

"The Cotton States," says the return, "show a gain of about forty per cent. since 1870. A five-fold increase in the corn crop of Kansas (106,791,000 bushels against 17,025,000 bushels in 1870) is caused by heavy immigration and cheap and fertile lands." It appears that interest in wheat-culture is steadily on the increase in the Southern States: Georgia and the Carolinas, and in North Texas. But the practice of using wheat fields for winter pasture has more to do with the low rate of yield in the South than unsuitable soil or unfavorable climate. The average yield in several of those states in 1879 was but five or six bushels to the acre.

The States yielding most oats were Illinois, Iowa, New York, and Pennsylvania, with 63, 50, 37, and 33 millions of bushels respectively. In the South this gain does not succeed so well. Barley growing makes no progress in the Southern States: California, 12,578,486 bushels, or 22 to the acre, and New York, 7,798,749 bushels, off 356,556 acres, still produce nearly one-half of the crop; Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota making considerable strides in extending the growth of this grain. The extraordinary agricultural growth of the United States, and the wealth still in her soil are well illustrated by this most interesting publication.

CO-OPERATIVE LIFE SOCIETIES.

We have received the Pennsylvania Commissioner's report of the business done in that state by Life Insurance Companies, and by co-operative or assessment life insurance associations, during the year 1880. It is brimful of interest in relation to the assessment societies and their operations in that state. We quote a few sentences from the Hon. Commissioner's Report:

"Since the date of last annual report of this department, one hundred and thirty-one assessment life companies have been incorporated under the Act of 1876. Of this number, twenty-nine are located in Dauphin County, eighteen in Snyder county, thirteen in Northumberland county, etc. It is manifest that there is no public necessity for the incorporation of so many of these companies. They are not organized in such numbers to supply any public want, or for any beneficial purpose. The more companies, the more officers and agents to pay. The promoters of most of these enterprises are not moved thereto by the desire to afford the benefits of good and safe life insurance to themselves and their fellow citizens. Where one has been organized with this view, ten have been organized to enable the officers to make money and speculate in the lives of others." The commissioner continues:

"These companies do not pretend to show by any mathematical process how their policies are to be paid. They guess that assessments will be collected, and that new members will supply the places of those who die. They guess that a number will decline to pay their assessments and forfeit to the company all previously paid. They guess that this process may go on indefinitely; but it is all guess work, lacking the essential element of certainty, even of probability. There can be no demonstration because there are no certain factors in their problem. But then a great merit is claimed for the system in this: the reserve of the company is beyond the reach of officers, safely lodged in the pockets of the assured. Unfortunately it is too apt to remain there. This imaginary reserve, floating about in the imaginary pockets of actual and imaginary members, available for the purposes of the company only at the option of these actual and imaginary members, is altogether too shadowy and intangible for practical purposes, and is not the kind of reserve necessary to give insurance a rock-bed foundation. Men would not undertake to conduct any other business enterprise in this fanciful and visionary way.

"But officers have in some instances squandered the reserve entrusted to them and may do so again. So they may. Officers of banks have been known to squander the capital entrusted to them, therefore banking should be carried on without capital. It should remain in the pockets of the stockholders, to be called for whenever a note is offered for discount.

"The assessment companies claim to furnish insurance at the least possible cost; a claim not justified by facts. It cost the assessment companies of this State THIRTY-TWO per cent. of their income to furnish a very uncertain and indefinite quality of insurance. The expense of management of the regular life companies of this State, including the investment and care of their trust funds, was SIXTEEN per cent. of their entire income, to furnish substantial insurance; and the expense of companies of other States about SEVENTEEN per cent. of income.

"The mortality of the assessment companies was, in this State, TWENTY-SEVEN in the thousand, of the average membership. The mortality of regular life companies averages about TEN in the thousand. So it will be seen that in the two things essential to cheap insurance: small expenses and a low rate of mortality, the assessment companies have not justified their claim. As to the quality of the insurance promised by the regular and the assessment companies it is not necessary to speak.

