

A better fate is reserved for the respectable old edifice. The City Council have paid large sums for insurance; could these be lessened, the hopes for Water Works would be increased.

"We take every and all possible precautions against fire, even to wishing for adequate water supply."

"You will guarantee that the Market Hall shall not burn, and that you will agitate construction of Water Works," says the new comer.

"Yes; our Chief of Police shall prohibit smoking forthwith, and take all precautions, and any money we save in premiums shall go towards the agitation."

"Ah! the Glorioso Fire Insurance Company will insure your Market Hall and Corporation property therein for three years at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. on these conditions."

Immense applause and satisfaction. "Fire Insurance is not all a fraud; this is a good and sterling Company, and deserves our cordial support!" The agent has glowing visions of his future popularity and success, of well-directed streams from æsthetic hydrants extinguishing incipient conflagrations at a glance, and goes home feeling that he has "deserved well of his country," and has shown that his Company is willing to *run any risks* if by so doing the community may be blessed if only in anticipation.

The contract is well kept to date, as the ubiquitous apostle of æstheticism, Oscar Wilde, can testify, from his late experience in this much-guaranteed Hall. While discoursing in a mono-rhythmic cadence on the joys of Ithaca and the heart yearnings of Aspasia in the Elysian fields, a stentorian voice broke forth with: "There's smoking." A deputy discordant followed: "Tell that mon to put his pipe oot," and in the far distant corridor a furious altercation ensued, ended by, "Begorra, but you'll spile the Wather agitation if you will smoke in the Market Hall." The delinquent turned pale and subsided. Calm was restored, and the great Oscar with an illusory smile, perceptibly intense in its meaning, forgave the interruption and proceeded with his monotonous refrain.

He was again reminded of the refined care exercised by the Charlottetonians when next morning he had to depart in a hollow manner, breakfastless, because, we presume, of the condition in the Glorioso Insurance Company's policy on the hotel, that no fire should be started before seven in the morning.

However, joking aside, we shall be happy to record the establishment of Water Works in Charlottetown, the continued safety of the Market Hall, and the success of the underwriters in securing adequate rates.

In September we asked for "the methods used by the Gore District Mutual Fire Insurance Company to ensure themselves against being wiped out of existence by a town or city conflagration."

The reply comes, and we are happy to publish it (in another column, under head of "Communications,") and are also pleased to know that this Company was once in the advance-guard of the progressive institutions, and in the dark ages had enterprise sufficient to specially plan out all towns and villages endangered by conflagration hazard.

But why not be consistently progressive, oh wise Gore Districtionians! When old-fogy and fossilized institutions have followed your manly lead, and have combined to share

the expense of systematizing and keeping in constant revision these plans, that at one time you bore the sole expense of, why sit down and write a laudatory puff of the "excellent system?" Why shut your eyes to the fact that your Ontario villages and towns change every three or four years, and change materially as to fire hazard?

Why wait for Piazzi Smith's comet to gobble up the sun?

Will the earth be then darkened for ages? and is it your idea that when re-lighted by the Utopian Orb, the future Boulak museum shall exhibit rolls of papyrus from Egyptian sarcophagi, and fossilized plans from the Goronian Ruins on Grand River banks as contemporaneous productions?

Why not be consistent? Why only refer to plans "when occasion *demand*s it?" Why not make them constant and daily companions?

Truth is stranger than fiction, and but for this letter one would not believe that you had actually benefited by the advantages offered by this system before its present supporters even dreamed of it, and had then gone to sleep while others commenced, struggled for, and achieved its establishment.

It now feels happily able to continue without your help. Can you as consistently feel able to ask its assistance only when "*occasion demand*s it?"

There are fires nearer to you than the "absorption of the comet by the sun in 1883," and we should regret to record the "wiping out" of our oldest friend, even should *ccasion demand* it.

#### FIRE INSURANCE STATISTICS.

"O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us."

The thought contained in these lines is a very important one, and not less applicable to companies or professions than to individuals. Acting on it, we will take a hurried glance at fire underwriting from the standpoint of an outsider. Much has been written, and well written, on the manner in which the business is conducted, but as the writers are almost invariably persons who have been long connected with the business, and have thus become accustomed to its peculiarities, they often fail to see points which to outsiders appear very striking. They have fallen into the habit of examining it as through a microscope, while we intend to look at it as through a telescope from a distance.

We will for the present only look at one point—the great difference between fire and life assurance in regard to published statistics. There are such a large number of works in existence bearing on mortality and all other matters connected with life assurance that a perfect novice can often become so thoroughly a master of its theory and practice as to organize and successfully manage a company simply by the knowledge obtained in this way. This was true of Mr. H. C. Baker, the founder of our oldest life company, the Canada, he having been previously an agent of the Bank of Montreal. It was also true, we believe, of the founders of the Mutual of New York, the Connecticut Mutual, the Equitable of England, the Australian Mutual Provident, and many others of the largest and best companies in the world.