The Income Tax

Author(s): J. F. R. Stainer

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 55, No. 853 (Mar. 1, 1914), pp. 165-166

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/906260>

Accessed: 01-12-2015 22:33 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

It's for the want o' pocket money
 And for the want o' cash
 Mak's many a bonny laddie
 Gar leave his bonny lass.
 For I am bound to go, my love,
 Where no one shall me know,
 And the bonny lassie's answer
 Will be Ay, no, no, no no.
 Will be Ay, no, no, no, no, my love,
 Will be Ay, no, no, no, no.
 I'll cut off my yellow locks
 And gang along with thee,
 And be thy faithful comarade
 In some foreign countree.
 Oh, stay at home, my bonny lass,
 And dinna gang awa,
 For little dost thou know
 Of the dangers of the war ;
 And the bonny lassie's answer
 Will be Ay, no, no, no, no.

Ex. 3.

I once went to Law-ton to sweetheart a lass, Folks
 'Twas a land drab-ly road, and I went a gay shack; It
 said that the fa-ther 'ud see af-ter t' brass.
 come on to rain, but I did - n't turn back.
 CHORUS.
 Nay, not a bit of it, Nay, not I, I
 ne'er care for wea-ther, be't rain - y or dry.

Close to Manchester, and probably not many miles from its birthplace, the following ballad, none too nice in sentiment (of a type hawked in the streets half a century ago), was committed to paper just as it came from the mouth of an elderly songster who had a ready voice and a sure ear. Those who are conversant with the printed ballads, such as the famous collection which Halliwell gave to the Chetham Library, will know that such things were often written to any old air which fitted. No antiquity is claimed for the present piece ; yet it is certainly far from new :

Ex. 4.

On Mon-day morn-ing we broke down At th'
 fac-to-ry where I spin, So I went home; it
 were so fine, I could - na stop with - in, I
 drest me up in my se-cond best, put on my Sun-day shoon,
 CHORUS.
 And I took a walk up Old - ham Street, That
 With a fa la la la, fa la la, fa
 Mon-day af-ter-noon.
 la la la fol ay.

I heard 'em say it were women's day
 So I thought I would just look o'er,
 I knew it were colliers' reckoning
 At t'Saturday neet afore.
 When I get there, there were nowt astir,
 But things did alter soon,
 For women coom rolling by dozens at once
 That Monday afternoon.

Owd women they were drest very grand
 But young uns grander still,
 And keys swung round on their fingers
 Like the sails of a windy mill.
 Old clothes shops they did surround,
 And pegs they laid bare soon,
 While Tom and me were working hard
 That Monday afternoon.

I watch'd their ways in the market place
 Until I were dry as a stick,
 And then I went to the Cheshire Cheese
 To see 'em pop in quick.
 They first popped in and then popped out
 With faces as red as the moon,
 And they smooth'd their lips quite unconcern'd
 That Monday afternoon.

At half-past five there were such a rush
 I shall never forget the shock,
 These women they flew like lightening,
 Shouting out it's six o'clock.
 Our Ben 'll be come when I get whoam,
 And then his clumsy shoon
 Ul come in contact with my poor shins
 This Monday afternoon.

One of the humours of ballad collecting is that time-honoured oral pieces, by act of transcription, tend to become copyright. Thus the writer, or the *Musical Times*, actually secures the copyright of the songs quoted (provided others have not gleaned in the same field) by the mere fact of publishing them. But the restriction is not so grave as it sounds, for no law in the land can hinder anyone from listening to *my* reaper, weaver, or huntsman, or from transcribing and publishing their songs. But they must first catch their hare. Law only says they must not snatch mine.

If musical readers will only be alert to ply pen or pencil, or to make judicious use of the phonograph, airs and ballads such as these will be found readily forthcoming throughout the North of England. Some of the country singers make one doubt whether folk-song is a thing even now quite dead, since they not uncommonly have an original composition or two up their sleeve.

THE INCOME TAX.

By J. F. R. STAINER.

The Income Tax, of which we are likely to hear a good deal shortly, is not, one would think, a theme that lends itself readily to musical treatment ; but it has been the subject of at least one song, a song written as long ago as 1800, by Charles Dibdin the younger, and sung by a Mr. Davis at Sadler's Wells in the course of a programme which was advertised in the daily Press as follows.

*Under the Patronage of His Royal Highness
The Duke of Clarence.*

SADLER'S WELLS.

On Monday next, August 18, 1800, and following Evenings
(for positively the last week)

THE SPIRIT OF THE ELBE.

Mr. Grimaldi will sing a favourite Comic Song.

An entire new Musical Bagatelle by C. Dibdin, jun., called

THE BLACK PIG; or, LADY'S HOBBY-HORSE.

After which Mr. Davis will sing a new Comic Song
(written by C. Dibdin, jun.) called

THE INCOME TAX.

An entire new Comic Pantomime Dance by
Mr. Gourié, called

THE HIGHLAND CAMP; or, A SOLDIER FOR ME.

Mr. Richer's inimitable performances on the
TIGHT ROPE.

The whole to conclude with the celebrated new Pantomime
by C. Dibdin, jun., called

CHAOS, or HARLEQUIN PHAETON.

