

# UTOPIA

CONCERNING THE BEST STATE OF A  
COMMONWEALTH  
AND THE NEW ISLAND OF UTOPIA

by

## Sir Thomas More



Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, published, in Latin, in 1516, is an exploration of the best way for human beings to live together. In Book I we meet Raphael Hythloday, a mysterious, free-spirited world traveler who sharply criticizes England and other European nations by contrast to the much better commonwealth he has visited: Utopia. In Book II we learn how the Utopians have abolished private property, choose their leaders democratically, disdain gold and finery, avoid war, deeply respect learning, and tolerate all religious ideas. More carefully distances himself from the many radical ideas that Raphael describes, but after 500 years thoughtful people still ponder the slender volume that the Victorian visionary and social reformer John Ruskin called "the most mischievous book ever written."

## Why a QuikScan edition?

QuikScan is provides brief summaries throughout the book, making it much easier to understand and dramatically increasing retention. And, if a section of the book doesn't interest you, read *just* the summary and keep going. We hope to draw more people to this brilliant and important work and to provide a richer, more enjoyable reading experience.

The translation of *Utopia* used here and most of the notes are borrowed from the Open Utopia edition, edited by Stephen Duncombe (<http://theopenutopia.org>). The QuikScan summaries, introductory essays, and additional footnotes are by David K. Farkas.



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# About Sir Thomas More



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1. Sir Thomas More was a pre-eminent Renaissance Humanist, an upright public figure, a martyr, and a saint. Today he is revered by a broad spectrum of people.
2. Well-born and well-educated, he served the eminent Cardinal Morton as a page, studied Latin and Greek at Oxford, left after two years to study law, and joined the bar in 1502.
3. More seriously considered becoming a monk and followed ascetic religious practices, such as wearing a hair shirt, all this life.
4. More married in 1505 and had four children before his died in 1511. More immediately married the feisty Alice Middleton.
5. More moved steadily upward as a public official, gaining great respect. He became Lord Chancellor in 1529.

6. In his fine home in Chelsea, built in 1525, More hosted King Henry, Humanist intellectuals, and many others. He enjoyed a domestic life with his large family.
7. More recognized the pervasive corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and sought reform. But he remained a staunch Catholic and strongly opposed the Reformation.
8. Unwilling to acknowledge Henry as "Supreme Head" of the Church of England and to endorse Henry's divorce from Queen Catherine, More retired to private life and hoped to be left alone.
9. However, he was imprisoned and, in July 1535, tried for high treason and executed.

▲1 Sir Thomas More is remembered both for *Utopia*, one of the most influential books written by an English author, and as a public figure of great integrity, an embodiment of the ideals of Renaissance Humanism, a martyr, and a saint. More gave up his position as Chancellor of England and accepted imprisonment and execution rather than acknowledge Henry VIII as head of the Roman Catholic Church in England or recognize the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, when Henry wanted to marry Ann Bolyn. More is a saint in the Roman Catholic Church and also in the Anglican church, even though he was a fierce opponent of Protestantism.

More was also a scholar and intellectual, a pre-eminent member of the circle of Renaissance Humanists led by his friend Erasmus. *Utopia* is his foremost, but hardly his only, literary achievement. His unfinished History of King Richard III, while showing bias against Richard, is a very vivid narrative and is considered a landmark in historical writing. Finally our knowledge of his domestic life speaks to his loving nature, his great capacity for friendship, and the superb application, within his household, of his values as a Renaissance humanist.

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More is revered by a broad spectrum of people, religious and non-religious. Because *Utopia* is a communist state in which social justice is paramount, More was esteemed by the Socialists and Marxists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, he is a figure from the past who reminds us of the human potential for integrity, courage, and love as he asks us to strive to become our best selves.

▲2 More was born in London in 1478 into the family of the successful lawyer Sir John More. He received the best of schooling at St. Anthony's grammar school and at age 12 he became a page (with the continuation of his schooling) in the household of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor of England. Mor-

ton held his young page in high regard, and More remembered his years with Morton very fondly. We meet Morton as a character in the dialog that makes up Book I of *Utopia*.

At age 14, More went to Oxford and studied under the eminent scholars and Humanists Thomas Linacre and William Grocyn. He became proficient in Greek as well as Latin, wrote comedies (which do not survive), and studied formal logic. After only two years he left Oxford at his father's insistence to study law in London. He joined the bar in 1502.

▲3 More seriously considered abandoning his legal career to become a monk. For several while he was studying law, More he lived near the Carthusian monastery outside London and took part in their spiritual exercises. Although he deeply admired their piety, More ultimately decided to remain a layman, largely because he did not want to live celibate. However, for the rest of his life More continued certain ascetical practices, such as wearing a hair shirt next to his skin and occasionally engaging in self-flagellation. In some respects Utopian society exhibits both the monastic life that More was drawn to and the opportunities for a fulfilling marriage and family life that More chose for himself.

▲4 More married Jane Colt in 1505. She was about 10 years younger than her husband, quiet and good-natured. Erasmus reported that More wanted to give his young wife a better education than she had previously received at home, and he tutored her in music and literature. They appear to have been very happy together, and they had four children before Jane died in 1511.

Within a month's time, More married a wealthy widow, Alice Harpur Middleton, who was seven years older than More and brought her own daughter into the marriage. More was already well acquainted with Lady Alice and her family and was eager to have a suitable woman raise his four children. Unlike his first wife, Alice was feisty and full of opinions. More, a famous jokester, once described her as "neither a pearl or a girl." Nonetheless, More and Lady Alice lived happily but did not have children of their own.

More wrote this remarkable epitaph on the grave of his first wife in Chelsea Old Church:

Here lies Joanna, dear little wife of Thomas More, who intends this tomb for Alice and me. The first united to me in my youthful days, gave me a boy and three girls to call me father. The second, a rare distinction in a stepmother, was as affectionate as if the children were her own. It is hard to say if the first lived with me more beloved than the second does now. Oh how blessed if fate and religion had permitted all three of us to live together. I pray the tomb and heaven may unite us, thus death could give what life could not give.

More insisted on giving his daughters the same education as his son, an unusual practice at the time. His eldest daughter, Margaret, in particular, was regarded as an excellent student.



▲5 More was elected to Parliament in 1504 and moved steadily upward as a public official and statesman. In 1510, He became one of the two undersheriffs of the City of London and earned the reputation as an honest and effective public servant. In 1514 he became Master of Requests and joined the Privy Council. Thomas was knighted by King Henry in May 1521. Other important appointments and duties as a diplomat followed. After Wolsey's disgrace and death in 1529, More became Lord Chancellor of England, the first layman to hold this position. He was now the most powerful person in England after the King, and he was widely respected for his honesty at a time when bribery was rampant.

▲6 In 1524 he purchased and seven acres of land in Chelsea, then a pleasant village just two miles down-river from Westminster Abbey. He built a large, handsome house with beautiful grounds, a library, and a chapel. More hosted many guests at Chelsea, and regularly engaged in intellectual discussions with Humanist thinkers, including Erasmus, with whom More established a life-long friendship when Erasmus first visited England in 1499. More, like the other Humanists of Europe, was a great letter writer, and collectively they discussed in their lengthy letters, key literary, philosophical, political, and religious issues of their day. Henry himself regularly traveled to Chelsea on the State barge to visit his friend and counselor. Here is an excerpt from a letter in which Erasmus described More's life in Chelsea:

More has built for himself on the banks of the Thames not far from London a country house that is dignified and adequate without being so magnificent as to excite envy. Here he lives happily with his family, consisting of his

wife, his son and daughter-in-law, three daughters with their husbands and already eleven grandchildren.

▲7 Along with his fellow Humanists (and many others), More recognized the pervasive corruption within the Roman Catholic Church and fervently sought reform. However, More remained a staunch Roman Catholic throughout his life, opposed the Reformation in his writings, and as Chancellor had no hesitation persecuting and executing Protestants. In the view of More, Erasmus, and others, Europe needed a single church as a framework for unity and peace. They were proven right insofar as the Reformation led to hundreds of years of fierce conflict in Europe.



▲8 Henry's quarrels with the Vatican and decision to leave the Roman Catholic Church placed More in an impossible position. He was in no way seeking martyrdom, but he could not fully acknowledge Henry as "Supreme Head" of the Church of England and endorse Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon when Henry wanted to marry Ann Boleyn. He resigned as Chancellor and hoped to recede into private life. In 1533 More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England, (though he expressed his good wishes toward the couple). This gesture was not enough. Henry, despite his personal reluctance, believed that he had to take strong action against More.

▲9 More was charged with accepting bribes, but the case was dismissed for lack of evidence. He was then tried, unsuccessfully, with conspiring with the "Holy Maid of Kent," a nun who had prophesied that Henry would die if he remarried. On April 13, 1534, More refused before a royal commission to take an oath affirming the supremacy of the Crown over the Pope and to uphold Henry's annulment from Catherine. He was then arrested for treason and imprisoned in the Tower of London. In 1535 he was tried high treason before a panel of judges, found guilty, and

condemned to death. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors who were not of the nobility), but the King commuted this to execution by decapitation.

The execution took place on July 6, 1535. When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying: "I pray you, I pray you, Mr Lieutenant, see me safe up and for my coming down, I can shift for myself." While on the scaffold, he declared "I die the king's good servant, but God's first."

Thomas Cromwell, who had replaced More as Chancellor, has generally been regarded as the ruthless and unjust agent of More's prosecution and trial. A revisionist narrative, popularized by novelist Hilary Mantel (*Wolf Hall*), emphasizes More's rigidity of thought and harshness in persecuting heretics and portrays Cromwell more favorably. But the broad consensus supports the more traditional view of the life of Sir Thomas More.

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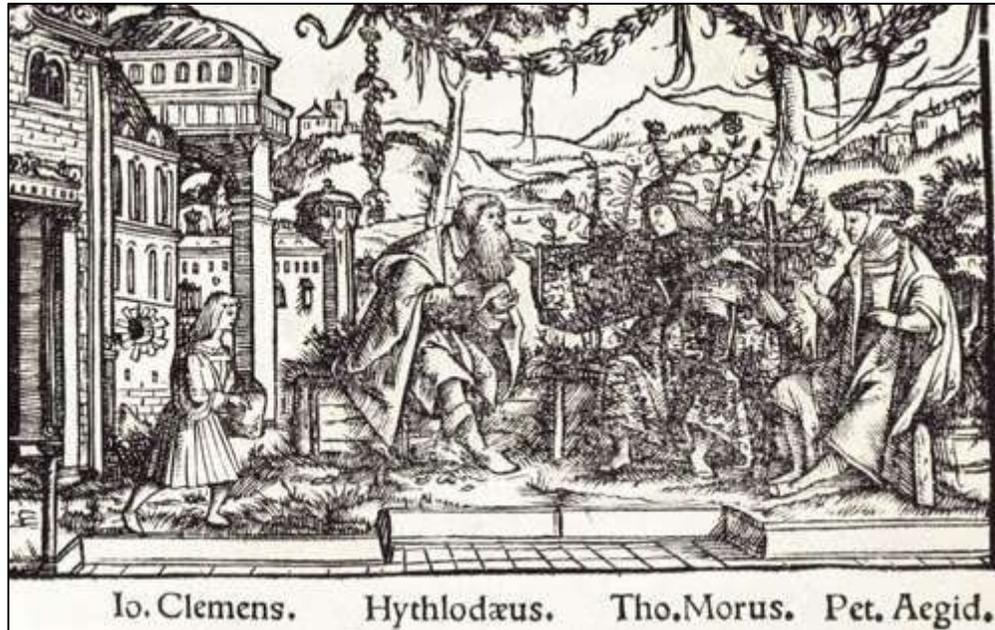
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# About More's *Utopia*



TOC

## About More's *Utopia* 1: Overview of the book

- 1 Raphael Hythloday, More's narrator, describes a land far better governed than any nation in Europe. The Utopians have no personal property, elect their leaders, and much more.
- 2 They share the same vices as Europeans, but their institutions—which are highly regulated—curtail their bad impulses and bring them happy lives.
- 3 Today we still admire More's vision and ponder which Utopian practices should be adopted. And, following More, we create our own Utopian and dystopian worlds.
- 4 Let's step back: In Book I, set in Antwerp, More and Giles converse with Giles's mysterious acquaintance, Raphael Hythloday ("RH"), who has traveled to the New World.
- 5 RH says he will not serve as a valued counselor to any prince. He values his freedom too much. Moreover, princes and their courts are too corrupt to heed good counsel.
- 6 As part of a lengthy digression, RH condemns England's cruel practice of executing thieves. There are better alternatives.

- 7 Ultimately, says RH, the only way to reform Europe is to eliminate ownership of property. More and Giles are skeptical. RH defends his position, citing *Utopia*.
- 8 Book II consists of RH's low-key, topic-by-topic description of Utopian institutions.
- 9 When he finishes, More and Giles reject key features of *Utopia*, but allow that some aspects are worth emulating.

▲ 1 In Book II of *Utopia*, the traveler Raphael Hythloday, More's primary narrator, describes an unknown land far below the Equator in the New World that is radically different and far better governed than any of the nations of Europe. The Utopians own no personal property, choose their leaders democratically, permit all religious beliefs, live simply but very well, have no need for lawyers, acknowledge the legitimacy of sexual desire, provide the best of health care to all citizens, embrace euthanasia, are generous to neighboring nations, and shrewdly minimize the impact of war when war proves necessary. ▲ 2 As individuals, the Utopians are no different from Europeans; they are subject to the same vices. But their highly regimented social institutions curtail the bad impulses of human nature and bring them harmonious, happy lives.

▲ 3 Today, after 500 years, we admire More's vision, wonder whether Utopian society could actual work as well as More imagines, consider which of their practices we would really want, and weigh the price of extreme centralized planning and highly regimented living. We may also wonder whether More fully agrees with the practices of the Utopians. An important genre of our books and movies—the fiction of Utopian societies—derives from *Utopia*, and (though less directly) so does the spin-off genre of dystopian worlds. So, here too, we are drawing upon More's imaginative technique to ponder alternative worlds, good and bad.

▲ 4 It will be helpful at this point to step back and look at the overall structure of the book. Book I is set in Antwerp, where More and his friend Peter Giles engage in a dialog with Giles' acquaintance, the mysterious (and fictitious) traveler Raphael Hythloday (abbreviated here as "RH"). Scholars have established the useful convention of referring to More as "Morus," the Latin form of his name, when More appears as a character in *Utopia*. The book, we must remember, was written in Latin—the international language and the language for serious literary writing in Renaissance Europe.

RH is a Portuguese intellectual who has traveled extensively in the New World with Americus Vespucci. ▲ 5 At the beginning of the dialog, Morus and Peter Giles urge RH to make appropriate use of his unique and valuable knowledge of the world. They think he should serve society (and himself) by becoming a valued counselor to a European prince. RH rejects the idea: First, he fiercely guards his personal freedom. Second, the princes of Europe and the courts that surround them are far too corrupt to heed his counsel. ▲ 6 As part of a lengthy digression, RH condemns England's extreme and cruel practice of executing thieves and cites better practices from well-governed nations he has visited (including those in the

New World). ▲7 Returning to his original point about the futility of serving corrupt princes, RH states that the only way to really reform Europe is to eliminate private property. Giles and Morus express skepticism. In response, RH describes how the Utopians have created the ideal commonwealth (Book II). ▲8 Book II is organized by topics (differing greatly in length) and reads like a low-key travel narrative, almost a corporate trip report. The ideas that More is working with are striking, even breathtaking, but the RH's narrative voice is laconic.

▲9 In the conclusion to Book II, RH once again condemns the injustice and corruption of Europe and points to the success of the Utopians. In the final passage Morus rejects the key features of Utopia (and, especially, holding all wealth in common), while stating that there is much about Utopia worth emulating.

## About More's *Utopia* 2: More distances himself from *Utopia*

- 1 More carefully distances himself from *Utopia* through many means, making his intentions elusive.
- 2 First, More, as author, slyly undercuts the positions taken by the fictionalized version of himself ("Morus"), as he appears in the book.
- 3 Because Utopian society developed without Christian Revelation, More's readers would be inclined to regard objectionable Utopian practices as More pointing out pagan error.
- 4 Many of the proper names in *Utopia* are pseudo-Greek phrases that suggest that the book should not be taken seriously.
- 5 A prefatory letter from More to Giles published with the book humorously pretends that RH is a real person.

▲1 Those who have not actually read *Utopia* or have read it too casually assume it is simply More's blueprint for an ideal world. In fact, there is much debate about More's intentions in writing the book and his attitudes toward the institutions and customs of the Utopians. What is clear is that More's intentions and attitudes are not straightforward. He takes numerous steps to distance himself from the book and from the land of *Utopia*. We will now examine this.

▲2 Morus is skeptical about RH's arguments in both Book I and Book II. However, Morus cannot be directly equated with More, the author. Morus doesn't say a lot, but he seems to be a duller, more conservative version of More himself. Morus argues at the end of Book I that without money and private property people will not work hard enough to supply the needs of the state. But this idea is thoroughly contradicted in Book II, Section 4. Also, at the conclusion of Book II Morus objects to establishing a state without individual property and money because this would eliminate "all nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty, which, according to the common opinion, are the true ornaments of a nation." But the historical Thomas More is no fan of magnificence and splendor, and the phrase "according to the common opinion" is a hint, I believe, of More's subtly satiric intent in this passage. By undercutting his own (represented) objections to RH's claims, More complicates our response to his book.

▲3 Utopian society has evolved without the benefit of Christian Revelation. It is true that they have developed beliefs that are as close to Christianity as one could come without knowing Christ and that, having received European visitors, they are rapidly embracing Christianity. But More knows that if his readers found any Utopian practices offensive, they would have to account this as pagan error and not something that More, a good Christian, would necessarily endorse.

▲4 Most of the names of people and places pertaining to Utopia and surrounding nations are humorously derived (mostly) from the Greek and suggest that the book should not be taken seriously. For example, when RH tells us that the Nephelogegetes warred against the Aleopolitanes, the etymologies of the two nations are “people from the clouds” and “people of a people-less land.”

The name “Utopia” is also intriguingly ambiguous because the first syllable directly recalls the Greek “ou-topos” or “no place” but is very close to the Greek “eu-topos” or “good place.” The name “Hythloday” means “speaker of nonsense.” Finally, More is surely exploiting the odd coincidence that “Morus,” More’s own name in the book, means “folly” in Greek.

▲5 In a prefatory letter from More to Peter Giles (one of numerous “extras” that were added when the book was prepared for publication), More asks Peter to contact Raphael to clarify some details in the manuscript. This whimsical, transparent pretense that the book is factual makes the book seem more playful and less like a serious literary work.

## About More's *Utopia* 3: What do we make of this?

1. So what do we make of all this? One answer is that More is insulating himself from blame for presenting some very radical ideas.
2. Also, More was a famous jokester, which can explain some of the humorous tricks that distance him from his book.
3. As a social critic and satirist, More could plausibly have depicted practices that expose Europe's failings without fully believing in those practices.
4. Certain Utopian practices make us uncomfortable: slavery, assassination, separating children from their families, and highly regimented living. Should we conclude that More also rejects these things?
5. One can, for example, argue that More rejects Utopian communism. But this requires us to see Morus as speaking for More and regard RH as extreme and foolish.
6. A better argument is that More, who lived happily among monks and drew from Plato's *Republic*, which depicts a communist society, respects communism.
7. More, in my judgment, cherishes his creation. *Utopia* embodies his deepest ideals and values and his personal tastes.
8. If More has reservations about Utopian practices, they are unavoidable consequences of what he does believe in.
9. We, like More, should embrace *Utopia*, seeing it as a "thought experiment," a hopeful vision, and a prod to reform our world.

▲1 What, then, should we make of the numerous ways in which More distances himself from the world he has created? One plausible answer is that More wants to dodge potential blame for presenting some very radical ideas.

▲2 As noted, More was a famous jokester. The silly proper nouns he made up and the phony request that Peter Giles contact RH are right up his alley, as is the trick of undercutting his own persona ("Morus") in the book. This wit and levity does indeed distance More from the world he has created: it suggests that *Utopia* is a trifle, a plaything, nothing anyone need get excited about. But we should also recognize that even if More were not interested in distancing himself from the ideas in this book, he might not have been able to resist possibilities for humor.

▲3 More may genuinely not stand behind all the practices of the Utopians or really believe that all of them, if adopted, would make Europe a better place. Both books of *Utopia* are in large part vehicles for social criticism and satire, and More could have depicted practices that show, through contrast, Europe's failings without believing that such practices are wholly good or that they ought to be adopted.

▲4 We should look at the Utopian practices that have disturbed many readers of *Utopia* and might support the idea that More does not fully stand behind *Utopia*.

These include slavery (although the Utopians practice a very thoughtful and “humane” form of slavery), their sneaky, unscrupulous military tactics (which include paying bribes for the assassination of opposing leaders), euthanasia (to this day often condemned by religion and the law), and (what I personally find disturbing) the removal of children from their families to regulate family size (Book I, Section 5, #1) and so they can learn a preferred trade (Book I, Section 4, #3). Also, Utopia is a communist state in which life is highly regulated. Does this provide strong support for the idea that More distances himself from Utopia because of fundamental disagreements?

▲5 As an instance of this argument, consider that the editors of the admirable Yale edition of *Utopia* (Hexter and Surtz, 1965), reject the idea that More embraces the communism of Utopia (perhaps in part because they were writing at the height of the Cold War with Communist Russia). Thus, to them, the skeptical Morus is voicing More’s own beliefs, and the alert reader should therefore regard Hythloday’s enthusiasm for Utopian communism—even though it is the cornerstone of Utopian society—as extreme and foolish (pp. xxiv–xxvii).

▲6 A better argument, I think, is that More is intrigued by the communism of the Utopians and is not trying to undercut Hythloday. Communism was deeply embedded into Monastic institutions, and More, as a young man, lived among the Carthusian monks and was deeply drawn to them. Also, More and his fellow Humanists revered Plato, and the higher orders of society in Plato’s *Republic*, an important source for *Utopia*, adhere to communist practices that are even more regimented than life in Utopia. This is not to say, that More believed that communism could ever be adopted or that it could work in Europe, but only that Hythloday’s enthusiasm for Utopia makes sense.

A still more extreme instance of the idea that More does not stand behind Utopia is offered by Thomas Betteridge (2013). Betteridge contends that Utopia is a “wretched place” (p. 82) and that, as a Christian Humanist, More is showing us the sad consequences of a society governed only by reason.

▲7 Again, I prefer the more traditional view that More does indeed cherish his creation and is not trying to undercut Hythloday. Utopia embodies More’s deepest ideals and values, such as his desire for peace and social justice, and also his personal tastes: the pleasure he took in gardening, music, and edifying conversation.

Also, More seems to treat Utopia as a kind of wish-fulfillment fantasy—for example, the physical geography of Utopia is very favorable for prosperous, comfortable living and military defense. There is an ideal harbor “well secured from high winds” and a secure supply of fresh water. In fact, with the sole exception of iron ore, Utopia is completely self-sufficient. These natural endowments don’t further any set of values. More just *wants* those things for his Utopians. At moments More seems to be a SimCity computer gamer building his ideal city, and George Logan

points out that there are Classical precedents for rhetorical exercises in which the writer “designs” an ideal commonwealth (Logan and Adams, 2002, xxiv–xxvii).

▲8 Perhaps, then, More *does* have reservations about certain aspects of Utopian society. But, if so, he probably sees them as unavoidable consequences of practices he embraces. To get something you want, you may have to grudgingly tolerate something you like less. To minimize casualties during war, you hire uncivilized mercenaries (who, as it happens, don't much care whether they live or die), and you try to arrange the assassination of the enemy's leaders. If you believe strongly that for the sake of good government and comfortable living cities should not grow beyond a certain size, you make rules requiring citizens to move, when necessary, to a new location. If you have certain social goals, you accept the idea of moving children from one family to another. If you want to ensure domestic happiness (and sex was important to More), you require young men and women to expose themselves naked to each other before marriage to avoid unwelcome surprises. And perhaps a society in which the great diversity of human beings, all prone to error and vice, collectively enjoy so many benefits will need to be a highly regulated, communist society.

▲9 So we, like More, should imaginatively embrace Utopia, even while we acknowledge some troubling features. After 500 years we can enjoy More's sly narrative, Raphael's fierce independence, and the *still* far-off land that can serve us as a radical “thought experiment,” a hopeful vision, and a prod to reform our world.

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Thomas Betteridge, *Writing Faith and Telling Tales: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Work of Thomas More*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.

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# About this Edition

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## About this Edition 1: What this edition offers you

1. This QuikScan edition of *Utopia* provides a careful summary of each section. A numbering scheme connects the summaries to locations in More's text.
2. If you read the summaries and the text, reading the text is easier and you retain more. Plus, your total reading time is no greater.
3. QuikScan also lets you read selectively within the book. When you wish, you can just read the summary of a section.

▲1 There are many editions of More's *Utopia*, both in print and on the web. This edition is a QuikScan edition, and it has unique features. Each section has been carefully summarized. Furthermore, each summary is formatted as a numbered list, and matching numbers are placed in the text (with a triangle symbol) to show the location of the content you have read in summarized form. This means that you can quickly switch back and forth between ideas in the summary and the corresponding locations in the text.

▲2 The summaries give you the basic meaning before you tackle each section of this 500-year-old book. As a result, reading is much easier and retention is much higher. Better yet, although the summaries make this edition about 15% longer, there is no extra reading time because reading the summaries naturally speeds up your reading of the text. For detailed information about the benefits of QuikScan, visit <http://www.quikscan.org/research.html>

▲3 People read for different reasons, and we do not believe that all readers need to read every word of any text. Normally skimming and skipping through a text is very inefficient, but with a QuikScan edition you can read a section and then decide whether you want to read the full text. If you content yourself with just the summary, you've still gotten the basic idea of that section. However, be warned: QuikScan is designed to entice you to jump from the summaries into the text.

## About this Edition 2: Things to know

- 1 This text and most of the footnotes are borrowed from Stephen Duncombe's Open Utopia edition (<http://theopenutopia.org>).
- 2 In the original text Book I was not divided into sections and Book II was very loosely divided into 8 sections. I have added many sections, each with a heading and a summary.
- 3 Of the supplementary items included with the original editions, I include only More's first prefatory letter to Giles, which is arguably the most important.
- 4 Following many editors, I have omitted the marginal comments, mostly written by Peter Giles, that accompanied the original editions.
- 5 Readers are encouraged to read other QuikScan texts at the QuikScan Library: <http://www.quikscan.org/library>. Readers are also encouraged to create their own QuikScan texts.
- 6 PDF files circulate freely on the Internet. To be sure you have to most current version of this edition, visit the QuikScan Library.
- 7 This edition can be readily updated, and so I invite all manner of corrections and suggestions.

▲1 This text and most of the footnotes used in this edition are borrowed from Stephen Duncombe's 2012 Open Utopia edition (<http://theopenutopia.org/>), which Professor Duncombe, out of deep conviction, has made available for anyone to use without charge under a Creative Commons license. I thank Prof. Duncombe for this scholarly contribution and for his stimulating introductory essay. I have made some very minor modifications to Duncombe's text, added a few footnotes (marked "DF"), and modified or deleted a few of Duncombe's footnotes.

▲2 Book I of the original text was not divided into sections. I have divided it into 13 sections, each titled and each with a summary. Book II was divided very loosely into eight sections that vary greatly in length and whose headings do not always fully describe the topics that appear in that section. The original sections are these: Introduction (no heading), "Their cities, particularly Amaurot," "Their magistrates," "Their occupations," "Their social relations," "Their travel," "Their slaves," and "Their military affairs." I have divided Book II into 23 sections, each titled and each with a summary.

▲3 The four "original" editions (1516–18) that More probably had a direct hand in include numerous supplementary items ("extras"), many of them commendatory verses and letters (the equivalent of modern-day "book blurbs"). As new ones were added, some others were removed.

Editors have made different decisions about the inclusion and placement of the these supplementary items. The Yale edition and the Open Utopia edition include all of them. Other editions have none. I follow the Yale University Press's "general

readers" edition (ed. Surtz, 1964) in including only More's first prefatory letter to Peter Giles. This letter, I think, is the most important of the supplementary items.

▲4 The original editions have marginal comments, probably added (at least in most cases) by Peter Giles. Many of these marginal comments are summaries and are not entirely unlike my QuikScan summaries. But some of these comments serve other purposes. Modern editors often leave out the marginal comments—as I have done. When a marginal comment seemed important, I mention it in a footnote. You can find all of the marginal comments in the Open Utopia edition.

▲5 Readers are encouraged to read QuikScan editions of other texts of enduring interest. Visit the QuikScan Library: <http://www.quikscan.org/library/index.html>. Some of these texts are available as a web app that offers more features than this PDF version. In addition, interested readers are invited to create their own QuikScan texts. See [QuikScan.org](http://www.quikscan.org) for complete information including authoring templates. All this is in the public domain.

▲6 PDF files, of course, circulate freely in the digital world and cannot be recalled for updates and corrections. To be certain you have the most current version of this edition of More's *Utopia*, visit the QuikScan Library.

▲7 I should perhaps explain background I bring to this edition of *Utopia*. In 1976 I completed a Ph.D. in British Literature focusing on the Renaissance (with some Latin), from the University of Minnesota. My career, however, was in a different academic field, and so I am returning to *Utopia* after many years, more the enthusiastic amateur than the professional scholar. Fortunately an online edition can be readily updated, and so I invite all manner of corrections and suggestions.

# Prefatory Epistle

## Thomas More to Peter Giles<sup>1</sup>

### TOC

- 1 Apologies, Peter, for this delay in getting this manuscript to you. After all, my task was simple: just writing down what Raphael told us in his own simple Latin.
- 2 However, I was very busy with me legal practice and personal affairs, leaving no time for the book.
- 3 For, it is important to spend time with one's household, to be merry and pleasant with them. Therefore my time for writing was taken out of my sleep and meal time.
- 4 I ask you, Peter, to tell me if I forgot anything in my transcribing of RH's narrative. In particular check me on one particular detail:
- 5 My very bright young servant, John Clement, who was with us, says the bridge at Amaurot is 300 paces long, not 500 as I recall. Who do you think is right?
- 6 Ideally you can ask RH yourself. Also, we foolishly forgot to find out the location of Utopia—and already there is someone who wishes to serve there as a bishop.
- 7 If possible, Peter, ask RH to review the complete manuscript. Also, if he wishes to publish his own account of Utopia, I'll set my manuscript aside.
- 8 I have, in any case, serious doubts about subjecting myself to hostile and foolish criticism by publishing the book.
- 9 But after I hear back from RH, I'll follow the advice of you and other friends as to whether the publish the manuscript. My love to you and your wife.

