



# UTOPIA

## DISCOURSES OF RAPHAEL HYTHLODAY, OF THE BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH

1 Henry VIII., the unconquered King of England, a prince adorned with all the virtues that become a great monarch, having some differences of no small consequence with Charles the most serene Prince of Castile, sent me into Flanders, as his ambassador, for treating and composing matters between them. I was colleague and companion to that incomparable man Cuthbert Tonsal, whom the King, with such universal applause, lately made Master of the Rolls; but of whom I will say  
5 nothing; not because I fear that the testimony of a friend will be suspected, but rather because his learning and virtues are too great for me to do them justice, and so well known, that they need not my commendations, unless I would, according to the proverb, "Show the sun with a lantern." Those that were appointed by the Prince to treat with us, met us at Bruges, according to agreement; they were all worthy men. The Margrave of Bruges was their head, and the chief man among them; but he that was esteemed the wisest, and that spoke for the rest, was George Temse, the Provost of  
10 Casselsee: both art and nature had concurred to make him eloquent: he was very learned in the law; and, as he had a great capacity, so, by a long practice in affairs, he was very dexterous at unravelling them. After we had several times met, without coming to an agreement, they went to Brussels for some days, to know the Prince's pleasure; and, since our business would admit it, I went to Antwerp. While I was there, among many that visited me, there was one that was more acceptable to me than any other, Peter Giles, born at Antwerp, who is a man of great honour, and of a good  
15 rank in his town, though less than he deserves; for I do not know if there be anywhere to be found a more learned and a better bred young man; for as he is both a very worthy and a very knowing person, so he is so civil to all men, so particularly kind to his friends, and so full of candour and affection, that there is not, perhaps, above one or two anywhere to be found, that is in all respects so perfect a friend: he is extraordinarily modest, there is no artifice in him, and yet no man has more of a prudent simplicity. His conversation was so pleasant and so innocently cheerful, that his company in a great measure lessened any longings to go back to my country, and to my wife and children,  
20 which an absence of four months had quickened very much. One day, as I was returning home from mass at St. Mary's, which is the chief church, and the most frequented of any in Antwerp, I saw him, by accident, talking with a stranger, who seemed past the flower of his age; his face was tanned, he had a long beard, and his cloak was hanging carelessly about him, so that, by his looks and habit, I concluded he was a seaman. As soon as Peter saw me, he came and saluted me, and as I was returning his civility, he took me aside, and pointing to him with whom he had been

1       discoursing, he said, “Do you see that man? I was just thinking to bring him to you.” I answered,  
“He should have been very welcome on your account.” “And on his own too,” replied he, “if you  
knew the man, for there is none alive that can give so copious an account of unknown nations and  
countries as he can do, which I know you very much desire.” “Then,” said I, “I did not guess amiss,  
for at first sight I took him for a seaman.” “But you are much mistaken,” said he, “for he has not  
5       sailed as a seaman, but as a traveller, or rather a philosopher. This Raphael, who from his family  
carries the name of Hythloday, is not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but is eminently learned in the  
Greek, having applied himself more particularly to that than to the former, because he had given  
himself much to philosophy, in which he knew that the Romans have left us nothing that is  
valuable, except what is to be found in Seneca and Cicero. He is a Portuguese by birth, and was so  
desirous of seeing the world, that he divided his estate among his brothers, ran the same hazard as  
10       Americus Vesputius, and bore a share in three of his four voyages that are now published; only he  
did not return with him in his last, but obtained leave of him, almost by force, that he might be one  
of those twenty-four who were left at the farthest place at which they touched in their last voyage to  
New Castile. The leaving him thus did not a little gratify one that was more fond of travelling than  
of returning home to be buried in his own country; for he used often to say, that the way to heaven  
was the same from all places, and he that had no grave had the heavens still over him. Yet this  
disposition of mind had cost him dear, if God had not been very gracious to him; for after he, with  
15       five Castilians, had travelled over many countries, at last, by strange good fortune, he got to Ceylon,  
and from thence to Calicut, where he, very happily, found some Portuguese ships; and, beyond all  
men’s expectations, returned to his native country.” When Peter had said this to me, I thanked him  
for his kindness in intending to give me the acquaintance of a man whose conversation he knew  
would be so acceptable; and upon that Raphael and I embraced each other. After those civilities  
were past which are usual with strangers upon their first meeting, we all went to my house, and  
20       entering into the garden, sat down on a green bank and entertained one another in discourse. He  
told us that when Vesputius had sailed away, he, and his companions that stayed behind in New  
Castile, by degrees insinuated themselves into the affections of the people of the country, meeting  
often with them and treating them gently; and at last they not only lived among them without  
danger, but conversed familiarly with them, and got so far into the heart of a prince, whose name  
and country I have forgot, that he both furnished them plentifully with all things necessary, and also  
25       with the conveniences of travelling, both boats when they went by water, and waggons when they  
trained over land: he sent with them a very faithful guide, who was to introduce and recommend  
them to such other princes as they had a mind to see: and after many days’ journey, they came to  
towns, and cities, and to commonwealths, that were both happily governed and well peopled.  
Under the equator, and as far on both sides of it as the sun moves, there lay vast deserts that were  
parched with the perpetual heat of the sun; the soil was withered, all things looked dismally, and all  
places were either quite uninhabited, or abounded with wild beasts and serpents, and some few men,  
30       that were neither less wild nor less cruel than the beasts themselves. But, as they went farther, a new  
scene opened, all things grew milder, the air less burning, the soil more verdant, and even the beasts  
were less wild: and, at last, there were nations, towns, and cities, that had not only mutual commerce  
among themselves and with their neighbours, but traded, both by sea and land, to very remote  
countries. There they found the conveniencies of seeing many countries on all hands, for no ship  
went any voyage into which he and his companions were not very welcome. The first vessels that  
35       they saw were flat-bottomed, their sails were made of reeds and wicker, woven close together, only

1 some were of leather; but, afterwards, they found ships made with round keels and canvas sails, and  
in all respects like our ships, and the seamen understood both astronomy and navigation. He got  
wonderfully into their favour by showing them the use of the needle, of which till then they were  
utterly ignorant. They sailed before with great caution, and only in summer time; but now they  
count all seasons alike, trusting wholly to the loadstone, in which they are, perhaps, more secure  
5 than safe; so that there is reason to fear that this discovery, which was thought would prove so much  
to their advantage, may, by their imprudence, become an occasion of much mischief to them. But it  
were too long to dwell on all that he told us he had observed in every place, it would be too great a  
digression from our present purpose: whatever is necessary to be told concerning those wise and  
prudent institutions which he observed among civilised nations, may perhaps be related by us on a  
more proper occasion. We asked him many questions concerning all these things, to which he  
10 answered very willingly; we made no inquiries after monsters, than which nothing is more common;  
for everywhere one may hear of ravenous dogs and wolves, and cruel men-eaters, but it is not so easy  
to find states that are well and wisely governed.

As he told us of many things that were amiss in those new-discovered countries, so he reckoned up  
not a few things, from which patterns might be taken for correcting the errors of these nations  
among whom we live; of which an account may be given, as I have already promised, at some other  
15 time; for, at present, I intend only to relate those particulars that he told us, of the manners and laws  
of the Utopians: but I will begin with the occasion that led us to speak of that commonwealth. After  
Raphael had discoursed with great judgment on the many errors that were both among us and these  
nations, had treated of the wise institutions both here and there, and had spoken as distinctly of the  
customs and government of every nation through which he had past, as if he had spent his whole life  
in it, Peter, being struck with admiration, said, "I wonder, Raphael, how it comes that you enter into  
20 no king's service, for I am sure there are none to whom you would not be very acceptable; for your  
learning and knowledge, both of men and things, is such, that you would not only entertain them  
very pleasantly, but be of great use to them, by the examples you could set before them, and the  
advices you could give them; and by this means you would both serve your own interest, and be of  
great use to all your friends." "As for my friends," answered he, "I need not be much concerned,  
having already done for them all that was incumbent on me; for when I was not only in good health,  
25 but fresh and young, I distributed that among my kindred and friends which other people do not  
part with till they are old and sick: when they then unwillingly give that which they can enjoy no  
longer themselves. I think my friends ought to rest contented with this, and not to expect that for  
their sakes I should enslave myself to any king whatsoever." "Soft and fair!" said Peter; "I do not  
mean that you should be a slave to any king, but only that you should assist them and be useful to  
them." "The change of the word," said he, "does not alter the matter." "But term it as you will,"  
30 replied Peter, "I do not see any other way in which you can be so useful, both in private to your  
friends and to the public, and by which you can make your own condition happier." "Happier?"  
answered Raphael, "is that to be compassed in a way so abhorrent to my genius? Now I live as I will,  
to which I believe, few courtiers can pretend; and there are so many that court the favour of great  
men, that there will be no great loss if they are not troubled either with me or with others of my  
temper." Upon this, said I, "I perceive, Raphael, that you neither desire wealth nor greatness; and,  
indeed, I value and admire such a man much more than I do any of the great men in the world. Yet  
35 I think you would do what would well become so generous and philosophical a soul as yours is, if

1 you would apply your time and thoughts to public affairs, even though you may happen to find it a  
little uneasy to yourself; and this you can never do with so much advantage as by being taken into  
the council of some great prince and putting him on noble and worthy actions, which I know you  
would do if you were in such a post; for the springs both of good and evil flow from the prince over  
a whole nation, as from a lasting fountain. So much learning as you have, even without practice in  
5 affairs, or so great a practice as you have had, without any other learning, would render you a very fit  
counsellor to any king whatsoever.” “You are doubly mistaken,” said he, “Mr. More, both in your  
opinion of me and in the judgment you make of things: for as I have not that capacity that you fancy  
I have, so if I had it, the public would not be one jot the better when I had sacrificed my quiet to it.  
For most princes apply themselves more to affairs of war than to the useful arts of peace; and in these  
I neither have any knowledge, nor do I much desire it; they are generally more set on acquiring new  
10 kingdoms, right or wrong, than on governing well those they possess: and, among the ministers of  
princes, there are none that are not so wise as to need no assistance, or at least, that do not think  
themselves so wise that they imagine they need none; and if they court any, it is only those for whom  
the prince has much personal favour, whom by their fawning and flatteries they endeavour to fix to  
their own interests; and, indeed, nature has so made us, that we all love to be flattered and to please  
ourselves with our own notions: the old crow loves his young, and the ape her cubs. Now if in such  
15 a court, made up of persons who envy all others and only admire themselves, a person should but  
propose anything that he had either read in history or observed in his travels, the rest would think  
that the reputation of their wisdom would sink, and that their interests would be much depressed if  
they could not run it down: and, if all other things failed, then they would fly to this, that such or  
such things pleased our ancestors, and it were well for us if we could but match them. They would  
set up their rest on such an answer, as a sufficient confutation of all that could be said, as if it were a  
great misfortune that any should be found wiser than his ancestors. But though they willingly let go  
20 all the good things that were among those of former ages, yet, if better things are proposed, they  
cover themselves obstinately with this excuse of reverence to past times. I have met with these  
proud, morose, and absurd judgments of things in many places, particularly once in England.”  
“Were you ever there?” said I. “Yes, I was,” answered he, “and stayed some months there, not long  
after the rebellion in the West was suppressed, with a great slaughter of the poor people that were  
engaged in it.

25 “I was then much obliged to that reverend prelate, John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury,  
Cardinal, and Chancellor of England; a man,” said he, “Peter (for Mr. More knows well what he  
was), that was not less venerable for his wisdom and virtues than for the high character he bore: he  
was of a middle stature, not broken with age; his looks begot reverence rather than fear; his  
conversation was easy, but serious and grave; he sometimes took pleasure to try the force of those  
30 that came as suitors to him upon business by speaking sharply, though decently, to them, and by  
that he discovered their spirit and presence of mind; with which he was much delighted when it did  
not grow up to impudence, as bearing a great resemblance to his own temper, and he looked on such  
persons as the fittest men for affairs. He spoke both gracefully and weightily; he was eminently  
skilled in the law, had a vast understanding, and a prodigious memory; and those excellent talents  
with which nature had furnished him were improved by study and experience. When I was in  
England the King depended much on his counsels, and the Government seemed to be chiefly  
35 supported by him; for from his youth he had been all along practised in affairs; and, having passed

1 through many traverses of fortune, he had, with great cost, acquired a vast stock of wisdom, which is  
not soon lost when it is purchased so dear. One day, when I was dining with him, there happened  
to be at table one of the English lawyers, who took occasion to run out in a high commendation of  
the severe execution of justice upon thieves, 'who,' as he said, 'were then hanged so fast that there  
were sometimes twenty on one gibbet!' and, upon that, he said, 'he could not wonder enough how it  
5 came to pass that, since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left, who were still robbing in  
all places.' Upon this, I (who took the boldness to speak freely before the Cardinal) said, 'There was  
no reason to wonder at the matter, since this way of punishing thieves was neither just in itself nor  
good for the public; for, as the severity was too great, so the remedy was not effectual; simple theft  
not being so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his life; no punishment, how severe soever,  
being able to restrain those from robbing who can find out no other way of livelihood. In this,' said  
10 I, 'not only you in England, but a great part of the world, imitate some ill masters, that are readier to  
chastise their scholars than to teach them. There are dreadful punishments enacted against thieves,  
but it were much better to make such good provisions by which every man might be put in a  
method how to live, and so be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it.'  
'There has been care enough taken for that,' said he; 'there are many handicrafts, and there is  
husbandry, by which they may make a shift to live, unless they have a greater mind to follow ill  
15 courses.' 'That will not serve your turn,' said I, 'for many lose their limbs in civil or foreign wars, as  
lately in the Cornish rebellion, and some time ago in your wars with France, who, being thus  
mutilated in the service of their king and country, can no more follow their old trades, and are too  
old to learn new ones; but since wars are only accidental things, and have intervals, let us consider  
those things that fall out every day. There is a great number of noblemen among you that are  
themselves as idle as drones, that subsist on other men's labour, on the labour of their tenants,  
whom, to raise their revenues, they pare to the quick. This, indeed, is the only instance of their  
20 frugality, for in all other things they are prodigal, even to the beggaring of themselves; but, besides  
this, they carry about with them a great number of idle fellows, who never learned any art by which  
they may gain their living; and these, as soon as either their lord dies, or they themselves fall sick, are  
turned out of doors; for your lords are readier to feed idle people than to take care of the sick; and  
often the heir is not able to keep together so great a family as his predecessor did. Now, when the  
25 stomachs of those that are thus turned out of doors grow keen, they rob no less keenly; and what else  
can they do? For when, by wandering about, they have worn out both their health and their clothes,  
and are tattered, and look ghastly, men of quality will not entertain them, and poor men dare not do  
it, knowing that one who has been bred up in idleness and pleasure, and who was used to walk about  
with his sword and buckler, despising all the neighbourhood with an insolent scorn as far below him,  
is not fit for the spade and mattock; nor will he serve a poor man for so small a hire and in so low a  
30 diet as he can afford to give him.' To this he answered, 'This sort of men ought to be particularly  
cherished, for in them consists the force of the armies for which we have occasion; since their birth  
inspires them with a nobler sense of honour than is to be found among tradesmen or ploughmen.'  
'You may as well say,' replied I, 'that you must cherish thieves on the account of wars, for you will  
never want the one as long as you have the other; and as robbers prove sometimes gallant soldiers, so  
soldiers often prove brave robbers, so near an alliance there is between those two sorts of life. But  
this bad custom, so common among you, of keeping many servants, is not peculiar to this nation. In  
France there is yet a more pestiferous sort of people, for the whole country is full of soldiers, still  
35 kept up in time of peace (if such a state of a nation can be called a peace); and these are kept in pay

1 upon the same account that you plead for those idle retainers about noblemen: this being a maxim of  
those pretended statesmen, that it is necessary for the public safety to have a good body of veteran  
soldiers ever in readiness. They think raw men are not to be depended on, and they sometimes seek  
occasions for making war, that they may train up their soldiers in the art of cutting throats, or, as  
Sallust observed, “for keeping their hands in use, that they may not grow dull by too long an  
5 intermission.” But France has learned to its cost how dangerous it is to feed such beasts. The fate of  
the Romans, Carthaginians, and Syrians, and many other nations and cities, which were both  
overturned and quite ruined by those standing armies, should make others wiser; and the folly of this  
maxim of the French appears plainly even from this, that their trained soldiers often find your raw  
men prove too hard for them, of which I will not say much, lest you may think I flatter the English.  
Every day’s experience shows that the mechanics in the towns or the clowns in the country are not  
10 afraid of fighting with those idle gentlemen, if they are not disabled by some misfortune in their  
body or dispirited by extreme want; so that you need not fear that those well-shaped and strong men  
(for it is only such that noblemen love to keep about them till they spoil them), who now grow  
feeble with ease and are softened with their effeminate manner of life, would be less fit for action if  
they were well bred and well employed. And it seems very unreasonable that, for the prospect of a  
war, which you need never have but when you please, you should maintain so many idle men, as will  
always disturb you in time of peace, which is ever to be more considered than war. But I do not  
15 think that this necessity of stealing arises only from hence; there is another cause of it, more peculiar  
to England.’ ‘What is that?’ said the Cardinal: ‘The increase of pasture,’ said I, ‘by which your  
sheep, which are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men and  
unpeople, not only villages, but towns; for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a  
softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men, the  
20 dobots! not contented with the old rents which their farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they,  
living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the  
course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and enclose grounds  
that they may lodge their sheep in them. As if forests and parks had swallowed up too little of the  
land, those worthy countrymen turn the best inhabited places into solitudes; for when an insatiable  
wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to enclose many thousand acres of ground, the  
owners, as well as tenants, are turned out of their possessions by trick or by main force, or, being  
25 wearied out by ill usage, they are forced to sell them; by which means those miserable people, both  
men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families  
(since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing  
whither to go; and they must sell, almost for nothing, their household stuff, which could not bring  
them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end  
(for it will be soon spent), what is left for them to do but either to steal, and so to be hanged (God  
30 knows how justly!), or to go about and beg? and if they do this they are put in prison as idle  
vagabonds, while they would willingly work but can find none that will hire them; for there is no  
more occasion for country labour, to which they have been bred, when there is no arable ground  
left. One shepherd can look after a flock, which will stock an extent of ground that would require  
many hands if it were to be ploughed and reaped. This, likewise, in many places raises the price of  
corn. The price of wool is also so risen that the poor people, who were wont to make cloth, are no  
more able to buy it; and this, likewise, makes many of them idle: for since the increase of pasture  
35 God has punished the avarice of the owners by a rot among the sheep, which has destroyed vast

1 numbers of them—to us it might have seemed more just had it fell on the owners themselves. But,  
suppose the sheep should increase ever so much, their price is not likely to fall; since, though they  
cannot be called a monopoly, because they are not engrossed by one person, yet they are in so few  
hands, and these are so rich, that, as they are not pressed to sell them sooner than they have a mind  
to it, so they never do it till they have raised the price as high as possible. And on the same account  
5 it is that the other kinds of cattle are so dear, because many villages being pulled down, and all  
country labour being much neglected, there are none who make it their business to breed them. The  
rich do not breed cattle as they do sheep, but buy them lean and at low prices; and, after they have  
fattened them on their grounds, sell them again at high rates. And I do not think that all the  
inconveniences this will produce are yet observed; for, as they sell the cattle dear, so, if they are  
10 consumed faster than the breeding countries from which they are brought can afford them, then the  
stock must decrease, and this must needs end in great scarcity; and by these means, this your island,  
which seemed as to this particular the happiest in the world, will suffer much by the cursed avarice of  
a few persons: besides this, the rising of corn makes all people lessen their families as much as they  
can; and what can those who are dismissed by them do but either beg or rob? And to this last a man  
of a great mind is much sooner drawn than to the former. Luxury likewise breaks in apace upon you  
to set forward your poverty and misery; there is an excessive vanity in apparel, and great cost in diet,  
and that not only in noblemen's families, but even among tradesmen, among the farmers themselves,  
15 and among all ranks of persons. You have also many infamous houses, and, besides those that are  
known, the taverns and ale-houses are no better; add to these dice, cards, tables, football, tennis, and  
quoits, in which money runs fast away; and those that are initiated into them must, in the  
conclusion, betake themselves to robbing for a supply. Banish these plagues, and give orders that  
those who have dispeopled so much soil may either rebuild the villages they have pulled down or let  
out their grounds to such as will do it; restrain those engrossings of the rich, that are as bad almost as  
20 monopolies; leave fewer occasions to idleness; let agriculture be set up again, and the manufacture of  
the wool be regulated, that so there may be work found for those companies of idle people whom  
want forces to be thieves, or who now, being idle vagabonds or useless servants, will certainly grow  
thieves at last. If you do not find a remedy to these evils it is a vain thing to boast of your severity in  
punishing theft, which, though it may have the appearance of justice, yet in itself is neither just nor  
convenient; for if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from  
their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them,  
25 what else is to be concluded from this but that you first make thieves and then punish them?