"The period between birth and death of these associations is often brief. A committee of the Ohio legislature discovered that fifty-one associations, comprising more than one half of the co-operative associations of that State have, during the period of eight years, ceased to exist.

The delusion must have its day. Nothing but sad experience will bring conviction. Like the oil excitement, the fever must run its course until the victims of this delusion regain their senses with the return of empty pockets, and wonder how they could have been so easily cheated."

Let the commissioner, Hon. J. M. Foster, should be supposed to have some personal interest in the making of the above remarks, he is careful to state that he never had and never expects to have a penny's worth of interest in any life insurance company of any character or description. His words should have influence with those who are solicited to waste their money on these swindling affairs in our own country. They have had experi-

ence with them in Pennsylvania by which we can profit.

Last year we gave a table showing the membership of nine of the most stable-looking of Pennsylvania's assessment associations, and we here repeat it, adding a column showing the membership in 1880.

Years of age.	Names of Associations.	Membership in			
		1877	1878	1879	1880
6	Mutual, Pottsville	83	87	91	95
8	Monroe Co., Stroudsburg. 162	125	125	101	
7	Odd Fellows, Harrisburg. 155	138	161	103	
3	" Titusville... 300	257	226	205	
11	" Montrose ... 1393	1248	1097	900	
8	Lake Shore Masonic, Erie 1240	1320	1329	1259	
10	Temperance Mutual	2350	1767	1939	1445
6	Home Mutual, Lebanon, 1092	1696	2697	3064	
11	United Brethren " 14237	13826	12409	12684	

Totals.....20897 20454 20074 19936

Upwards of 20,000 new members were admitted to the nine associations during the four years, and yet there has been a steady decrease in their total membership. The decline in membership seems to be heaviest as they reach their tenth year. Three of them, it will be seen, are now ten years old, and their history for the past seven years is worth noting carefully. We therefore give space to the following separate tables, taken from the sworn statements of the officers of each company:—

TEMPERANCE MUTUAL BENEFIT.

Years.	New		Total	No. of	Costing
	Members.	Members.				Deaths.	per $1000
1874.....	563	935	.....	4	\$ 4.27
1875.....	577	1889	.....	1	5.70
1876.....	551	1549	.....	14	9.03
1877.....	1094	2305	.....	25	10.80
1878.....	415	1757	.....	23	13.08
1879.....	597	1939	.....	11	5.67
1880.....	183	1445	.....	33	22.83

ODD FELLOWS MUTUAL.

Years.	New		Total	No. of	Costing
	Members.	Members.				Deaths.	per $1000
1874.....	207	1688	.....	11	\$ 6.51
1875.....	241	1802	.....	17	9.21
1876.....	153	1676	.....	21	12.53
1877.....	87	1393	.....	19	13.64
1878.....	100	1248	.....	19	15.32
1879.....	220	1097	.....	20	18.23
1880.....	6	846	.....	23	27.18

UNITED BRETHERN MUTUAL AID.

Years.	New		Total	No. of	Costing
	Members.	Members.				Deaths.	per $1000
1874.....	1713	7093	.....	58	\$ 8.24
1875.....	3721	9900	.....	110	11.11
1876.....	3378	12102	.....	195	11.15
1877.....	4035	14237	.....	242	17.00
1878.....	4533	13626	.....	256	18.51
1879.....	2019	12409	.....	252	20.80
1880.....	1967	12684	.....	308	24.28

The fees or dues are not included in the costs columns above, but the mere assessments only. The expenses would add about one-third to the figures given.

If a large influx of new and healthy members could be depended upon to keep the mortality low, the United Brethren have had that advantage to the full, 21,466 having been obtained during the seven years. And yet their deaths multiplied until thousands of the best lives were forced out by the increasing assessments. But it is the same story with the other two. Indeed, while the U.B. death rate only trebled in the seven years, one of the others quadrupled, and the other multiplied still faster, though the Temperance Mutual had, upon the whole, rather lighter losses than its neighbors, for obvious