

### "LOOKING BACKWARD" IN INSURANCE.

At the annual gathering, in Buffalo last month, of the Life Underwriters' Association of Western New York, Mr. J. W. Moore, of the Equitable, president, in the chair, an interesting paper with the caption given above was delivered by Mr. H. S. Munson, of the Etna Life. The author referred to the book of Mr. Bellamy, "Looking Backward," and supposed a man on this globe 100 years hence looking to discover the defects of this present age.

What would such a man see? Mr. Munson seems to ask, and his answer, condensed, is as under:

There is that fossilized executive officer, selected because of his eminent respectability, a man who takes counsel of his fears, and shivers every time an innovation is mentioned, who has arrived at the sage conclusion that business must come to the company because his name appears as chief official, and because of the high character of the board of directors; who looks upon a new idea with as much fear as the natives of Mexico looked upon the cavalry of the Spanish invaders. He wraps himself up in the glittering garments of his own self-consequence, and is as impervious to improvement as a Chinese god. He is as much out of place amid the hum and bustle of this last decade of the nineteenth century as a New York alderman would be in the Kingdom of Heaven. As a consequence the business of his company grows less and he lags behind his more fortunate rivals.

There is also that mummified medical examiner who has declined so many of our good risks because some one's great-grandfather suffered from a decayed tooth, or this other one's aunt had bunions, and who all the time pointed out to the afflicted agent in horrible doctors' Latin the mysterious consequences of heredity, until we were reminded of Goldsmith's schoolmaster:—

And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew  
That one small head could carry all he knew.

There also is that other ossified specimen—the dawdling agent, who stands around like Wilkins Micawber, eternally waiting for something new to turn up, and feeds himself and his family upon Col. Sellers' raw turnips. He is everlastingly figuring upon some new and better plan, is never just satisfied with what he has, and delights the hearts of those at the home office with six-page letters devoted to choice suggestions as to how it is best to conduct their business. He has always many promises of gilt-edged risks, upon which he is never known to realize. He will visit you frequently, always calling at the busiest time, and sit for hours in your office discoursing on the defects in this, that, or the other prominent rival company, and will demonstrate, to his own satisfaction at least, how next year it will be utterly impossible to maintain the present rate of speed. He is so far in the rear of the procession that he does not keep step with the inspiring music, and will ultimately be consigned with McGinty to the bottom of the sea.

There, too, is the rebater, whom neither the obligations (made sacred by binding pledges and association ties) nor the fear of penal statutes could keep from his demoralizing and criminal practices. Occupying a place in our chosen circle, nay, it may be ministering with unclean hands at the very altar in our temple, yet with hypocritical pretensions and lying lips violating his word and making a mockery of his vows; too much of a sneak to openly pursue his tortuous course, and hoping to blind his associates with his loud-mouthed professions, he has stolen the livery of heaven to serve the devil in, but truth is mighty and will prevail, and as the fallen angels were cast out of the Kingdom, so will these base pretenders finally receive the merited contempt of all decent men. "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

There also is that despicable creature known as the "twister." Arrayed with a multitude of figures, which always lie, pursuing the policy-holders of other companies, nothing daunted however often repulsed, making comparisons of prices between contracts entirely dissimilar, with smooth tongue and seared conscience deceiving his victims as a trade, and living and working simply for the commission received to-day. The Oily Gammon of the profession, first with one company and then with another, ever compelled to seek new fields. He is a barnacle and a cormorant,

loud-mouthed, vapid, soulless, and utterly despised. In the golden age just ahead of us there will be no room for any of his ilk.

Here is another study, a delightful object, rarely met, yet readily distinguished, the man who doesn't believe in life insurance; a petre-faction belonging to the Paleozoic age. He is the individual who is smart enough to take care of his own in his own way, and yet usually manages to leave his own with a very small bank account. He has a large estimate of his own knowledge and will descant for hours about some imaginary fault in the system, and perhaps conclude by telling you that probably at some time he will take a policy, and that when he does it will be with you.

Ah! here is the insurance journalist; what shall we say of him? This is dangerous ground, for he may be among us and taking notes. Not always right, many times mistaken, sometimes prejudiced and altogether very human, yet who shall say that in the main he has not proven himself a friend to sound and legitimate insurance, and if we have sometimes smiled at those usual annual notices so gratifying to the overworked officers, yet we must say that, taken all in all, we could not part with his aid and encouragement.

There is that great body of faithful agents, field workers, ever like Oliver Twist asking for more, never satisfied with present attainments: their voices, like those of Boanerges, sounding through the caverns of time in no unmistakable tones. Now they speak to the man of wealth of the mutation of all earthly things, and the transitory nature of riches; to the man of affairs, engaged it may be in questions of state, they urge the problems of fortune; their voice pursues the man of family with his obligations, and whisper to him in the gentle tones of love; they allure the young men with the tempting offers of gain and accumulation. The voice of the agent makes itself heard along the road of every-day life, in the broad avenues of pleasure and through the straight and narrow path of conscience; it is the ever present voice of duty; you and I are its missionaries and apostles; we preach its gospel now and then to attentive and willing auditors, now and then to a gainsaying and perverse generation, yet we keep on teaching these beautiful lessons of duty and obligation, not always, perhaps not often, realizing the æsthetic and sentimental, but teaching it just the same, even if our eyes are blinded and our ears are stopped by the sordid dross of pelf.

