

vented. It is doubtful, we say, whether, even by a scheme thus improved, the statistician would find that the watchman did more than neutralize himself.

One suggestion, however, may be made on the subject, which we are convinced the practical man will at once recognise as sound. The causes of the three great fires which within the last seven years have inflicted three great calamities on the country, seem, so far as they can be ascertained, to have been all pretty much alike. They all appear to have been connected with the overheating of flues: the buildings were all *ancient ones*,—none of them at least less so than the times of William III.; and they have all been destroyed by accidents originating in the *modern mode* of heating houses by stoves and metal flues. Any one practically acquainted with the subject must see that in every such case the liability to accidents of this nature is inevitably great. In *building* a house, the workman can take the necessary precautions as he proceeds. He can take care, for instance, that no beam or joist, or other piece of wood, approach any flue nearer than a foot,—the distance specified by act of Parliament; but in *altering* a house, he can, in striking out his flues, take no such precautions. In cutting through the hard walls, there may be wood within an inch of him, of which he can know nothing,—wood covered up at times by a mere film of mortar; and no possible care can guarantee him against accidents. He is of necessity a worker in the dark; nor, in the circumstances, can it be otherwise. Still, however, one very effectual kind of precaution *may* be taken. A medium for heating such a flue may be employed through which fire cannot be communicated. A metal flue, heated in the ordinary manner, becomes not unfrequently red hot, and sets fire to whatever wood may be in contact with it; and hence, we doubt not, the destruction of both Houses of Parliament, the Royal Exchange, and the National Armoury.