

## Oii7 Rejoyce brave English Gallants

*Notes.* This mocking song on Buckingham's expedition to the Ile de Ré dates from the early months of the campaign when the news was, for the most part, encouraging. The libel's taunts at Buckingham's sexual and culinary appetites and his military incompetence are repeated in many of the other attacks on the favourite in 1627. Bellany ("Raylinge Rymes" 301-02) places the poem in context of the evolving libellous image of the Duke.

### "A Song"

Rejoyce brave English Gallants

Whose Auncestors wonne France<sup>1</sup>

Our Duke of Buckingham is gone

To fight and not to daunce.

Beleive it; for our Ladies

His absence greatly mourne,

And swear they'l have noe Babies

Untill hee doth retourne.

5

They feare him very sore,

But hope hee's wondrous strong,

And therefore they doe thinke hee will

Bee with them er't bee long.

But they and every Man

Are glad that loves a Wench,

That since hee's gone, hee's gone to kill

His Enemie the French.<sup>2</sup>

10

15

They sing how many thousands

With him of worth there bee,

Of whom the worst amongst them all

Is better skilld then hee.

Besides a gallant Fleet of Shipps

20

That with him still must stay,  
Either that they may fight with him,  
Or with him runne away.

His Army was twelve thousand, 25  
Well nombred on our shore,  
Besides his Pasties and bakt meates,  
Which were as many more,  
Besides his many Partridges,  
His Quailes and many Pullen, 30  
That it is thought a greater hoast  
Than Harry led to Bullen.<sup>3</sup>

At last hee is for France  
After his thus long tarrying,  
Hee stay'd but for his victualling 35  
And for some kinsfolks marrying.<sup>4</sup>

But now hee is at Sea  
Where hee commaunds amaine  
Whence all true Englishmen doe hope  
Hee'l ne'er come back againe, 40

Without such Victories and spoiles  
From that proud and rich people  
That England all must ring of them  
And ev'rie flattering steeple.

For he doth threaten sore, 45  
And Frenchmen greatly feare  
Hee'l have a Royall Subsedie  
In France as well as heere.

For when hee came to land

His Soldiers, that were starting, 50  
Hee stood behinde and backt them soe  
That they have won Saint Martin.<sup>5</sup>  
Yet at the first Encounter  
The Frenchmen were soe hott,  
Our Englishmen were like t'ave been 55  
Devour'd in a showre of shott.

But though they did prevaile  
Against us at the first,  
Yet wee bore up so well againe  
That wee gave them the worst. 60  
This was noe sooner done,  
But Grymes<sup>6</sup> posts to the King,  
Where all that hope by flatterie  
To bee preferr'd doe singe.

They ranck the Duke with Bevis, 65  
This skirmish they doe place  
Before the Cowe of Dunmowe heath  
And next to Chevy Chase,<sup>7</sup>  
And sweare that through our Chronicles  
Wee farr and neere doe wander 70  
Before that such an one wee finde  
Imploy'd as a commauder.

Algiers, Cales, and Guyana<sup>8</sup>  
Were spoild before they went,  
They had commission to doe naught 75  
But onely to bee sent.  
And i'st not a great wonder  
That hee should compasse more

Than all our old Sea-Captaines  
That never fought before. 80

Returne then glorious Duke  
Unto thy old commaund  
For though th'art Admirall at Sea  
Th'art admirable at land.  
Heere thou commaunds the Sea, 85  
Religion, and the States  
Art Admirall of our Bishops Seas<sup>9</sup>  
Aswell as of the Straites.

Or do'st thou stay soe long  
To love thine Enemie, 90  
And stay with him because thou think'st  
Hee hates thee lesse than wee?

Ne'er fear: For men must love thee  
When they behold thy glorie  
To fill two leaves in a Currant<sup>10</sup> 95  
Or bee a Bishops Storie.

London, prepare thy Faggotts<sup>11</sup>  
Against the Dukes returne,  
And see thou hast them readie  
Layd for the Duke to burne. 100  
For hee deserves them all,  
All that thou canst lay on,  
I thinke his greatest Enemies  
Will sweare it, every one.

So God preserve our noble King 105  
And send him long to Raigne,

And gett a boy that shall enjoy  
England and France againe  
God blesse the Church and Parliament,  
Our Queene<sup>12</sup> God blesse, and Wee,  
And send us Peace that ne'er shall cease,  
But that wee all agree.

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**Source.** BL MS Sloane 826, fols. 167r-171r

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- <sup>1</sup> *Whose Auncestors wonne France*: alluding to the (temporary) conquests of French territory during the Hundred Years' War of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
- <sup>2</sup> *His Enemie the French*: the last four lines of this stanza depend on the pun in the tail. "The French" was a common term for syphilis ("the French pox").
- <sup>3</sup> *Than Harry led to Bullen*: allusion to Henry VIII's large-scale military expedition to France and his siege and capture of Boulogne in 1544.
- <sup>4</sup> *some kinsfolks marrying*: Buckingham was an aggressive promoter of politically and socially advantageous marriages for his kindred.
- <sup>5</sup> *Saint Martin*: the chief town on the Ile de Ré. Buckingham took the town of St. Martin early in the expedition, but had to besiege the French force in the citadel of St. Martin from July to October 1627 before a failed assault on the fort forced the English to retreat.
- <sup>6</sup> *Grymes*: Richard Graham, one of Buckingham's clients, who brought news of the first phase of the Ré expedition back to court.
- <sup>7</sup> *They ranck the Duke...Chevy Chase*: these lines mock Buckingham by ironically comparing his achievement in the early days on Ré with legendary battles (like Chevy Chase) and the actions of heroes (like Sir Bevis of Southampton), celebrated in the English broadside ballad tradition.
- <sup>8</sup> *Algiers, Cales, and Guyana*: alludes to earlier, apparently less successful naval expeditions: Sir Robert Mansell's expedition against the Barbary pirates in Algiers in 1620-21, Wimbledon's Cadiz expedition of 1625, and Raleigh's second voyage to Guiana in 1617-18.
- <sup>9</sup> *Admirall of our Bishops Seas*: a pun on "bishops' sees", implying that Buckingham controls the

allocation of appointments to bishoprics.

<sup>10</sup> *Currant*: coranto; a printed serial newsbook. An authorized serial newsbook reported Buckingham's exploits on Ré.

<sup>11</sup> *Faggotts*: firewood for the celebratory bonfires in the case of Buckingham's victorious return. Of course, the subtext here is that the firewood could also be used to burn the duke.

<sup>12</sup> *Our Queene*: Charles I's wife, Henrietta Maria.

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