▲ 1 I am almost ashamed, right well-beloved Peter Giles, to send you this book of the Utopian commonwealth, well nigh after a year's space, which I am sure you looked for within a month and a half.<sup>2</sup> And no marvel. For you know well enough that I was already disburdened of all the labor and study belonging to the invention of this work, and that I had no need at all to trouble my brains about the disposition or conveyance of that matter and, therefore, had nothing else to do but only to rehearse those things which you and I together heard Master Raphael tell and declare.<sup>3</sup> Wherefore there was no cause why I should study to set forth the matter with eloquence; for as much as his talk could not be fine and eloquent, being first not studied for but sudden and unpremeditated, and then, as you know, of a man better seen in the Greek language than in the Latin tongue.<sup>4</sup> And my writing, the nearer it should approach his homely, plain, and simple speech, so much the nearer should it go to the truth; which is the only mark, where unto I do and ought to direct all my travail and study herein.

I grant and confess, friend Peter, myself discharged of so much labor, having all these things ready done to my hand, that almost there was nothing left for me to do. Else either the invention, or the disposition of this matter, might have required of a wit neither base nor at all unlearned, both some time and leisure, and also some study. But if it was requisite and necessary that the matter should also have been written eloquently, and not alone truly, of a surety that thing I could have performed by no time or study. But now, seeing all these cares, stays, and hindrances were taken away, wherein else so much labor and study should have been employed, and that there remained no other thing for me to do but only to write plainly the matter as I heard it spoken, that indeed was a thing light and easy to be done. ▲ 2 Howbeit, to the dispatching of this so little business my other cares and troubles did leave almost less than no leisure. While I do daily bestow my time about law matters; some to plead, some to hear, some as an arbitrator with mine award to determine, some as an umpire or a judge with my sentence finally to discuss; while I go one way to see and visit my friend, an other way about mine own private affairs; while I spend almost all the day abroad amongst others and then reside at home among mine own, I leave to my myself, I mean to my book, no time.<sup>5</sup>

▲ 3 For when I come home, I must commune with my wife, chat with my children, and talk with my servants. All the which things I reckon and account among business, forasmuch as they must of necessity be done; and done must they need be unless a man will be a stranger in his own house. And, in any wise, a man must so fashion and order his conditions, and so appoint and dispose himself, that he be merry, jocund, and pleasant among them whom either nature has provided, or chance has made, or he himself has chosen to be the fellows and companions of his life: so that with too much gentle behavior and familiarity he do not mar them, and by too much sufferance of his servants make them his masters. Among these things now rehearsed steal away the day, the month, the year. When do I write then? And all this while I have spoken no word of sleep, neither yet of meals, which among a great number do waste no less time than does sleep, wherein almost half the time of man creepeth away. I, therefore, do win and get only that time which I steal from sleep and meals.<sup>6</sup> ▲ 4 Which time, because it is very little, and yet somewhat it is, therefore have I once at the last, though it be long first, finished *Utopia* and have sent it to you Peter to read and peruse to the intent that if anything has escaped me you might put me in remembrance of it. For though in this behalf I do not greatly mistrust myself (which would God I were somewhat in wit and learning, as I am not all of the worst and dullest in memory), yet have I not so great trust and confidence in it that I think nothing could fall out of my mind.

▲ 5 For John Clement, my boy, who as you know was there present with us, whom I suffer to be away from no talk wherein may be any profit or goodness (for out of this young-bladed and new-shot-up corn, which has already begun to spring up both in Latin and Greek language, I look for plentiful increase at length of goodly ripe grain), he, I say, has brought me into great doubt.<sup>7</sup> For whereas Hythloday (unless my memory fail me) said that the bridge of Amaurot, which goes over the

river of Anyder, is five hundred paces, that is to say, half a mile, in length; my John saith that two hundred of these paces must be plucked away, for that the river contains there not above three hundred paces in breadth. I pray you heartily call the matter to your remembrance. For if you agree with him I also will say as you say and confess myself deceived. But if you cannot remember the thing, then surely I will write as I have done, and as mine own remembrance serves me. For as I shall take good heed that there be in my book nothing false, so if there be anything in doubt I will rather tell a lie then make a lie, because I had rather be good than wise.<sup>8</sup>

▲6 Howbeit, this matter may easily be remedied if you will take the pains to ask the question of Raphael himself, by word of mouth if he be now with you, or else by your letters; which you must need do for another doubt also, which has chanced through, whose fault I cannot tell, whether through mine or yours or Raphael's. For neither we remembered to inquire of him, nor he to tell us, in what part of that new world Utopia is situated; which thing I had rather have spent no small sum of money than it should thus have escaped us. As well for that I am ashamed to be ignorant of what sea that Island standeth whereof I write so long a treatise; as also because there be with us certain men, and especially one devout and godly man, who is exceeding desirous to go unto Utopia, not for a vain and curious desire to see news, but to the intent that he may further and increase our religion which is there already begun. And that he may the better accomplish and perform this his good intent, he is minded to procure that he may be sent there by the high Bishop, yes, and that he himself made be made Bishop of Utopia; being nothing scrupulous herein, that he may obtain this bishopric with suit. For he counteth that a godly suit which proceeds not of the desire of honor or lucre but only of a godly zeal.

▲7 Wherefore, I most earnestly desire you, friend Peter, to talk with Hythloday, if you can face to face, or else write letters to him, and so to work in this matter that in this, my book, there may be neither anything be found that is untrue, neither anything be lacking which is true. And I think verily it shall be well done that you show unto him the book itself, for if I have missed or failed in any point, or find any fault that has escaped me, no man can so well correct and amend it as he can, and yet that can he not do unless he peruse and read over my book written. Moreover, by this means shall you perceive whether he will be willing and content that I should undertake to put this work in writing. For if he be minded to publish and put forth his own labors and travails himself, perchance he would be loathe, and so would I also, that in publishing the Utopian commonwealth I should prevent and take from him the flower and grace of the novelty of this his history.

▲8 Howbeit, to say the very truth, I am not fully determined with myself whether I will put forth my book or no. For the natures of men be so divers, the fantasies of some so wayward, their minds so unkind, their judgments so corrupt that they

which lead a merry and jocund life following their own sensual pleasures and carnal lusts, may seem to be in a much better state or case than they that vex and unquiet themselves with cares and studies for putting forth and publishing of something, that may be either profit or pleasure to others, which others nevertheless will disdainfully, scornfully, and unkindly accept the same. The most part of all be unlearned, and a great number hold learning in contempt. The rude and barbarous allow nothing but that which is very barbarous indeed. If it be one that has a little smack of learning, he rejects as homely and common-ware whatsoever is not stuffed full of old moth-eaten words and that be worn out of use. Some there be that have pleasure only in old rustic antiquities, and some only in their own doings. One is so sour, so crabbed, and so unpleasant that he can abide with no mirth or sport; another is so narrow between the shoulders, that he can bear no jests or taunts. Some silly poor souls be so afraid that at every snappish word their nose shall be bitten off that they stand in no less dread of every quick and sharp word then he that is bitten of a mad dog fears water. Some be so mutable and wavering that every hour they be in a new mind, saying one thing sitting and an other thing standing. Another sort sits upon their ale benches, and there among their cups they give judgment of the wits of writers and with great authority they condemn even as please them every writer according to his writing in most spiteful manner mocking, louting, and flouting them: being themselves in the mean season safe and, as sayeth the proverb, out of all danger of gunshot. For why they be so smug and smooth that they have not so much as one hair of an honest man whereby one may take hold of them. There be, moreover, some so unkind and ungentle that though they take great pleasure and delectation in the work, yet for all that they can not find in their hearts to love the author thereof, nor to afford him a good word, being much like uncourteous, unthankful, and churlish guests, which when they have with good and dainty meats well filled their bellies, depart home giving no thanks to the feast-maker. Go your ways now, and make a costly feast at your own charges for guests so dainty-mouthed, so divers in taste, and besides that, of so unkind and unthankful natures.

▲9 But nevertheless, friend Peter, do I pray you with Hythloday as I willed you before, and as for this matter, I shall be at my liberty afterwards to take new advisement. Howbeit, seeing I have taken great pains and labor in writing the matter, if it may stand with his mind and pleasure, I will, as touching the edition or publishing of the book, follow the counsel and advice of my friends, and especially yours. Thus fare you well, right heartily beloved friend Peter, with your gentle wife; and love me as you have ever done; for I love you better then I ever did.

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<sup>1</sup> This epistle appears in the four original editions of *Utopia*, located as it is here. Giles was More's Flemish friend and a character in Book I. The letter humorously tries to create the impression that the book is factual. The four original editions of the book, those that More had a hand in, appear with numerous commendations and other supplementary material. Many of the commendations were from prominent Humanist scholars. These can be conveniently found in the Open *Utopia* version of the book and can be ready with full scholarly notes in the Yale edition of More's complete works (Volume 4).

<sup>2</sup> As chronicled in the book itself, More met with Giles on an abortive diplomatic trip to Flanders a year earlier, when and where he began work on *Utopia*.

<sup>3</sup> Master Raphael is Raphael Hythloday

<sup>4</sup> Amongst Renaissance scholars the reverse would be true, with mastery of Latin more common than Greek.

<sup>5</sup> More was a very busy man in 1516: a prominent lawyer and one of two Undersheriffs of London, as well as judge in the Sheriff's Court and arbitrator in the Court of Chancery.

<sup>6</sup> More is said to have slept only four to five hours a night, waking up at two in the morning to begin his day.

<sup>7</sup> John Clement was, indeed, a servant of More's and accompanied him on his diplomatic mission to the Netherlands in 1515. He "ripened" well, learning Latin and Greek (the latter well enough to become Reader in Greek at Oxford), becoming a respected physician and later president of the College of Physicians, and marrying More's adopted daughter.

<sup>8</sup> In this difficult passage, More appears to be saying that if Giles does not agree with More's servant, More will rely on his own memory. If Giles and More's servant agree are in agreement, More will accept their judgement. But if they split, he prefers to follow his own memory. The meaning is also obscure in both the Wootton and Yale translations. DF

# Book I

## FIRST BOOK

OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH THE EXCEPTIONAL MAN  
 RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY HELD CONCERNING THE  
 BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH,  
 BY WAY OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS MAN THOMAS MORE,  
 CITIZEN AND UNDERSHERIFF OF THE  
 GLORIOUS CITY OF LONDON IN BRITAIN

## TOC

### **More travels to Flanders, Meets Giles and Hythloday** (Bk 1, Sec 1)

- 1 I was sent by Henry VIII to Flanders to negotiate with Charles, Prince of Castile. In Antwerp I met Peter Giles.
- 2 Peter introduced me to a weathered older man, Raphael Hythloday.
- 3 Peter describes RH's background and education and his travels with Amerigo Vesputius.
- 4 We assembled in the garden of my house, where RH told of his travels in the New World.

▲ 1 Henry VIII, the unconquered King of England, a prince adorned with all the virtues that become a great monarch, having some differences of no small consequence with Charles the most serene Prince of Castile, sent me into Flanders, as his ambassador, for treating and composing matters between them.<sup>1</sup> I was colleague and companion to that incomparable man Cuthbert Tunstall,<sup>2</sup> whom the King, with such universal applause, lately made Master of the Rolls; but of whom I will say nothing; not because I fear that the testimony of a friend will be suspected, but rather because his learning and virtues are too great for me to do them justice, and so well known, that they need not my commendations, unless I would, according to the proverb, "Show the sun with a lantern."

Those that were appointed by the Prince to treat with us, met us at Bruges, according to agreement; they were all worthy men. The Margrave of Bruges<sup>3</sup> was their

head, and the chief man among them; but he that was esteemed the wisest, and that spoke for the rest, was George Temse, the Provost of Casselsee:<sup>4</sup> both art and nature had concurred to make him eloquent: he was very learned in the law; and, as he had a great capacity, so, by a long practice in affairs, he was very dexterous at unraveling them. After we had several times met, without coming to an agreement, they went to Brussels for some days, to know the Prince's pleasure; and, since our business would admit it, I went to Antwerp<sup>5</sup>.

While I was there, among many that visited me, there was one that was more acceptable to me than any other, Peter Giles,<sup>6</sup> born at Antwerp, who is a man of great honor, and of a good rank in his town, though less than he deserves; for I do not know if there be anywhere to be found a more learned and a better bred young man; for as he is both a very worthy and a very knowing person, so he is so civil to all men, so particularly kind to his friends, and so full of candor and affection, that there is not, perhaps, above one or two anywhere to be found, that is in all respects so perfect a friend: he is extraordinarily modest, there is no artifice in him, and yet no man has more of a prudent simplicity. His conversation was so pleasant and so innocently cheerful, that his company in a great measure lessened any longings to go back to my country, and to my wife and children, which an absence of four months had quickened very much.

▲2 One day, as I was returning home from mass at St. Mary's, which is the chief church, and the most frequented of any in Antwerp, I saw him, by accident, talking with a stranger, who seemed past the flower of his age; his face was tanned, he had a long beard, and his cloak was hanging carelessly about him, so that, by his looks and habit, I concluded he was a seaman. As soon as Peter saw me, he came and saluted me, and as I was returning his civility, he took me aside, and pointing to him with whom he had been discoursing, he said, "Do you see that man? I was just thinking to bring him to you."

I answered, "He should have been very welcome on your account."

"And on his own too," replied he, "if you knew the man, for there is none alive that can give so copious an account of unknown nations and countries as he can do, which I know you very much desire."

"Then," said I, "I did not guess amiss, for at first sight I took him for a seaman."

▲3 "But you are much mistaken," said he, "for he has not sailed as a seaman, but as a traveler, or rather a philosopher. This Raphael, who from his family carries the name of Hythloday, is not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but is eminently learned in the Greek, having applied himself more particularly to that than to the former, because he had given himself much to philosophy, in which he knew that the Romans have left us nothing that is valuable, except what is to be found in Seneca and Cicero. He is a Portuguese by birth, and was so desirous of seeing the world, that he divided his estate among his brothers, ran the same hazard as Americus

Vesputius,<sup>7</sup> and bore a share in three of his four voyages that are now published; only he did not return with him in his last, but obtained leave of him, almost by force, that he might be one of those twenty-four who were left at the farthest place at which they touched in their last voyage to New Castile.<sup>8</sup> The leaving him thus did not a little gratify one that was more fond of traveling than of returning home to be buried in his own country; for he used often to say, 'that the way to heaven was the same from all places,' and 'he that had no grave had the heavens still over him.'<sup>9</sup> Yet this disposition of mind had cost him dear, if God had not been very gracious to him; for after he, with five Castilians, had traveled over many countries, at last, by strange good fortune, he got to Ceylon, and from thence to Calicut, where he, very happily, found some Portuguese ships; and, beyond all men's expectations, returned to his native country."

▲4 When Peter had said this to me, I thanked him for his kindness in intending to give me the acquaintance of a man whose conversation he knew would be so acceptable; and upon that Raphael and I embraced each other. After those civilities were past which are usual with strangers upon their first meeting, we all went to my house, and entering into the garden, sat down on a green bank and entertained one another in discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry VIII was crowned King of England in 1509; Prince Charles became the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and ruled Spain, German territories, Burgundy, and the Netherlands. The "matters" More and his mission were entrusted with were commercial ones, likely involving tariffs.

<sup>2</sup> Cuthbert Tunstall was, like More, a well-educated Renaissance Humanist. He was friends with Erasmus and also godfather to Peter Giles's daughter. The Master of the Rolls was, and still is, the penultimate judge of England, second only to the Lord Chief Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Bruges was an important Flemish city and the Margrave its hereditary ruler.

<sup>4</sup> George Temse, Georgius a Tempseca, or de Theimsecke, as he was also known, was a doctor of laws and official of the Flemish town of Cassel.

<sup>5</sup> Antwerp, capital of Flanders in what is now modern Belgium, was a major center of international trade and arguably the richest city in Europe in the sixteenth century.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Giles (1486-1533) Flemish friend to Thomas More, and character in More's *Utopia*. Giles, or Pieter Gillis as he was born, was a well known Humanist and printer in Antwerp. He contributed the Utopian alphabet, verses in the Utopian tongue, and probably the marginalia in *Utopia*.

<sup>7</sup> Americus Vesputius (1454-1512) or Amerigo Vespucci, was a famous explorer, cartographer, and chronicler of voyages to the New World; "America" is derived from his name.

<sup>8</sup> Simply "the fort" in More's original Latin. New Castile was the name given to the Spanish New World possession of Spain of what is now Peru. It was only named as such, however, in 1528 — a dozen years after *Utopia* was written. Thus its use here is likely an anachronism of the translator's.

<sup>9</sup> From, respectively, Lucan's epic *Pharsalia*, VII, and Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, I, xliii.

## TOC

**RH relates his travels below the Equator** (Bk 1, Sec 2)

- 1 After Vesputius sailed for home, RH and his companions became well liked by the local prince, who supplied them with vessels and wagons for traveling.
- 2 The prince also provided a guide, and they visited well-governed towns.
- 3 After passing below the parched, barely populated equator, they encountered a milder climate—and nations, towns, and cities that engaged in extensive trade.
- 4 Their seamen knew astronomy and navigation, but RH taught them to use the compass.
- 5 RH told us of many things, including what we might learn from some well-governed peoples. But I will relate only what he told us of the Utopians.

▲1 He told us that when Vesputius had sailed away, he, and his companions that stayed behind in New Castile, by degrees insinuated themselves into the affections of the people of the country, meeting often with them and treating them gently; and at last they not only lived among them without danger, but conversed familiarly with them, and got so far into the heart of a prince, whose name and country I have forgot, that he both furnished them plentifully with all things necessary, and also with the conveniences of traveling, both boats when they went by water, and wagons when they trained over land: ▲2 he sent with them a very faithful guide, who was to introduce and recommend them to such other princes as they had a mind to see: and after many days' journey, they came to towns, and cities, and to commonwealths, that were both happily governed and well peopled.

▲3 Under the equator, and as far on both sides of it as the sun moves, there lay vast deserts that were parched with the perpetual heat of the sun; the soil was withered, all things looked dismally, and all places were either quite uninhabited, or abounded with wild beasts and serpents, and some few men, that were neither less wild nor less cruel than the beasts themselves. But, as they went farther, a new scene opened, all things grew milder, the air less burning, the soil more verdant, and even the beasts were less wild: and, at last, there were nations, towns, and cities, that had not only mutual commerce among themselves and with their neighbors, but traded, both by sea and land, to very remote countries. There they found the conveniences of seeing many countries on all hands, for no ship went any voyage into which he and his companions were not very welcome.

▲4 The first vessels that they saw were flat-bottomed, their sails were made of reeds and wicker, woven close together, only some were of leather; but afterwards, they found ships made with round keels and canvas sails, and in all respects like our ships, and the seamen understood both astronomy and navigation. He got wonderfully into their favor by showing them the use of the needle,<sup>1</sup> of which till then they were utterly ignorant. They sailed before with great caution, and only in

summer time; but now they count all seasons alike, trusting wholly to the loadstone, in which they are, perhaps, more secure than safe; so that there is reason to fear that this discovery, which was thought would prove so much to their advantage, may, by their imprudence, become an occasion of much mischief to them.

▲5 But it were too long to dwell on all that he told us he had observed in every place, it would be too great a digression from our present purpose: whatever is necessary to be told concerning those wise and prudent institutions which he observed among civilized nations, may perhaps be related by us on a more proper occasion. We asked him many questions concerning all these things, to which he answered very willingly; we made no inquiries after monsters, than which nothing is more common; for everywhere one may hear of ravenous dogs and wolves, and cruel men-eaters, but it is not so easy to find states that are well and wisely governed.<sup>2</sup> As he told us of many things that were amiss in those new-discovered countries, so he reckoned up not a few things, from which patterns might be taken for correcting the errors of these nations among whom we live; of which an account may be given, as I have already promised, at some other time; for, at present, I intend only to relate those particulars that he told us, of the manners and laws of the Utopians: but I will begin with the occasion that led us to speak of that commonwealth.

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<sup>1</sup> The magnetic needle of the compass.

<sup>2</sup> More is, of course, making a joke here. Popular tales of travel were stocked full of monsters like the six-headed Scylla, the half-bird, half-woman harpy Celeano, and the people-eating Laestrygonians of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, all mentioned by More in the original Latin text, though omitted here in this translation. Less colorful tales about foreign laws, customs, and states—that is, tales like the one More tells here—are not so easy to find.

## TOC

**RH rejects the idea of serving a monarch** (Bk 1, Sec 3)

- 1 Answering Peter Giles, RH says he would not use his extensive knowledge to serve a king. He has already provided financially for his friends. Service would be mere slavery.
- 2 Answering More, RH says that he would not be performing any useful public service by serving a king. Kings are more interested in war and gaining territory than good governance.
- 3 Furthermore, the ministers at court are vain, self-interested flatters who would oppose, out of envy, any good counsel he might offer.

▲ 1 After Raphael had discoursed with great judgment on the many errors that were both among us and these nations, had treated of the wise institutions both here and there, and had spoken as distinctly of the customs and government of every nation through which he had past, as if he had spent his whole life in it, Peter, being struck with admiration, said, "I wonder, Raphael, how it comes that you enter into no king's service, for I am sure there are none to whom you would not be very acceptable; for your learning and knowledge, both of men and things, is such, that you would not only entertain them very pleasantly, but be of great use to them, by the examples you could set before them, and the advices you could give them; and by this means you would both serve your own interest, and be of great use to all your friends."<sup>1</sup>

"As for my friends," answered he, "I need not be much concerned, having already done for them all that was incumbent on me; for when I was not only in good health, but fresh and young, I distributed that among my kindred and friends which other people do not part with till they are old and sick: when they then unwillingly give that which they can enjoy no longer themselves. I think my friends ought to rest contented with this, and not to expect that for their sakes I should enslave myself to any king whatsoever."

"Soft and fair!"<sup>2</sup> said Peter; "I do not mean that you should be a slave to any king, but only that you should assist them and be useful to them."

"The change of the word," said he, "does not alter the matter."

"But term it as you will," replied Peter, "I do not see any other way in which you can be so useful, both in private to your friends and to the public, and by which you can make your own condition happier."

"Happier?" answered Raphael, "is that to be achieved in a way so abhorrent to my genius? Now I live as I will, to which I believe, few courtiers can pretend; and there are so many that court the favor of great men, that there will be no great loss if they are not troubled either with me or with others of my temper."

▲2 Upon this, said I, “I perceive, Raphael, that you neither desire wealth nor greatness; and, indeed, I value and admire such a man much more than I do any of the great men in the world. Yet I think you would do what would well become so generous and philosophical a soul as yours is, if you would apply your time and thoughts to public affairs, even though you may happen to find it a little uneasy to yourself; and this you can never do with so much advantage as by being taken into the council of some great prince and putting him on noble and worthy actions, which I know you would do if you were in such a post; for the springs both of good and evil flow from the prince over a whole nation, as from a lasting fountain. So much learning as you have, even without practice in affairs, or so great a practice as you have had, without any other learning, would render you a very fit counselor to any king whatsoever.”

“You are doubly mistaken,” said he, “Mr. More, both in your opinion of me and in the judgment you make of things: for as I have not that capacity that you fancy I have, so if I had it, the public would not be one jot the better when I had sacrificed my quiet to it. For most princes apply themselves more to affairs of war than to the useful arts of peace; and in these I neither have any knowledge, nor do I much desire it; they are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms, right or wrong, than on governing well those they possess: and, ▲3 among the ministers of princes, there are none that are not so wise as to need no assistance, or at least, that do not think themselves so wise that they imagine they need none; and if they court any, it is only those for whom the prince has much personal favor, whom by their fawning and flatteries they endeavor to fix to their own interests; and, indeed, nature has so made us, that we all love to be flattered and to please ourselves with our own notions: the old crow loves his young, and the ape her cubs. Now if in such a court, made up of persons who envy all others and only admire themselves, a person should but propose anything that he had either read in history or observed in his travels, the rest would think that the reputation of their wisdom would sink, and that their interests would be much depressed if they could not run it down: and, if all other things failed, then they would fly to this, that such or such things pleased our ancestors, and it were well for us if we could but match them. They would set up their rest on such an answer, as a sufficient confutation of all that could be said, as if it were a great misfortune that any should be found wiser than his ancestors. But though they willingly let go all the good things that were among those of former ages, yet, if better things are proposed, they cover themselves obstinately with this excuse of reverence to past times. I have met with these proud, morose, and absurd judgments of things in many places, particularly once in England.”

“Where you ever there?” said I.

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<sup>1</sup> More was contemplating much the same situation at the time, having recently been asked by Henry VIII to enter his service as a counselor. After long consideration, More accepted and became a member of the King's Privy Council in 1518.

<sup>2</sup> "These are good words. But even so, I did not mean . . ." DF

## TOC

## RH tells of his stay in England with Cardinal Morton. A debate about thieves. (Bk1, Sec 4)

- 1 RH had been the guest of the eminent John Morton (More's former patron), a man of great wisdom and high character.
- 2 One day, over dinner, a lawyer praised the wholesale execution of thieves in England but wondered why there was no decrease in thievery.
- 3 RH responded that this policy was unjust and also pointless, because men had no choice but to turn to thievery.
- 4 RH rejected the lawyer's claim that poor people can find work. Many lose their limbs in foreign wars. Also, noblemen keep many idle, brawling retainers who, when they are not longer employed, have no skills but robbery.
- 5 The lawyer states that such men are useful in time of war. But RH points to great trouble and little benefit when nations maintain large number of idle soldiers.

▲ 1 "Yes, I was," answered he, "and stayed some months there, not long after the rebellion in the West<sup>1</sup> was suppressed, with a great slaughter of the poor people that were engaged in it. I was then much obliged to that reverend prelate, John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal, and Chancellor of England;<sup>2</sup> a man, Peter (for Mr. More knows well what he was), that was not less venerable for his wisdom and virtues than for the high character he bore: he was of a middle stature, not broken with age; his looks begot reverence rather than fear; his conversation was easy, but serious and grave; he sometimes took pleasure to try the force of those that came as suitors to him upon business by speaking sharply, though decently, to them, and by that he discovered their spirit and presence of mind; with which he was much delighted when it did not grow up to impudence, as bearing a great resemblance to his own temper, and he looked on such persons as the fittest men for affairs. He spoke both gracefully and weightily; he was eminently skilled in the law, had a vast understanding, and a prodigious memory; and those excellent talents with which nature had furnished him were improved by study and experience. When I was in England the King depended much on his counsels, and the Government seemed to be chiefly supported by him; for from his youth he had been all along practiced in affairs; and, having passed through many traverses of fortune, he had, with great cost, acquired a vast stock of wisdom, which is not soon lost when it is purchased so dear.

▲ 2 "One day, when I was dining with him, there happened to be at table one of the English lawyers, who took occasion to run out in a high commendation of the severe execution of justice upon thieves, 'who,' as he said, 'were then hanged so fast that there were sometimes twenty on one gibbet!' and, upon that, he said, 'he

could not wonder enough how it came to pass that, since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left, who were still robbing in all places.'

▲ 3 "Upon this, I (who took the boldness to speak freely before the Cardinal) said, 'There was no reason to wonder at the matter, since this way of punishing thieves was neither just in itself nor good for the public; for, as the severity was too great, so the remedy was not effectual; simple theft not being so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his life; no punishment, how severe soever, being able to restrain those from robbing who can find out no other way of livelihood.' 'In this,' said I, 'not only you in England, but a great part of the world, imitate some ill masters, that are readier to chastise their scholars than to teach them. There are dreadful punishments enacted against thieves, but it were much better to make such good provisions by which every man might be put in a method how to live, and so be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it.'

"'There has been care enough taken for that,' said he; 'there are many handicrafts, and there is husbandry, by which they may make a shift to live, unless they have a greater mind to follow ill courses.'

▲ 4 "'That will not serve your turn,' said I, 'for many lose their limbs in civil or foreign wars, as lately in the Cornish rebellion, and some time ago in your wars with France,<sup>3</sup> who, being thus mutilated in the service of their king and country, can no more follow their old trades, and are too old to learn new ones; but since wars are only accidental things, and have intervals, let us consider those things that fall out every day. There is a great number of noblemen among you that are themselves as idle as drones, that subsist on other men's labor, on the labor of their tenants, whom, to raise their revenues, they pare to the quick. This, indeed, is the only instance of their frugality, for in all other things they are prodigal, even to the beggaring of themselves; but, besides this, they carry about with them a great number of idle fellows, who never learned any art by which they may gain their living; and these, as soon as either their lord dies, or they themselves fall sick, are turned out of doors; for your lords are readier to feed idle people than to take care of the sick; and often the heir is not able to keep together so great a family as his predecessor did. Now, when the stomachs of those that are thus turned out of doors grow keen, they rob no less keenly; and what else can they do? For when, by wandering about, they have worn out both their health and their clothes, and are tattered, and look ghastly, men of quality will not entertain them, and poor men dare not do it, knowing that one who has been bred up in idleness and pleasure, and who was used to walk about with his sword and buckler, despising all the neighborhood with an insolent scorn as far below him, is not fit for the spade and mattock; nor will he serve a poor man for so small a hire and in so low a diet as he can afford to give him.'

▲ 5 "To this he answered, 'This sort of men ought to be particularly cherished, for in them consists the force of the armies for which we have occasion; since their

birth inspires them with a nobler sense of honor than is to be found among tradesmen or plowmen.'

"You may as well say,' replied I, 'that you must cherish thieves on the account of wars, for you will never want the one as long as you have the other; and as robbers prove sometimes gallant soldiers, so soldiers often prove brave robbers, so near an alliance there is between those two sorts of life. But this bad custom, so common among you, of keeping many servants, is not peculiar to this nation. In France there is yet a more pestiferous sort of people, for the whole country is full of soldiers, still kept up in time of peace (if such a state of a nation can be called a peace); and these are kept in pay upon the same account that you plead for those idle retainers about noblemen: this being a maxim of those pretended statesmen, that it is necessary for the public safety to have a good body of veteran soldiers ever in readiness. They think raw men are not to be depended on, and they sometimes seek occasions for making war, that they may train up their soldiers in the art of cutting throats, or, as Sallust observed, "for keeping their hands in use, that they may not grow dull by too long an intermission."<sup>4</sup> But France has learned to its cost how dangerous it is to feed such beasts. The fate of the Romans, Carthaginians, and Syrians,<sup>5</sup> and many other nations and cities, which were both overturned and quite ruined by those standing armies, should make others wiser; and the folly of this maxim of the French appears plainly even from this, that their trained soldiers often find your raw men prove too hard for them, of which I will not say much, lest you may think I flatter the English. Every day's experience shows that the mechanics in the towns or the clowns in the country are not afraid of fighting with those idle gentlemen, if they are not disabled by some misfortune in their body or dispirited by extreme want; so that you need not fear that those well-shaped and strong men (for it is only such that noblemen love to keep about them till they spoil them), who now grow feeble with ease and are softened with their effeminate manner of life, would be less fit for action if they were well bred and well employed. And it seems very unreasonable that, for the prospect of a war, which you need never have but when you please, you should maintain so many idle men, as will always disturb you in time of peace, which is ever to be more considered than war. But I do not think that this necessity of stealing arises only from hence; there is another cause of it, more peculiar to England.'