“While I was talking thus, the Counsellor, who was present, had prepared an answer, and had  
resolved to resume all I had said, according to the formality of a debate, in which things are generally  
repeated more faithfully than they are answered, as if the chief trial to be made were of men's  
memories. ‘You have talked prettily, for a stranger,’ said he, ‘having heard of many things among us  
30 which you have not been able to consider well; but I will make the whole matter plain to you, and  
will first repeat in order all that you have said; then I will show how much your ignorance of our  
affairs has misled you; and will, in the last place, answer all your arguments. And, that I may begin  
where I promised, there were four things—’ ‘Hold your peace!’ said the Cardinal; ‘this will take up  
too much time; therefore we will, at present, ease you of the trouble of answering, and reserve it to  
our next meeting, which shall be to-morrow, if Raphael's affairs and yours can admit of it. But,  
35 Raphael,’ said he to me, ‘I would gladly know upon what reason it is that you think theft ought not

1 to be punished by death: would you give way to it? or do you propose any other punishment that  
will be more useful to the public? for, since death does not restrain theft, if men thought their lives  
would be safe, what fear or force could restrain ill men? On the contrary, they would look on the  
mitigation of the punishment as an invitation to commit more crimes.’ I answered, ‘It seems to me  
a very unjust thing to take away a man’s life for a little money, for nothing in the world can be of  
5 equal value with a man’s life: and if it be said, “that it is not for the money that one suffers, but for  
his breaking the law,” I must say, extreme justice is an extreme injury: for we ought not to approve  
of those terrible laws that make the smallest offences capital, nor of that opinion of the Stoics that  
makes all crimes equal; as if there were no difference to be made between the killing a man and the  
taking his purse, between which, if we examine things impartially, there is no likeness nor  
proportion. God has commanded us not to kill, and shall we kill so easily for a little money? But if  
10 one shall say, that by that law we are only forbid to kill any except when the laws of the land allow of  
it, upon the same grounds, laws may be made, in some cases, to allow of adultery and perjury: for  
God having taken from us the right of disposing either of our own or of other people’s lives, if it is  
pretended that the mutual consent of men in making laws can authorise man-slaughter in cases in  
which God has given us no example, that it frees people from the obligation of the divine law, and so  
makes murder a lawful action, what is this, but to give a preference to human laws before the divine?  
and, if this is once admitted, by the same rule men may, in all other things, put what restrictions  
15 they please upon the laws of God. If, by the Mosaical law, though it was rough and severe, as being  
a yoke laid on an obstinate and servile nation, men were only fined, and not put to death for theft,  
we cannot imagine, that in this new law of mercy, in which God treats us with the tenderness of a  
father, He has given us a greater licence to cruelty than He did to the Jews. Upon these reasons it is,  
that I think putting thieves to death is not lawful; and it is plain and obvious that it is absurd and of  
ill consequence to the commonwealth that a thief and a murderer should be equally punished; for if  
20 a robber sees that his danger is the same if he is convicted of theft as if he were guilty of murder, this  
will naturally incite him to kill the person whom otherwise he would only have robbed; since, if the  
punishment is the same, there is more security, and less danger of discovery, when he that can best  
make it is put out of the way; so that terrifying thieves too much provokes them to cruelty.

“But as to the question, ‘What more convenient way of punishment can be found?’ I think it much  
easier to find out that than to invent anything that is worse; why should we doubt but the way that  
25 was so long in use among the old Romans, who understood so well the arts of government, was very  
proper for their punishment? They condemned such as they found guilty of great crimes to work  
their whole lives in quarries, or to dig in mines with chains about them. But the method that I liked  
best was that which I observed in my travels in Persia, among the Polylerits, who are a considerable  
and well-governed people: they pay a yearly tribute to the King of Persia, but in all other respects  
they are a free nation, and governed by their own laws: they lie far from the sea, and are environed  
30 with hills; and, being contented with the productions of their own country, which is very fruitful,  
they have little commerce with any other nation; and as they, according to the genius of their  
country, have no inclination to enlarge their borders, so their mountains and the pension they pay to  
the Persian, secure them from all invasions. Thus they have no wars among them; they live rather  
conveniently than with splendour, and may be rather called a happy nation than either eminent or  
famous; for I do not think that they are known, so much as by name, to any but their next  
35 neighbours. Those that are found guilty of theft among them are bound to make restitution to the



1 owner, and not, as it is in other places, to the prince, for they reckon that the prince has no more  
right to the stolen goods than the thief; but if that which was stolen is no more in being, then the  
goods of the thieves are estimated, and restitution being made out of them, the remainder is given to  
their wives and children; and they themselves are condemned to serve in the public works, but are  
neither imprisoned nor chained, unless there happens to be some extraordinary circumstance in their  
5 crimes. They go about loose and free, working for the public: if they are idle or backward to work  
they are whipped, but if they work hard they are well used and treated without any mark of  
reproach; only the lists of them are called always at night, and then they are shut up. They suffer no  
other uneasiness but this of constant labour; for, as they work for the public, so they are well  
entertained out of the public stock, which is done differently in different places: in some places  
whatever is bestowed on them is raised by a charitable contribution; and, though this way may seem  
10 uncertain, yet so merciful are the inclinations of that people, that they are plentifully supplied by it;  
but in other places public revenues are set aside for them, or there is a constant tax or poll-money  
raised for their maintenance. In some places they are set to no public work, but every private man  
that has occasion to hire workmen goes to the market-places and hires them of the public, a little  
lower than he would do a freeman. If they go lazily about their task he may quicken them with the  
whip. By this means there is always some piece of work or other to be done by them; and, besides  
their livelihood, they earn somewhat still to the public. They all wear a peculiar habit, of one certain  
15 colour, and their hair is cropped a little above their ears, and a piece of one of their ears is cut off.  
Their friends are allowed to give them either meat, drink, or clothes, so they are of their proper  
colour; but it is death, both to the giver and taker, if they give them money; nor is it less penal for  
any freeman to take money from them upon any account whatsoever: and it is also death for any of  
these slaves (so they are called) to handle arms. Those of every division of the country are  
distinguished by a peculiar mark, which it is capital for them to lay aside, to go out of their bounds,  
20 or to talk with a slave of another jurisdiction, and the very attempt of an escape is no less penal than  
an escape itself. It is death for any other slave to be accessory to it; and if a freeman engages in it he  
is condemned to slavery. Those that discover it are rewarded—if freemen, in money; and if slaves,  
with liberty, together with a pardon for being accessory to it; that so they might find their account  
rather in repenting of their engaging in such a design than in persisting in it.

25 “These are their laws and rules in relation to robbery, and it is obvious that they are as advantageous  
as they are mild and gentle; since vice is not only destroyed and men preserved, but they are treated  
in such a manner as to make them see the necessity of being honest and of employing the rest of  
their lives in repairing the injuries they had formerly done to society. Nor is there any hazard of  
their falling back to their old customs; and so little do travellers apprehend mischief from them that  
they generally make use of them for guides from one jurisdiction to another; for there is nothing left  
30 them by which they can rob or be the better for it, since, as they are disarmed, so the very having of  
money is a sufficient conviction: and as they are certainly punished if discovered, so they cannot  
hope to escape; for their habit being in all the parts of it different from what is commonly worn, they  
cannot fly away, unless they would go naked, and even then their cropped ear would betray them.  
The only danger to be feared from them is their conspiring against the government; but those of one  
division and neighbourhood can do nothing to any purpose unless a general conspiracy were laid  
35 amongst all the slaves of the several jurisdictions, which cannot be done, since they cannot meet or  
talk together; nor will any venture on a design where the concealment would be so dangerous and

1 the discovery so profitable. None are quite hopeless of recovering their freedom, since by their  
obedience and patience, and by giving good grounds to believe that they will change their manner of  
life for the future, they may expect at last to obtain their liberty, and some are every year restored to  
it upon the good character that is given of them. When I had related all this, I added that I did not  
5 see why such a method might not be followed with more advantage than could ever be expected  
from that severe justice which the Counsellor magnified so much. To this he answered, 'That it  
could never take place in England without endangering the whole nation.' As he said this he shook  
his head, made some grimaces, and held his peace, while all the company seemed of his opinion,  
except the Cardinal, who said, 'That it was not easy to form a judgment of its success, since it was a  
method that never yet had been tried; but if,' said he, 'when sentence of death were passed upon a  
10 thief, the prince would reprieve him for a while, and make the experiment upon him, denying him  
the privilege of a sanctuary; and then, if it had a good effect upon him, it might take place; and, if it  
did not succeed, the worst would be to execute the sentence on the condemned persons at last; and I  
do not see,' added he, 'why it would be either unjust, inconvenient, or at all dangerous to admit of  
such a delay; in my opinion the vagabonds ought to be treated in the same manner, against whom,  
15 though we have made many laws, yet we have not been able to gain our end.' When the Cardinal  
had done, they all commended the motion, though they had despised it when it came from me, but  
more particularly commended what related to the vagabonds, because it was his own observation.

"I do not know whether it be worth while to tell what followed, for it was very ridiculous; but I shall  
venture at it, for as it is not foreign to this matter, so some good use may be made of it. There was a  
Jester standing by, that counterfeited the fool so naturally that he seemed to be really one; the jests  
which he offered were so cold and dull that we laughed more at him than at them, yet sometimes he  
20 said, as it were by chance, things that were not unpleasant, so as to justify the old proverb, 'That he  
who throws the dice often, will sometimes have a lucky hit.' When one of the company had said  
that I had taken care of the thieves, and the Cardinal had taken care of the vagabonds, so that there  
remained nothing but that some public provision might be made for the poor whom sickness or old  
age had disabled from labour, 'Leave that to me,' said the Fool, 'and I shall take care of them, for  
there is no sort of people whose sight I abhor more, having been so often vexed with them and with  
25 their sad complaints; but as dolefully soever as they have told their tale, they could never prevail so  
far as to draw one penny from me; for either I had no mind to give them anything, or, when I had a  
mind to do it, I had nothing to give them; and they now know me so well that they will not lose  
their labour, but let me pass without giving me any trouble, because they hope for nothing—no  
more, in faith, than if I were a priest; but I would have a law made for sending all these beggars to  
30 monasteries, the men to the Benedictines, to be made lay-brothers, and the women to be nuns.' The  
Cardinal smiled, and approved of it in jest, but the rest liked it in earnest. There was a divine  
present, who, though he was a grave morose man, yet he was so pleased with this reflection that was  
made on the priests and the monks that he began to play with the Fool, and said to him, 'This will  
not deliver you from all beggars, except you take care of us Friars.' 'That is done already,' answered  
the Fool, 'for the Cardinal has provided for you by what he proposed for restraining vagabonds and  
35 setting them to work, for I know no vagabonds like you.' This was well entertained by the whole  
company, who, looking at the Cardinal, perceived that he was not ill-pleased at it; only the Friar  
himself was vexed, as may be easily imagined, and fell into such a passion that he could not forbear  
railing at the Fool, and calling him knave, slanderer, backbiter, and son of perdition, and then cited

1 some dreadful threatenings out of the Scriptures against him. Now the Jester thought he was in his  
element, and laid about him freely. ‘Good Friar,’ said he, ‘be not angry, for it is written, “In  
patience possess your soul.”’ The Friar answered (for I shall give you his own words), ‘I am not  
angry, you hangman; at least, I do not sin in it, for the Psalmist says, “Be ye angry and sin not.”’  
Upon this the Cardinal admonished him gently, and wished him to govern his passions. ‘No, my  
5 lord,’ said he, ‘I speak not but from a good zeal, which I ought to have, for holy men have had a  
good zeal, as it is said, “The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;” and we sing in our church that  
those who mocked Elisha as he went up to the house of God felt the effects of his zeal, which that  
mocker, that rogue, that scoundrel, will perhaps feel.’ ‘You do this, perhaps, with a good intention,’  
said the Cardinal, ‘but, in my opinion, it were wiser in you, and perhaps better for you, not to  
engage in so ridiculous a contest with a Fool.’ ‘No, my lord,’ answered he, ‘that were not wisely  
10 done, for Solomon, the wisest of men, said, “Answer a Fool according to his folly,” which I now do,  
and show him the ditch into which he will fall, if he is not aware of it; for if the many mockers of  
Elisha, who was but one bald man, felt the effect of his zeal, what will become of the mocker of so  
many Friars, among whom there are so many bald men? We have, likewise, a bull, by which all that  
jeer us are excommunicated.’ When the Cardinal saw that there was no end of this matter he made a  
sign to the Fool to withdraw, turned the discourse another way, and soon after rose from the table,  
and, dismissing us, went to hear causes.

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

To this I answered, “You have done me a great kindness in this relation; for as everything has been  
related by you both wisely and pleasantly, so you have made me imagine that I was in my own  
country and grown young again, by recalling that good Cardinal to my thoughts, in whose family I  
was bred from my childhood; and though you are, upon other accounts, very dear to me, yet you are  
25 the dearer because you honour his memory so much; but, after all this, I cannot change my opinion,  
for I still think that if you could overcome that aversion which you have to the courts of princes, you  
might, by the advice which it is in your power to give, do a great deal of good to mankind, and this  
is the chief design that every good man ought to propose to himself in living; for your friend Plato  
thinks that nations will be happy when either philosophers become kings or kings become  
philosophers. It is no wonder if we are so far from that happiness while philosophers will not think  
30 it their duty to assist kings with their counsels.” “They are not so base-minded,” said he, “but that  
they would willingly do it; many of them have already done it by their books, if those that are in  
power would but hearken to their good advice. But Plato judged right, that except kings themselves  
became philosophers, they who from their childhood are corrupted with false notions would never  
fall in entirely with the counsels of philosophers, and this he himself found to be true in the person  
of Dionysius.

35 “Do not you think that if I were about any king, proposing good laws to him, and endeavouring to

1 root out all the cursed seeds of evil that I found in him, I should either be turned out of his court, or,  
at least, be laughed at for my pains? For instance, what could I signify if I were about the King of  
France, and were called into his cabinet council, where several wise men, in his hearing, were  
proposing many expedients; as, by what arts and practices Milan may be kept, and Naples, that has  
5 so often slipped out of their hands, recovered; how the Venetians, and after them the rest of Italy,  
may be subdued; and then how Flanders, Brabant, and all Burgundy, and some other kingdoms  
which he has swallowed already in his designs, may be added to his empire? One proposes a league  
with the Venetians, to be kept as long as he finds his account in it, and that he ought to  
communicate counsels with them, and give them some share of the spoil till his success makes him  
need or fear them less, and then it will be easily taken out of their hands; another proposes the hiring  
10 the Germans and the securing the Switzers by pensions; another proposes the gaining the Emperor  
by money, which is omnipotent with him; another proposes a peace with the King of Arragon, and,  
in order to cement it, the yielding up the King of Navarre's pretensions; another thinks that the  
Prince of Castile is to be wrought on by the hope of an alliance, and that some of his courtiers are to  
be gained to the French faction by pensions. The hardest point of all is, what to do with England; a  
treaty of peace is to be set on foot, and, if their alliance is not to be depended on, yet it is to be made  
15 as firm as possible, and they are to be called friends, but suspected as enemies: therefore the Scots are  
to be kept in readiness to be let loose upon England on every occasion; and some banished nobleman  
is to be supported underhand (for by the League it cannot be done avowedly) who has a pretension  
to the crown, by which means that suspected prince may be kept in awe. Now when things are in so  
great a fermentation, and so many gallant men are joining counsels how to carry on the war, if so  
mean a man as I should stand up and wish them to change all their counsels—to let Italy alone and  
stay at home, since the kingdom of France was indeed greater than could be well governed by one  
20 man; that therefore he ought not to think of adding others to it; and if, after this, I should propose  
to them the resolutions of the Achorians, a people that lie on the south-east of Utopia, who long ago  
engaged in war in order to add to the dominions of their prince another kingdom, to which he had  
some pretensions by an ancient alliance: this they conquered, but found that the trouble of keeping  
it was equal to that by which it was gained; that the conquered people were always either in rebellion  
or exposed to foreign invasions, while they were obliged to be incessantly at war, either for or against  
25 them, and consequently could never disband their army; that in the meantime they were oppressed  
with taxes, their money went out of the kingdom, their blood was spilt for the glory of their king  
without procuring the least advantage to the people, who received not the smallest benefit from it  
even in time of peace; and that, their manners being corrupted by a long war, robbery and murders  
everywhere abounded, and their laws fell into contempt; while their king, distracted with the care of  
30 two kingdoms, was the less able to apply his mind to the interest of either. When they saw this, and  
that there would be no end to these evils, they by joint counsels made an humble address to their  
king, desiring him to choose which of the two kingdoms he had the greatest mind to keep, since he  
could not hold both; for they were too great a people to be governed by a divided king, since no man  
would willingly have a groom that should be in common between him and another. Upon which  
the good prince was forced to quit his new kingdom to one of his friends (who was not long after  
dethroned), and to be contented with his old one. To this I would add that after all those warlike  
35 attempts, the vast confusions, and the consumption both of treasure and of people that must follow  
them, perhaps upon some misfortune they might be forced to throw up all at last; therefore it  
seemed much more eligible that the king should improve his ancient kingdom all he could, and

1 make it flourish as much as possible; that he should love his people, and be beloved of them; that he should live among them, govern them gently and let other kingdoms alone, since that which had fallen to his share was big enough, if not too big, for him:—pray, how do you think would such a speech as this be heard?”

