

whole island. For that city, which is located at the navel of the land, so to speak, and hence is most convenient as a meeting place for the delegates from everywhere, is the capital and chief city.

The land is so well distributed that no city has less than twelve miles of ground on all sides, though it may have much more in some directions, namely where the cities are furthest apart from one another. None of them is driven by any desire to extend its boundaries.¹³³ Indeed, whatever land they have, they consider themselves its tenant-farmers, not its landlords. In the countryside, throughout the fields, they have conveniently located houses, each provided with farming tools. They are inhabited by the citizens, who take turns going out to live there. No country household has fewer than forty men and women, besides the two slaves bound to the land; it is presided over by a master and mistress who are sober and mature. Every thirty households are ruled by one phylarch.¹³⁴ Every year twenty from each household return to the city, having fulfilled their two-year stint in the country. They are replaced by twenty substitutes from the city, who are to be trained by those who have already been there a year and hence are more skilled in farmwork; the substitutes themselves will train another group the following year, for if everyone were new and equally ignorant of farming, the crops would suffer from lack of skill. Although this system of exchanging farmers is customary, to keep anyone from being forced to live this hard life for a long time, nevertheless many who have a natural bent for agricultural pursuits apply for and are allowed additional years.

They farm the land, raise cattle, cut wood, and convey it to the cities by the most convenient route, whether by sea or by

land. They raise a huge number of chickens, and they have a marvelous method of doing it. The hens do not sit on the eggs. For the Utopians themselves tend a great number of eggs, keeping them alive and hatching them in constant warmth.¹³⁵ As soon as the chicks emerge from the shell, they recognize and follow human beings around as if they were their mothers.

They raise very few horses and none but high-spirited ones, which serve no other purpose than the training of young people in horsemanship. For ploughing and hauling they use oxen; they grant that they are inferior to horses in short sprints, but they consider them superior over the long haul and less subject to diseases; moreover, they require less effort and expense to maintain, and when they have served out their term, they can be used for food.

Grain they use only for bread.¹³⁶ For they drink either wine made from grapes or cider made from apples or pears or else plain water, which they often boil with honey or licorice, of which they have plenty. Although they know (and they know it very well) how much produce is needed by a city and its surrounding population, they plant far more grain and raise far more cattle than they need for their own use, giving the surplus to their neighbors. All the supplies that are necessary but not available in the country they get from the city, giving nothing in exchange; the city magistrates provide them the goods with no bargaining. For every month many of them gather there on the feast day. On the day of harvesting, the phylarchs of the farmers inform the city magistrates how many citizens should be sent out; since they arrive at precisely the right time, such a large crowd of workers gets the harvest almost completely done in one day if they have good weather.¹³⁷

next meeting;¹⁵⁴ they do this so that someone who blurts out the first thing that occurs to him will not proceed to think up arguments to defend his position instead of looking for what is of use to the commonwealth, being willing to damage the public welfare rather than his own reputation, ashamed, as it were, in a perverse and wrong-headed way, to admit that his first view was short-sighted.¹⁵⁵ From the start such a person should have taken care to speak with deliberation rather than haste.

O C C U P A T I O N S

Farming is the one occupation in which all of them are skilled, men and women alike.¹⁵⁶ They are all trained in it from childhood on, partly by instruction in the classroom, partly by being taken out to play at it,¹⁵⁷ as it were, in the fields near the city, not merely looking on but doing the work themselves for bodily exercise.

Besides farming (which, as I said, is common to all of them) everyone is taught some trade of his own. The ordinary ones are working with wool or linen or laboring as a stone mason, blacksmith, or carpenter. No other trade there employs any number worth mentioning.¹⁵⁸ As for their clothing—which is uniform throughout the island for all age groups and varies only to indicate sex or marital status, and which is not unappealing to the eye, allows freedom of movement, and is adapted to either heat or cold—as for their clothing, I say, each household makes its own.

