Part Second.

REVIEWS.

Studies in Statistics—Social, Political, and Medical. By GEORGE BLUNDELL LONGSTAFF, M.A., M.B. Oxon., etc. London: Edward Stanford: 1891.

A WORK by a well-known statistician. After dealing with some elementary matters relating to the births, deaths, and marriages of England and Wales during the last fifty years,—well illustrated graphically by a chart indicating the ups and downs of those, and placed alongside for comparison, the varying price of wheat per quarter, with the result of harvests as to whether good or bad, as also the various periods of commercial depression,—the author goes on to discuss the growth of the population in England, and states that perhaps the chief cause which has led to the remarkable developments in this respect during the last fifty years is “the application of novel mechanical appliances, which has rendered possible an unparalleled increase of population by bringing within reach unlimited supplies of food.” England and Wales alone add 1000 a day to the population of the world, “that is to say, over and above reserve men who fill up the gaps caused by death—the excess of births over deaths—a fresh regiment at full war strength daily marches to the front.” The increase of population to England and Wales deduced from such estimates allows of an addition of 7,300,000 living souls being made to the present inhabitants by the year 1901.

The migrations of people in the nineteenth century is next considered, after which a chapter teeming with information is devoted to the growth of new nations—those of the United States of America, Canada, South America, the Cape of Good Hope, and Australasia being dealt with. The increase in the United States is prodigious; the population has been doubled every twenty-five years during the present century. Fifty years ago the inhabitants numbered 17,000,000; at the late census (1890) they amount to 62,000,000. Among other things the author mentions how in Australia and New Zealand there is a decided deficiency of women, there being in the former colony 85 females for every 100 males, and in the latter but 82—a point of which a note may be taken.

The chapter on food supply is very interesting. In it he points out that, in his opinion, owing to the rapid increase of population in the United States and in Western Europe, some 2600 square miles of the land should be brought under the plough every year to afford food for the same; and in connexion with the statement made by Mr Giffen, that “perhaps in the course of ten years, and most certainly in the course of twenty years, we should begin to feel the consequences as to that portion of our food supply now derived from

there," we have the following consolatory reward:—"One consequence, we may venture to hope, will be that rents in this country will begin to rise again (and what is more, to be paid), with a rise in prices, so that English landlords and farmers, or at least their children, may look forward to a good time coming."

After a chapter relating to the taking of the census come several others dealing with the undernoted subjects—mostly papers which have been read before different scientific societies, *e.g.*,—Decline of Death-rate; Causation of Summer Diarrhœa; On some Statistical Relationship between Scarlet Fever, Erysipelas, Puerperal Fever, and certain other diseases. In the chapter on the Geographical Distribution of Diphtheria the practical deduction is suggested, that the causes of diphtheria should not be sought for primarily in any high development of civilisation such as sewers, but rather in some condition associated with a more primitive mode of life as found in rural districts, and special notice is drawn to the possible relation between some little known disease affecting such domestic animals as cows, sheep, pigs, poultry, and pigeons, etc., which may be capable of inducing membranous sore throat in the human race, and which may develop into true diphtheria, or the formerly called *Cynanche maligna*.

Chapters follow on Phthisis, Bronchitis, and Pneumonia, are they Epidemic Diseases? on Continued Fevers in London; and upon Statistics as to Hydrophobia.

The work is well and carefully executed, and contains a valuable fund of information upon the various subjects treated of.

The Barbarity of Circumcision as a Remedy for Congenital Abnormality. By HERBERT SNOW, M.D. Lond. London: J. & A. Churchill: 1890.

THE author objects to circumcision as being a barbarous mutilation, and recommends dilatation in its place. Most surgeons would be content with the dilatation of a phimosi where that manipulation proved sufficient; but where this was insufficient they would proceed to the mutilation of the redundant, and worse than useless, prepuce, without considering the operation in any way barbarous. Circumcision has been advocated for the following reasons, which are here sought to be controverted:—

- (a.) Greatly enhanced local cleanliness throughout after life.
- (b.) Greater chastity, and the preclusion of immoral personal habits.
- (c.) A smaller liability to venereal contagion.
- (d.) A diminished proneness to eventual cancerous disease.

He concedes the probable benefit of the first of these among uncivilized people, but does not think it applicable to civilized races. It is a sad fact, that there is a terrible amount of genital uncleanness amongst those cursed with the possession of a long foreskin, even in this civilized community, to whom circumcision would be an unmixed benefit.