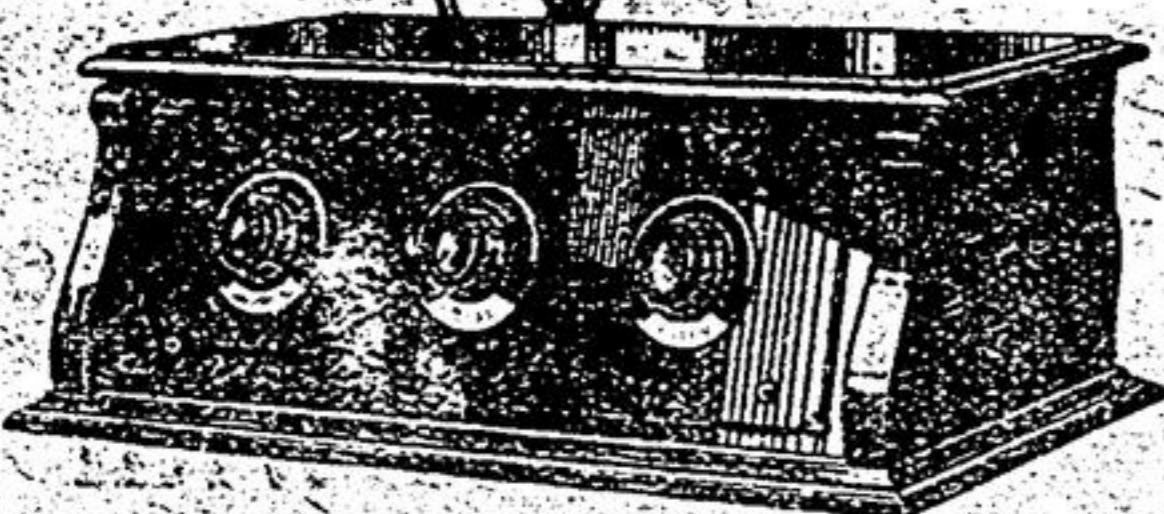


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## Queer Things Happen

BY PAUL TOMLINSON.

PART I.  
"Unexpected endings? Certainly!" said Roberts. "That's what people like. They love to be fooled, when the process doesn't make fools of them, and a story with a trick ending is always popular. Look at O. Henry. Maupassant, too, did the same kind of thing. I read one of his stories the other evening, and I was completely fooled right up to the last sentence. It made me jump, literally, and of the many stories of Maupassant's, that I've read that is one of the few I remember. Certainly people like unexpected endings."

"Do you mean mystery stories?" asked Van Wagenen.  
"Yes, of course, although I wasn't thinking of them particularly. The story with an entirely unforeseen denouement was what I had in mind."  
"Shall I illustrate?" inquired Copley.

There were five of them seated around the table. Once a month they met and dined together—a custom they had followed for nearly ten years. Classmates at college, they had gone out into the world, worked hard, got married, and drifted apart.

Ten years after their graduation Roberts had conceived the idea of these monthly dinners. From the start they had been a tremendous success, and for nine and a half years they had proceeded with only one interruption. There had been six men in the group originally, and the one break in the chain of meetings had been out of respect for Peter Wigton, an untimely victim of pneumonia.

Archibald Roberts was usually the life of the gatherings. A stout, jolly man of 45, he had made a financial success of his life.  
Coxo was a lawyer, moderately successful—a thin little man, with thin hair, thin lips, and a thin, dry sense of humor.  
Van Wagenen was an advertising man, full of ideas, enthusiastic, and bustling. Success had come his way, too, and with it the customary attendant avoidances. He puffed a good deal when he got excited, which was most of the time.

Then there was Elder, a physician, who talked little and listened a great deal.

Copley was a merchant in cotton, a handsome, sociable sort of fellow who every one liked, and who liked every

one. Some one has described him as the easiest man to talk to he over met. The dinner was at his home. He had been absent on a business trip, and had got back to town only that afternoon. In fact, he had cut his trip one day short in order to be there. He had been an attentive listener to the discussion around the table, but had contributed nothing to it as yet. His four friends turned their attention to him as he asked his question.

