

God, the maker and ruler of the hole worlde'.¹ At the time of the advent of the European travellers Christianity was unknown among them, but they gladly listened and accepted its principles 'by the secrete inspiration of God, or els for that they thought it next vnto that opinion which amonge them is counted the chiefest'.² Every one could believe what he would and endeavour to convert others—

so that he dyd it peaceably, gentelye, quyctly, and soberlye, without hastye and contentions rebuking and inuehyng against other. If he coulde not by fayre and gentle speche induce them vnto his opinion, yet he should vse no kinde of violence, and refrayne from displeasaut and seditious wordes. To him that would vehemently and feruently in this cause striue and contend, was decreid bannishment or bondage.³

It was a very 'vnmete and folish thing', King Utopus thought, who introduced freedom of religious belief, 'and a pointe of arrogant presumption, to compell all other by violence and threatenynge to agre to the same that thou beleuest to bee trewe'.⁴ For, although there be but one true religion, he nevertheless foresaw 'that the trewth of the owne powre woulde at the laste issue owte and come to lyght'.⁵ However, a belief in the immortality of the soul and in an after life was required. Those who did not so believe were deprived of honours and excluded from the right of holding office. But they were not punished, because 'it is in no mans powre to beleue what he lyst'.⁶

This was unacceptable doctrine to the men of More's day, but in very truth the New World was to become the refuge of men and women who could not bring themselves to believe as others in politics, as well as in religion. We may not hope in this world to overtake perfection, just as we can never catch up with the horizon, but unless we set our minds on an ideal and direct our steps towards the goal, which we may never reach, we shall fail to justify our existence. As in the past, so will it be in the future, 'no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'.

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The Utopia of Sir Thomas More shows the effect which the discovery of America had upon the public to which he belonged and in whose behalf he spoke as a lawyer deeply read in the Classics and fitted to appeal to the humanists of his day.

At about the same time, in the year 1515, Erasmus, More's friend and companion, although somewhat older in years and with a European reputation to which More himself could not then or indeed afterwards lay claim, had stated in general terms the enlightened views which both hoped to see become the practice of the princes whom they had

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 268-9.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

in mind, young Henry VIII in England and the youthful Charles, then King of Spain and shortly to be Holy Roman Emperor.

The tractate of Erasmus known as *The Institutes of the Christian Prince* was in his mind at the very time when the *Utopia* was written, if it were not lying upon the desk before him in more or less completed form. It would be surplusage to say, even in passing, that the doctrine professed by Erasmus was humanistic in thought, conception, and form. If More's masterpiece is to be looked upon as the work of the legal mind set to a social and political task, the tractate of Erasmus is to be taken as the classic expression of the views pervading enlightened Christendom in a period when the Spanish were busily engaged in expeditions to the Americas and when the Spanish missionaries were coming into contact with the Indians recently discovered—not always to the advantage of the natives, as Francisco de Vitoria would have us believe a few years later in his disquisition on the subject prepared at Salamanca in 1532.

Dates are of secondary interest, the first interest being the matters to which they relate. Sometimes, however, they are interesting in themselves. This is especially so with these two periods, in the first of which More and Erasmus were indeed looking upon an old world, with the hope that it would be new, in the sense that it might differ from the very material world of which they were a part. At the very same time it appears that a Florentine, one Machiavelli by name, was looking at the Old World, not from a wagon hitched to a star, as an American philosopher has expressed it, but with his eyes lowered to the world at his feet. He too had written with a prince of his day in mind, none other than Lorenzo the Magnificent of the Medicean dynasty. The curious conjunction of dates is that his *Prince*, as in the case of the two works of More and Erasmus, apparently lay at this time in manuscript form upon his desk in Florence, although it was first to see the light of day some years later,¹ in 1532, the very year when Victoria was putting into form the conception of a society extending beyond the horizon of Christendom, which should be based upon a single moral standard, applicable alike to man and State, together with rules of law based upon principles of justice of universal application—a complete refutation of the thesis of the Florentine that the State and the relations of States had no relation to morality.

