THE DARK WYRESING THE REPLY WILLIAM THOUGHDAY, OFFICER 24, 1 ST.

TOADS.

John Bull gratifies his hereditary dislike for the French by calling a Frenchman "Johnny Crapaud"—that is, "Johnny Toad." Ask him why, and he will tell you that all Frenchmen are frog-eaters, and that if a frog is not exactly a toad it is very like one, and that toads and frogs are all "much of a muchness." If he knew that Agassiz ranks the toad higher than the frog because of its more terrestrial habits, perhaps he would be disposed to call himself "John Bull," and his Gallie neighbor "Johnny Bull-frog." And yet John Bull in general— Tourus vulgaris-believes that the toad is venomous, and, if eaten, would poison Johnny Crapand to death; in which belief many Frenchman ignorantly believes with the vulgar Englishman, although he may have often unconsciously eaten toads, supposing them to be frogs, just as he doubtless has eaten cats under the mistaken persuasion that they were

Yet French restaurateurs and English mount?banks long ago discovered that the common toad is harmless food. The one cooks him and calls him "frog;" the other used to eat him raw, amidst a gaping crowd, who, like the barbarians of Malta, when the viper fastened on Paul's hand, "looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly," but, instead of such a catastrophe, only saw the charlatan swallow a dose of what he called "medicine," and seem to be livelier and healthier than ever; none the less lively because the crowd of admiring bumpkins at once made haste to buy his nostrum, and, as President Lincoln used to Bay, "provide against the emergency" of their swallowing a toad. Usually on such occasions one man ate the toad, at the mountebank's request, and, to please him, was then attacked with seeming illness, and, being persuaded to try the "cure-all," recovered immediately. Was it from this practice that sycophants and

flatterers came to be called "toad-eaters?" English poetry is full of slanders upon toads. Even Shakespeare, like all others in his day, and most others since, looked upon toads as poisonous, as appears from that charming pas-sage in As You Like It:-

"Sweet are the uses of adversity, Which, like the toad, ugiy and venomous, Wears yet a precious jewel in his head," and is further manifest in the Witches' incantation, in Macbeth:-

"Toad, that under coldest stone, Days and nights has thirty-one Sweitered venom sleeping got, Boil thou first i' the charmed pot!"

If Shakespeare believed also in the precious jewel, the "toad-stone," or bufonite, supposed to be formed and found in the toad, he partook of an error which lived both long before and long after him. The toad-stone is now known to be the tooth of a fossil fish; but for ages it was believed to be formed in the toad's head, as is the pearl in the oyster, and to possess wonderful powers, both medical and magical.

Children, until they are taught better, regard toad-stools as structures built by toads, as did "our sage and serious poet" Spenser, and wonder why, unlike him, they never find toads sitting on or under those pretty umbrella-shaped fungi, though they have never read his declaration in the "Faerie Queen"

"The grisly toad-stool, grown there, might I see, And loathed paddocks lording on the same!" Milton evidently shared in Shakespeare's and Spenser's dislike of toads; otherwise he would not have described Satan as taking the form of that reptile:-

"Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve, Assaying by his devilish art to reach The organs of her fancy.... Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint

The animal spirits," etc. The great poet of the "Paradise Lost" permits the devil to assume the form of three different animals, all objects of popular hate and disgust, and all classified from time immemrial among monsters, or beasts of malignant aspect and evil omen. He doubtless remembered that Virgil in his Georgies (i. 184)-even Virgil, whose knowledge of agriculture should have taught him not merely the harmlessness, but also the insect-killing value and helpfulness of the toad-calumniates that much abused reptile as a monster:-

"Inventusque cavis buío, et que plurima terre Monstra ferunt." Or, as Dryden says:-

"In hollow caverns vermin make abode The hissing serpent and the swelling toad,"

Thus the very modesty and retiring disposition of this poor toad become his reproach How invariably poets add to the horrors of grottoes and caverns by peopling them with snakes and toads! Take, for example, this passage from Henry Kirk White's "Gondo-

"And as she entered the cavern wide The moonbeam gleamed pale; And she saw a snake on the craggy rock— And she saw a snake on the oraggy rock-It clung by its slimy tail!

Her foot it slipped, and she stood aghast,
She frod on a bloated toad!

