

expounder. Persons are grouped according to some characteristic, and the number of persons forming the group is set down under that characteristic. This is the raw material from which the statist endeavours to deduce general theorems in sociology. Other students of human nature proceed on a different plan. They observe individual men, ascertain their history, analyse their motives, and compare their expectation of what they will do with their actual conduct. . . . However imperfect this study of man may be in practice, it is evidently the only perfect method in principle. . . . If we betake ourselves to the statistical method, we do so confessing that we are unable to follow the details of each individual case, and expecting that the effects of widespread causes, though very different in each individual, will produce an average result on the whole nation, from the study of which we may estimate the character and propensities of an imaginary being called the Mean Man. Now, if the molecular theory of the constitution of bodies is true, all our knowledge of matter is of a statistical kind. A constituent molecule of a body has properties very different from those of the body to which it belongs. The smallest portion of a body which we can discern consists of a vast number of molecules, and all we can learn about the group of molecules is statistical information. . . . Hence those uniformities which we observe in our experiments with quantities of matter containing millions of millions of molecules are uniformities of the same kind as those explained by Laplace and wondered at by Buckle, arising from the slumping to-