When he wrote the *Christian Prince*, Erasmus was about fifty years of age and in the full possession of the world's greatest intellect. He had been appointed a member of the council to the young King of Spain, soon to become the fifth Charles in the annals of the Holy Roman Empire. On the surface, the tractate was Erasmus's way of expressing his appreciation of the honour which the young King had conferred upon him. Inwardly, it was, like the *Utopia* of More, the expression of

¹ Frederic Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers* (Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent, London), pp. 229-31.

his matured convictions upon the education and the duties of a Christian Prince. It was a case of prince speaking to prince; for was not Erasmus then as now the prince of humanists?

The duties of a Christian Prince could be expressed in a single phrase, 'to keep the peace', and the education of a Christian Prince was to fit him to 'keep the peace'.

The little volume is made up of eleven chapters, all dealing with the education and the duties of the Prince: the first two with the education of the Prince as a lad of tender years, and the balance more especially dealing with the activities of the Prince in the performance of his duties. The chapters are difficult to summarize, for they are in themselves a summary of the matured views of Erasmus on the great question before Europe: how the princelings of the day could become enlightened rulers. Then, too, the difficulty is enhanced by the fact that we are dealing with a masterpiece of the world's literature, in which every phrase has an artistic value.

But it is more than a work of art; it is the work of an internationalist, who from his closet expressed the views which the statesman should follow in his cabinet.

Within the compass of a few pages we may only hope to show the reader of to-day why he should read this tractate of more than four centuries ago, for if it were read and its counsel pondered and accepted, the world would be better than it is, and indeed better than it ever has been.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the opening paragraphs of the *Christian Prince* state the thesis which Erasmus had set himself to prove, and that, short as these paragraphs are, they may be looked upon as a summary of the views which he was to express at length in the tractate. In any event, they are Erasmus at his best.

There were two kinds of princes whom he had in mind: the one elective, the other hereditary. Charles of Spain was one; he was soon to be the other. Born King of Spain, he was to be elected Holy Roman Emperor while still a youth, and this Christian Prince was no ordinary youth.

Erasmus first speaks of the qualities of the elective prince—probably in the hope of arousing the interest of the young King in the tractate, relegating to the second place the hereditary monarch, as the King of Spain no doubt thought himself sufficiently educated for a post which he already held by birth. It would not be amiss if candidates for the highest elective offices in the States of our day should file with their candidacy the first three paragraphs—hardly a page of modern print—in which Erasmus speaks of the qualities which elective officers should possess, as indicating that they realize the necessity of these qualifications and consider themselves as possessing them. What are these qualities?

1. 'In those countries in which the Prince is elected to his office, the qualities particularly to be sought in him are not aristocratic lineage, physical grace, bodily height [the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* closes its *eulogium* of Charles V with the statement that he 'had an incomparable leg'], although we read that, in former times, there were barbarians who indulged in the absurd practice [of electing their rulers on this basis], nor even a mild and gentle disposition. Rather should one seek a spirit sedate and far from impetuous; neither so vehement that there is danger lest it break forth in tyranny, intolerant of admonition or advice, should fortune offer an opportunity for such behaviour; nor yet so dispassionate that it will suffer itself to be led by every whim of any person whatsoever. The experience [of the candidate] ought to be taken into consideration; and his age, which should be neither so advanced that it borders upon dotage, nor so tender that he may be carried away by his passions. Possibly some heed ought also to be paid to the matter of health, lest it should immediately become necessary to find a new Prince, and that not without expense to the State.'

2. 'In navigating, he is not placed at the helm who is superior to all the rest in ancestry or wealth or outward appearance; but rather he who excels in skill as a pilot, in vigilance, and in trustworthiness. Even so, a kingdom is preferably given into the charge of one who surpasses his fellows in kingly qualities, that is, in wisdom, justice, moderation of spirit, foresight, and zeal for the public welfare.'

