

Although, however, the above considerations forbid the acceptance of the Continental opinion that the study of man in the social state is identical with statistics, it must be admitted that without statistics the nature of human society could never become known. For society is an aggregate, or rather a congeries of aggregates. Not only that, but the individuals composing these aggregates are not in juxtaposition, and what is, from the sociological point of view, the same aggregate or organ of the "body politic" is not always composed of the same individuals. Constancy of social form is maintained concurrently with the most extensive changes in the collocation and identity of the particles composing the form. A "nation" is really changed, so far as the individuals composing it are concerned, every moment of time by the operation of the laws of population. But the nation, considered sociologically, remains the same in spite of this slow change in the particles composing it, just as a human being is considered to be the same person year by year, although year by year the particles forming his or her body are constantly being destroyed and fresh particles substituted. Of course the analogy between the life of a human being and the life of a human community must not be pressed too far. Indeed, in several respects human communities more nearly resemble some of the lower forms of animal life than the more highly organized forms of animal existence. There are organisms which are fissiparous, and when cut in two form two fresh independent organisms, so diffused is the vitality of the original organism; and the same phenomenon may be observed in regard to human communities.

Now the only means whereby the grouping of the individuals forming a social organism can be ascertained, and the changes in the groups year by year observed, is the statistical method. Accordingly the correct view seems to be that it is the function of this method to make perceptible facts regarding the constitution of society on which sociology is to base its conclusions. It is not claimed, or ought not to be claimed, that statistical investigation can supply the whole of the facts a knowledge of which will enable sociologists to form a correct theory of the social life of man. The statistical method is essentially a mathematical procedure, attempting to give a quantitative expression to certain facts; and the resolution of differences of quality into differences of quantity has not yet been effected even in chemical science. In sociological science the importance of differences of quality is enormous, and the effect of these differences on the conclusions to be drawn from figures is sometimes neglected, or insufficiently recognized, even by men of unquestionable ability and good faith. The majority of politicians, social "reformers," and amateur handlers of statistics generally are in the habit of drawing the conclusions that seem good to them from such figures as they may obtain, merely by treating as homogeneous quantities which are heterogeneous, and as comparable quantities which are not comparable. Even to the conscientious and intelligent inquirer the difficulty of avoiding mistakes in using statistics prepared by other persons is very great. There are usually "pitfalls" even in the simplest statistical statement, the position and nature of which are known only to the persons who have actually handled what may be called the "raw material" of the statistics in question; and in regard to complex statistical statements the "outsider" cannot be too careful to ascertain from those who compiled them as far as possible what are the points requiring elucidation.

The Statistical Method.—This method is a scientific procedure (1) whereby certain phenomena of aggregation not perceptible to the senses are rendered perceptible to the intellect, and (2) furnishing rules for the correct perform-

ance of the quantitative observation of these phenomena. The class of phenomena of aggregation referred to includes only such phenomena as are too large to be perceptible to the senses. It does not, *e.g.*, include such phenomena as are the subject-matter of microscopy. Things which are very large are often quite as difficult to perceive as those which are very small. A familiar example of this is the difficulty which is sometimes experienced in finding the large names, as of countries or provinces, on a map. Of course the terms "large," "too large," "small," and "too small" must be used with great caution, and with a clear comprehension on the part of the person using them of the standard of measurement implied by the terms in each particular case. A careful study of the first few pages of De Morgan's *Differential and Integral Calculus* will materially assist the student of statistics in attaining a grasp of the principles on which standards of measurement should be formed. It is not necessary that he should become acquainted with the calculus itself, or even possess anything more than an elementary knowledge of mathematical science, but it is essential that he should be fully conscious of the fact that "large" and "small" quantities can only be so designated with propriety by reference to a common standard.

Sources whence Statistics are Derived.—The term "statistics" in the concrete sense means systematic arrangements of figures representing "primary statistical quantities." A primary statistical quantity is a number obtained from numbers representing phenomena, with a view to enable an observer to perceive a certain other phenomenon related to the former as whole to parts. They represent either a phenomenon of existence at a given point of time or a phenomenon of accretion during a given period. As examples may be mentioned the number of deaths in a given district during a given time, the number of pounds sterling received by the London and North Western Railway during a given time, and the number of "inches of rain" that fell at Greenwich during a given time. Other examples are the number of tons of pig-iron lying in a particular store at a given date, the number of persons residing (the term "residing" to be specially defined) in a given territory at a given date, and the number of pounds sterling representing the "private deposits" of the Bank of England at a given date.

