

STRINGENT MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Our London contemporary, the *Review*, has some very decided views on the subject of medical examinations by life assurance companies, and in a recent issue deals with the question at some length, taking the ground that with most companies the examination is unwisely stringent and the standard of acceptance too severe. Our contemporary remarks: "The principle of life assurance never contemplated the possibility of a band of gilt-edged persons gathering themselves together with the object of admitting no one into their charmed circle whose every bone and nerve and vein would not bear the most stringent and pitiless examination, using all the resources of chemistry, backed by microscopic and even spectroscopic investigation. This never was the intention of life assurance. It was intended for the average man. Thus those who are in splendid physical condition must be content, in the very spirit of the business, to grant out of their superabundant capital of health and strength a little towards the support of their less fortunate brethren." The *Review* proceeds to refer to what it considers the stringent medical examinations prevailing among the American companies, admitting, however, that with our wide area of population and the ease with which men transfer their domiciles from one section and one large city to another, there may be more need than in Great Britain, with its compact and more permanently fixed population, for a pretty searching investigation into the personal history and condition of applicants. We quote further from the *Review* article, with the single remark that we believe the true theory of medical examinations is found in that golden mean which avoids the technical and fussy inquisition of the medical martinet on the one hand, and the loose indifference to real physical condition and antecedents of the extremists on the other. We quote:—

In Great Britain the same conditions do not apply. We venture to go further, and claim that the future prospects of the business are imperilled by this method of treating the crowd. It is notorious that a very large proportion of persons not now insured would be candidates for insurance, but that they are irritated at the reported troubles of a stringent medical examination. Even those who have passed too often vow that nothing would ever induce them to submit again to it. And what is much worse, they prejudice their friends against going through any experience of a similar kind. Now, to all these troubles it is proposed to add a new horror, viz., that candidates for insurance are to be compelled, under penalty of forfeiture of policy, to disclose the names of their medical attendants, if any, and the said medical attendants are to be requested to report on the physical condition of their patients. This, it may be observed, tends primarily to the destruction of the position of the accredited and permanent medical officers of the companies, and, secondly, it is likely to result in serious breaches of professional etiquette, with the result of estrangement of doctor and client for good. It is not likely that the inner and more sacred confidences of doctor and patient can be laid bare to the inquisitorial eye of the permanent medical officer and the whole board and staff of any insurance society, without grave dissatisfaction being created in the mind of the patient and candidate for insurance.

But, more than this, we return to our previous argu-

ment, and claim that life assurance is not so much intended for the special benefit of a charmed circle as it is for the crowd and as it is for the average man. Although primarily it sounds like a personal financial transaction, yet upon closer examination life assurance is nothing more nor less than the highest form of philanthropy combined with business, and as essentially carrying out the scriptural injunction of bearing one another's burdens. From the ancient days when the Amicable Society sat round a table in fur gowns, and passed people, literally, on sight, to these days when the candidate is literally torn inside out there is an emendous leap—an abyss too wide to be bridged over by common sense. The natural reaction is now setting in, and we shall be very much surprised if the Caledonian, the Sun, or any other office which has nerve enough to take an intelligent view of the situation, does not reap a large and substantial profit from the results of what we may call overdoing the present system of medical examination in life insurance.

FIRE LOSS STATISTICS.

We give below the fire losses in the United States and Canada by months for 1891 complete, as stated by the *Commercial Bulletin*:—

	1889.	1890.	1891.
Jan'y.....	\$6,898,700	\$9,179,300	\$11,230,900
Feb'y.....	12,800,000	7,387,025	9,226,500
March.....	10,912,000	8,466,300	12,540,750
April.....	15,987,000	8,285,520	11,309,000
May.....	9,915,300	8,838,100	16,660,395
June.....	7,755,000	5,655,000	8,587,625
July.....	11,020,500	14,723,500	9,692,200
Aug.....	11,153,850	9,009,100	9,055,100
Sept.....	9,735,900	6,943,700	10,658,200
Oct.....	8,366,600	7,279,500	13,248,300
Nov.....	20,081,600	8,351,300	14,736,100
Dec.....	7,304,800	12,880,000	13,535,500
Total.....	\$131,949,250	\$106,998,345	\$137,716,150

The excess of the 1891 fire loss will clearly appear when placed alongside of the record for the previous five years. The past six years' totals are as follows:—

1886	\$116,600,000	1889	\$131,949,250
1887	129,264,400	1890	106,998,345
1888	123,293,520	1891	137,716,150

Whether the year 1892 will prove to be more kindly than its predecessor remains one of the uncertainties, though general expectation points to an affirmative answer.

Financial and Statistical.

Canada's trade with Great Britain for the eleven months ending with November shows a total both as to exports and imports very close to the figures for last year. Thus we find that the exports from Canada to the United Kingdom for the eleven months of 1890 amounted to \$44,076,965, and for the eleven months of 1891 to \$44,941,765, a gain of \$864,800. For the same period of 1890, the imports were \$22,900,150, and for the eleven months of 1891 \$22,959,185, a gain of \$59,035.

The Bank of England was founded in 1694, and was the first joint stock bank established in England, and so continued with exclusive privileges until 1826 in the country, and in London until 1834. At this time