

## Utopia

SIR Thomas More (1478-1535) was the leading English humanist of his generation. Successful in the profession of law, he was also known as a man of keen wit and learning. In 1529, having entered the service of King Henry VIII, More became Lord Chancellor, the most important of the royal officers. He resigned this position in 1532, however, in an attempt to avoid having to take part in the political and religious quarrels that accompanied Henry's dynastic ambitions and his break with the papacy. So important a man, however, was not allowed to remain in obscurity: On his refusal to take any oath of loyalty to the king that would involve rejection of the pope's authority, More was tried, found guilty of high treason, and beheaded.

Like his friend Erasmus, More injected a religious tone into his humanism. Scholarship, a sense of humor, and the intention of reforming society and the Church were common to the work of both men.

More's *Utopia* (1516) is an imaginary discourse by a fictional traveler to the New World. The narrator, Raphael Hythloday, tells of the land of Utopia, a name coined by More from the Greek word meaning "nowhere." Hythloday describes the Utopians' socialized economy, their system of compulsory and universal education for both men and women, and their austere life under the firm discipline of a wise and benevolent prince, who is completely tolerant of all religious views save atheism. More thus presents a picture of a society completely different from his own—one that is free from corruption in politics and law, and, more significantly, free from the poverty and crime resulting from selfish misuse of private property by the rich and powerful. Like Plato's Republic, More's Utopia has been taken as a model by social reformers who like to envisage an ideal society founded on perfect order and justice.

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Farming is a science common to all, both men and women, and they are all expert. They are instructed from their youth, partly in school with lessons and precepts, and partly in the country near the city, where they learn not only by seeing agriculture practised but engaging in it also as a kind of play. Besides farming, which is common to all, everyone learns another craft as his own. Most commonly this is clothworking in wool or flax, or masonry, or blacksmithing, or carpentry. There are no other trades followed there by any great number. Their garments are of one fashion throughout the island (except that men and women wear different garments, and there is a difference between the married and unmarried). The style stays the same always, is handsome in appearance, allows free movement of the body, and is fit for both winter and summer. Every family makes its own clothes. But of other crafts every man learns one, as do the women. But the women, being weaker, are put to the easier crafts like working wool or flax. The more laborious tasks are entrusted to the men. For the most part, every man is brought up in his father's craft. They are naturally inclined to it; but if a youth wants to learn another, he is adopted by a family engaged in the occupation he wants to learn. His own father and the magistrate take care that he is given to an honest and worthy householder. Yes, and if any person, after he has learned one craft, wants to learn still another, he is permitted to do so.

When he has learned both, he follows the one he prefers, unless the city needs one more than the other. The chief, and almost the only duty of the officers is to see that no man is idle but that everyone works diligently at his own craft, yet not all day from early morning to late at night like beasts of burden. For this would be worse than the fate of slaves, which is, nevertheless, the life of workmen almost everywhere except in Utopia. For they divide the day and night into twenty-four equal hours and devote only six hours to work, three before noon. Then they go straight to dinner, and after dinner, when they have rested two hours, they work three hours and then have supper. About eight in the evening (counting one o'clock as the first hour after noon) they go to bed. Eight hours they give to sleep. In the hours not devoted to work, sleep, or meals, every man spends his time as he wishes. This is not intended to permit waste of time, however, but that, being free

UTOPIA Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Ralph Robinson (1556), reprinted (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1888), 78-99, 143-47. (This is an adaptation.)

*What is not bound to master and*

from their own occupations, they can devote some time to some other branch of learning. For it is a custom there to have daily lectures early in the mornings. Although only those who are specifically designated as students are forced to be present, a great number of all kinds of people, both men and women, attend. However, if any man would rather spend this time on his own occupation (for there are many whose minds are unsuited to liberal studies), he is not blamed but praised and commended as helping the common welfare.

After supper they spend an hour in play: in summer in their gardens, in winter in their common halls, where they dine and sup. There they practice music or engage in pleasant conversation. Dice and other such foolish and pernicious games are unknown. But they have some games not much unlike chess. One is the battle of numbers, in which one number wins over another. In another, the vices fight against virtues, as if in battle array. In this game, there is clearly shown the strife and discord that vices have among themselves, but also their unity and concord against the virtues; what vices are opposed to what virtues; how they assail virtues openly with power and strength; how they operate secretly with wiles and subtlety; what the virtues need for help and aid in overcoming the power of the vices; how they too can use craft; and finally by what means victory can be achieved.