3. 'Ancestral images, gold, and precious stones are of no more significance in the administration of a State, than they are of service to a skipper in the steering of his ship. The one consideration which the Prince should bear in mind in the process of government, is also the sole consideration to be borne in mind by the people when they choose their Prince, namely: the public good, entirely apart from all personal desires.'

4. 'For the very reason that it is a blameworthy act to change a ruler who has once been chosen, special care should be exercised in his selection, lest we suffer a weary length of time for one hour of recklessness.'

After paying his respects to candidates for election to the chief magistracy, Erasmus turns to the hereditary monarch.

1. 'But in those countries where the Prince holds office by virtue of his birth, and not by election, . . . the hope of securing a good ruler is chiefly bound up in the conduct of his education. It is fitting that special care should be devoted to his matter, compensation being made for the loss in the right of suffrage, by increased zeal with respect to the education [of the ruler]. Therefore, at the very outset—"even from the cradle", to use a common phrase—the mind of the future Prince, hitherto empty and unformed, must be imbued with salutary

concepts. The seeds of virtue should at once be sown in the virgin soil of his childish mind, so that gradually, as he acquires age and experience, these seeds may put forth shoots, may grow to maturity, and—once implanted in his nature—may cling to him through all his life. For no [other qualities] are so deeply and firmly rooted in us, as those whose seeds are sown in these early years; years in which the influences absorbed by all of us are tremendously significant, and therefore of even greater significance in the case of a Prince.’

2. ‘In countries not empowered to choose their ruler, compensatory care must be exercised in selecting the tutor of the future Prince. It is for the Powers above to will that the Prince shall be born with honourable inclinations. On the other hand, it rests in part with us that he who is born virtuous shall not grow less so; and that he who at birth is lacking in virtue shall be rendered more worthy by education. It was once the custom to set up statues, arches, and inscriptions in honour of those who had served the state well. Yet there is no one more deserving of this honour than those persons who have toiled faithfully and zealously in educating the Prince; for they had at heart no private reward, but the well-being of their country. A nation ruled by a good Prince, owes all to that good ruler. But it owes that Prince himself to the individual whose upright counsels have made him what he is. The period during which a Prince may best be formed and corrected is that time when he himself does not as yet realize that he is the Prince . . .’ Apparently the reading and experience of Erasmus had led him to doubt whether much—or indeed anything—could be hoped from a Prince who already knew that he was a Prince. However, he may have had the hope that his tractate on the education of a Christian Prince might be called to the mind of the future Prince, ‘“even from the cradle”, to use a common phrase’.¹

With these few paragraphs as a foreword, we pass to the chapters in which Erasmus treats of the duties of the Prince. The first of these, the third chapter—although the duties of the Prince are scattered with a generous hand throughout the tractate—is entitled ‘The Arts of Peace’.

Apparently Erasmus was not satisfied that ‘the whole system of State administration’ should be divided ‘into arts of peace and war’. His view was that ‘the first and principal task’ should be ‘to instruct the Prince in matters pertaining to wise government in time of peace’; and that ‘during peace every possible effort should be made to render the arts of war forever unnecessary’.² The Prince should endeavour ‘to make himself loved by his subjects’, so that his authority should ‘be respected’ among men.³

¹ The preceding quotations are translated from *Desiderii Erasmi, Opera Omnia*, ed. J. Clericus (Lugduni Batavorum, 1703-6), vol. iv, p. 561.

² Erasmus’s *Institutio Principis Christiani*, translated, with an introduction by Percy Ellwood Corbett (The Grotius Society Publications, London, 1921), chap. iii, p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Believing that it will be convenient for the reader to have a selection of the leading counsels of Erasmus concerning the duties of his Christian Prince, we have taken them here and there from the text and supplied them with numbers.

