

A fruteful /

and pleasaunt worke of the
beste state of a publyque weale, and
of the newe yle called Utopia: written
in Latine by Syr Thomas More
knyght, and translated into Englyshe
by Raphe Robynson Cittyzen and
Goldsmythe of London, at the
procurement, and earnest re-
quest of George Tadlowe
Citezein and Haberdassher
of the same Cittle.

(. .)

U Printed at London

by Abraham Wele, dwelling in Pauls
churcheyarde at the sygne of
the Lambe. Anno,

1551.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, AND HIS VERY
SINGULAR GOOD MASTER,

MASTER WILLIAM CECIL,
ESQUIRE,

ONE OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES TO THE
KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

RALPH ROBINSON WISHETH CONTINUANCE OF
HEALTH WITH DAILY INCREASE OF
VIRTUE AND HONOUR

UPON a time when tidings came to the City of Corinth that King Philip, father to Alexander surnamed the Great, was coming thitherward with an army royal to lay siege to the city, the Corinthians being forthwith stricken with great fear, began busily and earnestly to look about them and to fall to work on all hands. Some to scour and trim up harness, some to carry stones, some to amend and build higher the walls, some to rampiere and fortify the bulwarks and fortresses, some one thing and some another for the defending and strengthening of the city. The which busy labour and toil of theirs when Diogenes the philosopher saw, having no profitable business whereupon to set himself on work (neither any man required his labour and help as expedient for the commonwealth in that necessity), immediately girded about him his philosophical cloak, and began to roll and tumble up and down hither and thither upon the hillside that lieth adjoining to the city his great barrel or tun, wherein he dwelled, for other dwelling-place would he have none. This seeing one of his friends, and not a little musing thereat, came to him: and, I pray thee, Diogenes, quoth he, why dost thou thus, or what meanest thou hereby? Forsooth I am tumbling my tub too, quoth he, because it were no reason that I only should be idle, where so many be working. In semblable manner, right honourable sir,

though I be, as I am indeed, of much less ability than Diogenes was to do anything that shall or may be for the advancement and commodity of the public wealth of my native country, yet I, seeing every sort and kind of people in their vocation and degree busily occupied about the commonwealth's affairs, and especially learned men daily putting forth in writing new inventions and devices to the furtherance of the same, thought it my bounden duty to God and to my country so to tumble my tub, I mean so to occupy and exercise myself in bestowing such spare hours as I, being at the beck and commandment of others, could conveniently win to myself, that though no commodity of that my labour and travail to the public weal should arise, yet it might by this appear that mine endeavour and goodwill hereunto was not lacking.

To the accomplishment, therefore, and fulfilling of this my mind and purpose, I took upon me to turn and translate out of Latin into our English tongue the fruitful and profitable book which Sir Thomas More, knight, compiled and made of the new isle Utopia, containing and setting forth the best state and form of a public weal, a work (as it appeareth) written almost forty years ago by the said Sir Thomas More the author thereof. The which man, forasmuch as he was a man of late time, yea almost of this our days, and for the excellent qualities wherewith the great goodness of God had plentifully endowed him, and for the high place and room whereunto his prince had most graciously called him, notably well known, not only among us his countrymen, but also in foreign countries and nations; therefore I have not much to speak of him. This only I say: that it is much to be lamented of all, and not only of us Englishmen, that a man of so incomparable wit, of so profound knowledge, of so absolute learning, and of so fine eloquence was yet nevertheless so much blinded, rather with obstinacy than with ignorance, that he could not or rather would not see the shining light of God's holy truth in certain principal points of Christian religion; but did rather choose to persevere

and continue in his wilful and stubborn obstinacy even to the very death. This I say is a thing much to be lamented. But letting this matter pass, I return again to *Utopia*. Which (as I said before) is a work not only for the matter that it containeth fruitful and profitable, but also for the writer's eloquent Latin style pleasant and delectable. Which he that readeth in Latin, as the author himself wrote it, perfectly understanding the same, doubtless he shall take great pleasure and delight both in the sweet eloquence of the writer and also in the witty invention and fine conveyance or disposition of the matter, but most of all in the good and wholesome lessons which be there in great plenty and abundance. But now I fear greatly that in this my simple translation, through my rudeness and ignorance in our English tongue, all the grace and pleasure of the eloquence wherewith the matter in Latin is finely set forth may seem to be utterly excluded and lost, and therefore the fruitfulness of the matter itself much peradventure diminished and appeared.