One thing you must consider more clearly here, lest you be mistaken: seeing that they spend only six hours in work, you may perhaps think that they lack many necessary things. But this is not so. For that small time is not only sufficient but even too much for the provision of an abundant supply of all things necessary to life. You will understand this if you consider how many people in other countries live idly: almost all women, who are half the population, or, if the women be employed, the men are idle. Besides this, there is a great and idle company of priests and religious men, as they call them. Add to them all rich men, especially landowners commonly called gentlemen, and of vain swaggers. Join to them also sturdy and ingenious beggars, disguising the idleness of their lives with some pretended deformity or disease. Truly, you shall find the goods used in daily life are produced by the labor of fewer than you thought.

Now, consider with yourself how few of those who do labor are employed in necessary work. For where money is the most important reward, many superfluous and vain occupations will flourish to cater to idle wants and foolish pleasures. But if the same multitude that now is

occupied in such work were divided into the few occupations necessary to supply basic wants, there would be such a quantity of necessary goods produced that undoubtedly prices would be too little to support the workmen and artificers. If, however, all those now busy in worthless occupations and the whole flock of those that live in idleness and sloth, consuming and wasting more of the things produced by other men's labor than the laborers themselves do—if all these, I say, were engaged in worthwhile occupations, you can easily see how little time would be sufficient to provide us with everything necessary, either to supply basic commodities or to provide a certain amount of modest and natural pleasures.

The truth of this is demonstrated in Utopia, for there in the whole city and the adjoining countryside, there are scarcely five hundred (in addition to the sick and aged) of the entire population who are excused from labor. Among these are the officers who, although they are by law exempt from labor, nevertheless set a good example by their voluntary work. The same freedom from labor is also granted those who, recommended by the priests and elected by the officers, are given a permanent excuse from labor so that they may engage in learning. But if any of these does not live up to expectations, he is sent back to the rank of artificers. On the other hand, it often happens that a laborer spends all of his free time in learning and makes such progress that he is taken from his trade and promoted to the company of the learned. From this class of learned people are chosen the ambassadors, the priests, magistrates and finally the prince himself, whom they call, in their old tongue, Barzanes, and also by a newer name, Adamus.

The rest of the people are neither idle nor occupied in worthless tasks. It is easily seen, therefore, that in only a few hours much productive work is accomplished. Moreover, they do not need to spend as much work in the necessary occupations as other nations. In other places, the building and repairing of houses takes up many men's continual labor because unthrifty persons allow their houses to fall into decay, so that what might have been repaired with little cost must be entirely rebuilt with great cost by their successors. It often happens, too, that a house that cost one man a great sum does not please another, who neglects it and lets it fall into ruin. Then he builds another just as costly somewhere else. Among the Utopians, however, where everything is well managed and the commonwealth well ordered, it very seldom happens that a new plot is chosen for building. Not only do they find quick remedies for present faults, but also repair houses that

are ready to fall. In this way their houses last long, with so little labor and few repairs needed that men engaged in this occupation sometimes have almost nothing to do and are ordered to hew lumber at home and square and trim stone so that if any work becomes necessary it can be more speedily done.

Now, sir, notice, I pray, how few workmen they need for their clothing. First of all, while they are at work they wear simple garments of leather or skins that will last seven years. When they go outdoors, they put on a cloak which hides the coarser apparel. These cloaks, throughout the entire island, are all of one color, that is, the natural color of the wool. Hence, they use much less woollen cloth than other countries, and at much less cost. Linen cloth is made with less labor and is, therefore, used more. But in linen only whiteness is prized; in wool only cleanliness. As for the smallness or fineness of the thread, it is unimportant. This is the reason that in other places four or five cloth gowns of different colors, and as many silk coats are not enough for one man. If he is a particular man, he may think ten too few, whereas there one garment will serve a man four years. Why should he want more? If he had them, he would not be better off or more protected from cold, nor handsomer in apparel.

Since they are all occupied in worthwhile occupations and a few workmen are sufficient in any one trade (this is the reason there is a plentiful supply of everything), they sometimes turn out a numerous company of people to mend the highways, if need be. Often, when they have no such work, a proclamation is made decreeing fewer hours of work. For the magistrates do not compel the citizens to engage unwillingly in unnecessary labor. In that commonwealth the chief and only aim is to spend as much time as possible in the free exercise and training of the mind, for in this they believe the chief felicity of life to consist.

