

NOT DRUNK OR CRAZY.

SOME PLAIN FACTS ABOUT POST OFFICE INSPECTOR KING.

Who said that the writer of the charges against him in last Saturday's "Progress" must have been either "Drunk or a Lunatic" - An Easy Way to Bluff the People.

Post office Inspector Stephen J. King stated in the Telegraph of Monday that the man who wrote the article in PROGRESS, Saturday, making a number of serious charges against him must have been drunk or crazy!

Mr. King did not mind his words, neither will PROGRESS, and when the public read this article and weigh the facts presented therein they will not find it difficult to conclude that the only course open to the post office inspector was to make light of the article.

For the benefit of the numerous readers of this paper outside of the city it will be necessary to repeat the charges since it was only possible in the last issue to print the article in the city edition. So many additional facts have come to light since then that new light is thrown upon the whole story which places the inspector in a worse position than ever - if that is possible.

To begin at the beginning. Some months ago, early in the summer, Hilyard Bros. of this city sent a registered letter containing a sum of money, said to be \$72 to Thomas Hetherington, ex-M. P. P., of Queen's County.

That letter never reached Mr. Hetherington. It was posted in the post office in this city and in the due course of the service found its way into the hands of railway mail clerk Fred Estey whose duty it was to deliver the same to the postmaster on the route. Mr. Estey, like any other clerk on the train, handles many letters, some of which are registered, and is supposed to be more careful of the latter than of the former. So far as he can remember the letter passed out of his hands in the usual way and he thought nothing of it at the time or later until the complaint was made to the department that the letter had not reached its destination.

Inspector King steps upon the stage at this point and becomes the leading actor in the scenes that follow. He began an investigation into the affair which was drawn out over some period of time. Mr. Estey's report of that trip was found technically incorrect and upon that ground he was called upon to make good the amount. He did so, though by referring to another record, had he thought of it at the time he might have placed himself in a proper position. But he paid over \$72 to Inspector King as the representative of the post office department.

It was the undoubted duty of Mr. King to pay that money over to Hilyard Bros. as soon as possible, but he did no such thing. That firm waited a reasonable time for the money, and not receiving it began to call upon the inspector and inquire into it. They, or their representative, was met with all kind of excuses, and for some time were under the impression that the money had not been paid to the department. They became tired of this at last, and pressed the inspector so hard for the amount due them, that he tried to settle the matter by offering them his personal note! This was refused, and the matter remained unsettled until the present month came in, and with it the checks of the railway mail clerks, which, as usual, were received by Inspector King.

It may be stated here, that the railway mail service is in the department of the inspector. Chief railway mail clerk Ryan, attends to the detail arrangements and is responsible to Mr. King. The pay of the clerks comes to the latter, who hands each to the clerk to whose order it is payable.

This is a trying time in the life of a railway mail clerk. Some of them, less firm than others, have found to their sorrow and cost that the P. O. system that sends their pay to them through the inspector makes them run the risk of leaving part of it in his hands as a loan! PROGRESS has the names of a number of clerks whose generosity has been abused in this way. It is not a pleasant task to refuse one's superior officer a loan upon pay day and, when he wanted it, which was pretty often, Inspector King has never been backward about asking a clerk for such a favor.

Up to this month he has always requested the permission of any one of them but in October he made a departure from that rule that will probably cost him his position. Among the checks in his possession was one of about \$80 for railway mail clerk John P. Hipwell.

As PROGRESS understands it Mr. Hipwell was not get-at-able at the time, and though the check was made payable to him, or his order, Inspector King took it to the teller of a city bank, and presented it for payment. The teller handed the check back to him with the remark that it was not endorsed, and much to Mr. King's apparent astonishment. But he was persuaded to cash it on the plea that it was all right, and that Mr. King would secure Mr. Hipwell's endorsement promptly. While in one way this was an unusual proceeding, still, no bank teller in the city would think for one moment, that the absence of an endorsement on a check, for so small an amount, was anything more than an omission that could be rectified as soon as possible. Mr. King obtained the money, re-

tained about \$50 of it, and enclosed the balance to Mr. Hipwell with a note stating what he had done and requesting him to endorse the check. No doubt he thought that in his position as clerk under him would hardly refuse. But Hipwell was made of different stuff and his reply to the inspector was an indignant refusal to comply with the request. More than that he sought legal advice upon the subject and was advised not to place his name upon the check. This placed the bank teller in an awkward position which was explained to Mr. Hipwell and in the end to save that official from any consequences of his kindness he endorsed the check. At that time he was short the amount Inspector King had "borrowed without leave." This is a polite phrase for it - the people can substitute one short plain English word to describe the act.