1. There were various methods by which Princes had been wont to make themselves loved, such as 'incantation and magic rings', but Erasmus would have none of these, boldly stating that 'no incantation is so efficacious as virtue itself';¹ that 'nothing can be more lovable, for not only is it in itself a real and immortal good, but it enlists for its possessor true and undying affection'.²

2. 'I should further wish', says Erasmus, 'that the Prince might be born and educated among the people which he is destined to rule, for friendship best germinates and flourishes when the origin of affection is nature itself.'³

The comment of Erasmus drives home the advice which he would wish to see accepted. Unfortunately we have but space for a phrase: 'The multitude hates even good qualities when they are unfamiliar, . . .' 'There is a double advantage' in the advice which he has just given, because a prince 'will be more affectionately inclined towards them [his subjects], more disposed to regard them as his own people, and they in turn will look upon him with more favour'.⁴

3. 'For this reason', Erasmus continues, 'I do not like the accepted custom of allying the Prince by marriage with foreign, especially with remote, nations.'⁵

It would seem that this statement proves itself without comment. But since, where monarchs still exist, it appears to be beneath the royal dignity to marry a countryman or countrywoman, the comment of Erasmus by which he seeks to enforce his views is still apposite: 'Race and nationality, and the common spirit they engender, are great aids in winning affection.' On this is a further comment in the nature of an unanswerable reason, 'that part of this benefit will be lost if mixed marriages disturb the native and inherent tendency'.⁶

4. 'It is no servitude to live in submission to upright laws.'⁷ The reason for this submission is that the State is only tranquil when the people obey laws because they are good and not because they are imposed by a tyrant whose 'every nod' is law. But how shall we have good laws? Through education, of which Erasmus was a great advocate (as became a man who was its greatest example). In his opinion, all the people should be educated, not merely the Prince but also the boys and girls, for 'youth yields to any system of training',⁸ if there are good schools and good teachers.

¹ Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, chap. iii, p. 20.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Having thus disposed of ignorance, illiteracy, and prejudice—still problems in our own day—Erasmus says: ‘If this is done, there will be no need for many laws or penalties, for citizens will of their own accord do what is right.’¹

The best teacher, however, is the conscience of the Prince, whose own conduct (according to his conscience) should always be ‘irreproachable’.

The fourth chapter is ‘On Tributes and Taxes’, a subject of perennial interest. The people of his day groaned under both, and, invoking history, Erasmus found that ‘many seditions have risen from immoderate taxation’.² Therefore the first word of advice under this section is that

5. ‘The good Prince will vex the people as little as possible with such measures’, and that he should ‘rule, if he can, with no expense to the State’. Therefore, the Prince of Erasmus should ‘reduce to a minimum his demands on the people’³ and he should devote his attention to the accomplishment of this.

The poor should be freed as much as possible from the burden of taxation. The Prince should not take advantage of temporary circumstances in order to impose taxation; for the experience of Erasmus was to the effect that if such measures were a profit to the king or the nobles, they would ‘never be abolished’.⁴

The Prince should also endeavour ‘to avoid excessive inequality of riches’.⁵ Although Erasmus is not opposed to private property, steps should, in his opinion, be taken ‘to prevent the riches of all the people being concentrated in a few persons’⁶—for which important principles he invokes the authority of Plato, that people should be neither too rich nor too poor, ‘for a pauper is no asset, and the rich man refuses to turn his ability to the public account’.⁷

6. The good Prince, therefore, should ‘tax least the commodities used by the humblest of the people, such as corn, bread, beer, wine, clothing’, which were in his opinion ‘indispensable for the support of life’;⁸ and the Prince’s chest is therefore ‘best enriched by restricting expenditure’,⁹ according to the old proverb that ‘Parsimony is great tribute’.¹⁰

But supposing that taxes be needed, what should the Prince tax most heavily? ‘Barbaric and foreign goods which are not wanted as necessities of life but as luxuries and dainties; and such as are used only by the wealthy, like fine linen, silks, purple, pepper, spices, ointment, gems, and everything else of this nature.’¹¹

7. The fifth chapter is appropriately short, as it is ‘On Princely

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, chap. iv, p. 27.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Beneficence'. 'The proper glory of good Princes lies in good deeds and kindness.' Therefore the Prince 'will aid some by liberal gifts, encourage others with his favour, deliver others from oppression, and hearten others with sympathy, counting that day lost on which he has not done some one a service'.¹

The sixth chapter deals with the enactment or amendment of laws, a chapter to be read, pondered, and mastered. There is a temptation to quote much of what he says on this matter.