"How do you mean, illustrate?" asked Roberts.

"By a story," said Copley.

He leaned forward in his chair, rested his elbows on the table, and crossed his arms.  
"I was on the Ironbound Limited," Copley began. "I travel on that train a good deal, you know, and feel quite at home on it. At noon I went into the dining car for lunch and was placed at a table for four. There were two men at the table already, and I'd only been seated for a moment when I thought I recognized them as gentlemen reputed to travel on that train for the purpose of extracting money from unsuspecting fellow passengers at bridge.

He soon got into conversation, and I must say I found them both agreeable. They were well dressed and of good appearance, and they looked me straight in the eye as they talked. Clean-cut citizens they seemed, and I soon began to think I must have been mistaken. One of the men was well above the average height, but in proportion, and really a fine figure of a man. He had the whitest teeth I've ever seen, and he apparently liked to show them off, for he smiled constantly as he talked—and he talked a great deal, telling story after story, most of them gloriously funny. I quite liked the fellow.

"His companion was the silent kind. He spoke infrequently and hid his thoughts behind a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. I didn't talk much, either, being too much entertained by the big fellow's stories to attempt any conversation myself.

"When we were about halfway through luncheon, we were joined by a little sandy-haired chap, with a cast in one of his blue eyes and a queer smile around his mouth—a smile which seemed to vary in intensity at times, but never to disappear entirely. My two friends soon got him into the conversation; although he didn't talk any more than the fellow with the spectacles, or myself. He didn't have a chance.

Copley picked up his cigar, and, twisting it slowly around with his thumb and first two fingers, held it in the flame of a lighted match.

"It really was a delightful lunch party," he said. "Unlike most Americans meeting for the first time, we didn't talk personalities. No one asked me what my business was, and no one showed the slightest curiosity, even about names of home towns."

"Your card-sharper friends thought it better not to mention such things, I suppose," laughed Roberts.  
"Listen to me," said Copley. "Long before we finished eating, I was certain that they were as fair and square as any men I'd ever met. I had taken quite a fancy to them—the big fellow, especially—and really I think I'd have resented any reflections on their honesty. The chap with the cast in his eye liked them, too—I could see that from his manner. He was a queer sort of bird, with thin, nervous hands, never still, which seemed to carress everything they touched.

"The big fellow who was telling all the stories seemed to be affected in the same way. At first he had done most of his talking directly at me, but soon he addressed most of his remarks to the little chap, who would smile his queer smile, nod his head, says yes

or no, and go on with his eating. Once in a while he would look my way, and the expression on his face was always baffling to me. I could never make out whether he was smiling at us or with us. He gave the impression of thinking of something amusing, and trying to decide whether to share it or keep it to himself.

"Well, just as I was ready for my desert, the two men who had been seated at the table when I arrived finished their lunch and called for a check. While they were waiting for it to be brought to them, the big fellow turned to me.

"Play bridge?" he asked.  
"I'd forgotten all about my suspicions by this time, but when he asked the question they all came back to me again with a rush. In fact, they came so fast that they nearly overpowered me, and for a moment I was completely at a loss for an answer.

"The first time in your life that ever happened!" said Coxo in his thin, dry voice.

Every one around the table laughed, with the exception of Copley. He merely gave his small friend a look of scorn.

"I didn't know what to say," he continued. "I was sort of out of breath, and my tongue wouldn't work."

"No," I stammered. "Much obliged to you."  
"We'll be up in the club smoker," said the big fellow. "A little bridge would help to pass the time away. How about you?" he said to the little sandy-haired chap.

"Sounds all right to me," he answered.  
"This, by the way, was about the longest speech I had heard the little man make. He smiled his wistful smile at the two others, who were now on their feet, ready to leave.

"Fine!" said the big fellow heartily. "Sure you won't play too?" the big fellow went on, turning his white teeth my way.

"No," I replied again. "Much obliged."  
"All right!" said the big fellow cheerfully. "We can play three-handed, if we can't pick up a fourth man. Then, turning to the little sandy-haired chap, he added: 'Any time you say, we'll be waiting for you.'