This placed \$50 more in King's hands. Ten of them he retained and \$40 were paid to Hilyard Bros on account of their missing registered letter. At the time the charge was made in PROGRESS, last Saturday, the balance was unpaid, but it may have been settled since then to quiet matters and prevent an investigation.

These are the main facts of one act of post office Inspector King's that calls for an investigation. The same law that applies to any clerk in the service should apply to him. Every man in it is held to a strict account and the inspector of all men in the department should be above reproach. He is called upon almost daily to look into matters that require the most careful inquiry and call for strict impartiality. His reports made to Ottawa may clear or ruin the character of any man under him.

How in the light of what has transpired can Inspector King be competent to perform this duty?

It is the duty of the department to order an investigation, which, when held, should include an inquiry into all his official acts.

His connection with many postmasters throughout the province should be looked into, and it should be ascertained whether he has not used his position as inspector to obtain financial favors, that would not otherwise be given him. If necessary to complete this article, PROGRESS could name half a dozen officials and contractors who are more or less connected with Inspector King financially. They have lent him money and whistled for their payment. Even more serious things than this are spoken of, and proof furnished of them, all of which will doubtless come to light in due time.

WHO SET THE FIRE?

There should be an Investigation. Other Topics.

FREDERICTON, Oct. 23.—St. Mary's and Gibson people have felt rather uneasy since the fire as it has been generally claimed that the St. Mary's fire was the work of an incendiary. And it appears now that such was the fact. On the morning of the fire James Vove was going to his work about four o'clock and saw a well known resident of the village entering the back yard where the fire originated. As the well known resident does not bear a very good character, but rather the reverse, and as he had no business at that place at such an hour, in fact at any hour, it is almost ample proof that he had something to do with setting the fire.

There is another fact which is also worth considering in connection. In the very heart of the burnt district there stood an old building which was well insured and which was of no value to the owner as he did not use it nor yet receive any rent equivalent to the cost of the structure.

When it was learned that Hugh had been burnt out, every one said: There! that fixes him, there will be one less rumrunner in St. Mary's. It was noised abroad that Hugh was going to Grand Falls. Hugh quietly negotiated for the purchase of the Lee house at the bridge approach and the temperance friends found him there happy and smiling as possible when they thought him at Grand Falls.

Mrs. John Black has long been recognized as one of Fredericton's best singers but it was not thought that Mr. Black was able to entrance an audience, yet such is the case. His singing at the Cathedral on Sunday evening last is pronounced the best heard for years in the city.

A city clergyman, one of the most prominent, in the course of his sermon yesterday said in connection with the Ellis case: "Almost within sound of my voice a worthy man is in prison because he has dared to tell the truth."

Several of the better class of citizens have met together and have decided that the city council will have to follow the fate of that of St. John and a new class of men, representing and being elected from the whole city, will have charge of affairs. The campaign is just beginning to have the appearance of war. The aldermen say that they are good enough to represent twice as important a city and perhaps they are, but they have got to go.

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Brown.—"I am going South for the Winter." Jones.—"You're foolish to do so. A man can get all the Winter he wants here without going South for it."

LARSEN'S BOSTON LETTER

HE DESCRIBES A PERFORMANCE IN THE STAUD MUSEUM.

Something Else About Theatres and Theatre Going People—What Houses are Coming to the Front—The Political Fight for Governor and the Business Outlook.

BOSTON, Oct. 24th.—I heard a fly young women in short skirts sing "Daisy Bell", or "a bicycle built for two", at the Boston museum the other night.

Nothing remarkable in that? Oh, yes, there is. Everybody who knows the old Boston museum, the staid old playhouse, to which even the puritanical Bostonians who thought a theatre a home of the devil used to go for amusement; who wandered among the curiosities for an hour or so, then went to see the drama in its purest, highest form, will probably think the statement incredible, but it's a fact. The museum has changed. The curiosities have gone forever, and other curiosities—to the museum's old patrons, have taken their places, the vaudeville artist is there with all the freedom of action which characterized the performance at the Bijou.

It's a new departure for the museum, the last of the high class theatres to take it up, and although the opera of which it is a feature has been running several months, the house is pretty well filled at every performance.

