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EDITORIAL

INFANT BIRTHS AND DEATHS

In the birth-registration area of the United States 1,353,649 infants were born alive in 1918, representing a birth rate of 24.4 per 1,000 population. Of this total number of infants born alive 1,288,711 were white and 74,938 were colored. The total number of deaths in the same area was 1,014,620, or 18.2 per 1,000. The births exceeded the deaths by 34.4 per cent. For every state in the registration area, for most of the cities, and for nearly all the counties, the births exceeded the deaths in many cases by considerable proportions. The mortality rate for infants under 1 year of age averaged 101 per 1,000 live births. The foregoing are among the facts brought out by the annual compilation of birth statistics by the Bureau of the Census.

The birth registration area, established in 1915, has grown rapidly. It comprised in 1916, as in 1917, the six New England States, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia, and had an estimated population of 55,813,339, or about 53 per cent. of the estimated total population of the United States in that year.

The birth rate for the entire birth-registration area fell below that for 1917 by two-tenths of one per 1,000 population; but the death rate was greater by 4.1 per 1,000 than in 1917. Thus the excess of the birth rate over the death rate for 1918, which amounted to 6.2 per 1,000, was somewhat less than the corresponding excess for 1917, 10.5.

The infant mortality rate—that is, the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 born alive—throughout the birth-registration area as a whole was 101 in 1918 as against 94 in 1917. This is equivalent to saying that in 1917 of every 11 infants born alive 1 died before reaching the age of 1 year, whereas the ratio in 1918 was about 1 in 10. Among the 20 states these rates ranged from 64 for Utah to 140 for Maryland, and for the white population separately the lowest and the highest rates were 63 for Utah and 126 for Pennsylvania.