8. 'The best laws under the best Prince are what render a city or kingdom most prosperous, for the State is then most happy when the Prince is obeyed by all, when he himself obeys the laws, and when the laws themselves are based on the standard of justice and truth, and aim only at the benefit of the commonwealth.

'A good and wise Prince is indeed a kind of living law. He will therefore endeavour to enact not many but the best possible laws, most calculated for the welfare of the State. For a well-ordered State under a good Prince and pure magistrates very few laws will suffice: under other conditions, no number will be enough. It is not the best treatment for a sick man to have an untrained physician prescribing drug on drug.'²

If Erasmus is not permitted to comment upon these passages, the reader will make his own comment, without that of Erasmus or the interposition of a third party.

9. 'The Prince should make such laws as not merely decree penalties for the guilty but exert a persuasive influence against crime.

'And as an honest doctor preparing his medicines has no thought but how the disease may be conquered with least danger to the invalid, so the good Prince, in enacting laws, will make the public advantage his sole aim, striving to remedy with as little damage as possible abuses to which the people is subject . . .

'Like the Prince, the law should always be more ready to forgive than to punish . . .

' . . . Let not the Prince compare himself with any one of his subjects, but with the whole body of the State. Thus he will see how much more important is the State, embracing as it does so many excellent men and women, than the single person of the Prince. Even if there were no Prince, the State would still be a State. The greatest have flourished without a Prince, for example the Roman and Athenian democracies. But there can be no Prince without a State; in a word, the Prince presupposes the State, the State does not presuppose the Prince. What is it that alone makes the Prince, if not the consent of those who obey him? . . . Plato says that whereas the law is most

¹ Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, chap. v, p. 30.

² *Ibid.*, chap. vi, p. 32.

supreme under the best Prince, the worst enemy is the despot who subordinates it to a single will.¹

10. 'Magistracies and Offices' are the theme of chapter vii: 'That same integrity which the Prince himself exhibits, or something very close to it, he should demand from his officials.'² But there are magistrates and magistrates, and it is only the good who can be considered. Invoking the authority of Aristotle, Erasmus declares that good laws are useless when they are not executed; indeed they may be so badly executed as to bring ruin upon the State. Our comment would be that Aristotle divined the future as he had illustrated the past.

11. There is no better way for a Prince 'to serve his State' than 'by appointing as magistrates and officers men who excel at once in purity and in zeal for the public service'.³ It might be said that this statement is as a corollary to what Erasmus has previously said, but his insistence on 'purity' and 'zeal' in the public service is so important that it cannot be too often stressed.

If we consider the Prince as the physician of the State—as Erasmus not infrequently does—he must not only 'have skilled apprentices' but must himself be 'above reproach',⁴ in that he may be able to select honest magistrates and to correct their shortcomings, if any they have.

12. Of 'Treaties' Erasmus has much of importance to say in chapter viii: 'In concluding treaties, as in other things, the good Prince will look only to the public advantage.'⁵

13. 'Between all Christian Princes there is the closest and most holy bond of union in the very fact that they are Christians. Why then conclude so many treaties daily, as if every one were the enemy of every one else, and we must effect by conventions what Christ cannot achieve?'⁶

14. 'Such should be the good faith of Princes in the fulfilment of their obligations, that their simple promise is more sacred than any oath by another. How base then not to abide by a treaty accompanied by forms of the utmost solemnity among Christians!'⁷

15. 'The good and wise Prince will make every effort to keep peace with all men, but especially with his neighbours, who, if incensed, can do most harm, but as friends are most useful; nay, without mutual intercourse with them, the State cannot even continue to exist.'⁸ The rules which Erasmus would have Princes observe in the exercise of the treaty-making power have been brought under four headings. What he says in their justification is as weighty as the rules themselves. For example, a treaty contrary to the interests of the people is not a treaty, Erasmus rightly says, but a conspiracy on the part of the Prince who

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 35, 40, 41-2, 43.

