

## CHAPTER II

### DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION

THE world's total population, roughly about 1950 millions, is very unevenly distributed. It is divided by the speaking of many languages; it exhibits diverse racial characteristics; and sections of it have attained to widely different degrees of culture and civilisation.

From the minute point of view the world's physical features are very varied.<sup>1</sup> From a world point of view, however, human beings are relatively but the merest specks on the earth's surface, and the earth's physical features, though relatively smooth compared with it directly, are imposing enough to man. His distribution and his activities are greatly influenced, therefore, by the character of the surface on which he dwells. It is well to bear in mind, however, that, judged from a cosmic point of view, man is but a mere micro-organism and his population-number of 1,950,000,000 is utterly insignificant. The duration of an individual life, compared with the totality of Man's life on earth, is also an insignificant fraction. For example, if he be taken to live on the average say fifty years—more than

<sup>1</sup> Looked at as a whole, the earth is nearly an ellipsoid of revolution, with a polar diameter that is less than its equatorial diameter by about the  $1/293.5$  part. To the eye sensibly a sphere, its highest mountain is about  $1/1443$  part of the diameter of the sphere. Represented by a globe one foot in diameter, this greatest height would be only  $1/120$  part of an inch. On such a scale therefore the earth-globe would look smooth. Taking man's height as, say, 5 ft. 6 in., he would be less than one five-thousandth of this, more exactly  $1/5273$ . Thus on the scale of the globe one foot in diameter, he would be less than one six-hundred-thousandth of an inch ( $1/634,045$  in.), that is to say, quite ultra-microscopic.