

# КОЛЛЕКТИВ АВТОРОВ

IDEAL

COMMONWEALTHS

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# Ideal Commonwealths

## INTRODUCTION

Plato in his "Republic" argues that it is the aim of Individual Man as of the State to be wise, brave and temperate. In a State, he says, there are three orders, the Guardians, the Auxiliaries, the Producers. Wisdom should be the special virtue of the Guardians; Courage of the Auxiliaries; and Temperance of all. These three virtues belong respectively to the Individual Man, Wisdom to his Rational part; Courage to his Spirited; and Temperance to his Appetitive: while in the State as in the Man it is Injustice that disturbs their harmony.

Because the character of Man appears in the State unchanged, but in a larger form, Plato represented Socrates as studying the ideal man himself through an Ideal Commonwealth.

In another of his dialogues, "Critias," of which we have only the beginning, Socrates wishes that he could see how such a commonwealth would work, if it were set moving. Critias undertakes to tell him. For he has received tradition of events that happened more than nine thousand years ago, when the Athenians themselves were such ideal citizens. Critias has received this tradition, he says, from a ninety-year-old grandfather, whose father, Dropides, was the friend of Solon. Solon, lawgiver and poet, had heard it from the priests of the goddess Neith or Athene at Sais, and had begun to shape it into a heroic poem.

This was the tradition: – Nine thousand years before the time of Solon, the goddess Athene, who was worshipped also in Sais, had given to her Athenians a healthy climate, a fertile soil, and temperate people strong in wisdom and courage. Their Republic was like that which Socrates imagined, and it had to bear the shock of a great invasion by the people of the vast island Atlantis. This island, larger than all Libya and Asia put together, was once in the sea westward beyond the Atlantic waves, – thus America was dreamed of long before it was discovered. Atlantis had ten kings, descended from ten sons of Poseidon (Neptune), who was the god magnificently worshipped by its people. Vast power and dominion, that extended through all Libya as far as Egypt, and over a part of Europe, caused the Atlantid kings to grow ambitious and unjust. Then they entered the Mediterranean and fell upon Athens with enormous force. But in the little band of citizens, temperate, brave, and wise, there were forces of Reason able to resist and overcome brute strength. Now, however, gone are the Atlantids, gone are the old virtues of Athens. Earthquakes and deluges laid waste the world. The whole great island of Atlantis, with its people and its wealth, sank to the bottom of the ocean. The ideal warriors of Athens, in one day and night, were swallowed by an earthquake, and were to be seen no more.

Plato, a philosopher with the soul of a poet, died in the year 347 before Christ. Plutarch was writing at the close of the first century after Christ, and in his parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans, the most famous of his many writings, he took occasion to paint an Ideal Commonwealth as the conception of Lycurgus, the half mythical or all mythical Solon of Sparta. To Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus, as well as to Plato, Thomas More and others have been indebted for some part of the shaping of their philosophic dreams.

The discovery of the New World at the end of the fifteenth century followed hard upon the diffusion of the new invention of printing, and came at a time when the fall of Constantinople by scattering Greek scholars, who became teachers in Italy, France and elsewhere, spread the study of Greek, and caused Plato to live again. Little had been heard of him through the Arabs, who cared little for his poetic method. But with the revival of learning he had become a force in Europe, a strong aid to the Reformers.

Sir Thomas More's Utopia was written in the years 1515-16, when its author's age was about thirty-seven. He was a young man of twenty when Columbus first touched the continent named after the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, who made his voyages to it in the years 1499-1503. More wrote his Utopia when imaginations of men were stirred by the sudden enlargement of their conceptions of the world, and Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyages, first printed in 1507, was fresh in every scholar's mind. He imagined a traveller, Raphael Hythloday – whose name is from Greek words that mean "Knowing in Trifles" – who had sailed with Vespucci on his three last voyages, but had not returned from the last voyage until, after separation from his comrades, he had wandered into some farther discovery of his own. Thus he had found, somewhere in those parts, the island of Utopia. Its name is from Greek words meaning Nowhere. More had gone on an embassy to Brussels with Cuthbert Tunstal when he wrote his philosophical satire upon European, and more particularly English, statecraft, in the form of an Ideal Commonwealth described by Hythloday as he had found it in Utopia. It was printed at Louvain in the latter part of the year 1516, under the editorship of Erasmus, and that enlightened young secretary to the municipality of Antwerp, Peter Giles, or Ægidius, who is introduced into the story. "Utopia" was not printed in England in the reign of Henry VIII., and could not be, for its satire was too direct to be misunderstood, even when it mocked English policy with ironical praise for doing exactly what it failed to do. More was a wit and a philosopher, but at the same time so practical and earnest that Erasmus tells of a burgomaster at Antwerp who fastened upon the parable of Utopia with such goodwill that he learnt it by heart. And in 1517 Erasmus advised a correspondent to send for Utopia, if he had not yet read it, and if he wished to see the true source of all political evils.

Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis," first written in Latin, was published in 1629, three years after its author's death. Bacon placed his Ideal Commonwealth in those seas where a great Austral continent was even then supposed to be, but had not been discovered. As the old Atlantis implied a foreboding of the American continent, so the New Atlantis implied foreboding of the Australian. Bacon in his philosophy sought through experimental science the dominion of men over things, "for Nature is only governed by obeying her." In his Ideal World of the New Atlantis, Science is made the civilizer who binds man to man, and is his leader to the love of God.

Thomas Campanella was Bacon's contemporary, a man only seven years younger; and an Italian who suffered for his ardour in the cause of science. He was born in Calabria in 1568, and died in 1639. He entered the Dominican order when a boy, but had a free and eager appetite for knowledge. He urged, like Bacon, that Nature should be studied through her own works, not through books; he attacked, like Bacon, the dead faith in Aristotle, that instead of following his energetic spirit of research, lapsed into blind idolatry. Campanella strenuously urged that men should reform all sciences by following Nature and the books of God. He had been stirring in this way for ten years, when there arose in Calabria a conspiracy against the Spanish rule. Campanella, who was an Italian patriot was seized and sent to Naples. The Spanish inquisition joined in attack on him. He was accused of books he had not written and of opinions he did not hold; he was seven times put to the question and suffered, with firmness of mind, the most cruel tortures. The Pope interceded in vain for him with the King of Spain. He suffered imprisonment for twenty-seven years, during which time he wrote much, and one piece of his prison work was his ideal of "The City of the Sun."

Released at last from his prison, Campanella went to Rome, where he was defended by Pope Urban VIII. against continued violence of attack. But he was compelled at last to leave Rome, and made his escape as a servant in the livery of the French ambassador. In Paris, Richelieu became Campanella's friend; the King of France gave him a pension of three thousand livres; the Sorbonne vouched for the orthodoxy of his writings. He died in Paris, at the age of seventy-one, in the Convent of the Dominicans.

Of Campanella's "Civitas Solis," which has not hitherto been translated into English, the translation here given, with one or two omissions of detail which can well be spared, has been made for me by my old pupil and friend, Mr. Thomas W. Halliday.

In the works (published in 1776) of the witty Dr. William King, who played much with the subject of cookery, is a fragment found among his remaining papers, and given by his editors as an original piece in the manner of Rabelais. It seems never to have been observed that this is only a translation of that part of Joseph Hall's "Mundus Alter es Idem," which deals with the kitchen side of life. The fragment will be found at the end of this volume, preceded by a short description of the other parts of Hall's World which is other than ours, and yet the same.

*H.M.*

*March 1885.*

## PLUTARCH'S LIFE OF LYCURGUS

Of Lycurgus the lawgiver we have nothing to relate that is certain and uncontroverted. For there are different accounts of his birth, his travels, his death, and especially of the laws and form of government which he established. But least of all are the times agreed upon in which this great man lived. For some say he flourished at the same time with Iphitus, and joined with him in settling the cessation of arms during the Olympic games. Among these is Aristotle the philosopher, who alleges for proof an Olympic quoit, on which was preserved the inscription of Lycurgus's name. But others who, with Eratosthenes and Apollodorus, compute the time by the succession of the Spartan kings, place him much earlier than the first Olympiad. Timæus, however, supposes that, as there were two Lycurguses in Sparta at different times, the actions of both are ascribed to one, on account of his particular renown; and that the more ancient of them lived not long after Homer: nay, some say he had seen him. Xenophon too confirms the opinion of his antiquity, when he makes him contemporary with the Heraclidæ. It is true, the latest of the Lacedæmonian kings were of the lineage of the Heraclidæ; but Xenophon there seems to speak of the first and more immediate descendants of Hercules. As the history of those times is thus involved, in relating the circumstances of Lycurgus's life, we shall endeavour to select such as are least controverted, and follow authors of the greatest credit.

Simonides the poet, tells us, that Prytanis, not Eunomus, was father to Lycurgus. But most writers give us the genealogy of Lycurgus and Eunomus in a different manner; for, according to them, Sous was the son of Patrocles, and grandson of Aristodemus, Eurytion the son of Sous, Prytanis of Eurytion, and Eunomus of Prytanis; to this Eunomus was born Polydectes, by a former wife, and by a second, named Dianassa, Lycurgus. Eutychidas, however, says Lycurgus was the sixth from Patrocles, and the eleventh from Hercules. The most distinguished of his ancestors was Sous, under whom the Lacedæmonians made the Helotes their slaves, and gained an extensive tract of land from the Arcadians. Of this Sous it is related, that, being besieged by the Clitorians in a difficult post where there was no water, he agreed to give up all his conquests, provided that himself and all his army should drink of the neighbouring spring. When these conditions were sworn to, he assembled his forces, and offered his kingdom to the man that would forbear drinking; not one of them, however, would deny himself, but they all drank. Then Sous went down to the spring himself, and having only sprinkled his face in sight of the enemy, he marched off, and still held the country, because all had not drunk. Yet, though he was highly honoured for this, the family had not their name from him, but from his son, were called Eurytionidæ; and this, because Eurytion seems to be the first who relaxed the strictness of kingly government, inclining to the interest of the people, and ingratiating himself with them. Upon this relaxation their encroachments increased, and the succeeding kings, either becoming odious, treating them with greater rigour, or else giving way through weakness or in hopes of favour, for a long time anarchy and confusion prevailed in Sparta; by which one of its kings, the father of Lycurgus, lost his life. For while he was endeavouring to part some persons who were concerned in a fray, he received a wound by a kitchen knife, of which he died, leaving the kingdom to his eldest son Polydectes.