Primary Statistical Quantities are the result of labours carried on either (A) by Governments or (B) by individuals or public or private corporations.

A. Government Statistics.—(1) A vast mass of statistical material of more or less value comes into existence automatically in modern states in consequence of the ordinary administrative routine of departments. To this class belong the highly important statistical information published in England by the registrar-general, the returns of pauperism issued by the Local Government Board, the reports of inspectors of prisons, factories, schools, and those of sanitary inspectors, as well as the reports of the commissioners of the customs, and the annual statements of trade and navigation prepared by the same officials. There are also the various returns compiled and issued by the Board of Trade, which is the body most nearly resembling the statistical bureaux with which most foreign Governments are furnished. Most of the Government departments publish some statistics for which they are solely responsible as regards both matter and form, and they are very jealous of their right to do so, a fact which is to some extent detrimental to that uniformity as to dates and periods which should be the ideal of a well-organized system of statistics. Finally may be mentioned the very important set of statistical quantities known as the budget, and the statistics prepared and published by the commissioners of inland revenue, by the post office, and by the national debt commissioners. All these sets of primary statistical quantities arise out of the ordinary work of departments of the public service. Many of them have been in existence, in some form or other, ever since a settled Government existed in the country. There are records of customs receipts at London and other ports of the time of Edward III., covering a period of many years, which leave nothing to be desired in point of precision and uniformity. It may be added that many of these sets of figures are obtained in much the same form by all civilized Governments, and that it is often possible to compare the figures relating to different countries, and thus obtain evidence as to the sociological phenomena of each, but in regard to others there are differences which make comparison difficult.

(2) Besides being responsible for the issue of what may be called administration statistics, all Governments are in the habit of ordering from time to time special inquiries into special subjects

of interest, either to obtain additional information needful for administrative purposes, or, in countries possessed of representative institutions, to supply statistics asked for by parliaments or congresses. It is not necessary to refer particularly to this class of statistical information, except in the case of the census. This is an inquiry of such great importance that it may be regarded as one of the regular administrative duties of Governments, though as the census is only taken once in a series of years it must be mentioned under the head of occasional or special inquiries undertaken by Governments. In the United Kingdom the work is done by the registrars-general who are in office when the period for taking the census comes round. On the Continent the work is carried out by the statistical bureaux of each country,—except France, where it is under the supervision of the minister of the interior. For further information on this subject reference may be made to the excellent chapter in M. Maurice Block's *Traité* entitled "Recensement." See also "Instructions to the Superintendent Registrar of Births and Deaths as to his duties in taking the Census," 1871; also *Census*, vol. v. p. 334 sq.

B. The primary statistical quantities for which individuals or corporations are responsible may be divided into three categories.

(1) Among those which are compiled in obedience to the law of the land are the accounts furnished by municipal corporations, by railway, gas, water, banking, insurance, and other public companies making returns to the Board of Trade, by trades unions, and by other bodies which are obliged to make returns to the registrar of friendly societies. The information thus obtained is published in full by the departments receiving it, and is also furnished by the companies themselves to their proprietors or members.

(2) An enormous mass of statistical information is furnished voluntarily by public companies in the reports and accounts which, in accordance with their articles of association, are presented to their proprietors at stated intervals. With these statistics may be classed the figures furnished by the various trade associations, some of them of great importance, such as Lloyd's, the London Stock Exchange, the British Iron Trade Association, the London Corn Exchange, the Institute of Bankers, the Institute of Actuaries, and other such bodies too numerous to mention.

(3) There are cases in which individuals have devoted themselves with more or less success to obtaining original statistics on special points. The great work done by Messrs Behm and Wagner in arriving at an approximate estimate of the population of the earth does not belong to this category, though its results are really primary statistical quantities. Many of these results have not been arrived at by a direct process of enumeration at all, but by ingenious processes of inference. It need hardly be said that it is not easy for individuals to obtain the materials for any primary statistical quantity of importance, but it has been done in some cases with success.

