

are such as a close observer and a competent narrator makes vivid to the mental eye of the reader; the setting of them not elaborately strained, but simple and life-like. Throughout them, as the *Boston Transcript* says, you don't get the author at all, but only his simple-hearted, interesting, very human people. What a delicious sample of Highland pride and Highland honor is given in Grandfather McTavish; what ingenuity in ethics is shown in his extension of the limits of Glengachie farm. And what broad fun, true to French Canadian life, in the punishment—by water-cure—of Old Man Savarin. A most touching story of the temptations of poverty and the sovereign power of kindness is "McGrath's Bad Night." Those who wish to understand the ingrained loyalty of a British soldier, the unconquerable spirit that shone at Waterloo and at the Alma, should read the story of the "Waterloo Veteran." Childish curiosity and faith gleam in "The Cross of Rigaud"; while French Canadian superstition and simplicity have representation in "The Red-Headed Windego." But of all these beautiful tales none is so graphic, so appealing, so natural, as the story of "Little Baptiste."

LIFE INSURANCE MATTERS.

Eight fraternal beneficiary orders have been placed in the hands of receivers on the motion of Commissioner Merrill, of Massachusetts.

Mr. Charles Edward Maclaren has been appointed by the directors of the Standard Life Assurance Company, to succeed Mr. Stevenson as their secretary in Manchester.

Edward C. Seeley, a life insurance agent at New Britain, Conn., pleaded guilty on Tuesday last before the superior court at Hartford to a charge of rebating and was fined \$100 under the law.

Too much smoking, says the *Medical Examiner*, will cause functional disturbance of the heart. It will also cause extreme nervousness, dyspepsia and other morbid conditions. The habit of using tobacco will ultimately cause these conditions to become chronic. Insurance companies often decline applicants of this class.

"I had a policy in your company some years ago that I very foolishly let drop to replace in an assessment company that has since failed." Thus writes a man to one of the companies, saying he cannot now take a policy, as the charge is too high. He is now old enough to know better, and that it is too late.—*Insurance Age*.

Seldom it is that a life agent gets an application at the first interview. He must keep at it. Do not depend on correspondence to insure a man. The journal that says these things, the *Insurance Press* says also, with much truth, that "The agent who confines his work exclusively to his friends will be very apt to be astonished to find how few he has. It is a good way, among others, to learn. It comes almost next to asking for 'a fiver for a day or so.' And you may have found out how that is yourself."

Practically all the life offices in New York city are now requiring agents and brokers to file with every application a signed statement that no rebate has been offered or paid. That of the New York Life, says the *Boston Standard*, is perhaps the most comprehensive, although not differing greatly from the rest. It reads: "I further declare that I have not paid or allowed, or offered to pay or allow, or agreed hereafter to pay or allow, any rebate of premium in any manner whatsoever, to said applicant or to any other person."

Respecting electrical risks to life, the National Life Insurance Company of Vermont makes the following announcement: "This company has had under consideration the subject of electrical risks to life. The classes considered are electrical engineers, electrical artisans, electric railway operators, linemen and dynamo men. You are instructed and will please instruct your sub-agents to the same effect, that there will be no discrimination exercised on account of occupation in the first three classes, but that applications from linemen and dynamo men will not be considered. The term 'lineman' is here used in its ordinary meaning, and by 'dynamo man' we mean one who handles electrical machinery in its steady operation for the generation of electricity for lighting and power purposes."

FIRE INSURANCE ITEMS.

The Boston fire department is experimenting with an electric device for a system of signals between the hoseman and the engineer of the fire engine. It consists of a double line of wires along the hose, so that the fireman by pressing a button can communicate with the engineer.

In a recent case, tried before a New York court, it was held that where the appraiser employed by the fire insurance company suggested to the appraiser representing the assured that they, by agreeing on a

* "Old Man Savarin" and other stories, by Edward William Thomson. Toronto: William Briggs; Montreal: C. W. Coates; Halifax: S. F. Huestis. 1895. Price, one dollar.

low estimate of the loss, might secure for themselves other and more work from the insurance company, the assured was justified in refusing to allow the appraisers to proceed with the work.

