

ARCHÆOLOGY AND MALTHUS

A USEFUL disclaimer of the Malthusian theory that "there is a natural tendency and constant effort in population to increase beyond the means of subsistence" is provided in a recent Pelican publication, *The Growth of Civilization*, by W. J. Perry, M.A., D.Sc., of London University. According to this authority on Archæology, the first races of men were food-gatherers and a great leap forward into civilization took place when the transition was made, in the Azilian period of the Old Stone Age, from gathering to producing food. Cultivation of the soil, and stock rearing was the origin of civilization. The earliest form of agriculture was by irrigation, followed in later periods by dry cultivation. The argument of the book is that Egypt was the cradle of this development.

Discussing the Stone Age food-gatherers, Dr. Perry says (p. 29): that it is not entirely correct that distribution and density of early populations was determined by the food supply. Archaeological findings give reason to believe that early men were partly industrialized, and migrated and settled where materials for their implements could be found, and that they tended to occupy certain limited areas and to ignore other areas that provided an abundant food supply. "There is no reason to believe that primitive men increased as far as the food supply permitted. Apparently other controlling forces were at work." The example is cited of dwarf Bushmen of the Southern part of Africa who came down from the North-east and who were always few in numbers and must always have had ample supplies of game to hunt.

Dr. Perry's dictum is: "People with an industry necessitating a raw material not readily available everywhere will tend to settle near sources of that raw material." (p. 67.) The same spot on the Somme at St. Acheul has been visited by palaeolithic man from earliest times down to the end of the Stone Age. It was a flint workshop, and that, beyond doubt, is why it was visited so constantly. These early races had become industrialized and this had an important effect on their selection of places for habitation. Many instances of this selection of flint sources are given in the text. The evidence of widespread intercourse between different parts of the world even in those days is also fascinating to read. Thus the *Cassis Rufa* shells found at Mentone must have come from the Indian Ocean. Possibly Stone Age men were not civilized enough to have tariff systems.

On p. 142 we read: "The dominant factor is the human mind, with its needs and desires, and the external world only enters into relationship with man in so far as it ministers to his needs and desires; it does not force him, to any appreciable extent, to do its will, as we are so often told." And on p. 161: "Much has been made of these movements of the Huns, Turks and Mongols for the purpose of showing that man is strongly influenced in his movements by his food supply. . . . The supposed periodic drying up of Asia has, it is said, produced a lack of food and caused nomadic peoples to seek fresh pastures. . . . This is not so. . . . They were not seeking food but someone to

dominate." "To say that Asia has been devoid of adequate pasturage is absurd; for, as Douglas Carruthers has shown in his work on *Unknown Mongolia*, there are thousands of square miles of fertile pasturage in Dzungaria that have never been tenanted by nomads or irrigators. . . . With one exception none of the rivers contain gold . . . therefore there were no irrigators . . . no one to dominate and so no conquerors." (p. 164.)

Whether we can agree in all particulars with Dr. Perry as to what caused the cultural degradations of history, he has certainly furnished additional evidence, if that were required, of the correctness of Henry George's refutation of the teachings of the Reverend Mr. Malthus.—D. J. J. O.

SINGAPORE

A Political Explanation

THE PRESS has widely quoted the message that came from the special correspondent writing from Batavia, representing *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* joint service. He discussed factors in the loss of Singapore. *The Times* omitted part of the message. The following are extracts from it as it appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* of 18th February:—

"In Malaya there was time for static to be replaced by dynamic and able leadership. The Government had no roots in the life of the people of the country. With the exception of certain sections of the Chinese community—some inspired by free China's struggle for survival, others by Soviet precept and example—the bulk of the Asiatic population remained spectators from start to finish. Their inclination was to get as far away as possible from the scene of hostilities.

"After nearly 120 years of British rule the vast majority of Asiatics were not sufficiently interested in the continuance of this rule to take any steps to ensure its continuance. And if it is true that the Government had no roots in the life of the people it is equally true that a few thousand British officials in Malaya and a few thousand British residents who made their living out of the country—virtually none of whom looked upon Malaya as being their home—were completely out of touch with people. British and Asiatics lived their lives apart. There was never any fusion or even cementing of these two groups. British rule and culture and the small British community formed no more than a thin and brittle veneer. . . . One good push sent the structure crashing to the ground"

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SOUTH AFRICA

IN A column article, the South African correspondent of the *Scotsman* (31st January) reviewed the demands made at a recent meeting of the Natives Representative Council, a body which has no powers except that of advice to the Government but succeeds in giving expression to native views a domestic policy which otherwise would not be heard at all. Colonel Reitz the Minister of Native Affairs, addressing the Council, struck a new and cheerfully progressive note but he had to warn the Council that in these matters the Government was compelled to hasten slowly for fear of the "forces of reaction" which it might arouse against both itself and the native people. Examples are given by the correspondent of the colour-bar attitude towards the natives, it being "one of the tragedies of South African life that Negrophobia is not confined to the Boers but is shared by many British people in the Cape and Natal." It is refreshing to find in the *Scotsman* such liberal sentiments as the correspondent expresses:—

"Post-war South Africa must embrace the native population in the social reforms that are inevitably coming. At the moment the natives are excluded from pension schemes which even the Coloured and Indian sections enjoy, and their children are denied the milk which is issued free to poor white, Coloured, and Indian children. They receive the minimum of education, and they are cramped in reserves whose soil threatens to collapse in ruin under the pressure of population.

"The Smuts Government has set up a commission to inquire into native health and kindred problems; but it is becoming evident that no amount of tinkering will do any good. The standard of living of the natives must be raised, and raised quickly, to an entirely new level. There is only one way to do that, and it is to overhaul the Union's regressive taxation system and free the natives from the crushing burden of having to pay for their own education, their own social welfare, and their own land out of their own funds.

"The present conditions of the native people, now universally admitted to be bad and growing worse, show that the labour supply is rapidly becoming vitiated. It must be restored and rehabilitated before any further strain is placed upon it.

"South Africa will welcome immigrants after the war if, with Colonel Reitz, they are prepared to support the principles of the Atlantic Charter in their application to the native people; but the selfish, the shortsighted, and the get-rich-quick would only add another element of instability to a country which, despite its surface appearance of wealth, is poor and undeveloped."

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