

Life Assurance and Total Abstinence.

The following is an abstract from the pen of Rev. Joseph Cook, Boston: The law of averages as exhibited in the experience of life assurance companies during the last forty years has once for all triumphantly justified the temperance principle of total abstinence. Everyone knows, or ought to know, that for nearly half a century many of the best life assurance societies of England have insured MODERATE DRINKERS and TOTAL ABSTAINERS in separate sections, and that a bonus has been paid to the section made up of total abstainers of 7, 13, 17, and in some cases, of 23 per cent over that paid to the section of moderate drinkers. Here are a few commercial facts of the largest philanthropic significance: I hold in my hand the circulars of a very celebrated life assurance company, which I shall not name for fear you will say I wish to advertise it, although it is not an American society, and I read in this official document that in 1872 and 1878 the bonus to the temperance section was 14 per cent. I will name a single one of the great life assurance companies in England because its reputation is well established, and I cannot be suspected of having any improper motive for giving its career publicity. I refer to the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution. In England its experience is often cited to show the superior value of teetotal lives as compared with those of moderate drinkers. The institution insures members in two sections, one in which all the members are total abstainers, in the other moderate drinkers — all intemperate persons being, of course, excluded. The two sections are exactly alike in every other respect, about 20,000 lives being insured in the general section, and 10,000 in the temperance section. Returns of the expected and actual claims in both sections for fifteen years, from 1860 to 1875, show that in the general section, 4,450 deaths were expected and 3,444 took place, whereas in the temperance section the expected deaths were 5,002 and the actual deaths only 1,453. During the year 1870 the expected claims in the temperance section were 195 for £40,844, the actual claims were 164 for £28,690; in the general section 305 were expected for £64,343, the actual having been 326 for £74,940. The quinquennial bonuses in the temperance section have been seventeen and a half per cent greater than those in the general section. I have been citing to you not temperance documents, but the report of life assurance societies. They are not fanatical organizations, they are not governed by this pet theory or that as to temperance reform. Here is cool, stern business sagacity applied to one of the most complicated matters, and the outcome we have in this great proposition, sustained by the most exact application of the law of averages, is that nearly twenty-five per cent bonus must be paid to total abstainers above what is paid to moderate drinkers.