Utopia

THOMAS MORE
1478–1535

Utopia

De optimo reipublicae statu deque nova insula Utopia

Translated from the Latin with AI (Claude) and edited



FORAGE
forage.com

Utopia · Thomas More (1478–1535)

Translated from the Latin with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, September 2026. forage.com/more/utopia

Latin text: the Basel (Froben) edition of 1518, as transcribed on Latin Wikisource (la.wikisource.org/wiki/Utopia), CC BY-SA 4.0, with its original spelling. English: translated from the Latin with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are the part and paragraph: “P” is the letter to Peter Giles, “1” and “2” are Books I and II (so 2.35 is the 35th paragraph of Book II).

The original text is in the public domain. This translation is free to share and adapt under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

Set in Source Serif 4.

CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Letter to Peter Giles 1

Book I 7

Should Raphael serve a king? 12
Dinner with Cardinal Morton 15
Sheep that devour men 19
Against hanging thieves 23
The hanger-on and the friar 28
Advice no king will take 32
Philosophy suited to public life 38
The case against private property 41

Book II 47

The cities, and Amaurot in particular 50
Magistrates 53
Occupations 55
How the citizens live together 60
Travel 66
Gold and silver held in contempt 68
Virtue and pleasure 74
Slaves 87
Sickness, death and marriage 88
Few laws and no lawyers 93
Why they make no treaties 95
Warfare 96
The religions of the Utopians 106
Freedom of religion 108
Priests and worship 113
Raphael's verdict 119
More's reply 123

INTRODUCTION

Thomas More was a London lawyer, an under-sheriff of the city and a friend of Erasmus when he wrote *Utopia* in 1515–16, partly while on a diplomatic mission to Flanders. He later became Lord Chancellor of England, refused to accept Henry VIII as head of the Church, and was beheaded in 1535. *Utopia* was published in Latin at Louvain in 1516, with Erasmus seeing it through the press.

The book is framed as a true report. In Antwerp, More's friend Peter Giles introduces him to Raphael Hythloday, a Portuguese traveller who has sailed with Amerigo Vespucci. In Book I they argue about whether a philosopher should serve a king, and Raphael attacks the England of the day: thieves hanged by the score while enclosures turn farmland into sheep pasture and drive the poor to steal. His remedy is to abolish private property. In Book II he describes the island where this has been done: Utopia, whose people share everything, work six hours a day, despise gold, choose their magistrates, and tolerate many religions.

The name is a Greek pun, "no-place" (and, the prefatory verses add, "good place"), and the book is full of such jokes: Hythloday means something like "peddler of nonsense." How far More endorsed what Raphael praises has been argued ever since. His word gave the language a name for every imagined perfect society. This edition includes More's prefatory letter to Peter Giles.

Letter to Peter Giles

Thomas Morus Petro Aegidio
More sends the book to his friend, apologizes for the delay,
and asks exactly where Utopia lies.

P.1 I am almost ashamed, my dear Peter Giles, to be sending you this little book about the Utopian commonwealth nearly a year late, when I have no doubt you expected it within six weeks. After all, you knew that I had been spared the labor of invention in this work, and had nothing to think about in the way of arrangement. I had only to repeat what you and I together heard Raphael tell. So there was no need to labor over the style either. His speech could not have been polished: first, it was impromptu and off the cuff, and second, it was the speech of a man who, as you know, is not as well versed in Latin as in Greek. And the closer my language came to his careless simplicity, the closer it would be to the truth, which is the one thing I ought to care about in this matter, and do.[1]

P.2 I confess, my dear Peter, that having all this ready to hand took so much of the labor off me that almost nothing was left. Otherwise, either devising or arranging such a subject could have demanded a good deal of time and study from a mind neither of the lowest sort nor wholly unlearned. And if it had been required that the matter be written eloquently as well as truthfully, that I could never have achieved, however much time or study I gave it.

P.3 As it was, with those concerns removed, which would have cost so much sweat, all that remained was simply to write down

what I had heard. That was no business at all. Yet to get even this no-business done, the rest of my business left me almost less than no time. I am constantly pleading some cases in court, hearing others, settling others as an arbitrator and deciding others as a judge. I call on one man out of duty and another on business. I give almost the whole day, away from home, to other people, and the rest to my own household. So I leave nothing for myself, that is, for my studies.

P.4 For when I come home, I have to talk with my wife, chat with my children and confer with my servants. All this I count as business, since it has to be done. And it has to be, unless you want to be a stranger in your own home. You must make every effort to be as agreeable as possible to those whom nature has provided, or chance has made, or you yourself have chosen as the companions of your life. Only take care not to spoil them by kindness, or by indulgence to turn your servants into your masters.

P.5 Amid all this, the day slips away, the month, the year. When, then, do I write? And I have said nothing yet about sleep, nor even about food, which for many people takes up no less time than sleep itself, and sleep takes up almost half of life. The only time I get for myself is what I steal from sleep and meals. Because it is little, I have been slow; because it is something, I have finished at last, and I have sent Utopia to you, my dear Peter, for you to read and to point out anything that has escaped me.

P.6 Not that I entirely distrust myself on this score. I only wish my wit and learning were worth as much as my memory, which does not altogether fail me. But I am not so confident as to believe that nothing could have slipped my mind. My boy John Clement has thrown me into great doubt. He was there with us, as you know, for I let him miss no conversation from which some profit may come, since I hope for an excellent crop one day from this young plant, which has begun to put out green

1 "Utopia" is More's coinage from Greek, meaning "no-place." Peter Giles (Pieter Gillis, c. 1486–1533) was town clerk of Antwerp and a humanist friend of Erasmus.

shoots in Latin and Greek studies. As far as I remember, Hythloday said that the bridge at Amaurot which spans the river Anyder is five hundred paces long. But my John says two hundred must be taken off, since the river is no more than three hundred paces wide at that point. Please call the matter back to mind.[2] If you agree with him, I will agree too and believe I was mistaken. But if you don't remember, I will write what I seem to remember myself, as I have done. For while I shall take the greatest care that there is nothing false in the book, if anything is doubtful I would rather say something untrue than tell a lie, because I would rather be honest than clever.[3]

P.7 It would, however, be easy to remedy this ailment if you asked Raphael himself, either in person or by letter. And you must do so in any case because of another difficulty that has come up, and I don't know whether it is more my fault, or yours, or Raphael's. It did not occur to us to ask, nor to him to say, in what part of that new world Utopia lies. I would certainly have paid a fair sum of my own money for that not to have been left out. For one thing, I am rather ashamed not to know in what sea the island lies about which I have so much to report. For another, there are one or two people here, and one in particular, a devout man and a theologian by profession, who burns with an extraordinary desire to go to Utopia. It is not from an idle and curious appetite for seeing new things, but to foster and increase our religion, which has made a happy beginning there.

P.8 To do this properly, he has decided first to arrange to be sent by the Pope, and indeed to be made bishop of the Utopians. He is not in the least held back by the scruple that he would have to solicit this office, for he regards ambition as holy when it springs not from thoughts of honor or gain but from regard for piety. So I beg you, my dear Peter, to press Hythloday, in person

2 John Clement (d. 1572) was More's young pupil and later a physician. The names are Greek jokes: Hythloday means roughly "peddler of nonsense," Amaurot "dim city," Anyder "waterless."

3 More plays on a classical distinction: to say something untrue by mistake (*mendacium dicere*) is not the same as to lie (*mentiri*), which means deliberately to deceive.

if you conveniently can, or by letter if you are away, and make sure that my work contains nothing false and lacks nothing true. And I rather think it would be best to show him the book itself. For no one else is so well qualified to correct any errors, and he himself can do so only by reading through what I have written. Besides, in this way you will find out whether he is glad or unwilling that I should write this work. For if he has decided to put his own adventures in writing, he may perhaps not want me to. And I certainly would not want, by publishing the Utopians' commonwealth, to rob his own story of the bloom and charm of novelty.

P.9 Though, to tell the truth, I have not yet quite made up my mind whether to publish at all. People's tastes are so varied, some minds so peevish, some dispositions so ungrateful, some judgments so absurd, that those who cheerfully and merrily indulge their own inclinations seem much better off than those who wear themselves out with cares to publish something that may be either useful or pleasant to others, who are either disdainful or ungrateful.

P.10 Most people know nothing of letters; many despise them. The uncultured reader rejects as difficult whatever is not thoroughly uncultured. The half-learned scorn as commonplace whatever does not bristle with obsolete words. Some like only what is old; most like only what is their own. This man is so grim that he allows no jokes; that one so witless that he cannot bear wit. Some are so flat-nosed that they dread every nose, every hint of mockery, as a man bitten by a mad dog dreads water. Others are so changeable that they approve one thing sitting and another standing. These people sit in taverns and, over their cups, pass judgment on the talents of writers. With great authority, and just as they please, they condemn each author by his writings, plucking at him as if by the hair, while they themselves stay safe, and, as the saying goes, ἔξω βέλους [out of range]. For they are so smooth and shaven all over that they have not even a hair of a decent man by which anyone could catch hold of them. Then there are some so ungrateful that,

although they take great delight in a work, they love the author none the more for it. They are not unlike rude guests who, after being lavishly entertained at a sumptuous dinner, finally go home well fed without a word of thanks to their host. Go on, then, and lay on a feast at your own expense for people with such delicate palates, such varied tastes, and such mindful and grateful hearts!

P.11 All the same, my dear Peter, do what I said with Hythloday. After that it will still be open to me to think the matter over again.

Though if it is done with his consent, since I have finished the labor of writing and am wise too late, then for what remains, the publishing, I will follow the advice of my friends, and yours first of all. Farewell, my dearest Peter Giles, and your excellent wife too; and love me as you always do, since I love you even more than I usually do.

Book I

Liber primus
More meets the traveller Raphael Hythloday, who refuses to serve kings and blames private property for England's thieves.

1.1 The most invincible King of England, Henry, the eighth of that name, richly endowed with all the accomplishments of an outstanding prince, had recently had a dispute on some matters of no small importance with the most serene Prince Charles of Castile. To discuss and settle them, he sent me as ambassador to Flanders, as companion and colleague of that incomparable man Cuthbert Tunstall, whom he recently appointed Master of the Rolls, to everyone's great delight. I will say nothing in his praise. This is not because I fear that friendship might be thought a less than honest witness. It is because his virtue and learning are too great for me to celebrate, and too well known and renowned everywhere to need it, unless I want to seem, as the saying goes, to show someone the sun with a lamp.[1]

1.2 At Bruges, as had been agreed, we were met by those whom the prince had put in charge of the business, all excellent men. Among them the governor of Bruges, a magnificent man, was the chief and head, but the mouth and heart was Georges de Themsecke, provost of Cassel. He was eloquent not only by training but by nature, deeply learned in the law, and a consummate master of negotiation, thanks both to his natural ability and to long experience. When we had met once or twice and

1 Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559), humanist, later bishop of London and of Durham, became Master of the Rolls in 1516. Prince Charles is the future Emperor Charles V; the embassy took place in 1515.

could not agree on certain points, they took leave of us for a few days and went off to Brussels to consult the prince's oracle.

Meanwhile, since the business allowed it, I went to Antwerp.[2]

1.4 While I was there, I had many visitors, but none more welcome than Peter Giles, a native of Antwerp. He is a man of great trustworthiness and of honorable standing among his people, worthy of the most honorable; indeed, a young man of whom I cannot say whether he is more learned or of better character. For he is excellent and highly lettered, open-hearted toward everyone, and toward his friends so warm, so sincere in love, loyalty and affection, that you would hardly find one or two anywhere to compare with him in every point of friendship.

1.5 He has a rare modesty; no one is further from pretense; no one has a wiser simplicity. And he is so charming in conversation and so harmlessly witty that his delightful company and sweetest talk largely relieved my longing for my country and my home, my wife and children. I was desperately anxious to see them again, for I had already been away from home for more than four months.

1.6 One day I had been at Mass in the church of St. Mary, which is very beautiful in its workmanship and much frequented by the people. When the service was over, I was about to return to my lodgings when I happened to see him talking with a stranger, a man getting on in years, with a sunburnt face and a long beard, and a cloak hanging carelessly from his shoulder. From his face and dress he seemed to me a ship's captain.

When Peter caught sight of me, he came up and greeted me. As I tried to reply, he drew me a little aside and said, "Do you see this man?" pointing as he spoke to the man I had seen him talking with. "I was just about to bring him straight to you."

1.8 "He would have been very welcome to me for your sake," I said.

"Rather for his own," he said, "if you knew the man.

2 Georges de Themsecke (d. 1536), provost of the church of Cassel in Flanders, was one of Prince Charles's councilors.

"For there is no one alive today who could tell you such a story of unknown peoples and lands, and I know how eager you are to hear about such things."

"Then I didn't guess too badly," I said.

"At first sight I could tell at once that the man was a ship's captain."

He answered: But you are very wide of the mark. He has sailed, it is true, but not like Palinurus. He has sailed like Ulysses, or rather like Plato.[3]

1.14 This Raphael (for that is his name, and Hythloday his family name) is not unlearned in Latin and deeply learned in Greek. He studied Greek more than Latin because he had devoted himself entirely to philosophy, and in that field he found nothing of any importance in Latin except some works of Seneca and Cicero. He left his brothers the property he had at home (he is Portuguese), and out of a desire to see the world he joined Amerigo Vespucci. He was his constant companion on the last three of those four voyages that people everywhere are now reading about, except that on the last one he did not come back with him.[4]

1.15 For he arranged, or rather wrested permission from Amerigo, to be one of the twenty-four men who were left in a fort at the farthest point of the last voyage.

So he was left behind, to humor his temperament, which cared more about traveling than about a grave. For these sayings are always on his lips: "The one who has no urn is covered by the sky," and "From everywhere the road to heaven is the same length."

This attitude would have cost him dear if God had not been gracious to him.[5]

1.18 After Vespucci left, he traveled through many regions with five companions from the fort, and at last, by an extraordinary

3 Palinurus, Aeneas' helmsman, sailed as a mere pilot; Ulysses saw the cities of many peoples, and Plato traveled to Egypt and Sicily in search of wisdom.

4 Vespucci's account of four voyages to the New World (1497–1504) was widely printed, notably in 1507.

stroke of fortune, he was carried to Taprobane. From there he reached Calicut, where he conveniently found some Portuguese ships and, beyond all hope, was finally brought back home.[6]

1.19 When Peter had told me this, I thanked him for his kindness in taking such trouble that I should enjoy the conversation of a man whose company he hoped I would welcome, and I turned to Raphael. When we had greeted each other and said the usual things people say when strangers first meet, we went off to my house. There, sitting in the garden on a bench covered with turf, we talked.

1.20 He told us, then, how after Vespucci had left, he and his companions who had stayed at the fort began, by meeting and courting them, gradually to win the favor of the peoples of that land. Soon they were living among them not only safely but on friendly terms, and they became dear to a certain ruler (both his country and his name have slipped my mind). By this ruler's generosity, he said, he and his five companions had been amply supplied with provisions and money for the road, together with a most trustworthy guide for their journey (which they made by raft over water and by wagon over land), who was to take them to other rulers to whom they carried warm recommendations.

1.21 After traveling for many days, he said, they found towns and cities, and commonwealths with large populations that were not at all badly governed.

Around the equator, he explained, and on either side of it for about as far as the sun's course extends, lie vast deserts scorched by perpetual heat.

Everywhere there is squalor; the face of things is grim; everything is rough and uncultivated, inhabited by wild beasts and snakes, or indeed by men no less savage than beasts, and no less dangerous.

1.24 But as you go further on, everything gradually grows gentler: the climate less harsh, the soil pleasantly green, the

5 The first saying is from Lucan, *Pharsalia* 7.819; the second, attributed to Anaxagoras, is quoted by Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.104.

animals less fierce. At last there appear peoples, cities and towns, and among them constant trade by land and sea, not only with one another and with their neighbors but also with nations far away.

This gave him the chance to visit many lands in every direction, since no ship was fitted out for any voyage on which he and his companions were not very gladly taken aboard.

1.26 The ships they saw in the first regions, he said, had flat bottoms, and their sails were made of papyrus or wicker sewn together, or elsewhere of leather. Later on they found ships with pointed keels and sails of hemp; in short, everything was like ours. The sailors were not unskilled in reading the sea and the sky.

But he said he had won extraordinary favor by teaching them the use of the magnet, of which they had been completely ignorant before. That was why they used to venture on the sea only timidly, and seldom except in summer.

Now, however, trusting in the lodestone, they think nothing of winter, more confident than safe, so that there is a danger that what was expected to be a great blessing to them may, through their own imprudence, become the cause of great evils.

1.29 What he told us he had seen in each place would take a long time to set out, and it is not the purpose of this work. Perhaps I shall tell it elsewhere, especially whatever is useful to know, above all the sound and wise arrangements he observed among peoples anywhere who live together in civil society.

For these were the things we questioned him about most eagerly, and he discoursed on them most willingly, leaving aside for the moment any inquiry about monsters, which are the least novel thing of all.

1.31 For Scyllas and greedy Celaenos and people-eating Laestrygonians and monstrous horrors of that kind can be found almost anywhere, but citizens governed soundly and wisely are not to be found just anywhere.

---

6 Taprobane is Sri Lanka; Calicut (Kozhikode), on the Malabar coast of India, was the chief port of the Portuguese spice trade.

Still, while he noted many ill-advised practices among those new peoples, he also described quite a few from which examples might be taken, fit for correcting the errors of our cities, nations, peoples and kingdoms. These, as I said, I shall record elsewhere.

For now I mean to relate only what he told us about the customs and institutions of the Utopians, first setting out the conversation that led us, as if along a thread, to mention that commonwealth.[7]

SHOULD RAPHAEL SERVE A KING?

Peter and More urge Raphael to become a royal counselor; he says courts have no use for honest advice.

1.34 Raphael had very wisely reviewed the mistakes made here and there (and there were certainly many on both sides), as well as the wiser provisions both among us and among them. He knew the customs and institutions of each people as if he had lived his whole life in every place he had stopped at. Peter, full of admiration for the man, said, "I really wonder, my dear Raphael, why you don't attach yourself to some king. I am sure there is not one to whom you would not be most welcome, since with this learning and this knowledge of places and people you are fit not only to entertain him but also to instruct him with examples and help him with advice. At the same time, in this way you would look after your own interests admirably and could be a great help to the advancement of all your family."

1.35 "As for my family," he said, "I am not much concerned, for I think I have done my duty by them reasonably well. The possessions which others give up only when they are old and sick (and even then give up reluctantly, when they can no longer keep them), I divided among my relatives and friends when I was not only healthy and vigorous but still young. I think they ought to be content with this generosity of mine, and not

7 Scylla is the sea monster of the *Odyssey*; Celaeno is the chief of the Harpies in the *Aeneid*; the Laestrygonians are the cannibal giants of *Odyssey* 10.

demand or expect as well that I should hand myself over into servitude to kings for their sake."

"Fair words!" said Peter. "What I meant was not that you should be in servitude to kings, but in their service."

1.37 "That," he said, "is only one syllable short of servitude."

"But my view is," said Peter, "that whatever name you give it, this is the very way by which you can not only benefit others, both privately and publicly, but also make your own condition happier."

"Make it happier," said Raphael, "by a way my mind shrinks from? As it is, I live as I please, which I suspect very few of those in purple can say.

"Besides, there are plenty of people who court the friendship of the powerful, so you need not think it a great loss if they have to do without me and one or two others like me."

1.41 Then I said: It is clear, my dear Raphael, that you desire neither wealth nor power; and I certainly revere and look up to a man of your mind no less than to any of those who hold the greatest power in the world.

1.42 But you will clearly be doing something worthy of yourself and of that generous and truly philosophical spirit of yours if you bring yourself to devote your talents and energy to public affairs, even at some cost to yourself. And you could never do that with so much benefit as by being counselor to some great prince and persuading him, as I am sure you would, to do what is right and honorable. For from the prince, as from a never-failing spring, flows a torrent of all things good and bad over the whole people.

1.43 Your learning is so complete that even without much experience of affairs, and your experience of affairs so great that even without any learning, you would make an excellent counselor for any king.

He replied: You are mistaken twice over, my dear More, first about me and then about the matter itself. I do not have the ability you credit me with; and even if I had it in full measure, I

would do nothing to advance the public good by giving up my leisure for business.

1.45 First of all, almost all princes themselves would rather occupy themselves with the pursuits of war (in which I have neither skill nor interest) than with the good arts of peace. They are much more eager to win new kingdoms for themselves by fair means or foul than to govern well the ones they have.

Besides, of those who sit on kings' councils, there is not one who is not either really so wise that he needs no advice, or thinks himself so wise that he will not approve anyone else's. The exception is that they agree with the most absurd sayings of those who stand highest in the prince's favor, and fawn on them, because they are eager to win these men over by flattery.

1.47 And certainly nature has so arranged it that everyone is pleased with his own inventions.

So the crow delights in its chick, and the ape loves its baby.

Now, in such a company of people who envy others' ideas or prefer their own, if someone brings forward something he has read of being done in other times or seen done in other places, the listeners behave as if their whole reputation for wisdom were at stake, and as if they would be thought complete fools from then on unless they could find something to criticize in other people's proposals.

1.50 If everything else fails, they fall back on this: "This is what our ancestors approved, and I wish we could equal their wisdom." And with that remark they sit down, as if they had wound up the case splendidly.

As though it were a great danger for anyone to be found wiser than his ancestors in anything! Yet whatever they provided for most wisely, we are content to let go without a qualm; but if in some matter a wiser course was possible, we eagerly seize on that handle and hold on to it with our teeth.

I have often come across these proud, absurd and peevish judgments elsewhere, and once in England too.

DINNER WITH CARDINAL MORTON

Raphael recalls a dinner in England where a lawyer praises hanging thieves and Raphael objects.

1.53 "Really?" I said. "You have been in our country?" He answered: I have, and I spent some months there, not long after the defeat in which the civil war of the western English against the king was crushed with a pitiful slaughter of the rebels.

During that time I was greatly indebted to the most reverend father John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal, and at that time also Lord Chancellor of England. He was a man, my dear Peter (for I shall be telling More what he already knows), venerable no less for his wisdom and virtue than for his authority.[8]

1.55 He was of medium height, and not bowed by age, though he was old. His face inspired respect, not fear. He was not difficult to approach, but serious and grave. He liked sometimes to test suitors by addressing them rather sharply, though without harming them, to see what wit and presence of mind each would show. He delighted in this, as a quality akin to his own, provided there was no impudence in it, and he welcomed it as fit for public affairs. His speech was polished and forceful, his knowledge of the law great, his intelligence incomparable, his memory excellent to the point of the prodigious.

These outstanding natural gifts he had developed by study and practice.