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Now I will tell how the citizens behave toward each other, how the people entertain and amuse themselves, and how they distribute their goods. First, the city consists of families, the families being made up of kindred. For women, when they are married at the legal age, become part of their husband's family. But the male children and all the male offspring continue in their own family, being governed by the eldest man, unless he is senile, in which case he is replaced by the next oldest.

But in order to prevent the number of citizens from increasing or decreasing, it is ordained that no family (there are 6,000 families in each city and nearby countryside) shall have fewer than ten children between the ages of thirteen and sixteen. Of children under this age, no number is set. This number is easily maintained by putting the children of larger families into smaller families. If by chance a city has more than can be accommodated, the excess is used in other cities. If the population of the entire island exceeds the set number, they choose citizens from every city to build up a town under their own laws in a neighboring land where there is waste land, accepting also natives of that country if they want to join and dwell with them. Thus joining and dwelling together, they easily agree in one way of life, to the great wealth of both peoples. For they manage things so by their laws that ground which was before neither good nor profitable for anyone becomes fruitful enough for both. If the natives will not dwell with them and accept their laws, they drive them out of the land they have taken for themselves. If the natives resist or rebel, they make war upon them. For they consider it a just war that is fought to dispossess people from land which they do not use and keep others from using.

If by chance the number in any city is so diminished that it cannot be filled up without reducing the proper number in the other cities (which they say happened only twice, by the plague, since the beginning of the island), they replenish the number with citizens brought from their own foreign towns. They would rather see these foreign towns decay and perish than any city of the island diminish.

But to return to the behavior of the citizens toward each other: the eldest, as I have said, rules the family, the wives and their husbands; the children help their parents, and, in short, all younger people assist their elders.

Every city is divided into four equal parts or quarters. In the midst of each quarter there is a market place for all kinds of things. There the products of every family's labor are brought into certain houses, and all kinds of commodities are stored in several barns or storehouses. From thence the father of every family, or every householder, takes whatever he needs and carries it with him without money, exchange, pawn, or pledge. Why should anything be denied him—seeing that there is abundance of everything and that no one will ask for more than he needs? Why should it be thought that men who know they will never be in want would ask for more than is merely enough? Certainly, fear of

want causes covetousness and greed, but only in man does it cause pride, because man thinks it a glorious thing to excel in ostentatious and vain display of possessions. This vice has no place among the Utopians.

Next to the market places that I spoke of stand meat markets where herbs, fruits, bread, fish, and all sorts of four-footed beasts and wild fowl that furnish meat for humans are stored and offered. First, the filth is washed away in the clear running river outside the city at properly appointed places. Then the beasts are killed and washed by the bondsmen. For they do not permit free citizens to become accustomed to killing beasts. They consider it kindness to let animals grow old and die naturally. Nor do they allow any unclean or filthy thing to be brought into the city lest stench infect the air and cause pestilence.

Moreover, every street has great halls equidistant from each other and each has its own name. In these halls dwell the officers, and every hall has thirty families assigned to it, fifteen on each side. The stewards of these halls come at a certain time to the meat markets where they receive meat according to the number of families in their hall. The first care of all, however, is the sick in the hospitals. For around the city, a little outside the walls, they have four hospitals, so large that they seem like four little towns. They are made so spacious that the sick will not be crowded and uncomfortable or those with contagious diseases so close to others as to endanger them with infection. These hospitals are so well built and furnished with everything necessary to health, and the attendants and physicians so diligent and skillful that, although no man is sent there against his will, sick persons would rather go to them than remain home.

After the hospital steward has received the kinds of meat prescribed by the physician, the best is equally divided among the halls. . . . To these halls at the dinner hour come all the inhabitants of the ward, summoned by trumpet. No one, however, is forbidden to get his own meat and take it home, for they know that no one will do so without reason. No man is forbidden to dine at home, but no one does so willingly. It would be foolish to take the trouble to prepare a bad dinner at home when they are welcome to good fare at the nearby hall.

In the hall, all menial service and drudgery are performed by bondsmen. But the women of every family have charge of the cooking and dressing the meat. They sit at three tables or more, according to their number. The men sit on the bench next the wall; the women opposite, so that if any sudden illness should affect them, as often happens to women with child, they may leave quickly and go to the nursery.