Everybody learns one or the other of these trades, including women as well as men. But women, as the weaker sex, engage in lighter crafts, mostly working with wool or linen. The other trades, which require more strength, are relegated to the men. Generally children take up their father's trade, for most are

naturally inclined to it.¹⁵⁹ But if anyone is drawn to another occupation, he is transferred by adoption into another household where he can work at the trade he wants to pursue. The move is supervised not only by his father but also by the magistrates, to make sure the master of his adoptive household is respectable and responsible. Actually, if someone has mastered one trade and wants to learn another besides, he gets permission to do so by the same procedure. When he has mastered both, he practices whichever he wants to, unless the city has a greater need for the other.¹⁶⁰

The chief and practically the only function of the syphogrants is to take care and see to it that no one lounges around in idleness¹⁶¹ but rather that everyone practices his trade diligently, but not working from early morning till late at night, exhausted by constant labor like a beast of burden.¹⁶² For such grievous labor is fit only for slaves, and yet almost everywhere it is the way workmen live, except in Utopia.¹⁶³ Dividing the day and night into twenty-four equal hours, they devote only six to work, three before noon, when they go to lunch. After lunch they take two hours of rest in the afternoon, then three more given over to work, after which they have dinner. Counting the first hour after noon as ending at one o'clock, it is eight o'clock when they go to bed. Sleep takes up eight hours.

The intervals between work, meals, and sleep they are allowed to spend however they like, provided that the time they have free from work is not wasted in debauchery and idleness but spent well in some other pursuit, according to their preference. Many devote these intervals to intellectual activities. For every day they have regular lectures in the hours before dawn; attendance is required only from those who have been specially chosen to devote themselves to learning. But a great

number of men, and also women, from all orders of society flock to hear these lectures, some one sort, some another, as each is naturally inclined. But if someone wishes to spend this same time practicing his trade (as do many whose temperaments are not suited to any abstract discipline), they are quite free to do so; indeed they are also praised for doing so, since their labor contributes to the common good.

After dinner they devote one hour to recreation, during the summer in the gardens, during the winter in the common rooms where they have their meals. There they either play music or entertain themselves with conversation. They do not so much as know about dice and other such pointless and pernicious games,¹⁶⁴ but they do play two games not unlike chess. In one of them numbers fight against each other, one taking over the other; in the other game virtues are lined up in a battlefront against the vices. This game shows very cleverly both how the vices fight among themselves but join forces against the virtues, and also which vices are opposed to which virtues, what forces they bring to bear openly, what instruments they use to attack indirectly, what defenses the virtues use to fend off the forces of the vices, how they evade their assaults, and finally by what methods one side or the other wins the victory.

But at this point, it is necessary to examine the matter in more detail to avoid making a mistake. If only six hours are devoted to work, you might think that there would necessarily be some shortage of supplies. But that is so far from being true that six hours is not only enough to produce abundantly all the necessities and comforts of life but is even more than enough. This you, too, will understand if you consider what a large part of the population in other countries live their lives in

idleness. First, almost all the women do,¹⁶⁵ and they make up almost half the population. Or in places where the women work, the men take their place and lie around snoring. Add to that the huge idle crowd of priests and religious, as they are called.¹⁶⁶ Throw in all the rich, especially the landlords of estates who are commonly called gentlemen and nobles. Include with them their retainers, that rank cesspool of worthless swashbucklers. Add, finally, the strong and sturdy beggars who feign some disease as a pretext for their idleness. You will certainly find that it takes far fewer than you thought to produce everything that mortals use.¹⁶⁷

Now consider how few of these workers are occupied in necessary trades, since, where money is the measure of everything, many completely futile and superfluous crafts must be practiced just to support over-indulgence and wanton luxury. Now if that same crowd who are presently working were divided up among the few trades needed to produce the few commodities that nature requires, the resulting abundance of goods would drive prices down so low that craftsmen could not make a living. But if all those who work away at pointless tasks and, together with them, that whole crowd of lazy, languid idlers (any single one of whom consumes twice as much as any of the workers who produce the goods), if they all were put to work—and useful work at that—you can easily see how little time would be enough and more than enough time to produce all the goods required for human needs and conveniences—and pleasures, too, as long as they are true and natural ones.