1.57 The king seemed to place the greatest trust in his advice, and the commonwealth to lean heavily on him, while I was there. For almost from his early youth he had been thrown straight from school into the court, and had spent his whole life in the greatest affairs. Constantly tossed on the shifting tides of fortune, he had learned, amid many great dangers, a practical

8 The Cornish rising of 1497 was crushed at Blackheath, near London. John Morton (c. 1420–1500) took the young More into his household as a page.

wisdom which, once acquired in that way, does not easily slip away.

1.58 It so happened one day, when I was at his table, that a layman learned in your laws was there. Seizing some occasion or other, he began to praise at length the rigorous justice then being dealt out to thieves there. They were being hanged everywhere, he said, sometimes twenty on a single gallows. And so, he said, he was all the more amazed that, although so few escaped punishment, some evil fate still caused so many to be out robbing everywhere.

Then, since I dared to speak freely before the Cardinal, I said: There is nothing to wonder at.

This way of punishing thieves goes beyond what is just, and it does not serve the public good.

1.61 It is too harsh a penalty for theft, and yet not enough to restrain it.

Simple theft is not so great a crime that it ought to be punished with death, and no punishment is so great that it will keep from robbery those who have no other way of making a living.

So in this matter not only you but a good part of the world seem to imitate bad schoolmasters, who would rather beat their pupils than teach them.

1.64 Heavy and horrible punishments are decreed for a thief, when it would be much better to provide some means of livelihood, so that no one is under such dire necessity, first of stealing, and then of dying for it.

"That has been provided for well enough," he said. "There are the trades, there is farming. They could make a living by these, if they did not choose to be wicked."

I said: You won't get off so easily.

1.67 First, let us leave aside those who often come home disabled from foreign or civil wars, as recently among you from the battle with the Cornish, and not long before from the war in France. These men have sacrificed their limbs for the commonwealth or for the king, and their disability does not allow them

to practice their old trades, nor their age to learn a new one. Let us leave them aside, I say, since wars come only at intervals.

Let us consider what happens every day.

There is, then, a great number of noblemen who not only live idle themselves, like drones, off the labors of others, such as the tenants of their estates, whom they shave to the quick to raise their rents.

1.70 That is the only thrift they know, men who are otherwise extravagant to the point of beggary. But they also carry about with them a huge crowd of idle retainers who have never learned any trade to earn a living.

As soon as their master dies, or they themselves fall ill, they are thrown out at once. For people would rather feed idle men than sick ones, and often the dying man's heir cannot immediately support his father's household. Meanwhile they go hungry with a will, unless they go robbing with a will.

1.72 What else can they do? Once they have worn out their clothes and their health a little by wandering, and are shabby with sickness and covered in rags, gentlemen will not deign to take them in, and farmers do not dare to. The farmers know that a man who has been softly brought up in idleness and pleasure, who is used to swaggering about with sword and buckler, looking down on the whole neighborhood with a scoundrel's face and despising everyone but himself, is hardly fit to serve a poor man faithfully with spade and hoe, for mean wages and scanty food.

To this he replied: But this is the very sort of men we ought to encourage above all.

1.74 For it is in them, since they are men of loftier and nobler spirit than craftsmen or farmers, that the strength and sinew of the army lies, if ever we have to fight a war.

I said: You might just as well say that thieves must be encouraged for the sake of war, and you will certainly never lack thieves as long as you have these men.

Robbers make quite vigorous soldiers, and soldiers are by no means the laziest of robbers: so well do these two trades go together.

But this vice, though common among you, is not peculiar to you. It is common to almost all nations.

1.78 For France is plagued by yet another pestilence, still more pestilent. The whole country is filled and besieged by mercenary soldiers, even in peacetime (if that is peace), brought in by the same conviction that led you to decide that idle servants must be kept here. These wise fools think that the public safety depends on always having a strong and reliable garrison ready, especially of veterans. For they put no trust in untrained men, so that they have to look for war, if only to avoid having inexperienced soldiers, and for men whose throats they can cut for nothing, so that, as Sallust wittily puts it, hand and spirit may not begin to grow dull through idleness.[9]

1.79 But how dangerous it is to keep beasts of this kind France has learned to her cost, and the examples of the Romans, the Carthaginians, the Syrians and many other nations make it plain. In all of them, their standing armies, on one occasion or another, overthrew not only their government but also their lands and even their cities.

And how little it is needed is clear from this too: even French soldiers, trained in arms from the cradle, cannot very often boast of having come off better against your conscripts. I will say no more, lest I seem to be flattering you to your faces.

1.81 Nor are your town craftsmen or your rough country farmers thought to be much afraid of the gentlemen's idle retainers, except for those whose bodies are not well suited to strength and daring, or whose courage is broken by poverty. So there is no danger at all that these men, whose strong and sturdy bodies (for the gentry deign to corrupt only picked men) are now growing feeble with idleness or softened by soft, sedentary tasks,

9 "Wise fools" renders *morosophi*, a Greek coinage borrowed from Lucian. The quotation is from Sallust, *The War with Catiline* 16.3.

would lose their manhood if they were trained in honest trades to earn a living and exercised in manly work.

SHEEP THAT DEVOUR MEN

Raphael blames enclosure for sheep pasture for driving English farmers off the land and into theft.

1.82 Certainly, however that may be, it does not seem to me at all in the public interest to keep, in case of a war (which you never have unless you want one), an endless crowd of the kind that troubles the peace, when peace ought to be given so much more consideration than war.

Yet this is not the only thing that drives men to steal.

There is another which, I believe, is more peculiar to you.

"What is that?" asked the Cardinal. I answered: Your sheep, which used to be so gentle and to need so little feeding, have now, so I hear, begun to be so greedy and wild that they devour men themselves, and lay waste and depopulate fields, houses and towns.

1.86 For in whatever parts of the kingdom the finer, and therefore more expensive, wool is produced, there the nobles and gentlemen, and even some abbots, holy men, are not content with the rents and annual profits that their predecessors used to get from their estates. It is not enough for them to live in idle luxury and do no good to the public; they must do it harm as well. They leave no land for the plow; they enclose everything for pasture; they tear down houses and destroy towns, leaving only the church, to stable the sheep in. And as if enough of your land were not already wasted on game parks and preserves, these good men turn all the dwellings and all the cultivated land into a wilderness.

1.87 So, in order that one insatiable glutton, a dire plague to his country, may join field to field and enclose several thousand acres within a single fence, the tenants are thrown out. Some are stripped even of their own property, either tricked by fraud or

overpowered by force, or they are so worn down by ill-treatment that they are driven to sell.

1.88 And so, one way or another, the poor wretches leave: men, women, husbands, wives, orphans, widows, parents with little children, and whole households more numerous than rich, since farming needs many hands. They leave, I say, their familiar and accustomed homes, and find nowhere to go. All their household goods, which would not fetch much even if they could wait for a buyer, they sell for next to nothing, since they are forced out. When they have soon spent that in their wanderings, what is left for them in the end but to steal, and then be hanged (justly, no doubt), or to wander and beg? And even then they are thrown into prison as vagrants for going about idle, when no one will hire their labor, though they offer it most eagerly.

1.89 For there is nothing to be done in the farm work they are used to, where nothing is sown.

One shepherd or herdsman is enough to graze with livestock the land which, when it was cultivated, needed many hands to sow it.

And this is how in many places the price of grain has risen steeply.

Indeed, the price of wool too has gone up so much that the poorer people among you who used to make cloth from it cannot afford it at all, and so more of them are driven from work into idleness.

1.93 For after the pastures were enlarged, a murrain carried off a vast number of sheep, as though God were punishing their greed by sending on the sheep a plague that would more justly have been hurled at the owners' own heads.

But even if the number of sheep increases greatly, the price does not fall at all. For if this cannot be called a monopoly, since there is more than one seller, it is certainly an oligopoly. The sheep have fallen into the hands of a few men, and rich ones,

whom no need compels to sell before they choose, and they do not choose until they can get the price they choose.[10]

1.95 The same cause makes other kinds of livestock just as dear, and all the more because, with the farmhouses pulled down and husbandry cut back, there is no one to see to the breeding.

For those rich men do not rear calves as they do lambs. They buy lean animals cheap elsewhere, fatten them on their own pastures, and sell them again at a high price.

And so, I think, the full harm of this is not yet felt.

1.98 For so far they make prices high only in the places where they sell. But when for some time they have been taking animals away from the places where they buy them faster than they can be bred, then at last the supply there too will gradually dwindle, and there must be a severe shortage here.

So the very thing that seemed to make this island of yours especially fortunate is now being turned to its ruin by the shameless greed of a few.

For this high cost of food is the reason why everyone dismisses as many people from his household as he can. And to do what, I ask, but beg, or (as you could more easily persuade gentlemanly spirits to do) rob? Add to this wretched poverty and want a luxury that is utterly out of place.

1.101 For the servants of noblemen, the craftsmen, even the farmers themselves, and in short all ranks of society, show a great deal of outlandish display in dress and far too much luxury in food.

Then there are cookshops, dives, brothels, and those other brothels, the taverns, wine shops and alehouses; and finally so many wicked games, dice, cards, backgammon, tennis, bowls, quoits. Do these not quickly drain their devotees of money and send them straight off somewhere to rob? Throw out these deadly plagues. Decree that those who have destroyed farmsteads and country towns must rebuild them, or hand them over to people who will restore them and are willing to build.

---

10 *Oligopolium* ("sale by a few") seems to be More's own coinage, on the model of "monopoly."

Restrain this buying-up by the rich, and their license to practice what amounts to monopoly.

1.104 Let fewer people be kept in idleness; let farming be restored and wool-working revived, so that there may be honest work to occupy usefully that idle crowd: both those whom poverty has so far made thieves, and those who are now vagrants or idle servants, all of whom will surely become thieves.

Certainly, unless you remedy these evils, it is useless to boast of the justice you exercise in punishing theft, a justice more showy than either just or useful.

1.106 For when you allow people to be brought up very badly and their characters to be gradually corrupted from their tender years, and then, of course, punish them when as grown men they commit the crimes which they had shown every promise of committing since childhood, what else, I ask, are you doing but first making thieves and then punishing them? While I was saying this, the lawyer had been getting ready to speak, and had made up his mind to use the solemn method of debaters, who repeat more carefully than they answer, so much of their credit do they place in memory.

1.107 "Well spoken, to be sure," he said, "considering that you are a foreigner, who could hear something about these matters rather than know anything about them exactly, as I shall make clear in a few words.

"First I shall review in order what you have said; then I shall show in what respects ignorance of our affairs has misled you; finally I shall demolish and refute all your arguments.

"So, to begin with the first point I promised, you seemed to me to say four things —" The Cardinal broke in: Be quiet, for you hardly seem likely to answer in a few words if you begin like that.

1.110 So we shall relieve you of the trouble of answering for now, but keep that task intact for you for your next meeting, which I should like to be tomorrow, unless something prevents you or Raphael here.

But meanwhile, my dear Raphael, I would very much like to hear from you why you think theft should not be punished with death, and what other punishment you would set that would do more good to the public.

For even you do not think it should be tolerated.

AGAINST HANGING THIEVES

Raphael argues that death for theft is unjust and describes the milder penal labor of the Polylerites.

1.113 But if people rush into theft now, even with death before them, what force, what fear could deter criminals once their lives were guaranteed? They would read the lighter penalty as a kind of reward inviting them to crime. I said: Most kind father, it seems to me altogether unjust to take away a man's life for taking away money.

For I think that not all the possessions fortune can give could be set equal to a human life.

1.115 If they say that this penalty pays not for the money but for justice violated and the laws broken, why should this supreme justice not rightly be called supreme injustice? For we should not approve such Manlian commands of the law that the sword is drawn at once for the slightest disobedience, nor such Stoic doctrines as hold all sins so equal that there is no difference between killing a man and stealing a coin from him. If equity counts for anything, there is no likeness or kinship between the two at all.[11]

1.116 God has forbidden us to kill anyone, and do we kill so readily for the sake of a little money taken? And if anyone interprets God's command as forbidding the power to kill only where human law does not declare that someone should be killed, what prevents men from deciding among themselves in the same way how far fornication, adultery and perjury should be

11 Manlius Torquatus had his own son executed for fighting against orders; the Stoics taught that all sins are equal (Cicero, *Stoic Paradoxes* 3). "Supreme justice is supreme injustice" is a proverb quoted by Cicero, *On Duties* 1.33.

allowed? God has taken away from each of us the right to take not only another's life but even our own. If men's mutual agreement to kill one another under fixed rules is to have such force that it frees from the bonds of that commandment those agents of theirs who, without any warrant from God, put to death those whom human law has ordered to be killed, will not God's commandment in this way have only as much force as human laws allow? And it will surely follow that men will decide in the same way, in every matter, how far it suits them to observe God's commands.

1.117 Finally, the law of Moses, though harsh and severe, being made for slaves, and stubborn ones at that, still punished theft with a fine, not with death.

Let us not suppose that in the new law of mercy, in which a father commands his children, God has allowed us greater license to be cruel to one another.

These are my reasons for thinking it is not permissible.

And how absurd, and even harmful to the commonwealth, it is to punish a thief and a murderer alike, there is no one, I think, who does not know.[12]

1.121 For when a robber sees that a man convicted only of theft is in no less danger than one also convicted of murder, this one thought drives him to kill the man he would otherwise only have robbed. Besides the fact that if he is caught he runs no greater risk, murder also gives him more safety and more hope of concealment, since it removes the witness to the crime.

So while we try to terrify thieves with excessive cruelty, we urge them on to destroy good people.

As for the usual question of what punishment could be more suitable, in my judgment it is far easier to find one than to find one that could be worse.

1.124 Why should we doubt that a method is useful for punishing crimes when we know that it long found favor with the Romans, the most skilled of all people in governing a commonwealth? They condemned those convicted of great crimes to the

12 The law of Moses (Exodus 22:1–4) prescribes restitution, not death, for theft.

stone quarries and to digging in the mines, to be kept in chains for life.

Though as far as this goes, I approve no nation's arrangement more than one I noticed during my travels in Persia, among the people commonly called the Polylerites. They are a nation neither small nor unwisely governed, and free and living under their own laws, except that they pay an annual tribute to the king of Persia.[13]

1.126 Since they live far from the sea, almost surrounded by mountains, and are content with the produce of their land, which is in no way meager, they seldom visit others and are seldom visited. By the ancient custom of their nation they do not try to extend their borders, and those they have are easily protected from all harm by their mountains and by the tribute they pay to their overlord. Entirely free from military service, they live in comfort rather than splendor, and happily rather than with nobility or fame. Indeed, I think they are hardly known even by name, except to their nearest neighbors.

1.127 Among them, then, those convicted of theft return what they took to its owner, not, as usually happens elsewhere, to the prince, since they think he has as little right to stolen goods as the thief himself. If the thing has been lost, its value is made up out of the thieves' property and paid, and the rest is left intact to their wives and children; the thieves themselves are sentenced to labor. Unless the theft was an atrocious one, they are neither locked in prison nor made to wear fetters, but are employed on public works, free and unchained. Those who refuse to work or work too sluggishly are not so much chained as spurred on with the whip; those who work hard are spared all insults. Only at night, after a roll call by name, are they locked in their sleeping quarters. Apart from constant work, there is nothing hard about their life.

1.128 For those who serve the public are fed, and not harshly, at public expense, though this is done differently in different places.

---

13 Polylerites: from Greek, roughly "people of much nonsense."

In some places what is spent on them is collected as alms, and though this is an uncertain means, that people is so compassionate that none proves more plentiful. Elsewhere certain public revenues are set aside for it.

In other places everyone pays a fixed tax for this purpose.

1.131 In some places, indeed, they do no public work at all, but when a private person needs hired workers, he hires one of them for the day in the marketplace at a fixed wage, a little less than he would have paid a free man; and he is allowed to punish a slave's laziness with the whip.

So it comes about that they are never out of work, and besides earning their keep, each of them brings in something every day for the public treasury.

They are all dressed in clothes of one particular color, and they alone wear it. Their hair is not shaved but clipped a little above the ears, and the tip of one ear is cut off.

1.134 Their friends are allowed to give them food and drink and clothing of their own color; but to give them money is a capital offense for giver and receiver alike. It is no less dangerous for a free man to take a coin from a convict for any reason, and likewise for the slaves (for that is what they call the convicts) to touch weapons.

Each district marks its own slaves with a distinctive badge. It is a capital offense to throw it away, to be seen outside one's own district, or to talk with a slave from another district.

Nor is planning to escape any safer than escape itself.

Indeed, for a slave, being party to such a plan means death; for a free man, slavery.

1.138 Informers, on the other hand, are granted rewards: money if they are free, freedom if they are slaves. Both are also given pardon and immunity for having known of the plot, so that it may never be safer to carry a wicked plan through than to repent of it.

1.139 That is the law and the procedure in this matter, as I have described it. How humane and how advantageous it is, is plain to see. Its anger is aimed at destroying vices while saving the

people, who are treated so that they cannot help being good, and who spend the rest of their lives making up for all the damage they did before. There is so little fear of their slipping back into their old ways that travelers setting out on a journey think no guides safer than these slaves, who are changed at each district along the way.

1.140 For committing robbery, everything anywhere is against them. Their hands are unarmed; money would only betray the crime; punishment is ready for anyone caught; and there is no hope at all of escaping anywhere.

How could a man disguise and hide his flight when no part of his clothing resembles anyone else's, unless he went off naked? And even then his ear would give him away as he fled.

1.142 But the real danger, of course, is that they might at least lay plans and conspire against the commonwealth. As if any one district could conceive such hopes without first sounding out and stirring up the slaves of many districts! Yet they are so far from being able to conspire that they may not even meet, talk, or greet one another. Are we to believe that they would fearlessly confide such a plan to their fellows, when they know that keeping quiet about it is dangerous and betraying it brings the greatest reward?

1.143 On the other hand, no one is entirely without hope that by obeying and enduring, and by giving good hope of a better life in future, he may in this way one day recover his freedom. Indeed, not a year goes by without some being set free on the strength of their patient conduct.

1.144 When I had said this, I added that I saw no reason why this method could not be adopted even in England, with far more benefit than the kind of justice the legal expert had praised so highly. At this he, the lawyer, replied: "That could never be established in England without bringing the commonwealth into the gravest danger." As he said this he shook his head, twisted his lip, and fell silent.

And everyone present came over to his view.

Then the Cardinal said: It is not easy to guess whether the thing would turn out well or otherwise without making any trial at all.

1.147 But suppose that, after sentence of death had been pronounced, the king ordered the execution postponed and tried out this practice, with the privileges of sanctuary curtailed.

Then, if the outcome proved it useful, it would be right to make it law. If not, putting to death those already condemned would be no less in the public interest, and no more unjust, than if it were done now; and meanwhile no danger can arise from the experiment.

In fact it certainly seems to me that vagrants too could be dealt with not at all badly in the same way. We have passed so many laws against them and still made no progress whatever.

THE HANGER-ON AND THE FRIAR

A jester's jokes about beggars and friars provoke an angry friar until the Cardinal ends the dinner.

1.150 When the Cardinal had said this, the very proposals they had all scorned when I made them, everyone now vied in praising, above all the point about vagrants, since he had added that himself.

I don't know whether it would be better to pass over what followed in silence, for it was ridiculous. But I will tell it all the same, for it was not bad and had some bearing on this subject.

There happened to be standing by a certain hanger-on who wanted to be thought to be playing the fool. He played it so well that he came nearer the real thing, fishing for laughs with such feeble jokes that he himself was laughed at more often than his jokes were.

1.153 Now and then, though, the fellow let slip remarks so far from absurd that they proved the proverb: throw the dice often enough and sooner or later you will throw a Venus. One of the guests said that my speech had made good provision for thieves and the Cardinal had seen to the vagrants as well. It now

remained, he said, for public provision to be made for those whom sickness or old age had driven into poverty and left unable to do any work to live by.

The hanger-on said: Leave that to me, for I will see to it that this is done properly too.[14]

1.155 I am dying to get this sort of person out of my sight somehow. They have so often pestered me terribly, demanding money with their whining laments, though they could never chant them tunefully enough to squeeze a penny out of me.

For one of two things always happens: either I don't feel like giving, or else I cannot, since I have nothing to give.

So now they have begun to learn sense. Not to waste their effort, when they see me going by they let me pass in silence. They expect no more from me, heaven knows, than if I were a priest.

1.158 But I shall pass a law and have all those beggars distributed and parceled out among the Benedictine monasteries and made lay brothers, as they call them. The women I order to become nuns.

The Cardinal smiled and approved it as a joke; the rest approved it in earnest.

But a certain theologian, a friar, was so delighted by this jibe at priests and monks that he too began to make jokes, though otherwise he was a man of gravity bordering on grimness.

"Even so," he said, "you won't get rid of the beggars unless you make provision for us friars as well."

The hanger-on replied: But that has already been taken care of.

1.163 The Cardinal made excellent provision for you when he decided that vagrants should be restrained and put to work, for you are the greatest vagrants of all.

They glanced at the Cardinal, and when they saw that he did not disapprove of this joke either, they all began to seize on it with some relish, all except the friar.

Doused with such vinegar, he (and I am not surprised) was so indignant and grew so heated that he could not even keep from abuse. He called the man a good-for-nothing, a slanderer, a backbiter and a son of perdition, quoting terrible threats from holy Scripture all the while.

Now the buffoon began to play the buffoon in earnest, and he was plainly on his own ground.

1.167 "Don't be angry, good brother," he said. "It is written: 'In your patience you will possess your souls.'"

The friar answered back (I will give you his very words): "I am not angry, you scoundrel, or at least I do not sin.

"For the Psalmist says, 'Be angry, and do not sin.'"

Then the Cardinal gently advised the friar to control his feelings. He replied: No, my lord, I speak only out of good zeal, as I ought. For holy men have had good zeal, which is why it is said, "Zeal for your house has consumed me." And they sing in church: "The mockers of Elisha, as he went up to the house of God, felt the zeal of the bald man." So perhaps this mocker, this buffoon, this ribald rogue will feel it too.[15]

1.171 "You may be acting from good feeling," said the Cardinal, "but it seems to me you would act, I don't know about more piously, but certainly more wisely, if you made up your mind not to get into a ridiculous contest with a foolish and ridiculous man." He replied: No, my lord, I would not act more wisely.

For Solomon himself, the wisest of men, says, "Answer a fool according to his folly," as I am doing now. And I am showing him the pit into which he will fall unless he takes good care.

1.173 For if the many mockers of Elisha, who was only one bald man, felt the zeal of the bald man, how much more will one mocker of many friars feel it, since there are many bald men among them! And we also have a papal bull by which all who mock us are excommunicated.