Yet still upheld by the accret charm,
She kept upon the road."

The toad's eyes were wonderfully bright and beautiful; yet not of them has it ever been said, in the undefined language of Keats-"A thing of beauty is a joy forever,"

Nay, the beauty of their eyes has rather aggravated the general dislike for toads, as though such ugly customers should not possess such sparkling gems without being suspected of grand larceny. The toad might find more favor, perhaps, were his skin smooth instead of warty, his colors gay instead of grey or grave, and his motions lively and graceful instead of slow and awkward; and yet it is doubtful. Frogs possess all these superior traits, but they are not admired by most persons; it is only some enthusiastic naturalist of the French school who sympathizes with the Count Lacepede instead of laughing at him as he exclaims:-"Who can regard without pleasure a creature so delicate in form, so nimble in movement, so graceful in attitude? Let us not deprive ourselves of an additional source of pleasure, nor regret to see the banks of our rivulets brightened by their colors, and animated by their sprightly gambols !"

The abundant moisture and coolness of the toad, so essential to his health and comfort, help to make him disagreeable to us. As the moist coolness of a dog's nose startles any one who feels it unexpectedly or in the dark, so does the invariable dewy cold and clammy sweat of the toad when touched offend many a civilized simpleton. I say civilized, remembering that the black barbarians of Senegal, availing themselves of this perpetual coolness produced by the abundant moisture and rapid evaporation on the skin of toads, are in the habit; as Adamson informs us, of applying toads to their foreheads as they travel in torrid heats over burning sands, on the same principle that Roman ladies of the imperial age carried cooling-pots in their hands and bosoms in the form of living serpents, or that the languid beauties of Turkish seraglios pass between their fingers the refrigerating and fragrant

beads of their amber tusbees. In every toad is a sack of pure water not at all connected with the kidneys, but serving as a reservoir, and furnishing, doubtless, a part of the fluid which transpires from the skin. This fluid is very harmless in the common English and American toads. So, also, is the

liquid, which is largely secreted by the bean-shaped bunch on each side of the toad's head, as well, as that which is so freely ejected when you suddenly grasp a toad in your hand. Most persons are afraid of these fluids, and imagine them poisonous. They are mistaken. Not even 'Macbeth's' weird sisters could now find venom in the common toad. It is true, however, that these juices have a slightly irritating effect when applied to the eyes or to a flesh wound, and that a cat or dog does not like to take a second taste. But they are substantially

There are foreign toads whose fluids are less harmless. Thus, Rev. Mr. Stanley of Engand found that ink was changed by them as by acids. Monsieur Bose, a French naturalist, tells us that if, in hot weather, any one puts his hand to his nose (his own nose, not that of Monsieur Bose) after handling a toad, he will feel nausea, and other disturbances of the stomach; and Schelhammer, another continental writer, relates an anecdote of a child who had severe pustulous eruption, in consequence of a toad having been held for some minutes before the child's month. The natter-jack, or bufo calamita, which is found in England and on the continent of Europe, and also the brown toad of Southern Europe, smell disgustingly, the one like gunpowder, the other like garlie, when disturbed, and people who "sniff" at them may be nauseated; but no such odor or effect belongs to the common toad of either England or the United States. Not only did "Macbeth's" witches use toads

to make their "hell-broth" "thick and slab." but many physicians of former ages, and some of more recent date, have employed both toads and frogs in pharmacy and medicine. The flesh of toads, dried and powdered, used to be considered diuretic and diaphoretic. I have read the statement of a living English doctor that "frog-spawn may be usefully employed in external inflammation as soothing and emollient." Formerly toads' flesh macerated in oil was regarded as detersive and anodyne. Live toads used to be applied topically for headache, colic, and cancer. Ettmuller, Jöel, Vallesnieri, and many others, have left us curious details on this subject. Timotheus directed the application of frogs, cut in two alive, to the region of the kidneys of dropsical patients. Dioscorides prescribed the flesh of frogs cooked in salt and oil as an antidote for the poison of serpents. Arnold affirmed that the heart of a frog, taken daily, in the form of a pill, was a cure for fistula, and the London Encyclopadia ("Credat Judaus apella, non ego") affirms that some Americans take the land frog of Catesby, reduce it to powder, mix it with orris root, and take it as a cure for flatulency!

