

inducement to Tommy and Dick and Gus. The owner of an 'Aunt Sally,' at an English fair, gives 'three shots a penny' and a cash prize into the bargain for breaking the pipe. But the military spirit, which has been so much in evidence lately, will probably make the Gibborne boys set a higher value on a shot out of the larger popgun, especially if they can get the teacher's hat—or cat—for a target.

What's in a name? Mr. Hogg, M.H.R., was called upon to propose the toast of 'The Pig Industry' at the Bacon Company's dinner at Woodville the other day. Mr. Hogg is a bit of a humorist, and consequently he took advantage of the family resemblance between his cognomen and the subject of the toast to make some happy remarks which created much amusement. 'This is,' he said, 'the first bacon factory I have ever visited, and it has pleased me greatly to observe the uncomplaining and philosophical manner in which a large and important section of our population is laying down its life for the benefit of humanity. Hundreds of our young men have recently gone in for a pig-hunting expedition. They have left New Zealand for the purpose of killing a few Boers at the other end of the world. Their sacrifice is entirely voluntary, and here, too, we have a large number of true martyrs prepared to sacrifice their lives in a voluntary way for the sake of the settlers around them. And, too, have we no tribute on an occasion of this kind for Captain Cook and the good work that he did? He has done more to Christianise New Zealand, and to improve the Maoris, and to change their habits than all the missionaries that ever were sent here. What was the effect of this man's philanthropic work? Was it not to give the natives of this Colony new tastes, new desires, and new ambitions? Was it not to civilise their palates, so that they learned to prefer roast pork to baked missionary, and has not the effect of that been to save a large number of valuable human lives? You may say what you like about it, but the pig industry has been the salvation of numbers of our settlers, who would have starved many a time but for that. . . . I went to a show some years ago, and I found there a young man in charge of a boiler working a cream separator. He showed me its points, and explained how it would not only work the separator, but how it would boil up food products for stock as well. He said to me: "See, now, mister, if you was goin' in fer rearin' hogs—" "My boy," I replied, "I have been doing that for years past." And, do you know, I could not get away from him for about half an hour, he was so anxious for me to buy one of his machines—he was so anxious to show me how I could feed my pigs and scald them through the instrumentality of that neat little invention of his.'

The *Thames Star* of March 2, in the course of a thoughtful leading article on the education question, uses the flail to some purpose on those of the Protestant clergy of the Colony who are so painfully anxious to abdicate one of the principal duties of the Christian Church and fling the burden of the proper religious training of youth upon the shoulders of the State. 'It is very easy to say,' says our northern contemporary, 'as the gentlemen of the cloth are fond of declaring, there need be no difficulty in selecting passages of scripture which all religious sects would approve. It might be possible to do so, but few believe it, but even were the task accomplished, the passages chosen would necessarily be so colorless of doctrine as to be useless in teaching great moral lessons. The Lord's Prayer and the Commandments might be chosen, and even taught in our schools without any possible objection, yet so fearful are those who would support such an alteration, that it would be but the commencement of trouble, that they would oppose the introduction for that reason alone. The clergy must know that if they are to wait till the State gives religious instruction it will never be given, and yet they continue to be satisfied with their annual protest, which soothes their consciences for another year, and in the meantime the children are neglected. How long are congregations and churches to submit to this neglect of duty on the part of the clergy whom they support that religion and morality may be taught the people. All churches are alike in this neglect of duty, save the Roman Catholic. That church perceiving that the State could not, even if it tried, teach religion in accordance with its views, manfully undertakes the task itself, and its adherents find the means.' It denounces in strong terms the neglect and indifference of the Protestant clergy in the matter of the religious instruction of children attending the State schools. After quoting the interview with the Archbishop of Melbourne which appeared a few weeks ago in the N.Z. TABLET on the impossibility of providing any workable scheme of Bible instruction for the State schools, the *Star* says: 'The Archbishop sums up the position in a few words, and his reflections will be endorsed by the majority of people. If we accept his opinion it is evident there is little use in waiting for a solution of the difficulty by the State, and it remains for those who desire their children taught religion, and all men do, to see that the clergy undertake the task.'

THAT PETTICOAT CAMPAIGN.