But he too dying soon after, the general voice gave it for Lycurgus to ascend the throne; and he actually did so, till it appeared that his brother's widow was pregnant. As soon as he perceived this, he declared that the kingdom belonged to her issue, provided it were male, and he kept the administration in his hands only as his guardian. This he did with the title of Prodicos, which the Lacedæmonians give to the guardians of infant kings. Soon after, the queen made him a private overture, that she would destroy her child, upon condition that he would marry her when king of Sparta. Though he detested her wickedness, he said nothing against the proposal, but pretending to approve it, charged her not to take any drugs to procure an abortion, lest she should endanger her own health or life; for he would take care that the child, as soon as born, should be destroyed. Thus he artfully drew on the

woman to her full time, and, when he heard she was in labour, he sent persons to attend and watch her delivery, with orders, if it were a girl, to give it to the women, but if a boy, to bring it to him, in whatever business he might be engaged. It happened that he was at supper with the magistrates when she was delivered of a boy, and his servants, who were present, carried the child to him. When he received it, he is reported to have said to the company, "Spartans, see here your new-born king." He then laid him down upon the chair of state, and named him Charilaus, because of the joy and admiration of his magnanimity and justice testified by all present. Thus the reign of Lycurgus lasted only eight months. But the citizens had a great veneration for him on other accounts, and there were more that paid him their attentions, and were ready to execute his commands, out of regard to his virtues, than those that obeyed him as a guardian to the king, and director of the administration. There were not, however, wanting those that envied him, and opposed his advancement, as too high for so young a man; particularly the relations and friends of the queen-mother, who seemed to have been treated with contempt. Her brother Leonidas, one day boldly attacked him with virulent language, and scrupled not to tell him that he was well assured he would soon be king; thus preparing suspicions, and matter of accusation against Lycurgus, in case any accident should befall the king. Insinuations of the same kind were likewise spread by the queen-mother. Moved with this ill-treatment, and fearing some dark design, he determined to get clear of all suspicion, by travelling into other countries, till his nephew should be grown up, and have a son to succeed him in the kingdom.

He set sail, therefore, and landed in Crete. There having observed the forms of government, and conversed with the most illustrious personages, he was struck with admiration of some of their laws, and resolved at his return to make use of them in Sparta. Some others he rejected. Among the friends he gained in Crete was Thales, with whom he had interest enough to persuade him to go and settle at Sparta. Thales was famed for his wisdom and political abilities: he was withal a lyric poet, who under colour of exercising his art, performed as great things as the most excellent lawgivers. For his odes were so many persuasives to obedience and unanimity, as by means of melody and numbers they had great grace and power, they softened insensibly the manners of the audience, drew them off from the animosities which then prevailed, and united them in zeal for excellence and virtue. So that, in some measure, he prepared the way for Lycurgus towards the instruction of the Spartans. From Crete Lycurgus passed to Asia, desirous, as is said, to compare the Ionian expense and luxury with the Cretan frugality and hard diet, so as to judge what effect each had on their several manners and governments; just as physicians compare bodies that are weak and sickly with the healthy and robust. There also, probably, he met with Homer's poems, which were preserved by the posterity of Cleophylus. Observing that many moral sentences and much political knowledge were intermixed with his stories, which had an irresistible charm, he collected them into one body, and transcribed them with pleasure, in order to take them home with him. For his glorious poetry was not yet fully known in Greece; only some particular pieces were in a few hands, as they happened to be dispersed. Lycurgus was the first that made them generally known. The Egyptians likewise suppose that he visited them; and as of all their institutions he was most pleased with their distinguishing the military men from the rest of the people, he took the same method at Sparta, and, by separating from these the mechanics and artificers, he rendered the constitution more noble and more of a piece. This assertion of the Egyptians is confirmed by some of the Greek writers. But we know of no one, except Aristocrates, son of Hipparchus, and a Spartan, who has affirmed that he went to Libya and Spain, and in his Indian excursions conversed with the Gymnosophists.

The Lacedæmonians found the want of Lycurgus when absent, and sent many embassies to entreat him to return. For they perceived that their kings had barely the title and outward appendages of royalty, but in nothing else differed from the multitude; whereas Lycurgus had abilities from nature to guide the measures of government, and powers of persuasion, that drew the hearts of men to him. The kings, however, were consulted about his return, and they hoped that in his presence they should experience less insolence amongst the people. Returning then to a city thus disposed,

he immediately applied himself to alter the whole frame of the constitution; sensible that a partial change, and the introducing of some new laws, would be of no sort of advantage; but, as in the case of a body diseased and full of bad humours, whose temperament is to be corrected and new formed by medicines, it was necessary to begin a new regimen. With these sentiments he went to Delphi, and when he had offered and consulted the god, he returned with that celebrated oracle, in which the priestess called him "Beloved of the gods, and rather a god than a man." As to his request that he might enact good laws, she told him, Apollo had heard his request, and promised that the constitution he should establish would be the most excellent in the world. Thus encouraged, he applied to the nobility, and desired them to put their hands to the work; addressing himself privately at first to his friends, and afterwards by degrees, trying the disposition of others, and preparing them to concur in the business. When matters were ripe, he ordered thirty of the principal citizens to appear armed in the market-place by break of day, to strike terror into such as might desire to oppose him. Hermippus has given us the names of twenty of the most eminent of them; but he that had the greatest share in the whole enterprise, and gave Lycurgus the best assistance in the establishing of his laws, was called Arithmiades. Upon the first alarm, king Charilaus, apprehending it to be a design against his person, took refuge in the Chalcioicos. But he was soon satisfied, and accepted of their oath. Nay, so far from being obstinate, he joined in the undertaking. Indeed, he was so remarkable for the gentleness of his disposition, that Archelaus, his partner in the throne, is reported to have said to some that were praising the young king, "Yes, Charilaus is a good man to be sure, who cannot find in his heart to punish the bad." Among the many new institutions of Lycurgus, the first and most important was that of a senate; which sharing, as Plato says, in the power of the kings, too imperious and unrestrained before, and having equal authority with them, was the means of keeping them within the bounds of moderation, and highly contributed to the preservation of the state. For before it had been veering and unsettled, sometimes inclining to arbitrary power, and sometimes towards a pure democracy; but this establishment of a senate, an intermediate body, like ballast, kept it in a just equilibrium, and put it in a safe posture: the twenty-eight senators adhering to the kings, whenever they saw the people too encroaching, and, on the other hand, supporting the people, when the kings attempted to make themselves absolute. This, according to Aristotle, was the number of senators fixed upon, because two of the thirty associates of Lycurgus deserted the business through fear. But Sphærus tells us there were only twenty-eight at first entrusted with the design. Something, perhaps, there is in its being a perfect number, formed of seven multiplied by four, and withal the first number, after six, that is equal to all its parts. But I rather think, just so many senators were created, that, together with the two kings, the whole body might consist of thirty members.

He had this institution so much at heart, that he obtained from Delphi an oracle in its behalf, called *rhetra*, or the decree. This was couched in very ancient and uncommon terms, which interpreted, ran thus: "When you have built a temple to the Syllanian Jupiter, and the Syllanian Minerva, divided the people into tribes and classes, and established a senate of thirty persons, including the two kings, you shall occasionally summon the people to an assembly between Babyce and Cnacion, and they shall have the determining voice." Babyce and Cnacion are now called Oenus. But Aristotle thinks, by Cnacion is meant the river, and by Babyce the bridge. Between these they held their assemblies, having neither halls, nor any kind of building for that purpose. These things he thought of no advantage to their councils, but rather a disservice; as they distracted the attention, and turned it upon trifles, on observing the statues and pictures, the splendid roofs, and every other theatrical ornament. The people thus assembled had no right to propose any subject of debate, and were only authorized to ratify or reject what might be proposed to them by the senate and the kings. But because, in process of time, the people, by additions or retrenchments, changed the terms, and perverted the sense of the decrees, the kings Polydorus and Theopompus inserted in the *rhetra* this clause: "If the people attempt to corrupt any law, the senate and chiefs shall retire: " that is, they shall

dissolve the assembly, and annul the alterations. And they found means to persuade the Spartans that this too was ordered by Apollo; as we learn from these verses of Tyrtæus:

Ye sons of Sparta, who at Phœbus' shrine  
Your humble vows prefer, attentive hear  
The god's decision. O'er your beauteous lands  
Two guardian kings, a senate, and the voice  
Of the concurring people, lasting laws  
Shall with joint power establish.