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The nurses stay with the infants in a special room, which always has a fire lit and a supply of clean water. Cradles are provided so they may lay the children down or take them out of their swaddling clothes and warm them before the fire and refresh them with play. Every mother nurses her own child unless death or sickness prevents. If that happens, the officers' wives quickly provide a nurse, which is not difficult, for those who can perform this service are glad to volunteer. This kind act is much praised, and the child that is nursed always regards his nurse as his natural mother.

Children under five are cared for by the nurses. All other children, both boys and girls, up to the age of marriage either serve at the tables or, if still too young, stand quietly by. Whatever is given them they eat, and they have no separate dinner time. . . . Their dinners are very short, but their suppers longer because a working period follows dinner, but after supper come sleep and rest. No supper is passed without music. . . . and they burn gums and spices, and sprinkle perfume about, leaving nothing undone that affords pleasure. For they incline to the opinion that no harmless pleasure should be forbidden.

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If anyone wants to visit friends in another city or to see the place itself, he can easily get permission from the officers or magistrates unless there is some good reason for refusal. No one journeys alone, but a group is sent, carrying letters from the prince showing that they have permission for the journey and setting the day of their required return. They have a wagon given them, with a bondman to drive the oxen. Unless they have women along, they send the wagon home because it is an impediment. Though they carry nothing with them, they never lack for anything during the whole trip. For wherever they stop, they are at home. If they stop at a place for more than a day, everyone falls to his own occupation and is welcomed by the workmen and companies of the same craft.

If any man on his own and without permission leaves his precinct, and does not have the prince's letters, he is apprehended as a fugitive or runaway and is rebuked, shamed, and punished. If he is caught again in that fault, he is punished with bondage.

If anyone wants to walk in the fields and countryside belonging to his own city, he is not forbidden, provided that he has obtained the consent of his father and wife. But no matter in what part of the country he chances to be, he is given no food until he has worked his forenoon's

stint or done as much as is required before supper. Observing this law and its conditions, he may go wherever he wants within the territory of his own city. He shall thus be no less profitable to his city than if he were always within the limits.

You can see how little time they have for loitering; how they have no way of disguising idleness. There are no taverns, alehouses, brothels, nor any occasion for vice or wickedness, no corners for lurking, no places for evil councils or unlawful assembly. For everyone is always in plain sight, so of necessity he must apply himself to his customary labors or else engage in honest and laudable pastimes.

This fashion of life and work being common to all, they must of necessity have plenty of everything. And since they are all equal partners, no one is poor or needy. The national council where, as I have said, every city sends three men every year, as soon as it knows in what places there is abundance and where there is scarcity, immediately allocates the abundance of one place to make up the lack of another place. This they do freely without any payment, taking nothing from them to whom things are given; but those cities that have given their supplies to cities in need do receive at another time what they need from the cities they aided. So, the whole island is, as it were, one family or household.

When they have made sufficient provision for themselves, which they think must consist of two years' supply because of the uncertainty of the next year's harvest, they send the superfluous goods and crops to other countries: grain, honey, wool, flax, wood, dyestuffs, skins, wax, tallow, leather, and livestock. A seventh of these things they give freely to the poor of the country to which they export, the rest they sell at a reasonable price. By this trade they bring into their own country not only a great deal of gold and silver, but also whatever they lack at home, which is chiefly iron. Because they have practised this trade for a long time, they have more of these things than anyone will readily believe. Therefore, they now do not care whether they sell for cash or for credit. If for credit, they never accept the word of private individuals but the warranty of the whole city set forth in contracts.

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They keep most of the treasure at home to use for extreme danger, especially to hire at great wages foreign soldiers. For they prefer to endanger mercenaries rather than their own citizens. They know that

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their enemies can be bribed, and weakened by hired traitors set to fight among themselves. For this purpose they keep a great treasure on hand. This treasure is not for hoarding but for use. I am almost afraid to say this, lest I not be believed, for I would hardly believe another man's telling this, if I had not seen it myself.

It usually happens that if a thing is strange and not familiar in our experience, it is difficult to believe. However, a wise and judicious judge of matters will not be surprised, since all of their laws and customs are so different from ours, if their use of gold and silver is interpreted by their customs, not ours. I mean that they use these not as money, but keep them in case of emergency. In the meantime they are used in such a way that no one prizes them as money.