"What is that?' said the Cardinal.

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<sup>1</sup> Hythloday is referring to the Cornish Rebellion of 1497, in which the people of Cornwall, in the far south-west of Britain, rose up in protest against ruinous taxes and marched on London. The uprising failed, and the rebels were slaughtered by the King's troops.

<sup>2</sup> John Morton (1420-1500) in addition to being Archbishop of Canterbury, Catholic Cardinal and Lord Chancellor of England, as Hythloday relates, was also a mentor to Thomas More, who had served as a page in Morton's household as a young man.

<sup>3</sup> England and France were perennially at war with one another: from the Norman Conquest of 1066, through the Hundred Years War of 1337-1453, to the War of the League of Cambria, being fought as More composed *Utopia* (and onward into the Napoleonic wars of the 19th century).

<sup>4</sup> From Sallust's *Catiline*, XVI.

<sup>5</sup> Tales of antiquity are filled with the hazards of a standing army. In the aftermath of the First Punic War, for instance, mercenaries employed by Carthage rebelled when faced with disbandment.

## A further reason for thievery: The enclosure of land for sheep (Bk 1, Sec 5)

1. RH points out that the powerful are converting cropland to pasture land for sheep, turning tenants into vagabonds and thieves. High profit outweighs the public good.
2. This pernicious enclosure of the land also raises the price of corn, wool, and beef.
3. Luxurious living, prostitution, drinking, and gambling all follow. Only by restoring agriculture can we reverse the corruption of our society and thereby curtail theft.

▲1 “‘The increase of pasture,’ said I, ‘by which your sheep, which are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men and unpeople, not only villages, but towns; for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men, the abbots! not contented with the old rents which their farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and enclose grounds that they may lodge their sheep in them. As if forests and parks had swallowed up too little of the land, those worthy countrymen turn the best inhabited places into solitudes; for when an insatiable wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to enclose many thousand acres of ground, the owners, as well as tenants, are turned out of their possessions by trick or by main force, or, being wearied out by ill usage, they are forced to sell them; by which means those miserable people, both men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go; and they must sell, almost for nothing, their household stuff, which could not bring them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end (for it will be soon spent), what is left for them to do but either to steal, and so to be hanged (God knows how justly!), or to go about and beg? and if they do this they are put in prison as idle vagabonds, while they would willingly work but can find none that will hire them; for there is no more occasion for country labor, to which they have been bred, when there is no arable ground left. One shepherd can look after a flock, which will stock an extent of ground that would require many hands if it were to be plowed and reaped.’<sup>1</sup>

▲2 “‘This, likewise, in many places raises the price of corn. The price of wool is also so risen that the poor people, who were wont to make cloth, are no more able to buy it; and this, likewise, makes many of them idle: for since the increase of pasture God has punished the avarice of the owners by a rot among the sheep, which has destroyed vast numbers of them—to us it might have seemed more just had it fell on the owners themselves. But, suppose the sheep should increase ever so much, their price is not likely to fall; since, though they cannot be called a monopoly, because they are not engrossed by one person, yet they are in so few hands, and these are so rich, that, as they are not pressed to sell them sooner than they have a mind to it, so they never do it till they have raised the price as high as possible.

“On the same account it is that the other kinds of cattle are so dear, because many villages being pulled down, and all country labor being much neglected, there are none who make it their business to breed them. The rich do not breed cattle as they do sheep, but buy them lean and at low prices; and, after they have fattened them on their grounds, sell them again at high rates. And I do not think that all the inconveniences this will produce are yet observed; for, as they sell the cattle dear, so, if they are consumed faster than the breeding countries from which they are brought can afford them, then the stock must decrease, and this must needs end in great scarcity; and by these means, this your island, which seemed as to this particular the happiest in the world, will suffer much by the cursed avarice of a few persons: besides this, the rising of corn makes all people lessen their families as much as they can; and what can those who are dismissed by them do but either beg or rob? And to this last a man of a great mind is much sooner drawn than to the former.

▲ 3 “Luxury likewise breaks in apace upon you to set forward your poverty and misery; there is an excessive vanity in apparel, and great cost in diet, and that not only in noble-men's families, but even among tradesmen, among the farmers themselves, and among all ranks of persons. You have also many infamous houses, and, besides those that are known, the taverns and ale-houses are no better; add to these dice, cards, tables, football, tennis, and quoits, in which money runs fast away; and those that are initiated into them must, in the conclusion, betake themselves to robbing for a supply. Banish these plagues, and give orders that those who have dispeopled so much soil may either rebuild the villages they have pulled down or let out their grounds to such as will do it; restrain those engrossings of the rich, that are as bad almost as monopolies; leave fewer occasions to idleness; let agriculture be set up again, and the manufacture of the wool be regulated, that so there may be work found for those companies of idle people whom want forces to be thieves, or who now, being idle vagabonds or useless servants, will certainly grow thieves at last. If you do not find a remedy to these evils it is a vain thing to boast of your severity in punishing theft, which, though it may have the appearance of justice, yet in itself is neither just nor convenient; for if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this but that you first make thieves and then punish them?”

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<sup>1</sup> Here (in an oft-quoted passage) More is referring to the infamous enclosure of the commons. Beginning as early as the twelfth century and extending into the nineteenth, land that had been used by commoners was cleared and fenced to create grazing land for sheep to supply the burgeoning wool trade. The practice was profitable for the land-holding gentry but devastating for the commoners who had depended upon these common lands for their livelihood. Karl Marx links this historical process to the development of modern private property in Vol. I of *Capital*, but criticism of the practice, as evidenced here, pre-dates him.

## The Cardinal enters the discussion. RH presses his argument. (Bk 1, Sec 6)

- 1 The lawyer began his refutation in the tedious manner of a formal debate, but Cardinal Morton stopped him.
- 2 Morton then asked me what is better than executing thieves. Is not death a deterrent?
- 3 I responded that it is disproportionate and unjust to equate a life with stolen property.
- 4 Also, we usurp God's prerogative to write law that permit killing beyond God's example.
- 5 Finally, if the penalty for theft is death, thieves will be safer if they murder those from whom they steal.
- 6 We can look to others for good ideas. The Romans put thieves to work in quarries and mines.

▲ 1 “While I was talking thus, the lawyer, who was present, had prepared an answer, and had resolved to resume all I had said, according to the formality of a debate, in which things are generally repeated more faithfully than they are answered, as if the chief trial to be made were of men's memories.

“You have talked prettily, for a stranger,’ said he, ‘having heard of many things among us which you have not been able to consider well; but I will make the whole matter plain to you, and will first repeat in order all that you have said; then I will show how much your ignorance of our affairs has misled you; and will, in the last place, answer all your arguments. And, that I may begin where I promised, there were four things—’

“Hold your peace!’ said the Cardinal; ‘this will take up too much time; therefore we will, at present, ease you of the trouble of answering, and reserve it to our next meeting, which shall be to-morrow, if Raphael's affairs and yours can admit of it.

▲ 2 But, Raphael,’ said he to me, ‘I would gladly know upon what reason it is that you think theft ought not to be punished by death: would you give way to it? or do you propose any other punishment that will be more useful to the public? for, since death does not restrain theft, if men thought their lives would be safe, what fear or force could restrain ill men? On the contrary, they would look on the mitigation of the punishment as an invitation to commit more crimes.’

▲ 3 “I answered, ‘It seems to me a very unjust thing to take away a man's life for a little money, for nothing in the world can be of equal value with a man's life: and if it be said, “that it is not for the money that one suffers, but for his breaking the law,” I must say, extreme justice is an extreme injury:<sup>1</sup> for we ought not to approve of those terrible laws that make the smallest offenses capital,<sup>2</sup> nor of that opinion

of the Stoics that makes all crimes equal; as if there were no difference to be made between the killing a man and the taking his purse, between which, if we examine things impartially, there is no likeness nor proportion. God has commanded us not to kill, and shall we kill so easily for a little money? But if one shall say, that by that law we are only forbid to kill any except when the laws of the land allow of it, upon the same grounds, laws may be made, in some cases, to allow of adultery and perjury: ▲ 4 for God having taken from us the right of disposing either of our own or of other people's lives, if it is pretended that the mutual consent of men in making laws can authorize man-slaughter in cases in which God has given us no example, that it frees people from the obligation of the divine law, and so makes murder a lawful action, what is this, but to give a preference to human laws before the divine? and, if this is once admitted, by the same rule men may, in all other things, put what restrictions they please upon the laws of God. If, by the Mosaical law, though it was rough and severe, as being a yoke laid on an obstinate and servile nation, men were only fined, and not put to death for theft,<sup>3</sup> we cannot imagine, that in this new law of mercy, in which God treats us with the tenderness of a father, He has given us a greater license to cruelty than He did to the Jews.

▲ 5 “Upon these reasons it is, that I think putting thieves to death is not lawful; and it is plain and obvious that it is absurd and of ill consequence to the commonwealth that a thief and a murderer should be equally punished; for if a robber sees that his danger is the same if he is convicted of theft as if he were guilty of murder, this will naturally incite him to kill the person whom otherwise he would only have robbed; since, if the punishment is the same, there is more security, and less danger of discovery, when he that can best make it is put out of the way; so that terrifying thieves too much provokes them to cruelty.

▲ 6 “But as to the question, ‘What more convenient way of punishment can be found?’ I think it much easier to find out that than to invent anything that is worse;<sup>4</sup> why should we doubt but the way that was so long in use among the old Romans, who understood so well the arts of government, was very proper for their punishment? They condemned such as they found guilty of great crimes to work their whole lives in quarries, or to dig in mines with chains about them.

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<sup>1</sup> A paraphrase of the common Latin phrase from Cicero: *summum ius, summa iniuria* (“the extreme law is the greatest injustice”).

<sup>2</sup> The original text also makes brief mention of the edicts of the Roman consul Manlius who, as the Roman historian Livy describes, put his own son to death for a minor infraction.

<sup>3</sup> The punishments for theft detailed by Moses in Exodus 22 are many, but do not include death.

<sup>4</sup> The phrasing here, which derives from the Burnet translation, is difficult. The contexts suggests a meaning like this: “I think it is much easier to look for a good precedent than to take a chance with an untried idea. Or, since we have good precedents, it makes sense to follow them.” -DF

## **RH continues his argument citing the Polylerits in Persia<sup>1</sup>** (Bk 1, Sec 7)

- 1 Better yet is the method of the Polylerits in Persia. These are a well-governed, independent people who live simply and avoid war.
- 2 Those found guilty of theft make restitution to their victims, not to princes, and are condemned to hard labor, not death. They are, however, treated well.
- 3 They are given a distinctive appearance. Precautions are taken to keep them away from money and to prevent them from conspiring together or attempting escape.
- 4 Because this method works so well, convicted thieves become useful to society (often serving as guides), and they have hope of earning their freedom.

▲1 “But the method that I liked best was that which I observed in my travels in Persia, among the Polylerits,<sup>2</sup> who are a considerable and well-governed people: they pay a yearly tribute to the King of Persia, but in all other respects they are a free nation, and governed by their own laws: they lie far from the sea, and are environed with hills; and, being contented with the productions of their own country, which is very fruitful, they have little commerce with any other nation; and as they, according to the genius of their country, have no inclination to enlarge their borders, so their mountains and the pension they pay to the Persian, secure them from all invasions. Thus they have no wars among them; they live rather conveniently than with splendor, and may be rather called a happy nation than either eminent or famous; for I do not think that they are known, so much as by name, to any but their next neighbors.

▲2 “Those that are found guilty of theft among them are bound to make restitution to the owner, and not, as it is in other places, to the prince, for they reckon that the prince has no more right to the stolen goods than the thief; but if that which was stolen is no more in being, then the goods of the thieves are estimated, and restitution being made out of them, the remainder is given to their wives and children. The thieves are condemned to serve in the public works, but are neither imprisoned nor chained, unless there happens to be some extraordinary circumstance in their crimes. They go about loose and free, working for the public: if they are idle or backward to work they are whipped, but if they work hard they are well used and treated without any mark of reproach; only the lists of them are called always at night, and then they are shut up. They suffer no other uneasiness but this of constant labor; for, as they work for the public, so they are well entertained out of the public stock, which is done differently in different places: in some places whatever is bestowed on them is raised by a charitable contribution; and, though this way may seem uncertain, yet so merciful are the inclinations of that people, that they are plentifully supplied by it; but in other places public revenues are set

aside for them, or there is a constant tax or poll-money raised for their maintenance. In some places they are set to no public work, but every private man that has occasion to hire workmen goes to the market-places and hires them of the public, a little lower than he would do a freeman. If they go lazily about their task he may quicken them with the whip. By this means there is always some piece of work or other to be done by them; and, besides their livelihood, they earn somewhat still to the public.

▲ 3 “They all wear a peculiar habit, of one certain color, and their hair is cropped a little above their ears, and a piece of one of their ears is cut off. Their friends are allowed to give them either meat, drink, or clothes, so long as they are of their proper color; but it is death, both to the giver and taker, if they give them money; nor is it less penal for any freeman to take money from them upon any account whatsoever: and it is also death for any of these slaves (so they are called) to handle arms. Those of every division of the country are distinguished by a peculiar mark, which it is capital for them to lay aside, to go out of their bounds, or to talk with a slave of another jurisdiction, and the very attempt of an escape is no less penal than an escape itself. It is death for any other slave to be accessory to it; and if a freeman engages in it he is condemned to slavery. Those that discover it are rewarded—if freemen, in money; and if slaves, with liberty, together with a pardon for being accessory to it; that so they might find their account rather in repenting of their engaging in such a design than in persisting in it.

▲ 4 “These are their laws and rules in relation to robbery, and it is obvious that they are as advantageous as they are mild and gentle; since vice is not only destroyed and men preserved, but they are treated in such a manner as to make them see the necessity of being honest and of employing the rest of their lives in repairing the injuries they had formerly done to society. Nor is there any hazard of their falling back to their old customs; and so little do travelers apprehend mischief from them that they generally make use of them for guides from one jurisdiction to another; for there is nothing left them by which they can rob or be the better for it, since, as they are disarmed, so the very having of money is a sufficient conviction: and as they are certainly punished if discovered, so they cannot hope to escape; for their habit being in all the parts of it different from what is commonly worn, they cannot fly away, unless they would go naked, and even then their cropped ear would betray them. The only danger to be feared from them is their conspiring against the government; but those of one division and neighborhood can do nothing to any purpose unless a general conspiracy were laid amongst all the slaves of the several jurisdictions, which cannot be done, since they cannot meet or talk together; nor will any venture on a design where the concealment would be so dangerous and the discovery so profitable. None are quite hopeless of recovering their freedom, since by their obedience and patience, and by giving good grounds to believe that they will change their manner of life for the future, they may expect at last to obtain their liberty, and some are every year restored to it upon the good character that is given of them.

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<sup>1</sup> The Polylerites live much like the Utopians, and More seems to be giving us an advance peek at his ideas for an ideal commonwealth. DF

<sup>2</sup> “Polylerits” is another fabrication of More’s, assembled from Greek, meaning “people of (or from) much nonsense.”

## TOC

**The Cardinal voices cautious approval** (Bk 1, Sec 8)

- 1 When I finished, the lawyer grimaced and said this plan would endanger the whole nation. Everyone seemed to agree with the lawyer, except Cardinal Morton.
- 2 Morton opined that the plan was worth trying out.
- 3 He also suggested that the plan could be applied to vagabonds as well as thieves.
- 4 Now everyone joined Morton's view, particularly in regard to vagabonds, because that had been Morton's own contribution.

▲1 "When I had related all this, I added that I did not see why such a method might not be followed with more advantage than could ever be expected from that severe "justice" which the lawyer magnified so much. To this he answered, 'That it could never take place in England without endangering the whole nation.'

"As he said this he shook his head, made some grimaces, and held his peace, while all the company seemed of his opinion, except the Cardinal, ▲2 who said, 'That it was not easy to form a judgment of its success, since it was a method that never yet had been tried; but if,' said he, 'when sentence of death were passed upon a thief, the prince would reprieve him for a while, and make the experiment upon him, denying him the privilege of a sanctuary; and then, if it had a good effect upon him, it might take place; and, if it did not succeed, the worst would be to execute the sentence on the condemned persons at last; and I do not see,' added he, 'why it would be either unjust, inconvenient, or at all dangerous to admit of such a delay; ▲3 in my opinion the vagabonds ought to be treated in the same manner, against whom, though we have made many laws, yet we have not been able to gain our end.'

▲4 "When the Cardinal was done, they all commended the motion, though they had despised it when it came from me, but more particularly commended what related to the vagabonds, because it was his own observation."

## TOC

**A ridiculous episode: The jester insults the friar<sup>1</sup>** (Bk 1, Sec 9)

- 1 Now something ridiculous occurred. A jester was standing by who, though his humor was usually lame, chanced to say something clever.
- 2 Someone had remarked that our suggestions had taken care of thieves and vagabonds but not the those beggars who are too sick or old to work.
- 3 The jester ("fool"), noting his disgust with such people, proposed sending them to monasteries.
- 4 A friar ("divine") joked that the jester's plan had not taken care of friars, who are also beggars.
- 5 The jester retorted that the Cardinal had already proposed putting vagabonds to work (like convicted thieves)—and friars are nothing more than vagabonds.
- 6 The angry friar exchanged insults with the jester. Cardinal Morton, when he could not calm the friar, dismissed the company and left the room.

▲1 "I do not know whether it be worth while to tell what followed, for it was very ridiculous; but I shall venture at it, for as it is not foreign to this matter, so some good use may be made of it. There was a Jester standing by, that counterfeited the fool so naturally that he seemed to be really one; the jests which he offered were so cold and dull that we laughed more at him than at them, yet sometimes he said, as it were by chance, things that were not unpleasant, so as to justify the old proverb, "That he who throws the dice often, will sometimes have a lucky hit."

▲2 "One of the company then said that I had taken care of the thieves, and the Cardinal had taken care of the vagabonds, so that there remained nothing but that some public provision might be made for the poor whom sickness or old age had disabled from labor ▲3 'Leave that to me,' said the Fool, 'and I shall take care of them, for there is no sort of people whose sight I abhor more, having been so often vexed with them and with their sad complaints; but as dolefully soever as they have told their tale, they could never prevail so far as to draw one penny from me; for either I had no mind to give them anything, or, when I had a mind to do it, I had nothing to give them; and they now know me so well that they will not lose their labor, but let me pass without giving me any trouble, because they hope for nothing—no more, in faith, than if I were a priest; but I would have a law made for sending all these beggars to monasteries, the men to the Benedictines, to be made lay-brothers, and the women to be nuns.'

▲4 "The Cardinal smiled, and approved of it in jest, but the rest liked it in earnest. There was a divine present, who, though he was a grave morose man, yet he was so pleased with this reflection that was made on the priests and the monks that he began to play with the Fool, and said to him, 'This will not deliver you from all beggars, except you take care of us Friars.'<sup>2</sup> ▲5 "That is done already,' answered

the Fool, 'for the Cardinal has provided for you by what he proposed for restraining vagabonds and setting them to work, for I know no vagabonds like you.'

▲6 "This was well entertained by the whole company, who, looking at the Cardinal, perceived that he was not ill-pleased at it; only the Friar himself was vexed, as may be easily imagined, and fell into such a passion that he could not forbear railing at the Fool, and calling him knave, slanderer, backbiter, and son of perdition, and then cited some dreadful threatenings out of the Scriptures against him. Now the Jester thought he was in his element, and laid about him freely. 'Good Friar,' said he, 'be not angry, for it is written, "In patience possess your soul.'"<sup>3</sup>

"The Friar answered (for I shall give you his own words), 'I am not angry, you hangman; at least, I do not sin in it, for the Psalmist says, "Be ye angry and sin not.'"<sup>4</sup> Upon this the Cardinal admonished him gently, and wished him to govern his passions. 'No, my lord,' said he, 'I speak not but from a good zeal, which I ought to have, for holy men have had a good zeal, as it is said, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;"<sup>5</sup> and we sing in our church that those who mocked Elisha as he went up to the house of God felt the effects of his zeal, which that mocker, that rogue, that scoundrel, will perhaps feel.'<sup>6</sup>

"You do this, perhaps, with a good intention,' said the Cardinal, 'but, in my opinion, it were wiser in you, and perhaps better for you, not to engage in so ridiculous a contest with a Fool.'

"No, my lord,' answered he, 'that were not wisely done, for Solomon, the wisest of men, said, "Answer a Fool according to his folly,"<sup>7</sup> which I now do, and show him the ditch into which he will fall, if he is not aware of it; for if the many mockers of Elisha, who was but one bald man, felt the effect of his zeal, what will become of the mocker of so many Friars, among whom there are so many bald men? We have, likewise, a bull, by which all that jeer us are excommunicated.'

"When the Cardinal saw that there was no end of this matter he made a sign to the Fool to withdraw, turned the discourse another way, and soon after rose from the table, and, dismissing us, went to hear causes.

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<sup>1</sup> This episode is complex and its meaning is hard to make out. The casual reader may want to skip this section (which is indicated by the sepia font color). However, an interesting reading of this section is offered by David Wootton in his edition of *Utopia*. In this reading the Jester is a special kind of fool, Erasmus's "Christian Fool," and so offers special insights.

<sup>2</sup> The friar is making reference to the fact that friars supported themselves by begging. He regards this as a respectable practice.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 21:19.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms 4:4.

<sup>5</sup> Psalms 69:9

<sup>6</sup> The Friar is referring to a Medieval hymn based on the story of Elisha, who is mocked by children for his baldness in 2 Kings 2:23-4.

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 26:5.

## **RH presses his point that court service is futile, showing how badly European nations are governed. (Bk 1, Sec 10)**

- 1 Mr. More, I told this story only because I was asked. I told it in detail to show how Morton's flattering guests changed their views to match his. So how would my unwelcome ideas be received at court?
- 2 Thank you, Raphael, for letting me re-live my youth as a page in Morton's household. But I still believe that you, as a philosopher, have a duty to benefit humankind by counseling a king.
- 3 RH: Philosophers do try to counsel kings. But, as Plato says (and found out first hand) kings, corrupted from birth, will not listen to philosophers.
- 4 Imagine that I were with the French king opposing his advisors' schemes for conquest and nefarious diplomacy.
- 5 Imagine if I told of the Achorians, neighbors to the Utopians, who learned long ago the folly of conquest. How would I be received? TM: Not well, I confess.
- 6 And what if I opposed schemes by counselors to fatten the king's treasury while impoverishing the people?
- 7 And what if I opposed schemes to corrupt the courts to help the king enrich himself unjustly?
- 8 And what if I challenge the pernicious precepts of Crassus with those of Fabricius, who recognized that a king is responsible for the well being of his people?
- 9 And what if I told of the Macarians (neighbors to the Utopians) whose kings avoid accumulating treasure, preferring that their people be prosperous?

▲1 "Thus, Mr. More, I have run out into a tedious story, of the length of which I had been ashamed, if (as you earnestly begged it of me) I had not observed you to hearken to it as if you had no mind to lose any part of it. I might have contracted it, but I resolved to give it you at large, that you might observe how those that despised what I had proposed, no sooner perceived that the Cardinal did not dislike it but presently approved of it, fawned so on him and flattered him to such a degree, that they in good earnest applauded those things that he only liked in jest; and from hence you may gather how little courtiers would value either me or my counsels."

▲2 To this I answered, "You have done me a great kindness in this relation; for as everything has been related by you both wisely and pleasantly, so you have made me imagine that I was in my own country and grown young again, by recalling that good Cardinal to my thoughts, in whose family I was bred from my childhood;<sup>1</sup> and though you are, upon other accounts, very dear to me, yet you are the dearer because you honor his memory so much; but, after all this, I cannot change my opinion, for I still think that if you could overcome that aversion which you have to the courts of princes, you might, by the advice which it is in your power to give, do a

great deal of good to mankind, and this is the chief design that every good man ought to propose to himself in living; for your friend Plato thinks that nations will be happy when either philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers.<sup>2</sup> It is no wonder if we are so far from that happiness while philosophers will not think it their duty to assist kings with their counsels.”

▲3 “They are not so base-minded,” said he, “but that they would willingly do it; many of them have already done it by their books, if those that are in power would but hearken to their good advice. But Plato judged right, that except kings themselves became philosophers, they who from their childhood are corrupted with false notions would never fall in entirely with the counsels of philosophers, and this he himself found to be true in the person of Dionysius.<sup>3</sup>”

▲4 “Do not you think that if I were about any king, proposing good laws to him, and endeavoring to root out all the cursed seeds of evil that I found in him, I should either be turned out of his court, or, at least, be laughed at for my pains? For instance, what could I signify<sup>4</sup> if I were about the King of France, and were called into his cabinet council, where several wise men, in his hearing, were proposing many expedients; as, by what arts and practices Milan may be kept, and Naples, that has so often slipped out of their hands, recovered; how the Venetians, and after them the rest of Italy, may be subdued; and then how Flanders, Brabant, and all Burgundy, and some other kingdoms which he has swallowed already in his designs, may be added to his empire? One proposes a league with the Venetians, to be kept as long as he finds his account in it, and that he ought to communicate counsels with them, and give them some share of the spoil till his success makes him need or fear them less, and then it will be easily taken out of their hands; another proposes the hiring the Germans and the securing the Switzers by pensions; another proposes the gaining the Emperor by money, which is omnipotent with him; another proposes a peace with the King of Arragon, and, in order to cement it, the yielding up the King of Navarre's pretensions; another thinks that the Prince of Castile is to be wrought on by the hope of an alliance, and that some of his courtiers are to be gained to the French faction by pensions. The hardest point of all is, what to do with England; a treaty of peace is to be set on foot, and, if their alliance is not to be depended on, yet it is to be made as firm as possible, and they are to be called friends, but suspected as enemies: therefore the Scots are to be kept in readiness to be let loose upon England on every occasion; and some banished nobleman is to be supported underhand (for by the League it cannot be done avowedly) who has a pretension to the crown, by which means that suspected prince may be kept in awe.<sup>5</sup>”

▲5 “Now when things are in so great a fermentation, and so many gallant men are joining counsels how to carry on the war, if so mean a man as I should stand up and wish them to change all their counsels—to let Italy alone and stay at home, since the kingdom of France was indeed greater than could be well governed by one man; that therefore he ought not to think of adding others to it; and if, after

this, I should propose to them the resolutions of the Achorians,<sup>6</sup> a people that lie on the south-east of Utopia, who long ago engaged in war in order to add to the dominions of their prince another kingdom, to which he had some pretensions by an ancient alliance: this they conquered, but found that the trouble of keeping it was equal to that by which it was gained; that the conquered people were always either in rebellion or exposed to foreign invasions, while they were obliged to be incessantly at war, either for or against them, and consequently could never disband their army; that in the meantime they were oppressed with taxes, their money went out of the kingdom, their blood was spilt for the glory of their king without procuring the least advantage to the people, who received not the smallest benefit from it even in time of peace; and that, their manners being corrupted by a long war, robbery and murders everywhere abounded, and their laws fell into contempt; while their king, distracted with the care of two kingdoms, was the less able to apply his mind to the interest of either. When they saw this, and that there would be no end to these evils, they by joint counsels made an humble address to their king, desiring him to choose which of the two kingdoms he had the greatest mind to keep, since he could not hold both; for they were too great a people to be governed by a divided king, since no man would willingly have a groom that should be in common between him and another. Upon which the good prince was forced to quit his new kingdom to one of his friends (who was not long after dethroned), and to be contented with his old one. To this I would add that after all those warlike attempts, the vast confusions, and the consumption both of treasure and of people that must follow them, perhaps upon some misfortune they might be forced to throw up all at last; therefore it seemed much more eligible that the king should improve his ancient kingdom all he could, and make it flourish as much as possible; that he should love his people, and be beloved of them; that he should live among them, govern them gently and let other kingdoms alone, since that which had fallen to his share was big enough, if not too big, for him:— pray, how do you think would such a speech as this be heard?”

“I confess,” said I, “I think not very well.”

▲6 “But what,” said he, “if I should sort with another kind of ministers, whose chief contrivances and consultations were by what art the prince's treasures might be increased? Where one proposes raising the value of specie when the king's debts are large, and lowering it when his revenues were to come in, that so he might both pay much with a little, and in a little receive a great deal. Another proposes a pretense of a war, that money might be raised in order to carry it on, and that a peace be concluded as soon as that was done; and this with such appearances of religion as might work on the people, and make them impute it to the piety of their prince, and to his tenderness for the lives of his subjects. A third offers some old musty laws that have been antiquated by a long disuse (and which, as they had been forgotten by all the subjects, so they had also been broken by them), and proposes the levying the penalties of these laws, that, as it would bring in a vast treasure, so there might be a very good pretense for it, since it would look like

the executing a law and the doing of justice. A fourth proposes the prohibiting of many things under severe penalties, especially such as were against the interest of the people, and then the dispensing with these prohibitions, upon great compositions, to those who might find their advantage in breaking them. This would serve two ends, both of them acceptable to many; for as those whose avarice led them to transgress would be severely fined, so the selling licenses dear would look as if a prince were tender of his people, and would not easily, or at low rates, dispense with anything that might be against the public good.

▲ 7 “Another proposes that the judges must be made sure, that they may declare always in favor of the prerogative; that they must be often sent for to court, that the king may hear them argue those points in which he is concerned; since, how unjust soever any of his pretensions may be, yet still some one or other of them, either out of contradiction to others, or the pride of singularity, or to make their court, would find out some pretense or other to give the king a fair color to carry the point. For if the judges but differ in opinion, the clearest thing in the world is made by that means disputable, and truth being once brought in question, the king may then take advantage to expound the law for his own profit; while the judges that stand out will be brought over, either through fear or modesty; and they being thus gained, all of them may be sent to the bench to give sentence boldly as the king would have it; for fair pretenses will never be wanting when sentence is to be given in the prince's favor. It will either be said that equity lies of his side, or some words in the law will be found sounding that way, or some forced sense will be put on them; and, when all other things fail, the king's undoubted prerogative will be pretended, as that which is above all law, and to which a religious judge ought to have a special regard.

▲ 8 “Thus all consent to that maxim of Crassus, that a prince cannot have treasure enough, since he must maintain his armies out of it; that a king, even though he would, can do nothing unjustly; that all property is in him, not excepting the very persons of his subjects; and that no man has any other property but that which the king, out of his goodness, thinks fit to leave him.<sup>7</sup> And they think it is the prince's interest that there be as little of this left as may be, as if it were his advantage that his people should have neither riches nor liberty, since these things make them less easy and willing to submit to a cruel and unjust government. Whereas necessity and poverty blunts them, makes them patient, beats them down, and breaks that height of spirit that might otherwise dispose them to rebel.

