

**PRACTICAL STATISTICS: A HANDBOOK
FOR THE USE OF THE STATISTICIAN AT
WORK, STUDENTS IN COLLEGES AND
ACADEMIES, AGENTS, CENSUS
ENUMERATION, ETC.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649678198

Practical Statistics: A Handbook for the Use of the Statistician at Work, Students in Colleges and Academies, Agents, Census Enumeration, etc. by Charles F. Pidgin

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Cover @ 2017

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CHARLES F. PIDGIN

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IN PREPARATION:
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

TO BE PUBLISHED EARLY IN 1889.

"A HISTORY OF STATISTICS,"

Embracing in its List of Subjects considered

1. *The Origin of Statistics.*
2. *The Growth of Statistics.*
3. *The Present Condition of Statistics.*
4. *The Future Development of Statistics.*
5. *The Statistical Offices and Societies of the World (with Addresses).*
6. *The Statisticians of the World (with Biographies and Portraits).*
7. *Summary of the Statistical Work of the World.*
8. *Catalogue of Official and Private Statistical Works and Papers.*
9. *Statistical Subjects, Methods, etc.*

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TO
HON. CARROLL D. WRIGHT,
CHIEF OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF LABOR,
AND COMMISSIONER OF LABOR OF THE UNITED STATES,

This Book

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED;

FOR IT IS TO HIS ENCOURAGEMENT AND ADVICE, DURING FIFTEEN YEARS OF OFFICIAL
WORK TOGETHER, THAT THE AUTHOR IS GREATLY INDEBTED FOR
WHATEVER SUCCESS HE MAY HAVE ATTAINED
AS A PRACTICAL STATISTICIAN.

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CHARLES F. PIDGIN,

CHIEF CLERK OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF LABOR.



BOSTON:

THE WILLIAM E. SMYTHIE COMPANY,

No. 3 TREMONT PLACE.

1888.

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PREFACE.

Many works have been written relating to statistics but, to the author's knowledge, none have been devoted exclusively to the explanation of the practical part of statistical work.

The first work written in relation to a new branch of a science or art is apt to be doubly unsatisfactory—to the author who is unable to refer to other writers and profit by the criticisms of their work, and to the reader who often fails to find the particular subject in which he is interested given the prominence he thinks it should receive.

The writer of this work had the advantage of ten years' service as an accountant before beginning statistical work. Since June, 1873, or for nearly fifteen years, his duties have been statistical in their nature. Being naturally inventive, he has not been bound by old methods but has endeavored to introduce improvements in the manner of doing statistical work. He has been advised to put into book form the principal features of his system of practical statistical work, and the results of his experience in the past fifteen years, including his connection with three censuses—two State and one National.

He is aware that his work is tentative; that in a few years there will be much more to write, and much that is

now recommended may be superseded by better forms and improved methods. His aim is to continue to be a student as long as he is a statistician, and he hopes that he may, himself, contribute to future editions of this work, if they should ever be issued, and in other ways, more valuable information than he is now able to supply.

The science of statistics is destined to achieve a great development, and the practical statistician is the one to whom the world looks for honest and assiduous endeavor to broaden the application and elevate the character of the work done in his chosen field of scientific service. The practical statistician must be expert in the use of figures, but such aptitude is only the mere alphabet of his work; he must know the tendencies of the times and select such topics for investigation as will answer the public demand; he must frame inquiries, draft schedules, write instructions for those filling in or answering inquiries, examine the returns, at the same time correcting errors and supplying omissions, adopt and supervise the application of the most improved methods of tabulation, prepare the material for expressive and concise presentation in print, and give therewith such careful explanations and exhaustive analyses that all parties will agree that the truth was his object, that he has found it, and that progressive action may be safely based upon the results presented.

Boston, April 19, 1888.