---

14 The "Venus" was the best throw in the Roman game of knucklebones.

15 Boys who jeered at the bald prophet Elisha were mauled by bears (2 Kings 2:23–24); the line comes from a medieval hymn. The friar's Latin is ungrammatical throughout, which More's readers would have relished.

When the Cardinal saw that there would be no end to it, he sent the hanger-on away with a nod and tactfully turned the conversation to another subject. A little later he rose from the table, gave his attention to hearing his clients' business, and dismissed us.

1.175 There, my dear More, what a long story I have burdened you with! I would have been thoroughly ashamed to go on so long if you had not asked for it eagerly and seemed to listen as if you did not want any part of that conversation left out. I have told it rather summarily, but I had to tell it all the same because of how those men judged. Having scorned what I said, they immediately approved the very same ideas themselves once the Cardinal did not disapprove of them. They flattered him so far that they even fawned on the inventions of his hanger-on, which their master did not reject as a joke, and all but accepted them in earnest.

From this you can judge how much the courtiers would value me and my advice.

1.177 Then I said: Truly, my dear Raphael, you have given me great pleasure, for everything you said was both wise and witty. Besides, all the while I felt not only that I was back in my own country but even, in a way, that I was becoming a boy again, through the pleasant memory of that Cardinal in whose household I was brought up as a boy. And because you cherish that man's memory so warmly, you would not believe, my dear Raphael, how much dearer you have become to me on that account, though you were very dear already.

1.178 But I still cannot by any means change my opinion. I am quite sure that if you could bring yourself not to shun the courts of princes, you could do a great deal of public good by your advice. That is why no duty is more binding on you, that is, on a good man.

1.179 For since your Plato holds that commonwealths will be happy only if either philosophers are kings or kings are philosophers, how far away happiness will be if philosophers do not even deign to share their advice with kings! He replied: They are

not so ungrateful that they would not gladly do it. Indeed many have already done so by publishing books, if only those in power were ready to follow good advice.[16]

ADVICE NO KING WILL TAKE

Raphael imagines urging royal councils to give up conquest and stop fleecing their own people.

1.180 But Plato no doubt foresaw rightly that unless kings themselves took up philosophy, they would never approve the advice of philosophers, since they have been steeped from boyhood in wrong opinions and are thoroughly infected by them. He found this out himself at the court of Dionysius. Don't you think that if I proposed sound decrees to some king and tried to root the deadly seeds of evil out of him, I would at once be thrown out or made a laughingstock? Come, imagine me at the court of the king of France, sitting in his council. In a most secret session, with the king himself presiding, a circle of the wisest men is earnestly discussing by what arts and schemes he can keep hold of Milan and bring that runaway Naples back to him. Then they consider how he can overthrow the Venetians and subject the whole of Italy to himself, and next bring Flanders, Brabant, and finally all of Burgundy under his rule —[17]

1.181 and other nations besides, whose kingdoms he invaded in his mind long ago.

Here one man advises making a treaty with the Venetians, to last just as long as it suits the king. He should share his plans with them and even leave part of the spoils with them, to be reclaimed when things have gone as planned. Meanwhile another recommends hiring German mercenaries. Another advises that the Swiss be soothed with money, and another that the divine majesty of the emperor be propitiated with gold, as with a votive offering.

16 Plato, *Republic* 5.473c–d.

17 Dionysius II, tyrant of Syracuse, whom Plato tried and failed to turn into a philosopher-king in the 360s BC.

1.183 Another thinks the king should settle matters with the king of Aragon and, as a pledge of peace, cede to him the kingdom of Navarre, which belongs to someone else. Another proposes that the prince of Castile be ensnared with some hope of a marriage alliance, and that certain nobles of his court be drawn over to the king's side with regular pensions.

Then the hardest knot of all comes up: what is to be done about England in the meantime?

Still, peace must be negotiated, and an alliance that is always weak must be bound with the strongest bonds; let the English be called friends but be suspected as enemies.

The Scots, therefore, must be kept ready, as if posted on guard, alert for every opportunity, to be let loose at once if the English make any move.

1.187 Besides this, some exiled nobleman who claims the throne of England as his by right must be secretly supported, since treaties forbid doing it openly, so that the king may use him as a handle for keeping in check a prince he distrusts.

Here, I say, amid such mighty undertakings, with so many distinguished men vying to contribute their advice for war, suppose that I, a little nobody, were to stand up and call for the sails to be turned about. Suppose I advised leaving Italy alone and said that the king should stay at home. I would say that the kingdom of France by itself is almost too large to be governed well by one man, so the king should not think of adding others to it.[18]

1.189 Suppose I then set before them the decrees of the Achorians, a people who live opposite the island of Utopia to the south-southeast. They once went to war to win another kingdom for their king, who claimed it was his by inheritance through an old marriage alliance. When at last they had won it, they saw that keeping it was no less trouble than getting it had been. The seeds of rebellion within or invasion from without were always sprouting among the conquered people, so they constantly had to fight either for them or against them. There was never a

18 Probably Richard de la Pole, the Yorkist claimant to the English throne, who lived in exile under French protection.

chance to disband the army. Meanwhile they were being fleeced, their money was carried abroad, and their blood was spent for someone else's petty glory. Peace was no safer. At home, morals were corrupted by war, a lust for plunder had been drunk in, and recklessness had been hardened by slaughter. And the laws were held in contempt, because the king, distracted by the care of two kingdoms, could give less attention to either.[19]

1.190 Since they saw that otherwise there would be no end to such evils, they finally took counsel together and very courteously gave their king the choice of keeping whichever of the two kingdoms he wished. He could not have both, they said. They were too many to be ruled by half a king, since nobody would willingly share even a muleteer with someone else.

So that good prince was forced to be content with his old kingdom, leaving the new one to one of his friends (who was driven out soon afterward).

1.192 Suppose, too, that I showed him that all these warlike efforts, which would throw so many nations into turmoil on his account, would exhaust his treasury and destroy his people and then come to nothing after all, through some turn of fortune. So he should look after the kingdom of his forefathers, improve it as much as he could, and make it as flourishing as possible.

Let him love his people and be loved by them, live among them, rule them gently, and leave other kingdoms alone, since what had already fallen to him was ample and more than enough. How do you think this speech would be received, my dear More? "Not very favorably, I am sure," I said.

1.194 Then he said: Let us go on. Suppose the king's councilors are discussing with him and devising tricks by which they can pile up treasure for him. One advises raising the value of the coinage when he has money to pay out, and lowering it below its true value when he has money to collect, so that he may pay off a large debt with little and receive a great deal for little. Another suggests that he pretend to make war and, once he has raised money on that pretext, make peace when it suits him, with sol-

19 Achorians: from Greek, "people without a place" or "without a country."

emn ceremonies to throw dust in the eyes of the common people. He will be the pious prince, of course, taking pity on human bloodshed. Another puts him in mind of certain old, moth-eaten laws, long obsolete through disuse, which everyone has broken because no one remembered they had been passed. Let him order the fines for these to be collected, for there is no richer source of revenue and none more honorable, since it wears the mask of justice. Another advises him to forbid many things under heavy fines, especially things it is in the people's interest to prohibit, and afterward to grant dispensations for money to those whose interests the ban obstructs. In this way, he says, the king both wins the people's favor and makes a double profit. He profits once when those whom greed for gain has lured into the net are fined, and again when he sells privileges to others. The better the prince, of course, the higher the price, since he is reluctant to grant any private person anything against the people's interest, and so does it only at a high price.

1.195 Another persuades him that he must bind the judges to himself, so that they will argue for the king's right in every case. They should also be summoned to the palace and invited to debate his affairs in his presence. Then no case of his will be so plainly unjust that one of them will not find some crack in it through which a false claim can be pressed, whether from love of contradiction, or shame at saying the same as the others, or to win favor with him.

1.196 So while the judges disagree, a thing perfectly clear in itself is argued over and the truth is called into question, and the king is handed a convenient handle for interpreting the law to his own advantage. The rest will fall into line from shame or fear, and afterward the verdict is boldly delivered from the bench.

For anyone who gives judgment for the prince can never lack a pretext.

It is enough for him that equity is on the king's side, or the letter of the law, or a twisted reading of the text. Failing those,

there is what outweighs all laws with conscientious judges: the indisputable prerogative of the prince.

1.199 Meanwhile all agree and conspire in that maxim of Crassus: no amount of gold is enough for a prince who has to maintain an army. Moreover, a king can do nothing unjust, however much he may wish to.[20]

1.200 For everything belongs to him, everyone's property and the people themselves too, and each person owns only as much as the king's generosity has not taken from him. It is very much in the prince's interest that this should be as little as possible. His security depends on the people not growing unruly with wealth and freedom, for these make them less patient under harsh and unjust rule. Want and poverty, on the other hand, blunt their spirits, make them submissive, and crush in the oppressed the noble spirit of rebellion.

Suppose I were to rise again at this point and argue that all these counsels are both dishonorable and ruinous for the king.

1.202 His honor, and his safety too, rest on his people's wealth rather than his own. Suppose I showed that they choose a king for their own sake, not for his, so that through his work and care they may live comfortably and safe from injury. It is therefore the prince's business to see that his people fare well rather than himself, just as it is a shepherd's duty, insofar as he is a shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself.

As for their view that the people's poverty is the safeguard of peace, experience itself shows how very wrong they are.

1.204 Where will you find more quarrels than among beggars? Who is keener for revolution than the man least satisfied with his present condition? Or who, finally, rushes more recklessly to throw everything into confusion, in the hope of gaining something somewhere, than the man who has nothing left to lose? Suppose a king were so despised or hated by his subjects that he could keep them in line only by abuse, plunder and confisca-

20 Marcus Licinius Crassus (died 53 BC), the richest man in Rome, reportedly said no one was rich who could not support an army from his income (Cicero, *On Duties* 1.25).

tion, reducing them to beggary. He would certainly do better to abdicate than to keep his throne by such methods, for though he keeps the name of ruler, he surely loses its majesty.

1.205 It is not in keeping with a king's dignity to rule over beggars, but rather over the rich and prosperous.

That is exactly what Fabricius, a man of upright and lofty spirit, meant when he replied that he would rather rule the rich than be rich himself.

And indeed, for one man to wallow in pleasures and luxuries while everyone around him groans and laments is to be the keeper not of a kingdom but of a prison.[21]

1.208 Finally, the most incompetent doctor is the one who can cure a disease only by causing another. In the same way, the man who knows no other way to reform the lives of his citizens than by taking away the good things of life should confess that he does not know how to rule free men. Let him rather change his own idleness or his pride, for these are the vices that usually make a people despise or hate their ruler. Let him live harmlessly on his own income, fit his expenses to his revenues, and curb crime. By training his people rightly he should prevent offenses rather than letting them grow and then punishing them. Let him not rashly revive laws that custom has repealed, especially those long abandoned and never missed. And let him never take anything as a forfeit that a judge would not allow a private person to take, as unfair and crafty.

1.209 What if I then put before them the law of the Macarians, who also live not very far from Utopia? On the day their king first takes office, he is bound by an oath, with solemn sacrifices, never to have in his treasury at any one time more than a thousand pounds of gold, or silver to the value of that gold.

This law, they say, was laid down by an excellent king who cared more for his country's good than for his own wealth. He

21 Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, Roman general of the 3rd century BC famed for incorruptible frugality; ancient sources usually give this saying to his contemporary Manius Curius.

meant it as a barrier against heaping up so much money as to make the people poor.

He saw that this treasure would be enough whether the king had to fight rebels or the kingdom had to meet enemy invasions.[22]

1.212 Yet it was too small to embolden him to invade other people's lands, and this was the chief reason for making the law.

The next was that he thought it would ensure there was no shortage of money for the citizens' daily dealings. Also, since the king is obliged to pay out whatever has accumulated in the treasury beyond the legal limit, he reckoned the king would not look for opportunities to do wrong.

Such a king will be feared by the wicked and loved by the good.

PHILOSOPHY SUITED TO PUBLIC LIFE

More urges an indirect approach at court; Raphael replies that it would only make him complicit.

1.215 Suppose, then, I were to press these and similar ideas on men strongly inclined the other way. What deaf ears I would be telling my tale to! I said: The deafest in the world, no doubt about it. And, heaven knows, I am not surprised. Nor, to tell the truth, do I think such talk should be pressed on people, or such advice given, when you are sure it will never be accepted.

What good could it do? How could such unfamiliar talk sink into the minds of men already occupied and thoroughly possessed by the opposite conviction? Among close friends, in familiar conversation, this scholastic philosophy is not unpleasant.

1.217 But in the councils of princes, where great matters are handled with great authority, there is no room for these things.

"That is just what I meant," he said, "when I said there is no place for philosophy among princes."

I said: Yes, there is, but not for this scholastic philosophy, which thinks anything suits any place. There is another philosophy, better suited to public life, which knows its stage and adapts itself to it. In whatever play is in hand, it performs its part neatly and with decorum.

This is the one you should use.

1.221 Otherwise, suppose a comedy of Plautus is being performed and the household slaves are fooling around together. You come onstage dressed as a philosopher and recite the passage from the *Octavia* where Seneca argues with Nero. Wouldn't it have been better to play a silent part than to turn the play into a tragicomedy by reciting something out of place? You would spoil and ruin the play at hand by mixing in something different, even if what you brought was better.

Whatever play is being performed, act it as well as you can, and don't throw the whole thing into confusion just because another one that is wittier comes to mind.

So it is in the commonwealth, so in the councils of princes.[23]

1.224 You may not be able to pull wrong opinions up by the roots, or cure long-established vices as you would wish. But that is no reason to abandon the commonwealth. You must not desert the ship in a storm because you cannot hold back the winds. Nor should you force on people unfamiliar and strange talk that you know will carry no weight with those of opposite convictions. Instead you must try an indirect approach and strive, as far as you can, to handle everything tactfully. And what you cannot turn to good, you must at least make as little bad as possible.

1.225 For it is impossible for all things to be good unless all men are good, and that I do not expect for quite a few years yet.

He replied: The only result of this method would be that while I tried to cure other people's madness, I would go mad along with them.

22 Macarians: from Greek *makares*, "the blessed" or "the fortunate."
23 *Octavia*: a Roman tragedy once ascribed to Seneca, in which Seneca himself appears and remonstrates with the emperor Nero.

For if I want to speak the truth, I must say such things.

Whether it is a philosopher's business to tell lies I don't know; it is certainly not mine.

And though that speech of mine may have been unwelcome and irksome to them, I do not see why it should seem so strange as to be absurd.

1.230 Suppose I were to say the things Plato imagines in his *Republic*, or the things the Utopians actually do in theirs. These things are better, as they certainly are, but they might still seem out of place, because here individuals own private property, while there everything is in common.

1.231 But what did my speech contain that would not be fitting, or even necessary, to say anywhere? The only exception is that it cannot be welcome to those who have made up their minds to rush headlong down the opposite road, since it calls them back and points out the dangers. Indeed, if we are to leave out as strange and absurd everything that men's perverse habits have made seem out of place, then among Christians we must hush up almost everything Christ taught. Yet he forbade it to be hushed up, so strongly that he commanded even what he had whispered in his followers' ears to be preached openly from the housetops.

1.232 Most of it is far more out of keeping with our present ways than my speech was.

Except that preachers, crafty men, following that advice of yours, I suppose, found that people were unwilling to have their morals fitted to Christ's standard. So they bent his teaching to fit people's morals, like a ruler made of lead, so that at least the two might somehow be brought into line. I cannot see what they have achieved by this, except that people can be wicked with an easier mind. That is certainly all I would achieve in the councils of princes.

Either I would hold a different opinion, which would amount to holding none at all, or I would agree with them and so be, as Mitio says in Terence, an accomplice to their madness.[24]

1.235 I do not see what you mean by that indirect approach of yours. You think one should strive, if everything cannot be made good, at least to handle it tactfully and make it as little bad as possible.

But there is no room there for pretending, and you cannot shut your eyes. You have to approve the worst counsels openly and put your name to the most pernicious decrees.

Even someone who praised wicked counsels half-heartedly would be counted a spy and almost a traitor.

1.238 Moreover, you would find no chance to do any good once you were brought among such colleagues, who would more easily corrupt the best of men than be reformed themselves. Their perverse company will either corrupt you, or, if you stay upright and innocent yourself, you will be used as a cover for other men's wickedness and folly. That indirect approach is so far from being able to turn anything for the better.

1.239 That is why Plato, in a very fine simile, shows why wise men are right to keep out of public affairs. They see the people pouring into the streets and getting drenched by constant showers, and they cannot persuade them to get out of the rain and go indoors. They know that if they went out, they would do no good except to get soaked along with them. So they stay indoors, content, since they cannot cure other people's folly, to be safe themselves at least.[25]

THE CASE AGAINST PRIVATE PROPERTY

Raphael argues that justice and prosperity are impossible while property is private, and praises Utopia.

1.240 And yet, my dear More, to tell you frankly what I really think, it seems to me that wherever there is private property,

24 A lead ruler bends to fit whatever it measures (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.10). Mitio is the indulgent father in Terence's comedy *The Brothers*.

where everything is measured by money, it will hardly ever be possible for a commonwealth to be governed justly or prosperously. That is, unless you think justice is done where all the best things go to the worst people, or prosperity reigns where everything is divided among a very few. And even they are not altogether well off, while the rest are utterly wretched.

1.241 So I consider the very wise and holy institutions of the Utopians, among whom affairs are ordered so smoothly with so few laws that virtue is rewarded, and yet, with everything shared equally, everyone has plenty of everything. Then, by contrast, I compare with their ways so many other nations, always passing new ordinances and never well ordered. In all of them, whatever a person has got hold of he calls his own private property. All the laws they enact every day are not enough for anyone to obtain what each calls his own private property, or to keep it, or even to tell it apart from someone else's. The endless lawsuits, springing up constantly and never to be settled, show this plainly. When, I say, I consider all this, I become fairer to Plato, and I wonder less that he refused to make any laws for those who rejected laws by which everyone would share all goods equally.[26]

1.242 That very wise man easily foresaw that the one and only road to public welfare lies in establishing equality of goods, and I doubt that this can ever be maintained where individuals have property of their own.

When everyone grabs as much as he can for himself under one title or another, then, however great the abundance of goods, a few divide it all among themselves and leave the rest in want. And it generally happens that each group deserves the other's lot. The rich are greedy, unscrupulous and useless, while the poor are modest, simple men whose daily toil benefits the public more than themselves.

25 Plato, *Republic* 6.496d.

26 Plato was said to have declined to give laws to the people of Megalopolis because they would not accept equality of property.

1.244 So I am thoroughly convinced that unless private property is entirely abolished, goods cannot be distributed on any fair and just basis, nor can the affairs of mortals go well.

As long as it remains, by far the largest and by far the best part of mankind will always be weighed down by the anxious and inescapable burden of poverty and misery.

I admit that this burden can be lightened somewhat, but I maintain that it cannot be removed entirely.

1.247 Suppose, for instance, it were decreed that no one may own more than a certain amount of land, and that there be a legal limit on each person's money. Suppose laws provided that the prince should not be too powerful nor the people too insolent. Suppose offices were not to be canvassed for or sold, nor require any expense from their holders. Otherwise occasion is given to recoup the money by fraud and extortion, and it becomes necessary to put rich men in charge of offices that ought rather to be administered by wise ones. By such laws, I say, these evils could be eased and mitigated, just as the bodies of the incurably sick are usually propped up by constant poultices. But there is no hope at all that they will be healed and restored to good health as long as each person has his own property.

1.248 Indeed, while you are tending one part, you will aggravate the wounds of others. So the cure of one breeds the disease of another, since nothing can be added to one person without being taken away from someone else.

I said: But it seems to me the opposite. People can never live comfortably where everything is in common.

How can there be plenty of goods when everyone shirks work? No concern for his own gain drives him, and reliance on other people's industry makes him lazy.

1.251 And when people are spurred on by want, and no one can protect by any law what he has acquired as his own, must there not be constant bloodshed and rioting? Especially once the authority of magistrates and respect for them are gone. What

place these could have among men with no distinctions between them, I cannot even imagine.

He replied: I am not surprised that it seems so to you, since you have either no picture of the thing in your mind, or a false one.

1.253 But if you had been in Utopia with me and seen their customs and institutions for yourself, as I did (I lived there more than five years and would never have wanted to leave, except to make that new world known), then you would freely admit that you had never seen a well-ordered people anywhere but there.

1.254 "And yet," said Peter Giles, "you would have a hard time persuading me that a better-ordered people is to be found in that new world than in this one we know. Here, I think, minds are no worse and commonwealths are older than there. Long experience has discovered many things here that make life comfortable, not to mention certain things discovered among us by chance which no ingenuity could have devised."

1.255 He replied: As for the antiquity of commonwealths, you could judge more accurately if you had read the histories of that world. If they are to be believed, there were cities there before there were people here. And whatever has so far been discovered by ingenuity or found by chance could have arisen in either place.

But I really believe that even if we surpass them in ingenuity, they leave us far behind in diligence and industry.

1.257 According to their chronicles, before we landed there they had never heard anything at all about our affairs (they call us the Ultraequinoctials). There was only one exception: twelve hundred years ago a ship that a storm had driven there was wrecked off the island of Utopia.

Some Romans and Egyptians were cast ashore and never left afterward.

See how well their industry turned this single opportunity to account.[27]

27 Ultraequinoctials: "people beyond the equinoctial line," that is, beyond the equator as seen from Utopia.

1.260 There was no useful art within the Roman Empire that they did not either learn from the castaways or work out for themselves once they had been given the seeds for their inquiries. So great a benefit it was to them that some people were once carried there from here.

But if any similar fortune ever drove anyone from there to here before, it has been as completely forgotten as later generations will perhaps forget that I was once there.

At the very first meeting they made their own whatever useful inventions we had. But I think it will be a long time before we adopt anything that is better arranged among them than among us.

1.263 This, I believe, is the main reason why, though we are not inferior to them in either ingenuity or resources, their commonwealth is more wisely governed and flourishes more prosperously than ours.

"Then, my dear Raphael," I said, "I beg and beseech you, describe the island to us. Don't try to be brief, but set out in order the fields, rivers, cities, people, customs, institutions, laws, and, in short, everything you think we would like to know. And you may take it that we want to know everything we don't yet know."

"Nothing would please me more," he said.

"For I have it all at my fingertips.

"But the subject needs time."

1.268 "Then let us go in to lunch," I said, "and afterward we will take as much time as we like."

"Agreed," he said.

So we went in and had lunch. After lunch we returned to the same place and sat down on the same bench, and we ordered the servants not to let anyone interrupt us. Then Peter Giles and I urged Raphael to keep his promise.

