but there has been much carelessness," is worthy of Mark Twain in his most extravagant satire. "No fraud," Oh no, it is not fraud to organize a life insurance company as a roosting place for one or two broken down bummers, collect the hard earnings of the poor men, under the promise that they shall be sacredly kept for his widow and orphans, and then squander these monies, and a good share of the capital paid in by confiding stockholders, in style and glitter and extravagant commissions to agents, and a desperate effort to demonstrate that Sam Patch was a philosopher, and that a life insurance business can be done by anybody. So it can, in the break neck style, and we have neither patience with, nor charity for, the managers of such companies as this "Great Western," now in chancery, let us hope to be knocked out of time forever."

The "Great Western" is only one of a number of companies, for whose organization there was no conceivable reason, in whose management there has been neither moderation nor method, and whose speedy collapse, and the valuable lesson it would teach, are the only possible atonement that can be made for the crime of their existence.

Youth is not a crime in an insurance company, any more than in an individual. But when companies that have little that is new, and nothing new that is valuable, either in their organization, plans or management, to commend them to popular favor, are organized, they owe it to the cause of life insurance, and to the decencies of business rivalry, not to be foremost in extravagant expenditure, and reckless in their bids for patronage.

It is not that companies are new, but that, being new only in the fact of their existence, they are under a sort of compulsion to pay an exorbitant price for business, which weak men, who have been lifted by accident into power, are entirely unable to resist. The solid claims and well-earned prominence of their older competitors throw them into an eclipse, from which there is no escape but by the most extraordinary exertions and outlays. The business location and facilities, the outside show and inside cost, that are necessary and economical for a business of millions per annum, must be rivalled, if not outdone, by the company whose entire first year's business, if fairly secured, would be sufficient, should it equal that of a single agency of its competitor.

It is the absurd efforts of these stripling Davids to wear the ponderous armor of Saul, that have brought the business of life insurance into distrust and almost contempt among so many candid, and not altogether incompetent, observers.

Superintendent Miller, whatever may be his other shortcomings, is entitled to the gratitude of all honest life underwriters, and of the half-million families throughout the country which are so vitally interested in the security of life insurance, for having commenced and prosecuted with such thoroughness and impartiality his personal examinations of the companies. In every case, the result can be but salutary.

If, in that crowd younger companies that have been spawned like shad at each annual migration of New York politicians up the Hudson, he does not find others to whom the same judgment which has overtaken the "Great Western" should be meted out, it will be because the extraordinary safeguards of the business are proof against the most desperate assaults, rather than because of any failure on the part of their officers to invite that judgment.

That he will find such, we have every reason to believe, and in the inevitable panic and confusion that must follow their several windings up, let us assure ourselves by the reflection that, after the storm is overpast, the skies will be clearer and the outlook brighter.—*Chicago Chronicle.*

—Messrs. Jay Cooke & Co. have severed their connection with the National Life Insurance Company of the United States.

Mortality of the City of Montreal.—The following is a Statement shewing the total annual mortality for the last sixteen years in the City and the outskirts of the City of Montreal, compiled from official records at the City Clerk's office :—

Year.	Males: Children.	Males: Married Men.	Males: Widowers.	Males: Bachelors.	Females: Children.	Females: Married Women.	Females: Widows.	Females: Unmarr'ed Women.	Total.
1855	864	182	67	112	851	167	100	112	2455
1856	857	165	59	136	760	197	103	82	2359
1857	879	162	74	160	816	201	98	94	2483
1858	965	219	83	83	764	209	107	74	2504
1859	985	216	85	93	974	190	111	105	2759
1860	1182	222	87	143	1067	242	129	98	3169
1861	1134	260	85	145	1102	202	130	121	3179
1862	1289	267	80	155	1176	231	145	124	3467
1863	1347	281	89	143	1188	252	148	158	3606
1864	1883	299	111	157	1653	259	146	193	4701
1865	1565	314	111	147	1288	255	165	172	4017
1866	1276	338	118	166	1108	251	171	184	3612
1867	1678	308	92	167	1630	321	179	189	4464
1868	1893	426	70	183	1631	206	140	182	4821
1869	1423	364	79	169	1355	268	174	162	3994
1870	1861	349	108	177	1751	333	195	151	4925
	21081	4372	1398	2335	19013	3874	2241	2201	50515