Both toads and frogs have the same curious habit of swelling up and puffing themselves out when alarmed by seemingly hostile ap-proach. Æsop had noticed this habit in the log, and makes use of it in his fable of the Frog and the Ox. I have often mischievously amused myself by wriggling a sack, snakefashion, towards a toad, in order to see him bloat and bulge out, and stand on tiptoe, apparently trying to make himself appear to be too large to be swallowed. Generally the toad's courage fails before the stick gets very near, and he, like another wellknown bloated character, believing that the better part of valor is discretion, turns tail, and hops away with a headlong speed and length of hop utterly ridiculous.

It is curious to observe that, while the common toad of the United States hops, the com-mon toad of Bugland does not hop, but crawls, and that the natter-jack or bufo calamita, which is the only other kind of toad found in England, neither hops nor crawls, but runs much like a mouse. All of them, however, have the same habit of blowing themselves up on the appearance of danger. May not Latin name for toad, which rufo, coupled with this swelling swagger common to toads and jesters, or clowns, on exhibition, have given the name of buffoon that amusing class of personages?

Children who are frightened by the rough skin and uncouth movements of toads, and who see them eagerly devouring worms and insects, are very apt to believe that toads have teeth. But neither English nor American bufo vulgaris has any such addition to jaw, tongue, or I have explored their mouths with the zeal of a dentist, but never found fang or tooth, incisor or canine, bicuspid or molar! It is worth while to see a toad eat an angleworm-using his forepaws as a greedy child his fingers, to cram his mouth and get the whole worm tucked in before he begins to swallow. It is still more amusing to see a toad wriggle off and devour his own skin.

This cutaneous thanksgiving feast occurs once a year. The skin comes off in lateral halves, and is crammed eagerly, one-half after the other, into the owner's mouth, and swal-

lowed with great apparent zest.

Every toad, like every frog, is, or should be, born in water. If the female can possibly get to the water she will always deposit her eggs, which resemble long threads of jelly, studded with minute beads, in either pond or stream. Sometimes, it is true, they are laid in cellars, or other places away from water. But in such cases the toads that may be hatched from them do not pass through the regular tadpole state.

Early in the spring the toad, who at every other period avoids the water, goes there to deposit her eggs. Then it is that we hear those piping, shrilling, far-reaching, and not unmusical sounds, from every lake, pond, river, stream, ditch, and pool, which tell us that spring has come again, and which have induced some naturalists to call our American toad the Bufo musicus. About twenty days after the eggs are laid they become tadpoles, purwiggies, porwiggles, poliwigs, or, as Yan-kee boys say, pollywors. The tadpole period, unlike the tadpole's tail, is very short. While it lasts the juvenile toad swims and breathes like a fish, having at first a tail only, with which to row, scull, or steer. Speedily his legs develop themselves; and, presently, the tail, as if conscious of its misplaced attachment, first falls away, and next falls off .waterfall is there, my countrymen !"')-The gills close up, the lungs are put in motion, and the pollywog emerges from the water and graduates a diminutive toad into field and garden. Nor is this the only change. As a tadpole his intestines were very long and adapted for the digestion of vegetable food only. As a toad, they have become very much shorter, are inflated into stomach and

colon, and become fitted for animal food. Lord Bacon, learned as he was, made some queer blunders in regard to tadpoles, frogs, and toads. In one passage he gravely informs us that during the great plague of 1666, there were seen in divers ditches about London many toads that had tails three inches long, where toads," he says, "have usually no tails!"

About the time of this transition from water to land, I have seen the margin of a pond or pool swarming and black with thousands on thousands of young toads not larger than a kernel of corn. Once, in particular, do I re-member having met auch a countless crowd advaccing in the road,

In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus Pour forth their populous youth !

no impression on a flock of depraved ducks and ducklings that followed this phalank of frogs, and gobbled these batrachian infants up (or down), with appetites that seemed inappeasable.