When he saw us attentive and eager to hear, he sat silent and thoughtful for a little while, and then began as follows.

Book II

Liber secundus
Raphael describes the island of Utopia: its cities, work, households, learning, laws, wars and religions, where all things are held in common.

2.1 The island of the Utopians is two hundred miles across in the middle, where it is broadest, and over a great part of its length it is not much narrower; toward the ends it gradually tapers on both sides. These ends curve round as if drawn with a compass in a circuit of five hundred miles, giving the whole island the shape of a new moon.

Its horns are separated by a strait about eleven miles wide. The sea flows in through it and spreads out into a huge empty space. Because the surrounding land keeps off the winds on every side, the water lies still like a vast lake rather than raging, and it makes nearly the whole hollow of the land into a harbor, carrying ships in every direction to the great benefit of the inhabitants. The entrance is dangerous, with shallows on one side and rocks on the other.

2.3 Almost in the middle of the channel a single rock rises up. Being visible, it is harmless, and they have built a tower on it which they keep garrisoned. The other rocks lie hidden and are treacherous.

Only the Utopians themselves know the channels, so it rarely happens that any foreigner gets into this bay without a Utopian pilot. Even they can hardly enter safely except by certain landmarks on the shore that guide their course.

By shifting these to different places they could easily lure an enemy fleet, however large, to its destruction.

On the other side there are harbors in plenty.

2.7 But everywhere the landing places are so well defended, by nature or by art, that a handful of defenders can hold off huge forces.

However, as the story goes, and as the lie of the land itself suggests, this land was once not surrounded by the sea.

The island bears the name of its conqueror, Utopus; before that it was called Abraxa. He brought its rough and rustic people to the level of culture and humanity in which they now surpass almost all other mortals. He won the victory as soon as he landed, and then had the fifteen-mile neck of land that joined it to the continent cut through, and so brought the sea around the land.[1]

2.10 He forced not only the natives to do this work but also put all his own soldiers to it, so that the natives would not regard the labor as a humiliation. With the work shared among so great a number of men, the job was finished with incredible speed. The neighbors, who at first had laughed at the folly of the undertaking, were struck with wonder and terror at its success.

The island has fifty-four cities, all spacious and splendid, and identical in language, customs, institutions and laws. They are all laid out on the same plan, and as far as the site allows, they all look the same.

The nearest of them are twenty-four miles apart.

2.13 On the other hand, none is so remote that one cannot walk from it to another city in a single day.

Every year three old and experienced citizens from each city meet at Amaurot to discuss the common affairs of the island. That city lies, as it were, at the navel of the land, and so is the most convenient for delegates from all parts; it is regarded as the first and chief city.

1 Abraxas was a mystical name among the Gnostics; its Greek letters add up to 365.

The land is so conveniently assigned to the cities that each has at least twelve miles of ground on every side, and on some sides much more, namely where the cities are farther apart.

2.16 No city has any desire to extend its boundaries.

For they consider themselves the cultivators rather than the owners of the land they hold.

Throughout the countryside they have houses, conveniently spaced and equipped with farm tools.

These are lived in by citizens who move there in turn.

No rural household has fewer than forty men and women, besides two slaves bound to the land. Over them are set a master and mistress of the household, serious and mature people, and over every thirty households one phylarch.

Every year twenty from each household, those who have completed two years in the country, move back to the city.[2]

2.22 In their place the same number of new people are sent from the city. They are trained by those who have been there a year and so know more about farming, and the next year they will teach others. In this way the food supply does not suffer through inexperience, as it would if everyone there were new and ignorant of farming at the same time.

This custom of rotating the farmers is the rule, so that no one is forced against his will to continue too long in a harder way of life. Still, many who naturally enjoy country work get permission to stay for more years.

The farmers till the soil, raise livestock, gather wood, and carry it to the city by land or by sea, whichever is more convenient.

2.25 They raise an enormous number of chickens by a remarkable method.

The hens do not sit on the eggs. Instead they keep a large number of eggs warm at an even temperature, and so bring the chicks to life and hatch them. As soon as the chicks come out of

2 Phylarch: from Greek, “ruler of a tribe”; in Utopia, an elected officer over thirty households.

the shell, they follow the people as if they were their mothers, and recognize them.

They keep very few horses, and only spirited ones, used for nothing but training the young in horsemanship.

2.28 All the work of plowing and hauling is done by oxen. They admit that oxen are inferior to horses in speed, but they think them superior in endurance and less subject to disease. Besides, oxen cost less in both labor and expense to keep, and finally, when they are worn out with work, they are still useful for food.

They use grain only for bread.

For they drink wine made from grapes, apples or pears, or else sometimes plain water, and often water in which they have boiled honey or licorice, of which they have a good supply.

2.31 They know for certain (and they know it very precisely) how much food the city and its surrounding district consume. Yet they sow far more grain and raise far more livestock than they need for their own use, and share the surplus with their neighbors.

Whatever they need that is not to be had in the country, they fetch from the city, and they get it from the city magistrates without any exchange of goods and without any trouble.

For most of them go there every month for the holy day.

2.34 When harvest time approaches, the phylarchs of the farmers notify the city magistrates how many citizens should be sent to them. This crowd of harvesters arrives promptly on the day and gets the whole harvest in almost in a single day of fine weather.

THE CITIES, AND AMAUROT IN PARTICULAR

Raphael describes Amaurot's site, river, bridge, walls, streets, houses and gardens.

2.35 Anyone who knows one of their cities knows them all, so alike are they in every respect, as far as the nature of the site allows.

So I will describe one of them (it doesn't much matter which). But which rather than Amaurot? None is worthier, since the others defer to it as the seat of the council, and none is better known to me, since I lived there for five whole years.

Amaurot, then, lies on the gentle slope of a hill and is almost square in shape.

Its breadth runs for about two miles from just below the top of the hill down to the river Anyder; along the bank it is somewhat longer.

2.39 The Anyder rises eighty miles above Amaurot from a modest spring. But it is swollen by other rivers flowing into it, two of them fairly large, so that in front of the city itself it is half a mile wide. Then, growing wider still, it flows on for sixty miles and is received by the ocean.

Over the whole stretch between the city and the sea, and for some miles above the city too, the tide flows in for six hours at a time and then ebbs, alternating in a rapid current.

When the sea comes in, it fills the whole bed of the Anyder with its waters for thirty miles, driving the river back.

2.42 Then for some distance beyond that the sea spoils the river's water with its saltiness. From there the river gradually grows fresh again and flows past the city untainted, and when the tide ebbs, the river follows it back, pure and unspoiled, almost to its mouth.

The city is joined to the opposite bank of the river by a bridge, not on wooden piles or piers but of stone, with splendid arches. It stands at the point farthest from the sea, so that ships can sail past that whole side of the city without obstruction.

They also have another river, not large, it is true, but very gentle and pleasant.

2.45 It rises on the same hill on which the city stands, flows down through the middle of the city, and joins the Anyder.

The head and source of this river rise a little outside the city, and the Amaurotians have enclosed them within their fortifications and joined them to the town,

so that if an enemy force should attack, the water cannot be cut off, diverted or poisoned.

From there the water is carried in channels of baked tile to the various lower parts of the city. Where the ground makes this impossible, capacious cisterns collect rainwater and serve just as well.

2.49 A high, broad wall surrounds the town, with many towers and bulwarks. On three sides the walls are ringed by a dry moat, deep and wide and choked with thorn hedges; on the fourth side the river itself serves as a moat.

The streets are conveniently laid out both for traffic and for shelter from the winds. The buildings are far from shabby. They stand in long, unbroken rows running the whole length of each block, and the house fronts face each other across the street.

These rows of house fronts are separated by a street twenty feet wide.

Behind the houses, along the whole length of the block, lies a large garden, enclosed on all sides by the backs of the blocks.

2.53 Every house has a door onto the street and a back door into the garden.

These are double doors that open at a light push of the hand and swing shut again by themselves, so they let anyone in. So there is nothing private anywhere.

Indeed, every ten years they exchange the houses themselves by lot.

They set great store by these gardens.

In them they grow vines, fruit, herbs and flowers,

all so bright and well tended that I have never seen anything more fruitful or more elegant anywhere.

Their enthusiasm is fired not only by the pleasure it gives them but also by the rivalry between streets, each competing to keep its own garden best.

2.60 Certainly you would hardly find anything in the whole city more useful or more pleasant for the citizens.

So it seems that the founder cared for nothing more than for gardens of this kind.

They say that the whole plan of the city was laid out from the very beginning by Utopus himself.

But he saw that one man's lifetime would not be enough for the decoration and the rest of the finishing, so he left these to be added by later generations.

2.64 Their annals cover the history of 1,760 years from the conquest of the island, and they keep them carefully and scrupulously written up. These records say that at first the houses were low, mere cabins and huts, knocked together from whatever wood came to hand. Their walls were daubed with mud, and their steep, pointed roofs were thatched with straw.

But now every house is handsome to look at and three stories high. The walls are faced with flint, rough stone or brick, and the space inside is packed with rubble.

The roofs are flat, and they cover them with a kind of plaster.

2.67 It costs nothing, yet it is mixed so that it is fireproof and stands up to the damage of storms better than lead.

They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, which is very widely used there.

Sometimes they also use thin linen smeared with clear oil or amber, which has a double advantage.

Treated this way, it lets through more light and lets in less wind.

MAGISTRATES

Households elect syphogrants, who choose a governor for life; public business may be discussed only in council.

2.71 Every thirty households elect a magistrate each year. In their old language they call him a syphogrant, and in their newer one a phylarch. Over every ten syphogrants and their households is set an officer who was once called a tranibor and is now called the head phylarch.

Finally, all the syphogrants, two hundred in number, swear to choose the man they judge most fit. They then elect a governor

by secret ballot from four candidates nominated to them by the people.

One candidate is chosen from each quarter of the city and put forward to the council.

The governor holds office for life, unless he is suspected of aiming at tyranny.

They elect the tranibors every year,

but do not change them without good reason.[3]

2.77 All the other magistracies are annual.

The tranibors meet in council with the governor every third day, and more often if need be.

They deliberate about the commonwealth and promptly settle any disputes between private persons, though there are very few.

They always bring two syphogrants into the council, different ones each day. It is laid down that nothing concerning the commonwealth may be ratified unless it has been debated in the council on three days before it is decreed.

To take counsel about public affairs outside the council or the popular assembly is a capital offense.

2.82 They say these measures were established to make it hard for the governor and the tranibors to conspire together, oppress the people by tyranny and change the constitution of the commonwealth.

Anything judged to be of great importance is therefore referred to the assembly of the syphogrants. They discuss the matter with their households, then consult among themselves and report their decision to the council.

Sometimes a matter is referred to the council of the whole island.

2.85 The council also has a rule that nothing is debated on the day it is first proposed. It is put off to the next session. The aim is to stop anyone from rashly blurting out the first thing that comes into his head and then spending his wits on defending his

3 "Governor" renders *princeps*, the head of each city. Syphogrant and tranibor are More's coinages.

own proposals rather than on what serves the commonwealth. Such a man, out of a perverse and misplaced sense of shame, would rather sacrifice the public welfare than his reputation, for fear of seeming to have shown too little foresight at the start.

He should have had the foresight at the start to speak with deliberation rather than in haste.

OCCUPATIONS

Everyone farms and learns a craft, works six hours a day, and spends free time on learning.

2.87 One craft is shared by everyone, men and women alike, and no one is without it: agriculture.

Everyone is trained in it from childhood. They learn partly through lessons at school and partly by being taken out into the fields near the city, as if for play. There they do not just watch but actually do the work, which also gives their bodies exercise.

Besides agriculture, which as I said is common to all, each person is taught one particular craft as his own. This is usually wool-working or linen-working, or the craft of the mason, the smith or the carpenter.

There is no other trade there that employs any number worth mentioning.

2.91 As for clothes, there is one pattern throughout the island, the only differences being those that mark men from women and the unmarried from the married. It stays unchanged over time. It is not unbecoming to the eye, it allows easy movement, and it suits both cold and heat.

These clothes, I say, each household makes for itself.

But everyone learns one of those other crafts, women as well as men. The women, being the weaker, practice the lighter crafts and usually work wool and linen. The other, more laborious crafts are assigned to the men. For the most part each person is brought up in his father's craft, since most are naturally drawn to it.

2.94 But if someone's inclination draws him elsewhere, he is transferred by adoption into a household that practices the trade he wants to follow. Both his father and the magistrates take care that he is placed with a sober and respectable head of household.

If someone who has thoroughly learned one craft wants to learn another as well, he is allowed to in the same way.

Once he has both, he practices whichever he likes, unless the city needs one of them more.

The chief and almost the only business of the syphogrants is to see to it that no one sits idle,

2.98 and that everyone works hard at his craft. Yet no one is to be worn out like a beast of burden by unbroken toil from early morning until late at night. That is worse than the misery of slaves, and yet it is the life of workers almost everywhere, except among the Utopians. They divide the day and night into twenty-four equal hours and assign only six of them to work. They work three hours before noon and then go to lunch. After lunch they rest for two hours in the afternoon, then work three more hours and end the day with supper.

Since they count the first hour from noon, they go to bed about eight o'clock. Sleep claims eight hours.

2.100 Whatever time is left between the hours of work, sleep and meals is left to each person's own discretion. It is not to be wasted in revelry or laziness. Free from his trade, each person should spend it well on some other pursuit of his choosing. Most people devote these intervals to learning.

It is their custom to hold public lectures every day in the hours before dawn. Only those specially chosen for learning are required to attend.

But a great crowd of every class, men and women together, flocks to the lectures, some to one and some to another, as each person's nature inclines.

2.103 However, some people's minds do not rise to the contemplation of any branch of learning, and many of them prefer to

spend this time on their own craft. They are not prevented. Indeed they are even praised as useful to the commonwealth.

After supper they spend an hour in recreation, in summer in the gardens and in winter in the common halls where they eat.

There they either play music or refresh themselves with conversation.

Dice and similar foolish and ruinous games they do not even know. But they play two games not unlike chess.

One is a battle of numbers, in which number plunders number.

2.108 In the other, the vices meet the virtues in pitched battle.

The game shows very cleverly how the vices quarrel among themselves and yet unite against the virtues. It also shows which vices are opposed to which virtues, with what forces they attack openly and with what stratagems they strike from the flank. It shows by what defenses the virtues break the strength of the vices, by what arts they elude their attacks, and finally by what means one side or the other wins the victory.

But at this point, to keep you from going wrong, we must look at something more closely.

Since they work only six hours, you might think that some shortage of necessities would follow.

2.112 This is so far from happening that the time is not only enough to produce plenty of everything needed for the necessities and comforts of life, but more than enough. You will understand this too if you consider how large a part of the population lives idle in other nations. First, there are almost all the women, who are half the total. Where the women are busy, the men, as a rule, are snoring in their place. Then consider how great and how idle a crowd of priests and so-called religious there is. Add all the rich, especially the landowners, who are commonly called gentlemen and nobles. Count in their servants as well, that whole rabble of swaggering good-for-nothings with their bucklers. Finally, add the sturdy, able-bodied beggars who plead some illness as an excuse for their idleness. You will certainly

find that the people whose labor produces everything that mortals use are far fewer than you had thought.

2.113 Now reckon up for yourself how few of these work in necessary trades. Where we measure everything by money, many crafts must be practiced that are utterly empty and superfluous, serving only luxury and self-indulgence. Suppose the very multitude now at work were divided among only as many crafts as the proper use of nature requires. There would then be such an abundance of goods that prices would certainly fall too low for the workers to make a living.

2.114 But now consider all those now kept busy by useless crafts, and on top of them the whole crowd languishing in leisure and idleness. Each one of these consumes as much of the goods supplied by other people's labor as two of the workers who produce them. Suppose they were all set to work, and to useful work. You can easily see how little time would be enough, and more than enough, to supply everything that necessity or comfort demands. You can add pleasure too, at least pleasure that is true and natural. In Utopia the facts themselves make this plain.

2.115 There, in the whole city and its surrounding district, scarcely five hundred of all the men and women whose age and strength fit them for work are exempted from it.

Among these are the syphogrants. Although the laws have released them from labor, they do not exempt themselves, so that their example may more easily encourage the rest to work.

The same exemption is enjoyed by those whom the people permanently release from work to devote themselves to learning. The people do this on the recommendation of the priests and by secret ballot of the syphogrants.

2.118 If any of these disappoints the hopes placed in him, he is sent back to the workers. On the other hand, it quite often happens that a craftsman spends his spare hours so diligently on learning, and makes such progress, that he is released from his trade and promoted to the class of scholars.

From this order of scholars are chosen the ambassadors, the priests, the tranibors and finally the governor himself. In their old language they call the governor Barzanes, and in their newer one Ademus.[4]

2.120 Nearly all the rest of the people are neither idle nor occupied in useless trades. So it is easy to reckon how much good work a few hours produce. Besides what I have mentioned, they have a further advantage: in most of the necessary crafts they need less labor than other nations.

2.121 Take first the building and repair of houses. Everywhere else this requires the constant labor of so many workers because a thriftless heir lets what his father built gradually fall into ruin. What could have been kept up at very little cost, his successor is then forced to rebuild from scratch at great expense. Often, too, a house that cost one man an enormous sum is scorned by another man of fastidious taste. He neglects it, so it soon collapses, and he builds another elsewhere at no less expense.

2.122 Among the Utopians, however, everything is settled and the commonwealth firmly established. So it very rarely happens that a new site is chosen for building houses. Present defects are quickly remedied, and threatening ones are forestalled.

The result is that buildings last a very long time with very little labor, and builders sometimes have hardly anything to do. In the meantime they are told to hew timber at home and to square and fit stones, so that if any work comes up, it can go up more quickly.

2.124 Now see how little labor they need for clothing. First, while they are at work they dress carelessly in leather or skins that last seven years. When they go out in public they put on a cloak to cover those rougher clothes. Its color is the same throughout the island, and it is the natural color of the wool.

So not only is far less woolen cloth needed than anywhere else, but what is needed also costs much less. Linen takes less labor, and so it is used more often. But in linen they look only

4 Ademus is Greek for "without a people."

for whiteness, and in wool only for cleanliness. No value is set on fineness of thread.

2.126 Elsewhere four or five woolen gowns of different colors and as many silk tunics are not enough for one man, and for the more fastidious not even ten. There, each person is content with one, usually for two years.

Indeed there is no reason for anyone to want more. Having got them, he would be no better protected against the cold, nor would he look one hair better dressed.

2.128 Everyone, then, works at useful crafts, and fewer workers are enough for these. So when there is an abundance of everything, they sometimes lead out a vast crowd to repair the public roads if any are worn out. Very often, when there is no need even for work of that kind, they publicly announce shorter working hours. The magistrates do not keep the citizens busy against their will with unnecessary labor. The constitution of that commonwealth aims above all at one thing: that, as far as public needs allow, all the citizens should have as much time as possible freed from the servitude of the body for the freedom and cultivation of the mind.

2.129 In this, they think, lies the happiness of life.

HOW THE CITIZENS LIVE TOGETHER

Raphael explains households, population limits, colonies, free stores, hospitals and the common halls.

2.130 Now it seems I should explain how the citizens deal with one another, what dealings the people have among themselves, and how goods are distributed.

The city consists of households, and the households are mostly made up of blood relations.

When women grow up, they are married off and move into their husbands' homes. But the sons, and after them the grandsons, stay in the household and obey the oldest parent, unless his mind has been weakened by old age. In that case the next oldest takes his place.

2.133 Each city has six thousand households, not counting those of the surrounding district. To keep the city from becoming underpopulated or growing beyond measure, they provide that no household has fewer than ten or more than sixteen adults.

No number can be fixed for children.

This limit is easily kept by moving the surplus members of fuller households into those with fewer.

If a city as a whole ever has too many people, they use them to make up the shortfall in their other cities.

2.137 If the population of the whole island should swell too far, they enroll citizens from every city and plant a colony under their own laws on the nearest mainland. They choose a place where the natives have plenty of land to spare lying uncultivated. They invite the natives to live with them if they are willing.

When the natives join them willingly, the two peoples easily grow together into the same way of life and the same customs, to the benefit of both. By their methods the Utopians make the land sufficient for both peoples, although it had seemed meager and barren to the natives before.

Those who refuse to live under their laws they drive out of the territory they mark out for themselves.

2.140 Against those who resist they wage war. They consider it a most just cause for war when a people does not use its land itself but holds it idle and empty, and yet forbids its use and possession to others who, by the rule of nature, ought to be fed from it.

Some misfortune may reduce one of their cities so much that it cannot be made up from other parts of the island without taking those cities below their proper size. This is said to have happened only twice in all their history, when plague raged fiercely. The city is then refilled with citizens brought back from a colony.

They would rather let their colonies perish than let any of the island's cities be diminished.

2.143 But I return to the way the citizens live together.

The oldest, as I said, presides over the household.

Wives serve their husbands, children their parents, and in general the younger serve the older.

Every city is divided into four equal quarters.

In the middle of each quarter is a market for all kinds of goods.

The products of each household are brought there to certain buildings, and each kind of goods is stored separately in its own storehouse.

Every head of household asks at these for whatever he and his family need, and carries off whatever he has asked for without money or any payment at all.

2.150 Why should anything be refused? There is more than enough of everything, and there is no fear that anyone will want to demand more than he needs. Why should anyone be suspected of asking for more than enough, when he is certain that he will never lack anything? In every kind of living creature, fear of want is what makes it greedy and grasping. In man alone, pride does it too, for pride counts it glorious to outdo others by a superfluous display of possessions. This kind of vice has no place whatever in the Utopians' institutions.

2.151 Next to the markets I have mentioned are food markets. To these they bring vegetables, fruit and bread, and also fish and whatever meat of four-footed animals and birds is fit to eat. The animals are slaughtered outside the city in suitable places, where the blood and filth can be washed away by running water.

From there they bring in the carcasses, killed and cleaned by the hands of slaves. They do not allow their own citizens to grow used to butchering animals, for they think such practice gradually kills off mercy, the most humane feeling of our nature. Nor do they allow anything filthy or unclean to be brought into the city, since its rotting might corrupt the air and bring disease.

2.153 Each street also has certain spacious halls, spaced at equal distances from one another, and each hall is known by its own name.

The syphogrants live in them. To each hall are assigned thirty households, fifteen from either side, who take their meals there.

The stewards of each hall meet in the market at a fixed hour, report the number of their people and ask for food.

But the sick come first, and they are cared for in public hospitals.

2.157 There are four hospitals around the city, a little outside the walls, each so spacious that it is like a small town. This is so that the sick, however many there are, are not crammed together and made uncomfortable. It also means that those with a disease whose contagion tends to creep from one person to another can be kept well away from other people.