	Children.	Adults.
1855	1715	740
1856	1617	742
1857	1694	789
1858	1729	775
1859	1959	800
1860	2249	920
1861	2236	943
1862	2465	1002
1863	2535	1071
1864	2536	1071
1865	2853	1164
1866	2384	1228
1867	3208	1256
1868	3524	1297
1869	2778	1216
1870	3612	1313
	40094	16421

Fire in a Drug Store.—A drug store recently caught fire in London, Ont., from, as is supposed, the spontaneous ignition of a quantity of phosphorus left in a glass jar on an upper shelf. The London *Free Press* says of the fire: "The shop has been shut up for nearly two months, being advertised for sale; and even now the proprietor is said to be on a tour eastward to dispose of the stock, which is valued at $700 or $800. No doubt the water had evaporated from the jar, and hence the fire. Every chemist knows that phosphorus is a dangerous substance to be left in careless places, and requires always to kept in water. It will melt in a close vessel at 95 degrees Fahr. into an oily fluid, and boil at 554 degrees. It takes fire in the open air at a temperature of 165 degrees, but at a lower if partially oxydized, and when once ignited, burns with intense brilliancy and fierceness. The jar in question was found to be broken, and its contents had fallen upon the woodwork below, all of which was burning freely. The cause of the breakage and ignition, at the natural temperature of yesterday in a closed store, might be one of some interest to chemists. When compounded with sulphur, phosphorous becomes terribly explosive in its nature, and when warmed slightly, will go off with tremendous violence. It has also been known to explode spontaneously. The experimentalist Berzelius, while pursuing his investigations with this material, had several narrow escapes from sudden and frightful explosions. The question may arise, was the phosphorus in question combined with sulphur, or merely a simple? If the former was the case, it is of interest to the public to know whether or not it is the practice of druggists in general to keep such dangerous material among their stock."

Railways.

Great Western Railway.—Traffic for week ending Dec. 30th, 1870.

Passengers	$25,666 31
Freight and Live Stock	36,708 10
Mails and Sundries	2,384 48
Total Receipts for week	$64,758 89
Corresponding week, 1869	74,369 01
Decrease	$9,610 12

Railways in Michigan.—Under the General Railway Act of 1868-9, authorizing local aid by vote, railway building (in which the State was behind her sister States) was vastly stimulated. By Dec. 15, 1869, 71 towns had voted to 13 different lines $2,622,003,00,—of which $1,495,803,-90 had been deposited in State Treasury, and $1,-126,200 had not been filed; while $646,675 were still pending. At the close of 1869 the State had 1,300 miles in operation; 400 miles ready for the iron; 500 miles under construction; 500 miles organized and raising stock; and 400 in contemplation under land grants,—a total of 3,160. The effect of the decision of the Supreme Court of the State, invalidating all such bonds, was a suspension of work on many new lines,—though fortunately, not a few on account of their prospective value as feeders to the trunk lines of the State have been prosecuted by the aid of these. Upon the whole, the showing is good; and the best of it is, that the progress has been legitimate. No roads have been built since that decision that were not needed. Progress groups itself mainly along existing lines and in connection with them. —*Chicago Railway Review.*

— The County Council of Carleton County, N.B., have unanimously voted $100,000 towards the construction of a railway from Woodstock to Riviere du Loup.

Dominion Notes.—The following is a return by the Receiver General of the amount of Dominion Notes which were outstanding on the 31st Dec., 1870, and of the Specie and Debentures held by him for their redemption thereof, in conformity with the Act 33 Vict., cap. 10:

In circulation & redeemable in Montreal	$4,704,833
do do Toronto	1,507,167
do do St. John, New Brunswick	449,000
In circulation & redeemable in Halifax, Nova Scotia, $301,000 at 2⅞ ex.	292,974
Fractional notes in circulation and redeemable in Montreal, Toronto, and St. John	454,000
	$7,407,974
Specie held in Montreal	$ 940,967
Do. Toronto	301,433
Do. St. John, New Brunswick	89,800
Do. Halifax, Nova Scotia	58,595
Do. Montreal alone for Fractional Notes	90,800
Additional Specie held to cover the excess beyond the $7,000,000 authorized	326,379
Debentures held by the Receiver General	5,600,000
	$7,407,974