And this very point is confirmed by the experience of the Utopians. For there, in the whole city and the surrounding territory, out of all the men and women who are old enough

and strong enough to work, barely five hundred are exempted from work.¹⁶⁸ Among them the syphogrants, who are legally relieved from work, nevertheless do not exempt themselves; they work so as to motivate others to work by giving a good example. The same immunity is enjoyed by those to whom the people give total leisure to pursue various branches of learning, but only after the priests have recommended them and the syphogrants have chosen them by a secret ballot. If any of them disappoints the hopes they had in him, he is put back to work; and on the other hand, it happens, not infrequently, that an artisan, devoting his free time to intellectual pursuits, works so diligently and makes such progress that he is exempted from working at his trade and promoted to the scholarly class. From this order of scholars are chosen ambassadors, priests, tranibors, and finally the ruler himself, who was called Barzanes in their ancient language, but is named Ademus in the modern tongue.¹⁶⁹ The remaining group, which is neither idle nor devoted to useless trades, is so large that it is easy to imagine how many goods they produce in so few hours.

Apart from what I have just said, they have it easier because in most of the necessary trades they do not need to expend as much labor as in other nations. First of all, building or repairing structures everywhere else requires the continuous effort of so many workers for the simple reason that what a father has built his worthless heir allows to fall gradually into disrepair. Thus what could have been maintained with a minimum of effort has to be totally rebuilt, at great expense, by the next heir. Moreover, it often happens that a house that cost someone enormous sums to build seems contemptible to someone of more fastidious taste; after a short time it falls into ruin through neglect and the owner builds another house some-

where else, at no less expense. But among the Utopians, from the time when everything was settled and the commonwealth was established, it very rarely happens that a new site is chosen on which to build houses; and they not only repair damage quickly when it happens but they take preventive measures against it. The result is that their buildings last a very long time and require very little work, and sometimes construction workers have so little to do that they are set to shaping timbers or squaring and fitting stones at home, so that if they ever need to build anything, it can be constructed more quickly.

Now as for their clothing, notice how little labor it requires. First of all, at work they wear informal garments made of leather or skins which last for seven years. When they go out in public they put on cloaks which cover these rough clothes; throughout the island they are all of the same color, that of the natural wool. Thus they not only get along with much less woolen cloth than anywhere else, but it also costs much less. But linen is easier to work and hence they use more of it; they are concerned only about the whiteness of linen and the neatness of wool, for they place no value on fineness of weave. The result is that in other places four or five woolen cloaks and the same number of silk shirts are not enough for one person, and if he is a bit fastidious, not even ten will do, but there everybody is content with one, which generally lasts for two years. Naturally there is no reason why he should want any more, for if he got them he would have no more protection against the cold, and his clothing would not look the least bit more fashionable.

Therefore, since everyone is employed in a useful trade and the trades themselves require less labor, the result is a great abundance of everything, so that sometimes they bring out an

enormous number of people to repair the public roads, if any have deteriorated. It happens very often, when there is no occasion even for that kind of work, that they publicly decree a shorter workday. For the magistrates do not compel anyone to engage in superfluous labor against his will, since the structure of the commonwealth is primarily designed to relieve all the citizens from as much bodily labor as possible, so that they can devote their time to the freedom and cultivation of the mind. For that, they think, constitutes a happy life.

S O C I A L R E L A T I O N S

Now is the time, I think, to explain how they treat each other, how they interact with one another, and what system they have for distributing goods.

And so, while the city is made up of households, the households themselves consist mostly of blood relatives. Girls, when they grow up and marry, move into the dwellings of their husbands. But sons and, after them, grandsons remain in the household and are subject to the oldest parent, unless his mind is failing because of old age; in that case he is replaced by the next oldest. But to keep the city from being either over- or underpopulated, they see to it that no household (and each city, apart from its territory, has six thousand of them) has fewer than ten or more than sixteen adults. For it is not possible to set a limit for children.¹⁷⁰ This limit is easily maintained by transferring persons from households with too many people to those with too few. But if it should happen that the whole city grows too large, they use the excess to supply underpopulated cities. But if it should happen that throughout the island the whole mass of the population should swell inordinately, they sign up citizens from each city and send them as