“Now what if, after all these propositions were made, I should rise up and assert that such counsels were both unbecoming a king and mischievous to him; and that not only his honor, but his safety, consisted more in his people's wealth than in his own; if I should show that they choose a king for their own sake, and not for his; that, by his care and endeavors, they may be both easy and safe; and that, therefore, a prince ought to take more care of his people's happiness than of his own, as a shepherd is to take more care of his flock than of himself?

“It is also certain that they are much mistaken that think the poverty of a nation is a mean of the public safety. Who quarrel more than beggars? Who does more earnestly long for a change than he that is uneasy in his present circumstances? And who run to create confusions with so desperate a boldness as those who, having nothing to lose, hope to gain by them? If a king should fall under such contempt or envy that he could not keep his subjects in their duty but by oppression and ill usage, and by rendering them poor and miserable, it were certainly better for him to quit his kingdom than to retain it by such methods as make him, while he keeps the name of authority, lose the majesty due to it. Nor is it so becoming the dignity of a king to reign over beggars as over rich and happy subjects.

“And therefore Fabricius,<sup>8</sup> a man of a noble and exalted temper, said 'he would rather govern rich men than be rich himself; since for one man to abound in wealth and pleasure when all about him are mourning and groaning, is to be a jailer and not a king.' He is an unskilful physician that cannot cure one disease without casting his patient into another. So he that can find no other way for correcting the errors of his people but by taking from them the conveniences of life, shows that he knows not what it is to govern a free nation. He himself ought rather to shake off his sloth, or to lay down his pride, for the contempt or hatred that his people have for him takes its rise from the vices in himself. Let him live upon what belongs to him without wronging others, and accommodate his expense to his revenue. Let him punish crimes, and, by his wise conduct, let him endeavor to prevent them, rather than be severe when he has suffered them to be too common. Let him not rashly revive laws that are abrogated by disuse, especially if they have been long forgotten and never wanted. And let him never take any penalty for the breach of them to which a judge would not give way in a private man, but would look on him as a crafty and unjust person for pretending to it.

▲ 9 “To these things I would add that law among the Macarians<sup>9</sup>—a people that live not far from Utopia—by which their king, on the day on which he began to reign, is tied by an oath, confirmed by solemn sacrifices, never to have at once above a thousand pounds of gold in his treasures, or so much silver as is equal to that in value. This law, they tell us, was made by an excellent king who had more regard to the riches of his country than to his own wealth, and therefore provided against the heaping up of so much treasure as might impoverish the people. He thought that moderate sum might be sufficient for any accident, if either the king had occasion for it against the rebels, or the kingdom against the invasion of an enemy; but that it was not enough to encourage a prince to invade other men's rights—a circumstance that was the chief cause of his making that law. He also thought that it was a good provision for that free circulation of money so necessary for the course of commerce and exchange. And when a king must distribute all those extraordinary accessions that increase treasure beyond the due pitch, it makes him less disposed to oppress his subjects. Such a king as this will be the terror of ill men, and will be beloved by all the good. If, I say, I should talk of these or

such-like things to men that had taken their bias another way, how deaf would they be to all I could say!"

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<sup>1</sup> As noted earlier, More served as a page in Morton's household when he was a young man.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, V.

<sup>3</sup> Hythloday refers here to either Dionysius the Elder or his son, Dionysius the Younger, both rulers of Syracuse. Plato visited and offered advice to both but reportedly had little influence with either.

<sup>4</sup> The meaning here is "What good would it do?" DF

<sup>5</sup> More, through Hythloday, is sketching out in shorthand political machinations common in his day: bribing sovereigns, hiring mercenaries, undermining treaties by supporting competing powers, cementing political alliances through marriage, and so on and so forth. Excepting, perhaps, political marriages, the list of practices is depressingly contemporary.

<sup>6</sup> Another neologism coined by More's, assembled from Greek and meaning: "people without a place."

<sup>7</sup> Marcus Licinius Crassus was a Roman general and politician and considered the richest man in all of Rome; the maxim is likely drawn from Cicero's reflections on Crassus in his *On Moral Obligation*, I, viii.

<sup>8</sup> Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, a Roman commander and statesman, was lauded for his virtues. The saying attributed to him, however, is not his but that of another, equally virtuous, Roman politician named Manius Curius Dentatus.

<sup>9</sup> Another More-ism, meaning "of the blessed or the happy."

## TOC

**I propose a pragmatic approach, which RH rejects** (Bk 1, Sec 11)

- 1 TM: It is true that your kind of philosophical guidance, “speculative philosophy,” would not be heeded, but there is a pragmatic alternative that accommodates the vice we see at court.
- 2 RH: I cannot do this. And we *should* be able to convey the wise teachings of Plato and the Utopians. Should we water down Christ’s teachings to suit the vices of humankind?
- 3 This “accommodation” you propose, Mr. More, would only encourage wickedness. At court you are forced to agree with the worst ideas—no middle ground is accepted.
- 4 As Plato says (in his rain simile), if you cannot persuade people to be wise, you are entitled to maintain your own virtue.

▲1 “No doubt, very deaf,” answered I; “and no wonder, for one is never to offer propositions or advice that we are certain will not be entertained. Discourses so much out of the road could not avail anything, nor have any effect on men whose minds were prepossessed with different sentiments. This philosophical way of speculation is not unpleasant among friends in a free conversation; but there is no room for it in the courts of princes, where great affairs are carried on by authority.”

“That is what I was saying,” replied he, “that there is no room for philosophy in the courts of princes.”

“Yes, there is,” said I, “but not for this speculative philosophy, that makes everything to be alike fitting at all times; but there is another philosophy that is more pliable, that knows its proper scene, accommodates itself to it, and teaches a man with propriety and decency to act that part which has fallen to his share. If, when one of Plautus’ comedies is upon the stage, and a company of servants are acting their parts, you should come out in the garb of a philosopher, and repeat, out of *Octavia*, a discourse of Seneca’s to Nero, would it not be better for you to say nothing than by mixing things of such different natures to make an impertinent tragedy? For you spoil and corrupt the play that is in hand when you mix with it things of an opposite nature, even though they are much better. Therefore go through with the play that is acting the best you can, and do not confound it because another that is pleasanter comes into your thoughts.

“It is even so in a commonwealth and in the councils of princes; if ill opinions cannot be quite rooted out, and you cannot cure some received vice according to your wishes, you must not, therefore, abandon the commonwealth, for the same reasons as you should not forsake the ship in a storm because you cannot command the winds. You are not obliged to assault people with discourses that are out of

their road, when you see that their received notions must prevent your making an impression upon them: you ought rather to cast about and to manage things with all the dexterity in your power,<sup>2</sup> so that, if you are not able to make them go well, they may be as little ill as possible; for, except all men were good, everything cannot be right, and that is a blessing that I do not at present hope to see.”

▲2 “According to your argument,” answered he, “all that I could be able to do would be to preserve myself from being mad while I endeavored to cure the madness of others; for, if I speak with, I must repeat what I have said to you; and as for lying, whether a philosopher can do it or not I cannot tell: I am sure I cannot do it.”

“But though these discourses may be uneasy and ungrateful to them, I do not see why they should seem foolish or extravagant; indeed, if I should either propose such things as Plato has contrived in his ‘Commonwealth,’ or as the Utopians practice in theirs, though they might seem better, as certainly they are, yet they are so different from our establishment, which is founded on property (there being no such thing among them), that I could not expect that it would have any effect on them. But such discourses as mine, which only call past evils to mind and give warning of what may follow, leave nothing in them that is so absurd that they may not be used at any time, for they can only be unpleasant to those who are resolved to run headlong the contrary way; and if we must let alone everything as absurd or extravagant—which, by reason of the wicked lives of many, may seem uncouth—we must, even among Christians, give over pressing the greatest part of those things that Christ hath taught us, though He has commanded us not to conceal them, but to proclaim on the housetops that which He taught in secret.<sup>3</sup> The greatest parts of His precepts are more opposite to the lives of the men of this age than any part of my discourse has been, but the preachers seem to have learned that craft to which you advise me: for they, observing that the world would not willingly suit their lives to the rules that Christ has given, have fitted His doctrine, as if it had been a leaden rule,<sup>4</sup> to their lives, that so, some way or other, they might agree with one another.

▲3 “But I see no other effect of this compliance except it be that men become more secure in their wickedness by it; and this is all the success that I can have in a court, for I must always differ from the rest, and then I shall signify nothing; or, if I agree with them, I shall then only help forward their madness. I do not comprehend what you mean by your ‘casting about,’ or by ‘the bending and handling things so dexterously that, if they go not well, they may go as little ill as may be;’ for in courts they will not bear with a man’s holding his peace or conniving at what others do: a man must barefacedly approve of the worst counsels and consent to the blackest designs, so that he would pass for a spy, or, possibly, for a traitor, that did but coldly approve of such wicked practices; and therefore when a man is engaged in such a society, he will be so far from being able to mend matters by his ‘casting about,’ as you call it, that he will find no occasions of doing any good—the

ill company will sooner corrupt him than be the better for him; or if, notwithstanding all their ill company, he still remains steady and innocent, yet their follies and knavery will be imputed to him; and, by mixing counsels with them, he must bear his share of all the blame that belongs wholly to others.

▲4 “It was no ill simile by which Plato set forth the unreasonableness of a philosopher's meddling with government. ‘If a man,’ says he, ‘were to see a great company run out every day into the rain and take delight in being wet—if he knew that it would be to no purpose for him to go and persuade them to return to their houses in order to avoid the storm, and that all that could be expected by his going to speak to them would be that he himself should be as wet as they, it would be best for him to keep within doors, and, since he had not influence enough to correct other people's folly, to take care to preserve himself.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman playwright Plautus was known for his low comedies, while the play *Octavia* (once attributed to the philosopher Seneca) is a serious-minded tragedy

<sup>2</sup> Other translations refer to this technique as “the indirect approach” (Surtz/Hexter)

<sup>3</sup> Hythloday is referring to the gospels of Matthew (10:27) and Luke (12:3), though it should be remembered that Jesus himself was a master at “casting about,” employing an “indirect approach” of persuasion through his use of parables.

<sup>4</sup> A ruler literally made of lead, and thus bendable. Aristotle uses the leaden rule as a metaphor for adaptable morality in his *Ethics*, V.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, VI.

## **RH: The root evil, I believe, is individual property and money** (Bk 1, Sec 12)

- 1 My true opinion is that while there is private property and money, there cannot be true justice or happiness in a nation. All you will have is predation.
- 2 Reflecting on the constitution of the Utopians makes this clear and confirms Plato's communist philosophy.

▲1 “Though, to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own that as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to be absolutely miserable.

▲2 “Therefore, when I reflect on the wise and good constitution of the Utopians, among whom all things are so well governed and with so few laws, where virtue hath its due reward, and yet there is such an equality that every man lives in plenty—when I compare with them so many other nations that are still making new laws, and yet can never bring their constitution to a right regulation; where, notwithstanding every one has his property, yet all the laws that they can invent have not the power either to obtain or preserve it, or even to enable men certainly to distinguish what is their own from what is another's, of which the many lawsuits that every day break out, and are eternally depending, give too plain a demonstration—when, I say, I balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favorable to Plato,<sup>1</sup> and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy; which cannot be obtained so long as there is property, for when every man draws to himself all that he can encompass, by one title or another, it must needs follow that, how plentiful soever a nation may be, yet a few dividing the wealth of it among themselves, the rest must fall into indigence. So that there will be two sorts of people among them, who deserve that their fortunes should be interchanged—the former useless, but wicked and ravenous; and the latter, who by their constant industry serve the public more than themselves, sincere and modest men.

“From whence I am persuaded that till property is taken away, there can be no equitable or just distribution of things, nor can the world be happily governed; for as long as that is maintained, the greatest and the far best part of mankind, will be still oppressed with a load of cares and anxieties. I confess, without taking it quite away, those pressures that lie on a great part of mankind may be made lighter, but they can never be quite removed; for if laws were made to determine at how great

an extent in soil, and at how much money, every man must stop—to limit the prince, that he might not grow too great; and to restrain the people, that they might not become too insolent—and that none might factiously aspire to public employments, which ought neither to be sold nor made burdensome by a great expense, since otherwise those that serve in them would be tempted to reimburse themselves by cheats and violence, and it would become necessary to find out rich men for undergoing those employments, which ought rather to be trusted to the wise. These laws, I say, might have such effect as good diet and care might have on a sick man whose recovery is desperate; they might allay and mitigate the disease, but it could never be quite healed, nor the body politic be brought again to a good habit as long as property remains; and it will fall out, as in a complication of diseases, that by applying a remedy to one sore you will provoke another, and that which removes the one ill symptom produces others, while the strengthening one part of the body weakens the rest."

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<sup>1</sup> Plato counseled communism for his Guardian elite in *The Republic*—and later, in *Laws VI*, communism among all.

## TOC

## I questioned holding property in common. RH: But you don't know Utopia. (Bk 1, Sec 13)

- 1 I challenged his view. Who would work without financial reward? How would you keep civil order in times of want?
- 2 RH: But you haven't seen Utopia as I have. I would never have left Utopia except to share what I had seen with Europe.
- 3 Peter Giles: How could a nation in the New World have advanced beyond us. We have much older traditions of governance?
- 4 They indeed do have ancient traditions of governance. Also, they learned much from the Romans and Egyptians who shipwrecked on their shore 1200 years ago.
- 5 I then asked him to describe every aspect of Utopia and, after we dined, he did so.

▲1 "On the contrary," answered I, "it seems to me that men cannot live conveniently where all things are common. How can there be any plenty where every man will excuse himself from labor? For as the hope of gain doth not excite him, so the confidence that he has in other men's industry may make him slothful. If people come to be pinched with want, and yet cannot dispose of anything as their own, what can follow upon this but perpetual sedition and bloodshed, especially when the reverence and authority due to magistrates falls to the ground? for I cannot imagine how that can be kept up among those that are in all things equal to one another."

▲2 "I do not wonder," said he, "that it appears so to you, since you have no notion, or at least no right one, of such a constitution; but if you had been in Utopia with me, and had seen their laws and rules, as I did, for the space of five years, in which I lived among them, and during which time I was so delighted with them that indeed I should never have left them if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans, you would then confess that you had never seen a people so well constituted as they."

▲3 "You will not easily persuade me," said Peter, "that any nation in that new world is better governed than those among us; for as our understandings are not worse than theirs, so our government (if I mistake not) being more ancient, a long practice has helped us to find out many conveniences of life, and some happy chances have discovered other things to us which no man's understanding could ever have invented."

▲4 "As for the antiquity either of their government or of ours," said he, "you cannot pass a true judgment of it unless you had read their histories; for, if they are to be believed, they had towns among them before these parts were so much as inhabited; and as for those discoveries that have been either hit on by chance or made by ingenious men, these might have happened there as well as here. I do not

deny but we are more ingenious than they are, but they exceed us much in industry and application. They knew little concerning us before our arrival among them. They call us all by a general name of 'The nations that lie beyond the equinoctial line;' for their chronicle mentions a shipwreck that was made on their coast twelve hundred years ago, and that some Romans and Egyptians that were in the ship, getting safe ashore, spent the rest of their days amongst them; and such was their ingenuity that from this single opportunity they drew the advantage of learning from those unlooked-for guests, and acquired all the useful arts that were then among the Romans, and which were known to these shipwrecked men; and by the hints that they gave them they themselves found out even some of those arts which they could not fully explain, so happily did they improve that accident of having some of our people cast upon their shore. But if such an accident has at any time brought any from thence into Europe, we have been so far from improving it that we do not so much as remember it, as, in after times perhaps, it will be forgot by our people that I was ever there; for though they, from one such accident, made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us, yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them. And this is the true cause of their being better governed and living happier than we, though we come not short of them in point of understanding or outward advantages."

▲5 Upon this I said to him, "I earnestly beg you would describe that island very particularly to us; be not too short, but set out in order all things relating to their soil, their rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know; and you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them of which we are hitherto ignorant."

"I will do it very willingly," said he, "for I have digested the whole matter carefully, but it will take up some time."

"Let us go, then," said I, "first and dine, and then we shall have leisure enough." He consented; we went in and dined, and after dinner came back and sat down in the same place. I ordered my servants to take care that none might come and interrupt us, and both Peter and I desired Raphael to be as good as his word. When he saw that we were very intent upon it he paused a little to recollect himself, and began in this manner:

## THE END OF BOOK ONE

## BOOK TWO FOLLOWS

# BOOK 2

SECOND BOOK  
OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH  
RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY HELD  
CONCERNING THE BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH,  
BY WAY OF THOMAS MORE,  
CITIZEN AND  
UNDERSHERIFF OF LONDON

TOC

## **Introduction: Geography and history** (Bk 2, Sec 1)

1. Utopia is a crescent-shaped island about 200 miles broad with one very large, wind-free harbor and also many other harbors—all well-protected from invasion.
2. Once it had been part of a continent, but Utopus, who first conquered and then much advanced the civilization, made it separate by building a 15-mile channel.
3. There are 54 cities, large, well-built, and well spaced from each other. They share similar manners, laws, and customs.
4. Each year senators are sent to Amaurot, the capital city, to consult about common concerns. In the rural areas there are large, well-appointed farmhouses for extended families.
5. The people regularly switch between town and country living so all understand good husbandry.
6. They breed many chickens (using advanced methods), but a few horses (preferring oxes for farming). They grow ample corn, but none to make whiskey.
7. Country folk supply the towns with food (and share their large surpluses with neighboring nations). In return, they get anything they need from townspeople.

▲ 1 The island of Utopia is in the middle two hundred miles broad, and holds almost at the same breadth over a great part of it, but it grows narrower towards both ends. Its figure is not unlike a crescent. Between its horns the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay, which is environed with land to the compass of about five hundred miles, and is well secured from winds. In this bay there is no great current; the whole coast is, as it were, one continued harbor, which gives all that live in the island great convenience for mutual com-

merce. But the entry into the bay, occasioned by rocks on the one hand and shallows on the other, is very dangerous. In the middle of it there is one single rock which appears above water, and may, therefore, easily be avoided; and on the top of it there is a tower, in which a garrison is kept; the other rocks lie under water, and are very dangerous. The channel is known only to the natives; so that if any stranger should enter into the bay without one of their pilots he would run great danger of shipwreck. For even they themselves could not pass it safe if some marks that are on the coast did not direct their way; and if these should be but a little shifted, any fleet that might come against them, how great soever it were, would be certainly lost.

On the other side of the island there are likewise many harbors; and the coast is so fortified, both by nature and art, that a small number of men can hinder the descent of a great army. ▲2 But they report (and there remains good marks of it to make it credible) that this was no island at first, but a part of the continent. Utopus, that conquered it (whose name it still carries, for Abraxa was its first name), brought the rude and uncivilised inhabitants into such a good government, and to that measure of politeness, that they now far excel all the rest of mankind. Having soon subdued them, he designed to separate them from the continent, and to bring the sea quite round them. To accomplish this he ordered a deep channel to be dug, fifteen miles long;<sup>1</sup> and that the natives might not think he treated them like slaves, he not only forced the inhabitants, but also his own soldiers, to labor in carrying it on. As he set a vast number of men to work, he, beyond all men's expectations, brought it to a speedy conclusion. And his neighbors, who at first laughed at the folly of the undertaking, no sooner saw it brought to perfection than they were struck with admiration and terror.

▲3 There are fifty-four cities<sup>2</sup> in the island, all large and well built, the manners, customs, and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived as near in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles' distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distant but that a man can go on foot in one day from it to that which lies next it.

▲4 Every city sends three of their wisest senators once a year to Amaurot,<sup>3</sup> to consult about their common concerns; for that is the chief town of the island, being situated near the center of it, so that it is the most convenient place for their assemblies. The jurisdiction of every city extends at least twenty miles, and, where the towns lie wider, they have much more ground. No town desires to enlarge its bounds, for the people consider themselves rather as tenants than landlords. They have built, over all the country, farmhouses for husbandmen, which are well contrived, and furnished with all things necessary for country labor. Inhabitants are sent, by turns, from the cities to dwell in them; no country family has fewer than forty men and women in it, besides two slaves. There is a master and a mistress set over every family, and over thirty families there is a magistrate. ▲5 Every year twenty of this family come back to the town after they have stayed two years in the

country, and in their stead there are another twenty sent from the town, that they may learn country work from those that have been already one year in the country, as they must teach those that come to them the next from the town. By this means such as dwell in those country farms are never ignorant of agriculture, and so commit no errors which might otherwise be fatal and bring them under a scarcity of corn. But though there is every year such a shifting of the husbandmen to prevent any man being forced against his will to follow that hard course of life too long, yet many among them take such pleasure in it that they desire leave to continue in it many years.

▲6 These husbandmen till the ground, breed cattle, hew wood, and convey it to the towns either by land or water, as is most convenient. They breed an infinite multitude of chickens in a very curious manner; for the hens do not sit and hatch them, but a vast number of eggs are laid in a gentle and equal heat in order to be hatched, and they are no sooner out of the shell, and able to stir about, but they seem to consider those that feed them as their mothers, and follow them as other chickens do the hen that hatched them.

They breed very few horses, but those they have are full of mettle, and are kept only for exercising their youth in the art of sitting and riding them; for they do not put them to any work, either of plowing or carriage, in which they employ oxen. For though their horses are stronger, yet they find oxen can hold out longer; and as they are not subject to so many diseases, so they are kept upon a less charge and with less trouble. And even when they are so worn out that they are no more fit for labor, they are good meat at last.

They sow no corn but that which is to be their bread; for they drink either wine, cider or perry, and often water, sometimes boiled with honey or liquorice, with which they abound; ▲7 and though they know exactly how much corn will serve every town and all that tract of country which belongs to it, yet they sow much more and breed more cattle than are necessary for their consumption, and they give that surplus of which they make no use to their neighbors. When they want anything in the country which it does not produce, they fetch that from the town, without carrying anything in exchange for it. And the magistrates of the town take care to see it given them; for they meet generally in the town once a month, upon a festival day. When the time of harvest comes, the magistrates in the country send to those in the towns and let them know how many hands they will need for reaping the harvest; and the number they call for being sent to them, they commonly dispatch it all in one day.

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<sup>1</sup> Utopia is an idealized version of England and even has a channel to set them off from from their continental neighbors.

<sup>2</sup> The fifty-four cities of Utopia parallel the fifty-three counties that made up England and Wales in More's time, plus one for London.

<sup>3</sup> The name of Utopia's major city, Amaurot, is a play on the Greek word *amauroton*, meaning dim or obscure. See also More's second letter to Giles where he hints he has named the city "a phantom."

## Their cities, particularly Amaurot (Bk 2, Sec 2)

- 1 Amaurot, where I lived, is the capital. It is built upon the broad (Thames-like) river Anyder.
- 2 The source of the river and the city generally are fortified and prepared for siege.
- 3 The streets are broad. The buildings are good and much alike in appearance. The door have no locks, and every 10 years people are assigned a new address.
- 4 They are enthusiastic (and competitive) gardeners.
- 5 Their well-kept records show that the city was planned by Utopus. They have gone from rude cottages to handsome, but practical, dwellings that admit much daylight.

▲1 He that knows one of their towns knows them all—they are so like one another, except where the situation makes some difference. I shall therefore describe one of them, and none is so proper as Amaurot; for as none is more eminent (all the rest yielding in precedence to this, because it is the seat of their supreme council), so there was none of them better known to me, I having lived five years all together in it.

It lies upon the side of a hill, or, rather, a rising ground. Its figure is almost square, for from the one side of it, which shoots up almost to the top of the hill, it runs down, in a descent for two miles, to the river Anyder; but it is a little broader the other way that runs along by the bank of that river. The Anyder rises about eighty miles above Amaurot, in a small spring at first. But other brooks falling into it, of which two are more considerable than the rest, as it runs by Amaurot it is grown half a mile broad; but, it still grows larger and larger, till, after sixty miles' course below it, it is lost in the ocean. Between the town and the sea, and for some miles above the town, it ebbs and flows every six hours with a strong current. The tide comes up about thirty miles so full that there is nothing but salt water in the river, the fresh water being driven back with its force; and above that, for some miles, the water is brackish; but a little higher, as it runs by the town, it is quite fresh; and when the tide ebbs, it continues fresh all along to the sea. There is a bridge cast over the river, not of timber, but of fair stone, consisting of many stately arches;<sup>1</sup> it lies at that part of the town which is farthest from the sea, so that the ships, without any hindrance, lie all along the side of the town. There is, likewise, another river that runs by it, which, though it is not great, yet it runs pleasantly, for it rises out of the same hill on which the town stands, and so runs down through it and falls into the Anyder.

▲2 The inhabitants have fortified the fountain-head of this river, which springs a little without the towns; that so, if they should happen to be besieged, the enemy might not be able to stop or divert the course of the water, nor poison it; from thence it is carried, in earthen pipes, to the lower streets. And for those places of the town to which the water of that small river cannot be conveyed, they have

great cisterns for receiving the rain-water, which supplies the want of the other. The town is compassed with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch, set thick with thorns, cast round three sides of the town, and the river is instead of a ditch on the fourth side.

▲3 The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. Their buildings are good, and are so uniform that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses. These are large, but enclosed with buildings, that on all hands face the streets, so that every house has both a door to the street and a back door to the garden. Their doors have all two leaves, which, as they are easily opened, so they shut of their own accord; and, there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At every ten years' end they shift their houses by lots.

▲4 They cultivate their gardens with great care, so that they have both vines, fruits, herbs, and flowers in them; and all is so well ordered and so finely kept that I never saw gardens anywhere that were both so fruitful and so beautiful as theirs. And this humor of ordering their gardens so well is not only kept up by the pleasure they find in it, but also by an emulation between the inhabitants of the several streets, who vie with each other. And there is, indeed, nothing belonging to the whole town that is both more useful and more pleasant. So that he who founded the town seems to have taken care of nothing more than of their gardens.

▲5 They say the whole scheme of the town was designed at first by Utopus, but he left all that belonged to the ornament and improvement of it to be added by those that should come after him, that being too much for one man to bring to perfection. Their records, that contain the history of their town and State, are preserved with an exact care, and run backwards seventeen hundred and sixty years. From these it appears that their houses were at first low and mean, like cottages, made of any sort of timber, and were built with mud walls and thatched with straw.

But now their houses are three stories high, the fronts of them are faced either with stone, plastering, or brick, and between the facings of their walls they throw in their rubbish. Their roofs are flat, and on them they lay a sort of plaster, which costs very little, and yet is so tempered that it is not apt to take fire, and yet resists the weather more than lead. They have great quantities of glass among them, with which they glaze their windows; they use also in their windows a thin linen cloth, that is so oiled or gummed that it both keeps out the wind and gives free admission to the light.

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<sup>1</sup> A reference to London Bridge. Amaurot is an idealized version of London.

## TOC

**Their magistrates** (Bk 2, Sec 3)

- 1 Each year, every thirty families chooses a magistrate (Syphogrant/Philarch). Over ten such magistrates is a higher magistrate (Tranibor/Archphilarch).
- 2 The Syphogrants choose a prince by secret ballot. The prince serves for life but can be removed.
- 3 The Tranibors, with some Syphogrants, meet regularly with the Prince. They guard against hasty decisions and any secret meetings that might be held to enslave the people.

▲ 1 Thirty families choose every year a magistrate, who was anciently called the Syphogrant, but is now called the Philarch; and over every ten Syphogrants, with the families subject to them, there is another magistrate, who was anciently called the Tranibor, but of late the Archphilarch.<sup>1</sup> ▲ 2 All the Syphogrants, who are in number two hundred, choose the Prince<sup>2</sup> out of a list of four who are named by the people of the four divisions of the city; but they take an oath, before they proceed to an election, that they will choose him whom they think most fit for the office: they give him their voices secretly, so that it is not known for whom every one gives his suffrage. The Prince is for life, unless he is removed upon suspicion of some design to enslave the people. The Tranibors are new chosen every year, but yet they are, for the most part, continued; all their other magistrates are only annual.

▲ 3 The Tranibors meet every third day, and oftener if necessary, and consult with the Prince either concerning the affairs of the State in general, or such private differences as may arise sometimes among the people, though that falls out but seldom. There are always two Syphogrants called into the council chamber, and these are changed every day. It is a fundamental rule of their government, that no conclusion can be made in anything that relates to the public till it has been first debated three days in their council. It is death for any to meet and consult concerning the State, unless it be either in their ordinary council, or in the assembly of the whole body of the people.

These things have been so provided among them that the Prince and the Tranibors may not conspire together to change the government and enslave the people; and therefore when anything of great importance is set on foot, it is sent to the Syphogrants, who, after they have communicated it to the families that belong to their divisions, and have considered it among themselves, make report to the senate; and, upon great occasions, the matter is referred to the council of the whole island.<sup>3</sup> One rule observed in their council is, never to debate a thing on the same day in which it is first proposed; for that is always referred to the next meeting, that so men may not rashly and in the heat of discourse engage themselves too soon, which might bias them so much that, instead of consulting the good of the

public, they might rather study to support their first opinions, and by a perverse and preposterous sort of shame hazard their country rather than endanger their own reputation, or venture the being suspected to have wanted foresight in the expedients that they at first proposed; and therefore, to prevent this, they take care that they may rather be deliberate than sudden in their motions.

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<sup>1</sup> All these terms are neologisms composed by More from Greek roots. "Syphogrant" draws upon the words for "wise" (sophos) and "old men," although other translators suggest the reference may be to sypheos, or "of the sty"—not necessarily referring to pigs, but a pun on "steward." "Philarch," or "Phylarch" as it is often translated, is a bit more straightforward, meaning "head of the tribe." "Tranibor" is again more difficult to puzzle out, with the word assembled from the Greek for "clear or distinct" and "gluttonous or devouring," and sometimes strung together as "master-eater"—that is: the person who presides over the dinner table. Like steward, master-eater may be a reference to the position occupied by senior lawyers in the law inns of London with which More was familiar. Finally, "Archphilarch" means simply the head Philarch.

<sup>2</sup> In the original Latin the word is princeps, or merely "first leader." There is no notion of hereditary royalty.

More's Utopians are not faultless individuals but are capable of foolish and wicked behavior. But the Utopian system of government is designed to check the worst impulses of individuals. DK <sup>3</sup>

## TOC

**Their occupations** (Bk 2, Sec 4)

- 1 They all learn agriculture. The men (and women) also learn a trade.
- 2 They wear simple, practical garments, all homemade. Fashion never changes.
- 3 Trades are typically heredity—father to son. Boys drawn to a different trade are placed in a different household.
- 4 The Syphogrants ensure no one is idle. Utopians work only six hours a day. They use their leisure time well, often reading or attending public lectures.
- 5 They also garden and play music. Instead of dice, they have games like chess. One represents a battle between the virtues and the vices.
- 6 A work day of six hours is more than enough. Consider how European nations are full of idle people—many women, men, and priests; rich men and sturdy beggars.
- 7 Also many who work produce nothing of real value, supporting luxury not true need.
- 8 In Utopia everyone works (except some chosen as scholars). With a focus on utility, rather than luxury, long workdays are not necessary.

