

insufficient medical selection,\* eventually prove in excess of the expectation. But in contemplating these rates it must be recollected that a very large proportion of the lodges under consideration are of quite recent establishment (*vide supra*), and consist, therefore, almost exclusively of lives at once young and select.

About 1,900 members (or 11·9 per cent—rather less than 1 in 8) were in receipt of sick pay during the year. They experienced in the aggregate 12,704 weeks of sickness, or on an average about 0·8 week per member, and about 6·7 weeks per member sick. These also are low rates, but the same qualifying remark applies to them as that which has been made in connection with the rate of mortality. In the 8 Odd Fellows lodges established prior to 1850, with a mean membership of 1,846, 272 members (or 14·7 per cent.) were in receipt of sick pay, and the aggregate amount of sickness experienced was 2,543 weeks 3 days, or 1·4 week per member and 9·35 weeks per member sick.

The 232 lodges which furnished the requisite returns had benefit funds amounting in the aggregate to £150,450 17s. 2½d., or on an average £648 9s. 11d. per lodge, and £9 2s. 5½d. per member. There can hardly be a doubt that this represents insolvency in the majority of cases. Out of 29† official valuations already made, only 2 have yielded a surplus.

The 9 lodges, &c., established before 1850, with an aggregate membership of 2,016 on 31st December, 1879 (or 224 per lodge), had Benefit Funds amounting to £32,682 17s. 6½d., or £16 4s. 2¾d. per member. As the aggregate amount on 1st January, 1879, was £31,122 3s. 3½d., or £16 3s. 4d. per member, it is evident that these lodges, *taking them one with another*, have at last, after from 30 to 40 years of existence, very nearly reached that critical moment in their history when the amount of the fund culminates, and actuarial insolvency begins to show itself by an excess of annual expenditure over annual receipts. A glance at the distribution of ages, as exhibited in Table XVI., will show the experienced actuary that this moment ought not yet to have arrived, even if the influx of new members had entirely ceased, and nothing remained but to “work out the existing business.”

The final column of Table VIII. exhibits the amount of interest credited to the Sick and Funeral Fund during the year. It is the custom of many lodges to charge to the Sick and Funeral Fund the expenses attendant on managing the investments of that fund, such as repairs to buildings, solicitors’ fees, &c., &c. Although the Registrar decidedly disapproves of this practice, deeming such expenses to be properly chargeable to the Management Fund, he apprehends that if these expenses are covered by the gross interest received during the year, no legal objection can be taken to the practice, and he has therefore resolved, after mature consideration, not to prosecute in such cases. As, however, it would be misleading in these cases to exhibit the gross interest received, he has deducted the said expenses, and shown only the net interest credited to the fund. It will be noticed with regret that in too many cases no interest has been obtained, and that in many others the interest is a very small percentage of the total fund. The average interest realized by all the lodges was about £4 14s. 6d. per cent., but this average would not have been attained had it not been for the fact that a considerable proportion of the better-managed lodges have the bulk of their funds invested on freehold securities at 8 and 10 per cent., and consequently realize as much as 7, 8, or 9 per cent. on their total funds, invested and un-invested. In the statistical tables for 1880, which are in course of compilation, the rate of interest credited to the Benefit Fund is being carefully calculated for each individual lodge. The 48 lodges, courts, &c., for which this computation has already been made, may be classified as follows, according to the percentage of interest credited to the Sick and Funeral Fund:—

| 1 between 10 and 11 per cent. |   |   |   | 3 between 3 and 4 per cent |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| 4                             | 8 | 9 | ” | 4                          | 2 | 3 | ” |
| 1                             | 7 | 8 | ” | 4                          | 1 | 2 | ” |
| 9                             | 6 | 7 | ” | 1 less than 1 per cent.    |   |   |   |
| 4                             | 5 | 6 | ” | 13 no interest at all.     |   |   |   |
| 4                             | 4 | 5 | ” |                            |   |   |   |

It is but fair to state that 5 out of the 13 last-mentioned were only established during 1880.

Coming now to the more detailed information derived from the returns of registered friendly societies and branches, the Registrar calls attention first of all to Table IX. From this it will be seen that returns for 1879 were received from the following registered societies and branches:—

|   |                               |                                  |                                 |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows                 | ..                            | ..                               | 57 out of 61 registered lodges. |
| American Order of Odd Fellows                   | 9                             | 15                               | ”                               |
| Ancient Order of Foresters                      | 39                            | 44                               | ” courts.                       |
| Ancient Order of Shepherds                      | the only registered sanctuary |                                  |                                 |
| United Ancient Order of Druids                  | ”                             | lodge at that time registered.   |                                 |
| Loyal United Friends                            | ”                             | registered lodge.                |                                 |
| Independent Order of Rechabites                 | ”                             | 2 tents at that time registered. |                                 |
| Sons and Daughters of Temperance                | ”                             | 3 divisions                      | ”                               |
| Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society | ”                             | 7 branches                       | ”                               |
| New Plymouth Friendly Society                   |                               |                                  |                                 |
| Kaeo and Wangaroa Friendly Society              |                               |                                  |                                 |

Counting each lodge, &c., of an affiliated order as a unit equally with each isolated society, it will thus be seen that Table IX. contains information respecting 122 distinct bodies or benefit clubs. It must be remembered in reading what follows that Tables X.—XII. refer to exactly the same lodges, courts, &c., as Table IX.

From Table IX. it will be seen that in these 122 lodges, &c., 1,572 new members were admitted

\* In the absence of careful medical selection, it is obvious that there must be great risk of an influx of members with delicate wives, as (quite apart from the funeral benefit) the prospect of the gratuitous medical attendance must be a strong inducement for such persons to become members of lodges.

† The Registrar has just received a notice of the valuation of the 5 lodges of the Nelson District, I.O.O.F., M.U. In each case a very large deficiency was brought out. Thus, up to the present moment, 32 valuations out of 34 have yielded deficiencies.