Though the government was thus tempered by Lycurgus, yet soon after it degenerated into an oligarchy, whose power was exercised with such wantonness and violence, that it wanted indeed a bridle, as Plato expresses it. This curb they found in the authority of the Ephori, about a hundred and thirty years after Lycurgus. Elatus was the first invested with this dignity, in the reign of Theopompus; who, when his wife upbraided him, that he would leave the regal power to his children less than he received it, replied, "Nay but greater, because more lasting." And, in fact, the prerogative, so stripped of all extravagant pretensions, no longer occasioned either envy or danger to its possessors. By these means they escaped the miseries which befell the Messenian and Argive kings, who would not in the least relax the severity of their power in favour of the people. Indeed, from nothing more does the wisdom and foresight of Lycurgus appear, than from the disorderly governments, and the bad understanding that subsisted between the kings and people of Messena and Argos, neighbouring states, and related in blood to Sparta. For, as at first they were in all respects equal to her, and possessed of a better country, and yet preserved no lasting happiness, but, through the insolence of the kings and disobedience of the people, were harassed with perpetual troubles, they made it very evident that it was really a felicity more than human, a blessing from heaven to the Spartans, to have a legislator who knew so well how to frame and temper their government. But this was an event of a later date.

A second and bolder political enterprise of Lycurgus was a new division of the lands. For he found a prodigious inequality, the city overcharged with many indigent persons, who had no land, and the wealth centred in the hands of a few. Determined, therefore, to root out the evils of insolence, envy, avarice, and luxury, and those distempers of a state still more inveterate and fatal, I mean poverty and riches, he persuaded them to cancel all former divisions of land, and to make new ones, in such a manner that they might be perfectly equal in their possessions and way of living. Hence, if they were ambitious of distinction they might seek it in virtue, as no other difference was left between them but that which arises from the dishonour of base actions and the praise of good ones. His proposal was put in practice. He made nine thousand lots for the territory of Sparta, which he distributed among so many citizens, and thirty thousand for the inhabitants of the rest of Laconia. But some say he made only six thousand shares for the city, and that Polydorus added three thousand afterwards; others, that Polydorus doubled the number appointed by Lycurgus, which were only four thousand five hundred. Each lot was capable of producing (one year with another) seventy bushels of grain for each man, and twelve for each woman, besides a quantity of wine and oil in proportion. Such a provision they thought sufficient for health and a good habit of body, and they wanted nothing more. A story goes of our legislator, that some time after returning from a journey through the fields just reaped, and seeing the shocks standing parallel and equal, he smiled, and said to some that were by, "How like is Laconia to an estate newly divided among many brothers!"

After this, he attempted to divide also the movables, in order to take away all appearance of inequality; but he soon perceived that they could not bear to have their goods directly taken from them, and therefore took another method, counterworking their avarice by a stratagem. First he stopped the currency of the gold and silver coin, and ordered that they should make use of iron money only, then

to a great quantity and weight of this he assigned but a small value; so that to lay up ten *minæ*, a whole room was required, and to remove it, nothing less than a yoke of oxen. When this became current, many kinds of injustice ceased in Lacedæmon. Who would steal or take a bribe, who would defraud or rob, when he could not conceal the booty; when he could neither be dignified by the possession of it, nor if cut in pieces be served by its use? For we are told that when hot, they quenched it in vinegar, to make it brittle and unmalleable, and consequently unfit for any other service. In the next place, he excluded unprofitable and superfluous arts: indeed, if he had not done this, most of them would have fallen of themselves, when the new money took place, as the manufactures could not be disposed of. Their iron coin would not pass in the rest of Greece, but was ridiculed and despised; so that the Spartans had no means of purchasing any foreign or curious wares; nor did any merchant-ship unlade in their harbours. There were not even to be found in all their country either sophists, wandering fortune-tellers, keepers of infamous houses, or dealers in gold and silver trinkets, because there was no money. Thus luxury, losing by degrees the means that cherished and supported it, died away of itself: even they who had great possessions, had no advantage from them, since they could not be displayed in public, but must lie useless, in unregarded repositories. Hence it was, that excellent workmanship was shown in their useful and necessary furniture, as beds, chairs, and tables; and the Lacedæmonian cup called *cothon*, as Critias informs us, was highly valued, particularly in campaigns: for the water, which must then of necessity be drunk, though it would often otherwise offend the sight, had its muddiness concealed by the colour of the cup, and the thick part stopping at the shelving brim, it came clearer to the lips. Of these improvements the lawgiver was the cause; for the workmen having no more employment in matters of mere curiosity, showed the excellence of their art in necessary things.

Desirous to complete the conquest of luxury, and exterminate the love of riches, he introduced a third institution, which was wisely enough and ingeniously contrived. This was the use of public tables, where all were to eat in common of the same meat, and such kinds of it as were appointed by law. At the same time they were forbidden to eat at home, upon expensive couches and tables, to call in the assistance of butchers and cooks, or to fatten like voracious animals in private. For so not only their manners would be corrupted, but their bodies disordered; abandoned to all manner of sensuality and dissoluteness, they would require long sleep, warm baths, and the same indulgence as in perpetual sickness. To effect this was certainly very great; but it was greater still, to secure riches from rapine and from envy, as Theophrastus expresses it, or rather by their eating in common, and by the frugality of their table, to take from riches their very being. For what use or enjoyment of them, what peculiar display of magnificence could there be, where the poor man went to the same refreshment with the rich? Hence the observation, that it was only at Sparta where Plutus (according to the proverb) was kept blind, and like an image, destitute of life or motion. It must further be observed, that they had not the privilege to eat at home, and so to come without appetite to the public repast: they made a point of it to observe any one that did not eat and drink with them, and to reproach him as an intemperate and effeminate person that was sick of the common diet.

The rich, therefore (we are told), were more offended with this regulation than with any other, and, rising in a body, they loudly expressed their indignation: nay, they proceeded so far as to assault Lycurgus with stones, so that he was forced to fly from the assembly and take refuge in a temple. Unhappily, however, before he reached it, a young man named Alcander, hasty in his resentments, though not otherwise ill-tempered, came up with him, and, upon his turning round, struck out one of his eyes with a stick. Lycurgus then stopped short, and, without giving way to passion, showed the people his eye beat out, and his face streaming with blood. They were so struck with shame and sorrow at the sight, that they surrendered Alcander to him, and conducted him home with the utmost expressions of regret. Lycurgus thanked them for their care of his person, and dismissed them all except Alcander. He took him into his house, but showed no ill treatment either by word or action; only ordering him to wait upon him, instead of his usual servants and attendants. The youth, who was

of an ingenuous disposition, without murmuring, did as he was commanded. Living in this manner with Lycurgus, and having an opportunity to observe the mildness and goodness of his heart, his strict temperance and indefatigable industry, he told his friends that Lycurgus was not that proud and severe man he might have been taken for, but, above all others, gentle and engaging in his behaviour. This, then, was the chastisement, and this punishment he suffered, of a wild and headstrong young man to become a very modest and prudent citizen. In memory of his misfortune, Lycurgus built a temple to Minerva Optiletis, so called by him from a term which the Dorians use for the eye. Yet Dioscorides, who wrote a treatise concerning the Lacedæmonian government, and others, relate that his eye was hurt, but not put out, and that he built the temple in gratitude to the goddess for his cure. However, the Spartans never carried staves to their assemblies afterwards.

The public repasts were called by the Cretans *Andria*; but the Lacedæmonians styled them *Phiditia*, either from their tendency to friendship and mutual benevolence, *phiditia* being used instead of *philitia*; or else from their teaching frugality and parsimony, which the word *pheido* signifies. But it is not all impossible that the first letter might by some means or other be added, and so *phiditia* take place of *editia*, which barely signifies eating. There were fifteen persons to a table, or a few more or less. Each of them was obliged to bring in monthly a bushel of meal, eight gallons of wine, five pounds of cheese, two pounds and a half of figs, and a little money to buy flesh and fish. If any of them happened to offer a sacrifice of first fruits, or to kill venison, he sent a part of it to the public table: for after a sacrifice or hunting, he was at liberty to sup at home: but the rest were to appear at the usual place. For a long time this eating in common was observed with great exactness: so that when king Agis returned from a successful expedition against the Athenians, and from a desire to sup with his wife, requested to have his portion at home, the Polemarchs refused to send it: nay, when, through resentment, he neglected, the day following, to offer the sacrifice usual on occasion of victory, they set a fine upon him. Children also were introduced at these public tables, as so many schools of sobriety. There they heard discourses concerning government, and were instructed in the most liberal breeding. There they were allowed to jest without scurrility, and were not to take it ill when the raillery was returned. For it was reckoned worthy of a Lacedæmonian to bear a jest: but if any one's patience failed, he had only to desire them to be quiet, and they left off immediately. When they first entered, the oldest man present pointed to the door, and said, "Not a word spoken in this company goes out there." The admitting of any man to a particular table was under the following regulation. Each member of that small society took a little ball of soft bread in his hand. This he was to drop, without saying a word, into a vessel called *caddos*, which the waiter carried upon his head. In case he approved of the candidate, he did it without altering the figure, if not, he first pressed it flat in his hand; for a flatted ball was considered as a negative. And if but one such was found, the person was not admitted, as they thought it proper that the whole company should be satisfied with each other. He who thus rejected, was said to have no luck in the *caddos*. The dish that was in the highest esteem amongst them was the black broth. The old men were so fond of it that they ranged themselves on one side and eat it, leaving the meat to the young people. It is related of a king of Pontus, that he purchased a Lacedæmonian cook, for the sake of this broth. But when he came to taste it he strongly expressed his dislike; and the cook made answer, "Sir, to make this broth relish, it is necessary first to bathe in the Eurotas." After they had drank moderately, they went home without lights. Indeed, they were forbidden to walk with a light either on this or any other occasion, that they might accustom themselves to march in the darkest night boldly and resolutely. Such was the order of their public repasts.