Such of these juvenile reptiles as escape the early perils of migration and transmigration grow rapidly in size, and some of them attain to a good old age. Toads, known to be fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years old, are not uncommon. Pennant gives a very interesting account of one that was domesticated in an English family for upwards of six-and-thirty years. His favorite abode and winter retreat was under the house door-steps. Of course he burrowed there, and remained out of sight except in warm weather. He knew his master, and would come forth at his approach. At candle-light he came out regularly to receive his supper. to gratify curious visitors, he was Often. brought into the house and placed on the table for exhibition, manifesting the utmost coolness and self-possession in polite society, and seizing with wonderful celerity every insect offered for his entertainment. He grew to a prodigious size, and showed no sign of infirmity up to the day when fate fell on him in the fell shape of a raven whose ravenous beak, in spite of a gallant and persistent defense, inflicted on his aged frame wounds whereof he never recovered, but of which, or the effects of which, after some months' lingering, he died. Sic transit gloria bufonis !

But a forty-year-old toad in our climate has really had an active, self-conscious life of less than half that period. For, to say nothing of his sleeping by day in summer, he retires into his hole on the approach of cold weather, and there remains torpid until the return of spring, "bids the earth roll, nor heeds its idle whirl." The ease and speed with which he digs his hole, stern foremost, not elbowing, nor shouldering, but hipping away the earth behind him, are quite remarkable, and it is really funny to watch him as he goes under, his eyes, with their three sets of eyelids, winking rapidly as they disappear, not again for more than six long months "to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon."

The toad loves the twilight. "Keeping shady" in the daytime, he comes nimbly forth after sunset, and seeks his evening meal among the insects which swarm amidst the deepening shadows. As "it is the early bird that catches the morning worm," so it is the twilight toad that catches the evening bug. How often, at eventide, have I sat on plazza or door-steps and watched the activity of these bright-eyed bug-devourers, a dozen of them in sight at once, hopping about in the gathering gloom like rabbits in their warren, evidently aware that they are licensed pets, each one a "chartered libertine," safe from all enemies, and not seriously disturbed when some zealous entomologist seizes one of their number and gently compels him to disgorge his evening meal in order to discover in his maw some rare and delicate insect, whose nocturnal habits enable him to elude all eyes less keen than those of the toad.

I was early taught to spare the lives of toads and swallows. "If you kill them," said one of the village oracles, in the very beginning of my memory, "the cows will give bloody milk." I believed it most religiously, and doubted not that I should thus be deprived of my morning and evening bread-and-milk should I wantonly destroy either of those sacred animals.

It has long been known that toads will not only remain for more than half a year in a torpid state, as is their winter custom, but that they will live for years shut up in darkness, and seemingly beyond the reach of either air or food. There are cases, well or ill authenticated, of the discovery of living toads inclosed in solid trees, in coal, in various kinds of stone, in beds of sand or gravel, at immense depths below the earth's surface. Over a sandstone mantel piece in Chillingham Castle, England, there used to hang, framed in with a coat of arms, a Latin inscription, in letters of gold, calling attention to a cavity in the mantel, and reciting that a living toad was taken from that hole in the rock when the mantel was split from the quarry. Nearly a hundred years ago, in tearing down the wall of a Parisian house belonging to the Due d'Orleans, which had been standing nearly fifty years, a live toad was said to have been found in the midst of the wall, his hinder-legs imbedded in the mortar. This discovery led to many cruel experiments in both France and Englandexperiments too cruel to be justified by any scientific pretext. Monsieur Herrisant, in presence of a committee of the French Academy of Sciences, inclosed three teads in plaster, boxed and sealed them up, and laid them aside for a year and a half. The boxes were opened at the end of that period, and two of the toads were found alive. were again boxed up for a few months, and then again their sarcophagi were opened, but all were dead. In 1817, at Paris, Dr. Edwards enclosed a number of toads in plaster, and as far as he could, in various ways, deprived them of air. All of them lived many days, but those died soonest which he forced to remain under water.

