

10.
Statistics in
France, Ger-
many, and
England.

labour of statistics was taken up in Germany by the Universities, whereas in England it fell to the lot chiefly of a single person—the celebrated Sir William Petty, the creator of the term “Political Arithmetic.” Thus, as in science generally, so in statistics, France marched ahead with her systematic and administrative genius; Germany followed in the person of Professor Conring,¹ who introduced the matter as a subject of university teaching; whilst Sir William Petty² wrote his essay with the practical object of disproving an opinion then much current in England, and which has periodically cropped up in the writings of journalists at home and abroad—the threatened decline of the English nation.

¹ Hermann Conring (1606-81), Professor of Medicine and Philosophy at Helmstädt, lectured on “Staatskunde, Notitia Rerum Publicarum,” from about 1660.

² About the same time when lectures on “The Science of the State” were begun in Germany by Conring, Sir William Petty (1623-87) in England, one of the founders of the Royal Society, occupied himself for practical reasons with similar subjects, collecting his views in a tract called ‘Political Arithmetic’ about the year 1677, besides contributing various papers to the ‘Philosophical Transactions’ and publishing several ‘Essays’ (1681-86). The ‘Political Arithmetic’ would have been printed, but for the French policy of Charles II., to whom it was presented in manuscript. It was not published till 1690, after the author’s death, on a permission “given at the Court of Whitehall on the seventh day of November,” by Lord Shelburne, the son of the author. In the preface, he characteristically

ally says: “I have thought fit to examine the following Persuasions; which I find too current in the world, and too much to have affected the minds of some, to the prejudice of all—viz., That *the rents of land are generally fallen*; that therefore, and for many other reasons, *the whole kingdom grows every day poorer and poorer*. That formerly it abounded with gold; but now, *there is a great scarcity, both of gold and silver*. That *there is no trade, nor employment for the people*; and yet that *the land is under-peopled*. That *taxes have been many and great*. That *Ireland and the Plantations in America, and other additions to the Crown, are a burden to England*. That *Scotland is of no advantage*. That *trade, in general, doth lamentably decay*. That *the Hollanders are at our heels, in the race for naval power*; the French grow too fast upon both; and appear so rich and potent, that it is but their clemency that they do not devour their neighbours.”