Lycurgus left none of his laws in writing; it was ordered in one of the *Rhetra* that none should be written. For what he thought most conducive to the virtue and happiness of a city, was principles interwoven with the manners and breeding of the people. These would remain immovable, as founded in inclination, and be the strongest and most lasting tie; and the habits which education produced in the youth, would answer in each the purpose of a lawgiver. As for smaller matters, contracts

about property, and whatever occasionally varied, it was better not to reduce these to a written form and unalterable method, but to suffer them to change with the times, and to admit of additions or retrenchments at the pleasure of persons so well educated. For he resolved the whole business of legislation into the bringing up of youth. And this, as we have observed, was the reason why one of his ordinances forbade them to have any written laws.

Another ordinance levelled against magnificence and expense, directed that the ceilings of houses should be wrought with no tool but the axe and the doors with nothing but the saw. For, as Epaminondas is reported to have said afterwards, of his table, "Treason lurks not under such a dinner," so Lycurgus perceived before him, that such a house admits of no luxury and needless splendour. Indeed, no man could be so absurd as to bring into a dwelling so homely and simple, bedsteads with silver feet, purple coverlets, golden cups, and a train of expense that follows these: but all would necessarily have the bed suitable to the room, the coverlet of the bed and the rest of their utensils and furniture to that. From this plain sort of dwellings, proceeded the question of Leotychidas the elder to his host, when he supped at Corinth, and saw the ceiling of the room very splendid and curiously wrought, "Whether trees grew square in his country."

A third ordinance of Lycurgus was, that they should not often make war against the same enemy, lest, by being frequently put upon defending themselves, they too should become able warriors in their turn. And this they most blamed king Agesilaus for afterwards, that by frequent and continued incursions into Boeotia, he taught the Thebans to make head against the Lacedæmonians. This made Antalcidas say, when he saw him wounded, "The Thebans pay you well for making them good soldiers who neither were willing nor able to fight you before." These ordinances he called *Rhetraë*, as if they had been oracles and decrees of the Deity himself.

As for the education of youth, which he looked upon as the greatest and most glorious work of a lawgiver, he began with it at the very source, taking into consideration their conception and birth, by regulating the marriages. For he did not (as Aristotle says) desist from his attempt to bring the women under sober rules. They had, indeed, assumed great liberty and power on account of the frequent expeditions of their husbands, during which they were left sole mistresses at home, and so gained an undue deference and improper titles; but notwithstanding this he took all possible care of them. He ordered the virgins to exercise themselves in running, wrestling, and throwing quoits and darts; that their bodies being strong and vigorous, the children afterwards produced from them might be the same; and that, thus fortified by exercise, they might the better support the pangs of childbirth, and be delivered with safety. In order to take away the excessive tenderness and delicacy of the sex, the consequence of a recluse life, he accustomed the virgins occasionally to be seen naked as well as the young men, and to dance and sing in their presence on certain festivals. There they sometimes indulged in a little raillery upon those that had misbehaved themselves, and sometimes they sung encomiums on such as deserved them, thus exciting in the young men a useful emulation and love of glory. For he who was praised for his bravery and celebrated among the virgins, went away perfectly happy: while their satirical glances thrown out in sport, were no less cutting than serious admonitions; especially as the kings and senate went with the other citizens to see all that passed. As for the virgins appearing naked, there was nothing disgraceful in it, because everything was conducted with modesty, and without one indecent word or action. Nay, it caused a simplicity of manners and an emulation for the best habit of body; their ideas too were naturally enlarged, while they were not excluded from their share of bravery and honour. Hence they were furnished with sentiments and language, such as Gorgo the wife of Leonidas is said to have made use of. When a woman of another country said to her, "You of Lacedæmon are the only women in the world that rule the men;" she answered, "We are the only women that bring forth men."

These public dances and other exercises of the young maidens naked, in sight of the young men, were, moreover, incentives to marriage: and, to use Plato's expression, drew them almost as necessarily by the attractions of love, as a geometrical conclusion follows from the premises. To

encourage it still more, some marks of infamy were set upon those that continued bachelors. For they were not permitted to see these exercises of the naked virgins; and the magistrates commanded them to march naked round the market-place in the winter, and to sing a song composed against themselves, which expressed how justly they were punished for their disobedience to the laws. They were also deprived of that honour and respect which the younger people paid to the old; so that nobody found fault with what was said to Dercyllidas, though an eminent commander. It seems, when he came one day into company, a young man, instead of rising up and giving place, told him, "You have no child to give place to me, when I am old."

In their marriages, the bridegroom carried off the bride by violence; and she was never chosen in a tender age, but when she had arrived at full maturity. Then the woman that had the direction of the wedding, cut the bride's hair close to the skin, dressed her in man's clothes, laid her upon a mattress, and left her in the dark. The bridegroom, neither oppressed with wine nor enervated with luxury, but perfectly sober, as having always supped at the common table, went in privately, untied her girdle, and carried her to another bed. Having stayed there a short time, he modestly retired to his usual apartment, to sleep with the other young men; and observed the same conduct afterwards, spending the day with his companions, and reposing himself with them in the night, nor even visiting his bride but with great caution and apprehensions of being discovered by the rest of the family; the bride at the same time exerted all her art to contrive convenient opportunities for their private meetings. And this they did not for a short time only, but some of them even had children before they had an interview with their wives in the daytime. This kind of commerce not only exercised their temperance and chastity, but kept their bodies fruitful, and the first ardour of their love fresh and unabated; for as they were not satiated like those that are always with their wives, there still was place for unextinguished desire. When he had thus established a proper regard to modesty and decorum with respect to marriage, he was equally studious to drive from that state the vain and womanish passion of jealousy; by making it quite as reputable to have children in common with persons of merit, as to avoid all offensive freedom in their own behaviour to their wives. He laughed at those who revenge with wars and bloodshed the communication of a married woman's favours; and allowed, that if a man in years should have a young wife, he might introduce to her some handsome and honest young man, whom he most approved of, and when she had a child of this generous race, bring it up as his own. On the other hand, he allowed, that if a man of character should entertain a passion for a married woman on account of her modesty and the beauty of her children, he might treat with her husband for admission to her company, that so planting in a beauty-bearing soil, he might produce excellent children, the congenial offspring of excellent parents. For, in the first place, Lycurgus considered children, not so much the property of their parents as of the state; and therefore he would not have them begot by ordinary persons, but by the best men in it. In the next place, he observed the vanity and absurdity of other nations, where people study to have their horses and dogs of the finest breed they can procure either by interest or money; and yet keep their wives shut up, that they may have children by none but themselves, though they may happen to be doting, decrepit, or infirm. As if children, when sprung from a bad stock, and consequently good for nothing, were no detriment to those whom they belong to, and who have the trouble of bringing them up, nor any advantage, when well descended and of a generous disposition. These regulations tending to secure a healthy offspring, and consequently beneficial to the state, were so far from encouraging that licentiousness of the women which prevailed afterwards, that adultery was not known amongst them. A saying, upon this subject of Geradas, an ancient Spartan, is thus related. A stranger had asked him, "What punishment their law appointed for adulterers?" He answered, "My friend, there are no adulterers in our country." The other replied, "But what if there should be one?" "Why then," says Geradas, "he must forfeit a bull so large that he might drink of the Eurotas from the top of Mount Taygetus." When the stranger expressed his surprise at this, and said, "How can such a bull be found?" Geradas answered with a smile, "How can an adulterer be found in Sparta?" This is the account we have of their marriages.

It was not left to the father to rear what children he pleased, but he was obliged to carry the child to a place called Lesche, to be examined by the most ancient men of the tribe, who were assembled there. If it was strong and well-proportioned, they gave orders for its education, and assigned it one of the nine thousand shares of land; but if it was weakly and deformed, they ordered it to be thrown into the place called Apothetæ, which is a deep cavern near the mountain Taygetus; concluding that its life could be no advantage either to itself or to the public, since nature had not given it at first any strength or goodness of constitution. For the same reason the women did not wash their newborn infants with water, but with wine, thus making some trial of their habit of body; imagining that sickly and epileptic children sink and die under the experiment, while healthy became more vigorous and hardy. Great care and art was also exerted by the nurses; for, as they never swathed the infants, their limbs had a freer turn, and their countenances a more liberal air; besides, they used them to any sort of meat, to have no terrors in the dark, nor to be afraid of being alone, and to leave all ill humour and unmanly crying. Hence people of other countries purchased Lacedæmonian nurses for their children; and Alcibiades the Athenian is said to have been nursed by Amicla, a Spartan. But if he was fortunate in a nurse, he was not so in a preceptor: for Zopyrus, appointed to that office by Pericles, was, as Plato tells us, no better qualified than a common slave. The Spartan children were not in that manner, under tutors purchased or hired with money, nor were the parents at liberty to educate them as they pleased: but as soon as they were seven years old, Lycurgus ordered them to be enrolled in companies, where they were all kept under the same order and discipline, and had their exercises and recreations in common. He who showed the most conduct and courage amongst them, was made captain of the company. The rest kept their eyes upon him, obeyed his orders, and bore with patience the punishment he inflicted: so that their whole education was an exercise of obedience. The old men were present at their diversions, and often suggested some occasion of dispute or quarrel, that they might observe with exactness the spirit of each, and their firmness in battle.

As for learning, they had just what was absolutely necessary. All the rest of their education was calculated to make them subject to command, to endure labour, to fight and conquer. They added, therefore, to their discipline, as they advance in age; cutting their hair very close, making them go barefoot, and play, for the most part, quite naked. At twelve years of age, their under garment was taken away, and but one upper one a year allowed them. Hence they were necessarily dirty in their persons, and not indulged the great favour of baths, and oils, except on some particular days of the year. They slept in companies, on beds made of the tops of reeds, which they gathered with their own hands, without knives, and brought from the banks of the Eurotas. In winter they were permitted to add a little thistle-down, as that seemed to have some warmth in it.