In that area of philosophy which deals with ethics, they discuss the same issues as we do. They inquire about the goods of the mind and body and external goods, and whether the designation “good” applies to all of these or only to the gifts of the mind.²⁰⁰ They discuss virtue and pleasure, but the primary and principal controversy is about what they think human happiness consists in, whether one thing or many. On this point they seem over-inclined to the position which claims that all or the most important part of human happiness consists of pleasure.²⁰¹ And what is even more surprising, they claim support for this self-indulgent view even from religion, which is sober and strict and, indeed, almost gloomy and stern. For they never analyze happiness unless they combine some religious principles with the rational analysis of philosophy, since they think that without such principles reason by itself is too weak and deficient to investigate true happiness.²⁰²

These principles are of this sort:²⁰³ that the soul is immortal, and by the beneficence of God is born for happiness; that our virtues and good deeds will be rewarded after this life, and our crimes have punishments prepared for them.²⁰⁴ Though these are religious principles, the Utopians still think that reason leads them to believe and grant them; if they are eliminated, the Utopians have no hesitation in affirming that no one could be so stupid as not to feel that he ought to pursue his own pleasure by hook or crook. He would only be concerned not to sacrifice a greater pleasure for a lesser one and not to pursue one that would be requited by pain. For they think it would be truly insane to pursue virtue, which is harsh and difficult, and not only to banish the pleasures of life but even to seek out pain of your own accord, and to expect to get nothing out of it (for how can you get anything out of it if you

get nothing after death, since you have spent your whole life here without pleasure, that is, wretchedly?). But as it is, they think happiness consists not in every sort of pleasure but in pleasure that is good and honorable, for they believe that our nature is drawn to pleasure as the highest good by virtue itself, whereas the opposite faction attributes happiness to virtue alone.²⁰⁵

And then they define virtue as living according to nature; to that end, they say, we were created by God.²⁰⁶ We follow the guidance of nature when we obey reason in choosing and avoiding things. Furthermore, reason above all inspires mortals to love and revere the majesty of God, to whom we owe our very existence and our capacity to be happy. Secondly, reason admonishes and encourages us to lead lives with as little anxiety and as much joy as possible and, beyond that, to exert ourselves in helping all others achieve the same end because of our natural fellowship. For not even the gloomiest and sternest advocate of virtue, who despises pleasure so much that he would impose toil, vigils, and mortifications on you, would refrain from enjoining you to do as much as you can to alleviate the poverty and distress of others, and he would think it praiseworthy and humane for one human being to rescue and comfort another, since the very essence of humanity (and no virtue is more proper to human beings) is to relieve the distress of others, eliminate sadness from their lives, and restore them to a joyful life, that is, to pleasure. Why should nature not impel us to do the same for ourselves? For either a joyful life, that is, a life of pleasure, is wrong and in that case we should not only not help anyone to achieve it but rather we should do all we can to make everyone avoid it as harmful and deadly, or if you are not only allowed but even required to obtain it for

others, why not do so first of all for yourself? You should be no less well-disposed to yourself than to others. For when nature prompts you to be good to others, she does not require you to turn around and be cruel and merciless to yourself. Nature herself, they say, prescribes as the aim of all our actions a joyful life, that is, pleasure, and they define virtue as following the prescriptions of nature.²⁰⁷ But when nature invites mortals to help each other to lead cheerful lives (and she is certainly right to do so, since no one is so far above the rank of human beings that nature should care for him alone, whereas in fact she is equally concerned about all those whom she groups together as belonging to the same species), she also, of course, forbids you time after time to seek your own advantages in ways that create disadvantages for others.

Therefore they think that not only private agreements must be kept but also public laws which have either been promulgated by a good ruler or which a people not oppressed by a tyrant or deceived by some trick have laid down by common consent to govern the distribution of vital commodities, that is, the means to pleasure. As long as these laws are not broken, to look out for your own good is prudent; to promote the public good is pious. But to deprive someone else of pleasure to promote your own is wrong; on the other hand, to deprive yourself of something to give it to someone else is a work of humanity and kindness and it always brings you more good than it takes away. For it is counterbalanced by gifts given in return, and also your consciousness of having done a good deed and the thought of the love and good will of those you have benefited will give you mental pleasure that outweighs any loss of bodily comfort. Finally, as religion makes clear to true believers, God will repay the loss of brief and paltry pleasures with

enormous and never-ending joy. Following this line of reasoning and having considered the matter long and hard, they think that all our actions, including also our virtuous deeds, are directed toward pleasure as our happiness and final end.²⁰⁸

