It may be said that the purchaser of a policy is not the insurer of a life, but merely the buyer of a right to the proceeds of a deed already effected. The spirit of the proceeding does not indeed differ from an original transaction—from the risk of a policy *ab initio*; and necessarily possesses all the characteristics of a gambling venture. Life Assurance Societies, however, now generally provide means for resuming their own policies, reducing the amounts to the sum for which the premiums paid may be considered sufficient, or debit as a loan upon the policy the deficient premiums. Arrangements of that nature can only be made when the policy has run for a period that renders it really valuable; and it is only in these cases that a heavy loss was incurred. We believe that more could yet be done in many cases to simplify transactions, and smooth down obstacles of this nature, to the progress of the system; but we also believe that no policy on which premiums have been paid for years can ever be entirely lost.

Life Insurance met other objections in its early history. Some people opposed it *theologically*. They were wise enough to believe that men committed sin by making provision for their families, and they quoted many authorities, and used a variety of arguments to support their views. Even yet, in some quarters there is a superstitious opposition to the practice. Some persons call it a speculation in death. They revolt from it as they do from writing out their last will and testament, and consider it altogether an ominous proceeding. There is a melancholy interest in the transaction as it generally occurs. In late years policies have been entered into as matters of present convenience and business arrangement, from which, at least indirectly, immediate advantages have been reaped. That is not, however, their most frequent object. The insurer anticipates no personal advantage from the transaction. He is establishing a property realisable only by his death, and stretching his prudence onwards to days that must shine upon his tomb. This influence is not, however, objectionable. We need in bustling times many warnings of the future. It cannot be wrong to fined even death claiming its entries in a man's cash-book and ledger. It cannot be selfish. The object sought is strictly beyond the insurer's own material comforts. He cannot participate in its advantages or its results. The provision made is to be applicable only after his dealings with the world are ended, and he is liable no more to its trials and privations. Few men in this country, and at this age, build their own tombs; although, certainly, a paralled custom is becoming provalent. We do not exactly mean that the conduct of a friend of ours—who has literally built his own tomb, and goes to meditate, not amongst the graves, but in his own grave occasionally—is generally and extensively imitated, but the mania for joint-stock companies produced a somewhat kindred custom. We have had several invitations of that nature; and one cemetery company in particular circularized us in very pressing and persuasive terms. They offered many advantages connected with the grave to persons who might become proprietors, and who are assured that preference will be afforded to them in the selection of dry localities in the ground; which are described as peculiarly pleasant and eminently desirable.

Within the last forty years, and still more especially within the last twenty years, the practice of Life Insurance has become very common in the middle ranks of life; and there has been a corresponding increase of companies. At any time the old companies exhibited unnecessary jealousy of their young rivals. Time has convinced them that the field is large, and furnishes scope enough for their united exertions. The old companies have nothing to fear from the increase of fairly-constituted rivals. What they have to fear, and what all who are interested in the prevalence of Life Insurance should guard against and oppose, is the establishment of companies with defective rates. There is a strong current of temptation in that direction. The rates were for a long period fixed too high. They were formed on the average duration of life, but the insured were not average but selected lives; and a reference to the tables of Mr. Finlaison already quoted, will show the immense difference between the duration of life in a wealthy class, or a class at least enjoying competence, even where the lives were not selected; and the average of mankind.

The premiums are fixed, but there is a varying yet a most important element in the revenue of all Insurance Societies, and the means of all accumulative fund. The expectancy of life at 35, according to the Carlisle tables, is 31 years nett, and the sum demanded for issuing £100 in the Equitable, on the scale published some years since, is £2 19s. 10d. per annum, which, for thirty-one years, produces a total absolute payment of £92 14s. 10d.—the balance and the costs of management; the first in this case being £7 5s. 2d.; and the second, indifinite, are met by interest and compound interest in the premium as they are paid. The premium which we have quoted is too high; but the Equitable being a mutual, and not a proprietory society, and guarded, at the same time, by a very large capital, and the amount charged if of comparatively small moment, as the surplus reverts to the insured.

The Asylum at the period to which we are referring, was one of the lowest English offices; and its premium, for insuring £100, was £2 8s. 9d., giving in thirty-one years an absolute payment of £75 11s. 3d., and leaving a balance of £24 8s. 9d., to be met by the accumulating interest and compound interest, in addition to the cost of management. The proportion of income to be derived from interest by this society was, it will be observed, over one-fourth of the whole revenue; and that shows how largely considerations of the rate of interest enter into all calculations of revenue in Life Assurance. Sometime ago, Mr. Finlaison assumed $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as the average rate of interest in this country, and named $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as a safe ground of calculation. We believe that errors are apt to be committed on this head, and we do not think that $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is a fair calculation of the permanent interest here in those securities which the directors of those societies should accept. Even at the present low price of British funds, consols only realise £3 13s. 2d. per cent. For permanent deposits with the Scotish bankers £3 10s. is obtained. In railway debentures a society may have £5 and £4 10s. per cent. for a term of years; but the capital is locked up, and cannot always be obtained when required. For mortgages on land, in large sums, more than 4 per cent. is not readily paid. We see, therefore, no valid grounds for assuming that an average rate of interest so high as 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. can be expected.

We naturally arrive now at the different classes of societies created by the demand; and the various schemes proposed by different companies for effecting assurance and affording facilities to the insured. But the subject has stretched over our assigned boundaries, and we are warned not to trespass farther in the meantime.