

## PREFACE

BY SIR FRANCIS GALTON, D.C.L., F.R.S.

IN my 'Herbert Spencer' lecture of 1907 before the University of Oxford, I expressed a belief that the elementary ideas on which the modern system of statistics depend, that the quality of the results to which they lead, and that the meaning of the uncouth words used in their description, admitted of much simpler explanation than usual. I sketched out a possible course of lectures to be accompanied with certain simple sortings, with object lessons and with diagrams. Finally, I expressed the hope that some competent teacher would elaborate a course of instruction on these lines. I entertain a strong belief that such a course would be of great service to those who are interested in statistics, but who, from want of mathematical aptitudes and special study, are unable to comprehend the results arrived at, even as regards their own subjects. It is, for example, a great hindrance to have no knowledge of what is meant by 'correlation.'

I learnt with much pleasure that two very competent persons were disposed to undertake the task—namely, Mr. W. Palin Elderton, well known as a highly instructed actuary, and his sister, Miss Ethel M. Elderton, who holds the post of Research Scholar in the Eugenics Laboratory of the University of London (now located in University College), and who is a thoroughly experienced worker in the modern methods.

This primer is the result. It goes forth on its important errand of familiarizing educated persons with the most recent developments of the new school of statistics, and, I beg to be allowed to add, with my heartiest good wishes for its success.

*September, 1909.*