2.158 These hospitals are so well equipped and so well stocked with everything that helps restore health, the care given is so tender and attentive, and skilled physicians are so constantly present, that there is hardly anyone in the whole city who, when he falls ill, would not rather lie there than at home. Yet no one is sent there against his will.

2.159 When the steward for the sick has received the food prescribed by the doctors, the best of the rest is divided equally among the halls according to the number in each. The exceptions are the governor, the high priest and the tranibors, and also ambassadors and all foreigners, if there are any. There are few of them, and they come rarely, but when they do, furnished lodgings are prepared for them. At the fixed hours of lunch and supper the whole syphogranty gathers in these halls, summoned by the blast of a bronze trumpet. Only those lying sick in the hospitals or at home stay away. Still, once the halls have been supplied, no one is forbidden to fetch food from the market to take home. They know that no one does this without good reason. No one is forbidden to eat at home, but no one likes to do it. It is not thought respectable, and it would be foolish to take the trouble of preparing a worse meal when a fine and lavish one is ready in the hall so close by.

2.160 In this hall all the tasks that involve rather more dirt or labor are done by slaves.

But the cooking and preparing of the food, and indeed the arranging of the whole meal, are done by the women alone, the women of each household taking turns.

They sit at three or more tables, according to the number of diners.

The men sit against the wall and the women on the outside. That way, if a woman is suddenly taken ill, as sometimes happens in pregnancy, she can get up without disturbing the rows and go off to the nurses.

2.164 The nurses sit apart with their infants in a room set aside for the purpose. It always has a fire and clean water, and cradles as well. There they can lay the babies down, and when they like they can unwrap them from their swaddling clothes by the fire and refresh them with freedom and play. Each mother nurses her own child unless death or illness prevents it. When that happens, the syphogrants' wives quickly find a nurse, and this is not difficult.

Women who can do it offer this service more gladly than any other, because everyone praises such kindness and the child who is nursed looks on the nurse as a parent.

2.166 In the nursery sit all the children who have not yet completed their fifth year. The other young people include all those of either sex below marriageable age. They either wait on the diners or, if they are too young for that, stand by in complete silence. Both groups eat whatever the diners hand to them and have no separate mealtime.

The syphogrant and his wife sit in the middle of the first table, which is the place of honor. That table runs crosswise at the upper end of the hall, so the whole company can be seen from it.

With them sit two of the oldest people.

2.169 They sit four to a table throughout.

If there is a temple in that syphogranty, the priest and his wife sit with the syphogrant and preside.

On either side of them are placed younger people, then older people again. In this way, throughout the whole hall, people of

the same age sit together and yet are mixed with those of other ages. They say this was instituted so that the gravity of the old and the respect they command would restrain the young from improper freedom of word and gesture, since nothing can be said or done at table without the elders sitting on every side noticing it.

2.172 The dishes are not served in order starting from the first place. Instead the best food is brought first to all the elders, whose places are specially marked, and then the rest are served equally.

The elders, however, share their delicacies with those sitting around them as they see fit, since there are not enough of these to go generously round the whole hall.

So the elders keep the honor due to them, and yet everyone benefits just as much.

Every lunch and supper begins with a reading that promotes good morals, but it is short, so as not to be tedious.

Taking this as their starting point, the elders bring up respectable conversation, neither gloomy nor humorless.

2.177 But they do not take up the whole meal with long speeches. They gladly listen to the young as well and even deliberately draw them out, so as to test each one's character and intelligence, which show themselves in the freedom of a meal.

Lunches are fairly short and suppers more generous, because work follows lunch, while sleep and the night's rest follow supper. They think rest is more effective for healthy digestion.

2.179 No supper passes without music, and dessert always comes with sweets. They burn incense and sprinkle perfumes, and they leave nothing undone that might cheer the diners. They lean somewhat in this direction, holding that no kind of pleasure is forbidden as long as no harm comes of it.

This, then, is how they live together in the city. In the country, however, people live far apart, and they all eat in their own homes. No household there lacks anything for its food, since everything the city-dwellers eat comes from them.

TRAVEL

Utopians travel only with leave and must work wherever they stay; the whole island shares like one household.

2.181 Anyone who wants to visit friends living in another city, or simply to see the place, easily gets leave from his syphogrants and tranibors, unless some need stands in the way.

A group is sent together with a letter from the governor. The letter certifies their permission to travel and fixes the day of their return.

They are given a wagon and a public slave to drive and tend the oxen. But unless there are women in the party, they send the wagon back as a burden and a hindrance.

They take nothing with them on the whole journey, yet they lack nothing, for they are at home everywhere.

2.185 If they stay anywhere longer than a day, each of them practices his craft there and is treated very kindly by the workers of the same craft.

If anyone wanders outside his own district on his own authority and is caught without the governor's pass, he is treated with disgrace, brought back as a runaway and severely punished. If he dares to do it again, he is punished with slavery.

If anyone takes a fancy to roam the fields belonging to his own city, he is not forbidden, as long as he has his father's leave and his wife's consent.

But wherever he goes in the country, he is given no food until he has done the morning's share of work, or as much as is usually done there before supper.

2.189 On this condition he may go anywhere within his own city's territory.

He will be no less useful to the city than if he were in it.

So you see that there is no license to idle anywhere and no pretext for laziness. There is no wine tavern, no alehouse, no brothel anywhere, no opportunity for corruption, no hiding place, no secret meeting. Since everyone is always in view,

people have to do their usual work or spend their leisure respectably.

With such customs, plenty of everything must follow. And since it reaches everyone equally, no one can be poor or a beggar.

2.193 As I said, three citizens from every city attend the council at Amaurot each year. There they first establish what goods are plentiful where, and where the harvest has been poorer. Then the abundance of one place at once makes up the shortage of another. They do this free of charge, receiving nothing in return from those to whom they give.

A city that gives some of its own goods to another city asks nothing back from it, but receives what it needs from a third city to which it has given nothing.

So the whole island is like a single household.

2.196 They do not consider themselves sufficiently provided for until they have laid in two years' supply, because they cannot know how next year's harvest will turn out. Once that is done, they export their surplus to other countries in great quantities: grain, honey, wool, flax, timber, scarlet and purple dye, fleeces, wax, tallow, leather, and livestock as well. They give a seventh part of all these goods to the poor of the country concerned and sell the rest at a moderate price. From this trade they bring home the goods they lack, which is almost nothing but iron. They also bring home a great quantity of silver and gold.

2.197 Having traded like this for a long time, they now have an unbelievable abundance of these metals.

So they now care little whether they sell for cash or on credit, and by far the greatest part of their wealth is held as debts owed to them. In these arrangements, however, they never rely on the credit of private persons. The documents are drawn up in the usual form, and they rely on the public guarantee of the city.

When the day of payment comes, the city collects the debt from the private debtors and puts it into its treasury. It enjoys the interest on that money until the Utopians ask for it.

Most of it they never ask for.

2.201 They think it hardly fair to take something that is no use to them away from people who can use it.

2.202 However, they do call it in when they need to lend part of it to another people, or when they have to wage war. This is the one purpose for which they keep all the treasure they have at home, as a resource in extreme danger or sudden emergency. Above all, they use it to hire foreign soldiers at extravagant pay, since they would rather put foreigners in danger than their own citizens. They know that with enough money the enemy themselves can often be bought, and set against one another either by treachery or even in open battle.

GOLD AND SILVER HELD IN CONTEMPT

The Utopians make chamber pots and slaves' chains of gold, and laugh at the finery of visiting ambassadors.

2.203 For this reason they keep a treasure beyond reckoning, but they do not keep it as treasure. How they keep it I am truly ashamed to tell, for fear my account will not be believed. My fear is all the more justified because I know how hard it would have been to make me believe anyone else telling the same story, had I not seen it myself.

2.204 It is almost inevitable that the more foreign a thing is to the listeners' customs, the harder they find it to believe. Yet a sensible judge will perhaps be less surprised that their use of silver and gold is suited to their customs rather than ours, since their other institutions differ so greatly from ours.

They do not use money themselves. They keep it for a contingency that may happen, but may just as well never arise.

2.206 Meanwhile they keep gold and silver, from which money is made, in such a way that no one values them more than their nature deserves. And who does not see how far below iron they are in that respect? Without iron, heaven knows, mortals could no more live than without fire and water. But nature has given gold and silver no use that we could not easily do without, had not human folly set a price on their rarity. On the contrary,

nature, like a most indulgent mother, has laid all the best things out in the open, such as air, water and the earth itself. The things that are empty and of no use she has hidden far away.

2.207 If these metals were locked away in some tower, the governor and the council might come under suspicion, such is the foolish cunning of the common people: they might be thought to be tricking the people and gaining some advantage from it themselves. And if they made the metals into drinking bowls and other finely wrought objects, a time might come when these had to be melted down again and paid out as soldiers' wages. The Utopians see that people would then be reluctant to part with things they had once begun to treasure.

2.208 To guard against these problems they have devised a method that is consistent with their other institutions. It is utterly different from ours, since we value gold so highly and hoard it so carefully, and so only those who have seen it can believe it.

They eat and drink from earthenware and glass, which is very elegant but cheap. Out of gold and silver they make chamber pots and all the lowliest vessels, not only in the common halls but in private houses too.

They also use the same metals to make the chains and heavy fetters with which they bind their slaves.

2.211 Finally, anyone disgraced by some crime wears gold rings hanging from his ears, gold on his fingers, a gold chain around his neck, and even a gold band around his head.

So they take care in every way that gold and silver are held in dishonor among them. Other nations part with these metals almost as painfully as with their own vital organs. But among the Utopians, if circumstances required them to hand over the whole lot at once, no one would feel he had lost a penny.

2.213 They also gather pearls on the shore, and even diamonds and garnets on certain rocks. They do not go looking for them, but when they chance upon them they polish them.

They use them to adorn their little children. In their first years the children are proud and boastful of such ornaments.

But when they grow a little older and notice that only children wear such trifles, they lay them aside of their own accord, not because their parents tell them to but out of their own sense of shame, just as our children, when they grow up, throw away their marbles, baubles and dolls.

These institutions are so different from those of other nations, and they produce very different feelings. This never became clearer to me than in the case of the Anemolian ambassadors.[5]

2.216 They came to Amaurot while I was there. Because they were coming to discuss important matters, the three citizens from each city had arrived ahead of them. All the ambassadors from neighboring peoples who had come there before knew the Utopians' customs. They understood that costly clothing earned no honor there, that silk was despised and that gold was even a mark of disgrace. So they had made a habit of coming in the plainest dress they could.

2.217 But the Anemolians lived farther away and had had fewer dealings with the Utopians. They had heard that the Utopians all dressed alike, and plainly, and concluded that they did not have what they did not use. Being more proud than wise, they decided to look like gods by the elegance of their outfit and to dazzle the eyes of the poor Utopians with the splendor of their finery.

2.218 So the three ambassadors made their entrance with a hundred attendants, all in clothes of many colors, most of them in silk. The ambassadors themselves were noblemen at home, and they wore cloth of gold, with great gold chains and gold earrings, gold rings on their fingers, and strings of jewels hanging from their caps that glittered with pearls and gems. In short, they were decked out in everything that the Utopians used to punish slaves, to mark the disgraced, or to amuse children.

2.219 It was worth seeing how they preened themselves when they compared their finery with the Utopians' clothing, for the people had poured out into the streets. It was no less a pleasure

5 Anemolians: from the Greek for "windy," that is, empty and puffed up.

to see how badly their hopes and expectations were disappointed, and how far they fell short of the esteem they thought they would win.

To all the Utopians, except for the very few who had visited other countries for some good reason, all that splendid display looked shameful. They respectfully greeted the humblest members of the party as the masters. The ambassadors themselves they took for slaves because of their gold chains, and let them pass without any honor at all.

2.221 You could also have seen children who had thrown away their gems and pearls. When they saw such jewels fixed on the ambassadors' caps, they nudged their mothers and called to them:

"Look, mother, what a big oaf, still wearing pearls and little jewels as if he were a small boy!" But the mother, quite seriously, said, "Hush, son, I think he is one of the ambassadors' fools."

Others found fault with those gold chains as useless. They were so thin that a slave could easily break them, and so loose that he could shake them off whenever he liked and run away wherever he wanted, free and unbound.

2.224 After a day or two there, the ambassadors saw so much gold held so cheap, treated with as much contempt as it was honored at home. They also saw more gold and silver heaped on the chains and fetters of a single runaway slave than the whole finery of all three of them had cost. Their feathers drooped, and in shame they put aside all the splendor in which they had paraded themselves so arrogantly.

2.225 This happened above all after they had talked more familiarly with the Utopians and learned their customs and opinions. The Utopians wonder that any mortal can delight in the doubtful sparkle of a tiny gem or stone when he can look at a star, or even at the sun itself. They also wonder that anyone can be so mad as to think himself nobler because his wool is spun from a finer thread. That very wool, however fine its thread, was once worn by a sheep, and all the while it was nothing but a sheep.

2.226 They wonder too that gold, by its own nature so useless, is now valued so highly everywhere that man himself is valued far less than gold, although it was through man and for his use that gold acquired its value. It goes so far that some blockhead with no more wit than a tree stump, and as wicked as he is stupid, keeps many wise and good men in servitude simply because a great heap of gold coins has come his way. Yet some chance, or some legal trick, may transfer the heap from that master to the lowest good-for-nothing in his household, for the law turns everything upside down as readily as chance does. Before long, of course, the master passes into the service of his own servant, like an appendage or accessory to the coins.

2.227 But they wonder at and detest far more the madness of those who pay almost divine honors to the rich simply because they are rich. They owe these rich men nothing and are under no obligation to them. They also know them to be so mean and grasping that they can be quite certain not a single penny of that great heap of money will ever come their way while the rich men live.

These and similar opinions come partly from their upbringing, since they were raised in a commonwealth whose institutions are very far removed from such kinds of folly. They come partly from teaching and books.

2.229 There are not many in each city who are relieved of other work and assigned to learning alone. They are the ones in whom, from childhood, their elders have seen an outstanding character, exceptional intelligence and a mind inclined to the liberal arts. Yet all children are introduced to letters, and a good part of the people, men and women, spend on learning, throughout their lives, the hours we said were free from work.

They study the various branches of learning in their own language. It is neither poor in vocabulary nor unpleasant to the ear, and no language expresses the mind more faithfully. Much the same language is spoken across a large region of that part of the world, except that it is corrupted everywhere, differently in different places.

2.231 Of all the philosophers whose names are famous in this world of ours, not one had so much as been heard of there before we arrived. And yet in music, logic, arithmetic and geometry they have discovered almost the same things as our ancient authors.

But while they equal the ancients in almost everything, they fall far short of the discoveries of the modern logicians.

They have not discovered a single one of the rules about restrictions, amplifications and suppositions, so very ingeniously devised, that our schoolboys everywhere here learn by heart from the *Little Logicals*.[6]

2.234 As for second intentions, they are so far from being able to investigate them that not one of them could even see "man in general," as it is called. Yet, as you know, he is plainly colossal, bigger than any giant, and we even pointed him out to them with our finger.

But they are very expert in the courses of the stars and the motions of the heavenly spheres.

They have also cleverly devised instruments of various shapes, with which they track very precisely the motions and positions of the sun, the moon and the other stars visible above their horizon.[7]

2.237 But they do not even dream of the friendships and quarrels of the planets, or of the whole imposture of divination by the stars.

They foresee rain, winds and other changes in the weather by certain signs learned through long experience.

On the causes of all these things, on the tides and the saltiness of the sea, and in short on the origin and nature of the heavens and the world, some of what they say agrees with our ancient philosophers. On other points, just as those philosophers disagree among themselves, the Utopians also bring forward

6 The *Parva logicalia* ("Little Logicals") was a medieval school textbook of logic. Restriction, amplification and supposition are technical terms from it.
7 Scholastic terms: "second intentions" are concepts about concepts (such as genus and species), and "man in general" is the universal "man."

new explanations and disagree with all of them. Nor do they entirely agree among themselves.

VIRTUE AND PLEASURE

The Utopians place happiness in good and honorable pleasure and rank the true pleasures of mind and body.

2.240 In the part of philosophy that deals with morals, they debate the same questions as we do. They inquire into goods of the mind, goods of the body and external goods, and whether the name of good applies to all of these or only to the gifts of the mind.

They discuss virtue and pleasure. But the first and chief of all their controversies is what thing or things human happiness consists in.

On this question they seem more inclined than they should be toward the school that champions pleasure, since they hold that pleasure is the whole of human happiness, or its chief part.

2.243 More surprising still, they seek support for so indulgent a view even from religion, which is serious and stern, almost gloomy and rigid.

They never discuss happiness without combining certain principles drawn from religion with the philosophy that works by reason. They think that without these principles, reason by itself is too defective and weak to investigate true happiness.

The principles are these:

that the soul is immortal and was created by God's goodness for happiness, and that after this life rewards are appointed for our virtues and good deeds, and punishments for our crimes.

2.247 Although these principles belong to religion, they think that reason leads us to believe and accept them. If they were done away with, the Utopians declare without any hesitation, no one would be so stupid as not to see that he should pursue pleasure by fair means or foul. He would only take care that a lesser pleasure did not get in the way of a greater one, and that he did not pursue a pleasure that would be paid back with pain.

2.248 Think of following a harsh and difficult virtue, not only driving away the sweetness of life but even choosing to suffer pain from which you could expect no benefit. What benefit could there be if after death you gain nothing, when you have spent this whole life unpleasantly, that is, miserably? That, they say, is the height of madness.

As it is, however, they hold that happiness lies not in every pleasure but in good and honorable pleasure. Our nature, they say, is drawn to this as to the highest good by virtue itself, which the opposing school holds to be the only source of happiness.

2.250 They define virtue as living according to nature, since that is what God created us for.

They say that anyone who obeys reason in what he seeks and what he avoids is following the guidance of nature.

Reason, moreover, first of all kindles in mortals love and reverence for the divine majesty, to whom we owe both our existence and our capacity for happiness. Next, it admonishes and urges us to lead a life as free from anxiety and as full of joy as possible ourselves. It also urges us, because all people share one nature, to help everyone else to attain the same.

2.253 For no one has ever been so gloomy and rigid a follower of virtue, or so fierce a hater of pleasure, that while he prescribes toil, sleepless nights and squalor for you, he does not also bid you do your share to relieve the poverty and hardships of others. He also thinks it praiseworthy, in the name of humanity, that one person should be a source of safety and comfort to another. And if it is supremely humane (and no virtue is more proper to human beings) to ease the troubles of others, take away their sadness and restore them to the enjoyment of life, that is, to pleasure—

2.254 why should nature not urge each of us to do the same for ourselves? Either a pleasant life, that is, a life of pleasure, is bad. If it is, you should not help anyone toward it, and you should take it away from everyone as far as you can, as something harmful and deadly. Or else, if you are not only allowed but obliged to secure it for others as something good, why not above

all for yourself? You ought to be no less kind to yourself than to others. For when nature prompts you to be good to others, she does not turn around and bid you be cruel and merciless to yourself.

2.255 So, they say, nature herself prescribes for us a pleasant life, that is, pleasure, as the goal of all our actions, and living according to her prescription is what they define as virtue.

Nature invites human beings to help one another toward a more cheerful life. She is right to do so, for no one is so far above the common lot of humankind as to be nature's only concern: she cherishes all alike, all whom she embraces in the fellowship of the same form. And so she surely also bids you take the greatest care not to pursue your own advantage in a way that brings disadvantage to others.

2.257 They hold, therefore, that we must keep not only agreements made between private persons but also public laws for distributing the good things of life, that is, the material of pleasure. These are laws that a good prince has justly promulgated, or that a people neither oppressed by tyranny nor tricked by fraud has enacted by common consent.

To look after your own advantage without breaking these laws is prudence; to look after the public advantage as well is piety. But to snatch away someone else's pleasure in pursuit of your own is injustice. On the other hand, to take something from yourself in order to give it to others is a duty of humanity and kindness, and such a duty never takes away as much advantage as it brings back.

2.259 For it is repaid by an exchange of benefits. Besides, the very awareness of having done good, and the memory of the affection and goodwill of those you have helped, give the mind more pleasure than the bodily pleasure you gave up would have given.

Finally, God repays a brief and slight pleasure with a vast joy that will never end, and religion easily persuades a willing mind of this.

So, after carefully examining and weighing the matter, they hold that all our actions, and among them even the virtues themselves, look in the end to pleasure as their goal and their happiness.

By pleasure they mean every movement and state of body or mind in which, with nature as our guide, we delight to dwell.

2.263 They add, not without reason, that the desire must be natural.

Some things are naturally pleasant: we can reach them without doing wrong, without losing a greater pleasure, and without paying for them in pain. Not only the senses but right reason too pursue these. By contrast, mortals, by a most foolish agreement among themselves, imagine that certain things are sweet against nature, as if it were in their power to change things as easily as they change names. The Utopians hold that all such things contribute nothing to happiness. Indeed they do great harm, if only because once they have taken hold of people they fill the whole mind with a false notion of pleasure, so that no room is left anywhere for true and genuine delights.

2.265 For there are a great many things that by their own nature contain no sweetness at all, and a good many of them contain a great deal of bitterness. Yet through the perverse allure of wicked desires these are not only regarded as the greatest pleasures but even counted among the chief reasons for living.

In this class of counterfeit pleasure they place the people I mentioned before, who think themselves the better, the better the coat they wear. In this one matter they are wrong twice over.

For they are no less mistaken in thinking their coat better than in thinking themselves better.

2.268 If you consider what clothing is for, why should wool of a finer thread be better than coarser wool? Yet these people raise their crests as if their superiority came from nature and not from their own mistake, and they believe it adds something to their own worth as well. So they demand, as if by right, for their finer coat the honor they would never have dared hope for if

they were dressed more cheaply, and they are indignant if they are passed over with too little notice.

2.269 And is it not the same ignorance to be pleased by empty honors that will do you no good? What natural and true pleasure do you get from another man's bared head or bent knees? Will that cure the pain in your own knees, or relieve the frenzy in your head? In this painted image of pleasure it is remarkable how sweetly they lose their minds who flatter and applaud themselves on the notion of their nobility. They congratulate themselves because they happen to have been born of ancestors who for a long line of generations have been thought rich, and especially rich in land, for that is all nobility means nowadays. And they think themselves not a hair less noble even if their ancestors left them nothing, or they have squandered what was left.

2.270 With these they class those who, as I said, are captivated by gems and precious stones. Such people think themselves made into gods, in a way, whenever they get hold of some exceptional stone. They especially prize the kind most highly valued among their own people at the time, for not all kinds are prized everywhere or at all times. But they will not buy one unless it has been taken out of its gold setting and is bare.