Operations Performed on Primary Statistical Quantities.—Only a brief description of matters connected with the technique of the statistical method can be given in this article. In order to form statistics properly so called the primary statistical quantities must be formed into tables, and in the formation of these tables lies the art of the statistician. It is not a very difficult art when the principles relating to it have been properly grasped, but those who are unfamiliar with the subject are apt to underrate the difficulty of correctly practising it.

Simple Tables.—The first thing to be done in the construction of a table is to form a clear idea of what the table is to show, and to express that idea in accurate language. This is a matter which is often neglected, and it is a source of much waste of time and occasionally of misapprehension to those who have to study the figures thus presented. No table ought to be considered complete without a "heading" accurately describing its contents, and it is frequently necessary that such headings should be rather long. It has been said that "you can prove anything by statistics." This statement is of course absurd, taken absolutely, but, like most assertions which are widely believed, it has a grain of truth in it. If this popular saying ran "you can prove anything by tables with slovenly and ambiguous headings," it might be assented to without hesitation. The false "statistical" facts which obtain a hold of the public mind may often be traced to some widely circulated table, to which either from stupidity or carelessness an erroneous or inaccurate "heading" has been affixed.

A statistical table in its simplest form consists of "primaries" representing phenomena of the same class, but existing at different points of time, or coming into existence during different portions of time. This is all that is essential to a table, though other things are usually added to it as an aid to its comprehension. A table stating the number of persons residing in each county of England on a given day of a given year, and also, in another column, the corresponding numbers for the same counties on the corresponding day of the tenth year subsequently, would be a simple tabular statement of the general facts regarding the total population of those counties supplied by two successive censuses. Various figures might, however, be added to it which would greatly add to

its clearness. There might be columns showing the increase or decrease for each county and for the whole kingdom during the ten years, and another column showing what *proportion*, expressed in percentages, these increases or decreases bore to the figures for the earlier of the two years. Then there might be two columns showing what proportions, also expressed as percentages, the figures for each county bore in each year to the figures for the whole kingdom. The nine-column table thus resulting would still be simple, all the figures being merely explicit assertions of facts which are contained implicitly in the original "primaries."

Complex Tables.—Suppose now we have another table precisely similar in form to the first, and also relating to the counties of England, but giving the number of houses existing in each of them at the same two dates. A combination of the two would form a complex table, and an application of the processes of arithmetic would make evident a number of fresh facts, all of which would be implied in the table, but would not be obvious to most people until explicitly stated.

The technical work of the statistician consists largely in operations of which the processes just referred to are types.

Proportions.—The most usual and the best mode of expressing the proportion borne by one statistical quantity to another is to state it as a percentage. In some cases another method is adopted—namely, that of stating the proportion in the form "one in so many." This method is generally a bad one, and its use should be discouraged as much as possible, the chief reason being that the changing portion of this kind of proportional figure becomes greater or less inversely, and not directly, as the phenomenon it represents increases or diminishes.

Averages.—Averages or means are for statistical purposes divided into two classes, the *geometrical* and *arithmetical*. An arithmetical mean is the sum of all the members forming the series of figures under consideration divided by their number, without reference to their *weight* or relative importance among themselves. A geometrical mean is the sum of such figures divided by their number, with due allowance made for their weight. An example will make this clear, and the simplest example is taken from a class of statistical quantities of a peculiar kind—namely, *prices*. The price of a given article is the approximate mathematical expression of the rates, in terms of money, at which exchanges of the article for money were actually made at or about a given hour on a given day. A *quotation of price* such as appears in a daily price list is, if there has been much fluctuation, only a very rough guide to the actual rates of exchange that have been the basis of the successive bargains making up the day's business.

But let us suppose that the closing price each day may be accepted as a fair representative of the day's transactions, and let us further suppose that we desire to obtain the *average price* for thirty days. Now the sum of the prices in question divided by thirty would be the arithmetical mean, and its weak point would be that it made no allowance for the fact that the business done on some days is much larger than that done on others; in other words, it treats them as being all of equal weight. Now if, as is actually the case in some markets, we have a daily account of the *total quantities sold* we can weight the members accurately, and can then obtain their geometrical mean. There are cases in which the careless use of arithmetical means misleads the student of the social organism seriously. It is often comparatively easy to obtain arithmetical means, but difficult to obtain geometrical means. Inferences based on the former class of average should be subjected to the most rigid investigation.

