

so difficult to get good laws enacted as it is to have them enforced. And this remark has a good deal wider application than to the State of Massachusetts.

#### THE SAVINGS BANK DELUSION.

Several months ago we published a carefully prepared article, showing the mathematical side of the question of Saving Banks versus Life Assurance, and demonstrated the superiority of the latter as a provision for one's family in the event of death and as an investment for the benefit of the assured himself. In our comparison of results we of course gave the savings banks investor full credit for systematic deposits of a definite sum every year, and showed he would have to live and deposit and get four per cent. compound interest for 27 years before he could die and leave his family with the amount of a policy which his annual deposit would secure and which would be good for its full face as well the next day of its issue as in 27 years. The fact is, the attempt to contrast the savings bank with life assurance as a prudent provision for the future contingencies of both life and death breaks down every time under examination. The life assurance policy affords a ready provision for dependent ones in every one of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year and in every one of the years of life's span, be it long or short. It is an already completed ark of refuge waiting to afford shelter when the deluge comes, while, at its best, the savings deposit is but a boat with the keel laid and in the process of slow construction, to be continued for many years before completion.

The phase of this question which we took up our pen to emphasize, however, refers to the adverse chances against the persistence of the savings bank depositor in keeping up his savings. In the first place, universal experience has demonstrated how very difficult it is for a man of limited income to lay aside with unfailing regularity a small amount every month and put it in the bank. The temptation and the abundant opportunity to spend small sums of money in any one of a hundred ways constantly operate to defeat his laudable intention, and with a large portion of people the theoretical savings get no further than theory, or at best are spasmodically applied. We all recognize the fact that it is an excellent thing to systematically save money, but where is the man who has not found what an exceedingly difficult thing it is to do it? Even where the saving has gone on for some time with tolerable regularity, the temptation to withdraw it or a portion of it to spend for some fancied but not real necessity, or to engage in some "dead sure" speculative enterprise promising to yield big returns, is apt to induce a use of the money which ends in loss instead of gain.

The savings bank depositor is not held to making or keeping his savings by any definite obligation the violation of which involves the loss of large benefits. He has nothing at stake beyond the amount of the small deposit. On the contrary, the man who has contracted to pay a definite premium at a definite time for a life assurance policy, convertible into cash for its full amount whenever death comes, has a large stake, affording a powerful motive to save systematically so

as to pay regularly. Non-payment means to him forfeiture of the chief benefit he is anxious to secure, and very naturally he plans to meet his obligation, definite as to time and amount. The chances that a man will pay his premium are ten to one as against keeping up without interruption a savings bank deposit. In a word, the one is comparatively certain, the other proverbially uncertain, and even where made certain yields more tardy and less profitable results.

#### NEW YORK LIFE STRONGER THAN EVER.

When we state that never before in its history has the New York Life been stronger, either financially or in the confidence of the people, than it is to-day, we state a most important and welcome fact. The ordeal through which the company has passed during the past few months, read in the light of final results, proves the stability of the foundation on which legitimate life insurance rests, and that the institution itself is superior to and dominates its management. The power within itself to reform whatever needed reformation has been strikingly demonstrated, and to-day no company in the world is better officered or better represented in the field than the New York Life. Of President McCall we have more than once spoken in terms which his unquestioned ability and integrity, joined to a knowledge of the principles and practical experience of the business of life insurance, amply justify. We candidly question if the choice of an executive leader at the critical period when the choice was made could so wisely have fallen upon any other man. The man and the hour found each other so fittingly that serious opposition and hostile criticism were utterly disarmed. The happy result of that choice is shown by the cordial manner in which the new president has been sustained by the great body of policyholders at the recent annual meeting, where, by the united voice of forty-seven thousand votes, a directorate and associate officers in perfect accord with each other and with the leader were chosen. Perfect unity even among weak men is strength; but when, as in this case, there is a union of strong men, their moving power may be regarded as comparatively irresistible.

What makes the outlook for the company especially promising is the fact, associated with the high efficiency of the management, that the company is sound to the core, and with immense resources available for guaranteeing the best possible results. The annual statement of its affairs, practically verified by the official examination of the State insurance department for the year ending December 31, 1891, shows clean assets amounting to \$125,947,291 and a surplus, over all liabilities of \$15,141,023, after applying \$919,376 in the account to the reduction in values of sundry office buildings, and \$988,921 as a special reserve on annuities in excess of that required by the State. If only the requirements of the insurance department as to liability under its policies had been considered, a clear surplus of \$17,049,320 would have been shown; and it is a most significant comment upon the abundant strength of the company that it could write off nearly a million dollars in the interest of a conservative valua-