At this age, the most distinguished amongst them became the favourite companions of the elder; and the old men attended more constantly their places of exercise, observing their trials of strength and wit, not slightly and in a cursory manner, but as their fathers, guardians, and governors: so that there was neither time nor place where persons were wanting to instruct and chastise them. One of the best and ablest men of the city was, moreover, appointed inspector of the youth: and he gave the command of each company to the discreetest and most spirited of those called Irens. An Iren was one that had been two years out of the class of boys: a Melliren one of the oldest lads. This Iren, then, a youth twenty years old, gives orders to those under his command in their little battles, and has them to serve him at his house. He sends the oldest of them to fetch wood, and the younger to gather pot-herbs: these they steal where they can find them, either slyly getting into gardens, or else craftily and warily creeping to the common tables. But if any one be caught, he is severely flogged for negligence or want of dexterity. They steal, too, whatever victuals they possibly can, ingeniously contriving to do it when persons are asleep, or keep but indifferent watch. If they are discovered, they are punished not only with whipping, but with hunger. Indeed, their supper is but slender at all times, that, to fence against want, they may be forced to exercise their courage and address. This is the first intention of their spare diet: a subordinate one is, to make them grow tall. For when the animal spirits are not too

much oppressed by a great quantity of food, which stretches itself out in breadth and thickness, they mount upwards by their natural lightness, and the body easily and freely shoots up in height. This also contributes to make them handsome; for thin and slender habits yield more freely to nature, which then gives a fine proportion to the limbs; whilst the heavy and gross resist her by their weight. So women that take physic during their pregnancy, have slighter children indeed, but of a finer and more delicate turn, because the suppleness of the matter more readily obeys the plastic power. However, these are speculations which we shall leave to others.

The boys steal with so much caution, that one of them having conveyed a young fox under his garment, suffered the creature to tear out his bowels with his teeth and claws, choosing rather to die than to be detected. Nor does this appear incredible, if we consider what their young men can endure to this day; for we have seen many of them expire under the lash at the altar of Diana Orthia.

The Iren, reposing himself after supper, used to order one of the boys to sing a song; to another he put some question which required a judicious answer: for example, "Who was the best man in the city?" or "What he thought of such an action?" This accustomed them from their childhood to judge of the virtues, to enter into the affairs of their countrymen. For if one of them was asked, "Who is a good citizen, or who an infamous one," and hesitated in his answer, he was considered a boy of slow parts, and of a soul that would not aspire to honour. The answer was likewise to have a reason assigned for it, and proof conceived in few words. He whose account of the matter was wrong, by way of punishment had his thumb bit by the Iren. The old men and magistrates often attended these little trials, to see whether the Iren exercised his authority in a rational and proper manner. He was permitted, indeed, to inflict the penalties; but when the boys were gone, he was to be chastised himself, if he had punished them either with too much severity or remissness.

The adopters of favourites also shared both in the honour and disgrace of their boys: and one of them is said to have been mulcted by the magistrates, because the boy whom he had taken into his affections let some ungenerous word or cry escape him as he was fighting. This love was so honourable and in so much esteem, that the virgins too had their lovers amongst the most virtuous matrons. A competition of affection caused no misunderstanding, but rather a mutual friendship between those that had fixed their regards upon the same youth, and an united endeavour to make him as accomplished as possible.

The boys were also taught to use sharp repartee, seasoned with humour, and whatever they said was to be concise and pithy. For Lycurgus, as we have observed, fixed but a small value on a considerable quantity of his iron money; but, on the contrary, the worth of speech was to consist in its being comprised in a few plain words, pregnant with a great deal of sense: and he contrived that by long silence they might learn to be sententious and acute in their replies. As debauchery often causes weakness and sterility in the body, so the intemperance of the tongue makes conversation empty and insipid. King Agis, therefore, when a certain Athenian laughed at the Lacedæmonian short swords, and said, "The jugglers would swallow them with ease upon the stage," answered in his laconic way, "And yet we can reach our enemies' hearts with them." Indeed, to me there seems to be something in this concise manner of speaking which immediately reaches the object aimed at, and forcibly strikes the mind of the hearer. Lycurgus himself was short and sententious in his discourse, if we may judge by some of his answers which are recorded; that, for instance, concerning the constitution. When one advised him to establish a popular government in Lacedæmon, "Go," said he, "and first make a trial of it in thy own family." That again, concerning sacrifices to the Deity, when he was asked why he appointed them so trifling and of so little value, "That we might never be in want," said he, "of something to offer him." Once more, when they inquired of him, what sort of martial exercises he allowed of, he answered, "All, except those in which you stretch out your hands." Several such like replies of his are said to be taken from the letters which he wrote to his countrymen: as to their question, "How shall we best guard against the invasion of an enemy?" – "By continuing poor, and not desiring in your possessions to be one above another." And to the question,

whether they should enclose Sparta with walls, "That city is well fortified, which has a wall of men instead of brick." Whether these and some other letters ascribed to him are genuine or not, is no easy matter to determine. However, that they hated long speeches, the following apophthegms are a farther proof. King Leonidas said to one who discoursed at an improper time about affairs of some concern, "My friend, you should not talk so much to the purpose, of what it is not to the purpose to talk of." Charilaus, the nephew of Lycurgus, being asked why his uncle had made so few laws, answered, "To men of few words, few laws are sufficient." Some people finding fault with Hecatæus the sophist, because, when admitted to one of the public repasts, he said nothing all the time, Archidamidas replied, "He that knows how to speak, knows also when to speak."

The manner of their repartees, which, as I said, were seasoned with humour, may be gathered from these instances. When a troublesome fellow was pestering Demaratus with impertinent questions, and this in particular several times repeated, "Who is the best man in Sparta?" He answered, "He that is least like you." To some who were commending the Eleans for managing the Olympic games with so much justice and propriety, Agis said, "What great matter is it, if the Eleans do justice once in five years?" When a stranger was professing his regard for Theopompus, and saying that his own countrymen called him Philolacon (a lover of the Lacedæmonians), the king answered him, "My good friend, it were much better, if they called you Philopolites" (a lover of your own countrymen). Plistonax, the son of Pausanias, replied to an orator of Athens, who said the Lacedæmonians had no learning. "True, for we are the only people of Greece that have learned no ill of you." To one who asked what number of men there was in Sparta, Archidamidas said, "Enough to keep bad men at a distance."

Even when they indulged a vein of pleasantry, one might perceive that they would not use one unnecessary word, nor let an expression escape them that had not some sense worth attending to. For one being asked to go and hear a person who imitated the nightingale to perfection, answered, "I have heard the nightingale herself." Another said, upon reading this epitaph,

Victims of Mars, at Selinus they fell,  
Who quench'd the rage of tyranny —

"And they deserved to fall, for, instead of *quenching* it, they should have let it *burn out*." A young man answered one that promised him some game-cocks that would stand their death, "Give me those that will be the death of others." Another seeing some people carried into the country in litters, said, "May I never sit in any place where I cannot rise before the aged!" This was the manner of their apophthegms: so that it has been justly enough observed that the term *lakonizein* (to act the Lacedæmonian) is to be referred rather to the exercises of the mind, than those of the body.

Nor were poetry and music less cultivated among them, than a concise dignity of expression. Their songs had a spirit, which could rouse the soul, and impel it in an enthusiastic manner to action. The language was plain and manly, the subject serious and moral. For they consisted chiefly of the praises of heroes that had died for Sparta, or else of expressions of detestation for such wretches as had declined the glorious opportunity, and rather chose to drag on life in misery and contempt. Nor did they forget to express an ambition for glory suitable to their respective ages. Of this it may not be amiss to give an instance. There were three choirs on their festivals, corresponding with the three ages of man. The old men began,

Once in battle bold we shone;  
the young men answered,  
Try us: our vigour is not gone;  
and the boys concluded,  
The palm remains for us alone.

Indeed, if we consider with some attention such of the Lacedæmonian poems as are still extant, and get into those airs which were played upon the flute when they marched to battle, we must agree that Terpander and Pindar have very fitly joined valour and music together. The former thus speaks of Lacedæmon,

There gleams the youth's bright falchion: there the muse  
Lifts her sweet voice: there awful Justice opes  
Her wide pavilion.

And Pindar sings,

There in grave council sits the sage;  
There burns the youth's resistless rage  
To hurl the quiv'ring lance;  
The Muse with glory crowns their arms,  
And Melody exerts her charms,  
And Pleasure leads the dance.

Thus we are informed, not only of their warlike turn, but their skill in music. For as the Spartan poet says,

To swell the bold notes of the lyre,  
Becomes the warrior's lofty fire.

And the king always offered sacrifice to the muses before a battle, putting his troops in mind, I suppose, of their early education and of the judgment that would be passed upon them; as well as that those divinities might teach them to despise danger, while they performed some exploit fit for them to celebrate.