Before closing this short survey of the very important subject of averages or means, it is needful to discuss briefly the nature of the phenomena which they may safely be regarded as indicating, when they have been properly obtained. Given a geometric mean of a series of numbers referring to no matter what phenomenon, it is obvious that the value of the mean as a *type* of the whole series will depend entirely on the extent of divergence from it of the members of the series as a body. If we are told that there are in a certain district 1000 men, and that their average height is 5 feet 8 inches, and are told nothing further about them, we can make various hypotheses as to the structure of this body from the point of view of height. It is possible that they may consist of a rather large number of men about 6 feet high, and a great many about 5 feet 5 inches. Or the proportions of relatively tall and short men may be reversed, that is, there may be a rather large number of men about 5 feet 4 inches, and a moderate number of men about 5 feet 11 inches. It is also possible that there may be very few men whose height is exactly 5 feet 8 inches, and that the bulk of the whole body consists of two large groups—one of giants and the other of dwarfs. Lastly, it is possible that 5 feet 8 inches may really give a fair idea of the height of the majority of the men, which it would do if (say) 660 of them were within an inch of that height, either by excess or deficiency, while of the remainder one half were all above 5 feet 9 inches and the other half all below 5 feet 7 inches. This latter supposition would most likely be found to be approximately correct if the men belonged to a race whose average height was 5 feet 8

inches, and if they had been collected by chance. The extent of the divergence of the items composing an average from the average itself may be accurately measured and expressed in percentages of the average, the algebraic signs + and - being employed to indicate the direction of the variation from the mean. An average may, therefore, advantageously be supplemented—(1) by a figure showing what proportion of the members from which it is derived differ from the average by a relatively small quantity, and (2) by figures showing the maximum and minimum deviations from the average. The meaning of the term "relatively small" must be considered independently in each investigation. Further remarks on averages will be found in the works mentioned at the conclusion of this article.

Prices.—Reference has already been made to the peculiar class of statistical quantities known as *prices*. Prices in their widest sense include all figures expressing *ratios of exchange*. In modern society the terms of exchange are always expressed in money, and the things for which money is exchanged are—(1) concrete entities with physical attributes, such as iron or wheat; (2) immediate rights, such as those given by interest-bearing securities of all kinds, by bills of exchange, by railway or steamship contracts to carry either passengers or goods, and by bargains relative to the foreign exchanges; (3) contingent rights, such as those implied in policies of insurance. All these rates of exchange belong to the same category, whether they are fixed within certain limits by law, as in the case of railway charges, or are left to be determined by the "higgling of the market." All these cases of price may conceivably come within the operation of the statistical method, but the only matter connected with price which it is necessary to refer to here is the theory of the *index number*.

Index Numbers.—The need for these became conspicuous during the investigations of Tooke, Newmarch, and others into the general cyclical movements of the prices of commodities; and to construct a good system of these may be said to be one of the highest technical aims of the statistical method. In comparing the prices of different years it was soon observed that, though whole groups of articles moved upwards or downwards simultaneously, they did not all move in the same proportion, and that there were nearly always cases in which isolated articles or groups of articles moved in the opposite direction to the majority of articles. The problem presented to statisticians therefore was and is to devise a statistical expression of the general movement of prices, in which all prices should be adequately represented. The first rough approximation to the desired result was attained by setting down the percentages representing the movements, with their proper algebraic signs before them, and adding them together algebraically. The total with its proper sign was then divided by the number of articles, and the quotient represented the movement in the prices of the whole body of articles during the period under consideration. It was soon seen, however, that this procedure was fatally defective, inasmuch as it treated all prices as of equal weight. Cotton weighed no more than pimento, and iron no more than umbrellas. Accordingly an improvement was made in the procedure, first by giving the prices of several different articles into which cotton, iron, and other important commodities entered, and only one price each in the case of the minor articles, and secondly by fixing on the price of some one article representing iron or cotton, and multiplying it by some number selected with the view of assigning to these articles their proper weights relatively to each other and to the rest. The objection to both these plans is the same,—that the numbers attached to the various articles or groups of articles are purely arbitrary; and of late years attempts have been made to obtain what may be called *natural index numbers*, the most successful so far being that of Mr Robert Giffen, whose index numbers are obtained from the declared values of the imports or exports into or from the United Kingdom of the articles whose prices are dealt with. In the case of both imports and exports Mr Giffen worked out the proportion borne by the value of each article to the total value for a series of years. Deducing the "unenumerated" articles, a series of numbers was thus obtained which could be used as the means of weighting the prices of the articles in an investigation of a movement of prices. This procedure is no doubt susceptible of further improvement, like its predecessors, but it is a great advance on the arbitrary systems of index numbers employed in them.

