

ing for a time left the worn fields of Wall street for fresher and greener pastures. The stock is considerably over-sold, and large lots are daily being taken off the market by investors, so that it is not impossible that the shorts may have some difficulty in keeping their contracts out. Merchants Bank appears to have seen its worst, and the efforts to depress it further futile, the disposition being, if anything to harden. Bank of Commerce has stood the shock well, shewing a decline of about one per cent only, and but little cash stock changing hands, though large contracts at sixty days have been put out by shorts. Montreal Telegraph, has led the market in amount of sales and movement, ranging from 109 to 104, but closing in some demand about 105½; this stock also is in the hands of the Shorts, who have very heavy lines out. City Passenger R.R. has sold at 70, but closed with a better feeling at 74. The report of the new directors is expected out early in April, and it is whispered that their valuation of assets will be a reduction of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars on the old one, thus giving the stock a minimum value of about 80. It is thought, however, that time will show better things.

THE INSURANCE CRISIS.—The magazines and reviews have taken up the insurance question. Following the cyclopaedic article on life insurance by Julius Wilcox in the current number of *Scribner's* comes a paper in the last *North American Review* on "The Insurance Crisis," by Shepherd Homans. The writer holds that the foundation or theoretical basis of life insurance is impregnable and worthy of the highest confidence. But there are some serious mistakes in management, to say nothing of the barefaced frauds now undergoing investigation in New York. The greatest defect in life insurance is the liability to forfeiture, and to the confiscation of all the accumulated deposits in case of the failure to pay a stated premium when due. "A fair surrender value," says Mr. Homans, "either in cash or in continued insurance, should be given, in every case, by the Company, and should be guaranteed in the policy contract." "No policy should be accepted without this guarantee." Under the present system, nine policies out of every ten lapse by forfeiture or surrender. Some of the writer's other suggestions are that there should be greater publicity with regard to the management and the character of the assets, and adequate examinations, if necessary, by professional accountants; that greater accountability should be demanded of life insurance managers, and that the system of yearly renewable insurances should be adopted by which large accumulations are rendered unnecessary, and insurance apart from deposits may be obtained.

A NEW AND BRILLIANT LIGHT.

A new invention, of a simple and practical nature, has of late been successfully applied in several places in Germany and France. The system consists of electric candles, or sticks of charcoal, surrounded by isolating matter, which gradually consumes, leaving the charcoal free like a wick, which slowly melts away under the brilliant glow of electricity. With two such candles a light equal to that of 100 gas-jets may be thrown on a street. An electro-magnetic

machine can keep burning twenty of these electric candles. The cost is about half that of gas, and the light is of the brightest and purest kind. The *Erfelder Zeitung* gives the following account by an eye-witness of the working of this mode of lighting in the machine factory of the brothers Meer, at Gladbach:

"The great building was enveloped in total darkness when we entered. Soon after, one of the proprietors lighted the small developing apparatus, in size not longer than thirty inches, and in height not more than sixteen inches. As soon as it was set in operation, by a small steam-power with which it was connected by a belt, the immense machine-room was instantaneously lit up as bright as day. At the entrance of the same there was to be seen only one lamp, at a height of fifteen or sixteen feet, which gave out a most brilliant and steady light. It was so clear that the finest shades of indigo-dyed silks could be easily distinguished. The electric light was distributed in such a manner, through the agency of a mirror, that a long stay in the room in no wise injuriously affected the eyes. On going into the garden an electric lantern, suddenly lighted, illuminated the whole neighborhood to such a degree that at 100 feet very fine print could be read, and at 250 feet larger and ordinary characters were plainly legible. Of the wonderful properties of this electric light we had the clearest proof, and we were further pleased to learn that in this establishment the cost is estimated at a fourth to a sixth of gaslight. In large rooms, halls, public squares, and streets the electric light before long is sure to take the place of gas as an illuminating agent. In France it is rapidly growing in favor, and is in operation in forty establishments. The immense depot of the Chemin de Fer du Nord at Paris is about, also, to be lighted by this same electric system. There is no danger whatever of fire from it, which gives it an immeasurable advantage over all other means of illumination. The Paris Engineers Gramme, and the Chief Engineer Von Hefner Alteneck, of the firm of Siemens-Halske, in Berlin, were the first who constructed the new electro-magnetic machines, by means of which a pleasing mechanical power is converted in a simple and practical manner into electric light. This invention is one of the most remarkable of modern times.