Nevertheless the audience is a study. It never was an applauder as the gallery knows the word, but the other evening when the Vaudeville stars came on, and flippant Miss with an abundance of curls, screwed up her face, and in the last line of the verse, announced in Americanized-Irish that she "Kissed Johnny J. Riley in the parlor last night," it was amusing to watch the effect it had on the audience. It was a good song well sung, and funny enough for anything, in the popular estimation, but that audience!

It smiled, it snickered, it broke out in spots, and some of the spots which didn't break out looked half ashamed of those who did, but taking it all in all, it was quite evident that the act was enjoyed by nine-tenths of those present.

If it wasn't enjoyed, I am puzzled to know what that audience was there for. The opera was "Prince Pro Tem," and it is one of the most tiresome operas imaginable. Some of the music is catchy, and people whistle and sing "Tommy Tomkins," occasionally, but the best parts of it sound familiar; that familiarity which impresses one with the idea that he has heard it somewhere else, under different circumstances. The jokes are as flat as a last summer's straw hat, and if several of the leading men deserve the newspaper notices they receive I cannot understand it. So, under the circumstances, the Vaudeville party of the show must be what pleases the people, unless the old saying that museum patrons attend museum shows because they have no other place to go, still holds good.

All the big houses now find room for Vaudeville, and the demand for it among the better class of theatre goers seems to be greater than ever. People who look on such things with a critical eye, and wonder whether all this is in the interests of morality, have come to the conclusion that the tendency is a good one. It has brought out a higher class of Vaudeville artists, who have a more exacting audience to please, who find that the vulgarity which satisfies the patrons of the cheaper houses is not absolutely necessary to make an art successful.

Looked at from another standpoint, business men, men of the world always did patronize the Vaudeville houses. Tired in body and mind after a day of thinking and worry, a man is often not in a fit mood to study a Shakesperian play in the evening. He wants amusement, something light, buoyant, gay, something which requires no exertion of the mind in order to grasp all there is to it and carry oneself along with the people on the stage. So in the old days, the men went to the cheap houses, saw cheap shows and mingled with cheap people. They did not take their wives and families with them. They do now.

But there has been another change in the theatrical world of Boston. The stock company of the Museum is a thing of the past, the Grand Opera House has come to the front with a company of old favorites in old favorite plays.

The grand opera house is a big theatre, where formerly one saw the giddiest of the giddy in the way of sensational drama; a place where the large stage was made useful in producing startling scenic effects, and where the result of the balloon ascension from the stage was of more importance than the work of the star actors.

One by one the names of noted actors began to appear as members of the opera house company. It was formed last season, and played "Rosedale." This year "Rosedale" is being played again with greater success, and is now, I think, on the new England circuit. And in the company are such old timers as Annie Clarke, Sadie Martinot, Meystayer, Haworth, Frank Keenan, and a number of others, with some good blood, too, to balance the company.

The state campaign is now on with a rush, and it is one of the liveliest Massachusetts has had for some years. Candidate Greenhalge is a hustler, and while even his friends admit that he has been injudicious in some respects, he has succeeded in

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keeping the Democrats on the liveliest kind of a chase. They cannot keep up with him. He speaks at least once every night, and often three or four times a day, and before election he will have covered nearly every town and city worth mentioning in the state. Massachusetts has had a Democratic governor for three years, but, although the state committee makes no public concessions, it may be set down for a certainty that the state will go straight Republican this year. Business is brightening up a little, but very, very little, and, with the winter coming on thousands of families are in despair. Even here in Boston, people will not believe that the suffering is really as great as it is, and, the elections being on, the newspapers do not picture it as they might. Nevertheless, they have to give reports of public meetings and the action of municipal bodies, and in this way some idea is had of the condition of affairs. But my business has brought me in contact with phases of it which really should be known. Walk along Boston's streets in the early morning, when the swill barrels are placed on the sidewalks. Few people out, but what are they doing? Looking over the refuse for crusts of bread, anything that looks clean and might be eaten safely. This is true. The people who are compelled to do it are not all foreigners, either. But there is another class whose condition is never made known until the undertaker is called in, or something happens. They suffer in silence, and try to be respectable, though poor. One day last week a man who had begun work a few days before fainting shortly before noon. He had become weak from hunger and this fact finally leaked out. It was also learned that he had a family at home who had not eaten anything for two days. The father had been idle eight weeks, the grocers, butchers and everybody else had refused to give more credit. The family was waiting until he received the money for his weeks work so that they might get bread. This is only one case in one hundred. R. G. LARSEN.

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