Anyone can plainly see that money is less important than iron, for men cannot live without iron any more than without fire and water. Nature has given no utility to gold and silver that we cannot do without. Only the folly of men sets them in higher esteem because of their scarcity. But nature, a most kind and loving nurse, has placed the most necessary things ready to our use, as air, water, and earth, and has hidden farthest from us all vain and unprofitable things. Therefore, if these metals should be locked up in some tower, it might be suspected that the prince and council (as the populace is always foolishly imagining) intended by some device to deceive the commons and profit themselves. Furthermore, if they should make plate of the gold and silver and other finely and cunningly wrought stuff, and if at any time they should have to melt it down again to pay their soldiers, they see that men would be loath to part from those things that they took delight in.

To remedy all of this, they have found a means which, since it conforms to all of their other laws and customs (and so different from ours, which set so much store on gold, that it is incredible except to those who are very wise) renders gold worthless. For they eat and drink of vessels of earthenware and glass, beautifully made but of small value. Of gold and silver they commonly make chamber pots and other vessels that serve for the vilest uses not only in the common halls but in every man's private house. Furthermore, of the same metals they make great chains and fetters and gyves in which they chain their bondmen. Finally, some condemned persons must wear earrings of gold, finger rings of gold, and collars of gold, and circlets of gold around their heads. Thus, by all possible means, they make gold and silver a badge

of reproach and infamy. These metals, which in other nations are valued as life itself, would, if taken from the Utopians, not be missed any more than one penny.

They also gather pearls by the seashore, and diamonds and garnets from certain rocks; yet they do not seek them out, but find them by chance and cut and polish them. They give them to their children, for they make much of young children and like to dress and ornament them so that when they grow up and see that only little children wear jewels and ornaments, they put aside their own voluntarily, without being counselled to do so by their parents, even as our own children, when grown, throw away their dolls and nuts and toys.

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There are several kinds of religion, not only in different parts of the island but also within the same city. Some worship the sun as their god; some, the moon; some, other planets. There are those who worship a man, once excellently virtuous and gloriously famous, not only as god but also as the chiefest and highest god. But the majority of wise people, rejecting all of these creeds, believes that there is a certain divine power, unknown, everlasting, inexplicable, far above the capacity and reach of man's knowledge, dispersed throughout the universe, not in size but in virtue. Him they call the father of all. To him alone they attribute the beginning, growth, processes, changes, and endings of all things. Nor do they worship any deity save him. All the other sects, though they differ, agree on this one point with the wisest—that there is one chief and principal god, maker and ruler of the whole world, whom they all, in their language, term *Mythra*.

There is some disagreement, however, for some identify this god in one way, some in another fashion. For everyone takes his own god to be the one to whose divine might and majesty the power over all things is commonly attributed. However, they are beginning little by little to forsake these various superstitions and to agree in the religion which seems reasonably to excel the others. There is no doubt that the others would have been abolished long since if it had not been for the habit of ascribing any mischance befalling one who has changed his religion to the enmity of the god whom he was forsaking, as if the god were seeking revenge.

After they heard us speak of Christ, of his doctrine, laws, miracles, and the wonderful constancy of martyrs whose blood was willingly shed to bring the nations of the world into the faith, you would hardly

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believe how glad they were to accept the Word, either by the secret inspiration of God or because it came closest to that opinion which they already thought of among themselves as the best. I do think, however, that it helped when they heard us say that Christ bade his followers to have all things in common, and that the same communalism still exists among the best Christian groups.

Whatever the cause, many of them accepted our religion and were washed with the holy waters of baptism. Because among us four (no more of us were left alive, two having died) there was no priest, which I heartily regret, they could be instructed in all the points of our religion but lacked those sacraments which only priests can administer. They nevertheless understand them and earnestly desire them, even disputing among themselves whether, without the sending of a Christian bishop, one of their own people might receive the order of priesthood. Truly, they were intending to choose one, but at my departure had not yet done so.