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

10 “But what,” said he, “if I should sort with another kind of ministers, whose chief contrivances and consultations were by what art the prince’s treasures might be increased? where one proposes raising the value of specie when the king’s debts are large, and lowering it when his revenues were to come in, that so he might both pay much with a little, and in a little receive a great deal. Another proposes a pretence of a war, that money might be raised in order to carry it on, and that a peace be concluded as soon as that was done; and this with such appearances of religion as might work on the people, and make them impute it to the piety of their prince, and to his tenderness for the lives of his subjects. A third offers some old musty laws that have been antiquated by a long disuse (and which, as they had been forgotten by all the subjects, so they had also been broken by them), and proposes the levying the penalties of these laws, that, as it would bring in a vast treasure, so there might be a very good pretence for it, since it would look like the executing a law and the doing of justice. A fourth proposes the prohibiting of many things under severe penalties, especially such as were against the interest of the people, and then the dispensing with these prohibitions, upon great compositions, to those who might find their advantage in breaking them. This would serve two ends, both of them acceptable to many; for as those whose avarice led them to transgress would be severely fined, so the selling licences dear would look as if a prince were tender of his people, and would not easily, or at low rates, dispense with anything that might be against the public good. Another proposes that the judges must be made sure, that they may declare always in favour of the prerogative; that they must be often sent for to court, that the king may hear them argue those points in which he is concerned; since, how unjust soever any of his pretensions may be, yet still some one or other of them, either out of contradiction to others, or the pride of singularity, or to make their court, would find out some pretence or other to give the king a fair colour to carry the point. For if the judges but differ in opinion, the clearest thing in the world is made by that means disputable, and truth being once brought in question, the king may then take advantage to expound the law for his own profit; while the judges that stand out will be brought over, either through fear or modesty; and they being thus gained, all of them may be sent to the Bench to give sentence boldly as the king would have it; for fair pretences will never be wanting when sentence is to be given in the prince’s favour. It will either be said that equity lies of his side, or some words in the law will be found sounding that way, or some forced sense will be put on them; and, when all other things fail, the king’s undoubted prerogative will be pretended, as that which is above all law, and to which a religious judge ought to have a special regard. Thus all consent to that maxim of Crassus, that a prince cannot have treasure enough, since he must maintain his armies out of it; that a king, even though he would, can do nothing unjustly; that all property is in him, not excepting the very persons of his subjects; and that no man has any other property but that which the king, out of his goodness, thinks fit to leave him. And they think it is the prince’s interest that there be as little of this left as may be, as if it were his advantage that his people should have neither riches nor liberty, since these things make them less easy and willing to submit to a cruel and unjust government. Whereas necessity and poverty blunts them, makes them patient, beats them down, and breaks that height of

1 spirit that might otherwise dispose them to rebel. Now what if, after all these propositions were  
made, I should rise up and assert that such counsels were both unbecoming a king and mischievous  
to him; and that not only his honour, but his safety, consisted more in his people's wealth than in  
his own; if I should show that they choose a king for their own sake, and not for his; that, by his care  
and endeavours, they may be both easy and safe; and that, therefore, a prince ought to take more  
5 care of his people's happiness than of his own, as a shepherd is to take more care of his flock than of  
himself? It is also certain that they are much mistaken that think the poverty of a nation is a mean of  
the public safety. Who quarrel more than beggars? who does more earnestly long for a change than  
he that is uneasy in his present circumstances? and who run to create confusions with so desperate a  
boldness as those who, having nothing to lose, hope to gain by them? If a king should fall under  
such contempt or envy that he could not keep his subjects in their duty but by oppression and ill  
10 usage, and by rendering them poor and miserable, it were certainly better for him to quit his  
kingdom than to retain it by such methods as make him, while he keeps the name of authority, lose  
the majesty due to it. Nor is it so becoming the dignity of a king to reign over beggars as over rich  
and happy subjects. And therefore Fabricius, a man of a noble and exalted temper, said 'he would  
rather govern rich men than be rich himself; since for one man to abound in wealth and pleasure  
when all about him are mourning and groaning, is to be a gaoler and not a king.' He is an unskilful  
physician that cannot cure one disease without casting his patient into another. So he that can find  
15 no other way for correcting the errors of his people but by taking from them the conveniences of life,  
shows that he knows not what it is to govern a free nation. He himself ought rather to shake off his  
sloth, or to lay down his pride, for the contempt or hatred that his people have for him takes its rise  
from the vices in himself. Let him live upon what belongs to him without wronging others, and  
accommodate his expense to his revenue. Let him punish crimes, and, by his wise conduct, let him  
endeavour to prevent them, rather than be severe when he has suffered them to be too common. Let  
20 him not rashly revive laws that are abrogated by disuse, especially if they have been long forgotten  
and never wanted. And let him never take any penalty for the breach of them to which a judge  
would not give way in a private man, but would look on him as a crafty and unjust person for  
pretending to it. To these things I would add that law among the Macarians—a people that live not  
far from Utopia—by which their king, on the day on which he began to reign, is tied by an oath,  
confirmed by solemn sacrifices, never to have at once above a thousand pounds of gold in his  
treasures, or so much silver as is equal to that in value. This law, they tell us, was made by an  
25 excellent king who had more regard to the riches of his country than to his own wealth, and  
therefore provided against the heaping up of so much treasure as might impoverish the people. He  
thought that moderate sum might be sufficient for any accident, if either the king had occasion for it  
against the rebels, or the kingdom against the invasion of an enemy; but that it was not enough to  
encourage a prince to invade other men's rights—a circumstance that was the chief cause of his  
making that law. He also thought that it was a good provision for that free circulation of money so  
30 necessary for the course of commerce and exchange. And when a king must distribute all those  
extraordinary accessions that increase treasure beyond the due pitch, it makes him less disposed to  
oppress his subjects. Such a king as this will be the terror of ill men, and will be beloved by all the  
good.

35 "If, I say, I should talk of these or such-like things to men that had taken their bias another way,  
how deaf would they be to all I could say!" "No doubt, very deaf," answered I; "and no wonder, for

1 one is never to offer propositions or advice that we are certain will not be entertained. Discourses so  
much out of the road could not avail anything, nor have any effect on men whose minds were  
prepossessed with different sentiments. This philosophical way of speculation is not unpleasant  
among friends in a free conversation; but there is no room for it in the courts of princes, where great  
affairs are carried on by authority.” “That is what I was saying,” replied he, “that there is no room  
5 for philosophy in the courts of princes.” “Yes, there is,” said I, “but not for this speculative  
philosophy, that makes everything to be alike fitting at all times; but there is another philosophy that  
is more pliable, that knows its proper scene, accommodates itself to it, and teaches a man with  
propriety and decency to act that part which has fallen to his share. If when one of Plautus’  
comedies is upon the stage, and a company of servants are acting their parts, you should come out in  
the garb of a philosopher, and repeat, out of *Octavia*, a discourse of Seneca’s to Nero, would it not  
10 be better for you to say nothing than by mixing things of such different natures to make an  
impertinent tragi-comedy? for you spoil and corrupt the play that is in hand when you mix with it  
things of an opposite nature, even though they are much better. Therefore go through with the play  
that is acting the best you can, and do not confound it because another that is pleasanter comes into  
your thoughts. It is even so in a commonwealth and in the councils of princes; if ill opinions cannot  
15 be quite rooted out, and you cannot cure some received vice according to your wishes, you must not,  
therefore, abandon the commonwealth, for the same reasons as you should not forsake the ship in a  
storm because you cannot command the winds. You are not obliged to assault people with  
discourses that are out of their road, when you see that their received notions must prevent your  
making an impression upon them: you ought rather to cast about and to manage things with all the  
dexterity in your power, so that, if you are not able to make them go well, they may be as little ill as  
possible; for, except all men were good, everything cannot be right, and that is a blessing that I do  
not at present hope to see.” “According to your argument,” answered he, “all that I could be able to  
20 do would be to preserve myself from being mad while I endeavoured to cure the madness of others;  
for, if I speak with, I must repeat what I have said to you; and as for lying, whether a philosopher  
can do it or not I cannot tell: I am sure I cannot do it. But though these discourses may be uneasy  
and ungrateful to them, I do not see why they should seem foolish or extravagant; indeed, if I should  
either propose such things as Plato has contrived in his ‘Commonwealth,’ or as the Utopians practise  
in theirs, though they might seem better, as certainly they are, yet they are so different from our  
25 establishment, which is founded on property (there being no such thing among them), that I could  
not expect that it would have any effect on them. But such discourses as mine, which only call past  
evils to mind and give warning of what may follow, leave nothing in them that is so absurd that they  
may not be used at any time, for they can only be unpleasant to those who are resolved to run  
headlong the contrary way; and if we must let alone everything as absurd or extravagant—which, by  
reason of the wicked lives of many, may seem uncouth—we must, even among Christians, give over  
30 pressing the greatest part of those things that Christ hath taught us, though He has commanded us  
not to conceal them, but to proclaim on the housetops that which He taught in secret. The greatest  
parts of His precepts are more opposite to the lives of the men of this age than any part of my  
discourse has been, but the preachers seem to have learned that craft to which you advise me: for  
they, observing that the world would not willingly suit their lives to the rules that Christ has given,  
have fitted His doctrine, as if it had been a leaden rule, to their lives, that so, some way or other, they  
might agree with one another. But I see no other effect of this compliance except it be that men  
35 become more secure in their wickedness by it; and this is all the success that I can have in a court, for

1 I must always differ from the rest, and then I shall signify nothing; or, if I agree with them, I shall  
then only help forward their madness. I do not comprehend what you mean by your ‘casting about,’  
or by ‘the bending and handling things so dexterously that, if they go not well, they may go as little  
ill as may be;’ for in courts they will not bear with a man’s holding his peace or conniving at what  
others do: a man must barefacedly approve of the worst counsels and consent to the blackest designs,  
5 so that he would pass for a spy, or, possibly, for a traitor, that did but coldly approve of such wicked  
practices; and therefore when a man is engaged in such a society, he will be so far from being able to  
mend matters by his ‘casting about,’ as you call it, that he will find no occasions of doing any  
good—the ill company will sooner corrupt him than be the better for him; or if, notwithstanding all  
their ill company, he still remains steady and innocent, yet their follies and knavery will be imputed  
to him; and, by mixing counsels with them, he must bear his share of all the blame that belongs  
10 wholly to others.

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

16 “Though, to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own that as long as there is any property,  
and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed  
either justly or happily: not justly, because the best things will fall to the share of the worst men; nor  
happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy),  
20 the rest being left to be absolutely miserable. Therefore, when I reflect on the wise and good  
constitution of the Utopians, among whom all things are so well governed and with so few laws,  
where virtue hath its due reward, and yet there is such an equality that every man lives in plenty—  
when I compare with them so many other nations that are still making new laws, and yet can never  
bring their constitution to a right regulation; where, notwithstanding every one has his property, yet  
all the laws that they can invent have not the power either to obtain or preserve it, or even to enable  
25 men certainly to distinguish what is their own from what is another’s, of which the many lawsuits  
that every day break out, and are eternally depending, give too plain a demonstration—when, I say, I  
balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favourable to Plato, and do not wonder that he  
resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise  
a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation  
happy; which cannot be obtained so long as there is property, for when every man draws to himself  
30 all that he can compass, by one title or another, it must needs follow that, how plentiful soever a  
nation may be, yet a few dividing the wealth of it among themselves, the rest must fall into  
indigence. So that there will be two sorts of people among them, who deserve that their fortunes  
should be interchanged—the former useless, but wicked and ravenous; and the latter, who by their  
constant industry serve the public more than themselves, sincere and modest men—from whence I  
am persuaded that till property is taken away, there can be no equitable or just distribution of things,  
35 nor can the world be happily governed; for as long as that is maintained, the greatest and the far best  
part of mankind, will be still oppressed with a load of cares and anxieties. I confess, without taking



1 it quite away, those pressures that lie on a great part of mankind may be made lighter, but they can  
never be quite removed; for if laws were made to determine at how great an extent in soil, and at  
how much money, every man must stop—to limit the prince, that he might not grow too great; and  
to restrain the people, that they might not become too insolent—and that none might factiously  
aspire to public employments, which ought neither to be sold nor made burdensome by a great  
5 expense, since otherwise those that serve in them would be tempted to reimburse themselves by  
cheats and violence, and it would become necessary to find out rich men for undergoing those  
employments, which ought rather to be trusted to the wise. These laws, I say, might have such effect  
as good diet and care might have on a sick man whose recovery is desperate; they might allay and  
mitigate the disease, but it could never be quite healed, nor the body politic be brought again to a  
good habit as long as property remains; and it will fall out, as in a complication of diseases, that by  
10 applying a remedy to one sore you will provoke another, and that which removes the one ill  
symptom produces others, while the strengthening one part of the body weakens the rest.” “On the  
contrary,” answered I, “it seems to me that men cannot live conveniently where all things are  
common. How can there be any plenty where every man will excuse himself from labour? for as the  
hope of gain doth not excite him, so the confidence that he has in other men’s industry may make  
him slothful. If people come to be pinched with want, and yet cannot dispose of anything as their  
15 own, what can follow upon this but perpetual sedition and bloodshed, especially when the reverence  
and authority due to magistrates falls to the ground? for I cannot imagine how that can be kept up  
among those that are in all things equal to one another.” “I do not wonder,” said he, “that it appears  
so to you, since you have no notion, or at least no right one, of such a constitution; but if you had  
been in Utopia with me, and had seen their laws and rules, as I did, for the space of five years, in  
which I lived among them, and during which time I was so delighted with them that indeed I should  
never have left them if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans,  
20 you would then confess that you had never seen a people so well constituted as they.” “You will not  
easily persuade me,” said Peter, “that any nation in that new world is better governed than those  
among us; for as our understandings are not worse than theirs, so our government (if I mistake not)  
being more ancient, a long practice has helped us to find out many conveniences of life, and some  
happy chances have discovered other things to us which no man’s understanding could ever have  
invented.” “As for the antiquity either of their government or of ours,” said he, “you cannot pass a  
25 true judgment of it unless you had read their histories; for, if they are to be believed, they had towns  
among them before these parts were so much as inhabited; and as for those discoveries that have  
been either hit on by chance or made by ingenious men, these might have happened there as well as  
here. I do not deny but we are more ingenious than they are, but they exceed us much in industry  
and application. They knew little concerning us before our arrival among them. They call us all by  
a general name of ‘The nations that lie beyond the equinoctial line;’ for their chronicle mentions a  
30 shipwreck that was made on their coast twelve hundred years ago, and that some Romans and  
Egyptians that were in the ship, getting safe ashore, spent the rest of their days amongst them; and  
such was their ingenuity that from this single opportunity they drew the advantage of learning from  
those unlooked-for guests, and acquired all the useful arts that were then among the Romans, and  
which were known to these shipwrecked men; and by the hints that they gave them they themselves  
found out even some of those arts which they could not fully explain, so happily did they improve  
that accident of having some of our people cast upon their shore. But if such an accident has at any  
35 time brought any from thence into Europe, we have been so far from improving it that we do not so

1 much as remember it, as, in aftertimes perhaps, it will be forgot by our people that I was ever there; for though they, from one such accident, made themselves masters of all the good inventions that were among us, yet I believe it would be long before we should learn or put in practice any of the good institutions that are among them. And this is the true cause of their being better governed and living happier than we, though we come not short of them in point of understanding or outward advantages." Upon this I said to him, "I earnestly beg you would describe that island very  
5 particularly to us; be not too short, but set out in order all things relating to their soil, their rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know; and you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them of which we are hitherto ignorant." "I will do it very willingly," said he, "for I have digested the whole matter carefully, but it will take up some time." "Let us go, then," said I, "first and dine, and then we shall have leisure enough." He consented; we went in and dined, and after dinner came back and  
10 sat down in the same place. I ordered my servants to take care that none might come and interrupt us, and both Peter and I desired Raphael to be as good as his word. When he saw that we were very intent upon it he paused a little to recollect himself, and began in this manner:—

"The island of Utopia is in the middle two hundred miles broad, and holds almost at the same breadth over a great part of it, but it grows narrower towards both ends. Its figure is not unlike a  
15 crescent. Between its horns the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay, which is environed with land to the compass of about five hundred miles, and is well secured from winds. In this bay there is no great current; the whole coast is, as it were, one continued harbour, which gives all that live in the island great convenience for mutual commerce. But the entry into the bay, occasioned by rocks on the one hand and shallows on the other, is very dangerous. In the middle of it there is one single rock which appears above water, and may, therefore, easily be  
20 avoided; and on the top of it there is a tower, in which a garrison is kept; the other rocks lie under water, and are very dangerous. The channel is known only to the natives; so that if any stranger should enter into the bay without one of their pilots he would run great danger of shipwreck. For even they themselves could not pass it safe if some marks that are on the coast did not direct their way; and if these should be but a little shifted, any fleet that might come against them, how great soever it were, would be certainly lost. On the other side of the island there are likewise many  
25 harbours; and the coast is so fortified, both by nature and art, that a small number of men can hinder the descent of a great army. But they report (and there remains good marks of it to make it credible) that this was no island at first, but a part of the continent. Utopus, that conquered it (whose name it still carries, for Abraxa was its first name), brought the rude and uncivilised inhabitants into such a good government, and to that measure of politeness, that they now far excel all the rest of mankind. Having soon subdued them, he designed to separate them from the continent, and to bring the sea quite round them. To accomplish this he ordered a deep channel to  
30 be dug, fifteen miles long; and that the natives might not think he treated them like slaves, he not only forced the inhabitants, but also his own soldiers, to labour in carrying it on. As he set a vast number of men to work, he, beyond all men's expectations, brought it to a speedy conclusion. And his neighbours, who at first laughed at the folly of the undertaking, no sooner saw it brought to perfection than they were struck with admiration and terror.