² *Ibid.*, chap. vii, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. viii, p. 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

makes it. Such a treaty divides the people into two classes: the Prince, who makes it; and the people, who lose; and where this course is followed, Erasmus says, you have no State—meaning that such a government is not worthy of the name.

If the exact language of Erasmus was not quoted in the matter of good faith, it might be thought that the commentary was of our day and that we have foisted it upon Erasmus, who has greatly suffered at the hands of his commentators. What he says is indeed applicable to-day, as he writes in full knowledge of human nature, and human nature changes so slowly that the far-sighted truth of yesterday is still the truth of to-day and will be that of to-morrow. This is what Erasmus, literally Englished, says: 'When there is good faith, and the parties to a transaction are honest men, there is no need of hard-and-fast bonds; on the other hand, when the matter is one between rascals, their very bonds provide the materials for litigation. So between good and wise Princes, even where there is no treaty, there is steadfast friendship: but where Sovereigns are foolish and evil-inclined, the treaties which were designed to make war impossible are the cause of war, for some one is always complaining that one or another of their innumerable articles has been violated. The usual purpose of a treaty is to end war, but nowadays the name is applied to an agreement to carry it on. Such leagues are but war measures; wherever expediency beckons, there an alliance is formed.'¹

Treaties in Erasmus's day were made, it would appear, to be violated, to such a degree indeed that violation seemed to be a method of ending an inconvenient treaty. But there were violations of the letter and violations of the spirit, and it was, in the opinion of Erasmus, better to put up with what he calls 'trifling infringements', since even private persons, not to speak of nations, could not 'long survive' if the parties insisted upon standing by 'the letter of every term'.² In any event, the advice of Erasmus in such a case is as wise and as applicable as when given; it would not indeed be more acceptable if it had come to us from Aristotle himself. Anger, he counsels us, is an unsafe guide. 'The public interest', he laconically remarks, 'is to be considered'.

Alas and alack for the treaties of our day!

16. 'In my opinion', Erasmus says in chapter ix, 'On the Marriage Alliances of Princes', 'it would be most expedient for the State if Princes sought their marriage alliances within the limits of their own kingdoms, . . .'³ In the omitted portion of the sentence, he admits reluctantly—although it is contrary to his argument—that there might be marriages with neighbours, if they are 'faithful friends'.

¹ Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, chap. viii, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. ix, p. 50.

Unfortunately the difficulty can be illustrated only too well in our day. Victoria, 'By the Grace of God Queen, Defender of the Faith' and, by Disraeli's intervention, Empress of India, took unto herself as consort a German nobleman (in the best sense of the word), Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Of this marriage there were, among others, three grandchildren: George V (now of Windsor), who succeeded to Victoria's domain; an older grandson, William II, former German Emperor, now in exile in Holland; and Nicholas II, once Tsar of all the Russias.

In the summer of 1914 the so-called 'World War' broke out. George V and Nicholas II found themselves at war with their first cousin, William II.

'Such alliances', Erasmus says, 'are commonly regarded as the adamant chains of general peace, though experience itself shows that they are the sources of our greatest woes.'¹ However, 'if Princes could secure peace for the world by marriage alliances, I could wish'—in the interest of peace, with which the sovereigns of his day doubtless considered him obsessed—'each of them six hundred wives'²—pushing Solomon rather hard, it may be said, for an author who was a priest and the recipient at one time and another of an offer of a bishopric and a cardinal's hat.

