

Raising Fire Rates. On Friday last, the Philadelphia Fire Underwriters Association notified its members of advances in rates. For some time past, managing underwriters have had to complain of the inadequacy of the rates received on Philadelphia risks, and the agents and companies in the Philadelphia district have at last recognized the necessity for a general advance.

Increasing Fire Losses. The losses of fire companies doing business in the United States in 1899 were serious enough to make the underwriting operations of the year most unsatisfactory, but the opening record for 1900 is so dismal that an advance in rates is regarded in insurance circles as absolutely necessary. The fire loss of the United States and Canada for January aggregates \$11,755,300 as against \$10,718,000 for last year. Serious as this increase is, the figures for the first four days of the present month, as given by the New York "Commercial Bulletin," are sufficient to make underwriters gasp for breath. A million dollars a day is reported to be the average fire loss for the four days in question.

Men and Money. The question whether the rich support the poor, or the poor the rich, has been frequently agitated, and it promises to form one of the stock arguments of United States politicians in the approaching presidential struggle. A perfect equality of condition is in its very nature chimerical and impracticable, and, if practicable, would probably be fatal to the energy and industry of mankind. However, by contrasting the relative positions of the poor and the rich, the professional agitator finds it easy to foster discontent among the masses. A New York financial paper having published the earnings of some of the principal trust companies of that city for the past year, a Chicago journal remarks:—

"Meanwhile the farmer who makes 4 per cent. on the cost of his farm is lucky, the workingman who will average \$15 a week the year round is exceptionally fortunate, and Wall street wonders why these classes do not share in its enthusiasm over revived prosperity. It is not necessary to be a Populist to discover in these figures a most unjust disproportion between the earnings of money and the earnings of men."

The struggle between capital and labour promises to assume an ugly shape some day.

Ruthless Rumor. A sad illustration of the mischief and misery frequently created by a current story passing from one person to another, without any known authority for it, is reported from Newfoundland. A rumor was set afloat in some of the outports to the effect that the Canadian banks were about to close their branches and leave the island. The result was that many of the people made

the mid-winter journey to St. Johns, and withdrew their savings. Among the frightened depositors was one Robert Lush, of Greenspond, who obtained all his money, \$1,000, and sailed in the schooner "Puritan" for home. The "Puritan" was lost at Cabot Island, and Lush was among the drowned. The "Daily News" of St. Johns says:—"Not only is the home circle bereft of a loving husband, kind father and bread winner, but the hard-earned savings of a life time have been lost, never to be recovered."

The widow and children of Robert Lush of Greenspond, now weeping for one who never shall return, have been reduced to want and misery by idle and groundless tattle, a criminally stupid rumor. Surely, there is a lesson for the thoughtless in this sad occurrence.

"Strict Inhumanity." One of the many curious actions arising from claims for compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act is reported from Dundee, Scotland, and, as a result thereof, the judges will be asked to determine the question whether a statue of the Queen is a building or not. A mason's labourer, named Timmans, while taking down a crane at the statue, fell from a height of about 20 feet and broke his ankle. The interested insurance company paid Timmans half wages until their doctor certified that he was able to resume work, but three doctors certified that Timmans was unable to use the injured limb. The sheriff before whom the action was called, said he had difficulty in deciding what fell under the Act, and that he was not satisfied that the Queen's statue is a building. The lawyer for the insurance company said that the payments of the insurance company to Timmans were not made "in terms of the Compensation Act," but simply out of sympathy to the man, and to avoid litigation. However, this Scottish sheriff seems to have scoffed at the idea of a corporation being swayed by kindness of feeling toward one who suffers. He not only declined to accept the medical certificate that Timmans is able to work, but he said that the questions for insurance companies were "nothing except exact law and strict inhumanity." The sheriff's opinion of insurance companies is reported to have caused much laughter, and the judges will now have to consider the question whether a statue of the Queen is a building or not.

The Cuban Census and the Truth. We are told by a celebrated writer "the truth depends on, or is only arrived at by, a legitimate deduction from all the facts which are truly material." In the endeavour to arrive at the truth concerning the population of Cuba, considerable discredit is being thrown on the veracity of those travellers whose shocking stories of Spanish atrocities had so much to do in bringing about the armed intervention of the United States. A leading New York financial jour-