35 "There are fifty-four cities in the island, all large and well built, the manners, customs, and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived as near in the same manner as the ground on which

1 they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles' distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distant but that a man can go on foot in one day from it to that which lies next it. Every city sends three of their wisest senators once a year to Amaurot, to consult about their common concerns; for that is the chief town of the island, being situated near the centre of it, so that it is the most convenient place for their assemblies. The jurisdiction of every city extends at least  
5 twenty miles, and, where the towns lie wider, they have much more ground. No town desires to enlarge its bounds, for the people consider themselves rather as tenants than landlords. They have built, over all the country, farmhouses for husbandmen, which are well contrived, and furnished with all things necessary for country labour. Inhabitants are sent, by turns, from the cities to dwell in them; no country family has fewer than forty men and women in it, besides two slaves. There is a master and a mistress set over every family, and over thirty families there is a magistrate. Every year twenty of this family come back to the town after they have stayed two years in the country, and in their room there are other twenty sent from the town, that they may learn country work from those that have been already one year in the country, as they must teach those that come to them the next from the town. By this means such as dwell in those country farms are never ignorant of agriculture, and so commit no errors which might otherwise be fatal and bring them under a scarcity of corn. But though there is every year such a shifting of the husbandmen to prevent any man being forced against his will to follow that hard course of life too long, yet many among them take such pleasure in it that they desire leave to continue in it many years. These husbandmen till the ground, breed  
15 cattle, hew wood, and convey it to the towns either by land or water, as is most convenient. They breed an infinite multitude of chickens in a very curious manner; for the hens do not sit and hatch them, but a vast number of eggs are laid in a gentle and equal heat in order to be hatched, and they are no sooner out of the shell, and able to stir about, but they seem to consider those that feed them as their mothers, and follow them as other chickens do the hen that hatched them. They breed very few horses, but those they have are full of mettle, and are kept only for exercising their youth in the art of sitting and riding them; for they do not put them to any work, either of ploughing or carriage, in which they employ oxen. For though their horses are stronger, yet they find oxen can hold out longer; and as they are not subject to so many diseases, so they are kept upon a less charge and with less trouble. And even when they are so worn out that they are no more fit for labour, they are good meat at last. They sow no corn but that which is to be their bread; for they drink either wine, cider or perry, and often water, sometimes boiled with honey or liquorice, with which they abound; and though they know exactly how much corn will serve every town and all that tract of country which  
25 belongs to it, yet they sow much more and breed more cattle than are necessary for their consumption, and they give that overplus of which they make no use to their neighbours. When they want anything in the country which it does not produce, they fetch that from the town, without carrying anything in exchange for it. And the magistrates of the town take care to see it given them; for they meet generally in the town once a month, upon a festival day. When the time of harvest comes, the magistrates in the country send to those in the towns and let them know how many hands they will need for reaping the harvest; and the number they call for being sent to them, they commonly despatch it all in one day.

## OF THEIR TOWNS, PARTICULARLY OF AMAUROT

35 “He that knows one of their towns knows them all—they are so like one another, except where the

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

5 “It lies upon the side of a hill, or, rather, a rising ground. Its figure is almost square, for from the one side of it, which shoots up almost to the top of the hill, it runs down, in a descent for two miles, to the river Anider; but it is a little broader the other way that runs along by the bank of that river. The Anider rises about eighty miles above Amaurot, in a small spring at first. But other brooks falling into it, of which two are more considerable than the rest, as it runs by Amaurot it is grown half a mile broad; but, it still grows larger and larger, till, after sixty miles’ course below it, it is lost in the ocean. Between the town and the sea, and for some miles above the town, it ebbs and flows every six hours with a strong current. The tide comes up about thirty miles so full that there is nothing but salt water in the river, the fresh water being driven back with its force; and above that, for some miles, the water is brackish; but a little higher, as it runs by the town, it is quite fresh; and when the tide ebbs, it continues fresh all along to the sea. There is a bridge cast over the river, not of timber, but of fair stone, consisting of many stately arches; it lies at that part of the town which is farthest from the sea, so that the ships, without any hindrance, lie all along the side of the town. There is, likewise, another river that runs by it, which, though it is not great, yet it runs pleasantly, for it rises out of the same hill on which the town stands, and so runs down through it and falls into the Anider. The inhabitants have fortified the fountain-head of this river, which springs a little without the town; that so, if they should happen to be besieged, the enemy might not be able to stop or divert the course of the water, nor poison it; from thence it is carried, in earthen pipes, to the lower streets. And for those places of the town to which the water of that small river cannot be conveyed, they have great cisterns for receiving the rain-water, which supplies the want of the other. The town is compassed with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch, set thick with thorns, cast round three sides of the town, and the river is instead of a ditch on the fourth side. The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. Their buildings are good, and are so uniform that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses. These are large, but enclosed with buildings, that on all hands face the streets, so that every house has both a door to the street and a back door to the garden. Their doors have all two leaves, which, as they are easily opened, so they shut of their own accord; and, there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At every ten years’ end they shift their houses by lots. They cultivate their gardens with great care, so that they have both vines, fruits, herbs, and flowers in them; and all is so well ordered and so finely kept that I never saw gardens anywhere that were both so fruitful and so beautiful as theirs. And this humour of ordering their gardens so well is not only kept up by the pleasure they find in it, but also by an emulation between the inhabitants of the several streets, who vie with each other. And there is, indeed, nothing belonging to the whole town that is both more useful and more pleasant. So that he who founded the town seems to have taken care of nothing more than of their gardens; for they say the whole scheme of the town was designed at first by Utopus, but he left all that belonged to the ornament and improvement of it to be added by those that should come after him, that being too much for one man to bring to perfection. Their records, that contain the history of their town and State, are

1 preserved with an exact care, and run backwards seventeen hundred and sixty years. From these it  
appears that their houses were at first low and mean, like cottages, made of any sort of timber, and  
were built with mud walls and thatched with straw. But now their houses are three storeys high, the  
fronts of them are faced either with stone, plastering, or brick, and between the facings of their walls  
they throw in their rubbish. Their roofs are flat, and on them they lay a sort of plaster, which costs  
5 very little, and yet is so tempered that it is not apt to take fire, and yet resists the weather more than  
lead. They have great quantities of glass among them, with which they glaze their windows; they use  
also in their windows a thin linen cloth, that is so oiled or gummed that it both keeps out the wind  
and gives free admission to the light.

## OF THEIR MAGISTRATES

10 “Thirty families choose every year a magistrate, who was anciently called the Syphogrant, but is now  
called the Philarch; and over every ten Syphogrants, with the families subject to them, there is  
another magistrate, who was anciently called the Tranibore, but of late the Archphilarch. All the  
Syphogrants, who are in number two hundred, choose the Prince out of a list of four who are named  
by the people of the four divisions of the city; but they take an oath, before they proceed to an  
election, that they will choose him whom they think most fit for the office: they give him their  
15 voices secretly, so that it is not known for whom every one gives his suffrage. The Prince is for life,  
unless he is removed upon suspicion of some design to enslave the people. The Tranibors are new  
chosen every year, but yet they are, for the most part, continued; all their other magistrates are only  
annual. The Tranibors meet every third day, and oftener if necessary, and consult with the Prince  
either concerning the affairs of the State in general, or such private differences as may arise  
sometimes among the people, though that falls out but seldom. There are always two Syphogrants  
20 called into the council chamber, and these are changed every day. It is a fundamental rule of their  
government, that no conclusion can be made in anything that relates to the public till it has been  
first debated three several days in their council. It is death for any to meet and consult concerning  
the State, unless it be either in their ordinary council, or in the assembly of the whole body of the  
people.

25 “These things have been so provided among them that the Prince and the Tranibors may not  
conspire together to change the government and enslave the people; and therefore when anything of  
great importance is set on foot, it is sent to the Syphogrants, who, after they have communicated it  
to the families that belong to their divisions, and have considered it among themselves, make report  
to the senate; and, upon great occasions, the matter is referred to the council of the whole island.  
One rule observed in their council is, never to debate a thing on the same day in which it is first  
30 proposed; for that is always referred to the next meeting, that so men may not rashly and in the heat  
of discourse engage themselves too soon, which might bias them so much that, instead of consulting  
the good of the public, they might rather study to support their first opinions, and by a perverse and  
preposterous sort of shame hazard their country rather than endanger their own reputation, or  
venture the being suspected to have wanted foresight in the expedients that they at first proposed;  
and therefore, to prevent this, they take care that they may rather be deliberate than sudden in their  
motions.

## 35 OF THEIR TRADES, AND MANNER OF LIFE

1 “Agriculture is that which is so universally understood among them that no person, either man or  
woman, is ignorant of it; they are instructed in it from their childhood, partly by what they learn at  
school, and partly by practice, they being led out often into the fields about the town, where they  
not only see others at work but are likewise exercised in it themselves. Besides agriculture, which is  
so common to them all, every man has some peculiar trade to which he applies himself; such as the  
5 manufacture of wool or flax, masonry, smith’s work, or carpenter’s work; for there is no sort of trade  
that is in great esteem among them. Throughout the island they wear the same sort of clothes,  
without any other distinction except what is necessary to distinguish the two sexes and the married  
and unmarried. The fashion never alters, and as it is neither disagreeable nor uneasy, so it is suited  
to the climate, and calculated both for their summers and winters. Every family makes their own  
clothes; but all among them, women as well as men, learn one or other of the trades formerly  
10 mentioned. Women, for the most part, deal in wool and flax, which suit best with their weakness,  
leaving the ruder trades to the men. The same trade generally passes down from father to son,  
inclinations often following descent: but if any man’s genius lies another way he is, by adoption,  
translated into a family that deals in the trade to which he is inclined; and when that is to be done,  
care is taken, not only by his father, but by the magistrate, that he may be put to a discreet and good  
man: and if, after a person has learned one trade, he desires to acquire another, that is also allowed,  
and is managed in the same manner as the former. When he has learned both, he follows that which  
15 he likes best, unless the public has more occasion for the other.

The chief, and almost the only, business of the Syphogrants is to take care that no man may live idle,  
but that every one may follow his trade diligently; yet they do not wear themselves out with  
perpetual toil from morning to night, as if they were beasts of burden, which as it is indeed a heavy  
slavery, so it is everywhere the common course of life amongst all mechanics except the Utopians:  
20 but they, dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, appoint six of these for work, three of  
which are before dinner and three after; they then sup, and at eight o’clock, counting from noon, go  
to bed and sleep eight hours: the rest of their time, besides that taken up in work, eating, and  
sleeping, is left to every man’s discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval to luxury and  
idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise, according to their various inclinations, which  
is, for the most part, reading. It is ordinary to have public lectures every morning before daybreak,  
at which none are obliged to appear but those who are marked out for literature; yet a great many,  
25 both men and women, of all ranks, go to hear lectures of one sort or other, according to their  
inclinations: but if others that are not made for contemplation, choose rather to employ themselves  
at that time in their trades, as many of them do, they are not hindered, but are rather commended,  
as men that take care to serve their country. After supper they spend an hour in some diversion, in  
summer in their gardens, and in winter in the halls where they eat, where they entertain each other  
either with music or discourse. They do not so much as know dice, or any such foolish and  
30 mischievous games. They have, however, two sorts of games not unlike our chess; the one is  
between several numbers, in which one number, as it were, consumes another; the other resembles a  
battle between the virtues and the vices, in which the enmity in the vices among themselves, and  
their agreement against virtue, is not unpleasantly represented; together with the special opposition  
between the particular virtues and vices; as also the methods by which vice either openly assaults or  
secretly undermines virtue; and virtue, on the other hand, resists it. But the time appointed for  
35 labour is to be narrowly examined, otherwise you may imagine that since there are only six hours

1 appointed for work, they may fall under a scarcity of necessary provisions: but it is so far from being  
true that this time is not sufficient for supplying them with plenty of all things, either necessary or  
convenient, that it is rather too much; and this you will easily apprehend if you consider how great a  
part of all other nations is quite idle. First, women generally do little, who are the half of mankind;  
and if some few women are diligent, their husbands are idle: then consider the great company of idle  
5 priests, and of those that are called religious men; add to these all rich men, chiefly those that have  
estates in land, who are called noblemen and gentlemen, together with their families, made up of idle  
persons, that are kept more for show than use; add to these all those strong and lusty beggars that go  
about pretending some disease in excuse for their begging; and upon the whole account you will find  
that the number of those by whose labours mankind is supplied is much less than you perhaps  
10 imagined: then consider how few of those that work are employed in labours that are of real service,  
for we, who measure all things by money, give rise to many trades that are both vain and  
superfluous, and serve only to support riot and luxury: for if those who work were employed only in  
such things as the conveniences of life require, there would be such an abundance of them that the  
prices of them would so sink that tradesmen could not be maintained by their gains; if all those who  
labour about useless things were set to more profitable employments, and if all they that languish out  
their lives in sloth and idleness (every one of whom consumes as much as any two of the men that  
are at work) were forced to labour, you may easily imagine that a small proportion of time would  
15 serve for doing all that is either necessary, profitable, or pleasant to mankind, especially while  
pleasure is kept within its due bounds: this appears very plainly in Utopia; for there, in a great city,  
and in all the territory that lies round it, you can scarce find five hundred, either men or women, by  
their age and strength capable of labour, that are not engaged in it. Even the Syphogrants, though  
excused by the law, yet do not excuse themselves, but work, that by their examples they may excite  
the industry of the rest of the people; the like exemption is allowed to those who, being  
20 recommended to the people by the priests, are, by the secret suffrages of the Syphogrants, privileged  
from labour, that they may apply themselves wholly to study; and if any of these fall short of those  
hopes that they seemed at first to give, they are obliged to return to work; and sometimes a mechanic  
that so employs his leisure hours as to make a considerable advancement in learning is eased from  
being a tradesman and ranked among their learned men. Out of these they choose their  
ambassadors, their priests, their Tranibors, and the Prince himself, anciently called their Barzenes,  
25 but is called of late their Ademus.

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

1 thus the builders, to whom that care belongs, are often without employment, except the hewing of  
timber and the squaring of stones, that the materials may be in readiness for raising a building very  
suddenly when there is any occasion for it. As to their clothes, observe how little work is spent in  
them; while they are at labour they are clothed with leather and skins, cut carelessly about them,  
which will last seven years, and when they appear in public they put on an upper garment which  
5 hides the other; and these are all of one colour, and that is the natural colour of the wool. As they  
need less woollen cloth than is used anywhere else, so that which they make use of is much less  
costly; they use linen cloth more, but that is prepared with less labour, and they value cloth only by  
the whiteness of the linen or the cleanness of the wool, without much regard to the fineness of the  
thread. While in other places four or five upper garments of woollen cloth of different colours, and  
10 as many vests of silk, will scarce serve one man, and while those that are nicer think ten too few,  
every man there is content with one, which very often serves him two years; nor is there anything  
that can tempt a man to desire more, for if he had them he would neither be the, warmer nor would  
he make one jot the better appearance for it. And thus, since they are all employed in some useful  
labour, and since they content themselves with fewer things, it falls out that there is a great  
abundance of all things among them; so that it frequently happens that, for want of other work, vast  
numbers are sent out to mend the highways; but when no public undertaking is to be performed, the  
hours of working are lessened. The magistrates never engage the people in unnecessary labour, since  
15 the chief end of the constitution is to regulate labour by the necessities of the public, and to allow  
the people as much time as is necessary for the improvement of their minds, in which they think the  
happiness of life consists.

## OF THEIR TRAFFIC

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

“As their cities are composed of families, so their families are made up of those that are nearly related  
to one another. Their women, when they grow up, are married out, but all the males, both children  
and grand-children, live still in the same house, in great obedience to their common parent, unless  
age has weakened his understanding, and in that case he that is next to him in age comes in his  
25 room; but lest any city should become either too great, or by any accident be dispeopled, provision is  
made that none of their cities may contain above six thousand families, besides those of the country  
around it. No family may have less than ten and more than sixteen persons in it, but there can be no  
determined number for the children under age; this rule is easily observed by removing some of the  
children of a more fruitful couple to any other family that does not abound so much in them. By  
30 the same rule they supply cities that do not increase so fast from others that breed faster; and if there  
is any increase over the whole island, then they draw out a number of their citizens out of the several  
towns and send them over to the neighbouring continent, where, if they find that the inhabitants  
have more soil than they can well cultivate, they fix a colony, taking the inhabitants into their society  
if they are willing to live with them; and where they do that of their own accord, they quickly enter  
into their method of life and conform to their rules, and this proves a happiness to both nations; for,  
according to their constitution, such care is taken of the soil that it becomes fruitful enough for  
35 both, though it might be otherwise too narrow and barren for any one of them. But if the natives



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

10 “But to return to their manner of living in society: the oldest man of every family, as has been  
already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the  
younger serves the elder. Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there  
is a market-place. What is brought thither, and manufactured by the several families, is carried from  
thence to houses appointed for that purpose, in which all things of a sort are laid by themselves; and  
thither every father goes, and takes whatsoever he or his family stand in need of, without either  
15 paying for it or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving a denial to any person,  
since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man’s asking for  
more than he needs; they have no inducements to do this, since they are sure they shall always be  
supplied: it is the fear of want that makes any of the whole race of animals either greedy or ravenous;  
but, besides fear, there is in man a pride that makes him fancy it a particular glory to excel others in  
pomp and excess; but by the laws of the Utopians, there is no room for this. Near these markets  
there are others for all sorts of provisions, where there are not only herbs, fruits, and bread, but also  
20 fish, fowl, and cattle. There are also, without their towns, places appointed near some running water  
for killing their beasts and for washing away their filth, which is done by their slaves; for they suffer  
none of their citizens to kill their cattle, because they think that pity and good-nature, which are  
among the best of those affections that are born with us, are much impaired by the butchering of  
animals; nor do they suffer anything that is foul or unclean to be brought within their towns, lest the  
air should be infected by ill-smells, which might prejudice their health. In every street there are great  
25 halls, that lie at an equal distance from each other, distinguished by particular names. The  
Syphogrants dwell in those that are set over thirty families, fifteen lying on one side of it, and as  
many on the other. In these halls they all meet and have their repasts; the stewards of every one of  
them come to the market-place at an appointed hour, and according to the number of those that  
belong to the hall they carry home provisions. But they take more care of their sick than of any  
others; these are lodged and provided for in public hospitals. They have belonging to every town  
four hospitals, that are built without their walls, and are so large that they may pass for little towns;  
30 by this means, if they had ever such a number of sick persons, they could lodge them conveniently,  
and at such a distance that such of them as are sick of infectious diseases may be kept so far from the  
rest that there can be no danger of contagion. The hospitals are furnished and stored with all things  
that are convenient for the ease and recovery of the sick; and those that are put in them are looked  
after with such tender and watchful care, and are so constantly attended by their skilful physicians,  
that as none is sent to them against their will, so there is scarce one in a whole town that, if he  
35 should fall ill, would not choose rather to go thither than lie sick at home.