In 1825 and 1830 two English clergymen, who might have been better employed in parochial duty, repeated these experiments on a larger scale. The full record of the tortures they inflicted may be found in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, April-October, 1832 pp. 26, 228. Dr. Buckland was the first of these experimenters. That reverend gentleman caught thirty-two toads, shut them up and starved them for two months in a cucumberframe in his garden; so that, to use his own words, they "were in an unhealthy and somewhat meagre state" when, on the 26th of November, 1825, he proceeded to imprison them more closely. Four of them he plugged tight into as many holes, each cut about five inches deep and three inches wide, on the north side of the trunk of an apple tree. At the end of a year every one of these four toads was dead, and all of their bodies were decayed. Twelve more he shut up at the same time in twelve circular celts, each about a feet deep and five inches in diameter, cut in a block of limestone so coarse that it was easily permeable by water. Twelve more he confined in twelve other cells of the same width, but only half as deep, cut in a very compact silicious sandstone The tops of the twenty four cells were glazed air-tight, and covered with slate. Both stones were then buried three feet deep in the garden, and there they remained for nearly thirteen months. On the 10th of December, 1826, they were dug up and examined. Every toad in the sandstone had evidently been dead for months. Most of those in the limestone were alive, but all except two were greatly ena-ciated. These two had gained in weight. Over one of them, and also over one that had died, the glass was broken.

The survivors were again shut up and buried as before, but all of them died before the end of the second year. Four others were placed each in a small basin of plaster of Paris, four inches deep and five inches wide, glazed in and buried like the twenty-four. Being dug up at the same time, only two were alive, but "much emaciated." What the Doctor did

with them we are not told. The other clerical experimenter was the Rev.

and fairly obliging me to check my horse, or | Edward Stanley. In June, 1830, he confined crush them by hundreds. My humanity made | three toads, each in a flower pot, and buried three toads, each in a flower pot, and buried them four feet deep. In the following March they were all dead. Then he corked up two others in glass bottles, one hermetically closed. the other with a small hole in the stopper. The first died in forty-eight hours; the other seemed to be dying in about a fortnight. He was then unbottled, put under a flower-pot on moist garden earth, grew lively, and was set at liberty. In words that sound like mockery this clergyman says:—"I had the pleasure of seeing it crawl off under every symptom of entire convalescence." Tortures inflicted for so trifling a purpose, and ending in results so worthless, almost make one wish that, for a while at least, the toads and their termenters could have been made to change places. Which of them would have then believed that "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Heavenly Father's notice ?"

I will finish this article by quoting some passages from the letter of a young friend who is endeavoring to domesticate a toad, and who in this letter "reports progress, and asks leave to sit again:"-

"Saturday.—I ran into the garden to look for a tead. It is hard to find them in the daytime, but I soon saw one, and then put on my gloves and gave chase. I thought that I really meant to catch him. He hopped and I ran. I stooped and put out my hand, and he sprang out of my reach. My movements are not very prompt, and his were; and presently, to my great satisfaction (!), he hopped through the pickets and escaped. I guess I was as glad as he.

as he.
"P. M.—After dinner I thought I would try
again, and after some search found a big toad
under a current bush. Summoning up all my courage, I grasped him with my gloved band, and, agh! what a sensation it gave me to touch him! I never felt a toad before. With a good deal of trepidation I managed to put him into an old bird cage which I had brought for the purpose; but to my amazement he hopped inan old bird cage which I liad brought for the purpose; but to my amazement he hopped instantly through one of the seed-hoies, which looked smaller than his body, and was at liberty. But I caught him again—shuddering as I did before—put him into the cage, covered up the seed and water holes, rushed to the house, and exhibited my prisoner. We all admired the beauty of his eyes; but his warty and watery skin was disgusting, and his activity in trying to get out was beyond all belief. Presently I placed the cage on the grass under the diningroom window, and took a seat in-doors to watch him. In less than five minutes he turned himself edgewise, orced himself through between the wires, and escaped! Not expecting such an escapade, I had taken off my gloves, and now if I caught him it must be with my haked hands—and I did it! As I seized his damp, cold, knobby, bloated body, an indescribable shudder ran through me, extending to my very toes. He wet my hand, but I did not let go until I had put him back into the cage; and then wrapping a shawl round it, I sat down on the piazza, quite faint and weak with the struggle. He remained still for a while, but presently began leaping upward over and among the perches in the cage, sometimes actually dilinging to the ton wires, showing the white vellow under sida

leaping upward over and among the perches in the cage, sometimes actually dinging to the top wires, showing the whity-yellow under side of his body, and making me feel almost as badly as when I had him in my hand. He seemed so nearly frantic that I concluded to let him go. So, taking him back to his currantbush, I opened his prison door and came away, leaving him to come out at his pleasure.

"So much for my first day of toad-taming!