### WARNING AGAINST FORGED CHEQUES.

The following warning circular in relation to the systematic swindling of banks by means of raised and forged cheques has been received by banks in this city:

TEXAS BANKERS' ASSOCIATION,  
OFFICE OF VICE-PRESIDENT,  
FORT WORTH, TEX., Mar. 15, '94.

The banks of the country are being systematically plundered by means of raised and forged bank drafts, in which all the work is so skillfully done as to defy detection by the naked eye, or even with a microscope. The method used is this: The forger or his confederate buys a draft from one or each of the banks in one of the smaller towns on a central point for, say, \$15.00, removes any precautionary lines or marks that have been made after the word "fifteen," on even tinted paper, writes in the word "hundred," erases the 10% or any marks that were made after the \$15.00, and makes the amount in figures \$1500.00, fills in the \$ mark made with the automatic or any of the perforating machines, executes the two ciphers and dollar mark after the \$15, and finally forges the signature of the officer signing the draft on the back, so perfectly that in one of the instances coming under our observation, the cashier who signed the draft stated he would pay a cheque on his forged signature without any hesitation. He also changes the date to perhaps the day previous to that of presentation. He presents the draft, and when asked for identification, calls attention to the indorsement of the cashier or president, and states that it was so indorsed to avoid the necessity of his being identified. The man who has been operating in this State has the appearance of being a well-to-do stockman, about fifty to fifty-five years of age, about six feet tall, large frame, dark complexion, dark moustache—slightly

gray, and of good address; answers all questions readily, and shows no anxiety or uneasiness whatever.

He was operating in this section under the names of Henry Slifer and R. L. Harper. If any person pursuing the above method presents himself to you, have him arrested and held for identification, and wire me immediately at Fort Worth, Texas. This circular is signed by A. S. Reed, vice-president.—*Banker's Magazine.*

### HOW TO LEARN THE FIRE INSURANCE BUSINESS.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN BY MR. HEALD, PRESIDENT OF THE HOME.

No young man of however bright an intellect, can float himself into the chair of a good underwriter without that effort which produces growth and sound development. To become a good underwriter one must know a little of everything pertaining directly and indirectly to the business, and he must know it well. The knowledge he must pick up from his daily work; find it in modern inventions and learn it from scientific investigations. There is no royal road to underwriting. There are no text-books or encyclopedias from which it can be learned by heart. Knowledge comes by experience, close observation and hard work.

The world moves rapidly nowadays and forces new dangers upon our business and develops new hazards which are to be detected, met, and overcome, or avoided. Safeguards are to be invented; appliances sought out to lessen or obviate altogether these new dangers. They lurk in hidden places and are to be drawn to the light by the vigilance and intensity of purpose with which our business is daily conducted. No fixed rules can be given. Each case must be judged by its own properties and characteristics. You must begin with the first principles. Learn from careful inspection of the risk itself, or a rigid examination of the daily report, the physical hazard, its point of danger, the adjustment of assurance to value, and the financial standing of the assured. See to it that you do not by inattention or indifference give opportunity to the insured to convert the contract from one of indemnity to one of profit to himself. Remember your duties demand of you full, accurate, and intelligent education on these points. It will not come without intense application and tireless vigilance on your part.

### THE FAST ATLANTIC SERVICE.

Mr. James Huddart has engaged the services of Mr. R. S. White, who was formerly general manager of the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company, and under whose superintendence the "Lucania" and the "Campania" were built, as nautical adviser in the construction of the steamers for the new mail services between Great Britain and Canada. It was at first proposed that these steamers, which are to attain a speed of 20 knots, should be from 8,000 to 10,000 tons each; but it is now contemplated to have them 10,500 tons each, in which case they will rank next in size and speed to the "Luconia" and "Campania." In their construction a number of improvements with regard to boilers, machinery, etc., will be introduced for the first time. No steps towards actually forming the new company which, as already stated, is to have a capital of £2,000,000 sterling, will be taken until the bill sanctioning the proposed subsidy of £150,000 a year by the Canadian Government has been passed by the Dominion Legislature.—*London Times.*

### BELL TELEPHONE CO. IN THE U. S.

The Treasurer's report at the annual meeting of the stockholders of the Bell Telephone Company, held in Boston last week, gives the net earnings of that organization for the year ending December 31st, 1893, as \$3,925,485, an increase of \$503,310 over last year. The expenses of the company for the past twelve months have been \$1,835,501, and the regular and extra dividends paid to stockholders amount to \$3,339,157. The value of the company's assets in telephones, real estate, stock, accounts receivable, etc., is stated at \$45,712,340.