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Infant Mortality. by Hugh T. Ashby

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deductions made therefrom. We concur with him in thinking that, valuable as are the results of physiological and chemical inquiries into the subject, the superstructure of sociological and economic inference which has been reared upon them is a trifle top-heavy.

In reading this valuable book, one slight correction has suggested itself. On p. 112, Dr. Bowley remarks that "it is very interesting" to see how closely the earnings of women weavers and men mule-spinners conform in their grouping to the normal curve of error," and then gives two actual distributions compared with the numbers given by the closest normal curves. It appears to us that the agreement is very poor. If we use Professor Pearson's criterion of goodness of fit, we find that the value of χ^2 for the case of men spinners is nearly 130, so that the odds against random sampling from a normal population having produced such a system of deviations as found are millions to 1. The second case, that of women weavers, is still worse, the group with wages under 15s. alone contributing 325.54 to the value of χ^2 .

Indeed, without applying any test, it seems clear that a table, one of the subdivisions of which contains 412 observations, while theory requires but 174, which in its largest subdivision displays a discrepancy of more than 10 per cent. when compared with the expected value, does not show close agreement in the ordinary sense of the word.

This is, however, a minor point, and Dr. Bowley must be congratulated on the production of another useful textbook for students of sociological phenomena.

M.G.

4.—*Infant Mortality*. By Hugh T. Ashby, B.A., M.D., B.C., M.R.C.P. viii + 229 pp., 8vo. Cambridge: University Press, 1915. Price 10s. 6d. net.

There are two standpoints from which we may view the subject of infant mortality. In the first place, acting more or less consciously in the spirit of the passage which begins with the well-worn quotation:—

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,

E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;

we may seek to unravel the tangled skein of causality which connects the infant death-rate with poverty, fertility, natural and artificial selection, the state of medical science and many other imposing matters. In the second place, we may ignore these recondite problems, and, having ventured to assume as a working hypothesis that the badly fed, clothed and housed children of badly fed, clothed and housed parents are less likely to survive the first year of life than are infants reared under more luxurious conditions, we may inquire what steps have been or might be taken to improve the environment of a large proportion of the nation's babies.

The reader who desires to adopt the latter standpoint will find Dr. Ashby's book of considerable assistance to him, but we fear that the columns of this *Journal* are hardly the place to discuss the administrative problems of preventive medicine. On the other

hand, the problems of causality, since they can only be approached along lines which are essentially statistical, must be regarded as within our special province, and numerous contributions to the subject have been made by fellows of the Royal Statistical Society. From the statistical side, Dr. Ashby's book is unsatisfactory, and we are sure that this judgment will be endorsed by all statistical readers, whether they happen to agree or disagree with Dr. Ashby as to the practical conclusions at which he arrives. The only reference to the labours of Continental statisticians which we have found in Dr. Ashby's book is to a single paper by M. Bertillon, while no warning is given as to the pit-falls which yawn at the feet of the untrained student of vital statistics. Perhaps the fairest way to give an idea of the statistical part of the work is to cite textually a paragraph headed *The Importance of Statistics*. It runs: "In studying infant mortality, the first and foremost necessity is to have proper and reliable records of the registration of all births and deaths. By this means we can compare one district with another and find out why one county or one special town has a greater mortality than another; we cannot expect to understand the in-comings and out-goings of human life if we keep no exact records. Man is not less valuable than merchandise, nor births and deaths than receipts and expenditure."

"Some countries keep better and more accurate statistics than others; and there is published each year a very accurate annual report by the Registrar-General on Births, Deaths and Marriages in England and Wales. The advantages of keeping accurate birth certificates are to determine the child's exact age, and to know from this when it can legally leave school and begin work. For many like events, the register of births is not only very useful, but indeed almost a necessity."

If the reader infers that Dr. Ashby's book is more illuminating on the practical than on the theoretical side, he will, we think, be quite correct.

M.G.

5.—*The Audacious War*. By C. W. Barron. xiv + 192 pp., sm. 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1915. Price \$1 net.

Les Finances de Guerre de l'Angleterre. Par Gaston Jèze. 248 pp., 8vo. Paris: Giard et E. Brière, 1915. Price 5 francs.

Problèmes de Politique et Finances de Guerre. Par MM. Jèze, Barthélemy, Rist et Rolland. vii + 227 pp., sm. 8vo. Paris: Félix Alcan, 1915. Price 3 francs 50 c.

The British nation is spending at this moment on the war at a rate corresponding roughly to one-half the income of its citizens. This juxtaposition of expenditure and income does not imply that the annual income is being solely drawn on to provide necessary war funds. If this were so, after allowing for, say, 8 per cent. of the people on active service, the remaining 92 per cent. would have to be content with 50 per cent. of the available output of commodities and services, measured by value, and nearer 40 per