Those who do not agree with Christianity fear no one who has been converted, nor do they speak against any one who has received Christianity. There was one exception, however. One of our company was severely punished. As soon as he was baptised he began, against our will, and with more earnestness than wisdom, to talk about Christ's religion, and became so vehement that he not only preferred our religion before all others but utterly despised and condemned all others, calling them profane and their followers wicked, devilish, and children of everlasting damnation. When he had argued this way for a long time, they seized him, accused and condemned him to exile, not as a despiser of religion but as a stirrer up of sedition among the people. For it is one of the most ancient laws among them that no one shall be blamed for arguing in defense of his own religion. For King Utopus, at the very beginning, heard that the inhabitants of the land were, before his coming there, in continual strife and dissension among themselves because of their religion. He also perceived that this dissension (in which several sects fought only for their own part of the country) was the only reason he was able to conquer the land. Therefore, when he had gained victory, his first decree was that it should be lawful for every man to favor and follow whatever religion he wished, and to do the best he could to bring others to his opinion so long as he did it peaceably, gently, quietly and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against others. If he could not by fair and gentle words induce others to his opinion, he must nevertheless refrain from violence

and unpleasant and seditious language. He who was guilty of vehemence and strife was banished or placed in bondage.

King Utopus made this law not only for the maintenance of peace, which he saw threatened by continual strife and mortal hatred, but also because he thought this decree would help religion. Of religion he did not define or determine anything, not knowing whether God, desiring many different kinds of respect and worship, might not inspire different men with different kinds of religious beliefs. He thought it an unwise and foolish thing, and arrogant presumption, to compel all others, by threats of violence, to agree to the same belief as yourself. Furthermore, though there may be only one true religion, and all others superstition, he foresaw that (if the matter were handled with reason and restraint) the truth of the right doctrine would at last come to light. If contention and debate were continually used, however, the worst and most stubborn and obstinate men, who uphold their evil opinions most constantly, would win. The holiest and best religion would thus be trodden down and destroyed by violent superstition, as good corn is overgrown and choked by weeds and thorns. Therefore, he left all this matter unprescribed and gave to every man liberty and free choice to believe as he wished.

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François Rabelais

## Gargantua and Pantagruel: The Abbey of Thélème

**L**IKE Erasmus and Sir Thomas More, François Rabelais (ca. 1490–1553) believed that entrenched institutions are more vulnerable to laughter and mockery than to forthright denunciation. The attack is doubly effective when contained in a literary work embodying a sincerely held conviction about human beings and society and presenting as well an amusing story. Whereas Erasmus is clever and incisively witty, Rabelais is wildly, discursively, and grossly funny. Nevertheless, as Renaissance humanists, their underlying assumptions concerning society are much alike.

Rabelais knew the institutions he attacked from personal experience. Educated in a Benedictine monastery, he served for a while as a secular priest. But, after earning a medical degree, he turned to the practice of medicine as well as to writing. His writing provoked the attempted rehabilitation of clerical authorities, but he was protected by his patron, Cardinal Du Bellay, whom he served as private physician.

Rabelais' best-known work, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1533–1535), appeared first in installments. Adopting a medieval legend narrating the exploits of the giant Gargantua and his son Pantagruel, it embellishes the original tale with Renaissance themes and circumstances. Gargantua's education, for example, is in the best and noblest ideas of the Renaissance. Gargantua then fights wars (filled with wildly extravagant episodes) against foolish opponents who epitomize the superstitious customs, as Rabelais saw them, of feudal society. A devoted follower in these campaigns is Brother John, a most unclerical cleric, whom Gargantua asks to found an "Abbey." This Abbey of Thélème, described in the following excerpt, is the opposite of a traditional monastic foundation; it is a satire on certain evils that, Rabelais felt, were characteristic of monasticism and, by extension, characteristic of much of the society of his time: fear and repression, mistrust, ignorance, unreasoning blind faith. The true

She was an excellent public speaker, often talking informally, as in the first of the following speeches. On more formal occasions, like the second example, she may have had a draft prepared by one of her advisers. But she undoubtedly reviewed and revised it to make it her own in form as well as in content.

Much of her success as a ruler has been attributed to her ability to choose the right words at precisely the right time to inspire the patriotic loyalty of her subjects. An example is the first of the following speeches. She spoke before the London militia at Tilbury, east of London, mobilized against the threat of a Spanish invasion in 1588.