1 “After the steward of the hospitals has taken for the sick whatsoever the physician prescribes, then  
the best things that are left in the market are distributed equally among the halls in proportion to  
their numbers; only, in the first place, they serve the Prince, the Chief Priest, the Tranibors, the  
Ambassadors, and strangers, if there are any, which, indeed, falls out but seldom, and for whom  
there are houses, well furnished, particularly appointed for their reception when they come among  
5 them. At the hours of dinner and supper the whole Syphogranty being called together by sound of  
trumpet, they meet and eat together, except only such as are in the hospitals or lie sick at home. Yet,  
after the halls are served, no man is hindered to carry provisions home from the market-place, for  
they know that none does that but for some good reason; for though any that will may eat at home,  
yet none does it willingly, since it is both ridiculous and foolish for any to give themselves the  
trouble to make ready an ill dinner at home when there is a much more plentiful one made ready for  
10 him so near hand. All the uneasy and sordid services about these halls are performed by their slaves;  
but the dressing and cooking their meat, and the ordering their tables, belong only to the women, all  
those of every family taking it by turns. They sit at three or more tables, according to their number;  
the men sit towards the wall, and the women sit on the other side, that if any of them should be  
taken suddenly ill, which is no uncommon case amongst women with child, she may, without  
disturbing the rest, rise and go to the nurses’ room (who are there with the sucking children), where  
there is always clean water at hand and cradles, in which they may lay the young children if there is  
15 occasion for it, and a fire, that they may shift and dress them before it. Every child is nursed by its  
own mother if death or sickness does not intervene; and in that case the Syphogrants’ wives find out  
a nurse quickly, which is no hard matter, for any one that can do it offers herself cheerfully; for as  
they are much inclined to that piece of mercy, so the child whom they nurse considers the nurse as  
its mother. All the children under five years old sit among the nurses; the rest of the younger sort of  
20 both sexes, till they are fit for marriage, either serve those that sit at table, or, if they are not strong  
enough for that, stand by them in great silence and eat what is given them; nor have they any other  
formality of dining. In the middle of the first table, which stands across the upper end of the hall, sit  
the Syphogrant and his wife, for that is the chief and most conspicuous place; next to him sit two of  
the most ancient, for there go always four to a mess. If there is a temple within the Syphogranty, the  
Priest and his wife sit with the Syphogrant above all the rest; next them there is a mixture of old and  
young, who are so placed that as the young are set near others, so they are mixed with the more  
25 ancient; which, they say, was appointed on this account: that the gravity of the old people, and the  
reverence that is due to them, might restrain the younger from all indecent words and gestures.  
Dishes are not served up to the whole table at first, but the best are first set before the old, whose  
seats are distinguished from the young, and, after them, all the rest are served alike. The old men  
distribute to the younger any curious meats that happen to be set before them, if there is not such an  
abundance of them that the whole company may be served alike.

30 “Thus old men are honoured with a particular respect, yet all the rest fare as well as they. Both  
dinner and supper are begun with some lecture of morality that is read to them; but it is so short that  
it is not tedious nor uneasy to them to hear it. From hence the old men take occasion to entertain  
those about them with some useful and pleasant enlargements; but they do not engross the whole  
discourse so to themselves during their meals that the younger may not put in for a share; on the  
contrary, they engage them to talk, that so they may, in that free way of conversation, find out the  
35 force of every one’s spirit and observe his temper. They despatch their dinners quickly, but sit long

1 at supper, because they go to work after the one, and are to sleep after the other, during which they  
think the stomach carries on the concoction more vigorously. They never sup without music, and  
there is always fruit served up after meat; while they are at table some burn perfumes and sprinkle  
about fragrant ointments and sweet waters—in short, they want nothing that may cheer up their  
spirits; they give themselves a large allowance that way, and indulge themselves in all such pleasures  
5 as are attended with no inconvenience. Thus do those that are in the towns live together; but in the  
country, where they live at a great distance, every one eats at home, and no family wants any  
necessary sort of provision, for it is from them that provisions are sent unto those that live in the  
towns.

## OF THE TRAVELLING OF THE UTOPIANS

10 If any man has a mind to visit his friends that live in some other town, or desires to travel and see the  
rest of the country, he obtains leave very easily from the Syphogrant and Tranibors, when there is no  
particular occasion for him at home. Such as travel carry with them a passport from the Prince,  
which both certifies the licence that is granted for travelling, and limits the time of their return.  
They are furnished with a waggon and a slave, who drives the oxen and looks after them; but, unless  
there are women in the company, the waggon is sent back at the end of the journey as a needless  
15 encumbrance. While they are on the road they carry no provisions with them, yet they want for  
nothing, but are everywhere treated as if they were at home. If they stay in any place longer than a  
night, every one follows his proper occupation, and is very well used by those of his own trade; but if  
any man goes out of the city to which he belongs without leave, and is found rambling without a  
passport, he is severely treated, he is punished as a fugitive, and sent home disgracefully; and, if he  
falls again into the like fault, is condemned to slavery. If any man has a mind to travel only over the  
20 precinct of his own city, he may freely do it, with his father's permission and his wife's consent; but  
when he comes into any of the country houses, if he expects to be entertained by them, he must  
labour with them and conform to their rules; and if he does this, he may freely go over the whole  
precinct, being then as useful to the city to which he belongs as if he were still within it. Thus you  
see that there are no idle persons among them, nor pretences of excusing any from labour. There are  
no taverns, no ale-houses, nor stews among them, nor any other occasions of corrupting each other,  
25 of getting into corners, or forming themselves into parties; all men live in full view, so that all are  
obliged both to perform their ordinary task and to employ themselves well in their spare hours; and  
it is certain that a people thus ordered must live in great abundance of all things, and these being  
equally distributed among them, no man can want or be obliged to beg.

30 “In their great council at Amaurot, to which there are three sent from every town once a year, they  
examine what towns abound in provisions and what are under any scarcity, that so the one may be  
furnished from the other; and this is done freely, without any sort of exchange; for, according to  
their plenty or scarcity, they supply or are supplied from one another, so that indeed the whole  
island is, as it were, one family. When they have thus taken care of their whole country, and laid up  
stores for two years (which they do to prevent the ill consequences of an unfavourable season), they  
order an exportation of the overplus, both of corn, honey, wool, flax, wood, wax, tallow, leather, and  
cattle, which they send out, commonly in great quantities, to other nations. They order a seventh  
35 part of all these goods to be freely given to the poor of the countries to which they send them, and

1 sell the rest at moderate rates; and by this exchange they not only bring back those few things that  
they need at home (for, indeed, they scarce need anything but iron), but likewise a great deal of gold  
and silver; and by their driving this trade so long, it is not to be imagined how vast a treasure they  
have got among them, so that now they do not much care whether they sell off their merchandise for  
money in hand or upon trust. A great part of their treasure is now in bonds; but in all their  
5 contracts no private man stands bound, but the writing runs in the name of the town; and the towns  
that owe them money raise it from those private hands that owe it to them, lay it up in their public  
chamber, or enjoy the profit of it till the Utopians call for it; and they choose rather to let the  
greatest part of it lie in their hands, who make advantage by it, than to call for it themselves; but if  
they see that any of their other neighbours stand more in need of it, then they call it in and lend it to  
them. Whenever they are engaged in war, which is the only occasion in which their treasure can be  
10 usefully employed, they make use of it themselves; in great extremities or sudden accidents they  
employ it in hiring foreign troops, whom they more willingly expose to danger than their own  
people; they give them great pay, knowing well that this will work even on their enemies; that it will  
engage them either to betray their own side, or, at least, to desert it; and that it is the best means of  
raising mutual jealousies among them. For this end they have an incredible treasure; but they do not  
keep it as a treasure, but in such a manner as I am almost afraid to tell, lest you think it so  
extravagant as to be hardly credible. This I have the more reason to apprehend because, if I had not  
15 seen it myself, I could not have been easily persuaded to have believed it upon any man's report.

“It is certain that all things appear incredible to us in proportion as they differ from known customs;  
but one who can judge aright will not wonder to find that, since their constitution differs so much  
from ours, their value of gold and silver should be measured by a very different standard; for since  
they have no use for money among themselves, but keep it as a provision against events which  
seldom happen, and between which there are generally long intervening intervals, they value it no  
20 farther than it deserves—that is, in proportion to its use. So that it is plain they must prefer iron  
either to gold or silver, for men can no more live without iron than without fire or water; but Nature  
has marked out no use for the other metals so essential as not easily to be dispensed with. The folly  
of men has enhanced the value of gold and silver because of their scarcity; whereas, on the contrary,  
it is their opinion that Nature, as an indulgent parent, has freely given us all the best things in great  
abundance, such as water and earth, but has laid up and hid from us the things that are vain and  
25 useless.

“If these metals were laid up in any tower in the kingdom it would raise a jealousy of the Prince and  
Senate, and give birth to that foolish mistrust into which the people are apt to fall—a jealousy of  
their intending to sacrifice the interest of the public to their own private advantage. If they should  
work it into vessels, or any sort of plate, they fear that the people might grow too fond of it, and so  
be unwilling to let the plate be run down, if a war made it necessary, to employ it in paying their  
30 soldiers. To prevent all these inconveniences they have fallen upon an expedient which, as it agrees  
with their other policy, so is it very different from ours, and will scarce gain belief among us who  
value gold so much, and lay it up so carefully. They eat and drink out of vessels of earth or glass,  
which make an agreeable appearance, though formed of brittle materials; while they make their  
chamber-pots and close-stools of gold and silver, and that not only in their public halls but in their  
private houses. Of the same metals they likewise make chains and fetters for their slaves, to some of  
35 which, as a badge of infamy, they hang an earring of gold, and make others wear a chain or a coronet

1 of the same metal; and thus they take care by all possible means to render gold and silver of no  
esteem; and from hence it is that while other nations part with their gold and silver as unwillingly as  
if one tore out their bowels, those of Utopia would look on their giving in all they possess of those  
metals (when there were any use for them) but as the parting with a trifle, or as we would esteem the  
loss of a penny! They find pearls on their coasts, and diamonds and carbuncles on their rocks; they  
5 do not look after them, but, if they find them by chance, they polish them, and with them they  
adorn their children, who are delighted with them, and glory in them during their childhood; but  
when they grow to years, and see that none but children use such baubles, they of their own accord,  
without being bid by their parents, lay them aside, and would be as much ashamed to use them  
afterwards as children among us, when they come to years, are of their puppets and other toys.

10 “I never saw a clearer instance of the opposite impressions that different customs make on people  
than I observed in the ambassadors of the Anemolians, who came to Amaurot when I was there. As  
they came to treat of affairs of great consequence, the deputies from several towns met together to  
wait for their coming. The ambassadors of the nations that lie near Utopia, knowing their customs,  
and that fine clothes are in no esteem among them, that silk is despised, and gold is a badge of  
infamy, used to come very modestly clothed; but the Anemolians, lying more remote, and having  
had little commerce with them, understanding that they were coarsely clothed, and all in the same  
15 manner, took it for granted that they had none of those fine things among them of which they made  
no use; and they, being a vainglorious rather than a wise people, resolved to set themselves out with  
so much pomp that they should look like gods, and strike the eyes of the poor Utopians with their  
splendour. Thus three ambassadors made their entry with a hundred attendants, all clad in garments  
of different colours, and the greater part in silk; the ambassadors themselves, who were of the  
nobility of their country, were in cloth-of-gold, and adorned with massy chains, earrings and rings of  
gold; their caps were covered with bracelets set full of pearls and other gems—in a word, they were  
20 set out with all those things that among the Utopians were either the badges of slavery, the marks of  
infamy, or the playthings of children. It was not unpleasant to see, on the one side, how they looked  
big, when they compared their rich habits with the plain clothes of the Utopians, who were come  
out in great numbers to see them make their entry; and, on the other, to observe how much they  
were mistaken in the impression which they hoped this pomp would have made on them. It  
appeared so ridiculous a show to all that had never stirred out of their country, and had not seen the  
25 customs of other nations, that though they paid some reverence to those that were the most meanly  
clad, as if they had been the ambassadors, yet when they saw the ambassadors themselves so full of  
gold and chains, they looked upon them as slaves, and forbore to treat them with reverence. You  
might have seen the children who were grown big enough to despise their playthings, and who had  
thrown away their jewels, call to their mothers, push them gently, and cry out, ‘See that great fool,  
that wears pearls and gems as if he were yet a child!’ while their mothers very innocently replied,  
30 ‘Hold your peace! this, I believe, is one of the ambassadors’ fools.’ Others censured the fashion of  
their chains, and observed, ‘That they were of no use, for they were too slight to bind their slaves,  
who could easily break them; and, besides, hung so loose about them that they thought it easy to  
throw their away, and so get from them.’ But after the ambassadors had stayed a day among them,  
and saw so vast a quantity of gold in their houses (which was as much despised by them as it was  
esteemed in other nations), and beheld more gold and silver in the chains and fetters of one slave  
35 than all their ornaments amounted to, their plumes fell, and they were ashamed of all that glory for

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

“These and such like notions have that people imbibed, partly from their education, being bred in a  
country whose customs and laws are opposite to all such foolish maxims, and partly from their  
learning and studies—for though there are but few in any town that are so wholly excused from  
labour as to give themselves entirely up to their studies (these being only such persons as discover  
from their childhood an extraordinary capacity and disposition for letters), yet their children and a  
20 great part of the nation, both men and women, are taught to spend those hours in which they are  
not obliged to work in reading; and this they do through the whole progress of life. They have all  
their learning in their own tongue, which is both a copious and pleasant language, and in which a  
man can fully express his mind; it runs over a great tract of many countries, but it is not equally pure  
in all places. They had never so much as heard of the names of any of those philosophers that are so  
25 famous in these parts of the world, before we went among them; and yet they had made the same  
discoveries as the Greeks, both in music, logic, arithmetic, and geometry. But as they are almost in  
everything equal to the ancient philosophers, so they far exceed our modern logicians for they have  
never yet fallen upon the barbarous niceties that our youth are forced to learn in those trifling logical  
schools that are among us. They are so far from minding chimeras and fantastical images made in  
the mind that none of them could comprehend what we meant when we talked to them of a man in  
the abstract as common to all men in particular (so that though we spoke of him as a thing that we  
30 could point at with our fingers, yet none of them could perceive him) and yet distinct from every  
one, as if he were some monstrous Colossus or giant; yet, for all this ignorance of these empty  
notions, they knew astronomy, and were perfectly acquainted with the motions of the heavenly  
bodies; and have many instruments, well contrived and divided, by which they very accurately  
compute the course and positions of the sun, moon, and stars. But for the cheat of divining by the  
stars, by their oppositions or conjunctions, it has not so much as entered into their thoughts. They  
35 have a particular sagacity, founded upon much observation, in judging of the weather, by which they

1 know when they may look for rain, wind, or other alterations in the air; but as to the philosophy of these things, the cause of the saltness of the sea, of its ebbing and flowing, and of the original and nature both of the heavens and the earth, they dispute of them partly as our ancient philosophers have done, and partly upon some new hypothesis, in which, as they differ from them, so they do not in all things agree among themselves.

5 “As to moral philosophy, they have the same disputes among them as we have here. They examine what are properly good, both for the body and the mind; and whether any outward thing can be called truly *good*, or if that term belong only to the endowments of the soul. They inquire, likewise, into the nature of virtue and pleasure. But their chief dispute is concerning the happiness of a man, and wherein it consists—whether in some one thing or in a great many. They seem, indeed, more inclinable to that opinion that places, if not the whole, yet the chief part, of a man’s happiness in pleasure; and, what may seem more strange, they make use of arguments even from religion, 10 notwithstanding its severity and roughness, for the support of that opinion so indulgent to pleasure; for they never dispute concerning happiness without fetching some arguments from the principles of religion as well as from natural reason, since without the former they reckon that all our inquiries after happiness must be but conjectural and defective.

15 “These are their religious principles:—That the soul of man is immortal, and that God of His goodness has designed that it should be happy; and that He has, therefore, appointed rewards for good and virtuous actions, and punishments for vice, to be distributed after this life. Though these principles of religion are conveyed down among them by tradition, they think that even reason itself determines a man to believe and acknowledge them; and freely confess that if these were taken away, no man would be so insensible as not to seek after pleasure by all possible means, lawful or unlawful, using only this caution—that a lesser pleasure might not stand in the way of a greater, and that no 20 pleasure ought to be pursued that should draw a great deal of pain after it; for they think it the maddest thing in the world to pursue virtue, that is a sour and difficult thing, and not only to renounce the pleasures of life, but willingly to undergo much pain and trouble, if a man has no prospect of a reward. And what reward can there be for one that has passed his whole life, not only without pleasure, but in pain, if there is nothing to be expected after death? Yet they do not place happiness in all sorts of pleasures, but only in those that in themselves are good and honest. There is 25 a party among them who place happiness in bare virtue; others think that our natures are conducted by virtue to happiness, as that which is the chief good of man. They define virtue thus—that it is a living according to Nature, and think that we are made by God for that end; they believe that a man then follows the dictates of Nature when he pursues or avoids things according to the direction of reason. They say that the first dictate of reason is the kindling in us a love and reverence for the Divine Majesty, to whom we owe both all that we have and, all that we can ever hope for. In the 30 next place, reason directs us to keep our minds as free from passion and as cheerful as we can, and that we should consider ourselves as bound by the ties of good-nature and humanity to use our utmost endeavours to help forward the happiness of all other persons; for there never was any man such a morose and severe pursuer of virtue, such an enemy to pleasure, that though he set hard rules for men to undergo, much pain, many watchings, and other rigors, yet did not at the same time advise them to do all they could in order to relieve and ease the miserable, and who did not represent gentleness and good-nature as amiable dispositions. And from thence they infer that if a man ought 35 to advance the welfare and comfort of the rest of mankind (there being no virtue more proper and

1 peculiar to our nature than to ease the miseries of others, to free from trouble and anxiety, in  
furnishing them with the comforts of life, in which pleasure consists) Nature much more vigorously  
leads them to do all this for himself. A life of pleasure is either a real evil, and in that case we ought  
not to assist others in their pursuit of it, but, on the contrary, to keep them from it all we can, as  
from that which is most hurtful and deadly; or if it is a good thing, so that we not only may but  
5 ought to help others to it, why, then, ought not a man to begin with himself? since no man can be  
more bound to look after the good of another than after his own; for Nature cannot direct us to be  
good and kind to others, and yet at the same time to be unmerciful and cruel to ourselves. Thus as  
they define virtue to be living according to Nature, so they imagine that Nature prompts all people  
on to seek after pleasure as the end of all they do. They also observe that in order to our supporting  
the pleasures of life, Nature inclines us to enter into society; for there is no man so much raised  
10 above the rest of mankind as to be the only favourite of Nature, who, on the contrary, seems to have  
placed on a level all those that belong to the same species. Upon this they infer that no man ought  
to seek his own conveniences so eagerly as to prejudice others; and therefore they think that not only  
all agreements between private persons ought to be observed, but likewise that all those laws ought to  
be kept which either a good prince has published in due form, or to which a people that is neither  
oppressed with tyranny nor circumvented by fraud has consented, for distributing those  
conveniences of life which afford us all our pleasures.

