

LIQUOR TRAFFIC RISKS.

A Committee of Scottish Life offices has investigated, and just reported upon, the risks attendant on the liquor trade, to which the *Medical Press* calls attention. The Committee has been at work since 1890, during which time it has analyzed returns including 79,215 males exposed to risk and 5,856 females. The problem as to the effect of the liquor traffic on the lines of those engaged in it is complicated by such conditions as are common to other trades, such as long hours of work in a vicious atmosphere, and lack of exercise. Exposure to a gas-heated atmosphere creates a craving for stimulants, and is otherwise adverse to prolongation of life. To shorten the hours during which liquor may be sold is a step liquor dealers should favor, as it is favorable to their health. Beer sellers were found to present a death rate of 3.68 per cent. per annum, against an expected mortality of 1.59 per cent. This result is regarded as proof of the beer sellers following a highly hazardous calling, their average mortality being very high. The annual excess per cent. of beer sellers is 2.09, of publicans 1.3, innkeepers 1.0 above the expected mortality; and hotel keepers 0.98, and wine and spirit merchants 0.94 per cent. in excess of the normal mortality per annum. These are figures which our prohibitionist friends will be able to use with considerable effect. The Irish grocers who retail liquor drinkable on the premises pay dearly for the privilege, as their death is 0.84 in excess of that of the Scotch grocers, who have no such right. The point is made that the amount of alcohol consumed increases with opportunity, as no doubt the Irish grocers drink with customers not for love of liquor but for company's sake. Wholesale wine merchants were found to be running no extra risk, but brewers, distillers, waiters, stewards, etc., have an extra mortality of about 10 per cent. over the tabular rate. Females in the liquor trade do not suffer as heavily as males; their sobriety is much greater. The Committee recommends extras being charged proportionate to the extra risks of the different classes of liquor dealers. This report in its general conclusions brings out no novel result, for the extra mortality amongst retailers of liquor has been recognized for many years. But it has unique value in having classified and valued the different risks of those engaged in the liquor traffic, the data of which will be a standard for judging this class of risks, and be of considerable service to medical examiners and the life assurance companies.

THE MAGNITUDE AND POWER OF LIFE INSURANCE.

An interesting paper on the above subject was read before the Convention of the National Association of Life Underwriters, held at Washington on the 7th, 8th and 9th October, by Mr. Henry C. Ayers, of which the following is a synopsis. The writer of the paper regards the system of life insurance as "the greatest monetary wonder of the age, and, next to Christianity, the most potent safeguard of modern civilization." The total amount of insurance now in force is nearly six

thousand millions of dollars, which is over half the total capital of all the railroads in the United States. The aggregate of the life insurance companies' assets exceeds twelve hundred millions, a sum equal to more than half the total money in the States, and greater than the total deposits of all the national banks in 26 of the chief cities. The vastness of this business makes it the most potent agency ever devised for the dissemination of wealth. In 1895 the life companies paid to policyholders over \$125,000,000. In the years 1893-4-5, 689 banks failed in the States, and 22 per cent. of all the railroads became bankrupt, but not a single life assurance company who, in these years, paid out 350 millions of dollars to policyholders or their heirs. The stability of these organizations and their vast distributions of money during years of financial depression had a most wholesome effect upon public credit. Another power of life insurance is moral, its whole tendency and influences are antagonistic to evil in every form, more especially are those evils which are so detrimental to social progress and to business prosperity counteracted by the working of the life assurance system. Upon the sacredness of the home rests the whole fabric of society, and to that sacredness life insurance contributes by protecting families from the disasters incident to the removal of the bread winner when no provision exists for the widow, orphans, or others who were his dependents. A life policy stimulates thrift and industry which are essential to business success, to personal honor, and to manliness of character. As Mr. Ayers said: "A man's life is freer from anxiety by having life insurance. It prevents worry, and prolongs life and usefulness. Worry unfits a man for duty, and sends him to a premature grave. By the fact of having made provision for those dependent upon him a man's ability has been increased for work and for benevolent purposes. The church, institutions of learning, and all worthy objects are benefited, and society advanced by the system of life insurance." The trusts created by insurance are so vast and so sacred as to call for "economy, correct methods, good judgment, and individual integrity," in the management of these institutions, in which features, we venture to say, the life assurance companies of Canada, as well as those of Great Britain and the United States, will honorably compare with any financial institutions in the world.

THE ANARCHIST IN LIFE ASSURANCE.

The last annual report of the Superintendent of Insurance of Illinois, has some trenchant remarks on the question of terminations, which are especially timely in view of our recent publication of a table of Terminations.

Policies surrendered and lapsed indicate both twisting and hard times. The per cent. of surrendered policies increased from 16.17 per cent. in 1894 to 20.28 per cent. in 1895, and the per cent. of lapsed policies increased from 39.85 per cent. in 1894 to 43.51 per cent. in 1895. The large percentage in lapsed policies can undoubtedly be to a great extent traced to twisting or poaching. The persistent policy holder should be