The second speech is known as the "Golden Speech," 1601. It was her last formal address to Parliament. She spoke to representatives of the House of Commons, who later reported to the rest of Parliament. In the speech she expresses her great love for her people and her deep concern for their welfare. The occasion of the speech was the House of Commons' refusal to discuss taxes to support the government until after the government dealt with the abuse of granting monopolies in commerce and manufacturing to powerful nobles. She promises to correct the abuse, and as usual ends by gaining the fervent loyalty of these representatives.

To the soldiers she said, "I have the heart of a king." To the members of the House of Commons she said, "I have reigned with your loves." Both statements were true, and both gained her such popularity and loyalty as have seldom been given to any ruler.

### TO THE TROOPS AT TILBURY, 1588

My loving people: We have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes for fear of treachery. But I assure you I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear! I have always so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chief strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport; but being resolved in the midst of the heat of the

ADDRESS TO THE TROOPS AND THE GOLDEN SPEECH From *The Public Speaking of Queen Elizabeth* by George P. Rice, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951). Copyright © 1979, Columbia University Press. By permission. Pp. 96-97, 106-109.

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## Queen Elizabeth I of England

### Address to the Troops and The Golden Speech

**E**LIZABETH I (1533-1603) came to the throne in 1558 at a time of great social and cultural change. The nation-state was supplanting the feudal monarchy. Religious conflict divided Europe. The changes of the Renaissance that began in Italy were reaching England. Elizabeth, with Elizabeth as guide and governor, came through this period more successfully than other countries of Europe in large measure because of her talents and strengths.

Elizabeth learned her consummate skills as adroit political maneuverer and negotiator at an early age, mastering the art of survival in a turbulent and dangerous time and in hazardous circumstances. When she was a child, she lived under a cloud of rejection, since her mother, Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII, had been executed for high treason. Later, she was the object of the envious suspicion of her older sister, Queen Mary, who had her imprisoned for a while in the Tower of London.

When she became queen, she was faced with the enmity of Spain and with many plots against her in her own country. She managed, however, to avoid becoming embroiled in major wars and to keep England free from religious civil warfare. At the same time, she maintained a strong, central government and furthered the growth of England as a nation-state.

Her shrewdness and intelligence enabled her to put to good use an excellent Renaissance education that gave her knowledge of history, acquaintance with theology and philosophy, appreciation of literature (Shakespeare's plays were sometimes performed at court), and skill in writing and speaking. She also acquired a mastery of Latin, Greek, French, and Italian. It has been said that she was excessively proud of her language skills and used them to surprise, charm, and impress foreign ambassadors.

From: Karl F. Thompson, *388 Classics of Western Thought*, San Diego: HGS, 1988

battle<sup>1</sup> to live or die amongst you all; to lay down for my God and for my Kingdom and for my people my honor and my blood even in the dust.

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma<sup>2</sup> or Spain or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which, rather than any dishonor should grow by me, I myself will take up arms; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

I know already for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns; and we do assure you on the word of a prince they shall be duly paid you.

In the meantime, my lieutenant-general<sup>3</sup> shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your obedience to my general, by your concord in the camp, and your valor in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over those enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.

### THE "GOLDEN SPEECH" OF 1601

Mr. Speaker: We have heard your declaration and perceive your care of our state, by falling into the consideration of a grateful acknowledgment of such benefits as you have received; and that your coming is to present thanks unto us, which I accept with no less joy than your loves can have desire to offer such a present. I do assure you that there is no prince that loveth his subjects better, or whose love can countervail our love. There is no jewel, be it of never so rich a prize, which I prefer before this jewel, I mean your love, for I do more esteem it than any treasure or riches, for that we know how to prize. That love and thanks I count inestimable. And though God has raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with your loves. This

<sup>1</sup>The Queen is speaking metaphorically. She is referring to war in general and to her leadership of her people, not to a specific battle. She did not, of course, command troops in action.

<sup>2</sup>The Duke of Parma, commander of Spanish forces in The Netherlands, had been ordered by the King of Spain to concentrate his troops preparatory to invading England. The invasion never occurred, for the Spanish fleet, the "Invincible Armada," was destroyed before it could land any forces in England.

<sup>3</sup>The Earl of Leicester.