15 “They think it is an evidence of true wisdom for a man to pursue his own advantage as far as the  
laws allow it, they account it piety to prefer the public good to one’s private concerns, but they think  
it unjust for a man to seek for pleasure by snatching another man’s pleasures from him; and, on the  
contrary, they think it a sign of a gentle and good soul for a man to dispense with his own advantage  
for the good of others, and that by this means a good man finds as much pleasure one way as he  
20 parts with another; for as he may expect the like from others when he may come to need it, so, if  
that should fail him, yet the sense of a good action, and the reflections that he makes on the love and  
gratitude of those whom he has so obliged, gives the mind more pleasure than the body could have  
found in that from which it had restrained itself. They are also persuaded that God will make up the  
loss of those small pleasures with a vast and endless joy, of which religion easily convinces a good  
soul.

25 “Thus, upon an inquiry into the whole matter, they reckon that all our actions, and even all our  
virtues, terminate in pleasure, as in our chief end and greatest happiness; and they call every motion  
or state, either of body or mind, in which Nature teaches us to delight, a pleasure. Thus they  
cautiously limit pleasure only to those appetites to which Nature leads us; for they say that Nature  
leads us only to those delights to which reason, as well as sense, carries us, and by which we neither  
injure any other person nor lose the possession of greater pleasures, and of such as draw no troubles  
30 after them. But they look upon those delights which men by a foolish, though common, mistake  
call pleasure, as if they could change as easily the nature of things as the use of words, as things that  
greatly obstruct their real happiness, instead of advancing it, because they so entirely possess the  
minds of those that are once captivated by them with a false notion of pleasure that there is no room  
left for pleasures of a truer or purer kind.

35 “There are many things that in themselves have nothing that is truly delightful; on the contrary, they  
have a good deal of bitterness in them; and yet, from our perverse appetites after forbidden objects,



1 are not only ranked among the pleasures, but are made even the greatest designs, of life. Among  
those who pursue these sophisticated pleasures they reckon such as I mentioned before, who think  
themselves really the better for having fine clothes; in which they think they are doubly mistaken,  
both in the opinion they have of their clothes, and in that they have of themselves. For if you  
consider the use of clothes, why should a fine thread be thought better than a coarse one? And yet  
5 these men, as if they had some real advantages beyond others, and did not owe them wholly to their  
mistakes, look big, seem to fancy themselves to be more valuable, and imagine that a respect is due  
to them for the sake of a rich garment, to which they would not have pretended if they had been  
more meanly clothed, and even resent it as an affront if that respect is not paid them. It is also a  
great folly to be taken with outward marks of respect, which signify nothing; for what true or real  
pleasure can one man find in another's standing bare or making legs to him? Will the bending  
10 another man's knees give ease to yours? and will the head's being bare cure the madness of yours?  
And yet it is wonderful to see how this false notion of pleasure bewitches many who delight  
themselves with the fancy of their nobility, and are pleased with this conceit—that they are  
descended from ancestors who have been held for some successions rich, and who have had great  
possessions; for this is all that makes nobility at present. Yet they do not think themselves a whit the  
less noble, though their immediate parents have left none of this wealth to them, or though they  
themselves have squandered it away. The Utopians have no better opinion of those who are much  
15 taken with gems and precious stones, and who account it a degree of happiness next to a divine one  
if they can purchase one that is very extraordinary, especially if it be of that sort of stones that is then  
in greatest request, for the same sort is not at all times universally of the same value, nor will men  
buy it unless it be dismounted and taken out of the gold. The jeweller is then made to give good  
security, and required solemnly to swear that the stone is true, that, by such an exact caution, a false  
one might not be bought instead of a true; though, if you were to examine it, your eye could find no  
20 difference between the counterfeit and that which is true; so that they are all one to you, as much as  
if you were blind. Or can it be thought that they who heap up a useless mass of wealth, not for any  
use that it is to bring them, but merely to please themselves with the contemplation of it, enjoy any  
true pleasure in it? The delight they find is only a false shadow of joy. Those are no better whose  
error is somewhat different from the former, and who hide it out of their fear of losing it; for what  
other name can fit the hiding it in the earth, or, rather, the restoring it to it again, it being thus cut  
25 off from being useful either to its owner or to the rest of mankind? And yet the owner, having hid it  
carefully, is glad, because he thinks he is now sure of it. If it should be stole, the owner, though he  
might live perhaps ten years after the theft, of which he knew nothing, would find no difference  
between his having or losing it, for both ways it was equally useless to him.

30 “Among those foolish pursuers of pleasure they reckon all that delight in hunting, in fowling, or  
gaming, of whose madness they have only heard, for they have no such things among them. But  
they have asked us, ‘What sort of pleasure is it that men can find in throwing the dice?’ (for if there  
were any pleasure in it, they think the doing it so often should give one a surfeit of it); ‘and what  
pleasure can one find in hearing the barking and howling of dogs, which seem rather odious than  
pleasant sounds?’ Nor can they comprehend the pleasure of seeing dogs run after a hare, more than  
of seeing one dog run after another; for if the seeing them run is that which gives the pleasure, you  
have the same entertainment to the eye on both these occasions, since that is the same in both cases.  
35 But if the pleasure lies in seeing the hare killed and torn by the dogs, this ought rather to stir pity,

1 that a weak, harmless, and fearful hare should be devoured by strong, fierce, and cruel dogs.

Therefore all this business of hunting is, among the Utopians, turned over to their butchers, and those, as has been already said, are all slaves, and they look on hunting as one of the basest parts of a butcher's work, for they account it both more profitable and more decent to kill those beasts that are more necessary and useful to mankind, whereas the killing and tearing of so small and miserable an animal can only attract the huntsman with a false show of pleasure, from which he can reap but small advantage. They look on the desire of the bloodshed, even of beasts, as a mark of a mind that is already corrupted with cruelty, or that at least, by too frequent returns of so brutal a pleasure, must degenerate into it.

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

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

1 it only carries pain along with it, they look upon that as a fetch of subtlety that does not much alter  
the matter. It is all one, in their opinion, whether it be said that health is in itself a pleasure, or that  
it begets a pleasure, as fire gives heat, so it be granted that all those whose health is entire have a true  
pleasure in the enjoyment of it. And they reason thus:—‘What is the pleasure of eating, but that a  
man’s health, which had been weakened, does, with the assistance of food, drive away hunger, and so  
5 recruiting itself, recovers its former vigour? And being thus refreshed it finds a pleasure in that  
conflict; and if the conflict is pleasure, the victory must yet breed a greater pleasure, except we fancy  
that it becomes stupid as soon as it has obtained that which it pursued, and so neither knows nor  
rejoices in its own welfare.’ If it is said that health cannot be felt, they absolutely deny it; for what  
man is in health, that does not perceive it when he is awake? Is there any man that is so dull and  
stupid as not to acknowledge that he feels a delight in health? And what is delight but another name  
10 for pleasure?

15 “But, of all pleasures, they esteem those to be most valuable that lie in the mind, the chief of which  
arise out of true virtue and the witness of a good conscience. They account health the chief pleasure  
that belongs to the body; for they think that the pleasure of eating and drinking, and all the other  
delights of sense, are only so far desirable as they give or maintain health; but they are not pleasant in  
themselves otherwise than as they resist those impressions that our natural infirmities are still making  
upon us. For as a wise man desires rather to avoid diseases than to take physic, and to be freed from  
pain rather than to find ease by remedies, so it is more desirable not to need this sort of pleasure than  
to be obliged to indulge it. If any man imagines that there is a real happiness in these enjoyments,  
he must then confess that he would be the happiest of all men if he were to lead his life in perpetual  
hunger, thirst, and itching, and, by consequence, in perpetual eating, drinking, and scratching  
himself; which any one may easily see would be not only a base, but a miserable, state of a life.  
20 These are, indeed, the lowest of pleasures, and the least pure, for we can never relish them but when  
they are mixed with the contrary pains. The pain of hunger must give us the pleasure of eating, and  
here the pain out-balances the pleasure. And as the pain is more vehement, so it lasts much longer;  
for as it begins before the pleasure, so it does not cease but with the pleasure that extinguishes it, and  
both expire together. They think, therefore, none of those pleasures are to be valued any further  
than as they are necessary; yet they rejoice in them, and with due gratitude acknowledge the  
tenderness of the great Author of Nature, who has planted in us appetites, by which those things that  
25 are necessary for our preservation are likewise made pleasant to us. For how miserable a thing would  
life be if those daily diseases of hunger and thirst were to be carried off by such bitter drugs as we  
must use for those diseases that return seldomer upon us! And thus these pleasant, as well as proper,  
gifts of Nature maintain the strength and the sprightliness of our bodies.

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

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

“This is their notion of virtue and of pleasure: they think that no man’s reason can carry him to a  
truer idea of them unless some discovery from heaven should inspire him with sublimer notions. I  
have not now the leisure to examine whether they think right or wrong in this matter; nor do I judge  
it necessary, for I have only undertaken to give you an account of their constitution, but not to  
defend all their principles. I am sure that whatever may be said of their notions, there is not in the  
10 whole world either a better people or a happier government. Their bodies are vigorous and lively;  
and though they are but of a middle stature, and have neither the fruitfulest soil nor the purest air in  
the world; yet they fortify themselves so well, by their temperate course of life, against the  
unhealthiness of their air, and by their industry they so cultivate their soil, that there is nowhere to  
be seen a greater increase, both of corn and cattle, nor are there anywhere healthier men and freer  
15 from diseases; for one may there see reduced to practice not only all the art that the husbandman  
employs in manuring and improving an ill soil, but whole woods plucked up by the roots, and in  
other places new ones planted, where there were none before. Their principal motive for this is the  
convenience of carriage, that their timber may be either near their towns or growing on the banks of  
the sea, or of some rivers, so as to be floated to them; for it is a harder work to carry wood at any  
distance over land than corn. The people are industrious, apt to learn, as well as cheerful and  
pleasant, and none can endure more labour when it is necessary; but, except in that case, they love  
20 their ease. They are unwearied pursuers of knowledge; for when we had given them some hints of  
the learning and discipline of the Greeks, concerning whom we only instructed them (for we know  
that there was nothing among the Romans, except their historians and their poets, that they would  
value much), it was strange to see how eagerly they were set on learning that language: we began to  
read a little of it to them, rather in compliance with their importunity than out of any hopes of their  
reaping from it any great advantage: but, after a very short trial, we found they made such progress,  
25 that we saw our labour was like to be more successful than we could have expected: they learned to  
write their characters and to pronounce their language so exactly, had so quick an apprehension, they  
remembered it so faithfully, and became so ready and correct in the use of it, that it would have  
looked like a miracle if the greater part of those whom we taught had not been men both of  
extraordinary capacity and of a fit age for instruction: they were, for the greatest part, chosen from  
among their learned men by their chief council, though some studied it of their own accord. In  
three years’ time they became masters of the whole language, so that they read the best of the Greek  
30 authors very exactly. I am, indeed, apt to think that they learned that language the more easily from  
its having some relation to their own. I believe that they were a colony of the Greeks; for though  
their language comes nearer the Persian, yet they retain many names, both for their towns and  
magistrates, that are of Greek derivation. I happened to carry a great many books with me, instead  
of merchandise, when I sailed my fourth voyage; for I was so far from thinking of soon coming back,  
that I rather thought never to have returned at all, and I gave them all my books, among which were  
35 many of Plato’s and some of Aristotle’s works: I had also Theophrastus on Plants, which, to my great

1 regret, was imperfect; for having laid it carelessly by, while we were at sea, a monkey had seized upon  
it, and in many places torn out the leaves. They have no books of grammar but Lascares, for I did  
not carry Theodorus with me; nor have they any dictionaries but Hesichius and Dioscerides. They  
esteem Plutarch highly, and were much taken with Lucian's wit and with his pleasant way of  
writing. As for the poets, they have Aristophanes, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles of Aldus's  
5 edition; and for historians, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Herodian. One of my companions,  
Thricius Apinatus, happened to carry with him some of Hippocrates's works and Galen's  
Microtechne, which they hold in great estimation; for though there is no nation in the world that  
needs physic so little as they do, yet there is not any that honours it so much; they reckon the  
knowledge of it one of the pleasantest and most profitable parts of philosophy, by which, as they  
10 search into the secrets of nature, so they not only find this study highly agreeable, but think that  
such inquiries are very acceptable to the Author of nature; and imagine, that as He, like the inventors  
of curious engines amongst mankind, has exposed this great machine of the universe to the view of  
the only creatures capable of contemplating it, so an exact and curious observer, who admires His  
workmanship, is much more acceptable to Him than one of the herd, who, like a beast incapable of  
reason, looks on this glorious scene with the eyes of a dull and unconcerned spectator.

15 "The minds of the Utopians, when fenced with a love for learning, are very ingenious in discovering  
all such arts as are necessary to carry it to perfection. Two things they owe to us, the manufacture of  
paper and the art of printing; yet they are not so entirely indebted to us for these discoveries but that  
a great part of the invention was their own. We showed them some books printed by Aldus, we  
explained to them the way of making paper and the mystery of printing; but, as we had never  
practised these arts, we described them in a crude and superficial manner. They seized the hints we  
gave them; and though at first they could not arrive at perfection, yet by making many essays they at  
20 last found out and corrected all their errors and conquered every difficulty. Before this they only  
wrote on parchment, on reeds, or on the barks of trees; but now they have established the  
manufactures of paper and set up printing presses, so that, if they had but a good number of Greek  
authors, they would be quickly supplied with many copies of them: at present, though they have no  
more than those I have mentioned, yet, by several impressions, they have multiplied them into many  
thousands. If any man was to go among them that had some extraordinary talent, or that by much  
25 travelling had observed the customs of many nations (which made us to be so well received), he  
would receive a hearty welcome, for they are very desirous to know the state of the whole world.  
Very few go among them on the account of traffic; for what can a man carry to them but iron, or  
gold, or silver? which merchants desire rather to export than import to a strange country: and as for  
their exportation, they think it better to manage that themselves than to leave it to foreigners, for by  
this means, as they understand the state of the neighbouring countries better, so they keep up the art  
of navigation which cannot be maintained but by much practice.

## 30 OF THEIR SLAVES, AND OF THEIR MARRIAGES

35 "They do not make slaves of prisoners of war, except those that are taken in battle, nor of the sons of  
their slaves, nor of those of other nations: the slaves among them are only such as are condemned to  
that state of life for the commission of some crime, or, which is more common, such as their  
merchants find condemned to die in those parts to which they trade, whom they sometimes redeem

1 at low rates, and in other places have them for nothing. They are kept at perpetual labour, and are  
always chained, but with this difference, that their own natives are treated much worse than others:  
they are considered as more profligate than the rest, and since they could not be restrained by the  
advantages of so excellent an education, are judged worthy of harder usage. Another sort of slaves  
are the poor of the neighbouring countries, who offer of their own accord to come and serve them:  
5 they treat these better, and use them in all other respects as well as their own countrymen, except  
their imposing more labour upon them, which is no hard task to those that have been accustomed to  
it; and if any of these have a mind to go back to their own country, which, indeed, falls out but  
seldom, as they do not force them to stay, so they do not send them away empty-handed.

10 “I have already told you with what care they look after their sick, so that nothing is left undone that  
can contribute either to their case or health; and for those who are taken with fixed and incurable  
diseases, they use all possible ways to cherish them and to make their lives as comfortable as  
possible. They visit them often and take great pains to make their time pass off easily; but when any  
is taken with a torturing and lingering pain, so that there is no hope either of recovery or ease, the  
priests and magistrates come and exhort them, that, since they are now unable to go on with the  
business of life, are become a burden to themselves and to all about them, and they have really out-  
lived themselves, they should no longer nourish such a rooted distemper, but choose rather to die  
15 since they cannot live but in much misery; being assured that if they thus deliver themselves from  
torture, or are willing that others should do it, they shall be happy after death: since, by their acting  
thus, they lose none of the pleasures, but only the troubles of life, they think they behave not only  
reasonably but in a manner consistent with religion and piety; because they follow the advice given  
them by their priests, who are the expounders of the will of God. Such as are wrought on by these  
persuasions either starve themselves of their own accord, or take opium, and by that means die  
20 without pain. But no man is forced on this way of ending his life; and if they cannot be persuaded  
to it, this does not induce them to fail in their attendance and care of them: but as they believe that a  
voluntary death, when it is chosen upon such an authority, is very honourable, so if any man takes  
away his own life without the approbation of the priests and the senate, they give him none of the  
honours of a decent funeral, but throw his body into a ditch.

25 “Their women are not married before eighteen nor their men before two-and-twenty, and if any of  
them run into forbidden embraces before marriage they are severely punished, and the privilege of  
marriage is denied them unless they can obtain a special warrant from the Prince. Such disorders  
cast a great reproach upon the master and mistress of the family in which they happen, for it is  
supposed that they have failed in their duty. The reason of punishing this so severely is, because they  
think that if they were not strictly restrained from all vagrant appetites, very few would engage in a  
state in which they venture the quiet of their whole lives, by being confined to one person, and are  
30 obliged to endure all the inconveniences with which it is accompanied. In choosing their wives they  
use a method that would appear to us very absurd and ridiculous, but it is constantly observed  
among them, and is accounted perfectly consistent with wisdom. Before marriage some grave  
matron presents the bride, naked, whether she is a virgin or a widow, to the bridegroom, and after  
that some grave man presents the bridegroom, naked, to the bride. We, indeed, both laughed at  
this, and condemned it as very indecent. But they, on the other hand, wondered at the folly of the  
men of all other nations, who, if they are but to buy a horse of a small value, are so cautious that  
35 they will see every part of him, and take off both his saddle and all his other tackle, that there may be

1 no secret ulcer hid under any of them, and that yet in the choice of a wife, on which depends the  
happiness or unhappiness of the rest of his life, a man should venture upon trust, and only see about  
a handsbreadth of the face, all the rest of the body being covered, under which may lie hid what may  
be contagious as well as loathsome. All men are not so wise as to choose a woman only for her good  
qualities, and even wise men consider the body as that which adds not a little to the mind, and it is  
5 certain there may be some such deformity covered with clothes as may totally alienate a man from  
his wife, when it is too late to part with her; if such a thing is discovered after marriage a man has no  
remedy but patience; they, therefore, think it is reasonable that there should be good provision made  
against such mischievous frauds.