For who knoweth not, which knoweth anything, that an eloquent style setteth forth and highly commendeth a mean matter? Whereas on the other side rude and unlearned speech defaceth and disgraceth a very good matter. According as I heard once a wise man say, a good tale evil told were better untold, and an evil tale well told needeth none other solicitor. This thing I, well pondering and weighing with myself, and also knowing and acknowledging the barbarous rudeness of my translation, was fully determined never to have put it forth in print, had it not been for certain friends of mine, and especially one whom above all other I regarded, a man of sage and discreet wit and in worldly matters by long use well experienced, whose name is George Tadlowe, an honest citizen of London, and in the same city well accepted and of good reputation, at whose request and instance I first took upon my weak and feeble shoulders the heavy and weighty burden of this great enterprise. This man with divers other, but this man chiefly (for he was able to do

more with me than many other), after that I had once rudely brought the work to an end, ceased not by all means possible continually to assault me until he had at the last, what by the force of his pithy arguments and strong reasons, and what by his authority so persuaded me, that he caused me to agree and consent to the imprinting hereof. He therefore, as the chief persuader, must take upon him the danger which upon this bold and rash enterprise shall ensue. I, as I suppose, am herein clearly acquit and discharged of all blame. Yet, honourable sir, for the better avoiding of envious and malicious tongues, I (knowing you to be a man not only profoundly learned and well affected towards all such as either can or will take pains in the well bestowing of that poor talent which God hath endued them with, but also for your godly disposition and virtuous qualities not unworthily now placed in authority and called to honour) am the bolder humbly to offer and dedicate unto your good mastership this my simple work. Partly that under the safe conduct of your protection it may the better be defended from the obloquy of them which can say well by nothing that pleaseth not their fond and corrupt judgments, though it be else both fruitful and godly, and partly that by the means of this homely present I may the better renew and revive (which of late, as you know, I have already begun to do) that old acquaintance that was between you and me in the time of our childhood, being then schoolfellows together. Not doubting that you for your native goodness and gentleness will accept in good part this poor gift, as an argument or token that mine old goodwill and hearty affection towards you is not, by reason of long tract of time and separation of our bodies, anything at all quailed and diminished, but rather (I assure you) much augmented and increased. This verily is the chief cause that hath encouraged me to be so bold with your mastership, else truly this my poor present is of such simple and mean sort, that it is neither able to recompense the least portion of your great gentleness to me, of my

part undeserved, both in the time of our old acquaintance and also now lately again bountifully shewed, neither yet fit and meet for the very baseness of it to be offered to one so worthy as you be. But Almighty God (who therefore ever be thanked) hath advanced you to such fortune and dignity, that you be of ability to accept thankfully as well a man's goodwill as his gift. The same God grant you and all yours long and joyfully to continue in all godliness and prosperity.

THOMAS MORE TO PETER GILES,

SENDETH GREETING

I AM almost ashamed, right well beloved Peter Giles, to send unto you this book of the Utopian commonwealth wellnigh after a year's space, which I am sure you looked for within a month and a half. And no marvel, for you knew well enough that I was already disburdened of all the labour and study belonging to the invention in this work, and that I had no need at all to trouble my brains about the disposition or conveyance of the matter, and therefore had herein nothing else to do, but only to rehearse those things which you and I together heard master Raphael tell and declare. Wherefore there was no cause why I should study to set forth the matter with eloquence, forasmuch as his talk could not be fine and eloquent, being first not studied for, but sudden and unpremeditate, and then, as you know, of a man better seen in the Greek language than in the Latin tongue. And my writing, the nigher it should approach to his homely, plain, and simple speech, so much the nigher should it go to the truth, which is the only mark whereunto I do and ought to direct all my travail and study herein. I grant and confess, friend Peter, myself discharged of so much labour, having all these things ready done to my hand, that almost there was nothing left for me to do. Else either the invention or the disposition of this matter might have required of a wit neither base neither at all unlearned, both some time and leisure, and also some study. But if it were requisite and necessary that the matter should also have been written eloquently and not alone truly, of a surety that thing could I have performed by no time nor study. But now seeing all these cares, stays, and lets were taken away, wherein else so

much labour and study should have been employed, and ~~that~~ there remained no other thing for me to do but only to write plainly the matter as I heard it spoken, that indeed was a thing light and easy to be done.

Howbeit, to the dispatching of this so little business, my other cares and troubles did leave almost less than no leisure. Whiles I do daily bestow my time about law matters, some to plead, some to hear, some as an arbitrator with mine award to determine, some as an umpire or a judge, with my sentence finally to discuss; whiles I go one way to see and visit my friend, another way about mine own private affairs; whiles I spend almost all the day abroad among others, and the residue at home among mine own; I leave to myself, I mean to my book, no time. For when I am come home I must commune with my wife, chat with my children, and talk with my servants. All the which things I reckon and account among business forasmuch as they must of necessity be done, and done must they needs be, unless a man will be stranger in his own house. And in any wise a man must so fashion and order his conditions and so appoint and dispose himself that he be merry, jocund, and pleasant among them whom either nature hath provided or chance hath made or he himself hath chosen to be the fellows and companions of his life, so that with too much gentle behaviour and familiarity he do not mar them, and by too much sufferance of his servants make them his masters. Among these things now rehearsed stealeth away the day, the month, the year. When do I write then? And all this while have I spoken no word of sleep, neither yet of meat, which among a great number doth waste no less time than doth sleep, wherein almost half the lifetime of man creepeth away. I therefore do win and get only that time which I steal from sleep and meat. Which time, because it is very little, and yet somewhat it is, therefore have I once at the last, though it be long first, finished *Utopia*, and have sent it to you, friend Peter, to read and peruse, to the intent that if anything have escaped me you might put me in remembrance of it.