Not even then, unless the seller swears and gives a guarantee that it is a true gem and a genuine stone—so anxious are they that a fake may be passed off on their eyes in place of the real thing.

2.272 But when all you will do is look at it, why should an imitation give you less delight, if your eye cannot tell it from the real one? Both ought to be worth exactly the same to you as they would be, heaven knows, to a blind man.

2.273 What about those who hoard superfluous wealth and take delight not in using the heap but only in gazing at it? Do they feel true pleasure, or are they deceived by a false one? Or those with the opposite vice, who hide away gold they will never use and perhaps never even see again, and in their anxiety not to lose it, lose it? For what else is it but taking it away from your

own use, and perhaps from the use of all mortals, and giving it back to the earth? And yet once your treasure is buried you jump for joy, as if your mind were now at rest.

2.274 Suppose someone stole it, and you died ten years later without knowing of the theft. During all those ten years that you outlived the stolen money, what difference did it make to you whether it had been stolen or was safe? Either way you got exactly the same use out of it. To these absurd joys they add gamblers, whose madness they know by hearsay and not by experience, and also hunters and fowlers.

2.275 For what pleasure is there, they say, in throwing dice on a board? You have done it so often that, even if there were some pleasure in it, repetition would have bred boredom. Or what delight can there be, and not rather disgust, in listening to the barking and howling of dogs? Or why should it give a greater sense of pleasure when a dog chases a hare than when a dog chases a dog? The same thing happens in both cases: there is running, if running is what delights you.

2.276 But if what holds you is the hope of slaughter, the expectation of seeing a creature torn to pieces before your eyes, it ought rather to move you to pity. You are watching a little hare torn apart by a dog: the weak by the stronger, the timid fugitive by the fierce, the harmless, in short, by the cruel.

2.277 So the Utopians have handed over the whole practice of hunting, as unworthy of free people, to their butchers, a trade which, as I said above, they carry out through slaves. For they regard hunting as the lowest part of butchery, and its other parts as both more useful and more honorable. Those parts contribute far more and kill animals only out of necessity, whereas the hunter seeks nothing but pleasure from the slaughter and mangling of a wretched little creature. This lust for watching death, even the death of beasts, either springs from a cruel disposition, they think, or else in the end degenerates into cruelty through the constant enjoyment of so savage a pleasure.

2.278 The common run of people take these things, and everything of the kind (and there are countless such things), for

pleasures. The Utopians, however, hold flatly that since there is nothing naturally sweet in them, they have nothing to do with true pleasure.

The fact that they commonly flood the senses with enjoyment, which seems to be the work of pleasure, does not shake them from this view. For it is not the nature of the thing itself that is responsible, but people's own perverse habit, and it is the fault of this habit that they embrace bitter things as sweet.

In just the same way pregnant women, whose sense of taste is corrupted, think pitch and tallow sweeter than honey.

2.281 Yet no one's judgment, however corrupted by disease or habit, can change the nature of pleasure, any more than it can change the nature of anything else.

They distinguish several kinds among the pleasures they acknowledge as true.

Some they assign to the mind, others to the body.

To the mind they assign understanding, and the sweetness that comes from contemplating the truth.

To these is added the pleasant memory of a life well lived, and the confident hope of good to come.

Bodily pleasure they divide into two forms. The first is the kind that floods the senses with a clear, perceptible sweetness. Sometimes this comes from the renewal of those parts that the heat within us has used up.

2.287 These are restored by food and drink. At other times it comes when things the body has in excess are expelled: this kind of pleasure arises when we clear our bowels, or engage in the act of begetting children, or soothe an itch somewhere by rubbing or scratching.

Sometimes, though, a pleasure arises that neither restores anything our limbs lack nor removes anything that troubles them. It still stirs and tickles our senses, affects them and draws them to itself by some hidden power but with an evident motion. Such is the pleasure that comes from music.

2.289 The second form of bodily pleasure, they say, is the one that consists in a calm and balanced state of the body, which is simply each person's health when no ailment disturbs it.

If no pain assails it, health gives delight of itself, even if no pleasure applied from outside stirs it.

2.291 It makes less display of itself and presents itself less to the senses than the swollen craving for food and drink. Even so, many hold it to be the greatest of pleasures. Almost all the Utopians admit that it is a great one, the foundation, as it were, and the base of all the rest. Health alone can make life's condition peaceful and desirable, and once it is taken away there is no room left anywhere for any pleasure at all.

For to be free of pain without being healthy they call insensibility, certainly not pleasure.

2.293 They long ago rejected the view of those who held that stable and tranquil health should not be counted as a pleasure (for this question too has been vigorously debated among them). These people argued that the presence of health could not be felt except through some motion from outside.

Now, on the contrary, almost all of them agree that health is a pleasure, and indeed chief among pleasures.

2.295 For since there is pain in illness, they say, and pain is the implacable enemy of pleasure just as illness is of health, why should pleasure not in turn reside in the tranquility of health? They think it makes no difference to the question whether we say that illness is pain or that pain is in illness.

The result is the same either way.

Whether health is pleasure itself, or necessarily produces pleasure as fire produces heat, it follows in either case that those who have steady health cannot be without pleasure.

2.298 Besides, they say, when we eat, what else is happening but that health, which had begun to weaken, is fighting against hunger with food as its comrade in arms? As it gradually gains strength in the fight, its very progress back to its usual vigor produces the pleasure that refreshes us.

Will health, then, which rejoices in the fight, not rejoice once it has won the victory? Having at last happily recovered its former strength, the only thing it sought in the whole fight, will it at once fall into a stupor, and fail to recognize and embrace its own good? As for the claim that health is not felt, they think that very far from the truth.

2.300 Who is there, they ask, who when awake does not feel that he is healthy—except someone who is not? Who is so gripped by numbness or lethargy that he will not admit that health is pleasant and delightful to him? And what is delight but pleasure by another name? So they embrace above all the pleasures of the mind, which they consider the first and foremost of all, and they think that the greatest part of these comes from practicing the virtues and from the consciousness of a good life.

Among the pleasures the body supplies, they give the palm to health.

The sweetness of eating and drinking, and anything else that delights in the same way, they consider worth seeking, but only for the sake of health.

2.303 Such things are not pleasant in themselves, but only insofar as they resist the ill health that is always stealthily creeping up on us. A wise man would rather pray to be spared illness than wish for medicine, and would rather banish pains than seek consolations. In the same way it would be better for him not to need this kind of pleasure than to be soothed by it. Anyone who thinks himself blessed by this kind of pleasure must admit that he would be happiest of all if he were granted a life spent in endless hunger, thirst, itching, eating, drinking, scratching and rubbing. And who does not see how disgusting, and how wretched too, such a life would be? These are certainly the lowest pleasures of all, since they are the least pure, for they never come except joined with the opposite pains. The pleasure of eating, for instance, is coupled with hunger, and on terms that are far from fair.

2.304 For the pain is longer as well as sharper: it arises before the pleasure, and is not extinguished until the pleasure dies along with it.

So they think such pleasures should not be highly valued, except insofar as necessity requires them.

Yet they enjoy these too, and gratefully acknowledge the kindness of nature, their parent. With the most alluring sweetness she entices her offspring to do what they had to do so constantly out of necessity.

2.307 How tedious life would be if these daily diseases of hunger and thirst, like the other ailments that trouble us less often, had to be driven off with poisons and bitter medicines! Beauty, strength and agility, on the other hand, they gladly cherish as nature's own delightful gifts.

2.308 They also pursue, as pleasant seasonings of life, the pleasures that come in through the ears, eyes and nose, which nature meant to be peculiar and proper to human beings. For no other kind of animal looks up at the form and beauty of the universe, or is moved by the charm of scents except to tell one food from another, or distinguishes the harmonious and discordant intervals between sounds.

In all of these, however, they keep to this rule: a lesser pleasure must not hinder a greater, and pleasure must never give rise to pain, which they think necessarily follows if the pleasure is dishonorable.

2.310 But to despise the grace of beauty, wear down one's strength, turn agility into sloth, exhaust the body with fasting, injure one's health and spurn the rest of nature's favors—this is a different matter if someone neglects these advantages of his own while working more ardently for those of others or of the public, and expects a greater pleasure from God in return for that labor. Otherwise, to torment oneself for the empty shadow of virtue, to no one's benefit, or in order to bear more easily hardships that may never come: this they consider the height of madness. It is the mark of a mind both cruel to itself and utterly

ungrateful to nature, as if it disdained to owe her anything and so renounced all her gifts.

2.311 This is their view of virtue and pleasure. They believe that human reason can discover no truer one, unless some religion sent down from heaven inspires a person with something holier. Whether they are right or wrong in this, time does not allow us to examine, nor is there any need, since we have undertaken to describe their institutions, not to defend them as well.

But of this at least I am convinced: whatever the truth of these doctrines, there is nowhere a more excellent people or a happier commonwealth.

2.313 They are agile and vigorous in body, and stronger than their stature would suggest, though they are not short. Their soil is not everywhere fertile, nor is their climate very healthy. Yet they protect themselves against the air by moderation in diet, and remedy the land by hard work, so effectively that nowhere in the world is there a richer yield of crops and livestock, or are people's bodies longer-lived and subject to fewer diseases.

2.314 So you can see there not only the things farmers commonly do, carefully carried out to help by skill and labor a soil that is naturally rather poor. You can also see whole forests pulled up by the roots by the people's own hands in one place and planted in another. In doing this they have considered not fertility but transport, so that timber might be nearer to the sea, the rivers or the cities themselves; for grain can be carried a long way overland with less labor than timber.

They are an easygoing, good-humored and clever people who enjoy their leisure. They can put up with physical labor well enough when it is needed, but otherwise are not at all eager for it. In the pursuits of the mind they are tireless.

2.316 When they heard from us about the literature and learning of the Greeks (for in Latin there was nothing, apart from the historians and poets, that they seemed likely to think much of), it was remarkable how eagerly they begged us to let them master it with our teaching.

So we began to give lessons, at first more so as not to seem unwilling to take the trouble than because we expected any fruit from it.

But once we had gone on a little, their diligence soon convinced us that ours would not be spent in vain.

2.319 They began to imitate the shapes of the letters so easily, pronounce the words so readily, commit them to memory so quickly and reproduce them so accurately that it would have seemed a miracle to us. The explanation was that most of those who took up these studies, not only fired by their own enthusiasm but also directed by a decree of the council, were chosen from among the scholars, and were of the finest minds and mature age.

So in less than three years there was nothing in the language they needed help with: they could read good authors without stumbling, unless a corrupt text got in the way.

They took to that literature all the more easily, I suspect, because it was somewhat related to their own.

2.322 For I suspect that the nation is descended from the Greeks, because their language, though otherwise mostly Persian, keeps some traces of Greek in the names of cities and magistrates.

From me they have most of Plato's works, more of Aristotle's, and Theophrastus on plants, though I am sorry to say it is mutilated in many places. (When I was about to sail on my fourth voyage, I put a moderate bundle of books on board instead of merchandise, since I had quite made up my mind never to come back rather than to come back soon.)

During the voyage the Theophrastus was carelessly left lying about, and a monkey got hold of it. Romping and playing, it tore out a number of pages here and there and ripped them to pieces.[8]

2.325 Of the grammarians they have only Lascaris, for I did not bring Theodore with me, and no dictionary except Hesychius

8 Theophrastus (c. 371–287 BC), Aristotle's pupil and successor, wrote the first systematic works on botany.

and Dioscorides. They are very fond of Plutarch's essays, and are captivated by the wit and charm of Lucian too.

Of the poets they have Aristophanes, Homer and Euripides, and Sophocles in Aldus's small type.[9]

2.327 Of the historians they have Thucydides and Herodotus, and also Herodian. In medicine, too, my companion Tricius Apinatus had brought along some short treatises of Hippocrates and Galen's *Microtechne*, books they value highly. They need medicine less than almost any other people, yet nowhere is it held in greater honor, if only because they count the knowledge of it among the finest and most useful parts of philosophy. When with the help of this philosophy they explore the secrets of nature, they believe they not only gain wonderful pleasure from it but also win the highest favor with nature's author and maker. They think that he, like other craftsmen, has set out the visible mechanism of this world for human beings to behold, since he made them alone capable of so great a thing. And so, they believe, he holds dearer the curious and attentive observer who admires his work than the one who, like an animal without reason, dully and unmoved, ignores so great and wonderful a spectacle.[10]

2.328 So the minds of the Utopians, trained in learning, are wonderfully quick at inventing arts that contribute to the comforts of life.

Two of these, however, they owe to us, printing and papermaking—though not to us alone, for a good part of the credit is theirs.

2.330 We showed them texts printed by Aldus in paper books, and talked about the material paper is made from and the technique of printing, hinting rather than explaining, since none of

9 Constantine Lascaris and Theodore Gaza wrote the standard Greek grammars of the day; Hesychius compiled a Greek lexicon, and Dioscorides wrote on medicinal plants. Aldus Manutius, the Venetian printer, issued Greek classics in small, portable editions.

10 Tricius Apinatus is a joke name built on Martial's phrase *tricae apinaeque*, "trifles and nonsense." Galen's *Microtechne* ("Little Art") was a short handbook of medicine.

us was expert in either. They at once very shrewdly guessed how it was done. Until then they had written only on skins, bark and papyrus, but now they immediately tried making paper and printing letters. At first their attempts did not go very well, but by trying again and again they soon mastered both. They made such progress that, if they had copies of Greek books, there would be no shortage of volumes.

2.331 As it is, they have nothing more than what I have mentioned, but what they do have they have already reproduced in printed books, many thousands of copies.

Anyone who comes there to see the country and is recommended by some remarkable gift of mind, or by knowledge of many lands gained through long travel, is received with open arms; that is why our arrival was welcome.

For they love to hear what is happening all over the world.

But people do not come there very often to trade.

2.335 For what would they bring, except iron—or else gold and silver, which anyone would rather take home again? And as for the things to be exported from Utopia, they think it wiser to carry them out themselves than to have others come and fetch them. In this way they come to know foreign peoples everywhere better, and do not lose their experience and skill in seafaring.

SLAVES

Utopian slaves are convicted criminals and condemned foreigners, along with volunteers from poor nations.

2.336 As slaves they do not keep prisoners of war, except those captured in wars they have fought themselves, nor the children of slaves, nor anyone enslaved among other peoples whom they could buy. Their slaves are either people of their own whose crime is punished with slavery, or else, a far more common kind, people in foreign cities condemned to death for some offense.

Many of these they take away, sometimes bought cheaply, more often obtained for nothing.

2.338 They keep these kinds of slaves not only at constant labor but also in chains. Their own people they treat more harshly, regarding them as all the more hopeless and as deserving to be made a harsher example, because they had been so well trained for virtue by so excellent an upbringing and still could not be restrained from crime.

There is another kind of slave: some poor, hard-working drudge from another nation who chooses of his own accord to serve among them.

These they treat decently, and apart from giving them a little more work, as being used to it, they treat them almost as kindly as citizens. If one wants to leave, which does not often happen, they neither keep him against his will nor send him away empty-handed.

SICKNESS, DEATH AND MARRIAGE

The incurably sick may choose death; couples see each other naked before marrying; adultery brings slavery.

2.341 The sick, as I said, they care for with great affection, and they leave nothing whatever undone to restore them to health, whether by medicine or by diet.

Those suffering from an incurable disease they comfort by sitting with them, talking with them and giving them whatever relief they can.

2.343 But if a disease is not only incurable but also causes constant torment and agony, then the priests and magistrates urge the sufferer as follows. He is unequal to all the tasks of life, a burden to others and a trouble to himself, and is now outliving his own death. So he should not resolve to feed the plague and pestilence any longer. Since life is torture to him, he should not hesitate to die, but, relying on good hope, should free himself from that bitter life as from a prison or a torment, or else let others release him of his own free will. In doing this he will act

wisely, since by his death he will be cutting short not good things but torture. And since he will be following the counsel of the priests, who are the interpreters of God, he will act piously and devoutly as well.

2.344 Those whom they persuade end their lives either by voluntary starvation, or are put to sleep and released without any sensation of death.

But they put no one to death against his will, and if someone declines, they do not lessen their care for him in any way. To die in this way when persuaded, they think, is honorable.

Otherwise, anyone who takes his own life for a reason not approved by the priests and the council is thought worthy of neither earth nor fire: he is thrown unburied, in disgrace, into some marsh.

A woman does not marry before the age of eighteen.

A man does not marry until he is four years older.

2.349 If a man or a woman is convicted of secret sexual relations before marriage, he or she is severely punished and forbidden to marry at all, unless the governor pardons the offense. The father and mother of the household in whose house the offense was committed are also exposed to great disgrace, for having failed to do their duty carefully enough. They punish this offense so severely because they foresee that few would join in married love, in which they see that a whole lifetime must be spent with one person and all the troubles that go with it endured besides, unless people were carefully kept from promiscuous intercourse.

2.350 Further, in choosing spouses they observe, seriously and strictly, a custom that seemed to us utterly foolish and extremely ridiculous.

The woman, whether a virgin or a widow, is shown naked to her suitor by a grave and respectable matron; and in turn some decent man presents the suitor naked to the young woman.

2.352 When we laughed at this custom and disapproved of it as foolish, they in turn expressed amazement at the remarkable folly of all other nations. When buying a colt, where only a little

money is at stake, people are so cautious that they refuse to buy it, though it is almost bare already, until the saddle has been taken off and all the harness removed, for fear some sore is hidden under those coverings. Yet in choosing a wife, a choice that will bring either pleasure or disgust for the rest of their lives, they act so carelessly that they judge the whole woman from barely a hand's breadth of her, with the rest of her body wrapped in clothes, since nothing but her face can be seen. And so they join her to themselves at great risk of an unhappy union, if something about her later offends them.

2.353 Not everyone is so wise as to look only at character, and even in the marriages of the wise, bodily attractions add something to the virtues of the mind. Certainly some defect ugly enough to turn a man's heart wholly away from his wife could lie hidden under those wrappings, when it is no longer lawful to be separated from her in body. If such a defect happens by chance after the marriage has been contracted, each must bear his own lot. But before marriage the laws ought to protect people from being trapped. This had to be seen to all the more carefully because they are the only people in those parts of the world content with one spouse each, and among them marriage is seldom dissolved except by death, unless adultery is the cause, or intolerably bad behavior.

2.354 In such cases the council grants the offended party permission to take another spouse, while the other lives out his or her life in disgrace and without ever marrying again.

Otherwise, they will in no way tolerate a man divorcing an unwilling wife who is guilty of nothing, because some bodily misfortune has befallen her. For they judge it cruel to abandon someone just when she most needs comfort; and they think that old age, which brings illnesses and is itself an illness, would then have only an uncertain and weak loyalty to rely on.

2.356 It sometimes happens, however, that a husband and wife do not get on well together, and each has found someone else with whom they hope to live more happily. They then separate by mutual consent and contract new marriages—but not without

the authority of the council, which does not allow a divorce until its members and their wives have carefully examined the case.

Even then it is not easy, because they know that holding out the hope of a new marriage easily does nothing to strengthen the love between husband and wife.

Those who violate marriage are punished with the harshest slavery. If neither of them was unmarried, the injured parties, if they wish, divorce the adulterers and marry each other, or else whomever they like.

2.359 But if either of the injured parties goes on loving so undeserving a spouse, he or she is not forbidden to remain married, provided they are willing to follow the condemned partner into forced labor. And it sometimes happens that the repentance of the one and the dutiful devotion of the other move the governor to pity, and so win back the offender's freedom.

But a second offense is punished with death.

For other crimes no law lays down a fixed penalty; the council decides the punishment according to how atrocious, or how slight, each offense seems.

2.362 Husbands correct their wives, and parents their children, unless they have committed an offense so grave that public morals require public punishment. But in general the most serious crimes are punished with slavery. They think this is no less grim for the criminals, and more advantageous to the commonwealth, than hastily putting the guilty to death and getting rid of them at once.

For they are more useful through their labor than through their death, and their example deters others from similar crimes for longer. But if, treated in this way, they rebel and kick against it, then at last they are put to death like untameable beasts that neither prison nor chain can restrain.

2.364 Those who bear it patiently, however, are not left entirely without hope. Tamed by long hardship, they may show a repentance proving that their crime displeases them more than their punishment. Then their slavery is lightened or remitted, some-

times by the governor's prerogative, sometimes by vote of the people.

Attempting to seduce someone is no less dangerous than seducing them.

In every crime, in fact, they count a definite, deliberate attempt as equal to the deed. For they do not think that what was lacking should benefit someone who did everything in his power to make sure nothing was lacking.

2.367 They are fond of fools, keeping them as jesters. It is a great disgrace to insult them, but there is no ban on taking pleasure in their foolishness.

Indeed they think this is very much for the fools' own good. If someone is so stern and gloomy that he laughs at nothing a fool does or says, they do not entrust a fool to his care, for fear he would not be treated kindly enough by a man to whom he would be of no use, and not even of any amusement, which is his one gift.

2.369 Mocking someone with a deformity or disability is thought shameful and ugly—not in the one mocked, but in the mocker, who foolishly reproaches a person, as if it were a fault, for something that was not in his power to avoid.

They think it lazy and slothful not to take care of one's natural good looks, but they regard seeking help from cosmetics as disgraceful affectation.

For they know from experience that no beauty commends wives to their husbands as much as honesty of character and respect.

Some men are captivated by beauty alone, but no one is kept except by virtue and deference.

2.373 They not only deter people from crime by punishments but also invite them to virtue by offering honors. So they set up statues in the marketplace to distinguished men who have served the commonwealth well, in memory of their achievements, and also so that their ancestors' glory may be a spur and incentive to virtue for their descendants.

Anyone who canvasses for any office loses all hope of holding one.

They live together affectionately, since no magistrate is arrogant or frightening. They are called fathers, and they behave like fathers. They are given honor willingly, as they should be; it is not exacted from the unwilling.

FEW LAWS AND NO LAWYERS

The Utopians keep their laws few and plain, plead their own cases, and lend magistrates to neighboring peoples.

2.376 Not even the governor himself is marked out by robe or crown, but by a sheaf of grain that he carries, just as the high priest's emblem is a wax candle carried before him.

They have very few laws, for very few are enough for people with institutions like theirs.

Indeed, what they chiefly criticize in other peoples is that countless volumes of laws and commentaries are not enough for them.

2.379 They think it most unjust that anyone should be bound by laws that are either too many to be read through or too obscure to be understood by everyone. Moreover, they completely exclude lawyers, who handle cases cleverly and argue about the laws craftily. For they think it best that each person should plead his own case and tell the judge the same things he would have told his lawyer.