LIFE INSURANCE REFORM.

There is one obvious danger in all legislation relating to life insurance, and that is the tendency to supersede individual precautions against bad management, and to inspire blind confidence in the checks and safeguards created by law. In its most perfect aspects, the law can be only an inadequate protector of the policy-holders or the public. It may be invaluable as an auxiliary; it is worthless as a substitute for independent criticism. The question is fairly open to discussion, whether the theory of State supervision, as hitherto applied in this country, has not produced quite as much harm as good. The immediate effect of it has been to create the impression that the action of the State department might with safety be relied upon to insure the solvency, and in essential features the good conduct, of the companies transacting business under its sanction. Recent events have rudely dispelled this delusion. We have seen reckless and fraudulent management carried on with the implied license of the department. We have seen companies long and notoriously rotten keeping up appearances, which an efficiently administered department would have rendered impossible. We have seen insolvency pass unchallenged, and frauds that should have landed their perpetrators in the dock consummated with impunity. A department which thus fails to accomplish its admitted objects is a snare. To some extent, the failure may have been attributable to the inherent weakness of the department. In other respects the failure must be attributed to the deficiencies of the law under which the department performs its work. Matters have been left to the discretion of the Superintendent about which the law should have left no room for laxity or doubt. Openings

have been afforded for the exercise of sinister influence on the part of the companies whose transactions should have been subjected to searching supervision, whether the officials relished the process or not. On the supposition that the State owes to its citizens protection in regard to life insurance, the law as it stands is too manifestly insufficient to admit of intelligent defense.—*N. Y. Times*.

ANOTHER LIFE INSURANCE COLLAPSE.—The Mutual Protection Company of Philadelphia, which last year dropped the term life insurance and became a beneficial company, has succumbed to the very general distrust now prevalent about all forms and plans of life insurance. The company has made an assignment for the benefit of all its creditors because of its inability to further collect assessments on death claims as fast as they occur. There are thirty deaths unassessed for, amounting to \$80,000, and deficiencies in previous assessments of \$60,000; also contested claims of about \$35,000; making a total of \$175,000. The deaths occurring since January 1, 1877, were 13, amounting to \$46,500, while the membership has dropped from 1,900 on January 1, 1875, to 700. This failure is one more lesson added to the many severe ones the general public has lately had relative to the looseness and want of management prevalent among life insurance companies—co-operative, mutual, beneficial and otherwise.—*Philadelphia Public Record*.

UNION BANK OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

At the twelfth annual meeting of this Bank held on the 7th inst., the following report of the Directors was read:—

General Statement of the Union Bank of Prince Edward Island, on 7th March, 1877.

LIABILITIES.	
Notes in circulation.....	\$177,912 59
Deposits bearing interest.....	246,673 43
Deposits not bearing interest.....	205,855 13
Balances due to other Banks.....	6,940 36
Liabilities to the public.....	\$637,381 51
Capital paid up.....	\$155,408 88
Reserve Fund.....	45,000 00
Dividends unpaid.....	1,006 70
Dividend of premium received on New Stock, payable 20th March.	31,789 40
Reserve for Interest on Deposit Receipts, &c.....	4,320 85
Net Profits on hand.....	4,049 28
Total Liabilities.....	\$878,956 62
ASSETS.	
Specie:—Gold, Silver, &c.....	\$66,295 10
Dominion (Legal Tender) Notes.....	20,055 00
Notes of and Cheques on other Banks.....	86,350 10
Balances due from other Banks—Cash.....	10,243 06
	121,741 14
Assets immediately available..	\$218,331 30
Notes discounted.....	472,919 46
Bills of Exchange purchased, re-mitted Agents for collection.....	89,201 73
Cash Accounts.....	68,683 95
Bank Premises.....	20,717 18
Total Assets.....	\$878,956 62
PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.	
To Dividend No. 24.....	\$7,300 00
" Dividend No. 25.....	7,300 00
" Dividend of premium on New Stock, payable 20th inst.....	31,789 40
" Amount transferred to Reserve Fund.....	20,000 00
" Balance on hand.....	4,049 28
	\$70,438 68