

Thomas Moore's Utopia (condensed into 432 words)

Raphael Hythloday told me of the Island of Utopia, which hath a compass of 500 miles, and 54 fair cities, all alike.

The chief city of Amaurote hath houses fair, each with a garden, and the streets twenty foot broad. Each thirty families choose a Siphogrant, who yearly choose a prince to hold counsel every third day.

All the people are expert in husbandry or some craft and work only six hours, enough for the store and abundance of things, because all do work.

They wear garments of skins or wool, and care only for the whiteness, and not the fineness; wherefore their apparel is of small cost.

The eldest citizen ruleth the family.

In each city is a market-place whither is brought the work of each, and each taketh away that he needeth, without money or exchange. All be partners, so that none may be poor or needy; and all the cities do send to the common council so that what one lacketh another maketh good.

Of gold and silver they make not rich vessels, but mean utensils, fetters and gyves; and jewels are toys for children.

All children are given learning, and many do bestow in learning their spare hours.

They know the course of the stars, but have never dreamt of the deceit of astrology. They believe that the soul is immortal, and define virtue as life according to nature. They make naught of dicing; or hunting, which they deem the most abject butchery, but take as true pleasures the contemplation of truth.

For bondmen, they have criminals, or poor labourers of other lands who choose to be with them.

The sick they tend with great affection; but, if the disease be incurable and full of anguish, the priests exhort them that they should die.

The women marry not before eighteen years, the men four years later. But if one have offended before marriage, he or she is sharply punished.

They have but few laws and never make leagues with any nation, putting no trust therein. They count nothing so much against glory as glory gotten in war, yet do daily practise the discipline of war in defence of their own. They be ashamed to win the victory with bloodshed, but rejoice if they vanquish their enemies by craft.

Some worship the sun, some the moon; or give worship to a man that was once of excellent virtue; but all believe that there is one God. This is one of their ancientest laws, that no man shall be blamed for reasoning in the maintenance of his own religion.