsist, and pay for washing, mending, hair-

powder, and other things ; *Soup-maigre* is their chief provision, though they sometimes regale themselves with Horse-beans boiled in grease; no wonder then they should be so poor, both in body and spirits, as to become objects of pity and ridicule, particularly as military men, to whom strength and courage is most essentially necessary.

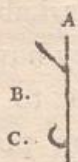
The scene before us is supposed to be taken from the landing of a sir-loin of Beef at the gate of Calais, which is here represented as it now stands. By the direction fixed to it, namely, "For Madam Grandsire, at Calais," we learn it is going to the English inn in that city. Though luxury in France is no stranger, particularly to the upper class of people, witness the corpulency of the full-fed friar, yet by the secret pleasure the priest receives at the sight of so large and noble a joint, we are taught how rare so substantial a piece of meat is, even among them, they feasting chiefly on fricasees, hashes, and minced-meat. The general consternation it causes among the soldiery is very expressive of their poor living, and the French Cook's sinking under the weight of it, a manifest token of their debilitated condition, brought on by constantly feeding on *soup-maigre*. This is further represented by the scanty messes they were going to lap, till their attention was summoned to something more important. On the right of this plate, are two men carrying a kettle, one of whom is communicating his surprize to his comrade on the stability of English food in general. Behind this man is an Irishman, (a prisoner of war) distinguished by his vulgar face and shortness of stature, but at the same time that Mr. Hogarth has marked out that country by these defects, he has taken an opportunity of paying it a compliment, with respect to bravery, by painting his hat with a hole in it, made as is supposed by a musket ball in the heat

of action. In the fore-ground is a Scotchman (a prisoner also) scarr'd in the service, (this plate being published during the war between France and England) sitting on the ground, with his dinner beside him of bread and onions, deploring his unhappy situation. On the other side are three old women who get their living by selling of herbs about the streets, got together admiring the face of a scate, it being so much like their own. As poor as these Frenchmen are in pocket, they are very attentive to their dress, intimated by the bags to their hair, and the centinel's paper ruffles, though his shirt is out at elbows, and he is obliged to keep up his breeches with a skewer; remarkable instances of their beggarly pride and vanity: if they have not a coat to their backs, they will take great pains to adorn their heads, and if they have but a penny in their pockets, they will lay it out in powder for their hair; nay, you may often see a blacksmith at his forge with his face covered with soot, and his hair dressed as if going to court; so great and astonishing is the folly of the French! Through the gateway we have a distant view of the carrying of the Host,* and the people on their knees, adoring it as it passes, another remarkable instance of their ignorance, and that of all roman catholic countries in general, who pay more regard to the outward shew of religion than to the vital part of it, and prostitute the most sacred things to low and idle purposes, further represented by the emblematical figure of the third person in the most holy Trinity, being made use of as a sign to a Cabaret, or villainous alehouse. When Mr. Hogarth was at Calais, and sketching out the gate, he was seized on as a spy, and carried before the Commandant; but

* A religious ceremony of carrying the consecrated wafer to the houses of the sick, in hopes of re-establishing health.

when it was known who he was, he was speedily set at liberty. This circumstance occasioned his introducing himself here, with the guard clapping him upon the shoulder.* Upon the whole, this excellent picture is, with great justice, reckoned as one of the most capital performances of our inimitable artist, and declares him well acquainted with the true spirit of satire.

* [As before noticed, the hand and the halberd of the guard brought into the picture, denote the presence of the guard—but Hogarth had an opposite whim of composing a subject by extrusion only. He could tell a story with only three lines, thus :—

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- A. The perspective line of the door.
 - B. The end of a Serjeant's pike who is going in.
 - C. The dog's tail who is following him.

Mr. Dallaway remarks, that “ Carracci amused himself with such whims, which if never seen by Hogarth, the coincidence of fancy is very singular.”]