They define pleasure as any motion or state of the mind or body which produces delight in accord with the guidance of nature. Not without reason do they add that the impulse must be in accord with nature. For just as not only our senses but also our reason pursues whatever is pleasurable by nature, that is, pleasures not achieved through wrongdoing, or acquired with the loss of a greater pleasure, or followed by hardship, so too they hold that all those unnatural pleasures which mortals agree to call delightful by the emptiest of fictions (as if it were in their power to change the thing by changing the name) are so far from contributing to happiness that they actually hinder it because, once they have taken over the mind, they occupy it totally and leave no room for true and genuine pleasures. For a great many things are not pleasurable by their very nature and are, in fact, for the most part bitter, but through the perverse enticement of evil desires they are not only thought to be the greatest pleasures but are even included among the primary reasons for living.

Among those who pursue false pleasures they include those whom I mentioned before who think that the finer the gown they wear the better they are. On this one point they are wrong twice over. They are no less deceived in thinking the gown is better than in imagining they themselves are. For if you consider the usefulness of a garment, why is wool woven with fine thread better than wool woven with coarser thread? But they think they excel in fact, not merely in their illusions. They ruffle their feathers; they believe that they are more valuable

because of their clothes. And on that basis, honors they would not have dared hope for in cheaper clothes they demand as rightly due to their elegant gown, and they are outraged if someone passes them by without due deference.

And then isn't it equally stupid to be much taken with empty and worthless honors? For what natural pleasure is there in someone's baring his head to you or bending his knee? Will that relieve the pain in your own knee or cure the delirium in your head? It is amazing how some are caught up in this imaginary, specious pleasure: delightfully insane, they flatter themselves and take pride in their imagined nobility simply because they happen to be descended from a long series of ancestors who are considered to be rich, above all rich landlords (for nowadays there is no other source of nobility except wealth), and yet they think they are not a whit the less noble even if their ancestors have left them no wealth or they themselves have squandered it.

With these they group the persons I mentioned before who are enthralled by gems and precious stones and almost think they have been deified if they ever get a fine specimen, especially if it is the sort most highly valued in their own times; for not all sorts are highly regarded by all persons and at all times. But they do not buy such a stone unless it is removed from its gold setting and exposed, and even then not unless the seller swears and guarantees that it is a genuine jewel and a true gemstone; so afraid are they that their eyes may be deceived by a counterfeit substituted for a real stone. For why should your eyes be any less delighted by a counterfeit since they cannot distinguish it from a real one? To you each of them should have equal value, no less so, by heaven, than they would to a blind man.

What about people who keep superfluous wealth under lock and key, taking delight not in using the amassed treasure but merely in contemplating it? Do they feel any real delight or rather are they not deluded by a false pleasure? How about those who are subject to a different vice and hide away their gold, intending not only never to use it but perhaps never even to see it any more; in their anxiety not to lose it, they lose it. For surely it is lost if it is buried in the ground so as to be of no use to you and perhaps not to any other mortal. But still, when the treasure is hidden away, you feel carefree and happy. If a thief took it away and you died ten years later without knowing of the theft, in all those years that you lived after the money was stolen, what difference did it make to you whether it was removed or remained safe?²⁰⁹ In either case its usefulness to you was the same.

To these categories of absurd enjoyment they add gambling (a sort of madness they know of only through hearsay, not experience) and also hunting and falconry. For what pleasure can there be, they say, in throwing dice on a gaming table? Even if there were any pleasure in it, you have done it so often that mere repetition should have made you sick of it. How can it be delightful to hear the barking and howling of dogs?—isn't that a disgusting noise? Why do hunters feel more pleasure when a dog chases a hare than when a dog chases a dog?²¹⁰ For in either case the action is the same, that is, running, if that is what pleases you. Or if you are attracted by the hope of carnage and the expectation of seeing the slaughter with your own eyes, you ought instead to be moved to compassion when you see a little hare torn to pieces by a dog, a weak creature tormented by a stronger one, a timid creature fleeing from a