

great advantage: besides this, to the public generally, it would afford an opportunity of viewing the rare treasures and curiosities which have been gathered here at so much labor and cost. For these and other important reasons, therefore we regret that the trustees have resolved that they would not be justified in allowing the collections of the Museum to be opened at any hour which would require gas-light.

Upon first considering the resolution which has been come to by the trustees, most persons will experience astonishment and some alarm at the late Mr. Braidwood's account of the inflammable nature of a building which has been erected by so large an outlay in our own days. By that gentleman's report, this museum—which contains priceless treasures of the world's art, objects, which, if destroyed, could never be replaced; the rare manuscripts, the chronicles of history, and the stories of old and new world learning, the real value of which cannot be estimated by any standard of price; the records of the famed cities of antiquity, whose glories have for centuries been laid in the dust; the relics of dynasties which have passed away; and examples of the arts of many ages, which are so useful to the historian and artist; the collection of objects of natural history; the store of prints, drawings, &c.—is, if it would be exposed to danger from gas-lighting, at any time liable, even at present, to risk from neglect, accident, or a spirit of mischief. These are uncomfortable reflections, and cause persons to inquire how it has occurred that a building intended for such purposes, has not been so constructed as to be perfectly safe from the danger of fire. At the present time there are steam-works and fires below for the purpose of heating and ventilating the new reading room, print room, &c.: there are also fire stoves in the manuscript and other departments, and in the private rooms of the officers. We mention this for the purpose of suggesting that if the shadow of risk exists of the burning of the contents of the Museum, no time should be lost in making those alterations which will prevent gas-light, or any other kind of light, from doing damage. The floorings, such as that of the King's library, the bookcases, staircases, (if any such exist,) rafters, or other inflammable parts of the structure, should, without delay, be removed, and others of a more safe description substituted.

While acknowledging the great experience of Mr. Braidwood, in connection with fires, we cannot admit that any great extra amount of danger would result from the lighting of the British Museum with gas, provided that this is carefully and properly managed; and, in fact, unless the electric light should become available, by means of the experiments which are constantly being carried on by men of science in various parts of the world—without the use of gas, the British Museum will not become a means of enlightenment to the artisans and numerous other classes of the metropolis who cannot spare the working hours for the purpose of pursuing those studies which would advance them in skill and intelligence.

At the Kensington Museum, gas-lighting is used with safety and good effect.

It will be impossible to oppose for much longer the strong voice of public opinion on this subject: the intelligence of the people is rapidly improving; and means must be taken to render such establishments as the British Museum accessible at hours convenient to the industrious classes of London.—*London Builder.*

Miscellaneous.

The British Census of April, 1861.

The population of Great Britain was estimated at 7,392,000 in 1751.

The population of Great Britain was then enumerated in 1801, and amounted to 10,917,000, and with that of Ireland united with her, made above 16,000,000. Notwithstanding the war the population increased, as the census showed, at the rate of two to three millions every ten years until 1841. Then immense emigrations took place; there was a depopulating famine in Ireland, which had an imperfect poor law, and cholera was epidemic; yet the population of Great Britain was augmented by 2,308,000, and although the population of Ireland fell off, the people of the United Kingdom amounted to 27,724,000 in 1851. There will be no investigation as to the "religious profession" of any one. That inquiry, when proposed last year, having been met with general disapproval, was abandoned by the government.

Vital Statistics of Scotland.

The Registrar-General for Scotland, who has hitherto issued no detailed annual reports, has just commenced the series, beginning with his first year of office, 1855. Taking first the births, the superintendent of statistics calls attention to the circumstance that the proportion of boys born to girls is greater in the rural districts than in the towns, in which, indeed, in that year, the illegitimate boys born were absolutely fewer in number than the girls. This is attributed to a residence in towns weakening the physical strength of parents, and it is considered a rule so established as to "afford a valuable hint to those who desire male progeny." It would appear from the year's returns, that, though marriages are much fewer in Scotland than in England, yet, when Scotchwomen do marry, they are much more prolific than the English. Some rather curious matrimonial statistics are supplied. It is remarked that widows, marrying bachelors, selected, as a general rule, husbands younger than themselves; "the *status* which the widow had acquired by her former marriage presented inducements to the unsettled bachelor, which gave the widow a great advantage over her unmarried sisters; and, as power is dear to every heart, a younger member of the opposite sex was selected, as more likely to leave that power in her hand than if the chosen second husband had been her senior in years." The Scotch stand the educational test well; 86.6 per cent. of the men who married, and 77.2 of the women signed their names. In England, in the same year, the proportions were 70.5 and 58.8. The deaths in the year (a year of more than average mortality) were only 206 deaths in 10,000 persons, showing Scotland to be one of the very healthiest countries on the face of the globe. The annual per centage of deaths to population is stated thus: Scotland, 2.06; England, 2.21; France, 2.36; Belgium, 2.52; Holland, 2.76; Prussia, 2.83; Spain, 2.85; Sardinia, 2.91. Some points of interest in relation to disease and mortality are noticed. Including the secondary diseases, twice as many women died from childbirth as in England. This is thought not much attributable to distance from medical aid, and the question is raised whether it is not owing to certain anatomical conformations. It