▲1 Agriculture is that which is so universally understood among them that no person, either man or woman, is ignorant of it; they are instructed in it from their childhood, partly by what they learn at school, and partly by practice, they being led out often into the fields about the town, where they not only see others at work but are likewise exercised in it themselves.

Besides agriculture, which is so common to them all, every man has some peculiar trade to which he applies himself; such as the manufacture of wool or flax, masonry, smith's work, or carpenter's work; for there is no sort of trade that is in great esteem among them.

▲2 Throughout the island they wear the same sort of clothes, without any other distinction except what is necessary to distinguish the two sexes and the married and unmarried. The fashion never alters, and as it is neither disagreeable nor uneasy, so it is suited to the climate, and calculated both for their summers and winters. Every family makes their own clothes.

▲3 All among them, women as well as men, learn one or other of the trades formerly mentioned. Women, for the most part, deal in wool and flax, which suit best with their weakness, leaving the ruder trades to the men. The same trade generally passes down from father to son, inclinations often following descent: but if any man's genius lies another way he is, by adoption, translated into a family that deals in the trade to which he is inclined; and when that is to be done, care is taken, not only by his father, but by the magistrate, that he may be put to a discreet and good man: and if, after a person has learned one trade, he desires to acquire another, that is also allowed, and is managed in the same manner as the former. When he

has learned both, he follows that which he likes best, unless the public has more occasion for the other.

▲4 The chief, and almost the only, business of the Syphogrants is to take care that no man may live idle, but that every one may follow his trade diligently; yet they do not wear themselves out with perpetual toil from morning to night, as if they were beasts of burden, which as it is indeed a heavy slavery, so it is everywhere the common course of life amongst all mechanics except the Utopians: but they, dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, appoint six of these for work, three of which are before dinner and three after; they then sup, and at eight o'clock, counting from noon, go to bed and sleep eight hours.

The rest of their time, besides that taken up in work, eating, and sleeping, is left to every man's discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval to luxury and idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise, according to their various inclinations, which is, for the most part, reading. It is ordinary to have public lectures every morning before daybreak, at which none are obliged to appear but those who are marked out for literature; yet a great many, both men and women, of all ranks, go to hear lectures of one sort or other, according to their inclinations: but if others that are not made for contemplation, choose rather to employ themselves at that time in their trades, as many of them do, they are not hindered, but are rather commended, as men that take care to serve their country.

▲5 After supper they spend an hour in some diversion, in summer in their gardens, and in winter in the halls where they eat, where they entertain each other either with music or discourse. They do not so much as know dice, or any such foolish and mischievous games. They have, however, two sorts of games not unlike our chess; the one is between several numbers, in which one number, as it were, consumes another; the other resembles a battle between the virtues and the vices, in which the enmity in the vices among themselves, and their agreement against virtue, is not unpleasantly represented; together with the special opposition between the particular virtues and vices; as also the methods by which vice either openly assaults or secretly undermines virtue; and virtue, on the other hand, resists it.

▲6 But the time appointed for labor is to be narrowly examined, otherwise you may imagine that since there are only six hours appointed for work, they may fall under a scarcity of necessary provisions: but it is so far from being true that this time is not sufficient for supplying them with plenty of all things, either necessary or convenient, that it is rather too much; and this you will easily apprehend if you consider how great a part of all other nations is quite idle.<sup>1</sup> First, women generally do little, who are the half of mankind; and if some few women are diligent, their husbands are idle: then consider the great company of idle priests, and of those that are called religious men; add to these all rich men, chiefly those that have estates in land, who are called noblemen and gentlemen, together with their retainers, made up of idle persons, that are kept more for show than use; add to these all those strong and lusty beggars that go about pretending some disease in excuse for

their begging; and upon the whole account you will find that the number of those by whose labors mankind is supplied is much less than you perhaps imagined.

▲7 Then consider how few of those that work are employed in labors that are of real service, for we, who measure all things by money, give rise to many trades that are both vain and superfluous, and serve only to support riot and luxury: for if those who work were employed only in such things as the conveniences of life require, there would be such an abundance of them that the prices of them would so sink that tradesmen could not be maintained by their gains; if all those who labor about useless things were set to more profitable employments, and if all they that languish out their lives in sloth and idleness (every one of whom consumes as much as any two of the men that are at work) were forced to labor, you may easily imagine that a small proportion of time would serve for doing all that is either necessary, profitable, or pleasant to mankind, especially while pleasure is kept within its due bounds.

▲8 This appears very plainly in Utopia; for there, in a great city, and in all the territory that lies round it, you can scarce find five hundred, either men or women, by their age and strength capable of labor, that are not engaged in it. Even the Syphogrants, though excused by the law, yet do not excuse themselves, but work, that by their examples they may excite the industry of the rest of the people; the like exemption is allowed to those who, being recommended to the people by the priests, are, by the secret suffrages of the Syphogrants, privileged from labor, that they may apply themselves wholly to study; and if any of these fall short of those hopes that they seemed at first to give, they are obliged to return to work; and sometimes a mechanic that so employs his leisure hours as to make a considerable advancement in learning is eased from being a tradesman and ranked among their learned men. Out of these they choose their ambassadors, their priests, their Tranibors, and the Prince himself, anciently called their Barzenes, but is called of late their Ademus.<sup>2</sup>

And thus from the great numbers among them that are neither suffered to be idle nor to be employed in any fruitless labor, you may easily make the estimate how much may be done in those few hours in which they are obliged to labor. But, besides all that has been already said, it is to be considered that the needful arts among them are managed with less labor than anywhere else. The building or the repairing of houses among us employ many hands, because often a thriftless heir suffers a house that his father built to fall into decay, so that his successor must, at a great cost, repair that which he might have kept up with a small charge; it frequently happens that the same house which one person built at a vast expense is neglected by another, who thinks he has a more delicate sense of the beauties of architecture, and he, suffering it to fall to ruin, builds another at no less charge. But among the Utopians all things are so regulated that men very seldom build upon a new piece of ground, and are not only very quick in repairing their houses,

but show their foresight in preventing their decay, so that their buildings are preserved very long with but very little labor, and thus the builders, to whom that care belongs, are often without employment, except the hewing of timber and the squaring of stones, that the materials may be in readiness for raising a building very suddenly when there is any occasion for it.

As to their clothes, observe how little work is spent in them; while they are at labor they are clothed with leather and skins, cut carelessly about them, which will last seven years, and when they appear in public they put on an upper garment which hides the other; and these are all of one color, and that is the natural color of the wool. As they need less woolen cloth than is used anywhere else, so that which they make use of is much less costly; they use linen cloth more, but that is prepared with less labor, and they value cloth only by the whiteness of the linen or the cleanness of the wool, without much regard to the fineness of the thread. While in other places four or five upper garments of woolen cloth of different colors, and as many vests of silk, will scarce serve one man, and while those that are nicer think ten too few, every man there is content with one, which very often serves him two years; nor is there anything that can tempt a man to desire more, for if he had them he would neither be the warmer nor would he make one jot the better appearance for it.

And thus, since they are all employed in some useful labor, and since they content themselves with fewer things, it falls out that there is a great abundance of all things among them; so that it frequently happens that, for want of other work, vast numbers are sent out to mend the highways; but when no public undertaking is to be performed, the hours of working are lessened. The magistrates never engage the people in unnecessary labor, since the chief end of the constitution is to regulate labor by the necessities of the public, and to allow the people as much time as is necessary for the improvement of their minds, in which they think the happiness of life consists.

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<sup>1</sup> Recall that in Book I, Section 13, Morus complains that if there is no property and money, people will not do enough work to supply basic needs. RH disagrees, citing the Utopians. This section serves to prove Morus wrong. DF

<sup>2</sup> "Barzenes" is patched together from the Hebrew for "son" and a poetic Greek derivative of "Zeus," so: "Son of Zeus." "Ademus" is a bit more clever: a-demos, meaning "people-less," or "a prince without a people" as More slyly refers to the leader of Utopia in his second letter to Giles.

## TOC

**Their social relations** (Bk 2, Sec 5)

- 1 When women marry they join their husband's extended family, which is governed by an elder. The size of each extended family is regulated.
- 2 They limit the population of the nation of Utopia by establishing colonies on the neighboring continent. The locals either join the colony or must move away.
- 3 Within families, younger serve elder and wives serve husbands. In their marketplaces goods, in ample supply, are stored up and then taken home freely by anyone.
- 4 Cattle are butchered outside the towns, by slaves, both to avoid sickly odors and because the sight of butchery coarsens a person's natural empathy.
- 5 In the cities are great halls (where the Syphogrants lodge) that serve for communal dining. [In the country, families eat at home.]
- 6 The most choice food goes to the sick, who are cared for tenderly in large hospitals outside the walls of the town (to prevent contagion).
- 7 The community eats together. Women prepare food; slaves serve and clean up. During meals, young married women have quick access to the nurses' room.
- 8 People are seated and served according to rank.
- 9 At both dinner ("lunch") and supper (the evening meal), there are lectures on morality. The young are encouraged to participate. At supper there is time for music.

But it is now time to explain to you the mutual intercourse of this people, their commerce, and the rules by which all things are distributed among them.

▲1 As their cities are composed of families, so their families are made up of those that are nearly related to one another. Their women, when they grow up, are married out, but all the males, both children and grand-children, live still in the same house, in great obedience to their common parent, unless age has weakened his understanding, and in that case he that is next to him in age comes in his room; but lest any city should become either too great, or by any accident be dispeopled, provision is made that none of their cities may contain above six thousand families, besides those of the country around it. No family may have less than ten and more than sixteen persons in it, but there can be no determined number for the children under age; this rule is easily observed by removing some of the children of a more fruitful couple to any other family that does not abound so much in them.<sup>1</sup>

▲2 By the same rule they supply cities that do not increase so fast from others that breed faster; and if there is any increase over the whole island, then they draw out a number of their citizens out of the several towns and send them over to the neighboring continent, where, if they find that the inhabitants have more soil than they can well cultivate, they fix a colony, taking the inhabitants into their society if they are willing to live with them; and where they do that of their own accord, they quickly enter into their method of life and conform to their rules, and this proves a

happiness to both nations; for, according to their constitution, such care is taken of the soil that it becomes fruitful enough for both, though it might be otherwise too narrow and barren for any one of them.

But if the natives refuse to conform themselves to their laws they drive them out of those bounds which they mark out for themselves, and use force if they resist, for they account it a very just cause of war for a nation to hinder others from possessing a part of that soil of which they make no use, but which is suffered to lie idle and uncultivated, since every man has, by the law of nature, a right to such a waste portion of the earth as is necessary for his subsistence. If an accident has so lessened the number of the inhabitants of any of their towns that it cannot be made up from the other towns of the island without diminishing them too much (which is said to have fallen out but twice since they were first a people, when great numbers were carried off by the plague), the loss is then supplied by recalling as many as are wanted from their colonies, for they will abandon these rather than suffer the towns in the island to sink too low.

▲3 But to return to their manner of living in society: the oldest man of every family, as has been already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the younger serves the elder.

Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there is a market-place. What is brought thither, and manufactured by the several families, is carried from thence to houses appointed for that purpose, in which all things of a sort are laid by themselves; and thither every father goes, and takes whatsoever he or his family stand in need of, without either paying for it or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving a denial to any person, since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man's asking for more than he needs; they have no inducements to do this, since they are sure they shall always be supplied: it is the fear of want that makes any of the whole race of animals either greedy or ravenous; but, besides fear, there is in man a pride that makes him fancy it a particular glory to excel others in pomp and excess; but by the laws of the Utopians, there is no room for this.

Near these markets there are others for all sorts of provisions, where there are not only herbs, fruits, and bread, but also fish, fowl, and cattle. ▲4 There are also, outside their towns, places appointed near some running water for killing their beasts and for washing away their filth, which is done by their slaves; for they suffer none of their citizens to kill their cattle, because they think that pity and good-nature, which are among the best of those affections that are born with us, are much impaired by the butchering of animals; nor do they suffer anything that is foul or unclean to be brought within their towns, lest the air should be infected by ill-smells, which might prejudice their health.

▲5 In every street there are great halls, that lie at an equal distance from each other, distinguished by particular names. The Syphogrants dwell in those that are

set over thirty families, fifteen lying on one side of it, and as many on the other. In these halls they all meet and have their repasts; the stewards of every one of them come to the market-place at an appointed hour, and according to the number of those that belong to the hall they carry home provisions.



▲ 6 But they take more care of their sick than of any others; these are lodged and provided for in public hospitals. They have belonging to every town four hospitals, that are built outside their walls, and are so large that they may pass for little towns; by this means, if they had ever such a number of sick persons, they could lodge them conveniently, and at such a distance that such of them as are sick of infectious diseases may be kept so far from the rest that there can be no danger of contagion. The hospitals are furnished and stored with all things that are convenient for the ease and recovery of the sick; and those that are put in them are looked after with such tender and watchful care, and are so constantly attended by their skillful physicians, that as none is sent to them against their will, so there is scarce one in a whole town that, if he should fall ill, would not choose rather to go thither than lie sick at home.

After the steward of the hospitals has taken for the sick whatsoever the physician prescribes, then the best things that are left in the market are distributed equally among the halls in proportion to their numbers; only, in the first place, they serve the Prince, the Chief Priest, the Tranibors, the Ambassadors, and strangers, if there are any, which, indeed, falls out but seldom, and for whom there are houses, well furnished, particularly appointed for their reception when they come among them.

▲ 7 At the hours of dinner and supper the whole Syphogranty being called together by sound of trumpet, they meet and eat together, except only such as are in the hospitals or lie sick at home. Yet, after the halls are served, no man is hindered to carry provisions home from the market-place, for they know that none does that but for some good reason; for though any that will may eat at home, yet none does it willingly, since it is both ridiculous and foolish for any to give themselves the trouble to make ready an ill dinner at home when there is a much more plentiful one made ready for him so near hand. All the uneasy and sordid services about

these halls are performed by their slaves; but the dressing and cooking their meat, and the ordering their tables, belong only to the women, all those of every family taking it by turns.

They sit at three or more tables, according to their number; the men sit towards the wall, and the women sit on the other side, that if any of them should be taken suddenly ill, which is no uncommon case amongst women with child, she may, without disturbing the rest, rise and go to the nurses' room (who are there with the suckling children), where there is always clean water at hand and cradles, in which they may lay the young children if there is occasion for it, and a fire, that they may shift and dress them before it. Every child is nursed by its own mother if death or sickness does not intervene; and in that case the Syphogrants' wives find out a nurse quickly, which is no hard matter, for any one that can do it offers herself cheerfully; for as they are much inclined to that piece of mercy, so the child whom they nurse considers the nurse as its mother. All the children under five years old sit among the nurses; the rest of the younger sort of both sexes, till they are fit for marriage, either serve those that sit at table, or, if they are not strong enough for that, stand by them in great silence and eat what is given them; nor have they any other formality of dining.

▲8 In the middle of the first table, which stands across the upper end of the hall, sit the Syphogrant and his wife, for that is the chief and most conspicuous place; next to him sit two of the most ancient, for there go always four to a mess. If there is a temple within the Syphogranty, the Priest and his wife sit with the Syphogrant above all the rest; next to them there is a mixture of old and young, who are so placed that as the young are set near others, so they are mixed with the more ancient; which, they say, was appointed on this account: that the gravity of the old people, and the reverence that is due to them, might restrain the younger from all indecent words and gestures. Dishes are not served up to the whole table at first, but the best are first set before the old, whose seats are distinguished from the young, and, after them, all the rest are served alike. The old men distribute to the younger any curious meats that happen to be set before them, if there is not such an abundance of them that the whole company may be served alike. Thus old men are honored with a particular respect, yet all the rest fare as well as they.

▲9 Both dinner and supper are begun with some lecture of morality that is read to them; but it is so short that it is not tedious nor uneasy to them to hear it. From hence the old men take occasion to entertain those about them with some useful and pleasant enlargements; but they do not engross the whole discourse so to themselves during their meals that the younger may not put in for a share; on the contrary, they engage them to talk, that so they may, in that free way of conversation, find out the force of every one's spirit and observe his temper.

They dispatch their dinners quickly, but sit long at supper, because they go to work after the one, and are to sleep after the other, during which they think the

stomach carries on the concoction more vigorously. They never sup without music, and there is always fruit served up after meat; while they are at table some burn perfumes and sprinkle about fragrant ointments and sweet waters—in short, they want nothing that may cheer up their spirits; they give themselves a large allowance that way, and indulge themselves in all such pleasures as are attended with no inconvenience.

Thus do those that are in the towns live together; but in the country, where they live at a great distance, every one eats at home, and no family wants any necessary sort of provision, for it is from them that provisions are sent unto those that live in the towns.

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<sup>1</sup> More was known as an affectionate father. It is, then, perhaps surprising that he imagines children so readily removed from their parents. Then, again, More was raised in the household of Cardinal Morton. DF

**Their travel** (Bk 2, Sec 6)

- 1 Citizens request official permission to travel, for a specified time, throughout Utopia and are given a wagon and slave. They are hosted without charge.
- 2 But rambling without a passport is a serious offense. Travel is not restricted within one's own precinct, but you labor with the country folks with whom you lodge.
- 3 Thus, there is no idleness. Nor taverns, brothels, or opportunities for conspiracy.
- 4 In their yearly council at Amaurot adjustments are made to ensure everyone's well being—as if the island were one family.

▲1 If any man has a mind to visit his friends that live in some other town, or desires to travel and see the rest of the country, he obtains leave very easily from the Syphogrant and Tranibors, when there is no particular occasion for him at home. Such as travel carry with them a passport from the Prince, which both certifies the license that is granted for traveling, and limits the time of their return. They are furnished with a wagon and a slave, who drives the oxen and looks after them; but, unless there are women in the company, the wagon is sent back at the end of the journey as a needless encumbrance. While they are on the road they carry no provisions with them, yet they want for nothing, but are everywhere treated as if they were at home. If they stay in any place longer than a night, every one follows his proper occupation, and is very well used by those of his own trade.

▲2 If any man goes out of the city to which he belongs without leave, and is found rambling without a passport, he is severely treated, he is punished as a fugitive, and sent home disgracefully; and, if he falls again into the like fault, is condemned to slavery. If any man has a mind to travel only over the precinct of his own city, he may freely do it, with his father's permission and his wife's consent; but when he comes into any of the country houses, if he expects to be entertained by them, he must labor with them and conform to their rules; and if he does this, he may freely go over the whole precinct, being then as useful to the city to which he belongs as if he were still within it.

▲3 Thus you see that there are no idle persons among them, nor pretenses of excusing any from labor. There are no taverns, no ale-houses, nor stews<sup>1</sup> among them, nor any other occasions of corrupting each other, of getting into corners, or forming themselves into parties; all men live in full view, so that all are obliged both to perform their ordinary task and to employ themselves well in their spare hours; and it is certain that a people thus ordered must live in great abundance of all things, and these being equally distributed among them, no man can want or be obliged to beg.

▲4 In their great council at Amaurot, to which there are three sent from every town once a year, they examine what towns abound in provisions and what are under any scarcity, that so the one may be furnished from the other; and this is done freely, without any sort of exchange; for, according to their plenty or scarcity, they supply or are supplied from one another, so that indeed the whole island is, as it were, one family.

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<sup>1</sup> A “stew” is a bathhouse (where one literally stews oneself in hot water), and commonly doubled as a brothel.

## TOC

**Their wealth** (Bk 2, Sec 7)

- 1 They export their large surpluses of commodities to other nations (1/7 given freely to the poor). In exchange they get iron (which they need) and also gold and silver.
- 2 When forced into war (which is rare), they use their great treasure to hire mercenaries and suborn the soldiers of the enemy.
- 3 Amazingly, they use gold for their toilets. This is to ensure a disdain for gold among their own people.
- 4 Gems are just baubles for children, as the Anemolian ambassadors learned to their embarrassment while I was residing in Amaurot.
- 5 They were proud of their gold, gems, and finery, but they looked ridiculous to the Utopians. Soon the Anemolians corrected their manner of dress.
- 6 They wonder that people prize the glare of gold and gems when you can gaze at the sun and stars. Why prize fine yarn? For still it comes from a the hide of sheep.
- 7 They are amazed by reports that a total blockhead should be served and fawned upon only because he has gold.

▲1 When they have thus taken care of their whole country, and laid up stores for two years (which they do to prevent the ill consequences of an unfavorable season), they order an exportation of the surplus, both of corn, honey, wool, flax, wood, wax, tallow, leather, and cattle, which they send out, commonly in great quantities, to other nations. They order a seventh part of all these goods to be freely given to the poor of the countries to which they send them, and sell the rest at moderate rates; and by this exchange they not only bring back those few things that they need at home (for, indeed, they scarce need anything but iron), but likewise a great deal of gold and silver; and by their driving this trade so long, it is not to be imagined how vast a treasure they have got among them, so that now they do not much care whether they sell off their merchandise for money in hand or upon trust.

A great part of their treasure is now in bonds; but in all their contracts no private man stands bound, but the writing runs in the name of the town; and the towns that owe them money raise it from those private hands that owe it to them, lay it up in their public chamber, or enjoy the profit of it till the Utopians call for it; and they choose rather to let the greatest part of it lie in their hands, who make advantage by it, than to call for it themselves; but if they see that any of their other neighbors stand more in need of it, then they call it in and lend it to them.

▲2 Whenever they are engaged in war, which is the only occasion in which their treasure can be usefully employed, they make use of it themselves; in great extremities or sudden accidents they employ it in hiring foreign troops, whom they more willingly expose to danger than their own people; they give them great pay, knowing well that this will work even on their enemies; that it will engage them either

to betray their own side, or, at least, to desert it; and that it is the best means of raising mutual jealousies among them.<sup>1</sup>

▲3 For this end they have an incredible treasure; but they do not keep it as a treasure, but in such a manner as I am almost afraid to tell, lest you think it so extravagant as to be hardly credible. This I have the more reason to apprehend because, if I had not seen it myself, I could not have been easily persuaded to have believed it upon any man's report. It is certain that all things appear incredible to us in proportion as they differ from known customs; but one who can judge aright will not wonder to find that, since their constitution differs so much from ours, their value of gold and silver should be measured by a very different standard; for since they have no use for money among themselves, but keep it as a provision against events which seldom happen, and between which there are generally long intervening intervals, they value it no farther than it deserves—that is, in proportion to its use. So that it is plain they must prefer iron either to gold or silver, for men can no more live without iron than without fire or water; but Nature has marked out no use for the other metals so essential as not easily to be dispensed with. The folly of men has enhanced the value of gold and silver because of their scarcity; whereas, on the contrary, it is their opinion that Nature, as an indulgent parent, has freely given us all the best things in great abundance, such as water and earth, but has laid up and hid from us the things that are vain and useless.

If these metals were laid up in any tower in the kingdom it would raise a jealousy of the Prince and Senate, and give birth to that foolish mistrust into which the people are apt to fall—a jealousy of their intending to sacrifice the interest of the public to their own private advantage. If they should work it into vessels, or any sort of plate, they fear that the people might grow too fond of it, and so be unwilling to let the plate be run down, if a war made it necessary, to employ it in paying their soldiers. To prevent all these inconveniences they have fallen upon an expedient which, as it agrees with their other policy, so is it very different from ours, and will scarce gain belief among us who value gold so much, and lay it up so carefully. They eat and drink out of vessels of earth or glass, which make an agreeable appearance, though formed of brittle materials; while they make their chamber-pots and close-stools of gold and silver, and that not only in their public halls but in their private houses. Of the same metals they likewise make chains and fetters for their slaves, to some of which, as a badge of infamy, they hang an earring of gold, and make others wear a chain or a coronet of the same metal; and thus they take care by all possible means to render gold and silver of no esteem; and from hence it is that while other nations part with their gold and silver as unwillingly as if one tore out their bowels, those of Utopia would look on their giving in all they possess of those metals (when there were any use for them) but as the parting with a trifle, or as we would esteem the loss of a penny!

▲4 They find pearls on their coasts, and diamonds and carbuncles on their rocks; they do not look after them, but, if they find them by chance, they polish them,

and with them they adorn their children, who are delighted with them, and glory in them during their childhood; but when they grow to years, and see that none but children use such baubles, they of their own accord, without being bid by their parents, lay them aside, and would be as much ashamed to use them afterwards as children among us, when they come to years, are of their puppets and other toys.

I never saw a clearer instance of the opposite impressions that different customs make on people than I observed in the ambassadors of the Anemolians,<sup>2</sup> who came to Amaurot when I was there. As they came to treat of affairs of great consequence, the deputies from several towns met together to wait for their coming. The ambassadors of the nations that lie near Utopia, knowing their customs, and that fine clothes are in no esteem among them, that silk is despised, and gold is a badge of infamy, used to come very modestly clothed; but the Anemolians, lying more remote, and having had little commerce with them, understanding that they were coarsely clothed, and all in the same manner, took it for granted that they had none of those fine things among them of which they made no use; and they, being a vainglorious rather than a wise people, resolved to set themselves out with so much pomp that they should look like gods, and strike the eyes of the poor Utopians with their splendor.

▲5 Thus three ambassadors made their entry with a hundred attendants, all clad in garments of different colors, and the greater part in silk; the ambassadors themselves, who were of the nobility of their country, were in cloth-of-gold, and adorned with massy chains, earrings and rings of gold; their caps were covered with bracelets set full of pearls and other gems—in a word, they were set out with all those things that among the Utopians were either the badges of slavery, the marks of infamy, or the playthings of children. It was not unpleasant to see, on the one side, how they looked big, when they compared their rich habits with the plain clothes of the Utopians, who were come out in great numbers to see them make their entry; and, on the other, to observe how much they were mistaken in the impression which they hoped this pomp would have made on them. It appeared so ridiculous a show to all that had never stirred out of their country, and had not seen the customs of other nations, that though they paid some reverence to those that were the most meanly clad, as if they had been the ambassadors, yet when they saw the ambassadors themselves so full of gold and chains, they looked upon them as slaves, and forbore to treat them with reverence.

You might have seen the children who were grown big enough to despise their playthings, and who had thrown away their jewels, call to their mothers, push them gently, and cry out, “See that great fool, that wears pearls and gems as if he were yet a child!” While their mothers very innocently replied, “Hold your peace! This, I believe, is one of the ambassadors' fools.” Others censured the fashion of their chains, and observed, “That they were of no use, for they were too slight to bind their slaves, who could easily break them; and, besides, hung so loose about them that they thought it easy to throw them away, and so get from them.”

But after the ambassadors had stayed a day among them, and saw so vast a quantity of gold in their houses (which was as much despised by them as it was esteemed in other nations), and beheld more gold and silver in the chains and fetters of one slave than all their ornaments amounted to, their plumes fell, and they were ashamed of all that glory for which they had formed valued themselves, and accordingly laid it aside—a resolution that they immediately took when, on their engaging in some free discourse with the Utopians, they discovered their sense of such things and their other customs.

▲6 The Utopians wonder how any man should be so much taken with the glaring doubtful luster of a jewel or a stone, that can look up to a star or to the sun himself; or how any should value himself because his cloth is made of a finer thread; for, how fine soever that thread may be, it was once no better than the fleece of a sheep, and that sheep, was a sheep still, for all its wearing it. They wonder much to hear that gold, which in itself is so useless a thing, should be everywhere so much esteemed that even man, for whom it was made, and by whom it has its value, should yet be thought of less value than this metal; ▲7 that a blockhead, who has no more sense than a log of wood, and is as bad as he is foolish, should have many wise and good men to serve him, only because he has a great heap of that metal; and that if it should happen that by some accident or trick of law (which, sometimes produces as great changes as chance itself) all this wealth should pass from the master to the meanest varlet of his whole family, he himself would very soon become one of his servants, as if he were a thing that belonged to his wealth, and so were bound to follow its fortune! But they much more wonder at and detest the folly of those who, when they see a rich man, though they neither owe him anything, nor are in any sort dependent on his bounty, yet, merely because he is rich, give him little less than divine honors, even though they know him to be so covetous and base-minded that, notwithstanding all his wealth, he will not part with one farthing of it to them as long as he lives!

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<sup>1</sup> These ideas re-appear in more detail in [Book 2 Sec 16](#).

<sup>2</sup> “Anemolian” derives from the Greek word for “windy,” as in “full of hot air.”

## TOC

**Their philosophies** (Bk 2, Sec 8)

- 1 Their attitude toward riches and their other values come partly from what they see around them and partly from their education, for all are well educated.
- 2 They learn in their own language. And, even before they received the books we brought them, had independently made the same discoveries as the Greeks.
- 3 And they exceed us because they are not plagued with the pointless distinctions of Scholastic theology.
- 4 They know astronomy (but have no astrology). They can forecast the weather. They speculate about causes of tides and other natural phenomenon.
- 5 As we do, they debate moral philosophy: What can truly be called "good"? What is virtue? What is pleasure?
- 6 They believe that happiness comes largely from pleasure, and they find that religious thought supports this view.
- 7 Their religious principles (which reason fully supports) are that our souls are immortal, that God wants us to be happy, and that there is eternal reward and punishment.
- 8 Reason alone argues that we should seek pleasure—but not allow lesser pleasures to displace the greater—these being the good, honest pleasures that lead to heaven.

▲1 These and such like notions have that people imbibed, partly from their education, being bred in a country whose customs and laws are opposite to all such foolish maxims, and partly from their learning and studies—for though there are but few in any town that are so wholly excused from labor as to give themselves entirely up to their studies (these being only such persons as discover from their childhood an extraordinary capacity and disposition for letters), yet their children and a great part of the nation, both men and women, are taught to spend those hours in which they are not obliged to work in reading; and this they do through the whole progress of life.

▲2 They have all their learning in their own tongue,<sup>1</sup> which is both a copious and pleasant language, and in which a man can fully express his mind; it runs over a great tract of many countries, but it is not equally pure in all places.

They had never so much as heard of the names of any of those philosophers that are so famous in these parts of the world, before we went among them; and yet they had made the same discoveries as the Greeks, both in music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry. But as they are almost in everything equal to the ancient philosophers, so ▲3 they far exceed our modern logicians for they have never yet fallen upon the barbarous niceties that our youth are forced to learn in those trifling logical schools that are among us. They are so far from minding chimeras and fantastical images made in the mind that none of them could comprehend what we meant

when we talked to them of a man in the abstract as common to all men in particular (so that though we spoke of him as a thing that we could point at with our fingers, yet none of them could perceive him) and yet distinct from every one, as if he were some monstrous Colossus or giant; yet, for all this ignorance of these empty notions, ▲ 4 they knew astronomy, and were perfectly acquainted with the motions of the heavenly bodies; and have many instruments, well contrived and divided, by which they very accurately compute the course and positions of the sun, moon, and stars. But for the cheat of divining by the stars, by their oppositions or conjunctions, it has not so much as entered into their thoughts. They have a particular sagacity, founded upon much observation, in judging of the weather, by which they know when they may look for rain, wind, or other alterations in the air; but as to the philosophy of these things, the cause of the saltness of the sea, of its ebbing and flowing, and of the original and nature both of the heavens and the earth, they dispute of them partly as our ancient philosophers have done, and partly upon some new hypothesis, in which, as they differ from them, so they do not in all things agree among themselves.