The Desirability of Increased Uniformity in Statistics.—One of the most serious difficulties in connexion with statistical investigations is the variety of the modes in which primaries of the same order are obtained, as regards dates and periods. This is a matter of which all persons who have occasion to use statistics are made painfully aware from time to time. Some attempts have lately been made to introduce more harmony into the official statistics of the United Kingdom, and some years ago a committee of the Treasury sat to inquire into the matter. The committee received a good deal of evidence, and presented a report, from which, however, certain members of the committee dissented, preferring to express their views separately. The evidence will be found very interesting by all who wish to obtain an insight into the genesis of the official statistics of the country. The report and evidence

were published in the June number of the *Journal of the Statistical Society* for 1881, as well as in the usual official form.

The International Institute of Statistics.—The absence of uniformity in statistics which is felt in England is not so marked in foreign countries, where the principle of centralization in arrangements of a political character is more powerful than it is here. In several Continental countries and in the United States there are statistical bureaux with definite duties to perform. In the United Kingdom, as already remarked, the nearest approach to a central statistical office is the Commercial and Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, on which the work of furnishing such statistics as are not definitely recognized as within the province of some other state department usually falls. Various attempts have been made to introduce more uniformity into the statistics of all countries. It was with this object that statistical congresses have met from time to time since 1853. An endeavour was made at the congress held in 1876 at Budapest to arrange for the publication of a system of international statistics, each statistical bureau undertaking a special branch of the subject. The experiment was, however, foredoomed to be only a very partial success, first because all countries were not then and are not yet furnished with central statistical offices, and secondly because the work which fell on the offices in existence could only be performed slowly, as the ordinary business of the offices necessarily left them little leisure for extra work. In 1885, at the jubilee of the London Statistical Society, a number of eminent statistical officials from all parts of the world except Germany were present, and the opportunity was taken to organize an International Institute of Statistics with a view to remedying the defects already ascertained to exist in the arrangements made by the congresses. The only obstacle to securing a proper representation of all countries was the absence of any German delegates, none of the official heads of the German statistical office being allowed to attend,—apparently on political grounds. Since then assurances of a satisfactory kind have been given to the German Government that their servants would be in no way committed to any course disapproved by that Government if they gave their assistance to the institute, from the formation of which it is hoped that much advantage may result. For information as to the constitution and objects of the institute reference may be made to a paper by Dr F. X. von Neumann-Spallart in vol. i. (1886) of the *Bulletin de l'Institut International de Statistique* (Rome, 1886).

Literature.—Maurice Block, *Traité Théorique et Pratique de Statistique*, Paris, 1878; Luigi Bodio, *Della Statistica nei suoi Rapporti coll'Economia Politica*, &c., Milan, 1869; Antonio Gabaglio, *Storia e Teoria Generale della Statistica*, Milan, 1880; Max Haushofer, *Lehr- u. Handbuch der Statistik*, 2d ed., Vienna, 1882; K. Kries, *Die Statistik als selbständige Wissenschaft*, Cassel, 1890; Georg Mayr, *Die Gesetzmässigkeit im Gesellschaftsleben*, Munich, 1871 (abridged translation in *Journ. Stat. Soc.*, Sept. 1883; the work has also been translated into Italian with valuable notes by G. B. Salvioni, Turin, 1886); Adolphe Quetelet, various works, but especially that entitled *Sur l'Homme et le Développement de ses Facultés, ou Essai de Physique Sociale*, 2 vols., Paris, 1835, and *Letters on the Theory of Probabilities*, already referred to; Albert C. F. Schäffle, *Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*, Tübingen, 1881; Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, especially part ii. pp. 465 sq.; Adolf Wagner, article "Statistik" in Buntson-Brater's *Staatswörterbuch*, vol. x. (W. HO.)