"They went out of the car, and I must say that I felt serious misgivings at the turn matters had taken. I felt certain now that they were card sharps, and I hated to see the little chap with the wistful smile and the thin, nervous hands get plucked by two common crooks. I suddenly resolved to tell him my fears, warn him of his danger, and do my best to dissuade him from playing.

"Why don't you join us?" he asked suddenly, before I had put my resolve into action.

"Believe me, that gave me another shock. He was looking at me with the wistful smile on his lips, and for the first time I really noticed the cast in his eye. It seemed to give him a sort of evil look; but only for a second, for

almost immediately his blue eyes and his smile made his face as attractive and appealing as ever. At the same time, the fleeting expression that I had caught worried me. Perhaps he was an accomplice. Perhaps a trap had been set for my benefit, and mine alone. I looked at him closely. No, I must have been mistaken.

"Thanks," I said, "but I don't play."

"It's an easy way to kill time," he remarked, with a smile.  
"An easy way to lose money, too," I said suddenly, in a burst of confidence.

"He had a piece of apple pie on his fork, and was about to deposit it in his mouth as I spoke. He lowered his hand for an instant, gave me a sharp look, and put the pie in his mouth. As he disposed of it, he smiled his wistful, quizzical smile.

"Well, sir, I could have kicked myself for having spoken as I had. I didn't know for sure that the two men were crooks. I didn't know anything about the little sandy-haired chap. For all I know he might really be their accomplice. If so, he would probably tell them what I had insinuated, and it might make a heap of trouble for me."

"(What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"Nothing," I replied.  
"I began checking up the addition on my bill, hoping that the subject might be changed; but no such luck.

"Think they're crooks?" inquired the little sandy-haired chap innocently.

"I could feel myself turning from cold to hot and back again, but I knew I was in for it now, and there was no use begging the question. I looked straight at the cast in his eye.

"They are said to be card sharps," I told him.  
"He took another piece of pie. 'Shouldn't be surprised,' he said solemnly, as if commenting on a remark about the fineness of the weather.

"He looked at me and smiled. This time I was certain that he was not an accomplice, but only an attractive, appealing sort of wistful little red-haired innocent person."

"Don't play with them," I urged. "They'll get your money."

"He seemed to consider my advice for a moment.  
"Still, it would be an experience," he remarked finally, as if he had debated the whole matter in his mind, and had decided that it would be worth while to play, even if it did cost him money.

"My heart went out to him.  
"Don't do it," I urged. "You'll only get trimmed, and experience wouldn't be any kind of compensation."

"He considered this for a moment, too.  
"I think I'll play," he said.  
"Well, you can't say I didn't warn you!" I exclaimed, with some degree of heat, for it made me angry to have him neglect what I considered sound advice.

"He dipped his fingers in the bowl in front of him, which the waiter had

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is revealed. The flavor is pure, fresh and fragrant. Try it. Black, Mixed or Green Blends.

just filled with water.  
"No," he said. "I can't, and I want you to know I appreciate it, too."  
"I sat beside him until he was ready to leave the table, and I did my level best to make him say he wouldn't play. It was no use, and my breath was merely wasted. He just smiled at me.  
"Come up and watch the game," he said. "That won't cost anything, anyway."  
"Perhaps I will in a little while," I replied, and left him to go back to my chair and the story I was reading. (To be concluded.)

### A Poem Worth Knowing.

A Cradle Song.  
The "Poems of Innocence," by William Blake, are, of course, classics. There is nothing quite like them in the language. They are simple and profound.

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,  
Dreaming in the joys of night,  
Sleep, sleep! in thy sleep  
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face  
Soft desires I can trace,  
Secret joys and secret smiles,  
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel  
Smiles as of the morning steal  
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast  
When thy little heart doth rest.

O the cunning wiles that creep  
In thy little heart asleep!  
When thy little heart doth wake,  
Then the dreadful night shall break.

It has been estimated that the earth can maintain a population of 6,000,000,000—a total which will be reached about 2100, at the present rate of increase.

Minard's Liniment relieves headache.



