Kingsley declared that there could never be a good world for women until the last remnant of canon law was destroyed; and that Thackeray was much impressed by the love of the Turkish people for their children.

It is difficult to understand for what class of readers such a volume is intended. C. D. W.

Bulkley, M. E. *The Feeding of School Children.* London. G. Bell and Sons, Ltd.; 1914; pp. 278; price 3s. 6d.

THIS admirable book is published under the auspices of the Ratan Tata Foundation, and may be regarded as complementary to Mr. Greenwood's "Health and Physique of School Children," recently published under the same auspices. Miss Bulkley traces, in some detail, the history of the movement for providing school meals, from the earliest efforts of voluntary agencies to the Education (Provision of Meals) Act. The working of this Act is then described with great knowledge, and the following (among other) conclusions are reached:—

1. So long as economic conditions are what they are, the provision of school meals is a necessity. The Act should be obligatory upon local authorities where no adequate provision is made by voluntary agencies. The limitation of a halfpenny rate should be removed.

2. The children to be fed should not be selected solely on the poverty test, and the provision of meals should be better linked up with the school medical service.

3. The meals should be part of the school curriculum, and cleanliness and good manners should be taught. Where only one meal a day is provided, dinner is preferable to breakfast. The food should be prepared not by caterers, but by the local authority itself in consultation with the school medical officers.

4. Meals should be continued throughout the year and during holidays. (There is an impressive chart showing the average loss in weight of Bradford children during their holidays.)

5. Meals should be intended primarily for paying, and not for necessitous, children. Otherwise, parents who can pay will not send their children to any great extent.

6. Overlapping between the guardians and the education authorities can be avoided if the guardians give their out-relief partly in the form of school meals, and pay the education authority for these meals.

In a most interesting chapter on the Provision of Meals in London, Miss Bulkley describes the functions and the great opportunities of the Care Committee. "The Care Committee system represents, indeed, one of the most hopeful movements of the time, denoting, as it does, an awakening of the social conscience and a revolt against the old system of district visiting . . . ." and she quotes some words of Mr. Marquis, of Liverpool, in which he sees in the Care Committee a means of turning the grumbling ratepayer into an enlightened and sympathetic critic of the education policy of his city. In the poorer districts of London the need for workers is very great, and the system ought to be more widely adopted in the provinces. There are chapters on the Extent and Causes of Malnutrition, and on the effect of the meals on the children, in which medical and other evidence is skilfully marshalled and leads Miss Bulkley to the conclusion that "as far as the children are concerned, whether we consider the improvement in physique, mental capacity or manners, there is no doubt that the provision of school meals has proved of the greatest benefit." An encouraging fact is that the school meals seem to improve the home meals, the children "acting as missionaries to their mothers." Now most of this the reader would have perhaps expected, and he will turn with special interest to the most controversial chapter, that on "The Effect on the Parents." In this Miss Bulkley deals faithfully with the "pauperisation" argument, and we have seldom read a more able discussion of the danger to the "solidarity of the family" alleged to lie generally in muni-

cipal enterprise and particularly in school meals. Miss Bulkley is strong both in theory and in experience, and though others equally strong may disagree with her defence of the meals, she deserves to make many converts. A. COCKBURN.

Elderton, ETHEL M. *The Declining Birth-rate: Report on the English Birth-rate.* Part I., *England North of the Humber.* London. Dulau and Co.; 1914; price 9s. net; pp. 246.

So many of the works devoted to a discussion of the birth-rate are ill-constructed that the systematic plan of Miss Elderton's treatise at once commands the approval of any serious reader. In an introduction the nature and limitations of the material are described and methods for its analysis indicated, briefly, but in a sufficiently intelligible manner. Each of the registration counties of England north of the Humber is then passed in review and its constituent units studied in detail. In the case of each district the changes in the birth-rate are displayed both diagramatically and with the help of statistical constants. In all cases a comparison is instituted between the actual birth-rate, in terms of married women at ages 15-55, and their potential fertility estimated by Tait's method; wherever possible, statistics of housing and industrial pursuits are furnished, while verbal accounts of local conditions have often been supplied by residents. In the final sections, the relation between the fall of the birth-rate on the one side and industrial and social variations on the other are examined with the help of the calculus of correlations, the last chapter setting forth the general conclusions to be drawn.

Any work planned on so large a scale and yet affording so much specialised information must be liable to attack at various points. One statistician may object that some measure of social conditions other than those adopted by the authoress would have been superior; another may dissent from the particular choice of constants; a third may hold that the influence of increasingly stringent registration in the earlier period (birth registration was not enforced *under penalty* until 1873) has not been enough emphasised, and so on. This sort of thing is the small change of criticism, and we desire to pass at once to Miss Elderton's general conclusions, only pausing to record our sense of the obligation under which all votaries of statistical science must labour in respect of her valuable and painstaking inquiry, the publication of which would have done credit to a Government department, and is worthy of still greater praise as the effort of a private worker.

Miss Elderton's first conclusion is that there has been an immense fall in the birth-rate of England north of the Humber, a fall only to a slight extent dependent upon changes in age constitution. We cannot suppose that anyone who has paid attention to Miss Elderton's work or to the publications of the General Register Office will dispute this conclusion, and need not enlarge upon its importance.

The second conclusion is that the fall is due not to any physiological decrease of fertility, but to widespread and nearly universal voluntary restriction.

This conclusion will also be accepted by a majority of students. So far as we know, Dr. John Brownlee is the only statistician of the first rank who entertains a different opinion. Dr. Brownlee rests his belief partly on certain general historico-statistical considerations and partly upon a particular study of Scottish data from which he infers that "the whole distribution of the birth-rate figures seems to disprove that any but natural causes are at work in the production of the change."[1]

The evidence upon which Miss Elderton relies is first the information as to the employment of contra-conceptive devices supplied by certain of her correspondents, and secondly, the fact that the fall has, on the whole, been more marked among those classes or in those districts in

[1] Brownlee, Proc. Roy. Philosophical Soc. of Glasgow, April 29th, 1908.