STATIUS, PUBLIUS PAPINIUS, Roman poet, lived from about 45 to 96 A.D., so far as can be judged from indications afforded by his poems. He was, to a great extent, born and trained to the profession of a poet. The Statii were of Græco-Campanian origin, and were gentle, though impoverished, and the family records were not without political distinctions. The elder Statius, our poet's father, was the Orbilius of his time, and taught with distinguished success at Naples and Rome. From boyhood to age he proved himself a champion in the poetic tournaments which formed an important part of the amusements of the early empire. The younger Statius declares that his father was in his time equal to any literary task, whether in prose or verse. Probably our poet inherited a modest competence and was not under the necessity of begging his bread from wealthy patrons. So far as appears he never pursued any occupation but that of poet, as poor an occupation in those days as in ours, if we may believe Juvenal and Martial. Statius certainly wrote poems to order (as *Silvae*, i. 1, 2, ii. 7, and iii. 4), but there is no indication that the material return for them was important to him. In his seventh satire Juvenal speaks of the immense public enthusiasm which attended the recitation of the *Thebais*, when the benches "were breaking" with applause; but the poet, he says, might have starved had not Paris, the favourite comedian of the day, bought from him the libretto of a comic opera. This reference

of Juvenal deserves, however, as little to be accepted literally as his misleading allusions to Quintilian in the same satire. Of events in the life of Statius we know little. He married early a young widow, for whom he expresses tender affection in some of the few obviously sincere verses he ever wrote. From his boyhood he was victorious in poetic contests,—many times at his native city Naples, thrice at Alba, where he received the golden crown from the hand of the emperor. But at the great Capitoline competition (probably on its third celebration in 94 A.D.) Statius failed to win the coveted chaplet of oak leaves. No doubt the extraordinary popularity of his *Thebais* had led him to regard himself as the supreme poet of the age, and when he could not sustain this reputation in the face of rivals from all parts of the empire he accepted the judges' verdict as a sign that his day was past, and retired to Naples, the home of his ancestors and of his own young days. We still possess the poem he addressed to his wife on this occasion (*Silv.*, iii. 5). It was a hard task to overcome her objections to turning her back upon the great capital. Chief among them was that which arose from a fear lest it should prove difficult to find in Naples a husband for her daughter (by her first marriage; she had no children by Statius). There are hints in this poem which naturally lead to the surmise that Statius was suffering from a loss of the emperor's favour; he may have felt that a word from Domitian would have won for him the envied garland, and that the word ought to have been given. In the preface to book iv. of the *Silvae* there is mention of detractors who hated our poet's style, and these may have succeeded in inducing a new fashion in poetry at court. Such an eclipse, if it happened, must have cut Statius to the heart. He appears to have relished thoroughly the rôle of court-poet. The statement sometimes made that the elder Statius had been the emperor's teacher, and had bestowed many favours on him, so that the son inherited a debt of gratitude, seems to have no solid foundation. Statius lauds the emperor, not to discharge a debt, but rather to create an obligation. His flattery is as far removed from the gentle propitiatory tone of Quintilian as it is from the coarse and crawling humiliation of Martial. It is in the large extravagant style of a nature in itself healthy and generous, which has accepted the theme and left scruples behind. In one of his prefatory epistles Statius declares that he never allowed any work of his to go forth without invoking the godhead of the divine emperor. The poem on the equestrian statue of Domitian set up on the Capitol (*Silv.*, i. 1) is such colossal rodomontade that if the emperor had had a grain of humour in his composition he must have died of merriment on receiving it. Statius had taken the full measure of Domitian's gross taste, and carefully puts conscience and sincerity out of view, lest some uneasy twinge should mar his master's enjoyment. But in one poem, that in which the poet pays his due for an invitation to the imperial table, we have sincerity enough. Statius clearly feels all the raptures he expresses. He longs for the power of him who told the tale of Dido's banquet, and for the voice of him who sang the feast of Alcinous, that he may give forth utterance worthy of the lofty theme. The poet seemed, he says, to dine with great Jove himself and to receive nectar from Ganymede the cup-bearer (an odious reference to the imperial favourite Earinus). All his life hitherto has been barren and profitless. Now only has he begun to live in truth. "O ruler over all the lands, and mighty father of the world which thou hast conquered, do I, *recumbent*, see thee, thou hope of all mankind, and nursling of all the gods? Is it mine to gaze from near at hand on thy features, with the wine-cup and the feast