Of Course.  
1st Snowman—"Goin' to the ball!"  
2nd Snowman—"What ball?"  
1st Snowman—"The snowball, of course."

Minard's Liniment for sore throat.

Then He Tried Again:

A man, dining in a fashionable restaurant and not wishing to exhibit his ignorance of French, beckoned to a waiter and, pointing to an item on the menu, said:—

"Walter, I think I will try some of that."

"Very sorry, sir," replied the waiter, "but the orchestra happens to be playing that just at present."

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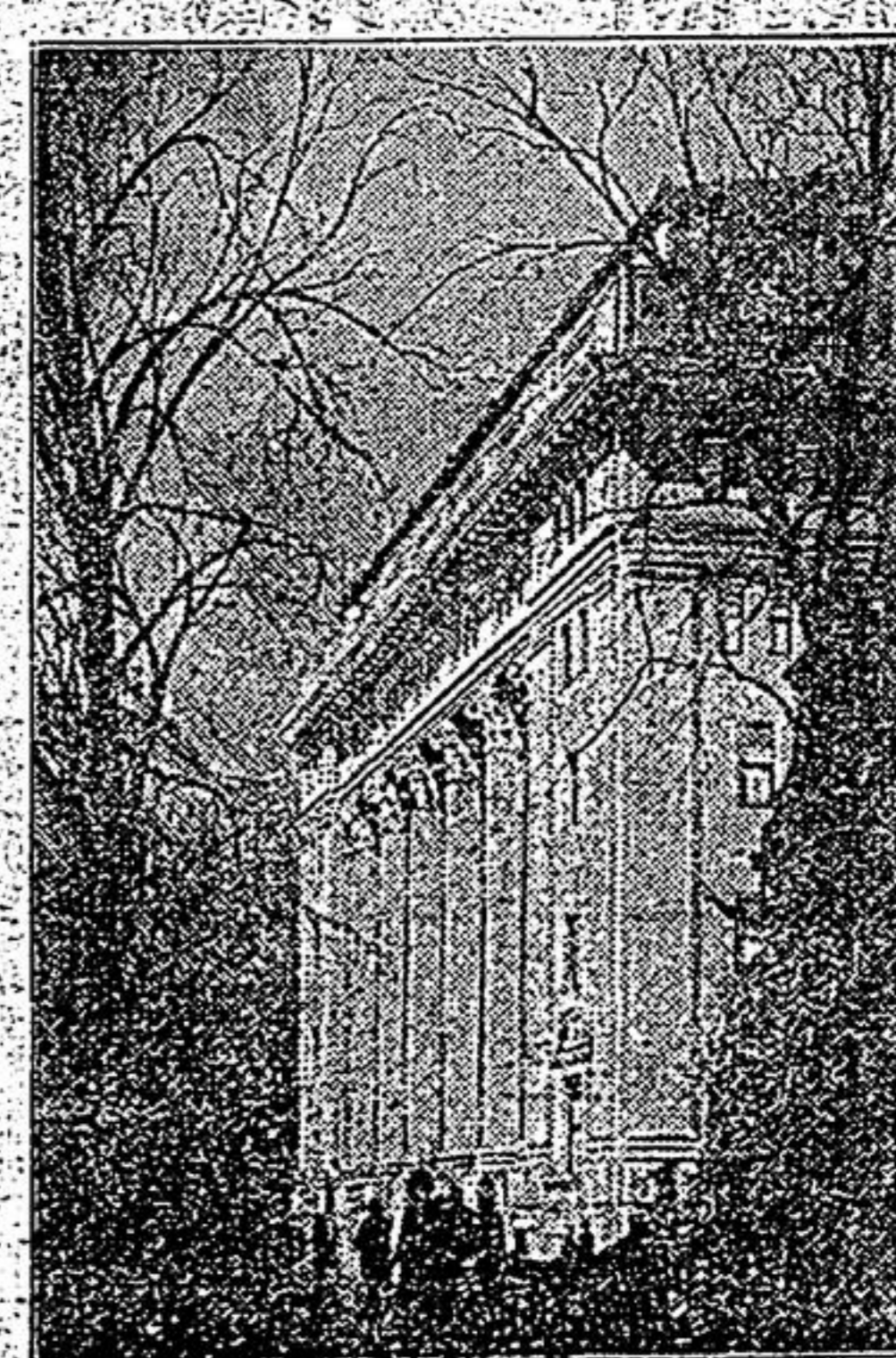
## SUN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF CANADA