*Original source: The Golden Speech*

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makes me that I do not so much rejoice that God hath made me to be a queen as to be a queen over so thankful a people. Therefore I have cause to wish nothing more than to content the subject, and that is a duty which I owe. Neither do I desire to live longer days than that I may see your prosperity, and that is my only desire. And as I am that person that still, yet under God, hath delivered you, so I trust, by the almighty power of God, that I still shall be His instrument to preserve you from envy, peril, dishonor, shame, tyranny, and oppression, partly by means of your intended helps, which we take very acceptably, because it manifests the largeness of your loves and loyalties unto your sovereign. Of myself I must say this: I never was any greedy, scraping grasper, nor a strait fast-holding prince, nor yet a waster; my heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good. What you do bestow on me I will not hoard up, but receive it to bestow on you again. Yea, mine own properties I count yours, to be expended for your good. Therefore render unto them, I beseech you, Mr. Speaker, such thanks as you imagine my heart yieldeth, but my tongue cannot express.

[During these words the assemblage had knelt. Because she had yet more to say and was conscious of their possible discomfort, Elizabeth invited the men to stand.]

Mr. Speaker, I would wish you and the rest to stand up, for I shall yet trouble you with longer speech.

Mr. Speaker, you give me thanks, but I doubt me I have more cause to thank you all than you me: and I charge you to thank them of the House of Commons from me, for had I not received a knowledge from you, I might have fallen into the lap of an error only for lack of true information. Since I was queen, yet never did I put my pen to any grant, but that upon pretext and semblance made unto me that it was both good and beneficial to the subjects in general, though a private profit to some of my ancient servants who had deserved well. But the contrary being found by experience, I am exceedingly beholding to such subjects as would move the same at first. And I am not so simple to suppose but that there be some of the Lower House whom these grievances never touched, and for them I think they speak out of zeal to their countries and not out of spleen or malevolent affection, as being parties grieved. And I take it exceeding grateful from them because it gives us to know that no respects or interests had moved them, other than the minds they bear to suffer no diminution of our honor and our subjects' love unto us. The zeal of which affection, tending to ease my people and knit their

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hearts unto me, I embrace with a princely care. Far above all earthly treasure I esteem my people's love, more than which I desire not to merit. That my grants should be grievous to my people and oppressions to be privileged under color of our patents, our kingly dignity shall not suffer it. Yea, when I heard it, I could give no rest to my thoughts until I had reformed it. Shall they think to escape unpunished that have thus oppressed you and have been respectless of their duty and regardless of our honor? No. Mr. Speaker, I assure you, were it more for conscience' sake than for any glory or increase of love that I desire these errors, troubles, vexations, and oppressions done by these varlets and lewd persons, not worthy the name of subjects, should not escape without condign punishment. But I perceive they dealt with me like physicians who, ministering a drug, make it more acceptable by giving it a good aromatical savour, or when they give pills, do gild them all over. I have ever used to set the last judgment day before mine eyes and so to rule as I shall be judged to answer before a higher Judge. To Whose judgment seat I do appeal that never thought was cherished in my heart that tended not to my people's good. And if my kingly bounty have been abused and my grants turned to the hurt of my people, contrary to my will and meaning, or if any in authority under me have neglected or perverted what I have committed to them, I hope God will not lay their culps [faults] and offences to my charge. And though there were danger in repealing our grants, yet what danger would not I rather incur for your own good, than I would suffer them still to continue? I know the title of a king is a glorious title, but assure yourself that the shining glory of princely authority hath not so dazzled the eyes of our understanding but that we well know and remember that we also are to yield an account of our actions before the Great Judge. To be a king and wear a crown is more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasure to them that bear it. For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God hath made me this instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend this kingdom, as I said, from peril, dishonor, tyranny, and oppression. There will never queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country or care to my subjects, and that will sooner with willingness yield and venture her life for your good and safety than myself. And though you have had and may have many princes more mighty and wise sitting in this seat, yet you never had or shall have any that will be more careful and loving. Should I ascribe anything to myself and my sexly weakness, I were not worthy to live then, and of all most unworthy of the

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mercies I have had from God, Who hath ever yet given me a heart which never yet feared foreign or home enemies. I speak it to give God the praise as a testimony before you, and not to attribute anything unto myself. For I, O Lord, what am I, whom practices and perils past should not fear! O what can I do that I should speak for any glory! God forbid. This, Mr. Speaker, I pray you deliver unto the House, to whom heartily recommend me. And so I commit you all to your best fortunes and further counsels. And I pray you, Mr. Comptroller, Mr. Secretary, and you of my council, that before these gentlemen depart into their counties, you bring them all to kiss my hand.