The following is the new rule of the Philadelphia Fire Underwriters' Association in respect to the settlement of losses under the co-insurance clause: "It is understood and agreed that in the adjustment of any loss or damage by fire, no inventory for the purpose of ascertaining the application of the co-insurance clause shall be required, unless the amount of damage is over 5 per cent. of the amount of insurance."

From statistics recently published by a plate-glass insurance company, having reference to the causes of accidents to plate-glass windows, it appears that out of 1,000 breakages, 154 were caused by stone throwing and horses casting up stones, 142 were not to be traced, 128 were caused by ladders slipping, shutters, sun-blinds, and fanlights falling, 104 by gas, wind and frost, 102 by employes and servants, 84 by goods falling in the course of window dressing, 70 by passengers slipping, 48 by children at play, 41 by disorderly people, 30 by vehicles and runaway horses, 38 by window cleaning, 36 were wilful, and 14 due to buildings settling.

Mr. E. F. Bedall, American manager of the Royal Insurance Company, has submitted to the Tariff Association of New York, suggestions regarding insurable value and the co-insurance clause. Thus: "Whenever a property owner desires to insure a building rated by this association, and is uncertain of the amount of insurance needful to comply with the provisions of the co-insurance clause, he may, at his own expense, procure an estimate of such insurable value from one or more of the appraisers elected by the association. These must be builders in good standing, with recommendations carefully specified.

CLEARING-HOUSE RETURNS.

The following are the figures of the Canadian clearing-houses for the week ended with Thursday, December 19th, compared with those of the previous week:

CLEARINGS.	Dec. 19.	Dec. 12.
Montreal	\$11,968,976	\$13,231,920
Toronto	7,605,779	7,922,817
Halifax	1,400,377	1,184,486
Winnipeg	1,453,708	1,756,624
Hamilton	775,570	792,431
Total	\$23,204,410	\$24,888,278
Aggregate balances this week,	\$3,730,531	last week, \$3,626,101.

—In the arrangements connected with the abolition of tolls on the York roads a hitch has occurred. The County Council, in its by-law for carrying abolition into effect, exceeded its powers by including a road beyond its jurisdiction. This of itself is fatal to the by-law. Apart from this, the Government regards as objectionable the proposal to throw the support of the roads on the separate townships through which they run. The roads are more than township roads, they are county roads, and as such their continuity ought to be preserved in the management and support. Economically, the proposed isolation was bad, offending as it did against equity and imposing unequal burthens on different townships.

—On the Toronto Board of Trade, the rates of fire insurance were considered and a committee appointed to consider the subject. The commission is composed of Messrs. M. C. Ellis, chairman; W. D. Matthews, P. Howland, J. K. Macdonald, John Donogh, Wm. Christie, the president and vice-president. At about the same time, the Toronto Fire Underwriters were discussing the reduction or abolition of the extra premium imposed last spring, under the caption of conflagration hazard. It could not be carried, however, until the concurrence of head offices in Montreal was obtained, which is now being sought.

—At a meeting of directors of the City and District Savings Bank, held in Montreal a week ago, for the purpose of filling the president's chair, vacant through the death of Senator Murphy, the directors unanimously chose Sir William Hingston, who has occupied the position of a director for many years, to be president. The vacant directorship was filled by the election of Mr. Michael Burke, president of the *True Witness* Printing and Publishing Company.

—In the Chatham Board of Trade council meeting the other day a suggestion was made to form a horticultural society in town to help the West Lambton fair. The opinion was general that the day of small fairs was over and that it would be useless to try and revive interest in them. Toronto and London offered the great attractions to those who wanted a holiday in the fall. Chatham and St. Thomas were cited as instances of the decadence of county fairs.