# A BILLION DOLLARS OF LIFE ASSURANCE IN FORCE

1925

ASSURANCES IN FORCE (net) -	\$1,021,097,000
An Increase of \$149,460,000	
New Assurances Paid For -	\$193,477,000
An Increase of \$56,011,000	
Total Income -	69,147,000
An Increase of \$6,901,000	
Payments to Policyholders and Beneficiaries -	35,441,000
Total Payments Since Organization -	219,239,000
Reserve for Unforeseen Contingencies -	10,000,000
Surplus over all Liabilities and Contingency Reserve -	28,640,000
An Increase of \$6,532,000	
ASSETS at December 31, 1925 -	303,056,000
An Increase of \$28,925,000	
Policies in Force, Excluding Group Policies -	411,492
Employees of Firms Protected by Group Policies -	42,755

Dividends to Policyholders increased for sixth successive year



### EXTRACTS FROM DIRECTORS' REPORT

Your Directors present the fifty-fifth annual report for your approval. The Company's statements have for years reflected its constantly increasing expansion and prosperity, but this year marks a epoch in the life of the organization. It has now passed the Billion Dollars mark in the assets in force, the amount after deducting reserves being \$1,021,097,000.

Applications for new insurances have been the largest in our history, amounting to \$220,534,536.67. The new policies paid for amounted to \$193,477,000 for the amount of \$193,477,000.25, after deducting amounts re-secured. The new business for the year exceeds the total amount of business the Company had in force only thirteen years ago.

The gratifying evidence of growth and expansion reflected in the accompanying statement is paralleled in regard to strength and profitability. Notwithstanding the general decline in business rates, the Company has been able not merely to continue, but to slightly increase its record in this connection, the rate earned during the year on the mean invested assets having been 6.41 per cent.

Several factors have contributed to produce this result, not the least important being an increase in the dividends paid by some of the corporations in which the Company has substantial stock holdings.

Even more important than interest yield has been the advance in the market value of our securities. For many years we have specialized in long term bonds and preferred and common stocks of outstanding corporations, both in Canada and in the United States. We are now raising the results of this policy. On actual sales of municipal debentures and other securities which had risen to high premiums, we have realized a net profit of \$2,215,772.41, while the increase in the value of securities still held has been much greater.

The profits earned by the Company during the year, based on an increase in the valuation of our securities as made by the government authorities, has been \$21,666,284.00. We have not thought it wise, however, to take credit for this entire amount, and we have made a deduction of \$3,000,000 from the official valuation placed on our assets. We have, moreover, added \$2,200,000 to our Contingency Account, bringing them up to a total of \$10,000,000.

Following the practice of recent years, we have written off \$750,000 from the book value of our Head Office and Branch Buildings, and other real estate.

We have also by writing aside an additional \$250,000, further strengthened the special reserve to provide for possible greater longevity among insureds, bringing the total amount under this heading up to \$1,000,000 in excess of government requirements.

During the year we have paid or allotted \$7,622,784.35 as profits to our policyholders. After deducting this sum, and the amounts to shareholders' accounts, and making the foregoing heavy allocations, we have yet been able to add \$6,532,642.75 to our unreserved profits bringing the total surplus over all liabilities, Contingency Account, and Capital up to \$28,640,000.00.

For the sixth consecutive year we are able to announce an increase in the scale of profits to be distributed to our policyholders in the coming year.

To provide for the expansion of our business, it has been necessary to make an extension of the Head Office building, which has now been completed, and will be formally opened on the day of our Annual Meeting. The building is devoted exclusively to the use of the Company, but it is already evident that we must at once provide for further extension.

Carry it always with you!  
**WRIGLEYS**  
Keeps teeth clean, breath sweet, appetite keen and digestion good.  
Great after smoking.  
After Every Meal