2.380 In this way there is less beating about the bush and the truth is more easily drawn out. The person speaking has not been taught any tricks by a lawyer, while the judge shrewdly weighs every point and helps simpler minds against the false accusations of the cunning. This is hard to achieve in other nations, with their huge heap of tangled laws.

But among the Utopians everyone is an expert in law.

For their laws, as I said, are very few, and besides, the plainer an interpretation is, the fairer they consider it.

2.383 All laws, they say, are promulgated only so that each person may be reminded of his duty by them. A subtler interpretation reminds very few, since few can follow it, while the simpler and more obvious meaning of the laws is plain to all. Besides, as far as the common people are concerned, who are the most numerous and most in need of reminding, what difference would it make whether you made no law at all, or interpreted the law you made in such a sense that no one could dig it out except by great intelligence and long argument? Ordinary people's plain judgment could not reach such a meaning, and a life taken up with earning a living would not leave time to investigate it.

2.384 Moved by these virtues of theirs, their neighbors—at least those who are free and independent, for the Utopians long ago freed many of them from tyranny—ask them for magistrates, some for one year, others for five. When these have completed their term of office, they escort them home with honor and praise, and bring new ones back with them to their own country.

2.385 And these peoples certainly provide for their commonwealth excellently and most wholesomely. For since its welfare and its ruin both depend on the character of its magistrates, whom could they have chosen more wisely than men who cannot be drawn away from what is right by any bribe, since money would be useless to men soon to return home, and who, being strangers to the citizens, cannot be swayed by partiality or by a grudge against anyone? These two evils, favoritism and greed, wherever they take hold of the courts, at once destroy all justice, the strongest sinew of a commonwealth.

The peoples who seek rulers from them the Utopians call allies; the others, on whom they have conferred benefits, they call friends.

WHY THEY MAKE NO TREATIES

The Utopians refuse to make treaties, holding that nature itself binds people together.

2.387 Treaties, which other nations so often make with one another, break and renew, they make with no nation at all.

What is the point of a treaty, they ask, as if nature did not bind one human being to another well enough? Would you really think that someone who has despised nature will care about words? They are drawn to this view above all because in those parts of the world the treaties and agreements of princes are usually kept with little good faith.

2.389 For in Europe, and particularly in those parts held by the faith and religion of Christ, the majesty of treaties is everywhere holy and inviolable. This is partly due to the justice and goodness of the princes themselves, and partly to their reverence for the supreme pontiffs and their fear of them. The popes themselves undertake nothing that they do not most scrupulously perform, and so they command all other princes to abide by their promises in every way, and compel those who try to wriggle out of them by pastoral censure and severity.

They are quite right to think it would be most shameful if there were no faith in the treaties of those who are given the special name of "the faithful."

2.391 But in that new world, which the equator scarcely separates as far from ours as their way of life and customs differ from ours, no one trusts treaties. The more numerous and solemn the ceremonies with which a treaty has been tied, the more quickly it is undone. Some quibble is easily found in the wording, which is deliberately drafted so cleverly that the parties can never be bound so tightly as not to find some way of slipping out and dodging the treaty and their good faith alike.

2.392 If they caught such cunning, or rather such fraud and deceit, interfering in a contract between private persons, they would cry out with great disdain that it was sacrilege and

deserved the gallows—these very same men who boast that they gave that advice to princes. The result is that justice seems to be either merely a humble plebeian virtue, sitting far below the height of royal majesty, or else that there are at least two kinds of it. One is suited to the common people: it goes on foot and creeps along the ground, and is fenced in on every side with many chains, so that it can never leap over the barriers. The other is the virtue of princes. Just as it is more august than the popular kind, so it is also far freer: it is allowed everything except what it does not care to do.

2.393 This behavior of princes over there, who keep treaties so badly, is, I think, the reason the Utopians make none. Perhaps they would change their minds if they lived here.

2.394 And yet they think that, even if treaties were perfectly kept, it is a bad custom that has grown up of making treaties at all. It leads people to think they are born enemies and adversaries to one another, as if no fellowship of nature joined one people to another, though they are separated only by a short distance, a hill or a stream. They think they are right to seek each other's destruction unless treaties forbid it. And even when treaties are made, friendship does not grow; the license to plunder remains, insofar as, through careless drafting, nothing forbidding it has been cautiously enough included in the terms.

The Utopians, on the contrary, think that no one should be regarded as an enemy who has done no wrong.

2.396 The fellowship of nature, they say, takes the place of a treaty, and people are better and more strongly bound to one another by goodwill than by pacts, by the heart than by words.

WARFARE

The Utopians hate war, fight only for defense or for friends, and prefer bribery and cunning to bloodshed.

2.397 War they utterly abhor as something fit only for beasts, though no kind of beast practices it as constantly as human beings do. Contrary to the custom of almost all nations, they

think nothing so inglorious as glory sought in war. So although they train constantly in military discipline on fixed days—not only the men but the women too—so as not to be unfit for war when it is needed, they do not go to war lightly. They do so only to defend their own territory, or to drive invading enemies out of their friends' lands, or when, out of pity for some people oppressed by tyranny, they use their own forces to free them from the tyrant's yoke and from slavery, which they do out of humanity.

2.398 They do give aid to their friends, though not always for defense; sometimes it is to repay and avenge injuries done to them. But they do so only if they are consulted themselves before anything has been done, if the cause has been approved, and if restitution has been demanded and not made; then they are the ones who start the war. They decide on war not only whenever booty has been carried off in an enemy raid, but also, and far more fiercely, when their friends' merchants anywhere in the world suffer unjust persecution under color of justice, whether on the pretext of unjust laws or by the twisting of good ones.

2.399 The war the Utopians waged on behalf of the Nephelogetes against the Alaopolitans shortly before our time had no other origin than this. A wrong had been done, as the Nephelogetes saw it, to Nephelogete merchants among the Alaopolitans under the pretext of law. Whether it was law or wrong, it was avenged by so savage a war, with the passions and resources of the surrounding nations added to the forces and hatreds of both sides, that some of the most flourishing peoples were shaken and others badly afflicted. Evils sprang from evils, until it ended at last in the enslavement and surrender of the Alaopolitans. They passed into the power of the Nephelogetes (for the Utopians were not fighting for themselves), a nation in no way comparable to the Alaopolitans while they were flourishing.[11]

2.400 So fiercely do the Utopians pursue wrongs done to their friends, even in money matters—but not wrongs done to them-

selves. If they are cheated anywhere and lose their goods, then, provided no violence is done to anyone's person, their anger goes only so far as to stop trading with that nation until satisfaction has been made.

It is not that they care less for their citizens than for their allies. But they take it harder when their allies' money is seized than when their own is, because their friends' merchants lose their own private property and feel the loss as a serious wound.

Their own citizens, however, lose nothing but public property, and besides, only what was abundant at home and practically surplus; otherwise it would not have been sent abroad.

2.403 So the loss happens without anyone feeling it.

Therefore they think it too cruel to avenge with many deaths a loss whose effects none of their people feels, either in life or in livelihood.

But if any of their own people is maimed or killed anywhere through wrongdoing, whether by public decision or private action, they send envoys to establish the facts, and nothing will satisfy them short of the surrender of the guilty; otherwise they declare war at once.

The guilty who are handed over they punish with death or slavery.

2.407 They are not only sorry but ashamed of a bloody victory, thinking it foolish to have paid too high a price even for the most precious goods. But they boast greatly of enemies defeated and overcome by skill and cunning. For such a victory they hold a public triumph and set up a trophy, as if for a brave deed. Only then do they pride themselves on having acted manfully and valiantly, whenever they have won in a way no animal but man could win, that is, by strength of mind.

For bears, lions, boars, wolves, dogs and the other beasts, they say, fight with strength of body. Most of them surpass us in strength and ferocity, but all of them are surpassed by us in intelligence and reason.

11 The joke names are Greek: Nephelogetes means "people born of the clouds," and Alaopolitans roughly "citizens of a blind city."

2.409 In war they aim at one thing only: to obtain what, had they obtained it beforehand, would have kept them from going to war. Or, if circumstances make that impossible, they exact such severe vengeance from those they hold responsible that terror deters them from daring the same thing in future.

These are the targets they set for their purpose, and they pursue them promptly, but in such a way that their first concern is to avoid danger rather than to win praise or fame.

2.411 So as soon as war is declared, they arrange for many placards, confirmed with their public seal, to be put up secretly and all at once in the most conspicuous places in enemy territory. On these they promise enormous rewards to anyone who kills the enemy prince. They also set smaller rewards, though still handsome ones, for the head of each of those whose names they list in the same notices: these are the men they regard, after the prince himself, as the authors of the plan against them.

Whatever reward they fix for an assassin, they double for anyone who brings one of the proscribed men to them alive. They even invite the proscribed men themselves to turn against their comrades, offering them the same rewards and immunity besides.

2.413 So very soon the enemy come to suspect everyone else, and among themselves they are neither trusting nor trustworthy, living in the greatest fear and no less danger.

It is well known that it has often happened that a good many of them, and above all the prince himself, have been betrayed by those in whom they placed their greatest hope.

So easily do bribes drive people to any crime—and the Utopians set no limit to their bribes.

2.416 But they are aware how great a risk they are urging people to run, so they take care that the size of the danger is matched by the scale of the rewards. They therefore promise not only an immense amount of gold but also estates with large revenues in very safe places among their friends, to be owned outright and forever, and they deliver on these promises in complete good faith.

Other peoples condemn this custom of bidding for the enemy and buying him up as the cruel act of a degenerate mind. The Utopians consider it very much to their credit. They think it wise, because in this way they get through the greatest wars without any battle at all. They also think it humane and merciful, because by the death of a few guilty men they ransom the many innocent lives that would have been lost in the fighting.

2.418 Those lives are partly those of their own people and partly those of the enemy, whose rank and file they pity almost as much as their own. They know that these men do not go to war of their own accord but are driven to it by the madness of their rulers.

If things do not work out this way, they sow the seeds of dissension and nourish them, leading the ruler's brother, or one of the nobles, to hope that he may seize the throne.

If internal factions die down, they stir up the peoples bordering on the enemy and set them against him, digging up some old claim, of the kind kings are never short of. They promise their own resources for the war and supply money lavishly.

2.421 Their own citizens they supply very sparingly. They hold them so uniquely dear, and value one another so highly, that they would not willingly exchange any one of their own people for the enemy's ruler.

Gold and silver, on the other hand, they spend without reluctance, since they keep all of it for this one purpose, and they would live no less comfortably even if they spent every bit of it.

2.423 Indeed, besides their wealth at home, they also have an unlimited treasure abroad, since a great many nations, as I said before, are in their debt. So they send to war soldiers hired from everywhere, especially from the Zapoletes. This people lives five hundred miles east of Utopia. They are rough, rustic and fierce, and they prefer the forests and rugged mountains in which they were raised.

They are a hardy race, able to endure heat, cold and toil, strangers to every refinement, not interested in farming, care-

less about their houses and their clothing alike; the only thing they look after is their livestock.

For the most part they live by hunting and plunder.[12]

2.426 Born for war alone, they eagerly look for opportunities to wage it, seize them greedily when they find them, and go out in great numbers to offer themselves cheaply as soldiers to anyone who wants them.

The only art of living they know is the one by which death is sought. They fight fiercely, and with incorruptible loyalty, for those in whose pay they serve.

But they bind themselves to no fixed term. They join a side on the understanding that the next day, if the enemy offers higher pay, they will stand with the enemy, and the day after that, if they are invited back with a little more, they will return again.

2.429 Hardly a war breaks out in which a good part of them are not in both armies. So it happens every day that men bound by ties of blood, who were hired on the same side and were on the closest terms with one another, are soon afterward split up into opposing forces and clash as enemies. With hostile hearts, forgetting their kinship and unmindful of their friendship, they run each other through. Nothing drives them to destroy each other except that they have been hired by different princes for a paltry sum of money—a sum they reckon so exactly that the addition of a single penny to their daily pay will easily induce them to change sides.

So quickly have they soaked up greed, which is nevertheless of no use to them.

2.431 For what they earn with their blood they immediately squander on dissipation, and a wretched kind of dissipation at that.

This people fights for the Utopians against anyone at all, because the Utopians pay more for their services than anyone else.

For just as the Utopians seek out good men to use, so they seek out these, the worst of men, to misuse. When the need

arises, they spur them on with great promises and expose them to the greatest dangers, from which a large part of them usually never return to claim what was promised. To the survivors they pay in good faith what they promised, so that they may be fired up for similar ventures.

2.434 For they do not care in the least how many of them they lose, believing that they would earn the deepest gratitude of the human race if they could purge the world of all the scum of so foul and wicked a people.

Next to these they use the forces of those on whose behalf they are taking up arms, and after them auxiliary squadrons from their other friends.

Last of all they add their own citizens, and put one of them, a man of proven valor, in command of the whole army.

2.437 They appoint two deputies under him, on these terms: while he is unharmed, both remain private men; if he is captured or killed, one of the two succeeds him, as if by inheritance, and the other, should it come to that, succeeds the first. This is so that the whole army is not thrown into confusion when its general is in danger, since the fortunes of war are changeable.

Each city raises its levy from those who volunteer. No one is pushed into military service abroad against his will, for they are convinced that a man who is timid by nature will not only do nothing brave himself but will also strike fear into his comrades.

2.439 But if war breaks out against their own country, they put cowards of this kind, provided they are physically fit, on board ships mixed in with better men, or station them here and there along the walls, where there is no way to run away. So shame before their own people, the enemy at close quarters, and the loss of any hope of flight overwhelm their fear, and often sheer necessity turns into courage.

2.440 Just as none of them is dragged to a foreign war against his will, so when women wish to accompany their husbands on

campaign, the Utopians are so far from forbidding it that they actually encourage them and spur them on with praise. Once they have set out, each woman is stationed beside her own husband in the battle line. Each man is also surrounded by his own children, in-laws and relatives, so that those whom nature most strongly prompts to help one another are close at hand to support each other.

2.441 It is a great disgrace for a husband or wife to come home without the other, or for a son to return having lost his father. The result is that when it comes to hand-to-hand fighting, provided the enemy holds firm, the battle is long and grievous and fought out to the point of annihilation.

2.442 Indeed, just as they do everything possible to avoid having to fight themselves, so long as they can get through a war with hired substitutes, so when they cannot avoid going into battle themselves, they take it on as fearlessly as they had prudently declined it while they could. They are not so fierce in the first charge; they grow stronger gradually as the fighting goes on and endures, with spirits so steadfast that they can be killed sooner than turned back. For the secure livelihood that each has at home, and freedom from anxious thoughts about their descendants (a worry that everywhere breaks noble spirits), make their spirits lofty and too proud to accept defeat.

2.443 Besides this, their skill in military discipline gives them confidence. Finally, the right opinions in which they have been steeped from childhood, through both teaching and the good institutions of their commonwealth, add virtue to the rest. Because of it they neither hold life so cheap as to squander it rashly nor so wickedly dear as to cling to it greedily and shamefully when honor urges them to lay it down.

2.444 While the battle rages everywhere at its fiercest, a band of picked young men, sworn together and vowed to the task, single out the enemy general for themselves. They attack him openly, they fall on him from ambush; he is targeted at long range and

12 Zapoletes: from Greek, roughly “eager sellers”—people who readily sell themselves.

at close quarters, and is assaulted by a long, unbroken wedge, with fresh men constantly sent up to take the places of the exhausted. It rarely happens, unless he looks to his safety by running away, that he is not killed or does not fall alive into the enemy's hands.

2.445 If the victory is theirs, they do not go on a rampage of slaughter; they would rather capture those who flee than kill them. Nor do they ever pursue fugitives without keeping one line drawn up under the standards in the meantime. Indeed, unless they have been beaten in every other part of the field and have won the victory with their last line, they would rather let the enemy escape entirely than get into the habit of pursuing fugitives with their own ranks in disorder. They remember that more than once this has happened to them: the main body of their army had been beaten and routed, and the enemy, exulting in their victory, were chasing after them this way and that; then a few of their men, placed in reserve and watching for their chance, suddenly attacked the enemy as they straggled about, scattered and careless in their presumed security, and changed the outcome of the whole battle. So a victory that seemed certain and beyond doubt was wrenched from the enemy's hands, and the conquered in their turn conquered the conquerors.

2.446 It is hard to say whether they are craftier at setting ambushes or more cautious in avoiding them. You would think they were preparing to flee when nothing is further from their minds; and, on the other hand, when they have decided to do so, you would suppose it was the last thing they were thinking of.

For if they feel themselves too hard pressed, whether by numbers or by position, they either move camp by night with the column in silence, or give the enemy the slip by some stratagem, or withdraw by day so gradually, keeping such good order, that it is no less dangerous to attack them as they retire than as they advance.

2.448 They fortify their camps very carefully with a deep, wide ditch, throwing the excavated earth inward. They do not use laborers for this: the work is done by the soldiers' own hands,

and the whole army is at work except for those who stand guard under arms in front of the rampart in case of sudden attack.

So with so many working at it, they complete large fortifications enclosing a wide area faster than you would believe.

The armor they use to take blows is strong, yet not awkward for any movement or gesture, so much so that they do not find it troublesome even when swimming.

2.451 For swimming in armor is among the first things they practice in their military training. Their long-range weapons are arrows, which they shoot with great force and great accuracy, not only on foot but also from horseback. At close quarters they use not swords but axes, which are deadly both for their edge and for their weight, whether they strike with a cut or a thrust.

They are very ingenious at devising war machines, and once these are built they hide them very carefully, so that they are not revealed before they are needed and so become more of a joke than a help. In building them they look above all to making them easy to transport and easy to turn.

They keep truces made with the enemy so faithfully that they will not break them even when provoked.

2.454 They do not lay waste enemy territory or burn the crops. On the contrary, as far as possible they take care that the crops are not trampled by the feet of men or horses, reckoning that they are growing for their own use.

They harm no one who is unarmed unless he is a spy.

Cities that surrender they protect; and even those taken by storm they do not plunder. They put to death those who prevented the surrender and make slaves of the rest of the defenders.

The whole noncombatant population they leave untouched.

If they learn that some people had urged surrender, they give them a share of the property of the condemned, and they reward their auxiliaries with the rest of the confiscated goods.

For none of the Utopians themselves takes anything from the spoils.

2.460 When the war is over, they charge the costs not to the friends on whose behalf they incurred them but to the

conquered. On this account they demand partly money, which they set aside for similar uses in future wars, and partly estates in the conquered country, of no small value, to be theirs in perpetuity.

2.461 They now have revenues of this kind among many nations. These have arisen gradually for various reasons and have grown to more than seven hundred thousand ducats a year. To manage them they send out some of their citizens as their collectors, who live there in grand style and play the part of great lords; even so, a great deal is left over to be paid into the treasury—unless they prefer to lend it to the same nation, which they often do until they need to use it, and it hardly ever happens that they ask for all of it back.

From these estates they assign a share to those who, at their urging, undertake the kind of risk I described earlier.

2.463 If any ruler takes up arms against them and prepares to invade their territory, they immediately go out to meet him in great strength beyond their own borders. For they do not lightly wage war on their own soil, and no necessity is so great as to force them to admit foreign auxiliaries onto their island.

THE RELIGIONS OF THE UTOPIANS

Most Utopians worship one unknown god, and many accepted Christianity when Raphael's party brought it.

2.464 There are different religions not only across the island but also within each city. Some worship the sun as a god, others the moon, others one of the planets. There are some who revere a man whose virtue or glory once shone out, not only as a god but even as the supreme god.

But by far the greatest part of them, and by far the wisest, believe in none of these, but in a single divine power: unknown, eternal, immeasurable, inexplicable, beyond the grasp of the human mind, pervading this whole universe not by its bulk but by its power. They call this being the Father.

2.466 To him alone they attribute the origins, growth, progress, changes and ends of all things, and they give divine honors to no one else.

Indeed, all the others too, though their beliefs differ, agree with these in one respect: they hold that there is one supreme being, to whom both the making of the universe and its providential government are due, and all of them alike call him in their native language Mithras. Where they disagree is that this same being is identified differently by different people.

Yet each of them holds that whatever it is he regards as supreme is exactly the same nature to whose sole divine power and majesty, by the consent of all peoples, the sovereignty over all things is attributed.[13]

2.469 But little by little they are all turning away from this variety of superstitions and coming together in the one religion that seems to surpass the others in reason.

There is no doubt that the others would have vanished long ago, except that whenever someone was thinking of changing his religion and chance put some misfortune in his way, fear interpreted it not as an accident but as sent from heaven—as though the deity whose worship he was abandoning were avenging an impious intention against itself.

2.471 But after they heard from us the name of Christ, his teaching, his way of life and his miracles, and the no less wonderful constancy of so many martyrs, whose freely shed blood brought so many nations far and wide over to their faith, you would not believe how readily they too came over to it. Perhaps God was secretly inspiring them; or perhaps it seemed to them closest to the belief that is most widespread among them. Though I would suppose that this also carried no small weight: they had heard that Christ approved of his followers' common way of life, and that it is still practiced in the truest communities of Christians.[14]

13 Mithras: the name of an ancient Persian god of light, borrowed here for the Utopians' supreme being.

14 The truest communities: the monastic orders, whose shared life echoed the first Christians' holding of "all things in common" (Acts 2:44).

2.472 At any rate, whatever the reason, a good many joined our religion and were washed in the sacred water of baptism.

But among the four of us (for only that many were left, two having died), none, I am sorry to say, was a priest.

So although they have been initiated into the other rites, they still lack those sacraments that among us only priests can confer. Yet they understand them and long for them more than anything. Indeed, they are even now earnestly debating among themselves whether someone chosen from their own number could receive the character of the priesthood without being sent by a Christian bishop. And they did seem about to choose one; but when I left, they had not yet done so.

2.475 Even those who do not accept the Christian religion try to deter no one from it and attack no one who has embraced it.

There was one exception: a member of our company was punished while I was there.

He had just been baptized, and, against our advice, he spoke publicly about the worship of Christ with more zeal than prudence. He grew so heated that he not only preferred our rites to the others but condemned all the rest outright.

He shouted that they were profane in themselves and their worshipers impious and sacrilegious, deserving to be punished with eternal fire.

2.479 When he had been preaching like this for a long time, they arrested him and put him on trial, not for contempt of religion but for stirring up a riot among the people. He was convicted and sentenced to exile. For it is one of their most ancient institutions that no one should suffer for his religion.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Utopus decreed that everyone may follow any religion, except those who deny providence and the soul's immortality.