"Mondoy. P. M.—I resolved to try again. Bringing down from the garret an old patent flour-siter, I converted it into a cage, and then ran into the garden, caught my victim, imprisoned him, brought him to the house, and carried him up to my own chamber, and placed him in one of the windows opening on the carried him up to my own chamber, and placed him in one of the windows opening on the piazza 1001, where I left him to meditate till after tea. After tea I brought him down, set the eage on the table, and offered him a succession of flies. He seemed quite calm, behaved very well, but would not notice the flies. Then I took him up stairs again, and placed his eage as before. When I went up to hed I had forgotten all about him, but just as I began to undress I heard a sort of scratching noise, looked towards the window, and saw the tead sprawling along on the outside of his had sprawling along on the outside of his rage. I uttered one scream, and sprang upon the bed. He gave one leap, and fell upon the cage. I uitered one scream, and sprang upon the bed. He gave one leap, and fell upon the floor. Del closed my door, and would not come in to my relief. Toady hopped about the chamber with alarming agility; and there I sat, 'squat like a toad,' on the bed, half crying, half laughing, and wholly afraid to get down and recapture the 'contraband.' I called to Del to 'come in and catch him,' and she exhorted to 'come in and cat through the keyhole) to 'get down and caten him, and each stoutly refused to do any such thing. At last, mustering all my courage, I charged at him with a towel, covered him, selved him, and called out, 'Del, I've got him!' That heroic female then ventured to open the door almost an inch, and peep in. I suppose I must have relaxed my grasp, for just that instant the toad leaped out from under the towel. Del screamed and jumped up again on the bed. Very soou, however, feeling rather ashamed of my cowardice, I put on my gloves, once more enveloped the toad in the towel, carried him down stairs, opened the back door, and dropped him on the grass. I went to bed disgusted with toads, and rather mortified at my want of courage, besides seeming to establish and maintain friendly relations with the lower orders of animals.

"Wednesday.—Another toad adventure! This afternoon at nucle Sam's once of the liftle boxe. caten him,' and each stoutly refused to do any

Wednesday. - Another toad adventure! This afternoon, at uncle Sam's, one of his little boys came in with a toad in his hand. He treated it just as though it were a pet bird. Uncle took it, patted it, played with it, tickled its stomach with one of his fingers until the toad actually with one of his fingers until the toad actually laughed out loud—at least he swelled up and made a sort of chuckling noise that sounded semething like laughing. Then uncle persuaded me to take it, first in one hand, then in the other, then in both together, without gloves: said I did so, and kept on doing so until all my uncomfortable feelings passed away, and I began to think that a toad, well trained, might become a very tolerable pet. I have made up my mind to keep one in a sort of pen in the garden, where I can feed it regularly, and study its disposition and habits. After a month's trial perhaps I will send you an account of my experiment."

I have written encouragingly to my correspondent, and in due time hope to receive a supplemental report .- Harper's Monthly.

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Franklin Fire Insurance Co. OF PHILADELPHIA.

OFFICE: HON. 485 AND 487 CHESNUT STREET, ASSETS ON JANUARY 1, 1867.

82,553,146:13. Accrued Surpius..... 946,718°98

INCOME FOR 1866. UNSETTLED CLAIMS, LOSSES PAID SINCE 1829 OVER

\$5,500,000, Perpetual and Temporary Policies on Liberal Terms, DIRECTORS.

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No. 111 South FOURTH Street,

INCORPORATED 3d MONTH 22d, 1887, II
CAPITAL, \$150,000, PAID IN,

Insurance on Lives, by Yearly Fremiums; or by 5,

On 20 year Premiums, Non-forleiture,

Annuilles granted on bayorable terms. Annuities granted on favorable terms.
Term Policies, Children's Endowments.
This Company, while giving the insured the security is a paid-up Capital, will divide the entire profits of the Life business among its policy holders.

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ticipation in division of surplus. Net Cash Plan may be also adopted, by which the cheap present cost is attained. Premiums may be paid in cash, annually, semiannually, or quarterly; or half in cash and half in

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POLICIES NON-FORFITTABLE. Thirty days grace given in payment of Premiums. No extra charge for residence or travel in any portion of the world. Dividends declared annually, and paid in cash. Dividend in 1867, 40 per cent.

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