On these occasions they relaxed the severity of their discipline, permitting their men to be curious in dressing their hair, and elegant in their arms and apparel, while they expressed their alacrity, like horses full of fire and neighing for the race. They let their hair, therefore, grow from their youth, but took more particular care, when they expected an action, to have it well combed and shining; remembering a saying of Lycurgus, that "a large head of hair made the handsome more graceful, and the ugly more terrible." The exercises, too, of the young men, during the campaigns, were more moderate, their diet not so hard, and their whole treatment more indulgent: so that they were the only people in the world with whom military discipline wore, in time of war, a gentler face than usual. When the army was drawn up, and the enemy near, the king sacrificed a goat, and commanded them all to set garlands upon their heads, and the musicians to play Castro's march, while himself began the pæan, which was the signal to advance. It was at once a solemn and dreadful sight to see them measuring their steps to the sound of music, and without the least disorder in their ranks or tumult of spirits, moving forward cheerfully and composedly, with harmony, to battle. Neither fear nor rashness was likely to approve men so disposed, possessed as they were of a firm presence of mind, with courage and confidence of success, as under the conduct of heaven. When the king advanced against the enemy, he had always with him some one that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us, that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic lists, refused them, having with much difficulty thrown his antagonist, one put this question to him, "Spartan, what will you get by this victory?" He answered with a smile, "I shall have the honour to fight foremost in the ranks before my prince." When they had routed the

enemy, they continued the pursuit till they were assured of the victory: after that they immediately desisted; deeming it neither generous nor worthy of a Grecian to destroy those who made no farther resistance. This was not only a proof of magnanimity, but of great service to their cause. For when their adversaries found that they killed such as stood it out, but spared the fugitives, they concluded it was better to fly than to meet their fate upon the spot.

Hippias the sophist tells us, that Lycurgus himself was a man of great personal valour, and an experienced commander. Philostephanus also ascribes to him the first division of cavalry into troops of fifty, who were drawn up in a square body. But Demetrius the Phalerean says, that he never had any military employment, and that there was the profoundest peace imaginable when he established the constitution of Sparta. His providing for a cessation of arms during the Olympic games is likewise a mark of the humane and peaceable man. Some, however, acquaint us, and among the rest Hermippus, that Lucurgus at first had no communication with Iphitus; but coming that way, and happening to be a spectator, he heard behind him a human voice (as he thought) which expressed some wonder and displeasure that he did not put his countrymen upon resorting to so great an assembly. He turned round immediately, to discover whence the voice came, and as there was no man to be seen, concluded it was from heaven. He joined Iphitus, therefore; and ordering, along with him, the ceremonies of the festival, rendered it more magnificent and lasting.

The discipline of the Lacedæmonians continued after they were arrived at years of maturity. For no man was at liberty to live as he pleased; the city being like one great camp, where all had their stated allowance, and knew their public charge, each man concluding that he was born, not for himself, but for his country. Hence, if they had no particular orders, they employed themselves in inspecting the boys, and teaching them something useful, or in learning of those that were older than themselves. One of the greatest privileges that Lycurgus procured his countrymen, was the enjoyment of leisure, the consequence of his forbidding them to exercise any mechanic trade. It was not worth their while to take great pains to raise a fortune, since riches there were of no account: and the Helotes, who tilled the ground, were answerable for the produce above-mentioned. To this purpose we have a story of a Lacedæmonian, who, happening to be at Athens while the court sat, was informed of a man who was fined for idleness; and when the poor fellow was returning home in great dejection, attended by his condoling friends, he desired the company to show him the person that was condemned for keeping up his dignity. So much beneath them they reckoned all attention to mechanics arts, and all desire of riches!

Lawsuits were banished from Lacedæmon with money. The Spartans knew neither riches nor poverty, but possessed an equal competency, and had a cheap and easy way of supplying their few wants. Hence, when they were not engaged in war, their time was taken up with dancing, feasting, hunting, or meeting to exercise, or converse. They went not to market under thirty years of age, all their necessary concerns being managed by their relations and adopters. Nor was it reckoned a credit to the old to be seen sauntering in the market-place; it was deemed more suitable for them to pass great part of the day in the schools of exercise, or places of conversation. Their discourse seldom turned upon money, or business, or trade, but upon the praise of the excellent, or the contempt of the worthless; and the last was expressed with that pleasantry and humour, which conveyed instruction and correction without seeming to intend it. Nor was Lycurgus himself immoderately severe in his manner; but, as Sosibius tells us, he dedicated a little statue to the god of laughter in each hall. He considered facetiousness as a seasoning of their hard exercise and diet, and therefore ordered it to take place on all proper occasions, in their common entertainments and parties of pleasure.

Upon the whole, he taught his citizens to think nothing more disagreeable than to live by (or for) themselves. Like bees, they acted with one impulse for the public good, and always assembled about their prince. They were possessed with a thirst of honour, an enthusiasm bordering upon insanity, and had not a wish but for their country. These sentiments are confirmed by some of their aphorisms. When Pædaretus lost his election for one of the "three hundred," he went away "rejoicing

that there were three hundred better men than himself found in the city." Pisistratidas going with some others, ambassador to the king of Persia's lieutenants, was asked whether they came with a public commission, or on their own account, to which he answered, "If successful, for the public; if unsuccessful, for ourselves." Agrileonis, the mother of Brasidas, asking some Amphipolitans that waited upon her at her house, whether Brasidas died honourably and as became a Spartan? they greatly extolled his merit, and said there was not such a man left in Sparta; whereupon she replied, "Say not so, my friends; for Brasidas was indeed a man of honour, but Lacedæmon can boast of many better men than he."

The senate, as I said before, consisted at first of those that were assistants to Lycurgus in his great enterprise. Afterwards, to fill up any vacancy that might happen, he ordered the most worthy men to be selected, of those that were full threescore years old. This was the most respectable dispute in the world, and the contest was truly glorious; for it was not who should be swiftest among the swift, or strongest of the strong, but who was the wisest and best among the good and wise. He who had the preference was to bear this mark of superior excellence through life, this great authority, which put into his hands the lives and honour of the citizens, and every other important affair. The manner of the election was this: when the people were assembled, some persons appointed for the purpose were shut up in a room near the place; where they could neither see nor be seen, and only hear the shouts of the constituents: for by them they decided this and most other affairs. Each candidate walked silently through the assembly, one after another according to lot. Those that were shut up had writing tables, in which they set down in different columns the number and loudness of the shouts, without knowing who they were for; only they marked them as first, second, third, and so on, according to the number of the competitors. He that had the most and loudest acclamations, was declared duly elected. Then he was crowned with a garland, and went round to give thanks to the gods: a number of young men followed, striving which should extol him most, and the women celebrated his virtues in their songs, and blessed his worthy life and conduct. Each of his relations offered him a repast, and their address on the occasion was, "Sparta honours you with this collation." When he had finished the procession, he went to the common table, and lived as before. Only two portions were set before him, one of which he carried away: and as all the women related to him attended at the gates of the public hall, he called her for whom he had the greatest esteem, and presented her with the portion, saying at the same time, "That which I received as a mark of honour, I give to you." Then she was conducted home with great applause by the rest of the women.

Lycurgus likewise made good regulations with respect to burials. In the first place, to take away all superstition, he ordered the dead to be buried in the city, and even permitted their monuments to be erected near the temples; accustoming the youth to such sights from their infancy, that they might have no uneasiness from them, nor any horror for death, as if people were polluted with the touch of a dead body, or with treading upon a grave. In the next place, he suffered nothing to be buried with the corpse, except the red cloth and the olive leaves in which it was wrapped. Nor would he suffer the relations to inscribe any names upon the tombs, except of those men that fell in battle, or those women who died in some sacred office. He fixed eleven days for the time of mourning: on the twelfth they were to put an end to it, after offering sacrifice to Ceres. No part of life was left vacant and unimproved, but even with their necessary actions he interwove the praise of virtue and the contempt of vice: and he so filled the city with living examples, that it was next to impossible, for persons who had these from their infancy before their eyes, not to be drawn and formed to honour.

For the same reason he would not permit all that desired to go abroad and see other countries, lest they should contract foreign manners, gain traces of a life of little discipline, and of a different form of government. He forbid strangers too to resort to Sparta, who could not assign a good reason for their coming; not, as Thucydides says, out of fear they should imitate the constitution of that city, and make improvements in virtue, but lest they should teach his own people some evil. For along with foreigners come new subjects of discourse; new discourse produces new opinions; and from these

there necessarily spring new passions and desires, which, like discords in music, would disturb the established government. He, therefore, thought it more expedient for the city to keep out of it corrupt customs and manners, than even to prevent the introduction of a pestilence.

Thus far, then, we can perceive no vestiges of a disregard to right and wrong, which is the fault some people find with the laws of Lycurgus, allowing them well enough calculated to produce valour, but not to promote justice. Perhaps it was the *Cryptia*, as they called it, or ambuscade, if that was really one of this lawgiver's institutions, as Aristotle says it was, which gave Plato so bad an impression both of Lycurgus and his laws. The governors of the youth ordered the shrewdest of them from time to time to disperse themselves in the country, provided only with daggers and some necessary provisions. In the daytime they hid themselves, and rested in the most private places they could find, but at night they sallied out into the roads, and killed all the Helotes they could meet with. Nay, sometimes by day, they fell upon them in the fields, and murdered the ablest and strongest of them. Thucydides relates in his history of the Peloponnesian war, that the Spartans selected such of them as were distinguished for their courage, to the number of two thousand or more, declared them free, crowned them with garlands, and conducted them to the temples of the gods; but soon after they all disappeared; and no one could, either then or since, give account in what manner they were destroyed. Aristotle particularly says, that the Ephori, as soon as they were invested in their office, declared war against the Helotes, that they might be massacred under pretence of law. In other respects they treated them with great inhumanity: sometimes they made them drink till they were intoxicated, and in that condition led them into the public halls, to show the young men what drunkenness was. They ordered them too to sing mean songs, and to dance ridiculous dances, but not to meddle with any that were genteel and graceful. Thus they tell us, that when the Thebans afterwards invaded Laconia, and took a great number of the Helotes prisoners, they ordered them to sing the odes of Terpander, Aleman, or Spondon the Lacedæmonian, but they excused themselves, alleging that it was forbidden by their masters. Those who say that a freeman in Sparta was most a freeman, and a slave most a slave, seem well to have considered the difference of states. But in my opinion, it was in after-times that these cruelties took place among the Lacedæmonians, chiefly after the great earthquake, when, as history informs us, the Helotes, joining the Messenians, attacked them, did infinite damage to the country, and brought the city to the greatest extremity. I can never ascribe to Lycurgus so abominable an act as that of the ambuscade. I would judge in this case by the mildness and justice which appeared in the rest of his conduct, to which also the gods gave their sanction.

