

In addition to the enclosed
which you may observe
deals with total attendance
there was in St James's Gazette

Some correspondence
on the continuously decreasing
evening attendance.

But I fancy the case is
better brought out by
grouping the years into
periods of five years each.

This is done overleaf,
of course from official
statistics.

For my own part?

Museum
Attendance

L 550

LONDON INSTITUTION,
FINSBURY CIRCUS, E.C.

15
4th Oct 88

Sir,

You are reported in Nature
(27 Sept) to have advocated
the establishment of an
anthropological Museum.

I do not altogether know
from what facts you would
draw encouragement but it
occurs to me as possible you
may be unaware of the
present tendency at South
Kensington.

	Total Attendance		Percentage of Evening Att. to Total
	Inc. %	Decr. %	
'58-'62			38.7
'63-'67		8.5	34.5
'68-'72	10.2		27.7
'73-'77		4.4	28.4
'78-'82	15.0		23.7
'83-'87		17.9	20.1

'57 was an incredible year
 + is therefore omitted.

do not quite see how any
 one could from this history
 draw argument for
 another educational
 establishment in London.

7 Am your obedient
 Servant

+ most sincerely that
 this has been done.

Wm. Pitt Rivers, F.R.S.

LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

SIR,—The success referred to in your last issue becomes all the more interesting when compared with the results in some other places. I have specially in mind Boston and Philadelphia. In these the issues have been, for a number of years, diminishing, and at a considerable rate. The shrinkage began in the first town about ten years ago, in the latter about fifteen years. The causes for this state of things are naturally not to be set down so confidently. But I gather that change in the character of the towns has much to do with it. They have apparently become less literary.

You say very justly, however instructive a volume may be it will instruct nobody if it stands unopened on the shelves. Certain libraries, however, seem just in this situation, that they have been increasing their stock of books much faster than their readers. In other words, their proportion of unread books seems to be somewhat rapidly increasing. I would instance as in this state the libraries of Chicago, Plymouth, and notably Birmingham.

Without throwing too much doubt on the linguistic talent of Warwickshire, one may well suppose that the dust lies pretty thick on many volumes in the Shakespeare Memorial Library. In Danish, Finnic, Hungarian, and Russian that curious collection can altogether boast of more than one hundred and forty volumes!

You have noticed that the Notting-hill Library possesses few technical works. Possibly this may be owing to students going to the South Kensington Museum for that class of books. With reference to this latter institution, I daresay many of your readers are aware that in spite of the very considerable enlargements in recent years the total attendance has been steadily diminishing since (say) 1876. Now the three libraries do not seem to share in this diminution of patronage. Might I, therefore, suggest, through your columns, that the authorities might do more to encourage visitors, more especially in the educational library? I mean by substituting one simple alphabetical catalogue for the three which one may have to wade through at present. More effort might also be made to keep the collection up to date by providing newer editions of books and the like.—Yours, &c.,