A MIDDLE WAY IN LIFE INSURANCE.

To pay more each year for an article or a guarantee of anything is an arrangement of which the average man is pretty sure to get tired after awhile, and get out of as best he can. Assessment life insurance practically embodies such a condition of things, and herein lies the reason of its untenability. The persons who were attracted to the scheme by the smallness of contributions required at the start of an assessment association, naturally grow restive as the number of calls increases by the workings of mortality laws, and drop out after awhile. It stands to reason that those who feel well and sound are the first to do this, while those that are in delicate health or ill hold on, and thus the downward process is accelerated. The insufficient reserve held by many of the assessment societies doubtless retards their dissolution, but cannot prevent it finally, as their contracts hold for the lifetime of certificate-holders.

The policies of the level premium companies, on the other hand, call for a premium much in excess of requirements at the start, and this excess is put by as an investment to prevent the increase of premiums in later years, and to provide for the various forms of tontinism, endowment, etc., offered by the companies. These arrangements are the cause of the accumulation of assets held by the companies, aggregating between eight and nine hundred millions of dollars, and whose safe and profitable investment is becoming yearly a more and more serious problem. Now the old whole-life policy is very rarely asked for among the great majority of the insured, whose means are moderate, and for whom insurance protection during the productive period of life is sufficient; on the other hand, the investment forms of life insurance for shorter periods draw sums from their pockets which might be multiplied and expanded by the exercise of business energy. These considerations raise the questions: Is there no way to supply the life insurance that will be equally removed from the uncertainty of assessmentism and the high cost of investment level premiumism—which will simply cover the productive period of life at cost, and check the mountainous heaping of assets, much of which could be more profitably employed in business activities? Is there no middle way?

Mr. William Miller contributes an article entitled "An Economic Problem," to the holiday *Chronicle*, in which this question is discussed, and the conclusion reached that term insurance which avoids heavy reserve accumulations is the solution of the problem. In support of this the net rates of thirteen leading assessment companies—that is net assessments, excluding dues and fees—are given, and are found to average as follows:—

Age 20.	Age 30.	Age 40.	Age 50.	Age 60.
$11 03	$12 46	$15 45	$22 70	$34 60

Contrasted with these are the net level premium rates for ten year terms, as follows:—

	Age 20.	Age 30.	Age 40.	Age 50.	Age 60.
American 4 per cent....	$7 72	$8 54	$10 62	$17 28	$36 28
Combined experience, 4 per cent....	7 41	8 80	11 58	19 97	39 81

It is in ten-year renewable term insurance therefore that Mr. Miller finds a means by which the regular companies can underbid the assessment societies, while having an immense advantage over them in respect of definite contracts and official endorsement of security. If in the statistics above the level premium rate in the last class stated exceeds the average assessment rate, it must be remembered that the former is fixed for ten years and the latter subject to increase. The plan outlined seems practical and feasible, the premiums remaining level for ten years, with only slight or moderate advances during the productive period, and a large advance at a time when experience shows that men have ceased to need protection of their insurable interests. But even the latter premium is much lower at the age of sixty than is charged on any non-term plans. There appears to be an adaptability about this renewable term plan which well fits it to the requirements of the average man.

Coroner.—"You seem to be certain that the deceased accidentally fell into the water. How do you know that this is not a case of suicide?" Witness.—"He was a brither Scot, an' had a wee bottle of whiskey on him wi' ne'er a nip ta'en cut."—*Pick Me Up.*

—There is improved activity in the Quebec boot and shoe trade. The correspondent of the *Witness*, writing from that city on the 21st says: "The boot and shoe industry, which was very inactive here for some time past, is again booming, and some factories are obliged to work day and night to fill orders, of which it is said local houses have received over one-fourth more than at the same date last year."

Commercial.

MONTREAL MARKETS.

MONTREAL, Jan. 25th, 1893.

ASHES.—Receipts this month to date are only 70 brls. as against 112 brls. to same date