

Statistics and Its Method

The New Dictionary of Statistics. By AUGUSTUS D. WEBB.
(London: George Routledge and Sons; New York: E. P.
Dutton and Company. 1911. Pp. 682. \$7.00.)

For some reason not clearly apparent this book is announced as "a complement to the fourth edition of Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics." It is true that Mr. Webb has covered less ground than Mulhall, but he has worked with commendable independence and has in no way limited himself to the task of bringing Mulhall's figures down to date. The pages of the new work are fewer in number and less crowded, but the omissions are largely of the odds and ends of curious and miscellaneous information, largely non-statistical in character and frequently unverifiable, which characterized Mulhall's book. Mr. Webb has limited himself to what is substantially the recognized field of economic and social statistics, a field which is for practical purposes delimited by the scope of official statistical publications of one sort and another. In its scope his book may be said to stand as near to Sundfärg's *Aperçus statistiques internationaux* as it does to Mulhall. But Mr. Webb's purpose, unlike Sundbärg's, is not primarily to provide a compendium of official statistics. He has used freely, but discriminatingly, the results of many analytical and interpretative studies that have appeared in the standard statistical journals, and has consistently kept in mind the fundamental purpose of the work as a book of ready reference.

The dictionary plan of arrangement is followed, but the classi-

fication of subjects is less detailed than in Mulhall. Mr. Webb's plan of grouping his presentation of the separate, but closely related, parts of important general fields of statistics into "articles" is thoroughly commendable, since it obviates repetition and minimizes the chance of erroneous interpretation that arises from isolating individual statistical facts from their proper context. Cross-references and an excellent index make the book substantially as easy to use as if the dictionary classification were more detailed. But perhaps the most notable and most praiseworthy departures from Mulhall's methods are the complete and specific citation of sources and authorities, and the concise but generally adequate cautions as to the limitations of the meaning and of the accuracy of the various kinds of statistics presented.

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