beside me, *while I am forbidden to rise?*" The palace struck on the poet's fancy like the very hall of heaven; nay, Jove himself marvels at its beauty, but is glad that the emperor should possess such an earthly habitation; he will thus feel less desire to seek his destined abode among the immortals in the skies. Yet even so gorgeous a palace is all too mean for his greatness and too small for his vast presence. "But it is himself, himself, that my eager eye has alone time to scan. He is like a resting Mars or Bacchus or Alcides." Martial too swore that, were Jove and Domitian both to invite him to dinner for the same day, he would prefer to dine with the greater potentate on the earth. Pliny, however, has sketched for us the state dinners of Domitian, where the coarse contempt of the tyrant overclouded the guests, and where a man who still respected himself had torments to endure. Martial and Statius were no doubt supreme among the imperial flatterers. Each was the other's only serious rival. It is therefore not surprising that neither should breathe the other's name. Even if we could by any stretch excuse the bearing of Statius towards Domitian, he could never be forgiven the poem entitled "The Hair of Flavius Earinus," Domitian's Ganymede (*Silv.*, iii. 4), a poem than which it would be hard to find a more repulsive example of real poetical talent defiled for personal ends. Well for Statius that he did not, like Martial, live on into the days of Nerva to write sorry palinodes! Everything points to the conclusion that he did not survive his emperor—that he died, in fact, a short time after leaving Rome to settle in Naples. Apart from the emperor and his minions, the friendships of Statius with men of high station seem to have been maintained on fairly equal terms. He was clearly the poet of society in his day as well as the poet of the court.

As poet, Statius unquestionably shines in many respects when compared with the other post-Augustans. He was born with exceptional talent, and his poetic expression is, with all its faults, richer on the whole and less forced, more buoyant and more felicitous, than is to be found elsewhere in the Silver Age of Latin poetry. Statius is at his best in his occasional verses, the "*Silvae*," which have a character of their own, and in their best parts a charm of their own. The title was proper to verses of rapid workmanship, on everyday themes. Statius prided himself on his powers of improvisation, and he seems to have been quite equal to the Horatian feat of dictating two hundred lines in an hour, while standing on one leg. The improvisatore was in high honour among the later Greeks, as Cicero's speech for the poet Archias indicates; and the poetic contests common in the early empire did much to stimulate ability of the kind. Statius speaks of his "*Silvae*" (preface to book i.) as having "streamed from him under the influence of sudden inspiration, and with a certain pleasure due to their rapidity." No one poem occupied more than two days; some came to birth at the dinner table; many while the poet's friend Pollius sat by his side, and shuddered at the audacity of his pen (preface to book iii.). It is to this velocity that the poems owe their comparative freshness and freedom, along with their loose texture and their inequality. There are thirty-two poems, divided into five books, each with a dedicatory epistle. Of nearly four thousand lines which the books contain, more than five-sixths are hexameters. Four of the pieces (containing about 450 lines) are written in the hendecasyllabic metre, the "tiny metre of Catullus," and there is one Alcaic and one Sapphic ode. But the poems in these metres are merely the experiments of a poet who knows well that his strength lies in the hexameter, which in his hands shows greater freedom, variety, and music than it exhibits when handled by other poets of the Silver Latin Age. The subjects of the "*Silvae*" are very various. Five poems are devoted to flattery of the emperor and his favourites; but of these enough has already been said. Six are lamentations for deaths, or consolations to survivors. Statius seems to have felt a special pride in this class of his productions; and certainly, notwithstanding the excessive and conventional employment of pretty mythological pictures, with other affectations, he sounds notes of pathos such as only come from the true poet. There are oftentimes traits of an almost modern domesticity in these verses, and Statius, the childless, has here and there touched on the charm of childhood in lines for a parallel to which, among the ancients, we must go, strange to say, to his rival Martial. One of the *epicedia*, that on Priscilla the wife of Abascantus, Domitian's freedman (*Silv.*, v. 1), is full of interest for the picture it presents of the official activity of a high