

appear, the Commissioners did not, in the whole course of their examination, ask a single question with the object of showing that the books to which they refer were in any way necessary to a complete audit, or contained any information which ought to have been disclosed to it, and which the Audit did not already possess.

To make this clear I will briefly describe the books to which the Commissioners refer : (a.) *The rough cash-books* (so called by the Commissioners). It is a common practice with some men who receive money which they have to pay into a bank, to write down on a slip of paper the cash, cheques, Post-Office orders, &c., received. Mr. Moginie, the Accountant to the Trust Office, prefers to keep such memoranda in a small book, and to have it compared with the bank pass-book the next morning, after which each entry is scored out with red ink, instead of being, as might have been done, put into the fire. I conceive that no person in his senses, unless he had evidence that it was used in the scheme of account, would take such a book to be an official record. But the Commissioners had positive evidence that it was not so used, and that it was never even consulted by the book-keepers; and yet the Chairman spent hours in endeavouring to extort from the officers of the Trust Office and the Audit Office an admission that these little books were official records, and that they were the *first* records of the cash received in the office.

In my first examination before the Commissioners the Chairman held out one of these books and asked me (Qn. 4760), "Are you aware that these entries are records of cash first coming into the Public Trust Office daily?" And again, "Are not the entries made from this first book into that cash-book?" Now, this was at once the assertion of a fact, and a question—whether I was aware of it. It will hardly be believed that the Chairman had distinct evidence before him from several witnesses that what he was representing to me as a fact was in reality the direct contrary to the truth; that the book in question was *not* a rough cash-book; that no entries were ever made from it to any other cash-book; and that it was *not* the *first* official record of cash coming into the office. I should be sorry to describe in the only language it deserves such a mode of examination. Not having had any personal acquaintance with the books of the office for some years, I was extremely surprised at the book shown to me as a *cash-book*; but when, by subsequent inquiry, I ascertained the truth, and how an attempt had been made to extort from me an admission which was contrary to the truth, I felt it my duty, on next appearing before the Commissioners, to protest in strong terms against the mode of examination adopted by the Chairman.

It is sufficient to say that the entries into *the cash-book* are made in all cases from the original vouchers, which, in the case of receipts, are the counterparts of the receipts given to the payers, and in the case of payments, the blocks of the cheques issued in pursuance of vouchers passed by the Auditor-General for payment. The Accountant's memoranda are not referred to by the book-keepers at all.

Fortunately, however, the Commissioners, fearing lest their bare assertion might fail to obtain the confidence it claimed, have supported it by attaching to these reports facsimiles of eleven pages of these rough "cash-books." I should imagine the result will scarcely fulfil their anticipations. I think that any man, especially any business-man, will only wonder how any person of ordinary capacity could have made so strange a blunder as to suppose that these scrawls were any part of the official records of a public office, or could have so far presumed on the credulity of Parliament and the public as to think that they would be accepted as fair specimens of the style in which the Public Trust Office books are kept; and if they are not published with that intent, why are they published at all?

I fear the question may possibly be asked, What has all this cost, and what public purpose has been served? It seems to me that the only gainer by this curious transaction is Mr. Moginie, the modest author of these—what shall we call them—"cash sketches," or "financial sonnets;" or, looking at the red blots so artistically reproduced, "*mes larmes*, by an accountant." For one can readily imagine the amusement and gratification he must feel at finding that he has unexpectedly achieved literary fame: that his little books are introduced to the world in a costly edition with voluminous notes by distinguished critics, with a large circulation guaranteed, and all at the expense of a grateful and admiring country. All he has to complain of is that his publishers did not publish the whole of these interesting volumes.

(b.) *The Subsidiary Ledgers*.—The only other set of books which are not inspected by the Audit are what are called the subsidiary ledgers, in which entries are taken from the ordinary ledgers and arranged under different heads. Every entry into a subsidiary ledger is a literal transcript of an entry in the ordinary ledger, the entries in the general ledgers being posted under the heads of estates, the same entries being posted in the subsidiary ledgers under the heads of beneficiaries in the estates. Now, I desire to ask, whether the statement