

## Fear

THE idea of many personal devils came with and has gone with the idea of many personal gods. The conception of one devil came with the Hebrew conception of one personal God. Whether or not fear was the origin of man's idea of God, fear and fear only, was the origin of man's conception of many personal devils.

This idea of a personal devil yet persists as a fear of some force which, though not clearly defined, is yet sufficiently strong to prevent equal distribution of earth's bounties. This fear, inherited from ages past, is the only devil—is the only evil.

This, and this only, enabled a hireling of the landlords of Great Britain to foist upon the world the economic theory, "That population, constantly tending to increase, must when unrestrained, ultimately press against the limits of subsistence, not as against a fixed, but against an elastic barrier, which makes the procurement of subsistence progressively more and more difficult."

And thus whenever reproduction has had time to assert its power and is unchecked by prudence there must exist that degree of want which will keep population within the bounds of subsistence. This, the Malthusian theory, though it obviously denies the existence of a just God, was welcomed by the rich and acquiesced in by the poor because of the hypnotic influence of their surroundings.

These surroundings were the result of monopoly. Monopoly in its various forms is but the outgrowth of the fear inherited from the past. It is an effort to construct a wall of legal right so high that the wolf cannot enter.

This doctrine was eagerly welcomed by the rich because, to use the language of another, it "parries the demand for reform and shelters selfishness from question and from conscience by the interposition of an inevitable necessity. It furnishes a philosophy by which Dives as he feasts can shut out the image of Lazarus who faints with hunger at his door; by which wealth may complacently button up its pockets when poverty asks for alms, and the rich Christian bend on Sundays in a nicely upholstered pew to implore the good gifts of the All-Father without any feeling of responsibility for the squalid misery that is festering but a square away. For poverty, want, and starvation are by this theory not chargeable either to individual greed or to social maladjustments; they are the inevitable results of universal laws, with which, if it were not impious, it were as hopeless to quarrel as with the law of gravitation. In this view, he who in the midst of want, has accumulated wealth, has but fenced in a little oasis from the driving sand which else would have overwhelmed it. He has gained for himself, but has hurt nobody.

Even if the rich were literally to obey the injunctions of Christ and divide their wealth among the poor, nothing would be gained. Population would be increased, only to press again upon the limits of subsistence. or capital, and the equality that would be produced would be but the equality of common misery. And thus reforms which

would interfere with the interests of any powerful class are discouraged as hopeless. As the moral law forbids any forestalling of the methods by which the natural law gets rid of surplus population, and thus holds in check a tendency to increase potent enough to pack the surface of the globe with human beings as sardines are packed in a box, nothing can really be done, either by individual or by combined effort to extirpate poverty, save to trust to the efficiency of education and preach the necessity of prudence."

This doctrine was stolidly acquiesced in by the poor because it accorded with their thought, or lack of thought. They had, the world over, been reared in an atmosphere of monopoly—under a system the necessary result of which was starvation for some and privation for most of humanity. They could conceive of no other. This lack of faith in a just God gave the Malthusian doctrine its influence.

The effect of fear as formulated by Malthus is best exemplified by the German people of today. Taught by the unscrupulous, and themselves hypnotized, the poor of Germany accepted, without any reservation, this abominable doctrine of Malthus. The result was the late war. The Germans did not invade Belgium from lust of carnage, but because they feared God was not able to provide for all His children.

The agony of the world today is caused by fear and by fear only. Fear is the result of ignorance. Just as knowledge reduced the many devils of our savage ancestors to one, so knowledge will banish the fear of poverty from the modern world. Not many years hence the Malthusian theory will be as obsolete as the notion that the earth is flat.

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## Wealth Distribution in 1890

WHEN the bill to take the census of 1890 was pending before Congress, I secured an amendment requiring the enumerators to ascertain the distribution of wealth through an inquiry into farms, homes and mortgages.

Using the figures thus secured by the enumerators of the census of 1890, on June 10, 1898, I delivered a speech in the senate of the United States on the subject of the distribution of wealth in the United States and from the census of 1890, I showed that 52 per cent. of the people of the United States owned \$95.00 worth of property per capita, or \$95.00 each of second-hand clothing and second-hand furniture, and that over four thousand families owned twelve billions of the wealth, and that 6,604,000 families, or 52 per cent. of the population, owned three billions of the wealth, or just five per cent.—EX-SENATOR R. F. PETTIGREW.

THE widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the Oeil de Boeuf, hath an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle and call it rent.—CARLYLE.