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MANHATTAN FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

Our readers will remember that this New York Company failed disgracefully, more than a year ago. Its last published statement showed a considerable surplus, and after the bankruptcy there was much speculation as to what had become of the assets therein mentioned as the property of the Company. The opinion was very generally entertained that there had been a good many crooked dealings in connection with the matter. The Superintendent of the Insurance department commenced legal proceedings against the president, Andrew J. Smith, for perjury. This was widely known, and most of our readers will probably wonder now how they lost sight of the matter. In some way, however, it dropped out of public view. We have lately come into possession of some facts in an indirect way which will explain it.

The Manhattan Fire reinsured its current risks in the Phenix, of Brooklyn. There were still a number of outstanding liabilities not covered by the reinsurance, for which the remaining assets were not sufficient. An arrangement was made with the Insurance Department to withdraw the legal proceedings against Mr. Smith, in consideration of the latter's transferring securities of a sufficient amount to guarantee all these claimants against loss. In February, 1883, a deed was passed by which Andrew J. Smith transferred to Richard Ingraham, as trustee for the creditors of the Manhattan company, his interest in seven New York steamers. The legal proceedings were then withdrawn and the matter hushed up. This is the inner history of this somewhat remarkable case. The New York Insurance department evidently did good service to the policyholders of the company, but we may well ask, what became of the poor stockholders?

PERMANENCY OF LIFE ASSURANCE.

A New York contemporary has lately been criticising two of our Canadian companies, dwelling particularly on the fact that within the last six years they have issued policies for as large an amount as the total they now have in force. When thus baldly stated, this fact seems to reflect seriously on the character of the business of these companies, and to imply that they have not as satisfactory a class of assurers as other companies. We must bear in mind, however, that these companies have been doing a rapidly progressive business. They wrote in 1883 about three times as much new assurance as in 1875. The amount written by them in their earlier years forms but a comparatively small proportion of the amount written in later years. The lapses, moreover, during the first two years of the existence of policies, are equal, probably, to those of the next ten years. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the lapses in companies doing so much new business should equal the small amount of existing assurances they had accumulated from their early years when they did but little business. The correct way of putting the matter is, not that the old business has been wiped out, but rather that a certain part of the *new* business has not been a permanent addition to the company's risks. A large proportion of these cancelled policies were never even taken up. The fact that the amount cancelled equals the amount in force five or six years before, is of very little importance.

But perhaps the most effectual way of answering the objections of our New York friend will be to show how some of his own companies compare in this regard. Let us take, first of all, the Equitable. Its position is as follows :

Equitable Life N. Y.

Year	Policies written.
1878	\$21,440,213
1879	26,502,541
1880	35,170,805
1881	46,189,096
1882	62,262,279
1883	81,129,756

Total\$272,694,690
Total in force 31st Dec., 1883, \$275,160,588.

It must be remembered, too, that the Equitable is of nearly twice the age of the companies criticised, and had in force at the end of 1877 an amount equal to over sixty per cent. of what it now has, while the others had not over thirty-five per cent. When we see, therefore, that an old