

TERMINATIONS IN LIFE ASSURANCE.

In accordance with our yearly custom, we present a table (as usual), showing the life assurance terminations during the past seven years in the business of the companies whose statements appear in the Report of the New York Insurance Department. The total terminations during 1895 showed a marked improvement over 1894, but were over the average for the septennial period under notice. This improvement is chiefly in the lapse ratio, which in 1894 was 63.48, and 52.61 last year. The other ratios generally show usual variations. This improvement, though gratifying so far as it goes, leaves much still to be done in the direction of reducing "waste" ratios. The meshes of the life assurance business net are still too open to retain the catch of fish to the extent desirable. In making our comparisons we have omitted the yearly totals of policies classified as "not taken," which are reported as follows:—

POLICIES NOT TAKEN.

1889.....	\$133,141,748	1893.....	\$216,145,940
1890. ...	157,517,512	1894.....	234,326,538
1891.....	177,837,000	1895.....	96,197,784
1892.....	164,901,268		

Total "not taken" for seven years..... \$1,180,172,866

The reduction in 1895 seems very large, and would be exceedingly gratifying were it a reliable exhibit. This is not so, as some of the companies have desisted from placing this item in their returns, for reasons only too obvious, for the enormous amount of "not taken" policies indicated not merely too large a mesh in their nets, but a serious gap which needs mending.

Adding the total lapses for the past seven years, which were..... \$1,737,014,785
To the policies "not taken"..... 1,180,172,866

Total..... \$2,917,187,651
and comparing this with new assurances taken amounting to..... \$5,265,535,056

Difference..... \$2,348,347,405

The result shows that 57.30 per cent. of the insurance for which applications had been made and accepted, medical examinations had been conducted, and other expenses incurred, wholly disappeared. This is comparable to a farmer cultivating and sowing 100 acres of land, of which the entire crop, or 57 acres, was totally destroyed, leaving him only 43 acres to harvest. Manifestly such a disproportion is excessive, and calls for more conservative methods to secure business of a more retentive and reliable character. A most impressive feature in the table of terminations published in this issue is the enormous amount paid by the life assurance companies for death claims, the total of which was \$62,023,805! In the last seven years death claims were paid for \$366,806,328. It would task beyond its powers the pen of the most powerful writer to depict the enormity of the service the distribution of these funds rendered in protecting widows, orphans, aged parents, and other dependent relatives from poverty or extreme pecuniary anxiety. Millions of this money went also in the liquidation of debts, and so being helpful in guarding the creditor classes from

such severe losses as are often incurred by a debtor dying without means.

As an earnest of what may be accomplished in the direction of reform, we quote the following figures from the report of a large life insurance company established in another colony:—

Amount of insurance in force July 1, 1895..... \$197,550,650
Amount issued during 1895..... 14,948,019

Total on the books during 1895..... \$202,498,669

Comparing the statistics of this company with those of the companies included in our terminations table, we get the following:—

	Terminations Colonial Company.	Colonial Company's ratio per M.	American Companies' ratio per M.
By Death.....	\$2,277,670	11.24	11.56
By Maturity.....	794,200	3.92	1.97
By Surrender.....	6,807,885	33.62	25.12
By Forfeiture.....	3,002,330	14.82	52.61
Total.....	\$12,882,085	63.61	*103.59

*This total includes 5.77 "expiry," and 6.57 "change," which are given in the American reports, but under which heads there are no terminations given in the company we refer to.

This company in 47 years wrote \$348,879,995, of which \$148,455,315 has terminated, leaving \$200,424,680 still extant on the books. Out of the total number of policies written, 59.10 per cent., and of the total amount written, 55.10 per cent still remain in force. To reach this standard should be the emulative aim of all the life assurance companies on this continent, whose terminations then would gradually become a more satisfactory exhibit.

A LITTLE COMMON SENSE ABOUT SILVER.

For the profitable, for indeed the rational discussion of any subject, it is essential that the disputants each accept all the terms used in the controversy in the same sense, as otherwise the debate becomes as foolish as that between two persons who each speak in a language not understood by the other. The free silver advocates put us in a tiresome dilemma by using terms sometimes in one sense, sometimes in another. Hence the apparent victory they occasionally seem to gain in controversy, as they show no more hesitation in repudiating the meanings of their own terms or phrases which they have previously accepted, than they do in advocating a scheme of which the tap root is a desire to repudiate honest debts. Mr. Bryan, for instance, at one time speaks of the present market value of silver as the desired standard of value, by which all obligations must be measured, and then, when he is cornered by those who show him that such a standard involves the scaling down of all prices and obligations stated in dollars in the proportion between a dollar coined to pass for that sum while only containing fifty-three cents in silver, he turns round on his own axis, and declares that his scheme will produce what he calls a "rising standard." But what he means by a "rising standard" he does not explain, it is a phrase of *sound* only, it is one of a number he uses which the Hon. Mr. Phelps declared "no man, not even the most ignorant, could understand" A standard is something fixed, as a yard measure, or a pint pot, a "rising standard,"