▲ 5 As to moral philosophy, they have the same disputes among them as we have here. They examine what are properly good, both for the body and the mind; and whether any outward thing can be called truly *good*, or if that term belong only to the endowments of the soul. They inquire, likewise, into the nature of virtue and pleasure. But their chief dispute is concerning the happiness of a man, and wherein it consists—whether in some one thing or in a great many. ▲ 6 They seem, indeed, more inclinable to that opinion that places, if not the whole, yet the chief part, of a man's happiness in pleasure; and, what may seem more strange, they make use of arguments even from religion, notwithstanding its severity and roughness, for the support of that opinion so indulgent to pleasure; for they never dispute concerning happiness without fetching some arguments from the principles of religion as well as from natural reason, since without the former they reckon that all our inquiries after happiness must be but conjectural and defective.

▲ 7 These are their religious principles: That the soul of man is immortal, and that God of His goodness has designed that it should be happy; and that He has, therefore, appointed rewards for good and virtuous actions, and punishments for vice, to be distributed after this life. ▲ 8 Though these principles of religion are conveyed down among them by tradition, they think that even reason itself determines a man to believe and acknowledge them; and freely confess that if these were taken away, no man would be so insensible as not to seek after pleasure by all possible means, lawful or unlawful, using only this caution—that a lesser pleasure might not stand in the way of a greater, and that no pleasure ought to be pursued that should draw a great deal of pain after it; for they think it the maddest thing in the world to pursue virtue, that is a sour and difficult thing, and not only to renounce the pleasures of life, but willingly to undergo much pain and trouble, if a man has no prospect of a reward. And what reward can there be for one that has passed his whole life, not only without pleasure, but in pain, if there is nothing to

be expected after death? Yet they do not place happiness in all sorts of pleasures, but only in those that in themselves are good and honest.

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<sup>1</sup> “Learning in their own tongue” differs from the practice of More’s Europe, where the language of learning—and the language in which *Utopia* was written—was the scholarly and ecclesiastical language of Latin.

## Their philosophies (continued) (Bk 2, Sec 9)

- 1 Many believe that God leads us to follow Nature as a means to happiness through virtue.
- 2 Reason leads us to love God, keep our minds free from passion, and seek the happiness of others.
- 3 Nature, even more than reason, asks us to seek pleasure for ourselves as much as to further the pleasure of others.
- 4 Furthering the happiness of others extends into public life. We should not snatch another's pleasures unfairly, and we should ourselves find pleasure in goodness.
- 5 Nature asks us to delight in *true* pleasures. False pleasures include taking pride in fine clothes and the obeisance of others. Likewise pleasure in gemstones.
- 6 Hunting they think is a false pleasure—cruel and corrupting. They can find no delight in gaming.
- 7 True pleasures *of the mind* include knowledge, contemplation of truth, the joyful reflection on a well-spent life, and the hope of future happiness.
- 8 True pleasures *of the body* include sensory pleasures including eating and drinking and our appetite to propagate the species. Also music
- 9 Another kind of bodily pleasure is health, which the foundation of all other bodily pleasures.
- 10 They delight in music, the beauty of the world, and pleasant odors—which are better than the satisfaction of bodily appetites. We should joyfully accept these blessings.
- 11 These views they think the height of reason. Only divine revelation could tell them more. I offer no opinions but testify that they live very well.

▲1 There is a party among them who place happiness in bare virtue; others think that our natures are conducted by virtue to happiness, as that which is the chief good of man. They define virtue thus—that it is a living according to Nature, and think that we are made by God for that end; they believe that a man then follows the dictates of Nature when he pursues or avoids things according to the direction of reason. ▲2 They say that the first dictate of reason is the kindling in us a love and reverence for the Divine Majesty, to whom we owe both all that we have and, all that we can ever hope for. In the next place, reason directs us to keep our minds as free from passion and as cheerful as we can, and that we should consider ourselves as bound by the ties of good-nature and humanity to use our utmost endeavors to help forward the happiness of all other persons; for there never was any man such a morose and severe pursuer of virtue, such an enemy to pleasure, that though he set hard rules for men to undergo, much pain, many watchings, and other rigors, yet did not at the same time advise them to do all they could in order to relieve and ease the miserable, and who did not represent gentleness and good-nature as amiable dispositions. And from thence they infer that if a man ought to

advance the welfare and comfort of the rest of mankind (there being no virtue more proper and peculiar to our nature than to ease the miseries of others, to free from trouble and anxiety, in furnishing them with the comforts of life, in which pleasure consists)

▲3 Nature much more vigorously leads them to do all this for himself. A life of pleasure is either a real evil, and in that case we ought not to assist others in their pursuit of it, but, on the contrary, to keep them from it all we can, as from that which is most hurtful and deadly; or if it is a good thing, so that we not only may but ought to help others to it, why, then, ought not a man to begin with himself? Since no man can be more bound to look after the good of another than after his own; for Nature cannot direct us to be good and kind to others, and yet at the same time to be unmerciful and cruel to ourselves. Thus as they define virtue to be living according to Nature, so they imagine that Nature prompts all people on to seek after pleasure as the end of all they do.

▲4 They also observe that in order to our supporting the pleasures of life, Nature inclines us to enter into society; for there is no man so much raised above the rest of mankind as to be the only favorite of Nature, who, on the contrary, seems to have placed on a level all those that belong to the same species. Upon this they infer that no man ought to seek his own conveniences so eagerly as to prejudice others; and therefore they think that not only all agreements between private persons ought to be observed, but likewise that all those laws ought to be kept which either a good prince has published in due form, or to which a people that is neither oppressed with tyranny nor circumvented by fraud has consented, for distributing those conveniences of life which afford us all our pleasures. They think it is an evidence of true wisdom for a man to pursue his own advantage as far as the laws allow it, they account it piety to prefer the public good to one's private concerns, but they think it unjust for a man to seek for pleasure by snatching another man's pleasures from him; and, on the contrary, they think it a sign of a gentle and good soul for a man to dispense with his own advantage for the good of others, and that by this means a good man finds as much pleasure one way as he parts with another; for as he may expect the like from others when he may come to need it, so, if that should fail him, yet the sense of a good action, and the reflections that he makes on the love and gratitude of those whom he has so obliged, gives the mind more pleasure than the body could have found in that from which it had restrained itself. They are also persuaded that God will make up the loss of those small pleasures with a vast and endless joy, of which religion easily convinces a good soul.

▲5 Thus, upon an inquiry into the whole matter, they reckon that all our actions, and even all our virtues, terminate in pleasure, as in our chief end and greatest happiness; and they call every motion or state, either of body or mind, in which Nature teaches us to delight, a pleasure. Thus they cautiously limit pleasure only to those appetites to which Nature leads us; for they say that Nature leads us only

to those delights to which reason, as well as sense, carries us, and by which we neither injure any other person nor lose the possession of greater pleasures, and of such as draw no troubles after them. But they look upon those delights which men by a foolish, though common, mistake call pleasure, as if they could change as easily the nature of things as the use of words, as things that greatly obstruct their real happiness, instead of advancing it, because they so entirely possess the minds of those that are once captivated by them with a false notion of pleasure that there is no room left for pleasures of a truer or purer kind.

There are many things that in themselves have nothing that is truly delightful; on the contrary, they have a good deal of bitterness in them; and yet, from our perverse appetites after forbidden objects, are not only ranked among the pleasures, but are made even the greatest designs, of life. Among those who pursue these sophisticated pleasures they reckon such as I mentioned before, who think themselves really the better for having fine clothes; in which they think they are doubly mistaken, both in the opinion they have of their clothes, and in that they have of themselves. For if you consider the use of clothes, why should a fine thread be thought better than a coarse one? And yet these men, as if they had some real advantages beyond others, and did not owe them wholly to their mistakes, look big, seem to fancy themselves to be more valuable, and imagine that a respect is due to them for the sake of a rich garment, to which they would not have pretended if they had been more meanly clothed, and even resent it as an affront if that respect is not paid them.

It is also a great folly to be taken with outward marks of respect, which signify nothing; for what true or real pleasure can one man find in another's standing bare or making legs to him? Will the bending another man's knees give ease to yours? And will the head's being bare cure the madness of yours? And yet it is wonderful to see how this false notion of pleasure bewitches many who delight themselves with the fancy of their nobility, and are pleased with this conceit—that they are descended from ancestors who have been held for some successions rich, and who have had great possessions; for this is all that makes nobility at present. Yet they do not think themselves a whit the less noble, though their immediate parents have left none of this wealth to them, or though they themselves have squandered it away.

The Utopians have no better opinion of those who are much taken with gems and precious stones, and who account it a degree of happiness next to a divine one if they can purchase one that is very extraordinary, especially if it be of that sort of stones that is then in greatest request, for the same sort is not at all times universally of the same value, nor will men buy it unless it be dismantled and taken out of the gold. The jeweler is then made to give good security, and required solemnly to swear that the stone is true, that, by such an exact caution, a false one might not be bought instead of a true; though, if you were to examine it, your eye could find no difference between the counterfeit and that which is true; so that they are all

one to you, as much as if you were blind. Or can it be thought that they who heap up a useless mass of wealth, not for any use that it is to bring them, but merely to please themselves with the contemplation of it, enjoy any true pleasure in it? The delight they find is only a false shadow of joy. Those are no better whose error is somewhat different from the former, and who hide it out of their fear of losing it; for what other name can fit the hiding it in the earth, or, rather, the restoring it to it again, it being thus cut off from being useful either to its owner or to the rest of mankind? And yet the owner, having hid it carefully, is glad, because he thinks he is now sure of it. If it should be stole, the owner, though he might live perhaps ten years after the theft, of which he knew nothing, would find no difference between his having or losing it, for both ways it was equally useless to him.

▲6 Among those foolish pursuers of pleasure they reckon all that delight in hunting, in fowling, or gaming, of whose madness they have only heard, for they have no such things among them. But they have asked us, "What sort of pleasure is it that men can find in throwing the dice?" (for if there were any pleasure in it, they think the doing it so often should give one a surfeit of it); "and what pleasure can one find in hearing the barking and howling of dogs, which seem rather odious than pleasant sounds?" Nor can they comprehend the pleasure of seeing dogs run after a hare, more than of seeing one dog run after another; for if the seeing them run is that which gives the pleasure, you have the same entertainment to the eye on both these occasions, since that is the same in both cases. But if the pleasure lies in seeing the hare killed and torn by the dogs, this ought rather to stir pity, that a weak, harmless, and fearful hare should be devoured by strong, fierce, and cruel dogs.<sup>1</sup> Therefore all this business of hunting is, among the Utopians, turned over to their butchers, and those, as has been already said, are all slaves, and they look on hunting as one of the basest parts of a butcher's work, for they account it both more profitable and more decent to kill those beasts that are more necessary and useful to mankind, whereas the killing and tearing of so small and miserable an animal can only attract the huntsman with a false show of pleasure, from which he can reap but small advantage. They look on the desire of the bloodshed, even of beasts, as a mark of a mind that is already corrupted with cruelty, or that at least, by too frequent returns of so brutal a pleasure, must degenerate into it.

Thus though the rabble of mankind look upon these, and on innumerable other things of the same nature, as pleasures, the Utopians, on the contrary, observing that there is nothing in them truly pleasant, conclude that they are not to be reckoned among pleasures; for though these things may create some tickling in the senses (which seems to be a true notion of pleasure), yet they imagine that this does not arise from the thing itself, but from a depraved custom, which may so vitiate a man's taste that bitter things may pass for sweet, as women with child think pitch or tallow taste sweeter than honey; but as a man's sense, when corrupted either by a disease or some ill habit, does not change the nature of other things, so neither can it change the nature of pleasure.

▲7 They reckon up several sorts of pleasures, which they call true ones; some belong to the body, and others to the mind. The pleasures of the mind lie in knowledge, and in that delight which the contemplation of truth carries with it; to which they add the joyful reflections on a well-spent life, and the assured hopes of a future happiness. ▲8 They divide the pleasures of the body into two sorts—the one is that which gives our senses some real delight, and is performed either by recruiting Nature and supplying those parts which feed the internal heat of life by eating and drinking, or when Nature is eased of any surcharge that oppresses it, when we are relieved from sudden pain, or that which arises from satisfying the appetite which Nature has wisely given to lead us to the propagation of the species. There is another kind of pleasure that arises neither from our receiving what the body requires, nor its being relieved when overcharged, and yet, by a secret unseen virtue, affects the senses, raises the passions, and strikes the mind with generous impressions—this is, the pleasure that arises from music. ▲9 Another kind of bodily pleasure is that which results from an undisturbed and vigorous constitution of body, when life and active spirits seem to actuate every part. This lively health, when entirely free from all mixture of pain, of itself gives an inward pleasure, independent of all external objects of delight; and though this pleasure does not so powerfully affect us, nor act so strongly on the senses as some of the others, yet it may be esteemed as the greatest of all pleasures; and almost all the Utopians reckon it the foundation and basis of all the other joys of life, since this alone makes the state of life easy and desirable, and when this is wanting, a man is really capable of no other pleasure. They look upon freedom from pain, if it does not rise from perfect health, to be a state of stupidity rather than of pleasure. This subject has been very narrowly canvassed among them, and it has been debated whether a firm and entire health could be called a pleasure or not.

Some have thought that there was no pleasure but what was “excited” by some sensible motion in the body. But this opinion has been long ago excluded from among them; so that now they almost universally agree that health is the greatest of all bodily pleasures; and that as there is a pain in sickness which is as opposite in its nature to pleasure as sickness itself is to health, so they hold that health is accompanied with pleasure. And if any should say that sickness is not really pain, but that it only carries pain along with it, they look upon that as a fetch of subtlety that does not much alter the matter. It is all one, in their opinion, whether it be said that health is in itself a pleasure, or that it begets a pleasure, as fire gives heat, so it be granted that all those whose health is entire have a true pleasure in the enjoyment of it. And they reason thus: “What is the pleasure of eating, but that a man’s health, which had been weakened, does, with the assistance of food, drive away hunger, and so recruiting itself, recovers its former vigor? And being thus refreshed it finds a pleasure in that conflict; and if the conflict is pleasure, the victory must yet breed a greater pleasure, except we fancy that it becomes stupid as soon as it has obtained that which it pursued, and so neither knows nor rejoices in its own welfare.” If it is said that health cannot be felt, they absolutely deny it; for

what man is in health, that does not perceive it when he is awake? Is there any man that is so dull and stupid as not to acknowledge that he feels a delight in health? And what is delight but another name for pleasure?

But, of all pleasures, they esteem those to be most valuable that lie in the mind, the chief of which arise out of true virtue and the witness of a good conscience. They account health the chief pleasure that belongs to the body; for they think that the pleasure of eating and drinking, and all the other delights of sense, are only so far desirable as they give or maintain health; but they are not pleasant in themselves otherwise than as they resist those impressions that our natural infirmities are still making upon us. For as a wise man desires rather to avoid diseases than to take physic, and to be freed from pain rather than to find ease by remedies, so it is more desirable not to need this sort of pleasure than to be obliged to indulge it.

If any man imagines that there is a real happiness in these enjoyments, he must then confess that he would be the happiest of all men if he were to lead his life in perpetual hunger, thirst, and itching, and, by consequence, in perpetual eating, drinking, and scratching himself; which any one may easily see would be not only a base, but a miserable, state of a life. These are, indeed, the lowest of pleasures, and the least pure, for we can never relish them but when they are mixed with the contrary pains. The pain of hunger must give us the pleasure of eating, and here the pain out-balances the pleasure. And as the pain is more vehement, so it lasts much longer; for as it begins before the pleasure, so it does not cease but with the pleasure that extinguishes it, and both expire together. They think, therefore, none of those pleasures are to be valued any further than as they are necessary; yet they rejoice in them, and with due gratitude acknowledge the tenderness of the great Author of Nature, who has planted in us appetites, by which those things that are necessary for our preservation are likewise made pleasant to us. For how miserable a thing would life be if those daily diseases of hunger and thirst were to be carried off by such bitter drugs as we must use for those diseases that return seldomer upon us! And thus these pleasant, as well as proper, gifts of Nature maintain the strength and the sprightliness of our bodies.

▲ 10 They also entertain themselves with the other delights let in at their eyes, their ears, and their nostrils as the pleasant relishes and seasoning of life, which Nature seems to have marked out peculiarly for man, since no other sort of animals contemplates the figure and beauty of the universe, nor is delighted with smells any further than as they distinguish meats by them; nor do they apprehend the concords or discords of sound. Yet, in all pleasures whatsoever, they take care that a lesser joy does not hinder a greater, and that pleasure may never breed pain, which they think always follows dishonest pleasures. But they think it madness for a man to wear out the beauty of his face or the force of his natural strength, to corrupt the sprightliness of his body by sloth and laziness, or to waste it by fasting; that it is madness to weaken the strength of his constitution and reject the other

delights of life, unless by renouncing his own satisfaction he can either serve the public or promote the happiness of others, for which he expects a greater recompense from God.<sup>2</sup> So that they look on such a course of life as the mark of a mind that is both cruel to itself and ungrateful to the Author of Nature, as if we would not be beholden to Him for His favors, and therefore rejects all His blessings; as one who should afflict himself for the empty shadow of virtue, or for no better end than to render himself capable of bearing those misfortunes which possibly will never happen.

▲ 11 This is their notion of virtue and of pleasure: they think that no man's reason can carry him to a truer idea of them unless some discovery from heaven should inspire him with sublimer notions.<sup>3</sup> I have not now the leisure to examine whether they think right or wrong in this matter; nor do I judge it necessary, for I have only undertaken to give you an account of their constitution, but not to defend all their principles. I am sure that whatever may be said of their notions, there is not in the whole world either a better people or a happier government. Their bodies are vigorous and lively; and though they are but of a middle stature, and have neither the fruitfulest soil nor the purest air in the world; yet they fortify themselves so well, by their temperate course of life, against the unhealthiness of their air, and by their industry they so cultivate their soil, that there is nowhere to be seen a greater increase, both of corn and cattle, nor are there anywhere healthier men and freer from diseases; for one may there see reduced to practice not only all the art that the husbandman employs in manuring and improving an ill soil, but whole woods plucked up by the roots, and in other places new ones planted, where there were none before. Their principal motive for this is the convenience of carriage, that their timber may be either near their towns or growing on the banks of the sea, or of some rivers, so as to be floated to them; for it is a harder work to carry wood at any distance over land than corn.<sup>4</sup> The people are industrious, apt to learn, as well as cheerful and pleasant, and none can endure more labor when it is necessary; but, except in that case, they love their ease.

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<sup>1</sup> More's monarch, Henry VIII, was very fond of hunting. Furthermore, Renaissance Humanists broadly approved of hunting and hawking (though More's close friend Erasmus did not). It appears then that More had strong views he wanted to express and that he wanted his Utopians to adhere to his personal convictions in this regard. See the footnote on this passage in the Yale edition (ed. Hexter/Surtz).

<sup>2</sup> This is not advice that More followed himself, practicing, as he did, mild forms of mortification of the flesh much of his life. As a young man contemplating the priesthood he frequently fasted, and as an adult wore a hair shirt (deeding the uncomfortable garment to his daughter, Margaret Roper, the day before his execution).

<sup>3</sup> This brief statement is highly significant. The Utopians have developed their philosophy and religious ideas through reason but acknowledge that they have not been blessed by Divine Revelation—which More's readers would take as Christianity. This statement both demonstrates how very far reason has taken the Utopians but also excuses any deficiencies in their thinking because they lack Christian Revelation. It also implicitly condemns Europe for falling short of the Utopians in many ways, even though they have the benefit of Christ's teachings. DF

<sup>4</sup> Following the eloquent discourse that has preceded, there is something odd about this mundane detail about the best places to grow timber.

## Their learning<sup>1</sup> (Bk 2, Sec 10)

- 1 They mastered Greek very rapidly, benefitting a little from similarities between their language and Greek (and Persian). Utopia may once have been a Greek colony.
- 2 On my voyage I had brought a supply of the best Classical books, which they embraced. Although a very healthy people, they especially like to study medicine.
- 3 From the general descriptions we provided, they mastered paper-making and printing.
- 4 They would gladly learn more from other nations but have few opportunities.

▲ 1 They are unwearied pursuers of knowledge; for when we had given them some hints of the learning and discipline of the Greeks, concerning whom we only instructed them (for we know that there was nothing among the Romans, except their historians and their poets, that they would value much), it was strange to see how eagerly they were set on learning that language: we began to read a little of it to them, rather in compliance with their importunity than out of any hopes of their reaping from it any great advantage: but, after a very short trial, we found they made such progress, that we saw our labor was like to be more successful than we could have expected: they learned to write their characters and to pronounce their language so exactly, had so quick an apprehension, they remembered it so faithfully, and became so ready and correct in the use of it, that it would have looked like a miracle if the greater part of those whom we taught had not been men both of extraordinary capacity and of a fit age for instruction: they were, for the greatest part, chosen from among their learned men by their chief council,

though some studied it of their own accord. In three years' time they became masters of the whole language, so that they read the best of the Greek authors very exactly. I am, indeed, apt to think that they learned that language the more easily from its having some relation to their own. I believe that they were a colony of the Greeks; for though their language comes nearer the Persian, yet they retain many names, both for their towns and magistrates, that are of Greek derivation.<sup>2</sup>



*A fanciful sample of the Utopian alphabet is included as prefatory matter in the original editions of Utopia. Some of the characters of the Utopian alphabet resemble Greek letters.*

▲2 I happened to carry a great many books with me, instead of merchandise, when I sailed my fourth voyage; for I was so far from thinking of soon coming back, that I rather thought never to have returned at all, and I gave them all my books, among which were many of Plato's

and some of Aristotle's works<sup>3</sup>: I had also Theophrastus on Plants, which, to my great regret, was imperfect; for having laid it carelessly by, while we were at sea, a monkey had seized upon it, and in many places torn out the leaves. They have no books of grammar but Lascars, for I did not carry Theodorus with me; nor have they any dictionaries but Hesichius and Dioscerides. They esteem Plutarch highly, and were much taken with Lucian's wit and with his pleasant way of writing. As for the poets, they have Aristophanes, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles of Aldus's edition;<sup>4</sup> and for historians, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Herodian.

One of my companions, Thricius Apinatus,<sup>5</sup> happened to carry with him some of Hippocrates's works and Galen's *Microtechné*, which they hold in great estimation; for though there is no nation in the world that needs physic so little as they do, yet there is not any that honors it so much; they reckon the knowledge of it one of the pleasantest and most profitable parts of philosophy, by which, as they search into the secrets of nature, so they not only find this study highly agreeable, but think that such inquiries are very acceptable to the Author of nature; and imagine, that as He, like the inventors of curious engines amongst mankind, has exposed this great machine of the universe to the view of the only creatures capable of contemplating it, so an exact and curious observer, who admires His workmanship, is much more acceptable to Him than one of the herd, who, like a beast incapable of reason, looks on this glorious scene with the eyes of a dull and unconcerned spectator.

▲3 The minds of the Utopians, when fenced with a love for learning,<sup>6</sup> are very ingenious in discovering all such arts as are necessary to carry it to perfection. Two things they owe to us, the manufacture of paper and the art of printing; yet they are not so entirely indebted to us for these discoveries but that a great part of the invention was their own. We showed them some books printed by Aldus, we explained to them the way of making paper and the mystery of printing; but, as we had never practiced these arts, we described them in a crude and superficial manner. They seized the hints we gave them; and though at first they could not arrive at perfection, yet by making many essays they at last found out and corrected all their errors and conquered every difficulty. Before this they only wrote on parchment, on reeds, or on the barks of trees; but now they have established the manufactures of paper and set up printing presses, so that, if they had but a good number of Greek authors, they would be quickly supplied with many copies of them: at present, though they have no more than those I have mentioned, yet, by several impressions, they have multiplied them into many thousands.

▲4 If any man was to go among them that had some extraordinary talent, or that by much travelling had observed the customs of many nations (which made us to

be so well received), he would receive a hearty welcome, for they are very desirous to know the state of the whole world. Very few go among them on the account of traffic; for what can a man carry to them but iron, or gold, or silver? Which merchants desire rather to export than import to a strange country: and as for their exportation, they think it better to manage that themselves than to leave it to foreigners, for by this means, as they understand the state of the neighbouring countries better, so they keep up the art of navigation which cannot be maintained but by much practice.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> More treated education earlier in Sec 8. The emphasis of this section, however, is the learning of the whole Utopian nation rather than the education of individuals.

<sup>2</sup> There is a joke here. Most of the names More devises for Utopia and surrounding nations are derived in some humorous way from the Greek. DF

<sup>3</sup> Here follows a list of choice authors, almost all Greek and Roman. More himself kept a pet monkey, which perhaps damaged some of his own books.

<sup>4</sup> One of the important intellectual projects of the Renaissance Humanists was the preparation of good editions of Classical authors. Aldus was a premier publisher and an innovator in type and book design. DF

<sup>5</sup> The name Tricius Apinatus is another one of More's learned in-jokes; the name points to a satiric epigram of the Latin poet Martial and signifies "trifles and toys." DF

<sup>6</sup> Wootten's translation is helpful here: "The intellects of the Utopians, well trained through their studies . . . " DF

<sup>7</sup> As much as they want to learn about the world, they few merchants visit them because all they need from the outside world is iron—and (for waging war) gold and silver. But merchants want to bring gold and silver home, not export it. Also, the Utopians prefer to conduct their own trade in their own vessels rather than deal with merchants who come to them. DF

## TOC

**Their slaves<sup>1</sup>** (Bk 2, Sec 11)

- 1 Their slaves are those who have committed a great crime and those who, having been condemned to death in foreign lands, are cheaply purchased by Utopian merchants.
- 2 Utopians condemned to slavery are treated more harshly than foreigners. Having received a sound education, they have less excuse for their crimes.
- 3 The poor of neighboring countries volunteer to be slaves and are treated well.

▲1 They do not make slaves of prisoners of war, except those that are taken in battle, nor of the sons of their slaves, nor of those of other nations:<sup>2</sup> the slaves among them are only such as are condemned to that state of life for the commission of some crime, or, which is more common, such as their merchants find condemned to die in those parts to which they trade, whom they sometimes redeem at low rates, and in other places have them for nothing. ▲2 They are kept at perpetual labor, and are always chained, but with this difference, that their own natives are treated much worse than others: they are considered as more profligate than the rest, and since they could not be restrained by the advantages of so excellent an education, are judged worthy of harder usage. ▲3 Another sort of slaves are the poor of the neighboring countries, who offer of their own accord to come and serve them: they treat these better, and use them in all other respects as well as their own countrymen, except their imposing more labor upon them, which is no hard task to those that have been accustomed to it; and if any of these have a mind to go back to their own country, which, indeed, falls out but seldom, as they do not force them to stay, so they do not send them away empty-handed.

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<sup>1</sup> The modern reader will not be pleased by More's inclusion of slavery as part of Utopian society. It should be noted, however, that the Latin word "servus" is broader in meaning than our word "slaves," and can mean "subjects," "vassals," or "serfs" as well as "slaves" in our sense. (Surtz, 1964 general reader's edition)

<sup>2</sup> When the Utopians' hired mercenaries take prisoners, they are not made slaves. Children of slaves are not slaves, and they don't purchase slaves from other nations.

**Their deaths** (Bk 2, Sec 12)

- 1 Those who are dying receive tender care. If they are suffering, they are encouraged to end their lives.
- 2 Thus euthanasia (by not eating or taking opium) is sanctioned by their religion and is considered honorable.

▲ 1 I have already told you with what care they look after their sick, so that nothing is left undone that can contribute either to their case or health; and for those who are taken with fixed and incurable diseases, they use all possible ways to cherish them and to make their lives as comfortable as possible. They visit them often and take great pains to make their time pass off easily; but when any is taken with a torturing and lingering pain, so that there is no hope either of recovery or ease, the priests and magistrates come and exhort them, that, since they are now unable to go on with the business of life, are become a burden to themselves and to all about them, and they have really out-lived themselves, they should no longer nourish such a rooted distemper, but choose rather to die since they cannot live but in much misery; being assured that if they thus deliver themselves from torture, or are willing that others should do it, they shall be happy after death: since, by their acting thus, they lose none of the pleasures, but only the troubles of life, ▲ 2 they think they behave not only reasonably but in a manner consistent with religion and piety; because they follow the advice given them by their priests, who are the expounders of the will of God. Such as are wrought on by these persuasions either starve themselves of their own accord, or take opium, and by that means die without pain.

But no man is forced on this way of ending his life; and if they cannot be persuaded to it, this does not induce them to fail in their attendance and care of them: but as they believe that a voluntary death, when it is chosen upon such an authority, is very honorable, so if any man takes away his own life without the approbation of the priests and the senate, they give him none of the honors of a decent funeral, but throw his body into a ditch.

**Their marriage** (Bk 2, Sec 13)

- 1 To marry, women must be 18 and men 22. Sex before marriage is a serious offense and a disgrace to the families. If promiscuity was permitted, no one would marry.
- 2 Before marriage, the bride and bridegroom appear to each other naked. Men should not be deceived by a bride with deformities hidden by her clothing.
- 3 Divorce is strongly discouraged except for infidelity or insufferable behavior. The offending party cannot remarry.
- 4 No one can divorce because their partner has suffered great illness.
- 5 Incompatible couples can divorce and remarry, but only after careful inquiry by the Senate.
- 6 Infidelity is punished by slavery. Sometimes the injured party, still in love, follows their spouse into slavery, after which mercy may be shown.

▲1 Their women are not married before eighteen nor their men before two-and-twenty, and if any of them run into forbidden embraces before marriage they are severely punished, and the privilege of marriage is denied them unless they can obtain a special warrant from the Prince. Such disorders cast a great reproach upon the master and mistress of the family in which they happen, for it is supposed that they have failed in their duty. The reason of punishing this so severely is, because they think that if they were not strictly restrained from all vagrant appetites, very few would engage in a state in which they venture the quiet of their whole lives, by being confined to one person, and are obliged to endure all the inconveniences with which it is accompanied.

