

A Thrifty People. As an illustration of thrift, and of the industry and frugality of the French people, some savings banks statistics for 1898, published by the "Economiste," are most interesting. On January 1st, 1899, there were 9,964,768 depositors. That was a proportion of 254 depositors in every 1,000 of population, or one French person in four, man, woman or baby, that has an account with the government. These deposits aggregate 1,275,261,452 francs, an average of 429 francs per account. Of this, 3,234,908, or 32 1-2 per cent. are of 20 francs (\$4) or less; about 1,747,245, or 17 1-2 per cent. are of between 21 and 100 francs, which means that half the accounts represent savings of less than \$20. The depositors come chiefly from the working classes. For instance, among the men day laborers are 6.55 per cent.; artisans, 6.7 per cent.; domestics, 3.54 per cent.; clerks, 4.46 per cent.; chiefs of establishments, 5.28 per cent.; liberal professions, 1.12; without occupations, 3.49; soldiers and sailors, 1.76 and nomads, .07 per cent. Of the females, domestic servants form 9.81 per cent.

The War and Life Insurance Companies. When Lord Methuen, before starting to serve his country in the Transvaal, wrote to the London "Times," regarding the extra premium of five guineas per cent. on his life insurance during the campaigning in South Africa, we ventured to say on behalf of the companies concerned that they were quite justified in taking a common-sense view of the matter, and that the result of previous fighting against the Boers fully warranted an extra charge to cover the actual cost of war-risk insurance. We are sorry to find, now that the war is closing, that the data collected from the mortality statements of troops engaged, killed or wounded in the disturbed territory places the companies beyond criticism in their business-like action.

At the same time, it is with regret that we find an English insurance journal taunting officers who have fought gallantly throughout a long and arduous campaign in the following unnecessarily coarse fashion:—

"Concerning the frothy indignation expressed by certain gentlemen bearing Her Majesty's commission, little need be said. The arguments put forward by these critics were as unsound and unbusinesslike as if they had been discussing tactics, and consequently are not worthy of reply."

Unhappily for all concerned, the additional premiums required by the companies proved insufficient. But we have no sympathy with those who can find it in their hearts, at this stage of the war, to criticize its conduct by the gallant gentlemen whose courage, and a possibly mistaken sentiment, prompted them to stand erect in the open when their men and the enemy were all under cover.

The "certain gentlemen," with whose "frothy indignation" and "tactics" our London contemporary finds fault in such contemptuous language, saved

Africa for the British Empire. For this, and for the recollection of the bull-dog bravery in the early battles of the war, we hold them in our love and honour.

Insurance Against Twins. Among the many purposes to which insurance is applicable, nothing seems to have so startled the English people as that against the arrival of twins. A correspondent of the London "Daily News" in writing to that paper, remarks:—

"The best authorities regard such occurrences as something unnatural—something, that is to say, out of the healthy and normal course of nature, and, no doubt, due to some physical idiosyncrasy, such as may be very likely to 'run in families.' Hence the wisdom of the insurance office inquiry as to relatives having had twins. If nothing of the sort had occurred in either family, the chances against the office having to pay up would be, at least, 116 to 1. But, if vagaries of this nature happened among relatives, the risk would be far greater, and a young mother who had once distinguished herself this way would hardly get insurance against a recurrence at any rate whatever."

If the Law Guarantee and Trust Society, and other offices in search of such business, want a fresh field in which to start branches of the "accident" business, we can guarantee that Quebec will upset their 116 to 1 calculations. Some of Dr. Drummond's healthy habitants do not regard twins as "physical idiosyncrasies." Even triplets only excite temporary interest. They generally form the basis for a story illustrating the fecundity of the French Canadians, and are useful as a means to the early acquisition of the land grant for large families.

Life Assurance, Health and Longevity. At the recent annual meeting of the admirable Scottish Widows' Fund Life Assurance Company, Sir James Crichton Browne paid the following eloquent tribute to the value of policies of life assurance.

"They afford at once, what private investment might eventually give if life and health were sufficiently prolonged, adequate provision against the greatest calamity that can befall the family, the death of the bread-winner; or they secure to the bread-winner himself a competency and independence in his declining years. They have a fine moral effect by encouraging all the cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, and by discouraging that spirit of gambling which is unhappily only too prevalent in our times. There can be no doubt that life assurance as a whole has had a profound influence on the ethical development of the nineteenth century, and that it has been, and is, one of the *forces at work amongst us that make for righteousness*. Then, beside their moral tendencies, policies of life assurance have many valuable practical bearings. They often facilitate business arrangements, or tide a man over an emergency; they are conducive to matrimony; they consolidate the domestic affections; and they also, I am quite certain of it, improve the digestion more than any mineral waters; allay irritability of temper,