

outside ; and they have then, in most cases, become too formidable to be got under. But by stationing careful persons within our more valuable buildings, instructed to visit every apartment and passage once every hour, might not the mischief be detected at a stage when it could be easily overmastered ? Statistical fact, however, comes in to show that the suggestion is less wise than obvious : buildings so watched are found more liable to destruction from fire than those for whose safety no such precautions are taken. The private watchman has to use a light in his rounds ; in cold weather he requires a fire ; though essential that he be of steady character, there is a liability to be deceived, on the part of the employer, considerable enough to tell in the statistical table as an element of accident. Even when there is no unsteadiness, inattention is apt to creep on men watching against an enemy that has just a chance of visiting what they guard, once in five hundred years. In short, the result of the matter is, that insurance offices, founding on their tables, demand a higher premium for houses guarded in this manner than for houses left altogether unprotected. To meet with the evil thus indicated, the writer in the *Times* suggests that the watchmen, in order to keep up their vigilance, should be changed once every two years ; that each at the end of his term should have to look forward to some certain promotion as a reward of his diligence and care ; and that none but active, prudent, trustworthy men, should be chosen for the office. The scheme, of course, lies open to the objection just hinted at ;—the inevitable liability of employers to be deceived in character would in not a few cases render the precaution useless. We question, too, whether the attention of a watchman who visited every part of a large building some ten or twelve times each night for two years together, could be so continually kept up, that more than a balance would be struck between the dangers he introduced and those he pre-