10 “There was so much the more reason for them to make a regulation in this matter, because they are  
the only people of those parts that neither allow of polygamy nor of divorces, except in the case of  
adultery or insufferable perverseness, for in these cases the Senate dissolves the marriage and grants  
the injured person leave to marry again; but the guilty are made infamous and are never allowed the  
privilege of a second marriage. None are suffered to put away their wives against their wills, from  
any great calamity that may have fallen on their persons, for they look on it as the height of cruelty  
and treachery to abandon either of the married persons when they need most the tender care of their  
consort, and that chiefly in the case of old age, which, as it carries many diseases along with it, so it is  
15 a disease of itself. But it frequently falls out that when a married couple do not well agree, they, by  
mutual consent, separate, and find out other persons with whom they hope they may live more  
happily; yet this is not done without obtaining leave of the Senate, which never admits of a divorce  
but upon a strict inquiry made, both by the senators and their wives, into the grounds upon which it  
is desired, and even when they are satisfied concerning the reasons of it they go on but slowly, for  
they imagine that too great easiness in granting leave for new marriages would very much shake the  
kindness of married people. They punish severely those that defile the marriage bed; if both parties  
20 are married they are divorced, and the injured persons may marry one another, or whom they please,  
but the adulterer and the adulteress are condemned to slavery, yet if either of the injured persons  
cannot shake off the love of the married person they may live with them still in that state, but they  
must follow them to that labour to which the slaves are condemned, and sometimes the repentance  
of the condemned, together with the unshaken kindness of the innocent and injured person, has  
prevailed so far with the Prince that he has taken off the sentence; but those that relapse after they  
25 are once pardoned are punished with death.

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

1 crimes they have committed than for the miseries they suffer, are not out of hope, but that, at last,  
either the Prince will, by his prerogative, or the people, by their intercession, restore them again to  
their liberty, or, at least, very much mitigate their slavery. He that tempts a married woman to  
adultery is no less severely punished than he that commits it, for they believe that a deliberate design  
to commit a crime is equal to the fact itself, since its not taking effect does not make the person that  
5 miscarried in his attempt at all the less guilty.

“They take great pleasure in fools, and as it is thought a base and unbecoming thing to use them ill,  
so they do not think it amiss for people to divert themselves with their folly; and, in their opinion,  
this is a great advantage to the fools themselves; for if men were so sullen and severe as not at all to  
please themselves with their ridiculous behaviour and foolish sayings, which is all that they can do to  
10 recommend themselves to others, it could not be expected that they would be so well provided for  
nor so tenderly used as they must otherwise be. If any man should reproach another for his being  
misshaped or imperfect in any part of his body, it would not at all be thought a reflection on the  
person so treated, but it would be accounted scandalous in him that had upbraided another with  
what he could not help. It is thought a sign of a sluggish and sordid mind not to preserve carefully  
one’s natural beauty; but it is likewise infamous among them to use paint. They all see that no  
15 beauty recommends a wife so much to her husband as the probity of her life and her obedience; for  
as some few are caught and held only by beauty, so all are attracted by the other excellences which  
charm all the world.

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

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

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

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



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

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

20 “The Utopians call those nations that come and ask magistrates from them Neighbours; but those to  
whom they have been of more particular service, Friends; and as all other nations are perpetually  
either making leagues or breaking them, they never enter into an alliance with any state. They think  
leagues are useless things, and believe that if the common ties of humanity do not knit men together,  
the faith of promises will have no great effect; and they are the more confirmed in this by what they  
see among the nations round about them, who are no strict observers of leagues and treaties. We  
25 know how religiously they are observed in Europe, more particularly where the Christian doctrine is  
received, among whom they are sacred and inviolable! which is partly owing to the justice and  
goodness of the princes themselves, and partly to the reverence they pay to the popes, who, as they  
are the most religious observers of their own promises, so they exhort all other princes to perform  
theirs, and, when fainter methods do not prevail, they compel them to it by the severity of the  
pastoral censure, and think that it would be the most indecent thing possible if men who are  
30 particularly distinguished by the title of ‘The Faithful’ should not religiously keep the faith of their  
treaties. But in that new-found world, which is not more distant from us in situation than the  
people are in their manners and course of life, there is no trusting to leagues, even though they were  
made with all the pomp of the most sacred ceremonies; on the contrary, they are on this account the  
sooner broken, some slight pretence being found in the words of the treaties, which are purposely  
couched in such ambiguous terms that they can never be so strictly bound but they will always find  
35 some loophole to escape at, and thus they break both their leagues and their faith; and this is done  
with such impudence, that those very men who value themselves on having suggested these

1 expedients to their princes would, with a haughty scorn, declaim against such craft; or, to speak plainer, such fraud and deceit, if they found private men make use of it in their bargains, and would readily say that they deserved to be hanged.

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

## 20 OF THEIR MILITARY DISCIPLINE

They detest war as a very brutal thing, and which, to the reproach of human nature, is more practised by men than by any sort of beasts. They, in opposition to the sentiments of almost all other nations, think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory that is gained by war; and therefore, though they accustom themselves daily to military exercises and the discipline of war, in which not only their men, but their women likewise, are trained up, that, in cases of necessity, they may not be quite useless, yet they do not rashly engage in war, unless it be either to defend themselves or their friends from any unjust aggressors, or, out of good nature or in compassion, assist an oppressed nation in shaking off the yoke of tyranny. They, indeed, help their friends not only in defensive but also in offensive wars; but they never do that unless they had been consulted before the breach was made, and, being satisfied with the grounds on which they went, they had found that all demands of reparation were rejected, so that a war was unavoidable. This they think to be not only just when one neighbour makes an inroad on another by public order, and carries away the spoils, but when the merchants of one country are oppressed in another, either under pretence of some unjust laws, or by the perverse wresting of good ones. This they count a juster cause of war than the other, because those injuries are done under some colour of laws. This was the only ground of that war in which they engaged with the Nephelogetes against the Aleopolitanes, a little before our time; for the merchants of the former having, as they thought, met with great injustice among the latter, which (whether it was in itself right or wrong) drew on a terrible war, in which many of their

1 neighbours were engaged; and their keenness in carrying it on being supported by their strength in  
maintaining it, it not only shook some very flourishing states and very much afflicted others, but,  
after a series of much mischief ended in the entire conquest and slavery of the Aleopolitanes, who,  
though before the war they were in all respects much superior to the Nephelogetes, were yet  
subdued; but, though the Utopians had assisted them in the war, yet they pretended to no share of  
5 the spoil.

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

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

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

30 “As soon as they declare war, they take care to have a great many schedules, that are sealed with their  
common seal, affixed in the most conspicuous places of their enemies’ country. This is carried  
secretly, and done in many places all at once. In these they promise great rewards to such as shall kill  
the prince, and lesser in proportion to such as shall kill any other persons who are those on whom,  
next to the prince himself, they cast the chief balance of the war. And they double the sum to him  
that, instead of killing the person so marked out, shall take him alive, and put him in their hands.  
35 They offer not only indemnity, but rewards, to such of the persons themselves that are so marked, if

1 they will act against their countrymen. By this means those that are named in their schedules  
become not only distrustful of their fellow-citizens, but are jealous of one another, and are much  
distracted by fear and danger; for it has often fallen out that many of them, and even the prince  
himself, have been betrayed, by those in whom they have trusted most; for the rewards that the  
Utopians offer are so immeasurably great, that there is no sort of crime to which men cannot be  
5 drawn by them. They consider the risk that those run who undertake such services, and offer a  
recompense proportioned to the danger—not only a vast deal of gold, but great revenues in lands,  
that lie among other nations that are their friends, where they may go and enjoy them very securely;  
and they observe the promises they make of their kind most religiously. They very much approve of  
this way of corrupting their enemies, though it appears to others to be base and cruel; but they look  
10 on it as a wise course, to make an end of what would be otherwise a long war, without so much as  
hazarding one battle to decide it. They think it likewise an act of mercy and love to mankind to  
prevent the great slaughter of those that must otherwise be killed in the progress of the war, both on  
their own side and on that of their enemies, by the death of a few that are most guilty; and that in so  
doing they are kind even to their enemies, and pity them no less than their own people, as knowing  
that the greater part of them do not engage in the war of their own accord, but are driven into it by  
the passions of their prince.

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

“But as they keep their gold and silver only for such an occasion, so, when that offers itself, they  
easily part with it; since it would be no convenience to them, though they should reserve nothing of  
it to themselves. For besides the wealth that they have among them at home, they have a vast  
treasure abroad; many nations round about them being deep in their debt: so that they hire soldiers  
from all places for carrying on their wars; but chiefly from the Zapolets, who live five hundred miles  
25 east of Utopia. They are a rude, wild, and fierce nation, who delight in the woods and rocks, among  
which they were born and bred up. They are hardened both against heat, cold, and labour, and  
know nothing of the delicacies of life. They do not apply themselves to agriculture, nor do they care  
either for their houses or their clothes: cattle is all that they look after; and for the greatest part they  
live either by hunting or upon rapine; and are made, as it were, only for war. They watch all  
opportunities of engaging in it, and very readily embrace such as are offered them. Great numbers  
30 of them will frequently go out, and offer themselves for a very low pay, to serve any that will employ  
them: they know none of the arts of life, but those that lead to the taking it away; they serve those  
that hire them, both with much courage and great fidelity; but will not engage to serve for any  
determined time, and agree upon such terms, that the next day they may go over to the enemies of  
those whom they serve if they offer them a greater encouragement; and will, perhaps, return to them  
the day after that upon a higher advance of their pay. There are few wars in which they make not a  
considerable part of the armies of both sides: so it often falls out that they who are related, and were  
35 hired in the same country, and so have lived long and familiarly together, forgetting both their

1 relations and former friendship, kill one another upon no other consideration than that of being  
hired to it for a little money by princes of different interests; and such a regard have they for money  
that they are easily wrought on by the difference of one penny a day to change sides. So entirely  
does their avarice influence them; and yet this money, which they value so highly, is of little use to  
5 them; for what they purchase thus with their blood they quickly waste on luxury, which among  
them is but of a poor and miserable form.

“This nation serves the Utopians against all people whatsoever, for they pay higher than any other.  
The Utopians hold this for a maxim, that as they seek out the best sort of men for their own use at  
home, so they make use of this worst sort of men for the consumption of war; and therefore they  
hire them with the offers of vast rewards to expose themselves to all sorts of hazards, out of which the  
10 greater part never returns to claim their promises; yet they make them good most religiously to such  
as escape. This animates them to adventure again, whenever there is occasion for it; for the Utopians  
are not at all troubled how many of these happen to be killed, and reckon it a service done to  
mankind if they could be a means to deliver the world from such a lewd and vicious sort of people,  
that seem to have run together, as to the drain of human nature. Next to these, they are served in  
their wars with those upon whose account they undertake them, and with the auxiliary troops of  
15 their other friends, to whom they join a few of their own people, and send some man of eminent and  
approved virtue to command in chief. There are two sent with him, who, during his command, are  
but private men, but the first is to succeed him if he should happen to be either killed or taken; and,  
in case of the like misfortune to him, the third comes in his place; and thus they provide against all  
events, that such accidents as may befall their generals may not endanger their armies. When they  
draw out troops of their own people, they take such out of every city as freely offer themselves, for  
20 none are forced to go against their wills, since they think that if any man is pressed that wants  
courage, he will not only act faintly, but by his cowardice dishearten others. But if an invasion is  
made on their country, they make use of such men, if they have good bodies, though they are not  
brave; and either put them aboard their ships, or place them on the walls of their towns, that being  
so posted, they may find no opportunity of flying away; and thus either shame, the heat of action, or  
the impossibility of flying, bears down their cowardice; they often make a virtue of necessity, and  
behave themselves well, because nothing else is left them. But as they force no man to go into any  
25 foreign war against his will, so they do not hinder those women who are willing to go along with  
their husbands; on the contrary, they encourage and praise them, and they stand often next their  
husbands in the front of the army. They also place together those who are related, parents, and  
children, kindred, and those that are mutually allied, near one another; that those whom nature has  
inspired with the greatest zeal for assisting one another may be the nearest and readiest to do it; and  
it is matter of great reproach if husband or wife survive one another, or if a child survives his parent,  
30 and therefore when they come to be engaged in action, they continue to fight to the last man, if their  
enemies stand before them: and as they use all prudent methods to avoid the endangering their own  
men, and if it is possible let all the action and danger fall upon the troops that they hire, so if it  
becomes necessary for themselves to engage, they then charge with as much courage as they avoided  
it before with prudence: nor is it a fierce charge at first, but it increases by degrees; and as they  
continue in action, they grow more obstinate, and press harder upon the enemy, insomuch that they  
35 will much sooner die than give ground; for the certainty that their children will be well looked after  
when they are dead frees them from all that anxiety concerning them which often masters men of

1 great courage; and thus they are animated by a noble and invincible resolution. Their skill in  
military affairs increases their courage: and the wise sentiments which, according to the laws of their  
country, are instilled into them in their education, give additional vigour to their minds: for as they  
do not undervalue life so as prodigally to throw it away, they are not so indecently fond of it as to  
preserve it by base and unbecoming methods. In the greatest heat of action the bravest of their  
5 youth, who have devoted themselves to that service, single out the general of their enemies, set on  
him either openly or by ambuscade; pursue him everywhere, and when spent and wearied out, are  
relieved by others, who never give over the pursuit, either attacking him with close weapons when  
they can get near him, or with those which wound at a distance, when others get in between them.  
So that, unless he secures himself by flight, they seldom fail at last to kill or to take him prisoner.  
When they have obtained a victory, they kill as few as possible, and are much more bent on taking  
10 many prisoners than on killing those that fly before them. Nor do they ever let their men so loose in  
the pursuit of their enemies as not to retain an entire body still in order; so that if they have been  
forced to engage the last of their battalions before they could gain the day, they will rather let their  
enemies all escape than pursue them when their own army is in disorder; remembering well what has  
often fallen out to themselves, that when the main body of their army has been quite defeated and  
broken, when their enemies, imagining the victory obtained, have let themselves loose into an  
irregular pursuit, a few of them that lay for a reserve, waiting a fit opportunity, have fallen on them  
15 in their chase, and when straggling in disorder, and apprehensive of no danger, but counting the day  
their own, have turned the whole action, and, wresting out of their hands a victory that seemed  
certain and undoubted, while the vanquished have suddenly become victorious.

20 “It is hard to tell whether they are more dexterous in laying or avoiding ambushes. They sometimes  
seem to fly when it is far from their thoughts; and when they intend to give ground, they do it so  
that it is very hard to find out their design. If they see they are ill posted, or are like to be  
overpowered by numbers, they then either march off in the night with great silence, or by some  
stratagem delude their enemies. If they retire in the day-time, they do it in such order that it is no  
less dangerous to fall upon them in a retreat than in a march. They fortify their camps with a deep  
and large trench; and throw up the earth that is dug out of it for a wall; nor do they employ only  
their slaves in this, but the whole army works at it, except those that are then upon the guard; so that  
when so many hands are at work, a great line and a strong fortification is finished in so short a time  
25 that it is scarce credible. Their armour is very strong for defence, and yet is not so heavy as to make  
them uneasy in their marches; they can even swim with it. All that are trained up to war practise  
swimming. Both horse and foot make great use of arrows, and are very expert. They have no  
swords, but fight with a pole-axe that is both sharp and heavy, by which they thrust or strike down  
an enemy. They are very good at finding out warlike machines, and disguise them so well that the  
enemy does not perceive them till he feels the use of them; so that he cannot prepare such a defence  
30 as would render them useless; the chief consideration had in the making them is that they may be  
easily carried and managed.

35 “If they agree to a truce, they observe it so religiously that no provocations will make them break it.  
They never lay their enemies’ country waste nor burn their corn, and even in their marches they take  
all possible care that neither horse nor foot may tread it down, for they do not know but that they  
may have use for it themselves. They hurt no man whom they find disarmed, unless he is a spy.  
When a town is surrendered to them, they take it into their protection; and when they carry a place

1 by storm they never plunder it, but put those only to the sword that oppose the rendering of it up, and make the rest of the garrison slaves, but for the other inhabitants, they do them no hurt; and if any of them had advised a surrender, they give them good rewards out of the estates of those that they condemn, and distribute the rest among their auxiliary troops, but they themselves take no share of the spoil.

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

## OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE UTOPIANS

20 “There are several sorts of religions, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town; some worshipping the sun, others the moon or one of the planets. Some worship such men as have been eminent in former times for virtue or glory, not only as ordinary deities, but as the supreme god. Yet the greater and wiser sort of them worship none of these, but adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity; as a Being that is far above all our apprehensions, that is spread over the whole universe, not by His bulk, but by His power and virtue; Him they call the Father of All, and acknowledge that the beginnings, the increase, the progress, the vicissitudes, and the end of all things come only from Him; nor do they offer divine honours to any but to Him alone. And, indeed, though they differ concerning other things, yet all agree in this: that they think there is one Supreme Being that made and governs the world, whom they call, in the language of their country, Mithras. They differ in this: that one thinks the god whom he worships is this Supreme Being, and another thinks that his idol is that god; but they all agree in one principle, that whoever is this Supreme Being, He is also that great essence to whose glory and majesty all honours are ascribed by the consent of all nations.

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

35 “After they had heard from us an account of the doctrine, the course of life, and the miracles of

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

15 “Those among them that have not received our religion do not fright any from it, and use none ill  
that goes over to it, so that all the while I was there one man was only punished on this occasion.  
He being newly baptised did, notwithstanding all that we could say to the contrary, dispute publicly  
concerning the Christian religion, with more zeal than discretion, and with so much heat, that he  
not only preferred our worship to theirs, but condemned all their rites as profane, and cried out  
against all that adhered to them as impious and sacrilegious persons, that were to be damned to  
everlasting burnings. Upon his having frequently preached in this manner he was seized, and after  
trial he was condemned to banishment, not for having disparaged their religion, but for his  
20 inflaming the people to sedition; for this is one of their most ancient laws, that no man ought to be  
punished for his religion. At the first constitution of their government, Utopus having understood  
that before his coming among them the old inhabitants had been engaged in great quarrels  
concerning religion, by which they were so divided among themselves, that he found it an easy thing  
to conquer them, since, instead of uniting their forces against him, every different party in religion  
fought by themselves. After he had subdued them he made a law that every man might be of what  
25 religion he pleased, and might endeavour to draw others to it by the force of argument and by  
amicable and modest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions; but that he ought  
to use no other force but that of persuasion, and was neither to mix with it reproaches nor violence;  
and such as did otherwise were to be condemned to banishment or slavery.