▲2 In choosing their wives they use a method that would appear to us very absurd and ridiculous, but it is constantly observed among them, and is accounted perfectly consistent with wisdom. Before marriage some grave matron presents the bride, naked, whether she is a virgin or a widow, to the bridegroom, and after that some grave man presents the bridegroom, naked, to the bride. We, indeed, both laughed at this, and condemned it as very indecent. But they, on the other hand, wondered at the folly of the men of all other nations, who, if they are but to buy a horse of a small value, are so cautious that they will see every part of him, and take off both his saddle and all his other tackle, that there may be no secret ulcer hid under any of them, and that yet in the choice of a wife, on which depends the happiness or unhappiness of the rest of his life, a man should venture upon trust, and only see about a handbreadth of the face, all the rest of the body being covered, under which may lie hid what may be contagious as well as loathsome. All men are not so wise as to choose a woman only for her good qualities, and even wise men consider the body as that which adds not a little to the mind, and it is certain there may be some such deformity covered with clothes as may totally alienate a man from his wife, when it is too late to part with her; if such a thing is discovered after

marriage a man has no remedy but patience; they, therefore, think it is reasonable that there should be good provision made against such mischievous frauds.<sup>1</sup>

▲3 There was so much the more reason for them to make a regulation in this matter, because they are the only people of those parts that neither allow of polygamy nor of divorces, except in the case of adultery or insufferable perverseness, for in these cases the Senate dissolves the marriage and grants the injured person leave to marry again; but the guilty are made infamous and are never allowed the privilege of a second marriage. ▲4 None are suffered to put away their wives against their wills, from any great calamity that may have fallen on their persons, for they look on it as the height of cruelty and treachery to abandon either of the married persons when they need most the tender care of their consort, and that chiefly in the case of old age, which, as it carries many diseases along with it, so it is a disease of itself.

▲5 But it frequently falls out that when a married couple do not well agree, they, by mutual consent, separate, and find out other persons with whom they hope they may live more happily; yet this is not done without obtaining leave of the Senate, which never admits of a divorce but upon a strict inquiry made, both by the senators and their wives, into the grounds upon which it is desired, and even when they are satisfied concerning the reasons of it they go on but slowly, for they imagine that too great easiness in granting leave for new marriages would very much shake the kindness of married people.

▲6 They punish severely those that defile the marriage bed; if both parties are married they are divorced, and the injured persons may marry one another, or whom they please, but the adulterer and the adulteress are condemned to slavery, yet if either of the injured persons cannot shake off the love of the married person they may live with them still in that state, but they must follow them to that labor to which the slaves are condemned, and sometimes the repentance of the condemned, together with the unshaken kindness of the innocent and injured person, has prevailed so far with the Prince that he has taken off the sentence; but those that relapse after they are once pardoned are punished with death.

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<sup>1</sup> Some critics think this practice is a joke on the part of More or that this practice is evidence that More condemns rather than endorses Utopian society. I believe that More is quite serious here. He certainly does not expect such a practice to be adopted in Christian England, but, as in many other parts of Book 2, when More frees imagination to contemplate what might be possible and perhaps desirable in a society guided by reason and not Christian doctrine, this is the kind of idea that comes into his mind.

## Their laws and punishments (Bk 2, Sec 14)

- 1 Other than these sexual offenses, punishments are determined by the Senate case by case. Husbands are allowed to discipline their wives and children.
- 2 The worst crimes are punished by slavery, not death. Slavery benefits the public and is a more visible form of deterrence.
- 3 To attempt seduction is as much a crime as to succeed in it. To attempt any crime and fail is morally no better than actually committing the crime.
- 4 They enjoy fools and are expected to treat them well. It is shameful to ridicule someone's deformities. It is shameful for women to use cosmetics.
- 5 They encourage public virtue, live in harmony, require their officeholders to be modest, and do not permit campaigning for office.
- 6 They have few laws and no lawyers (who primarily distort true justice). Citizens plead their cases before judges using simple language.

▲ 1 Their law does not determine the punishment for other crimes, but that is left to the Senate, to temper it according to the circumstances of the fact. Husbands have power to correct their wives and parents to chastise their children, unless the fault is so great that a public punishment is thought necessary for striking terror into others. ▲ 2 For the most part slavery is the punishment even of the greatest crimes, for as that is no less terrible to the criminals themselves than death, so they think the preserving them in a state of servitude is more for the interest of the commonwealth than killing them, since, as their labor is a greater benefit to the public than their death could be, so the sight of their misery is a more lasting terror to other men than that which would be given by their death. If their slaves rebel, and will not bear their yoke and submit to the labor that is enjoined them, they are treated as wild beasts that cannot be kept in order, neither by a prison nor by their chains, and are at last put to death. But those who bear their punishment patiently, and are so much wrought on by that pressure that lies so hard on them, that it appears they are really more troubled for the crimes they have committed than for the miseries they suffer, are not out of hope, but that, at last, either the Prince will, by his prerogative, or the people, by their intercession, restore them again to their liberty, or, at least, very much mitigate their slavery.

▲ 3 He that tempts a married woman to adultery is no less severely punished than he that commits it, for they believe that a deliberate design to commit a crime is equal to the fact itself, since its not taking effect does not make the person that miscarried in his attempt at all the less guilty<sup>1</sup>.

▲ 4 They take great pleasure in fools, and as it is thought a base and unbecoming thing to use them ill, so they do not think it amiss for people to divert themselves with their folly; and, in their opinion, this is a great advantage to the fools themselves; for if men were so sullen and severe as not at all to please themselves with

their ridiculous behavior and foolish sayings, which is all that they can do to recommend themselves to others, it could not be expected that they would be so well provided for nor so tenderly used as they must otherwise be.

If any man should reproach another for his being misshaped or imperfect in any part of his body, it would not at all be thought a reflection on the person so treated, but it would be accounted scandalous in him that had upbraided another with what he could not help. It is thought a sign of a sluggish and sordid mind not to preserve carefully one's natural beauty; but it is likewise infamous among them to use paint. They all see that no beauty recommends a wife so much to her husband as the probity of her life and her obedience; for as some few are caught and held only by beauty, so all are attracted by the other excellences which charm all the world.

▲5 As they fright men from committing crimes by punishments, so they invite them to the love of virtue by public honors; therefore they erect statues to the memories of such worthy men as have deserved well of their country, and set these in their market-places, both to perpetuate the remembrance of their actions and to be an incitement to their posterity to follow their example.

If any man aspires to any office he is sure never to compass it. They all live easily together, for none of the magistrates are either insolent or cruel to the people; they affect rather to be called fathers, and, by being really so, they well deserve the name; and the people pay them all the marks of honor the more freely because none are exacted from them. The Prince himself has no distinction, either of garments or of a crown; but is only distinguished by a sheaf of corn carried before him; as the High Priest is also known by his being preceded by a person carrying a wax light.

▲6 They have but few laws, and such is their constitution that they need not many. They very much condemn other nations whose laws, together with the commentaries on them, swell up to so many volumes; for they think it an unreasonable thing to oblige men to obey a body of laws that are both of such a bulk, and so dark as not to be read and understood by every one of the subjects.

They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters and to wrest the laws,<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, they think it is much better that every man should plead his own cause, and trust it to the judge, as in other places the client trusts it to a counselor; by this means they both cut off many delays and find out truth more certainly; for after the parties have laid open the merits of the cause, without those artifices which lawyers are apt to suggest, the judge examines the whole matter, and supports the simplicity of such well-meaning persons, whom otherwise crafty men would be sure to run down; and thus they avoid those evils which appear very remarkably among all those nations that labor under a vast load of laws.

Every one of them is skilled in their law; for, as it is a very short study, so the plainest meaning of which words are capable is always the sense of their laws; and they argue thus: all laws are promulgated for this end, that every man may know his duty; and, therefore, the plainest and most obvious sense of the words is that which ought to be put upon them, since a more refined exposition cannot be easily comprehended, and would only serve to make the laws become useless to the greater part of mankind, and especially to those who need most the direction of them; for it is all one not to make a law at all or to couch it in such terms that, without a quick apprehension and much study, a man cannot find out the true meaning of it, since the generality of mankind are both so dull, and so much employed in their several trades, that they have neither the leisure nor the capacity requisite for such an inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup> This contrasts to many modern legal systems where, for example, the penalty for attempted murder is far less if the attempt is successful.

<sup>2</sup> More was himself a lawyer.

## Their foreign policies (Bk 2, Sec 15)

- 1 Some neighboring states request magistrates from Utopia. This works out well, especially because these magistrates serve for limited terms and are truly impartial.
- 2 Utopia never enters into alliances with any state.
- 3 We know how honorably the princes and popes of Europe respect *their* alliances (meant ironically). But in the New World states find loopholes to break treaties when convenient.
- 4 Princes license themselves to do as they wish, even while ordinary citizens are held to strict standards. But the Utopians reject the practices of their neighboring states.
- 5 Ultimately, the Utopians place their faith in the ties of nature and mutual good will.

▲1 Some of their neighbors, who are masters of their own liberties (having long ago, by the assistance of the Utopians, shaken off the yoke of tyranny, and being much taken with those virtues which they observe among them), have come to desire that they would send magistrates to govern them, some changing them every year, and others every five years; at the end of their government they bring them back to Utopia, with great expressions of honor and esteem, and carry away others to govern in their stead. In this they seem to have fallen upon a very good expedient for their own happiness and safety; for since the good or ill condition of a nation depends so much upon their magistrates, they could not have made a better choice than by pitching on men whom no advantages can bias; for wealth is of no use to them, since they must so soon go back to their own country, and they, being strangers among them, are not engaged in any of their heats or animosities; and it is certain that when public judicatories are swayed, either by avarice or partial affections, there must follow a dissolution of justice, the chief sinew of society.

The Utopians call those nations that come and ask magistrates from them Neighbors; but those to whom they have been of more particular service, Friends; and as all other nations are perpetually either making leagues or breaking them, ▲2 they never enter into an alliance with any state. They think leagues are useless things, and believe that if the common ties of humanity do not knit men together, the faith of promises will have no great effect; and they are the more confirmed in this by what they see among the nations round about them, who are no strict observers of leagues and treaties.

▲3 We know how religiously they are observed in Europe, more particularly where the Christian doctrine is received, among whom they are sacred and inviolable! Which is partly owing to the justice and goodness of the princes themselves, and partly to the reverence they pay to the popes, who, as they are the most religious observers of their own promises, so they exhort all other princes to perform theirs, and, when fainter methods do not prevail, they compel them to it by the severity of the pastoral censure, and think that it would be the most indecent thing

possible if men who are particularly distinguished by the title of "The Faithful" should not religiously keep the faith of their treaties.<sup>1</sup>

But in that new-found world, which is not more distant from us in situation than the people are in their manners and course of life, there is no trusting to leagues, even though they were made with all the pomp of the most sacred ceremonies; on the contrary, they are on this account the sooner broken, some slight pretense being found in the words of the treaties, which are purposely couched in such ambiguous terms that they can never be so strictly bound but they will always find some loophole to escape at, and thus they break both their leagues and their faith; and this is done with such impudence, that those very men who value themselves on having suggested these expedients to their princes would, with a haughty scorn, declaim against such craft; or, to speak plainer, such fraud and deceit, if they found private men make use of it in their bargains, and would readily say that they deserved to be hanged.

▲4 By this means it is that all sort of justice passes in the world for a low-spirited and vulgar virtue, far below the dignity of royal greatness—or at least there are set up two sorts of justice; the one is mean and creeps on the ground, and, therefore, becomes none but the lower part of mankind, and so must be kept in severely by many restraints, that it may not break out beyond the bounds that are set to it; the other is the peculiar virtue of princes, which, as it is more majestic than that which becomes the rabble, so takes a freer compass, and thus lawful and unlawful are only measured by pleasure and interest. These practices of the princes that lie about Utopia, who make so little account of their faith, seem to be the reasons that determine them to engage in no confederacy. ▲5 Perhaps they would change their mind if they lived among us; but yet, though treaties were more religiously observed, they would still dislike the custom of making them, since the world has taken up a false maxim upon it, as if there were no tie of nature uniting one nation to another, only separated perhaps by a mountain or a river, and that all were born in a state of hostility, and so might lawfully do all that mischief to their neighbors against which there is no provision made by treaties; and that when treaties are made they do not cut off the enmity or restrain the license of preying upon each other, if, by the unskillfulness of wording them, there are not effectual provisions made against them; they, on the other hand, judge that no man is to be esteemed our enemy that has never injured us, and that the partnership of human nature is instead of a league; and that kindness and good nature unite men more effectually and with greater strength than any agreements whatsoever, since thereby the engagements of men's hearts become stronger than the bond and obligation of words.

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<sup>1</sup> Another one of More's ironic jokes. Princes and popes were frequently far from just and good and were rarely revered, and treaties were routinely violated.

## Their military affairs 1: Extreme reluctance to shed blood (Bk 2, Sec 16)

- 1 The Utopians hate war and all forms of military glory. The men, and women as well, train daily, but they do not engage in war without good reason.
- 2 They will defend themselves or friends from unjust aggressors and help oppressed nations free themselves. But only if consulted before hostilities have begun.
- 3 They joined the Nephelogetes against the Aleopolitanes when the latter oppressed Nephelogetes merchants. Upon the conquest of the Aleopolitanes, the Utopians took no spoils.
- 4 When their own merchants are unjustly hindered, the Utopians forbear because they are less dependent on trade than their neighbors.
- 5 They glory only in victories that cost them little blood, preferring guile to violence. They try to discourage defeated enemies from attempting another war.

▲ 1 They detest war as a very brutal thing, and which, to the reproach of human nature, is more practiced by men than by any sort of beasts. They, in opposition to the sentiments of almost all other nations, think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory that is gained by war; and therefore, though they accustom themselves daily to military exercises and the discipline of war, in which not only their men, but their women likewise, are trained up, that, in cases of necessity, they may not be quite useless, yet they do not rashly engage in war, ▲ 2 unless it be either to defend themselves or their friends from any unjust aggressors,<sup>1</sup> or, out of good nature or in compassion, assist an oppressed nation in shaking off the yoke of tyranny. They, indeed, help their friends not only in defensive but also in offensive wars; but they never do that unless they had been consulted before the breach was made, and, being satisfied with the grounds on which they went, they had found that all demands of reparation were rejected, so that a war was unavoidable.

This they think to be not only just when one neighbor makes an inroad on another by public order, and carries away the spoils, but when the merchants of one country are oppressed in another, either under pretense of some unjust laws, or by the perverse wresting of good ones. This they count a juster cause of war than the other, because those injuries are done under some color of laws.

▲ 3 This was the only ground of that war in which they engaged with the Nephelogetes against the Aleopolitanes,<sup>2</sup> a little before our time; for the merchants of the former having, as they thought, met with great injustice among the latter, which (whether it was in itself right or wrong) drew on a terrible war, in which many of their neighbors were engaged; and their keenness in carrying it on being supported by their strength in maintaining it, it not only shook some very flourishing states and very much afflicted others, but, after a series of much mischief ended in

the entire conquest and slavery of the Aleopolitanes, who, though before the war they were in all respects much superior to the Nephelogetes, were yet subdued; but, though the Utopians had assisted them in the war, yet they pretended to no share of the spoil.

▲4 But, though they so vigorously assist their friends in obtaining reparation for the injuries they have received in affairs of this nature, yet, if any such frauds were committed against themselves, provided no violence was done to their persons, they would only, on their being refused satisfaction, forbear trading with such a people. This is not because they consider their neighbors more than their own citizens; but, since their neighbors trade every one upon his own stock, fraud is a more sensible injury to them than it is to the Utopians, among whom the public, in such a case, only suffers, as they expect no thing in return for the merchandise they export but that in which they so much abound, and is of little use to them, the loss does not much affect them. They think, therefore, it would be too severe to revenge a loss attended with so little inconvenience, either to their lives or their subsistence, with the death of many persons; but if any of their people are either killed or wounded wrongfully, whether it be done by public authority, or only by private men, as soon as they hear of it they send ambassadors, and demand that the guilty persons may be delivered up to them, and if that is denied, they declare war; but if it be complied with, the offenders are condemned either to death or slavery.

▲5 They would be both troubled and ashamed of a bloody victory over their enemies; and think it would be as foolish a purchase as to buy the most valuable goods at too high a rate. And in no victory do they glory so much as in that which is gained by dexterity and good conduct without bloodshed. In such cases they appoint public triumphs, and erect trophies to the honor of those who have succeeded; for then do they reckon that a man acts suitably to his nature, when he conquers his enemy in such a way as that no other creature but a man could be capable of, and that is by the strength of his understanding. Bears, lions, boars, wolves, and dogs, and all other animals, employ their bodily force one against another, in which, as many of them are superior to men, both in strength and fierceness, so they are all subdued by his reason and understanding.

The only design of the Utopians in war is to obtain that by force which, if it had been granted them in time, would have prevented the war; or, if that cannot be done, to take so severe a revenge on those that have injured them that they may be terrified from doing the like for the time to come. By these ends they measure all their designs, and manage them so, that it is visible that the appetite of fame or vainglory does not work so much on there as a just care of their own security.

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<sup>1</sup> They go to war only to defend themselves and their friends from unjust aggressors.

<sup>2</sup> More More-isms: "Nephelogetes" are "people from the clouds," and "Aleopolitanes" are "people of a people-less land." Both derive from the Greek.

## **Their military affairs 2: Assassinations and mercenaries** (Bk 2, Sec 17)

- 1 When they declare war, they offer bribes for killing or capturing the enemy's prince. This and similar means of corrupting their enemies they consider humane.
- 2 They also hire mercenaries whenever possible, which is the only use of their vast supply of gold.
- 3 They especially hire Zapolets, a rude, wild people who will fight fiercely for low pay. The Utopians regard the depletion of these depraved people to be a good thing.

▲ 1 As soon as they declare war, they take care to have a great many placards, that are marked with their common seal, affixed in the most conspicuous places of their enemies' country. This is carried secretly, and done in many places all at once. In these they promise great rewards to such as shall kill the prince, and lesser in proportion to such as shall kill any other persons who are those on whom, next to the prince himself, they cast the chief balance of the war. And they double the sum to him that, instead of killing the person so marked out, shall take him alive, and put him in their hands. They offer not only indemnity, but rewards, to such of the persons themselves that are so marked, if they will act against their countrymen. By this means those that are named in their proclamations become not only distrustful of their fellow-citizens, but are jealous of one another, and are much distracted by fear and danger; for it has often fallen out that many of them, and even the prince himself, have been betrayed, by those in whom they have trusted most; for the rewards that the Utopians offer are so immeasurably great, that there is no sort of crime to which men cannot be drawn by them. They consider the risk that those run who undertake such services, and offer a recompense proportioned to the danger—not only a vast deal of gold, but great revenues in lands, that lie among other nations that are their friends, where they may go and enjoy them very securely; and they observe the promises they make of their kind most religiously.

They very much approve of this way of corrupting their enemies, though it appears to others to be base and cruel; but they look on it as a wise course, to make an end of what would be otherwise a long war, without so much as hazarding one battle to decide it. They think it likewise an act of mercy and love to mankind to prevent the great slaughter of those that must otherwise be killed in the progress of the war, both on their own side and on that of their enemies, by the death of a few that are most guilty; and that in so doing they are kind even to their enemies, and pity them no less than their own people, as knowing that the greater part of them do not engage in the war of their own accord, but are driven into it by the passions of their prince.

If this method does not succeed with them, then they sow seeds of contention among their enemies, and animate the prince's brother, or some of the nobility, to aspire to the crown. If they cannot disunite them by domestic broils, then they engage their neighbors against them, and make them set on foot some old pretensions, which are never wanting to princes when they have occasion for them. These they plentifully supply with money, though but very sparingly with any auxiliary troops; for they are so tender of their own people that they would not willingly exchange one of them, even with the prince of their enemies' country.

▲2 But as they keep their gold and silver only for such an occasion, so, when that offers itself, they easily part with it; since it would be no convenience to them, though they should reserve nothing of it to themselves. For besides the wealth that they have among them at home, they have a vast treasure abroad; many nations round about them being deep in their debt: so that they hire soldiers from all places for carrying on their wars; ▲3 but chiefly from the Zapolets,<sup>1</sup> who live five hundred miles east of Utopia. They are a rude, wild, and fierce nation, who delight in the woods and rocks, among which they were born and bred up. They are hardened both against heat, cold, and labor, and know nothing of the delicacies of life. They do not apply themselves to agriculture, nor do they care either for their houses or their clothes: cattle is all that they look after; and for the greatest part they live either by hunting or upon rapine; and are made, as it were, only for war.

They watch all opportunities of engaging in it, and very readily embrace such as are offered them. Great numbers of them will frequently go out, and offer themselves for a very low pay, to serve any that will employ them: they know none of the arts of life, but those that lead to the taking it away; they serve those that hire them, both with much courage and great fidelity; but will not engage to serve for any determined time, and agree upon such terms, that the next day they may go over to the enemies of those whom they serve if they offer them a greater encouragement; and will, perhaps, return to them the day after that upon a higher advance of their pay. There are few wars in which they make not a considerable part of the armies of both sides: so it often falls out that they who are related, and were hired in the same country, and so have lived long and familiarly together, forgetting both their relations and former friendship, kill one another upon no other consideration than that of being hired to it for a little money by princes of different interests; and such a regard have they for money that they are easily wrought on by the difference of one penny a day to change sides. So entirely does their avarice influence them; and yet this money, which they value so highly, is of little use to them; for what they purchase thus with their blood they quickly waste on luxury, which among them is but of a poor and miserable form.

This nation serves the Utopians against all people whatsoever, for they pay higher than any other. The Utopians hold this for a maxim, that as they seek out the best sort of men for their own use at home, so they make use of this worst sort of men

for the consumption of war; and therefore they hire them with the offers of vast rewards to expose themselves to all sorts of hazards, out of which the greater part never returns to claim their promises; yet they make them good most religiously to such as escape. This animates them to adventure again, whenever there is occasion for it; for the Utopians are not at all troubled how many of these happen to be killed, and reckon it a service done to mankind if they could be a means to deliver the world from such a lewd and vicious sort of people, that seem to have run together, as to the drain of human nature.

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<sup>1</sup>“Zapolets” comes from the Greek for “busy sellers” (of themselves). A marginal comment at this point makes reference to the Swiss, who provided many of the mercenaries used in Europe in More’s time. Even today, the pope has his Swiss Guards. A marginal note pointing to the similarity between the Zapolets and the Swiss was removed in the 1518 editions by the (Swiss) publisher, Johann Froben.

## TOC

**Their military affairs 3: Leadership and valor** (Bk 2, Sec 18)

- 1 They choose an eminent and experienced general as commander in chief, with two backups ready to succeed him.
- 2 Only volunteers serve in foreign wars. If they need to defend their homeland, even the cowardly are pressed into combat.
- 3 Women are encouraged to serve alongside their husbands—and other relatives too. Kin will courageously come to each other's aid.
- 4 They are always prudent but are prepared to give their lives if necessary, especially because their children will be cared for.
- 5 A special contingent of their bravest youth is assigned to kill or capture the general of the enemy.

Next to these, they are served in their wars with those upon whose account they undertake them, and with the auxiliary troops of their other friends, to whom they join a few of their own people, and ▲ 1 send some man of eminent and approved virtue to command in chief. There are two sent with him, who, during his command, are but private men, but the first is to succeed him if he should happen to be either killed or taken; and, in case of the like misfortune to him, the third comes in his place; and thus they provide against all events, that such accidents as may befall their generals may not endanger their armies.

▲ 2 When they draw out troops of their own people, they take such out of every city as freely offer themselves, for none are forced to go against their wills, since they think that if any man is pressed that wants courage, he will not only act faintly, but by his cowardice dishearten others. But if an invasion is made on their country, they make use of such men, if they have good bodies, though they are not brave; and either put them aboard their ships, or place them on the walls of their towns, that being so posted, they may find no opportunity of flying away; and thus either shame, the heat of action, or the impossibility of flying, bears down their cowardice; they often make a virtue of necessity, and behave themselves well, because nothing else is left them.

▲ 3 But as they force no man to go into any foreign war against his will, so they do not hinder those women who are willing to go along with their husbands; on the contrary, they encourage and praise them, and they stand often next their husbands in the front of the army. They also place together those who are related, parents, and children, kindred, and those that are mutually allied, near one another; that those whom nature has inspired with the greatest zeal for assisting one another may be the nearest and readiest to do it; and it is matter of great reproach if husband or wife survive one another, or if a child survives his parent, and therefore when they come to be engaged in action, they continue to fight to the last man.

▲4 If their enemies stand before them: and as they use all prudent methods to avoid the endangering their own men, and if it is possible let all the action and danger fall upon the troops that they hire, so if it becomes necessary for themselves to engage, they then charge with as much courage as they avoided it before with prudence: nor is it a fierce charge at first, but it increases by degrees; and as they continue in action, they grow more obstinate, and press harder upon the enemy, insomuch that they will much sooner die than give ground; for the certainty that their children will be well looked after when they are dead frees them from all that anxiety concerning them which often masters men of great courage; and thus they are animated by a noble and invincible resolution. Their skill in military affairs increases their courage: and the wise sentiments which, according to the laws of their country, are instilled into them in their education, give additional vigor to their minds: for as they do not undervalue life so as prodigally to throw it away, they are not so indecently fond of it as to preserve it by base and unbecoming methods.

▲5 In the greatest heat of action the bravest of their youth, who have devoted themselves to that service, single out the general of their enemies, and set on him either openly or by ambush; pursue him everywhere, and when spent and wearied out, are relieved by others, who never give over the pursuit, either attacking him with close weapons when they can get near him, or with those which wound at a distance, when others get in between them. So that, unless he secures himself by flight, they seldom fail at last to kill or to take him prisoner.

## TOC

**Their military affairs 4: Tactics and policies** (Bk 2, Sec 19)

- 1 They prefer taking prisoners to killing. From their own successes, they know better than to engage in disorganized pursuit of a fleeing foe.
- 2 They skillfully set ambushes and use all manner of deceptive tactics. They work together to rapidly dig excellent fortifications around their camps.
- 3 Their armor is strong but light (and they are trained to swim). They favor arrows, the pole-axe rather than the sword, and machines of war, cleverly disguised until used.
- 4 They honor truces, avoid pillaging, and spare the lives of civilians.
- 5 They demand reparations in money and land from the conquered. The lands are used to induce foreign allies to undertake desperate military actions.
- 6 They strive to prevent any invasion of Utopia. If invaded, they employ only Utopians in defense.

▲1 When they have obtained a victory, they kill as few as possible, and are much more bent on taking many prisoners than on killing those that fly before them. Nor do they ever let their men so loose in the pursuit of their enemies as not to retain an entire body still in order; so that if they have been forced to engage the last of their battalions before they could gain the day, they will rather let their enemies all escape than pursue them when their own army is in disorder; remembering well what has often fallen out to themselves, that when the main body of their army has been quite defeated and broken, when their enemies, imagining the victory obtained, have let themselves loose into an irregular pursuit, a few of them that lay for a reserve, waiting a fit opportunity, have fallen on them in their chase, and when straggling in disorder, and apprehensive of no danger, but counting the day their own, have turned the whole action, and, wresting out of their hands a victory that seemed certain and undoubted, while the vanquished have suddenly become victorious.

▲2 It is hard to tell whether they are more dexterous in laying or avoiding ambushes. They sometimes seem to fly when it is far from their thoughts; and when they intend to give ground, they do it so that it is very hard to find out their design. If they see they are ill posted, or are like to be overpowered by numbers, they then either march off in the night with great silence, or by some stratagem delude their enemies. If they retire in the daytime, they do it in such order that it is no less dangerous to fall upon them in a retreat than in a march. They fortify their camps with a deep and large trench; and throw up the earth that is dug out of it for a wall; nor do they employ only their slaves in this, but the whole army works at it, except those that are then upon the guard; so that when so many hands are at work, a great line and a strong fortification is finished in so short a time that it is scarce credible.

▲3 Their armor is very strong for defense, and yet is not so heavy as to make them uneasy in their marches; they can even swim with it. All that are trained up to war practice swimming. Both horse and foot make great use of arrows, and are very expert. They have no swords, but fight with a pole-axe that is both sharp and heavy, by which they thrust or strike down an enemy. They are very good at finding out warlike machines, and disguise them so well that the enemy does not perceive them till he feels the use of them; so that he cannot prepare such a defense as would render them useless; the chief consideration had in the making them is that they may be easily carried and managed.

▲4 If they agree to a truce, they observe it so religiously that no provocations will make them break it. They never lay their enemies' country waste nor burn their corn, and even in their marches they take all possible care that neither horse nor foot may tread it down, for they do not know but that they may have use for it themselves. They hurt no man whom they find disarmed, unless he is a spy. When a town is surrendered to them, they take it into their protection; and when they carry a place by storm they never plunder it, but put those only to the sword that oppose the rendering of it up, and make the rest of the garrison slaves, but for the other inhabitants, they do them no hurt; and if any of them had advised a surrender, they give them good rewards out of the estates of those that they condemn, and distribute the rest among their auxiliary troops, but they themselves take no share of the spoil.

▲5 When a war is ended, they do not oblige their friends to reimburse their expenses; but they obtain them of the conquered, either in money, which they keep for the next occasion, or in lands, out of which a constant revenue is to be paid them; by many increases the revenue which they draw out from several countries on such occasions is now risen to above 700,000 ducats a year. They send some of their own people to receive these revenues, who have orders to live magnificently and like princes, by which means they consume much of it upon the place; and either bring over the rest to Utopia or lend it to that nation in which it lies. This they most commonly do, unless some great occasion, which falls out but very seldom, should oblige them to call for it all. It is out of these lands that they assign rewards to such as they encourage to adventure on desperate attempts. ▲6 If any prince that engages in war with them is making preparations for invading their country, they prevent him, and make his country the seat of the war; for they do not willingly suffer any war to break in upon their island; and if that should happen, they would only defend themselves by their own people; but would not call for auxiliary troops to their assistance.

## Their Religions 1: Core beliefs (Bk 2, Sec 20)

- 1 There are numerous religions. Some worship a heavenly body or a legendary hero. But the wisest worship one eternal, invisible, infinite Divine Being.
- 2 All believe in one Supreme Being, known as Mithras. Each sect thinks its deity is Mithras. Gradually they are all moving toward the beliefs of the wisest.
- 3 Most embraced Christ when we taught about him, perhaps because Christ's precepts accord with their notions of communal property. They may establish a priesthood.
- 4 Those who have not converted do not oppose Christian belief, except that one extreme, seditious person was banished.
- 5 They believe no one should be punished for their religion, a principle established by Utopus. One can seek to persuade others, nothing more.
- 6 This preserves the public peace. But, also, God may inspire men to different beliefs.
- 7 They do, however, disdain those who deny the immortality of the soul and eternal reward and punishment. Such men have no check on their bad impulses.
- 8 People with such beliefs are encouraged to take counsel from priests. But Utopians know no one can be made to believe what they truly don't, and they hate dissembling.
- 9 They lament no man's death, except those who fear their death (which they regard as shameful.)
- 10 They believe that the souls of good people are with us. They despise superstition but believe in miracles. They believe that God approves the study of nature.

