

scribe will attest, the value of a cypher or two at the end of a number was often very inadequately appreciated, and some people would even venture to say that the same statement could be applied locally to-day! True it is, at least, that we have often wondered at the surprising following of a Xerxes, and at the astonishing number of deaths in some plague-stricken mediaeval town, which later investigation shows to have been quite impossible. In Roman times especially celebrated, not alone for financial but also for political and for social reasons, was the Roman census, which tradition dates from the time of Servius Tullius. The census under the Republic was made every five years, and for a time under the Empire every ten. It is claimed indeed that the Romans, if they may be represented by Cicero, had a true conception of the nature and importance of administrative statistics; for in his *de oratore*, lib. ii., Cicero states categorically "*ad concilium de Republica dandum caput est, nosse Rempublicam.*" Statisticians make frequent reference to this diction of the great Roman, as also to the latter's "*notitia rerum publicarum.*" To the Middle Ages belong, as sources of historical and statistical moment, the breviana of Charlemagne, the national inventory of William the First of England, the Domesday Book, and the consular relazioni of some of the Italian Republics so often referred to by historians, as also local tax lists, gild documents and inventories of private manors. Systematic tabulation of births, marriages and deaths dates generally from the Reformation when the adherents of the rival churches were now more carefully marshalled. But still greater statistical activity was the result of the growth of mercantile policies and the development of national administrations and organizations in which the spirit of the intellectual awakening, the renaissance, was well reflected. This increased statistical activity was indeed, a feature of Sully's administration in France and also of Colbert's and Necker's; and it was to the first of this trio that falls the merit of having erected about 1602 a cabinet complet de politique et de finance, which may be regarded as the forerunner of modern statistical Bureaus.

In the erection of statistical offices England was not quick to follow the example thus set her now by France, and later on by one or two of the other continental countries. Not until the third decade of the present century was a permanent Statistical Bureau opened in England. But in 1832 such an office was attached to the Board of Trade, under the able direction of Mr. Porter, afterwards author of the well-known "Progress of the Nation." England, however, in the meantime, had not been neglecting the gathering of information, as will be indicated especially by her valuable parliamentary papers, dating from the latter part of the seventeenth century. On the continent Napoleon who regarded statistics as the "budget of things, without which there was no public safety" made his influence felt in the same direction: as did also the need of detailed information on the part of several of the over-trodden continental States both during and after the Napoleonic war. There was this difference, however, between then and now, that then all official information was looked upon as the peculiar and inviolate property of the government.

We have spoken thus far of administrative statistics, not of scientific statistics; and the development of statistics in the latter sense, that is, as the arithmetical science of facts, natural, social and political, has been peculiar. The word statistics itself, was first coined or roughhewn in Italy and polished in Germany. In Italy *ragioni di stato* was the science of the State, and the publicist or statesman, familiar with such department, was called *statista*. Thus Shakespeare in Cymbeline speaks of a statesman as a "statist": for which reason some of the English delegates to the Statistical Congress at London in 1860 proposed that those having to do with statistics should be called "statists." But the German University professors had long since taken over the Italian expressions, and having giving them a Latin form had popularised them. And "status" was their new word for state and "statisticus" that for statistics. Hence the word "statistician" (Statistiker) as well has been preserved.