2.480 Right from the beginning Utopus had heard that before his arrival the inhabitants had been constantly fighting among themselves over religion. He had also noticed that this very fact

—that the sects were at odds with one another and each fought separately for their country—had given him the opportunity to conquer them all. Once he had won, therefore, he decreed first of all that everyone might follow whatever religion he pleased. Each might also try to bring others over to his own, but only so far as to argue for it calmly and modestly with reasons, not to tear down the others bitterly if persuasion failed; he was not to use any force, and was to refrain from abuse. Anyone who contends about religion too insolently they punish with exile or slavery.

2.481 Utopus made this law not only for the sake of peace, which he saw being utterly destroyed by constant conflict and implacable hatred, but also because he thought such a decree was in the interest of religion itself. On religion he did not dare to lay down anything rashly, since he was uncertain whether God, desiring varied and manifold worship, might inspire different people differently. He certainly judged it both arrogant and foolish to demand by force and threats that what you believe to be true should seem so to everyone. Moreover, even if one religion is entirely true and all the others false, he readily foresaw that, provided the matter was handled with reason and moderation, the power of truth would in the end emerge and prevail of its own accord. But if the struggle were carried on with weapons and riots, then, since the worst people are always the most stubborn, the best and holiest religion would be smothered by the emptiest superstitions, like crops choked by thorns and brambles.

2.482 So he left the whole matter open and allowed each person to believe what he thought right.

There was one exception: he solemnly and strictly forbade anyone to sink so far below the dignity of human nature as to believe that souls perish with the body, or that the world drifts along by chance, with no providence. And so they believe that after this life punishments are decreed for vices and rewards laid up for virtue. Anyone who thinks otherwise they do not even count as a human being, since he has lowered the lofty

nature of his soul to the level of a beast's paltry body. Still less do they count him among their citizens, since, if it were not for fear, he would set all their institutions and customs at naught.

2.484 For who can doubt that a man who has nothing to fear beyond the laws and nothing to hope for beyond the body will try either to evade the public laws of his country by secret cunning or to break them by force, in order to serve his own private desires?

So no honor is granted to a man of that mind, no magistracy entrusted to him, no public office put in his charge.

Everywhere he is looked down on as someone of a sluggish and base nature.

2.487 They do not, however, punish him in any way, because they are convinced that no one has it in his power to believe whatever he likes. Nor do they use threats to force him to disguise his opinion, and they do not tolerate pretense and lies, which, as next door to fraud, they hate remarkably.

But they forbid him to argue for his opinion, at least among the common people.

In private, with the priests and serious-minded men, they not only allow it but even encourage it, confident that this madness will in the end give way to reason.

2.490 There are others too, and not a few, who are not prohibited, since they are neither wholly without reason on their side nor wicked. Erring in quite the opposite direction, they believe that the souls of animals too are eternal.

These souls, however, are not comparable to ours in dignity, nor destined for an equal happiness. For almost all of them hold it as certain and settled that human bliss will be so immense that they lament anyone's illness but no one's death—except when they see someone torn from life anxiously and against his will.

This they regard as a very bad omen, as though the soul, without hope and with a guilty conscience, dreaded its departure from some secret foreboding of punishment to come.

2.493 Moreover, they think that such a man's arrival will not be at all welcome to God, since when summoned he does not come running gladly but is dragged unwilling and reluctant.

Those who witness this kind of death are horrified by it. So they carry out the dead sadly and in silence, and after praying God to be gracious to the departed spirit and mercifully forgive its weaknesses, they bury the body in the earth.

2.495 On the other hand, no one mourns those who have died cheerfully and full of good hope. They accompany their funerals with singing, commend their souls to God with great affection, and finally cremate their bodies with reverence rather than grief, and on the spot they set up a column inscribed with the dead person's record. When they get home, they go over his character and deeds, and no part of his life is dwelt on more often or more gladly than his joyful death.

They think that this remembrance of goodness is the most effective incentive to virtue for the living and the most welcome form of honor for the dead. They believe that the dead are present when they are being talked about, though invisible, since mortal sight is so dull.

2.497 For it would not suit the lot of the blessed to lack the freedom to go wherever they wish; and it would be utterly ungrateful of them to have cast off all desire to visit their friends, to whom mutual love and affection bound them while they lived. They suppose that in good men this affection, like their other good qualities, is increased rather than diminished after death.

So they believe that the dead move among the living, watching what they say and do. As a result they go about their business more confidently, trusting in such guardians, as it were; and the belief that their ancestors are present keeps them from doing anything shameful in secret.

Auguries and the other kinds of divination belonging to empty superstition, to which other peoples pay great attention, they utterly disregard and laugh at.

2.500 Miracles, on the other hand, which happen without any help from nature, they revere as works and witnesses of the

divine presence. They say that such miracles often occur there, and sometimes, in great and critical matters, they seek them through public prayer with sure confidence, and obtain them.

They think that the contemplation of nature, and the praise of God that arises from it, is a form of worship pleasing to him. There are some, however, and indeed not a few, who, led by religion, neglect learning, pursue no knowledge of things, and allow themselves no leisure at all. They have resolved to earn happiness after death solely by hard work and by good services to others.

2.502 So some of them nurse the sick; others repair roads, clean out ditches, rebuild bridges, dig turf, sand and stones, fell trees and saw them up, and bring wood, grain and other things into the cities by cart. They act as servants, and more than slaves, not only for the public but for private individuals too.

Whatever work there is anywhere that is rough, hard or dirty, the kind from which toil, disgust and despair would deter most people, they take entirely on themselves, gladly and cheerfully. They secure leisure for others while they themselves are constantly at work and toil. Yet they do not claim credit for it, nor do they criticize the lives of others or boast of their own.

2.504 The more they make themselves servants, the more they are honored by everyone.

There are, however, two sects of them. One consists of celibates, who abstain not only from sex altogether but also from eating meat—some of them from all animal food. Rejecting the pleasures of this present life entirely as harmful, they strive, with vigils and sweat, for the life to come alone, in the hope of attaining it soon; meanwhile they are cheerful and vigorous.

The other sect is no less eager for work, but prefers marriage. They do not despise its comforts, and they think that they owe work to nature and children to their country.

They avoid no pleasure that does not keep them from their work.

2.508 They like the meat of four-footed animals precisely because they think that such food makes them stronger for any kind of work.

The Utopians consider these the wiser, but the others the holier.

If the first group based their preference of celibacy to marriage and of a hard life to a peaceful one on reasoning, the Utopians would laugh at them; but as it is, since they profess to be led by religion, the Utopians look up to them and revere them.

For there is nothing they are more careful about than not to pronounce rashly on any religion.

These, then, are the people whom they call by a special name in their language, Buthrescae, a word that may be rendered in Latin as *religiosi*, "the religious."[15]

PRIESTS AND WORSHIP

Raphael describes the Utopians' few elected priests, their festivals, their dim temples and their common prayer.

2.513 Their priests are of exceptional holiness, and therefore very few: no more than thirteen in each city, one for each temple, except when they go to war. Then seven of them set out with the army, and seven others take their places in the meantime. When the first return, each recovers his own place, and those left over serve as assistants to the chief priest until they succeed in turn to those who die. For one of them is placed over the rest.

They are elected by the people, as the other magistrates are, by secret ballot to prevent partisanship. Once elected, they are consecrated by their own college.

2.515 They preside over divine worship, look after religious matters and act, as it were, as censors of morals; and it is considered a great disgrace to be summoned or reprimanded by them for not living an upright life.

But while exhorting and admonishing is their business, restraining and punishing offenders belongs to the governor

and the other magistrates—except that the priests bar from worship those they find to be flagrantly wicked. There is hardly any punishment people dread more.

For they are branded with the deepest disgrace and tormented by a secret religious fear; nor will their bodies be safe for long, since unless they quickly convince the priests of their repentance, they are arrested and pay the council the penalty for impiety.

2.518 The priests are in charge of educating children and young people, and they pay no more attention to learning than to morals and virtue. They take the greatest pains to instill, from the very start, good opinions that are useful for preserving their commonwealth into children's minds while they are still tender and pliable. Once these opinions have taken deep root in children, they stay with them as adults throughout their lives, and they do great service in safeguarding the state of the commonwealth, which never declines except through vices, and vices are born of wrong opinions.

The priests, unless they are women (for that sex is not excluded, though women are chosen more rarely, and only if they are widows of advanced age), have as wives the finest women of the people.

2.520 No office among the Utopians is held in greater honor—so much so that even if priests commit some crime, they are not subject to any public court but are left to God alone and to themselves.

For they think it wrong for a mortal hand to touch someone, however wicked, who has been dedicated to God in so singular a way, as a consecrated offering.

This custom is all the easier for them to observe because the priests are so few and chosen with such care.

2.523 For it rarely happens that someone who, as the best of the good, has been raised to so high a dignity purely on account of his virtue should sink into corruption and vice. And even if that

15 Buthrescae: from Greek, roughly "exceedingly devout." In More's Latin, *religiosi* was the usual word for monks and friars.

did happen, as human nature is changeable, still, since they are so few and have no power apart from their honor, nothing of great consequence need be feared from them that could harm the public.

2.524 They keep their priests so few and far between so that the dignity of the order, which they now treat with such veneration, may not be cheapened by sharing the honor with many—especially since they think it hard to find many men good enough to be equal to that dignity, which calls for more than ordinary virtues.

And they are esteemed no less among foreign nations than among their own people. This is easily seen from the practice from which, I think, that esteem also arose.

2.526 When the armies are engaged in battle, the priests kneel apart, not very far off, dressed in their sacred vestments, with their palms stretched toward heaven. They pray first of all for peace, and next for victory for their own side, but bloodless for both. When their own side is winning, they run down into the battle line and restrain their men from raging against the routed enemy. Merely to have seen them and called on them is enough to save a man's life if they are present, and touching their flowing robes protects the rest of his possessions too from all the harms of war.

2.527 As a result, among all peoples everywhere they have gained such veneration and so much true majesty that they have often brought back from the enemy no less safety for their own citizens than they had brought from their own side to the enemy. For it is well known that on occasion, when their own line had given way and the situation was desperate, when their men were turning to flight and the enemy were rushing in to kill and plunder, the slaughter was halted by the intervention of the priests; the two forces were separated, and peace was agreed and settled on fair terms.

2.528 For there has never been a people so savage, cruel and barbarous that they did not regard the persons of these priests as sacred and inviolable. They celebrate as festivals the first and

last day of each month, and likewise of the year, which they divide into months measured by the circuit of the moon, just as the course of the sun rounds off the year.

In their language they call the first days Cynemerni and the last days Trapemerni, words that mean as much as "First-feasts" and "End-feasts."

Their temples are remarkable to see: not only elaborately built but also—as was necessary, since there are so few of them—able to hold a vast crowd.

2.531 Yet they are all rather dark. They say this was not done out of ignorance of building but on the advice of the priests, who think that too much light scatters the thoughts, while a dimmer and, as it were, uncertain light gathers the mind and intensifies religious feeling. Religion there is not the same for everyone; yet all its forms, however varied and manifold, converge by different paths on the worship of the divine nature, as on a single goal. So nothing is seen or heard in the temples that does not seem to suit them all in common.

2.532 If any sect has a rite of its own, each person performs it within the walls of his own home. Public worship is conducted in such a way that it takes nothing away from any of the private forms.

So no image of the gods is to be seen in the temple, so that each may be free to conceive of God in whatever form he wishes, in keeping with his own deepest devotion. They call on God by no particular name except Mithras, a word in which all agree on the one nature of the divine majesty, whatever that may be. No prayers are composed that anyone could not say without offense to his own sect.

2.534 So on the End-feast days they gather in the temple in the evening, still fasting, to thank God for the successful course of the year or month whose last day that feast is. The next day, which is a First-feast, they flock to the temples in the morning to pray for good fortune and success in the coming year or month, which they are about to begin with that festival.

2.535 On the End-feasts, before they go to the temple, wives kneel at home at their husbands' feet and children at their parents', confess that they have done wrong, either by committing some fault or by performing some duty carelessly, and ask pardon for their error. So if any little cloud of domestic resentment has arisen, it is dispelled by such amends, and they can take part in the sacrifices with pure and serene minds; for they consider it sacrilege to attend with a troubled one. Therefore, if they are aware of feeling hatred or anger toward anyone, they do not present themselves at the sacrifices until they have been reconciled and have purged their feelings, for fear of swift and severe punishment.

2.536 When they arrive, the men go to the right side of the temple and the women separately to the left. Then they seat themselves so that the males of each household sit in front of the father of that household, while the mother of the household brings up the rear of the women.

In this way they make sure that everyone's every gesture in public is watched by those whose authority and discipline govern them at home. They also take great care that throughout the temple the young are seated beside the old. Otherwise children left in the charge of children might spend in childish nonsense the very time in which they ought most of all to develop a religious awe of the powers above—the greatest and almost the only incentive to virtue.

2.538 They kill no animal in their sacrifices, and they do not think that the divine mercy delights in blood and slaughter, since God gave life to living creatures so that they might live.

They burn incense and other fragrances too, and they also carry many candles. This is not because they do not know that such things add nothing to the divine nature—any more than people's prayers do. But they like this harmless kind of worship, and they feel that these scents and lights, and the other ceremonies too, somehow lift people up and make them rise with livelier minds to the worship of God.

2.540 In the temple the people are dressed in white. The priest wears vestments of many colors, wonderful in workmanship and design, though the material is not especially precious. For they are not woven with gold or set with rare stones but made of the feathers of various birds, worked with such skill and artistry that no valuation of the material could ever match the worth of the work.

Moreover, they say that certain hidden mysteries are contained in these birds' feathers and plumes, and in the particular patterns in which they are arranged on the priest's vestment. Once people learn their meaning (which is carefully handed down by the priests), they are reminded of God's benefits to them, of the devotion they owe God in return, and of their duties to one another.

2.542 As soon as the priest, dressed in this way, comes out of the sanctuary, everyone at once falls to the ground in reverence, in so deep a silence on every side that the very sight of it strikes a kind of awe, as if some deity were present.

After remaining on the ground a little while, they rise at a signal from the priest. Then they sing praises to God, interspersed with music played on instruments, most of them quite different in shape from those seen in our part of the world.

Many of these far surpass ours in sweetness, just as some are not even to be compared with ours.

2.545 But in one respect they are undoubtedly far ahead of us. All their music, whether played on instruments or sung by the human voice, imitates and expresses natural feelings so well, fits the sound so closely to the subject—whether the words are a supplication or are joyful, conciliatory, troubled, mournful or angry—and represents the sense of the matter so vividly in the shape of the melody, that it moves, pierces and inflames the hearts of the listeners to a wonderful degree. At the end, priest and people together recite solemn prayers in set words, composed so that what all recite together each person can apply privately to himself.

2.546 In these prayers each person acknowledges God as the author of creation, of the government of the world and of all other good things besides, and gives him thanks for so many benefits received—and in particular that, by God's favor, he has been born into the happiest of commonwealths and has been given the religion he hopes is the truest.

2.547 If he is mistaken in this, or if there is something better than either that God approves of more, he prays that God in his goodness will let him know it, for he is ready to follow wherever God leads him. But if this form of commonwealth is the best and his religion the truest, then he prays that God will grant him constancy in them and bring all other mortals to the same way of life and the same belief about God—unless there is something in this variety of religions that pleases God's inscrutable will.

2.548 Finally he prays that God will take him to himself after an easy death, though how soon or how late he does not presume to say.

Yet if it could be done without offense to God's majesty, he would much rather suffer the hardest of deaths and come to God than be kept away from him longer by the most prosperous course of life.

When this prayer has been said, they prostrate themselves on the ground again, and shortly afterward they rise and go off to lunch. The rest of the day they spend in games and military exercises.

RAPHAEL'S VERDICT

Raphael calls Utopia the only true commonwealth and every other state a conspiracy of the rich.

2.551 I have described to you as truthfully as I could the form of that commonwealth which I consider not only the best but the only one that can rightly claim the name of commonwealth.

For everywhere else people talk about the public good but look after their private interests.

Here, where nothing is private, they take public business seriously. In both cases they have good reason.

For elsewhere, how many people are there who do not know that, however prosperous the commonwealth may be, they will starve unless they make some provision for themselves? So necessity compels them to think that they must look after themselves rather than the people, that is, other people.

2.555 Here, on the contrary, where everything belongs to everyone, no one doubts that, as long as care is taken to keep the public granaries full, no individual will ever lack anything he needs.

For the distribution of goods is not grudging, and there is no one poor there and no beggar. And though no one owns anything, everyone is rich.

2.557 For what can be richer than to live with a glad and tranquil mind, free of every worry? Not fretting about one's livelihood, not harassed by a wife's nagging demands, not fearing poverty for one's son, not anxious about a daughter's dowry, but secure about the livelihood and happiness of oneself and of all one's family—wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, and as long a line of descendants as the well-born like to count on.

Moreover, those who once worked but can no longer do so are provided for no less than those who are working now.

2.559 At this point I would like someone to dare to compare this fairness with the justice of other nations. May I perish if I find among them any trace at all of justice or fairness.

2.560 For what kind of justice is it that some nobleman, or goldsmith, or moneylender, or anyone else of those who either do nothing at all or do work of a kind not very necessary to the commonwealth, should obtain a lavish and splendid life from idleness or from superfluous business? Meanwhile the laborer, the carter, the craftsman and the farmer work so hard and so constantly that even beasts of burden could hardly bear it, at work so necessary that no commonwealth could last a single year without it—and yet they earn so meager a living and lead so wretched a life that the condition of beasts of burden might

seem far preferable. For the beasts' labor is not so unceasing, their food is not much worse, and even tastes better to them, and meanwhile they have no fear about the future.

2.561 But these men are driven on in the present by barren and fruitless toil and are tormented to death by the thought of a destitute old age. Their daily wage is too small to last even for that day, let alone to increase and leave something over that could be put aside each day for their old age.

Is not this an unjust and ungrateful commonwealth? It lavishes such rewards on the so-called gentry, on goldsmiths and the rest of that sort, who are either idle or mere flatterers and contrivers of empty pleasures, while it makes no kindly provision for farmers, charcoal burners, laborers, carters and craftsmen, without whom there would be no commonwealth at all.

2.563 Instead, having exploited their labors in the prime of life, when at last they are weighed down with age and illness and in need of everything, it forgets all their sleepless nights, forgets all their many great services, and most ungratefully repays them with a most miserable death.

What of the fact that the rich every day scrape away something from the daily allowance of the poor, not only by private fraud but even by public laws? So what before already seemed unjust—repaying those who have deserved best of the commonwealth with the worst ingratitude—they have now perverted still further and, by publishing a law, turned into justice.

2.565 So when I consider and turn over in my mind all the commonwealths that flourish anywhere today, nothing, so help me God, comes to mind but a kind of conspiracy of the rich, who look after their own interests under the name and title of the commonwealth. They devise and think up every means and trick by which, first, they may keep without fear of losing it what they have amassed by wicked tricks, and then may buy the work and labor of all the poor as cheaply as possible and exploit them.

Once the rich have decreed that these schemes are to be observed in the name of the public—which includes the poor—they become laws.

2.567 Yet even when the worst of men, with insatiable greed, have divided among themselves all the things that would have been enough for everyone, how far they still are from the happiness of the Utopian commonwealth! There the very use of money has been abolished, and with it all greed for money; and what a mass of misery has been cut away, what a crop of crimes pulled up by the roots! For who does not know that frauds, thefts, robberies, brawls, riots, quarrels, seditions, murders, treasons and poisonings—which daily punishments avenge rather than restrain—would die along with money once money was done away with? And that fear, anxiety, worries, toil and sleepless nights would perish the very moment money did? Indeed poverty itself, which alone seemed to need money, would at once diminish if money were entirely abolished everywhere. To make this clearer, think of some barren and unproductive year in which famine carried off many thousands of people. I firmly maintain that if the granaries of the rich had been searched at the end of that scarcity, enough grain would have been found that, had it been distributed among those who died of starvation and wasting disease, no one would have noticed that niggardliness of sky and soil at all. So easily could people get a living, were it not that blessed money—a splendid invention, of course, meant to open the way to a living—is the one thing that blocks our way to a living.

2.568 I have no doubt that the rich themselves are aware of this. They know perfectly well how much better it would be to lack nothing necessary than to have an abundance of superfluities, to be rescued from so many evils than to be besieged by great riches.

2.569 Nor do I doubt for a moment that either each person's regard for his own interest, or the authority of Christ our Savior (who in his great wisdom could not fail to know what was best, and in his goodness would not have advised what he did not

know to be best), would long ago have easily drawn the whole world to adopt the laws of this commonwealth—were it not for the resistance of one single monster, the chief and parent of all plagues: pride. Pride measures prosperity not by her own advantages but by other people's disadvantages. Pride would not even wish to be made a goddess if no wretches were left for her to lord it over and insult.

2.570 She needs wretches whose miseries will make her own good fortune shine brighter by comparison, whose poverty she can torment and inflame by displaying her wealth.

This serpent from hell, creeping through the hearts of mortals, holds them back like a remora and stops them from taking a better way of life. Since it is fixed in people too deeply to be easily pulled out, I am glad that this form of commonwealth, which I would gladly wish for all, has at least fallen to the lot of the Utopians. They have followed ways of life by which they have laid the foundations of a commonwealth that is not only most happy but also, so far as human conjecture can foresee, destined to last forever.[16]

2.572 For since at home, along with the other vices, they have rooted out ambition and faction, there is no danger of their suffering from internal discord, which alone has ruined the well-defended power of many cities.

As long as harmony at home and their sound institutions remain intact, the envy of all the neighboring rulers—which has often tried it in the past and has always been beaten back—could never shake or disturb that realm.

MORE'S REPLY

More privately doubts much of what he heard but would rather wish than hope for many Utopian ways.

2.574 When Raphael had finished his account, many things came to my mind that seemed to have been very absurdly established

16 Remora: the sucker fish believed in antiquity to hold ships back; the Latin verb *remoratur* ("holds back") plays on its name.

in the customs and laws of that people. This was true not only of their way of waging war, their rites and religion, and other institutions of theirs besides, but above all of the very thing that is the chief foundation of their whole system: their common life and common livelihood, without any use of money. That one thing utterly overthrows all nobility, magnificence, splendor and majesty, which, in the common opinion, are the true glories and ornaments of a commonwealth. Yet I knew he was tired from talking, and I was not quite sure whether he could bear to have his views contradicted, especially since I remembered that he had criticized some people on that very score, as if they were afraid they would not be thought wise enough unless they found something to pick at in other people's ideas. So I praised both their institutions and his speech, took him by the hand and led him in to supper—though I said first that we would find another time to think more deeply about these same matters and to talk them over with him more fully. I only wish that might happen someday.

2.575 Meanwhile, though I cannot agree with everything that was said—by a man, for all that, unquestionably very learned and very experienced in human affairs—I readily admit that there are many things in the Utopian commonwealth that I would rather wish for than hope to see in our cities.