When his principal institutions had taken root in the manners of the people, and the government was come to such maturity as to be able to support and preserve itself, then, as Plato says of the Deity, that he rejoiced when he had created the world, and given it its first motion; so Lycurgus was charmed with the beauty and greatness of his political establishment, when he saw it exemplified in fact, and move on in due order. He was next desirous to make it immortal, so far as human wisdom could effect it, and to deliver it down unchanged to the latest times. For this purpose he assembled all the people, and told them the provisions he had already made for the state were indeed sufficient for virtue and happiness, but the greatest and most important matter was still behind, which he could not disclose to them till he had consulted the oracle; that they must therefore inviolably observe his laws, without altering anything in them, till he returned from Delphi; and then he would acquaint them with the pleasure of Apollo. When they had all promised to do so, and desired him to set forward, he took an oath of the kings and senators, and afterwards of all the citizens, that they would abide by the present establishment till Lycurgus came back. He then took his journey to Delphi.

When he arrived there, he offered sacrifice to the gods, and consulted the oracle, whether his laws were sufficient to promote virtue, and secure the happiness of the state. Apollo answered, that the laws were excellent, and that the city which kept to the constitution he had established, would be the most glorious in the world. This oracle Lycurgus took down in writing, and sent it to Sparta. He then offered another sacrifice, and embraced his friends and his son, determined never to release

his citizens from their oath, but voluntarily there to put a period to his life; while he was yet of an age when life was not a burden, when death was not desirable, and while he was not unhappy in any one circumstance. He, therefore, destroyed himself by abstaining from food, persuaded that the very death of lawgivers should have its use, and their exit, so far from being insignificant, have its share of virtue, and be considered as a great action. To him, indeed, whose performances were so illustrious, the conclusion of life was the crown of happiness, and his death was left guardian of those invaluable blessings he had procured his countrymen through life, as they had taken an oath not to depart from his establishment till his return. Nor was he deceived in his expectations. Sparta continued superior to the rest of Greece, both in its government at home and reputation abroad, so long as it retained the institution of Lycurgus: and this it did during the space of five hundred years, and the reign of fourteen successive kings, down to Agis the son of Archidamus. As for the appointment of the Ephori, it was so far from weakening the constitution, that it gave it additional vigour, and though it seemed to be established in favour of the people, it strengthened the aristocracy.

But in the reign of Agis money found its way into Sparta, and with money came its inseparable attendant – avarice. This was by means of Lysander; who, though himself incapable of being corrupted by money, filled his country with the love of it, and with luxury too. He brought both gold and silver from the wars, and thereby broke through the laws of Lycurgus. While these were in force, Sparta was not so much under the political regulations of a commonwealth, as the strict rules of a philosophic life; and as the poets feign of Hercules, that only with a club and lion's skin he travelled over the world, clearing it of lawless ruffians and cruel tyrants; so the Lacedæmonians with a piece of parchment and coarse coat kept Greece in a voluntary obedience, destroyed usurpation and tyranny in the states, put an end to wars, and laid seditions asleep, very often without either shield or lance, and only by sending one ambassador; to whose directions all parties concerned immediately submitted. Thus bees, when their prince appears, compose their quarrels and unite in one swarm. So much did justice and good government prevail in that state, that I am surprised at those who say the Lacedæmonians knew indeed how to obey, but not how to govern: and on this occasion quote the saying of king Theopompus, who, when one told him that Sparta was preserved by the good administration of its kings, replied, "Nay, rather by the obedience of their subjects." It is certain that people will not continue pliant to those who know not how to command; but it is the part of a good governor to teach obedience. He who knows how to lead well, is sure to be well followed: and as it is by the art of horsemanship that a horse is made gentle and tractable, so it is by the abilities of him that fills the throne that the people become ductile and submissive. Such was the conduct of the Lacedæmonians, that people did not only endure, but even desired to be their subjects. They asked not of them either ships, money or troops, but only a Spartan general. When they had received him, they treated him with the greatest honour and respect; so Gylippus was revered by the Sicilians, Brasidas by the Chalcidians, Lysander, Callicratidas, and Agesilaus by all the people of Asia. These, and such as these, wherever they came, were called moderators and reformers, both of the magistrates and people, and Sparta itself was considered as a school of discipline, where the beauty of life and political order were taught in the utmost perfection. Hence Stratonicus seems facetiously enough to have said, that he would order "the Athenians to have the conduct of mysteries and processions; the Eleans to preside in games, as their particular province; and the Lacedæmonians to be beaten, if the other did amiss." This was spoken in jest: but Antisthenes, one of the scholars of Socrates, said (more seriously) of the Thebans, when he saw them pluming themselves upon their success at Leuctra, "They were just like so many school-boys rejoicing that they had beaten their master."

It was not, however, the principal design of Lycurgus that his city should govern many others, but he considered its happiness like that of a private man, as flowing from virtue and self-consistency: he therefore so ordered and disposed it, that by the freedom and sobriety of its inhabitants, and their having a sufficiency within themselves, its continuance might be the more secure. Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, and other writers upon government, have taken Lycurgus for their model: and these have

attained great praise, though they left only an idea of something excellent. Yet he who, not in idea and in words, but in fact produced a most inimitable form of government, and by showing a whole city of philosophers, confounded those who imagine that the so much talked of strictness of a philosophic life is impracticable; he, I say, stands in the rank of glory far beyond the founders of all the other Grecian states. Therefore Aristotle is of opinion, that the honours paid him in Lacedæmon were far beneath his merit. Yet those honours were very great; for he has a temple there, and they offer him a yearly sacrifice, as a god. It is also said, that when his remains were brought home, his tomb was struck with lightning: a seal of divinity which no other man, however eminent, has had, except Euripides, who died and was buried at Arethusa in Macedonia. This was matter of great satisfaction and triumph to the friends of Euripides, that the same thing should befall him after death, which had formerly happened to the most venerable of men, and the most favoured of heaven. Some say, Lycurgus died at Cirrha; but Apollothemis will have it, that he was brought to Elis and died there; and Timæus and Aristoxenus write, that he ended his days in Crete; nay, Aristoxenus adds, that the Cretans show his tomb at Pergamia, near the high road. We are told, he left an only son named Antiorus: and as he died without issue, the family was extinct. His friends and relations observed his anniversary, which subsisted for many ages, and the days on which they met for that purpose they called Lycurgidæ. Aristocrates, the son of Hipparchus, relates, that the friends of Lycurgus, with whom he sojourned, and at last died in Crete, burned his body, and, at his request, threw his ashes into the sea. Thus he guarded against the possibility of his remains being brought back to Sparta by the Lacedæmonians, lest they should then think themselves released from their oath, on the pretence that he was returned, and make innovations in the government. This is what we had to say of Lycurgus.

# SIR THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

## BOOK I

Henry the Eighth, 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 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 lanthorn." 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 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 dextrous 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 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, 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 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 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, run the same hazard as 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 heaven 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 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 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 with the conveniences of travelling; both boats when they went by water, and waggons when they travelled 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, 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 conveniences 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 they saw were flat-bottomed, their sails were made of reeds and wicker woven close together, only some were of leather; but afterwards they found ships made with round keels, and canvas sails, and in all respects like our ships; and the seamen understood both astronomy and navigation. He got wonderfully into their 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 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 civilized nations, may perhaps be related by us on a more proper occasion. We asked him many questions concerning all these things, to which he answered very willingly; only 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 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 passed, as if he had spent his whole life in it; Peter being struck with admiration, said, "I wonder, Raphael, how it comes that you enter into no king's service, for I am sure there are none to whom you would not be very acceptable: for your learning and knowledge, both of men and things, is such, that you would not only entertain them very pleasantly, but be of great use to them, by the examples you could set before them, and the advices you could give them; and by this means you would both serve your own interest, and be of great use to all your friends." – "As for my friends," answered he, "I need not be much concerned, having already done for them all that was incumbent on me; for when I was not only in good health, but fresh and young, I distributed that among my kindred and friends which other people do not part with till they are old and sick; when they then unwillingly give that which they can enjoy no longer themselves. I think my friends ought to rest contented with this, and not to expect that for their sakes I should enslave myself to any king whatsoever." – "Soft and fair," said Peter, "I do not mean that you should be a slave to any king, but only that you should assist them, and be useful to them." – "The change of the word," said he, "does not alter the matter." – "But term it as you will," replied Peter, "I do not see any other way in which you can be so useful, both in private to your friends, and to the public, and by which you can make your own condition happier." – "Happier!" answered Raphael, "is that to be 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 I think you would do what would well become so generous and philosophical a soul as yours is, if you would apply your time and thoughts to public affairs, even though you may happen to find it a little uneasy to yourself: and this you can never do with so much advantage, as by being taken into the counsel of some great prince, and putting him on noble and worthy actions, which I know you would do if you were in such a post; for the springs both of good and evil flow from the prince, over a whole nation, as from a lasting fountain. So much learning as you have, even without practice in affairs, or so great a practice as you have had, without any other learning, would render you a very fit 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 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 fawnings 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 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 interest would be much depressed, if they could not run it down: and if all other things failed, then they would fly to this, that such or such things pleased our ancestors, and it were well for us if we could but match them. They would set up their rest on such an answer, as a sufficient confutation of all that could be said; as if it were a great misfortune, that any should be found wiser than his ancestors; but though they willingly let go all the good things that were among those of former ages, yet if better things are proposed they cover themselves obstinately with this excuse of reverence to past times. I have met with these proud, morose, and absurd judgments of

things in many places, particularly once in England." – "Was 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.