▲ 1 There are several sorts of religions, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town; some worshipping the sun, others the moon or one of the planets. Some worship such men as have been eminent in former times for virtue or glory, not only as ordinary deities, but as the supreme god. Yet the greater and wiser sort of them worship none of these, but adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity; as a Being that is far above all our apprehensions, that is spread over the whole universe, not by His bulk, but by His power and virtue; Him they call the Father of All, and acknowledge that the beginnings, the increase, the progress, the vicissitudes, and the end of all things come only from Him; nor do they offer divine honors to any but to Him alone.

▲ 2 And, indeed, though they differ concerning other things, yet all agree in this: that they think there is one Supreme Being that made and governs the world, whom they call, in the language of their country, Mithras<sup>1</sup>. They differ in this: that one thinks the god whom he worships is this Supreme Being, and another thinks that his idol is that god; but they all agree in one principle, that whoever is this Supreme Being, He is also that great essence to whose glory and majesty all honors are ascribed by the consent of all nations.

By degrees they fall off from the various superstitions that are among them, and grow up to that one religion that is the best and most in request; and there is no doubt to be made, but that all the others had vanished long ago, if some of those who advised them to lay aside their superstitions had not met with some unhappy accidents, which, being considered as inflicted by heaven, made them afraid that the god whose worship had like to have been abandoned had interposed and revenged themselves on those who despised their authority.

▲3 After they had heard from us an account of the doctrine, the course of life, and the miracles of Christ, and of the wonderful constancy of so many martyrs, whose blood, so willingly offered up by them, was the chief occasion of spreading their religion over a vast number of nations, it is not to be imagined how inclined they were to receive it. I shall not determine whether this proceeded from any secret inspiration of God, or whether it was because it seemed so favorable to that community of goods, which is an opinion so particular as well as so dear to them; since they perceived that Christ and His followers lived by that rule, and that it was still kept up in some communities among the sincerest sort of Christians. From whichever of these motives it might be, true it is, that many of them came over to our religion, and were initiated into it by baptism. But as two of our number were dead, so none of the four that survived were in priests' orders, we, therefore, could only baptize them, so that, to our great regret, they could not partake of the other sacraments, that can only be administered by priests, but they are instructed concerning them and long most vehemently for them. They have had great disputes among themselves, whether one chosen by them to be a priest would not be thereby qualified to do all the things that belong to that character, even though he had no authority derived from the Pope, and they seemed to be resolved to choose some for that employment, but they had not done it when I left them.

▲4 Those among them that have not received our religion do not fright any from it, and use none ill that goes over to it, so that all the while I was there one man was only punished on this occasion. He being newly baptized did, notwithstanding all that we could say to the contrary, dispute publicly concerning the Christian religion, with more zeal than discretion, and with so much heat, that he not only preferred our worship to theirs, but condemned all their rites as profane, and cried out against all that adhered to them as impious and sacrilegious persons, that were to be damned to everlasting burnings. Upon his having frequently preached in this manner he was seized, and after trial he was condemned to banishment, not for having disparaged their religion, but for his inflaming the people to sedition; ▲5 for this is one of their most ancient laws, that no man ought to be punished for his religion.<sup>2</sup>

At the first constitution of their government, Utopus having understood that before his coming among them the old inhabitants had been engaged in great quarrels concerning religion, by which they were so divided among themselves, that he found it an easy thing to conquer them, since, instead of uniting their forces

against him, every different party in religion fought by themselves. After he had subdued them he made a law that every man might be of what religion he pleased, and might endeavor to draw others to it by the force of argument and by amicable and modest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions; but that he ought to use no other force but that of persuasion, and was neither to mix with it reproaches nor violence; and such as did otherwise were to be condemned to banishment or slavery.

▲6 This law was made by Utopus, not only for preserving the public peace, which he saw suffered much by daily contentions and irreconcilable heats, but because he thought the interest of religion itself required it. He judged it not fit to determine anything rashly; and seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire man in a different manner, and be pleased with this variety; he therefore thought it indecent and foolish for any man to threaten and terrify another to make him believe what did not appear to him to be true. And supposing that only one religion was really true, and the rest false, he imagined that the native force of truth would at last break forth and shine bright, if supported only by the strength of argument, and attended to with a gentle and unprejudiced mind; while, on the other hand, if such debates were carried on with violence and tumults, as the most wicked are always the most obstinate, so the best and most holy religion might be choked with superstition, as corn is with briars and thorns; he therefore left men wholly to their liberty, that they might be free to believe as they should see cause; ▲7 only he made a solemn and severe law against such as should so far degenerate from the dignity of human nature, as to think that our souls died with our bodies, or that the world was governed by chance, without a wise overruling Providence: for they all formerly believed that there was a state of rewards and punishments to the good and bad after this life; and they now look on those that think otherwise as scarce fit to be counted men, since they degrade so noble a being as the soul, and reckon it no better than a beast's.

Thus they are far from looking on such men as fit for human society, or to be citizens of a well-ordered commonwealth; since a man of such principles must needs, as oft as he dares do it, despise all their laws and customs: for there is no doubt to be made, that a man who is afraid of nothing but the law, and apprehends nothing after death, will not scruple to break through all the laws of his country, either by fraud or force, when by this means he may satisfy his appetites. They never raise any that hold these maxims, either to honors or offices, nor employ them in any public trust, but despise them, as men of base and sordid minds. ▲8 Yet they do not punish them, because they lay this down as a maxim, that a man cannot make himself believe anything he pleases; nor do they drive any to dissemble their thoughts by threatenings, so that men are not tempted to lie or disguise their opinions; which being a sort of fraud, is abhorred by the Utopians: they take care indeed to prevent their disputing in defense of these opinions, especially before

the common people: but they suffer, and even encourage them to dispute concerning them in private with their priest, and other grave men, being confident that they will be cured of those mad opinions by having reason laid before them. There are many among them that run far to the other extreme, though it is neither thought an ill nor unreasonable opinion, and therefore is not at all discouraged. They think that the souls of beasts are immortal, though far inferior to the dignity of the human soul, and not capable of so great a happiness.

▲9 They are almost all of them very firmly persuaded that good men will be infinitely happy in another state: so that though they are compassionate to all that are sick, yet they lament no man's death, except they see him loath to part with life; for they look on this as a very ill presage, as if the soul, conscious to itself of guilt, and quite hopeless, was afraid to leave the body, from some secret hints of approaching misery. They think that such a man's appearance before God cannot be acceptable to Him, who being called on, does not go out cheerfully, but is backward and unwilling, and is as it were dragged to it. They are struck with horror when they see any die in this manner, and carry them out in silence and with sorrow, and praying God that He would be merciful to the errors of the departed soul, they lay the body in the ground: but when any die cheerfully, and full of hope, they do not mourn for them, but sing hymns when they carry out their bodies, and commending their souls very earnestly to God: their whole behavior is then rather grave than sad, they burn the body, and set up a pillar where the pile was made, with an inscription to the honor of the deceased. When they come from the funeral, they discourse of his good life, and worthy actions, but speak of nothing of tenebr and with more pleasure than of his serenity at the hour of death.

They think such respect paid to the memory of good men is both the greatest incitement to engage others to follow their example, and the most acceptable worship that can be offered them; ▲10 for they believe that though by the imperfection of human sight they are invisible to us, yet they are present among us, and hear those discourses that pass concerning themselves. They believe it inconsistent with the happiness of departed souls not to be at liberty to be where they will: and do not imagine them capable of the ingratitude of not desiring to see those friends with whom they lived on earth in the strictest bonds of love and kindness: besides, they are persuaded that good men, after death, have these affections; and all other good dispositions increased rather than diminished, and therefore conclude that they are still among the living, and observe all they say or do. From hence they engage in all their affairs with the greater confidence of success, as trusting to their protection; while this opinion of the presence of their ancestors is a restraint that prevents their engaging in ill designs.

They despise and laugh at auguries, and the other vain and superstitious ways of divination, so much observed among other nations; but have great reverence for such miracles as cannot flow from any of the powers of nature, and look on them as effects and indications of the presence of the Supreme Being, of which they say

many instances have occurred among them; and that sometimes their public prayers, which upon great and dangerous occasions they have solemnly put up to God, with assured confidence of being heard, have been answered in a miraculous manner. They think contemplating God in His works, and adoring Him for them, is a very acceptable piece of worship to Him.

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<sup>1</sup> Mithras was the spirit of light, or sun god, first worshiped by the Zoroastrians of ancient Persia and then adopted by Greek and Roman sects.

<sup>2</sup> More, as Lord Chancellor later in life, fiercely punished religious dissidents, presiding over the execution of six Protestant “heretics,” all of whom were burned at the stake.

## TOC

**Their religions 2: Religious life and priesthood** (Bk 2, Sec 21)

- 1 Many neglect education and devote themselves to good works as a path to salvation. These willingly do the most difficult work. They are honored for their choice in life.
- 2 Of these, some (in religious orders) are ascetic, avoiding all pleasures. Others, who are thought wiser, embrace pleasure, including marriage and family and eating meat.
- 3 Their priests are few in number, deeply pious, and are chosen by the people. They have no legal authority but can admonish and, in extreme cases, excommunicate.
- 4 Priests educate the young, emphasizing morality. Their wives are extraordinary women. Their widows may be made priests.
- 5 Priests are honored above magistrates (partly because of their small numbers). If they commit a crime (a very rare occurrence), they answer to God, not the law.
- 6 Their priests are venerated by neighboring nations because they pray near the field of battle both for peace and for the least loss of life for both armies.
- 7 Also, they often restrain the fury of the conquering side and have through negotiation achieved peace on the field of battle.

▲1 There are many among them that upon a motive of religion neglect learning, and apply themselves to no sort of study; nor do they allow themselves any leisure time, but are perpetually employed, believing that by the good things that a man does he secures to himself that happiness that comes after death. Some of these visit the sick; others mend highways, cleanse ditches, repair bridges, or dig turf, gravel, or stone. Others fell and cleave timber, and bring wood, corn, and other necessities, on carts, into their towns; nor do these only serve the public, but they serve even private men, more than the slaves themselves do: for if there is anywhere a rough, hard, and sordid piece of work to be done, from which many are frightened by the labor and loathsomeness of it, if not the despair of accomplishing it, they cheerfully, and of their own accord, take that to their share; and by that means, as they ease others very much, so they afflict themselves, and spend their whole life in hard labor: and yet they do not value themselves upon this, nor lessen other people's credit to raise their own; but by their stooping to such servile employments they are so far from being despised, that they are so much the more esteemed by the whole nation.

▲2 Of these there are two sorts: some live unmarried and chaste, and abstain from eating any sort of flesh; and thus weaning themselves from all the pleasures of the present life, which they account hurtful, they pursue, even by the hardest and painfullest methods possible, that blessedness which they hope for hereafter; and

the nearer they approach to it, they are the more cheerful and earnest in their endeavors after it. Another sort of them is less willing to put themselves to much toil, and therefore prefer a married state to a single one; and as they do not deny themselves the pleasure of it, so they think the begetting of children is a debt which they owe to human nature, and to their country; nor do they avoid any pleasure that does not hinder labor; and therefore eat flesh so much the more willingly, as they find that by this means they are the more able to work: the Utopians look upon these as the wiser sect, but they esteem the others as the most holy. They would indeed laugh at any man who, from the principles of reason, would prefer an unmarried state to a married, or a life of labor to an easy life: but they reverence and admire such as do it from the motives of religion. There is nothing in which they are more cautious than in giving their opinion positively concerning any sort of religion. The men that lead those severe lives are called in the language of their country *Buthrescas*, which answers to those we call Religious Orders.<sup>1</sup>

▲3 Their priests are men of eminent piety, and therefore they are but few, for there are only thirteen in every town, one for every temple; but when they go to war, seven of these go out with their forces, and seven others are chosen to supply their room in their absence; but these enter again upon their employments when they return; and those who served in their absence, attend upon the high priest, till vacancies fall by death; for there is one set over the rest. They are chosen by the people as the other magistrates are, by suffrages given in secret, for preventing of factions: and when they are chosen, they are consecrated by the college of priests.

The care of all sacred things, the worship of God, and an inspection into the manners of the people, are committed to them. It is a reproach to a man to be sent for by any of them, or for them to speak to him in secret, for that always gives some suspicion: all that is incumbent on them is only to exhort and admonish the people; for the power of correcting and punishing ill men belongs wholly to the Prince, and to the other magistrates: the severest thing that the priest does is the excluding those that are desperately wicked from joining in their worship: there is not any sort of punishment more dreaded by them than this, for as it loads them with infamy, so it fills them with secret horrors, such is their reverence to their religion; nor will their bodies be long exempted from their share of trouble; for if they do not very quickly satisfy the priests of the truth of their repentance, they are seized on by the Senate, and punished for their impiety.

▲4 The education of youth belongs to the priests, yet they do not take so much care of instructing them in letters, as in forming their minds and manners aright; they use all possible methods to infuse, very early, into the tender and flexible minds of children, such opinions as are both good in themselves and will be useful to their country, for when deep impressions of these things are made at that age, they follow men through the whole course of their lives, and conduce much to preserve the peace of the government, which suffers by nothing more than by vices that rise out of ill opinions.

The wives of their priests are the most extraordinary women of the whole country; sometimes the women themselves are made priests, though that falls out but seldom, nor are any but ancient widows chosen into that order.

▲5 None of the magistrates have greater honor paid them than is paid the priests; and if they should happen to commit any crime, they would not be questioned for it; their punishment is left to God, and to their own consciences; for they do not think it lawful to lay hands on any man, how wicked soever he is, that has been in a peculiar manner dedicated to God; nor do they find any great inconvenience in this, both because they have so few priests, and because these are chosen with much caution, so that it must be a very unusual thing to find one who, merely out of regard to his virtue, and for his being esteemed a singularly good man, was raised up to so great a dignity, degenerate into corruption and vice; and if such a thing should fall out, for man is a changeable creature, yet, there being few priests, and these having no authority but what rises out of the respect that is paid them, nothing of great consequence to the public can proceed from the indemnity that the priests enjoy. They have, indeed, very few of them, lest greater numbers sharing in the same honor might make the dignity of that order, which they esteem so highly, to sink in its reputation; they also think it difficult to find out many of such an exalted pitch of goodness as to be equal to that dignity, which demands the exercise of more than ordinary virtues.

▲6 Nor are the priests in greater veneration among them than they are among their neighboring nations, as you may imagine by that which I think gives occasion for it. When the Utopians engage in battle, the priests who accompany them to the war, apparelled in their sacred vestments, kneel down during the action (in a place not far from the field), and, lifting up their hands to heaven, pray, first for peace, and then for victory to their own side, and particularly that it may be gained without the effusion of much blood on either side; and ▲7 when the victory turns to their side, they run in among their own men to restrain their fury; and if any of their enemies see them or call to them, they are preserved by that means; and such as can come so near them as to touch their garments have not only their lives, but their fortunes secured to them; it is upon this account that all the nations round about consider them so much, and treat them with such reverence, that they have been often no less able to preserve their own people from the fury of their enemies than to save their enemies from their rage; for it has sometimes fallen out, that when their armies have been in disorder and forced to fly, so that their enemies were running upon the slaughter and spoil, the priests by interposing have separated them from one another, and stopped the effusion of more blood; so that, by their mediation, a peace has been concluded on very reasonable terms; nor is there any nation about them so fierce, cruel, or barbarous, as not to look upon their persons as sacred and inviolable.

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<sup>1</sup> Seemingly no pun here: “Buthrescas,” from the Greek, means what it implies in the text: “extraordinarily religious.”

### **Their religions 3: Festivals and temples** (Bk 2, Sec 22)

- 1 They hold festivals regularly, reckoning by both the sun and moon.
- 2 They have few temples but these are magnificent and spacious. For better worship, they are kept semi-dark.
- 3 The temple interiors and the public rites are non-denominational. Rites specific to particular sects are performed at home.
- 4 They meet in temples on seasonal festival dates (after fasting). Wives and children confess misdeeds to their husbands or parents, thus reconciling differences.
- 5 Sexes are divided. A master or mistress of each family presides, ensuring good deportment. The younger are seated among the older to prevent inattention.
- 6 They sacrifice no living creatures. They burn incense and use wax lights to create a favorable mood for worship.
- 7 The people wear white. Priestly vestments are multi-colored and are beautifully made from feathers, not fine cloth or gems. In the feathers religious mysteries are encoded.
- 8 They fall prostrate before the priests, sing hymns to beautiful music appropriate in mood to each hymn, and voice prayers acceptable to all worshippers.
- 9 They thank God for their good government and for what they know of Him, but ask for a truer understanding if what they know is imperfect.
- 10 They pray for salvation, preferring this even to a long and happy life. Then they go home to dinner and either diversion or military exercises.

▲ 1 The first and the last day of the month, and of the year, is a festival; they measure their months by the course of the moon, and their years by the course of the sun: the first days are called in their language the Cynemernes, and the last the Trapemernes, which answers in our language, to the festival that begins or ends the season.<sup>1</sup>

▲ 2 They have magnificent temples, that are not only nobly built, but extremely spacious, which is the more necessary as they have so few of them; they are a little dark within, which proceeds not from any error in the architecture, but is done with design; for their priests think that too much light dissipates the thoughts, and that a more moderate degree of it both recollects the mind and raises devotion.

▲ 3 Though there are many different forms of religion among them, yet all these, how various soever, agree in the main point, which is the worshipping the Divine Essence; and, therefore, there is nothing to be seen or heard in their temples in which the several persuasions among them may not agree; for every sect performs those rites that are peculiar to it in their private houses, nor is there anything in the public worship that contradicts the particular ways of those different sects. There are no images for God in their temples, so that every one may represent Him to his thoughts according to the way of his religion; nor do they call this one God

by any other name but that of Mithras, which is the common name by which they all express the Divine Essence, whatsoever otherwise they think it to be; nor are there any prayers among them but such as every one of them may use without prejudice to his own opinion.

▲4 They meet in their temples on the evening of the festival that concludes a season, and not having yet broke their fast, they thank God for their good success during that year or month which is then at an end; and the next day, being that which begins the new season, they meet early in their temples, to pray for the happy progress of all their affairs during that period upon which they then enter. In the festival which concludes the period, before they go to the temple, both wives and children fall on their knees before their husbands or parents and confess everything in which they have either erred or failed in their duty, and beg pardon for it. Thus all little discontents in families are removed, that they may offer up their devotions with a pure and serene mind; for they hold it a great impiety to enter upon them with disturbed thoughts, or with a consciousness of their bearing hatred or anger in their hearts to any person whatsoever; and think that they should become liable to severe punishments if they presumed to offer sacrifices without cleansing their hearts, and reconciling all their differences.

▲5 In the temples the two sexes are separated, the men go to the right hand, and the women to the left; and the males and females all place themselves before the head and master or mistress of the family to which they belong, so that those who have the government of them at home may see their deportment in public. And they intermingle them so, that the younger and the older may be set by one another; for if the younger sort were all set together, they would, perhaps, trifle away that time too much in which they ought to beget in themselves that religious dread of the Supreme Being which is the greatest and almost the only incitement to virtue.

▲6 They offer up no living creature in sacrifice, nor do they think it suitable to the Divine Being, from whose bounty it is that these creatures have derived their lives, to take pleasure in their deaths, or the offering up their blood. They burn incense and other sweet odors, and have a great number of wax lights during their worship, not out of any imagination that such oblations can add anything to the divine nature (which even prayers cannot do), but as it is a harmless and pure way of worshipping God; so they think those sweet savors and lights, together with some other ceremonies, by a secret and unaccountable virtue, elevate men's souls, and inflame them with greater energy and cheerfulness during the divine worship.

▲7 All the people appear in the temples in white garments; but the priest's vestments are parti-colored, and both the work and colors are wonderful. They are made of no rich materials, for they are neither embroidered nor set with precious stones; but are composed of the plumes of several birds, laid together with so much art, and so neatly, that the true value of them is far beyond the costliest ma-

terials. They say, that in the ordering and placing those plumes some dark mysteries are represented, which pass down among their priests in a secret tradition concerning them; and that they are as hieroglyphics, putting them in mind of the blessing that they have received from God, and of their duties, both to Him and to their neighbors.

▲8 As soon as the priest appears in those ornaments, they all fall prostrate on the ground, with so much reverence and so deep a silence, that such as look on cannot but be struck with it, as if it were the effect of the appearance of a deity. After they have been for some time in this posture, they all stand up, upon a sign given by the priest, and sing hymns to the honor of God, some musical instruments playing all the while. These are quite of another form than those used among us; but, as many of them are much sweeter than ours, so others are made use of by us. Yet in one thing they very much exceed us: all their music, both vocal and instrumental, is adapted to imitate and express the passions, and is so happily suited to every occasion, that, whether the subject of the hymn be cheerful, or formed to soothe or trouble the mind, or to express grief or remorse, the music takes the impression of whatever is represented, affects and kindles the passions, and works the sentiments deep into the hearts of the hearers.

When this is done, both priests and people offer up very solemn prayers to God in a set form of words; and these are so composed, that whatsoever is pronounced by the whole assembly may be likewise applied by every man in particular to his own condition. In these they acknowledge God to be the author and governor of the world, and the fountain of all the good they receive, and therefore offer up to him their thanksgiving; and, in particular, bless him for His goodness in ordering it so, that they are born under the happiest government in the world, and are of a religion which they hope is the truest of all others; but, if they are mistaken, and ▲9 if there is either a better government, or a religion more acceptable to God, they implore His goodness to let them know it, vowing that they resolve to follow him whithersoever he leads them; but if their government is the best, and their religion the truest, then they pray that He may fortify them in it, and bring all the world both to the same rules of life, and to the same opinions concerning Himself, unless, according to the unsearchableness of His mind, He is pleased with a variety of religions.

▲10 Then they pray that God may give them an easy passage at last to Himself, not presuming to set limits to Him, how early or late it should be; but, if it may be wished for without derogating from His supreme authority, they desire to be quickly delivered, and to be taken to Himself, though by the most terrible kind of death, rather than to be detained long from seeing Him by the most prosperous course of life. When this prayer is ended, they all fall down again upon the ground; and, after a little while, they rise up, go home to dinner, and spend the rest of the day in diversion or military exercises.

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<sup>1</sup>“Cynemernes” is Greek for “dog day,” and Trapemernes means “turning day.” Here, again, More does not seem to be punning with his lexical creations.

## TOC

**Their true commonwealth: Concluding remarks** (Bk 2, Sec 23)

- 1 I have described what I think is the world's best commonwealth—indeed the only true commonwealth, for elsewhere else people pursue individual gain.
- 2 In Utopia, no one is poor, and all share the wealth of secure, serene, and cheerful lives for themselves and their descendants.
- 3 Elsewhere, noblemen, goldsmiths, and bankers do nothing useful, while workers live lives of toil and misery.
- 4 The rich scheme to lower the wages of laborers and rig the laws to support their unjust practices.
- 5 But even the rich are not as happy as the Utopians. Who cannot see that without money, frauds, thefts, treacheries, and poverty will disappear?
- 6 Consider that in years of plague, when thousands died of hunger, the corn hoarded up in rich men's granaries would have fed everyone.
- 7 The rich understand that simpler, more virtuous living would make them happier. But pride makes them ignore Christ's commands and take pleasure in the misery of others.
- 8 Thus I am glad that the Utopians have established such a good form of government, and I wish that the world would be wise enough to imitate them.
- 9 When RH finished, I would have voiced my many objections to Utopian laws and customs—chiefly the elimination of property. But RH was clearly tired and so we dined.
- 10 I'd like to talk more with him. Meanwhile, I'll say that there are many Utopian practices that I wish, but don't expect, our governments to adopt.

▲1 Thus have I described to you, as particularly as I could, the constitution of that commonwealth, which I do not only think the best in the world, but indeed the only commonwealth that truly deserves that name.

In all other places it is visible that, while people talk of a commonwealth, every man only seeks his own wealth; but there, where no man has any property, all men zealously pursue the good of the public, and, indeed, it is no wonder to see men act so differently, for in other commonwealths every man knows that, unless he provides for himself, how flourishing soever the commonwealth may be, he must die of hunger, so that he sees the necessity of preferring his own concerns to the public; ▲2 but in Utopia, where every man has a right to everything, they all know that if care is taken to keep the public stores full no private man can want anything; for among them there is no unequal distribution, so that no man is poor, none in necessity, and though no man has any thing, yet they are all rich.

For what can make a man so rich as to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife? He is not afraid of the misery of his children, nor is he contriving how to raise a portion for his daughters; but is secure in this, that both he and his wife, his children and grand-children, to as many generations as he can fancy, will all live both plentifully and happily; since, among them, there is no less care taken of those who were once engaged in labor, but grow afterwards unable to follow it, than there is, elsewhere, of these that continue still employed.

▲ 3 I would gladly hear any man compare the justice that is among them with that of all other nations; among whom, may I perish, if I see anything that looks either like justice or equity; for what justice is there in this: that a nobleman, a goldsmith, a banker, or any other man, that either does nothing at all, or, at best, is employed in things that are of no use to the public, should live in great luxury and splendor upon what is so ill acquired, and a mean man, a carter, a smith, or a plowman, that works harder even than the beasts themselves, and is employed in labors so necessary, that no commonwealth could hold out a year without them, can only earn so poor a livelihood and must lead so miserable a life, that the condition of the beasts is much better than theirs? For as the beasts do not work so constantly, so they feed almost as well, and with more pleasure, and have no anxiety about what is to come, while these men are depressed by a barren and fruitless employment, and tormented with the apprehensions of want in their old age; since that which they get by their daily labor does but maintain them at present, and is consumed as fast as it comes in, there is no surplus left to lay up for old age.

Is not that government both unjust and ungrateful, that is so prodigal of its favors to those that are called gentlemen, or goldsmiths, or such others who are idle, or live either by flattery or by contriving the arts of vain pleasure, and, on the other hand, takes no care of those of a meaner sort, such as plowmen, colliers, and smiths, without whom it could not subsist? But after the public has reaped all the advantage of their service, and they come to be oppressed with age, sickness, and want, all their labors and the good they have done is forgotten, and all the recompense given them is that they are left to die in great misery. ▲ 4 The richer sort are often endeavoring to bring the hire of laborers lower, not only by their fraudulent practices, but by the laws which they procure to be made to that effect, so that though it is a thing most unjust in itself to give such small rewards to those who deserve so well of the public, yet they have given those hardships the name and color of justice, by procuring laws to be made for regulating them.

Therefore I must say that, as I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the other governments that I see or know, than that they are a conspiracy of the rich, who, on pretense of managing the public, only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find out; first, that they may, without danger, preserve all that they have so ill-acquired, and then, that they may engage the poor to toil and labor for them at as low rates as possible, and oppress them as much as

they please; and if they can but prevail to get these contrivances established by the show of public authority, which is considered as the representative of the whole people, then they are accounted laws.

▲5 Yet these wicked men, after they have, by a most insatiable covetousness, divided that among themselves with which all the rest might have been well supplied, are far from that happiness that is enjoyed among the Utopians; for the use as well as the desire of money being extinguished, much anxiety and great occasions of mischief is cut off with it, and who does not see that the frauds, thefts, robberies, quarrels, tumults, contentions, seditions, murders, treacheries, and witchcrafts, which are, indeed, rather punished than restrained by the severities of law, would all fall off, if money were not any more valued by the world? Men's fears, solitudes, cares, labors, and watchings would all perish in the same moment with the value of money; even poverty itself, for the relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall. But, in order to the apprehending this aright, take one instance:

▲6 Consider any year, that has been so unfruitful that many thousands have died of hunger; and yet if, at the end of that year, a survey was made of the granaries of all the rich men that have hoarded up the corn, it would be found that there was enough among them to have prevented all that consumption of men that perished in misery; and that, if it had been distributed among them, none would have felt the terrible effects of that scarcity: so easy a thing would it be to supply all the necessities of life, if that blessed thing called money, which is pretended to be invented for procuring them was not really the only thing that obstructed their being procured!

▲7 I do not doubt but rich men are sensible of this, and that they well know how much a greater happiness it is to want nothing necessary, than to abound in many superfluities; and to be rescued out of so much misery, than to abound with so much wealth: and I cannot think but the sense of every man's interest, added to the authority of Christ's commands, who, as He was infinitely wise, knew what was best, and was not less good in discovering it to us, would have drawn all the world over to the laws of the Utopians, if pride, that plague of human nature, that source of so much misery, did not hinder it; for this vice does not measure happiness so much by its own conveniences, as by the miseries of others; and would not be satisfied with being thought a goddess, if none were left that were miserable, over whom she might insult. Pride thinks its own happiness shines the brighter, by comparing it with the misfortunes of other persons; that by displaying its own wealth they may feel their poverty the more sensibly. This is that infernal serpent that creeps into the breasts of mortals, and possesses them too much to be easily drawn out.

▲8 Therefore, I am glad that the Utopians have fallen upon this form of government, in which I wish that all the world could be so wise as to imitate them; for they have, indeed, laid down such a scheme and foundation of policy, that as men

live happily under it, so it is like to be of great continuance; for they having rooted out of the minds of their people all the seeds, both of ambition and faction, there is no danger of any commotions at home; which alone has been the ruin of many states that seemed otherwise to be well secured; but as long as they live in peace at home, and are governed by such good laws, the envy of all their neighboring princes, who have often, though in vain, attempted their ruin, will never be able to put their state into any commotion or disorder.

▲9 When Raphael had thus made an end of speaking, though many things occurred to me, both concerning the manners and laws of that people, that seemed very absurd, as well in their way of making war, as in their notions of religion and divine matters—together with several other particulars, but chiefly what seemed the foundation of all the rest, their living in common, without the use of money, by which all nobility, magnificence, splendor, and majesty, which, according to the common opinion, are the true ornaments of a nation, would be quite taken away—yet since I perceived that Raphael was weary, and was not sure whether he could easily bear contradiction, remembering that he had taken notice of some, who seemed to think they were bound in honor to support the credit of their own wisdom, by finding out something to censure in all other men's inventions, besides their own, I only commended their constitution, and the account he had given of it in general.

And so, taking him by the hand, I carried<sup>1</sup> him to supper, and ▲10 told him I would find out some other time for examining this subject more particularly, and for discoursing more copiously upon it. And, indeed, I shall be glad to embrace an opportunity of doing it. In the meanwhile, though it must be confessed that he is both a very learned man and a person who has obtained a great knowledge of the world, I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related. However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments.

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<sup>1</sup> Led him to supper.

THE END OF BOOK TWO

THE END OF THE AFTERNOON DISCOURSE OF RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY  
ON THE LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE ISLAND OF UTOPIA,  
HITHERTO KNOWN BUT TO FEW, AS REPORTED BY THE  
MOST DISTINGUISHED AND MOST LEARNED MAN,  
MR. THOMAS MORE,  
CITIZEN AND UNDERSHERIF OF LONDON  
FINI



*The Utopian community of New Harmony, Indiana, as conceived by Robert Owen.*