

PRACTICAL POINTS IN LIFE INSURANCE EXAMINATIONS.*

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OF late years, Life Insurance has assumed vast proportions. During the last century it rose from a mere gamble in human lives to a science, which is claiming the talent and attention of some of our very brightest intellects.

All sound, progressive companies now *select* the lives offered them. This was not always so; and the great responsibility of this selection rests with the medical profession.

All Life Insurance calculations are based on the expectation of Life, that is the average after-lifetime of all persons at that age.

The laws of mortality are as fixed as the laws of gravitation. Babbage says, "Nothing is more uncertain than the duration of life, when the maxim is applied to the individual; but there are few things less subject to fluctuation than the duration of human life in a multitude of individuals." We cannot tell how long any given person shall live—whether a few days or many years. Expectation has no significance as to the individual life, but only to the lives in the aggregate. However, if we take one thousand, or better still, ten thousand persons of the same age, we can predict with almost mathematical precision the number who will die within a given period. This is the principle of annuities, endowments, limited payments, etc., in insurance.

Nearly all application forms now have an expectation table printed on them; but, if they have not, you can easily find the expectation of an applicant by deducting his age from eighty and taking two-thirds of the remainder. This will be approximately correct. It will be inaccurate when applied to very young, or very old lives. Between 25 and 75 it is fairly correct.

Now, if you remember that healthy men seek insurance with considerable deliberation, and that unhealthy ones rush after it when they think they have a chance of passing the examination, you can plainly see what a great responsibility rests with the local examiner. There should always be the closest harmony, and strictest confidence, between the local examiner and the referee of the company. An entire medical department, thus working harmoniously, ever on the alert to prevent bad lives creeping in, constitutes the greatest safety-valve the Company can possibly have. I am glad to belong to a profession of which a large majority are highly honorable men, and who could not be induced to betray a trust. Experience compels me to say, however, that some local

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