

POPULATION

Miriam E. Oatman-Blachly, 1920.
(Abstract)

Many statesmen and publicists believe and teach that it is absolutely necessary for every nation that wishes to progress, to increase its population rapidly. The writer believes, on the contrary, that overcrowding of the world is the greatest danger to peace and prosperity.

Increase of population is desirable when (1) the world's system of food-production has not yet reached the point of diminishing returns, and is not merely sufficient, but ample, to support a greater number of persons; (2) when the material resources are available, so that standards of living will not be lowered by the increase of population; (3) under any conditions, to nations which face the likelihood of war—or at least, so it appears to most people.

This brings up to a vicious circle; viz., nations in a world where war is imminent must increase their population as much as possible; nations which are overcrowded must resort to war (unless the other checks named by Malthus operate, as so often they do in China and India). Whether the check of pestilence and famine, or that of war, reduce the overcrowded population, immense suffering results from such overcrowding.