An esteemed correspondent from Canterbury writes to us protesting as a Catholic Englishman against the comments that appeared in our last issue on the statement made in the British House of Commons by Mr. W. St. John Brodrick (Secretary of State for War) to the effect that the Boer women detained in British camps, whose husbands were in commando, were on reduced rations, but that the other women were on full rations. He asks us to state (1) in what 'reduced rations' consist; (2) our authority 'for interpreting Mr. St. John Brodrick's statement by such unmeasured terms as "systematic, deliberate, and unnecessary starvation." (3) The writer of our 'Topic' 'also insinuates,' says our correspondent, 'that the soldiers seduce the Boer women: this is perhaps a more odious charge than the accusation of starvation, but I think the majority of your readers will prefer to believe Lord Roberts's public statement that his soldiers have at all times conducted themselves as chivalrous gentlemen towards the wives and daughters of the enemy. Only a few days ago I read in the *Christchurch Press* a letter from a Boer woman which contained a most emphatic denial of the charge of disrespect towards the unprotected women of the country. The writer even went out of her way to pay a tribute to the kindness and chivalry of the soldiers.'

To our esteemed correspondent's remarks we make the following general reply: The whole question at issue is partly a matter of fact, partly a matter of inference. Admitting the truth of the facts as stated by Mr. Brodrick, the remainder of our remarks on the subject were matters of legitimate inference. But the truth of the facts has not been questioned, nor has any flaw in the deductions from them been pointed out by our Canterbury friend. And now for a more detailed reply:—

1. 'Reduced rations' is an elastic term. It may mean anything from such a 'docking' of provisions as would cause only moderate discomfort down to a pittance that would scarcely sustain the life of a medium-sized rat.

2. London papers some time ago stated that the Boer women detained in British camps, whose husbands were on commando, were subjected to serious privations in the matter of food, and that the object of this treatment was to compel the fighting burghers to surrender with a view to ending the distress of their women-folk. Mr. Brodrick's cabled statement in the House of Commons was an admission of the gravamen of this charge. (a) It shows that Boer women whose husbands are in the field are, of express purpose, discriminated against, and that, too, by way of military penalty. (b) Short rations as a military punishment is no trifling penalty, even when it is inflicted upon friends. It may be made a very terrible thing when, as in the case before us, it is inflicted for the purpose of punishing or breaking the spirit of a foe. Long-drawn wars between people of different race and religion have never been favorable to humane methods. And common-sense forbids the supposition that officers who, on so wholesale a scale, compelled Boer women whose relatives were *not* on commando to witness the burning of their homes and the plunder or destruction of their property, are likely to be more squeamish in the infliction of a further penalty on Boer women whose husbands are in the fighting line. At its best, the punishment of short rations is intended, and is sure, to cause some degree of distress. Otherwise it would defeat its own purpose. And, according to definitions given in the sixth volume of the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, 'to distress with hunger' is to inflict 'starvation.' If our Canterbury friend maintains that the punishment of short rations was not intended to cause any kind of distress to the Boer women, and as a matter of fact did not cause any such distress, the burden of proof rests upon him. And if he has any fact to advance in point we shall be glad to give it due publication.

We described the starvation inflicted on the Boer women as 'systematic, deliberate, and unnecessary.' (a) By Mr. Brodrick's admission it is systematic—that is, 'proceeding or working according to a system or method.' (b) In view of the same high official's public statement, nobody will, we think, maintain that the infliction of this hunger-penalty on the Boer women was an indeliberate act—one of mere forgetfulness or of irresponsible terror or blind impulse. (c) The Boer women in British camps, whose relatives are on commando, are treated with less consideration than is usually extended to fighting-men held as prisoners of war. Unless under temporary and special difficulties affecting the commissariat, these, according to the recognised practice, are nowadays accorded full rations. In other words, the Boer women referred to are treated with more harshness than it is usual to extend to male enemies taken prisoners of war. But Leoni Levi, in his *International Law* (seconded, p. 280), says that 'in actual practice' 'women and children, the old and the sick, physicians and surgeons, who do not take arms, are not enemies.' We have followed this wretched South African campaign pretty closely, but we are not acquainted with any circumstance connected with it which could make it really 'necessary' that British military chiefs, with sufficient stores at hand, should single out the captive wives and daughters of the enemy—and them alone—for a process of starvation. Hence we have referred to the cruel policy as not being alone 'systematic' and 'deliberate,' but also 'unnecessary.' If our correspondent is aware of any grounds of fact that would make such a harsh measure really *necessary* in South Africa, we shall be willing to give it publication.

(3). In our 'Topic' of March 7, we said: 'Briefly and in plain terms, those hapless Boer females (in British camps) whose husbands, brothers, or sons are out on commando are practically placed between the alternatives of slow starvation or selling themselves to degradation and infamy.' This is, on the face of it, quite a different