30 “This law was made by Utopus, not only for preserving the public peace, which he saw suffered  
much by daily contentions and irreconcilable heats, but because he thought the interest of religion  
itself required it. He judged it not fit to determine anything rashly; and seemed to doubt whether  
those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire man in a different  
manner, and be pleased with this variety; he therefore thought it indecent and foolish for any man to  
threaten and terrify another to make him believe what did not appear to him to be true. And  
supposing that only one religion was really true, and the rest false, he imagined that the native force  
of truth would at last break forth and shine bright, if supported only by the strength of argument,  
and attended to with a gentle and unprejudiced mind; while, on the other hand, if such debates were  
35 carried on with violence and tumults, as the most wicked are always the most obstinate, so the best



1 and most holy religion might be choked with superstition, as corn is with briars and thorns; he  
therefore left men wholly to their liberty, that they might be free to believe as they should see cause;  
only he made a solemn and severe law against such as should so far degenerate from the dignity of  
human nature, as to think that our souls died with our bodies, or that the world was governed by  
chance, without a wise overruling Providence: for they all formerly believed that there was a state of  
5 rewards and punishments to the good and bad after this life; and they now look on those that think  
otherwise as scarce fit to be counted men, since they degrade so noble a being as the soul, and reckon  
it no better than a beast's: thus they are far from looking on such men as fit for human society, or to  
be citizens of a well-ordered commonwealth; since a man of such principles must needs, as oft as he  
dares do it, despise all their laws and customs: for there is no doubt to be made, that a man who is  
10 afraid of nothing but the law, and apprehends nothing after death, will not scruple to break through  
all the laws of his country, either by fraud or force, when by this means he may satisfy his appetites.  
They never raise any that hold these maxims, either to honours or offices, nor employ them in any  
public trust, but despise them, as men of base and sordid minds. Yet they do not punish them,  
because they lay this down as a maxim, that a man cannot make himself believe anything he pleases;  
nor do they drive any to dissemble their thoughts by threatenings, so that men are not tempted to lie  
or disguise their opinions; which being a sort of fraud, is abhorred by the Utopians: they take care  
indeed to prevent their disputing in defence of these opinions, especially before the common people:  
15 but they suffer, and even encourage them to dispute concerning them in private with their priest,  
and other grave men, being confident that they will be cured of those mad opinions by having  
reason laid before them. There are many among them that run far to the other extreme, though it is  
neither thought an ill nor unreasonable opinion, and therefore is not at all discouraged. They think  
that the souls of beasts are immortal, though far inferior to the dignity of the human soul, and not  
capable of so great a happiness. They are almost all of them very firmly persuaded that good men  
20 will be infinitely happy in another state: so that though they are compassionate to all that are sick,  
yet they lament no man's death, except they see him loath to part with life; for they look on this as a  
very ill presage, as if the soul, conscious to itself of guilt, and quite hopeless, was afraid to leave the  
body, from some secret hints of approaching misery. They think that such a man's appearance  
before God cannot be acceptable to Him, who being called on, does not go out cheerfully, but is  
backward and unwilling, and is as it were dragged to it. They are struck with horror when they see  
25 any die in this manner, and carry them out in silence and with sorrow, and praying God that He  
would be merciful to the errors of the departed soul, they lay the body in the ground: but when any  
die cheerfully, and full of hope, they do not mourn for them, but sing hymns when they carry out  
their bodies, and commending their souls very earnestly to God: their whole behaviour is then rather  
grave than sad, they burn the body, and set up a pillar where the pile was made, with an inscription  
to the honour of the deceased. When they come from the funeral, they discourse of his good life,  
and worthy actions, but speak of nothing oftener and with more pleasure than of his serenity at the  
30 hour of death. They think such respect paid to the memory of good men is both the greatest  
incitement to engage others to follow their example, and the most acceptable worship that can be  
offered them; for they believe that though by the imperfection of human sight they are invisible to  
us, yet they are present among us, and hear those discourses that pass concerning themselves. They  
believe it inconsistent with the happiness of departed souls not to be at liberty to be where they will:  
and do not imagine them capable of the ingratitude of not desiring to see those friends with whom  
35 they lived on earth in the strictest bonds of love and kindness: besides, they are persuaded that good

1 men, after death, have these affections; and all other good dispositions increased rather than diminished, and therefore conclude that they are still among the living, and observe all they say or do. From hence they engage in all their affairs with the greater confidence of success, as trusting to their protection; while this opinion of the presence of their ancestors is a restraint that prevents their engaging in ill designs.

5 “They despise and laugh at auguries, and the other vain and superstitious ways of divination, so much observed among other nations; but have great reverence for such miracles as cannot flow from any of the powers of nature, and look on them as effects and indications of the presence of the Supreme Being, of which they say many instances have occurred among them; and that sometimes their public prayers, which upon great and dangerous occasions they have solemnly put up to God, with assured confidence of being heard, have been answered in a miraculous manner.

10 “They think the contemplating God in His works, and the adoring Him for them, is a very acceptable piece of worship to Him.

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

25 “Of these there are two sorts: some live unmarried and chaste, and abstain from eating any sort of flesh; and thus weaning themselves from all the pleasures of the present life, which they account hurtful, they pursue, even by the hardest and painfulest methods possible, that blessedness which they hope for hereafter; and the nearer they approach to it, they are the more cheerful and earnest in their endeavours after it. Another sort of them is less willing to put themselves to much toil, and therefore prefer a married state to a single one; and as they do not deny themselves the pleasure of it, so they think the begetting of children is a debt which they owe to human nature, and to their country; nor do they avoid any pleasure that does not hinder labour; and therefore eat flesh so much more willingly, as they find that by this means they are the more able to work: the Utopians look upon these as the wiser sect, but they esteem the others as the most holy. They would indeed laugh at any man who, from the principles of reason, would prefer an unmarried state to a married, or a life of labour to an easy life: but they reverence and admire such as do it from the motives of religion. There is nothing in which they are more cautious than in giving their opinion positively concerning any sort of religion. The men that lead those severe lives are called in the language of  
35 their country Brutheskas, which answers to those we call Religious Orders.

1 “Their priests are men of eminent piety, and therefore they are but few, for there are only thirteen in every town, one for every temple; but when they go to war, seven of these go out with their forces, and seven others are chosen to supply their room in their absence; but these enter again upon their employments when they return; and those who served in their absence, attend upon the high priest, till vacancies fall by death; for there is one set over the rest. They are chosen by the people as the  
5 other magistrates are, by suffrages given in secret, for preventing of factions: and when they are chosen, they are consecrated by the college of priests. The care of all sacred things, the worship of God, and an inspection into the manners of the people, are committed to them. It is a reproach to a man to be sent for by any of them, or for them to speak to him in secret, for that always gives some suspicion: all that is incumbent on them is only to exhort and admonish the people; for the power of correcting and punishing ill men belongs wholly to the Prince, and to the other magistrates: the severest thing that the priest does is the excluding those that are desperately wicked from joining in  
10 their worship: there is not any sort of punishment more dreaded by them than this, for as it loads them with infamy, so it fills them with secret horrors, such is their reverence to their religion; nor will their bodies be long exempted from their share of trouble; for if they do not very quickly satisfy the priests of the truth of their repentance, they are seized on by the Senate, and punished for their impiety. The education of youth belongs to the priests, yet they do not take so much care of instructing them in letters, as in forming their minds and manners aright; they use all possible  
15 methods to infuse, very early, into the tender and flexible minds of children, such opinions as are both good in themselves and will be useful to their country, for when deep impressions of these things are made at that age, they follow men through the whole course of their lives, and conduce much to preserve the peace of the government, which suffers by nothing more than by vices that rise out of ill opinions. The wives of their priests are the most extraordinary women of the whole country; sometimes the women themselves are made priests, though that falls out but seldom, nor are any but ancient widows chosen into that order.  
20

“None of the magistrates have greater honour paid them than is paid the priests; and if they should happen to commit any crime, they would not be questioned for it; their punishment is left to God, and to their own consciences; for they do not think it lawful to lay hands on any man, how wicked soever he is, that has been in a peculiar manner dedicated to God; nor do they find any great  
25 inconvenience in this, both because they have so few priests, and because these are chosen with much caution, so that it must be a very unusual thing to find one who, merely out of regard to his virtue, and for his being esteemed a singularly good man, was raised up to so great a dignity, degenerate into corruption and vice; and if such a thing should fall out, for man is a changeable creature, yet, there being few priests, and these having no authority but what rises out of the respect that is paid them, nothing of great consequence to the public can proceed from the indemnity that the priests enjoy.

30 “They have, indeed, very few of them, lest greater numbers sharing in the same honour might make the dignity of that order, which they esteem so highly, to sink in its reputation; they also think it difficult to find out many of such an exalted pitch of goodness as to be equal to that dignity, which demands the exercise of more than ordinary virtues. Nor are the priests in greater veneration among them than they are among their neighbouring nations, as you may imagine by that which I think gives occasion for it.

35 “When the Utopians engage in battle, the priests who accompany them to the war, apparelled in

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

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

20 “They have magnificent temples, that are not only nobly built, but extremely spacious, which is the  
more necessary as they have so few of them; they are a little dark within, which proceeds not from  
any error in the architecture, but is done with design; for their priests think that too much light  
dissipates the thoughts, and that a more moderate degree of it both recollects the mind and raises  
devotion. Though there are many different forms of religion among them, yet all these, how various  
soever, agree in the main point, which is the worshipping the Divine Essence; and, therefore, there is  
nothing to be seen or heard in their temples in which the several persuasions among them may not  
agree; for every sect performs those rites that are peculiar to it in their private houses, nor is there  
anything in the public worship that contradicts the particular ways of those different sects. There are  
no images for God in their temples, so that every one may represent Him to his thoughts according  
to the way of his religion; nor do they call this one God by any other name but that of Mithras,  
25 which is the common name by which they all express the Divine Essence, whatsoever otherwise they  
think it to be; nor are there any prayers among them but such as every one of them may use without  
prejudice to his own opinion.

30 “They meet in their temples on the evening of the festival that concludes a season, and not having  
yet broke their fast, they thank God for their good success during that year or month which is then  
at an end; and the next day, being that which begins the new season, they meet early in their  
temples, to pray for the happy progress of all their affairs during that period upon which they then  
enter. In the festival which concludes the period, before they go to the temple, both wives and  
children fall on their knees before their husbands or parents and confess everything in which they  
have either erred or failed in their duty, and beg pardon for it. Thus all little discontents in families  
are removed, that they may offer up their devotions with a pure and serene mind; for they hold it a  
great impiety to enter upon them with disturbed thoughts, or with a consciousness of their bearing  
35 hatred or anger in their hearts to any person whatsoever; and think that they should become liable to

1 severe punishments if they presumed to offer sacrifices without cleansing their hearts, and  
reconciling all their differences. In the temples the two sexes are separated, the men go to the right  
hand, and the women to the left; and the males and females all place themselves before the head and  
master or mistress of the family to which they belong, so that those who have the government of  
them at home may see their deportment in public. And they intermingle them so, that the younger  
5 and the older may be set by one another; for if the younger sort were all set together, they would,  
perhaps, trifle away that time too much in which they ought to beget in themselves that religious  
dread of the Supreme Being which is the greatest and almost the only incitement to virtue.

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

15 “All the people appear in the temples in white garments; but the priest’s vestments are parti-  
coloured, and both the work and colours are wonderful. They are made of no rich materials, for  
they are neither embroidered nor set with precious stones; but are composed of the plumes of several  
birds, laid together with so much art, and so neatly, that the true value of them is far beyond the  
costliest materials. They say, that in the ordering and placing those plumes some dark mysteries are  
20 represented, which pass down among their priests in a secret tradition concerning them; and that  
they are as hieroglyphics, putting them in mind of the blessing that they have received from God,  
and of their duties, both to Him and to their neighbours. As soon as the priest appears in those  
ornaments, they all fall prostrate on the ground, with so much reverence and so deep a silence, that  
such as look on cannot but be struck with it, as if it were the effect of the appearance of a deity.  
After they have been for some time in this posture, they all stand up, upon a sign given by the priest,  
and sing hymns to the honour of God, some musical instruments playing all the while. These are  
quite of another form than those used among us; but, as many of them are much sweeter than ours,  
25 so others are made use of by us. Yet in one thing they very much exceed us: all their music, both  
vocal and instrumental, is adapted to imitate and express the passions, and is so happily suited to  
every occasion, that, whether the subject of the hymn be cheerful, or formed to soothe or trouble the  
mind, or to express grief or remorse, the music takes the impression of whatever is represented,  
affects and kindles the passions, and works the sentiments deep into the hearts of the hearers. When  
this is done, both priests and people offer up very solemn prayers to God in a set form of words; and  
30 these are so composed, that whatsoever is pronounced by the whole assembly may be likewise  
applied by every man in particular to his own condition. In these they acknowledge God to be the  
author and governor of the world, and the fountain of all the good they receive, and therefore offer  
up to him their thanksgiving; and, in particular, bless him for His goodness in ordering it so, that  
they are born under the happiest government in the world, and are of a religion which they hope is  
the truest of all others; but, if they are mistaken, and if there is either a better government, or a  
35 religion more acceptable to God, they implore His goodness to let them know it, vowing that they  
resolve to follow him whithersoever he leads them; but if their government is the best, and their

1 religion the truest, then they pray that He may fortify them in it, and bring all the world both to the same rules of life, and to the same opinions concerning Himself, unless, according to the unsearchableness of His mind, He is pleased with a variety of religions. Then they pray that God may give them an easy passage at last to Himself, not presuming to set limits to Him, how early or late it should be; but, if it may be wished for without derogating from His supreme authority, they desire to be quickly delivered, and to be taken to Himself, though by the most terrible kind of death,  
5 rather than to be detained long from seeing Him by the most prosperous course of life. When this prayer is ended, they all fall down again upon the ground; and, after a little while, they rise up, go home to dinner, and spend the rest of the day in diversion or military exercises.

“Thus have I described to you, as particularly as I could, the Constitution of that commonwealth, which I do not only think the best in the world, but indeed the only commonwealth that truly  
10 deserves that name. In all other places it is visible that, while people talk of a commonwealth, every man only seeks his own wealth; but there, where no man has any property, all men zealously pursue the good of the public, and, indeed, it is no wonder to see men act so differently, for in other commonwealths every man knows that, unless he provides for himself, how flourishing soever the commonwealth may be, he must die of hunger, so that he sees the necessity of preferring his own concerns to the public; but in Utopia, where every man has a right to everything, they all know that  
15 if care is taken to keep the public stores full no private man can want anything; for among them there is no unequal distribution, so that no man is poor, none in necessity, and though no man has anything, yet they are all rich; for what can make a man so rich as to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife? He is not afraid of the misery of his children, nor is he contriving how to raise a portion for his daughters; but is secure in this, that both he and his wife, his children and grand-children, to as many generations as he can fancy, will all live both plentifully and happily; since, among them, there  
20 is no less care taken of those who were once engaged in labour, but grow afterwards unable to follow it, than there is, elsewhere, of these that continue still employed. I would gladly hear any man compare the justice that is among them with that of all other nations; among whom, may I perish, if I see anything that looks either like justice or equity; for what justice is there in this: that a nobleman, a goldsmith, a banker, or any other man, that either does nothing at all, or, at best, is employed in things that are of no use to the public, should live in great luxury and splendour upon what is so ill acquired, and a mean man, a carter, a smith, or a ploughman, that works harder even than the beasts themselves, and is employed in labours so necessary, that no commonwealth could hold out a year without them, can only earn so poor a livelihood and must lead so miserable a life, that the condition of the beasts is much better than theirs? For as the beasts do not work so  
25 constantly, so they feed almost as well, and with more pleasure, and have no anxiety about what is to come, whilst these men are depressed by a barren and fruitless employment, and tormented with the apprehensions of want in their old age; since that which they get by their daily labour does but maintain them at present, and is consumed as fast as it comes in, there is no overplus left to lay up for old age.

“Is not that government both unjust and ungrateful, that is so prodigal of its favours to those that are called gentlemen, or goldsmiths, or such others who are idle, or live either by flattery or by  
35 contriving the arts of vain pleasure, and, on the other hand, takes no care of those of a meaner sort, such as ploughmen, colliers, and smiths, without whom it could not subsist? But after the public has

1 reaped all the advantage of their service, and they come to be oppressed with age, sickness, and want,  
all their labours and the good they have done is forgotten, and all the recompense given them is that  
they are left to die in great misery. The richer sort are often endeavouring to bring the hire of  
labourers lower, not only by their fraudulent practices, but by the laws which they procure to be  
made to that effect, so that though it is a thing most unjust in itself to give such small rewards to  
5 those who deserve so well of the public, yet they have given those hardships the name and colour of  
justice, by procuring laws to be made for regulating them.

“Therefore I must say that, as I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the other  
governments that I see or know, than that they are a conspiracy of the rich, who, on pretence of  
managing the public, only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find  
out; first, that they may, without danger, preserve all that they have so ill-acquired, and then, that  
10 they may engage the poor to toil and labour for them at as low rates as possible, and oppress them as  
much as they please; and if they can but prevail to get these contrivances established by the show of  
public authority, which is considered as the representative of the whole people, then they are  
accounted laws; yet these wicked men, after they have, by a most insatiable covetousness, divided  
that among themselves with which all the rest might have been well supplied, are far from that  
happiness that is enjoyed among the Utopians; for the use as well as the desire of money being  
15 extinguished, much anxiety and great occasions of mischief is cut off with it, and who does not see  
that the frauds, thefts, robberies, quarrels, tumults, contentions, seditions, murders, treacheries, and  
witchcrafts, which are, indeed, rather punished than restrained by the severities of law, would all fall  
off, if money were not any more valued by the world? Men’s fears, solitudes, cares, labours, and  
watchings would all perish in the same moment with the value of money; even poverty itself, for the  
relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall. But, in order to the apprehending this  
aright, take one instance:—  
20

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

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

1 breasts of mortals, and possesses them too much to be easily drawn out; and, therefore, I am glad  
that the Utopians have fallen upon this form of government, in which I wish that all the world could  
be so wise as to imitate them; for they have, indeed, laid down such a scheme and foundation of  
policy, that as men live happily under it, so it is like to be of great continuance; for they having  
rooted out of the minds of their people all the seeds, both of ambition and faction, there is no  
5 danger of any commotions at home; which alone has been the ruin of many states that seemed  
otherwise to be well secured; but as long as they live in peace at home, and are governed by such  
good laws, the envy of all their neighbouring princes, who have often, though in vain, attempted  
their ruin, will never be able to put their state into any commotion or disorder.”

10 When Raphael had thus made an end of speaking, though many things occurred to me, both  
concerning the manners and laws of that people, that seemed very absurd, as well in their way of  
making war, as in their notions of religion and divine matters—together with several other  
particulars, but chiefly what seemed the foundation of all the rest, their living in common, without  
the use of money, by which all nobility, magnificence, splendour, and majesty, which, according to  
the common opinion, are the true ornaments of a nation, would be quite taken away—yet since I  
perceived that Raphael was weary, and was not sure whether he could easily bear contradiction,  
remembering that he had taken notice of some, who seemed to think they were bound in honour to  
15 support the credit of their own wisdom, by finding out something to censure in all other men’s  
inventions, besides their own, I only commended their Constitution, and the account he had given  
of it in general; and so, taking him by the hand, carried him to supper, and told him I would find  
out some other time for examining this subject more particularly, and for discoursing more  
copiously upon it. And, indeed, I shall be glad to embrace an opportunity of doing it. In the  
meanwhile, though it must be confessed that he is both a very learned man and a person who has  
20 obtained a great knowledge of the world, I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related.  
However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to  
see followed in our governments.

END