For though in this behalf I do not greatly mistrust myself (which would God I were somewhat in wit and learning, as I am not all of the worst and dullest memory), yet have I not so great trust and confidence in it that I think nothing could fall out of my mind. For John Clement, my boy, who, as you know, was there present with us, whom I suffer to be away from no talk wherein may be any profit or goodness (for out of this young-bladed and new-shot-up corn, which hath already begun to spring up both in Latin and Greek learning, I look for plentiful increase at length of goodly ripe grain), he, I say, hath brought me into a great doubt. For whereas Hythloday (unless my memory fail me) said that the bridge of Amaurote which goeth over the river of Anyder is five hundred paces, that is to say half a mile, in length, my John saith that two hundred of those paces must be plucked away, for that the river containeth there not above three hundred paces in breadth; I pray you heartily call the matter to your remembrance. For if you agree with him I also will say as you say and confess myself deceived. But if you cannot remember the thing, then surely I will write as I have done and as mine own remembrance serveth me. For as I will take good heed that there be in my book nothing false, so if there be anything doubtful I will rather tell a lie than make a lie, because I had rather be good than wily. Howbeit, this matter may easily be remedied if you will take the pains to ask the question of Raphael himself by word of mouth, if he be now with you, or else by your letters. Which you must needs do for another doubt also that hath chanced, through whose fault I cannot tell, whether through mine or yours or Raphael's. For neither we remembered to inquire of him, nor he to tell us, in what part of the new world Utopia is situate. The which thing I had rather have spent no small sum of money than that it should thus have escaped us, as well for that I am ashamed to be ignorant in what sea that island standeth whereof I wrote so long a treatise, as also because there be with us certain men, and especially

one virtuous and godly man and a professor of divinity, who is exceeding desirous to go unto Utopia, not for a vain and curious desire to see news, but to the intent he may further and increase our religion which is there already luckily begun. And that he may the better accomplish and perform this his good intent he is minded to procure that he may be sent thither by the high bishop; yea, and that he himself may be made bishop of Utopia, being nothing scrupulous herein that he must obtain this bishopric with suit. For he counteth that a godly suit which proceedeth not of the desire of honour or lucre, but only of a godly zeal. Wherefore I most earnestly desire you, friend Peter, to talk with Hythloday, if you can, face to face, or else to write your letters to him, and so to work in this matter that in this my book there may neither anything be found which is untrue, neither anything be lacking which is true. And I think verily it shall be well done that you shew unto him the book itself. For if I have missed or failed in any point, or if any fault have escaped me, no man can so well correct and amend it as he can; and yet that can he not do unless he peruse and read over my book written. Moreover, by this means shall you perceive whether he be well willing and content that I should undertake to put this work in writing. For if he be minded to publish and put forth his own labours and travels himself, perchance he would be loath, and so would I also, that in publishing the Utopian weal-public I should prevent him and take from him the flower and grace of the novelty of this his history. Howbeit, to say the very truth, I am not yet fully determined with myself whether I will put forth my book or no. For the natures of men be so diverse, the phantasies of some so wayward, their minds so unkind, their judgments so corrupt, that they which lead a merry and a jocund life, following their own sensual pleasures and carnal lusts, may seem to be in a much better state or case than they that vex and unquiet themselves with cares and study for the putting forth and publishing of something that may be either

profit or pleasure to others, which others nevertheless will disdainfully, scornfully, and unkindly accept the same. The most part of all be unlearned, and a great number hath learning in contempt. The rude and barbarous alloweth nothing but that which is very barbarous indeed. If it be one that hath a little smack of learning, he rejecteth as homely gear and common ware whatsoever is not stuffed full of old moth-eaten terms and that be worn out of use. Some there be that have pleasure only in old rusty antiquities, and some only in their own doings. One is so sour, so crabbed, and so unpleasant, that he can away with no mirth nor sport. Another is so narrow between the shoulders, that he can bear no jests nor taunts. Some silly poor souls be so afeard that at every snappish word their nose shall be bitten off, that they stand in no less dread of every quick and sharp word than he that is bitten of a mad dog feareth water. Some be so mutable and wavering, that every hour they be in a new mind, saying one thing sitting and another thing standing. Another sort sitteth upon their ale-benches, and there among their cups they give judgment of the wits of writers, and with great authority they condemn, even as pleaseth them, every writer according to his writing, in most spiteful manner mocking, louting, and flouting them, being themselves in the mean season safe and, as saith the proverb, out of all danger of gunshot. For why, they be so smug and smooth, that they have not so much as one hair of an honest man whereby one may take hold of them. There be, moreover, some so unkind and ungentle, that, though they take great pleasure and delectation in the work, yet for all that they cannot find in their hearts to love the author thereof nor to afford him a good word, being much like uncourteous, unthankful, and churlish guests, which when they have with good and dainty meat well filled their bellies, depart home, giving no thanks to the feast maker. Go your ways now, and make a costly feast at your own charges for guests so dainty mouthed, so divers in taste, and besides that of so unkind and unthankful natures. But

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