Interspersed with Comic Singing, and including a most uncommon variety of Mechanical and Magical Transformations, replete with Whim and Originality; and in most superb and interestingly diversified arrangement of Scenery, combining the most prominent Characteristics of Novelty, Magnificence and Natural Effect. To conclude with a Magical Transition from the celebrated Ruins of the Temple of the Sun, at Balbec in Persia, to a most exquisite Fancy Temple of that Luminary, forming a complete

CLIMAX OF BRILLIANCE.

Boxes, 4s. Pit, 2s. Gallery, 1s.

Doors to be opened at half-past five, and begin at half-past six. Servants to keep places until half-past seven. The half-price admission at half-past eight o'clock.

One of the 'turns' introduced in 'Chaos, or Harlequin Phaeton,' was a 'Mock Italian Air' by Mr. Dubois, accompanied on the salt-box by Mr. Grimaldi' (!).

A tax on income was still a novelty. It was first imposed in 1799, when the country was straining every nerve in the French wars, and Ministers were at their wits' end to devise new means of raising money. Wines, spirits, and tobacco had of course been laid under contribution. Taxes had been imposed on windows, wheels, taxed carts, horses, dogs, salt, glass, hats, clocks and watches, bricks and tiles, candles, and even hair powder, and as a last resort, on January 9, 1799, the Royal Assent was given to an Act 'to make more effectual Provision for the Prosecution of the War by granting certain Duties upon Income.'

Under this Act, incomes of £200 and upwards were taxed to the extent of one-tenth, or at the rate of 2s. in the £, and the point of Dibdin's song lies in the suggestion that this 'tenth' should be paid in kind, like the old ecclesiastical tithe. For incomes below £200 there were graduated rates of assessment down to incomes of from £60 to £65, which paid only 2d. in the £. Incomes below £60 were exempt. The country being in need of men as well as money, abatements were allowed for children born in wedlock, and these abatements, I observe, were on a rather more generous scale than those that have been allowed by a modern Chancellor. The tax was to be paid by six instalments on June 5, August 5, October 5, December 5, February 5, and April 5 in each year; and there being no provision for 'deduction at the source,' the tax collector called every two months for payment of the money!

No more need be said, I think, by way of introduction to the song except that 'the Minister' was Pitt, and that the word 'plum' in the fourth verse is or used to be commercial slang for a sum of £100,000. The music was published by Clementi & Co., Cheapside, but I am sorry to say that I have not been able to come across a copy of it.

'THE INCOME TAX.'

Ye quidnuncs so queer, who through politics trudge it
And mumble each crust of the Minister's budget,
Of all the various ways he discovered to link 'em,
Don't you think he did the job in the Tax upon Income?
Lord, how the great folks must come down with the
clinkum,
When the gem'man he goes round for the Tax upon Income.

'Twould be droll if this tax tythe-in-kind should be collected,
Then from lawyers, you know, justice couldn't be expected!
The proctors their payment in testaments they'd make it,
The doctors pay in physic—but who the deuce would take it?
I'll tell you who we'd give it to, 'twould save us all our
clinkum,
To the gem'man who goes round for the Tax upon Income.

Should the gem'man ask the barber's tythe, he'd lather him,
mayhap, Sir,
The cobbler too for tythe in kind would give his worship
strap, Sir,
The baker'd give him short weight, whene'er he chose to
call, Sir,
Except the baker was churchwarden, then he'd give him
none at all, Sir,
For we know no more what churchwardens do with the
clinkum
Than the gem'man who goes round for the Tax upon Income.

Our cits are worth so many plums, our nobles too including,
Their contributions sure would make a national plum
pudding,
Of which our foes to get a slice would try, ne'er doubt the
question,
But they find our British dumplings too hard for their
digestion,
And but for these, cooked by our tars, we'd have but little
clinkum
For the gem'man who goes round for the Tax upon Income.

May the incomes of the rich ne'er be taxed by venality,
But the incomes of the poor enlarged by their liberality;
May the tax of war's terrible outgoings cease, Sir,
And Britons be blest by the income of peace, Sir;
Till then may our tars make our foes find the clinkum
For the gem'man who goes round for the Tax upon Income.

Charles Dibdin, junior, the author of the song, was the elder of the two sons of Charles Dibdin, the famous writer of naval songs. He was born in 1768, the year in which his father made his first great hit as an actor in the part of Mungo in Isaac Bickerstaffe's play 'The Padlock,' and the boy was accordingly christened Charles Isaac Mungo. He was for many years manager and part proprietor of Sadler's Wells, and wrote a large number of songs and dramatic pieces for that theatre. He died in 1833. In 1807 a collection of his songs was published under the title 'Mirth and Metre.' Many of them were very popular, notably 'Abraham Newland' and 'Giles Scroggins.' He was the father of Henry Edward Dibdin, organist of Trinity Chapel, Edinburgh, who edited two well-known books of psalmody, *The Standard Psalm Book* (1857) and *The Praise Book* (1865).

On March 4 and April 1, Sir Frederick Bridge will complete a series of five lectures at the University of London, South Kensington, on 'Early efforts in opera.' The subjects on these two occasions will be Purcell's 'Dido and Æneas,' and 'The beggar's opera.'