"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 that came as suitors to him upon business, by speaking sharply, though decently to them, and by that he discovered their spirit and presence of mind, with which he was much delighted, when it did not grow up to impudence, as bearing a great resemblance to his own temper; and he looked on such persons as the fittest men for affairs. He spoke both gracefully and weightily; he was eminently skilled in the law, had a vast understanding, and a prodigious memory; and those excellent talents with which Nature had furnished him, were improved by study and experience. When I was in England the king depended much on his counsels, and the government seemed to be chiefly supported by him; for from his youth he had been all along practised in affairs; and having passed through many traverses of fortune, he had with great cost acquired a vast stock of wisdom, which is not soon lost when it is purchased so dear. One day when I was dining with him there happened to be at table one of the English lawyers, who took occasion to run out in a high commendation of the severe execution of justice upon thieves, who, as he said, were then hanged so fast, that there were sometimes twenty on one gibbet; and upon that he said he could not wonder enough how it came to pass, that since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left who were still robbing in all places. Upon this, I who took the boldness to speak freely before the Cardinal, said, there was no reason to wonder at the matter, since this way of punishing thieves was neither just in itself nor good for the public; for as the severity was too great, so the remedy was not effectual; simple theft not being so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his life, no punishment how severe soever being able to restrain those from robbing who can find out no other way of livelihood. 'In this,' said I, 'not only you in England, but a great part of the world imitate some ill masters that are readier to chastise their scholars than to teach them. There are dreadful punishments enacted against thieves, but it were much better to make such good provisions by which every man might be put in a method how to live, and so be preserved from the fatal necessity of stealing and of dying for it.' – 'There has been care enough taken for that,' said he, 'there are many handicrafts, and there is husbandry, by which they may make a shift to live unless they have a greater mind to follow ill courses.' – '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 frugality, for in all other things they are prodigal, even to the beggaring of themselves: but besides this, they carry about with them a great number of idle fellows, who never learned any art by which they may gain their living; and these, as soon as either their lord dies, or they themselves fall sick, are turned out of doors; for your lords are readier to feed idle people, than to take care of the sick; and often the heir is not able to keep together so great a family as his predecessor did. Now when the stomachs of those that are thus turned out of doors, grow keen, they rob no less keenly; and what else can they do? for when, by wandering about, they have worn out both their health and their clothes, and are tattered, and look ghastly, men of quality will not entertain them, and poor men dare not do it; knowing that one who has been bred up in idleness and pleasure, and who was used to walk about with his sword and buckler, despising all the 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 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 kept up in time of peace; if such a state of a nation can be called a peace: and these are kept in pay upon the same account that you plead for those idle retainers about noblemen; this being a maxim of those pretended statesmen that it is necessary for the public safety, to have a good body of veteran soldiers ever in readiness. They think raw men are not to be depended on, and they sometimes seek occasions for making war, that they may train up their soldiers in the art of cutting throats; or as Sallust observed, for keeping their hands in use, that they may not grow dull by too long an intermission. 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 afraid of fighting with those idle gentlemen, if they are not disabled by some misfortune in their body, or dispirited by extreme want, so that you need not fear that those well-shaped and strong men (for it is only such that noblemen love to keep about them, till they spoil them) who now grow feeble with ease, and are softened with their effeminate manner of life, would be less fit for action if they were well bred and well employed. And it seems very unreasonable, that for the prospect of a war, which you need never have but when you please, you should maintain so many idle men, as will always disturb you in time of peace, which is ever to be more considered than war. But I do not think that this necessity of stealing arises only from hence; there is another cause of it more peculiar to England.' – 'What is that?' said the Cardinal. – 'The increase of pasture,' said I, 'by which your sheep, which are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and unpeople, not only villages, but towns; for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men the abbots, not contented with the old rents which their farms yielded, nor thinking it enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the course of agriculture, destroying houses and towns, reserving only the churches, and enclose grounds that they may lodge their sheep in them. As if forests and parks had swallowed up too little of the land, those worthy countrymen turn the best inhabited places in solitudes; for when an insatiable wretch, who is a plague to his country, resolves to inclose many thousand acres of ground, the owners, as well as tenants, are turned out of their possessions, by tricks, or by main force, or being wearied out with ill usage, they are forced to sell them. By which means those miserable people, both men and women, married and unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go; and they must sell almost for nothing their household stuff, which could not bring them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end, for it will be soon spent; what is left for them to do, but either to steal and so to be hanged (God knows how justly), or to go about and beg? And if they do this, they are put in prison as idle vagabonds; while they would willingly work, but can find none that will hire them; for there is no more occasion for country 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, God has punished the avarice of the owners, by a rot among the sheep, which has destroyed vast numbers of them; to us it might have seemed more just had it fell on the owners themselves. But suppose the sheep should increase ever so much, their price is not like 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 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 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, and among all ranks of persons. You have also many infamous houses, and besides those that are known, the taverns and alehouses are no better; add to these, dice, cards, tables, foot-ball, tennis, and quoits, in which money runs fast away; and those that are initiated into them, must in the conclusion betake themselves to robbing for a supply. Banish these plagues, and give orders that those who have dispeopled so much soil, may either rebuild the villages they have pulled down, or let out their grounds to such as will do it: restrain those engrossings of the rich, that are as bad almost as monopolies; leave fewer occasions to idleness; let agriculture be set up again, and the manufacture of the wool be regulated, that so there may be work found for those companies of idle people whom want forces to be thieves, or who now being idle vagabonds, or useless servants, will certainly grow thieves at last. If you do not find a remedy to these evils, it is a vain thing to boast of your severity in punishing theft, which though it may have the appearance of justice, yet in itself is neither just nor convenient. For if you suffer your people to be ill educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them?'

"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 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, Raphael,' said he to me, 'I would gladly know upon what reason it is that you think theft ought not to be punished by death? Would you give way to it? Or do you propose any other punishment that will be more useful to the public? For since death does not restrain theft, if men thought their lives would be safe,

what fear or force could restrain ill men? On the contrary, they would look on the mitigation of the punishment as an invitation to commit more crimes.' I answered, 'It seems to me a very unjust thing to take away a man's life for a little money; for nothing in the world can be of equal value with a man's life: and if it is 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 these 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 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 man in making laws can authorize man-slaughter in cases in which God has given us no example, that it frees people from the obligation of the divine law, and so makes murder a lawful action; what is this, but to give a preference to human laws before the divine? And if this is once admitted, by the same rule men may in all other things put what restrictions they please upon the laws of God. If by the Mosaical law, though it was rough and severe, as being a yoke laid on an obstinate and servile nation, men were only fined, and not put to death for theft, we cannot imagine that in this new law of mercy, in which God treats us with the tenderness of a father, He has given us a greater license to cruelty than He did to the Jews. Upon these reasons it is, that I think putting thieves to death is not lawful; and it is plain and obvious that it is absurd, and of ill consequence to the commonwealth, that a thief and a murderer should be equally punished; for if a robber sees that his danger is the same, if he is convicted of theft as if he were guilty of murder, this will naturally incite him to kill the person whom otherwise he would only have robbed, since if the punishment is the same, there is more security, and less danger of discovery, when he that can best make it is put out of the way; so that terrifying thieves too much, provokes them to cruelty.

"But as to the question, what more convenient way of punishment can be found? I think it is much more easier to find out that, than to invent anything that is worse; why should we doubt but the way that was so long in use among the old Romans, who understood so well the arts of government, was very proper for their punishment? They condemned such as they found guilty of great crimes, to work their whole lives in quarries, or to dig in mines with chains about them. 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 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 neighbours. Those that are found guilty of theft among them, are bound to make restitution to the owner, and not as it is in other places, to the prince, for they reckon that the prince has no more right to the stolen goods than the thief; but if that which was stolen is no more in being, then the goods of the thieves are estimated, and restitution being made out of them, the remainder is given to their wives and children: and they themselves are condemned to serve in the public works, but are neither imprisoned, nor chained, unless there happened to be some extraordinary circumstances in their crimes. They go about loose and free, working for the public. If they are idle or backward to work, they are whipped; but if they work hard, they are well used and treated without any mark of reproach, only the lists of them are called always at night, and then they are shut up. They suffer no other uneasiness, but

this of constant 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 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 of a 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 beside their livelihood, they earn somewhat still to the public. They all wear a peculiar habit, of one certain 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, 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.

"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 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 have 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 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 amongst all the slaves of the several jurisdictions, which cannot be done, since they cannot meet or talk together; nor will any venture on a design where the concealment would be so dangerous, and the discovery so profitable. None are quite hopeless of recovering their freedom, since by their obedience and patience, and by giving good grounds to believe that they will change their manner of life for the future, they may expect at last to obtain their liberty: and some are every year restored to it, upon the good character that is given of them. – When I had related all this, I added, that I did not see why such a method might not be followed with more advantage, than could ever be expected from that severe justice which the 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 the sentence of death was passed upon a thief, the prince would relieve 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, 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 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 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 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 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, back-biter, and son of perdition, and then cited some dreadful threatenings out of the Scriptures against him. Now the jester thought he was in his element, and laid about him freely. 'Good friar,' said he, 'be not angry, for it is written, "In patience possess your soul."' – 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 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 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 one mocker of so many friars, among whom there are so many bald men? We have likewise a Bull, by which all that jeer us are excommunicated.' – When the Cardinal saw that there was no end of this matter, he made a sign to the fool to withdraw, turned the discourse another way; and soon after rose from the table, and dismissing us, went to hear causes.

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