On still another point Erasmus's views were heterodox. He even believed—at least he so stated—that 'whatever her birth, the woman who will make a good wife for the Prince is good enough'.³

So much for the international 'marriage alliances of Princes'.

Chapter x treats of 'Occupations of the Prince in Time of Peace', which, according to Erasmus, should be his sole occupations, inasmuch as Erasmus looked upon war as a crime, although he did not condemn as criminals all who took part in the crime. However, he deals in this section with what may be called 'preoccupations'. The occupations were many, as will shortly appear, but their purpose was to establish 'perpetual peace among the people'.⁴

17. 'The Prince, then, instructed in Christ's commandments'—for was not Christ the Prince of Peace—'and fortified by wisdom, will hold nothing so dear as the happiness of his people, all of whom, as one body, he must love and cherish. He will devote every thought and effort to such an administration of the kingdom entrusted to him as will be approved by Christ when He demands an account, and leave his memory most honoured by all men'.⁵

After an enumeration of what a Prince would do for his people, did he act as a *paterfamilias* and think only of the good of his children, Erasmus, with a pardonable exaggeration and anxious to supply the idle Prince with plenty of occupation to keep him out of mischief, not

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. x, p. 55.

⁵ *Ibid.*

to say crime, adds: 'Six thousand such tasks there are, meet for a Prince, even pleasant for a good Prince; busied with these he need never look about for wars to vary the tedium of idleness, nor shorten the night in gaming.'¹

A duty of the Prince to which Erasmus called particular attention is that he should strive to make his kingdom 'better', not larger, and that neither the Prince of his time nor of future time should make the mistake of the ancients in directing all his efforts towards aggrandizing his kingdom. In pursuing the shadow, they often lost what they had, according to a fable which everybody knows. The comment of Erasmus, however, was, as would be expected, more dignified: 'I think the Laconic commandment worthy to be written on the insignia of every Prince: "You have been given Sparta—adorn her."'

'The good Prince must know that he can do nothing finer than to give back, more prosperous and in all respects more beautiful, the kingdom that fate has assigned to him.'² Taking advantage of the dictum of Epaminondas that the man glorifies the office, not the office the man—Erasmus continues, summarizing what he had said in various places and at no little length: 'The State is most strengthened by the example, the wisdom and the vigilance of a good Prince, by the integrity of magistrates and officials, by the holiness of priests, by the careful choice of schoolmasters, by just laws and measures conducing to virtue. Let his whole task be to encourage and develop these qualities'.³

There was nothing so distasteful to Erasmus as war. He was a man of letters—the very prince of letters—who knew by experience how the wars of his day interfered not merely with his scholarly pursuits and with the arts, but also with the mechanical arts of industry and commerce. Indeed he made the discovery—or at least he gave it its classical form—that everybody—victor, victim, and neutral—lost by war. Assuredly we of to-day dare not say him nay. To the humanist peace meant civilization—and he was a humanist to his finger-tips; and war meant destruction of civilization—of all that he and his fellow Christians held most dear; and in the *Institutio Principis Christiani*—addressed to a lad who was to wield world power and make, as it were, a profession of war—he expressed himself with that moral courage which is so infinitely superior to the mere physical courage of the animal:

19. 'The Prince should never be hasty in counsel, but above all he must be deliberate and circumspect in entering upon war, for while other things have their attending evils, war is the shipwreck of all that is good in a sea of all iniquity. No calamity prolongs itself with more tenacity—war springs from war, the greatest from the least, two wars from one, fierce and bloody war from a tourney; and the plague, rising

¹ Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, chap. x, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

in one place, spreads its infection to the neighbouring peoples, nay, to the most remote.¹

This is a large indictment; but history is its justification. In the opening phrase of the indictment Erasmus speaks of a Prince in general. What should be the duty of the Prince whom he had in mind?

20. 'A good Prince will never make war until every method has been tried in vain to avoid it.'² What will be the consequence of this policy? 'War will scarcely ever occur.'³

Erasmus, however, mentions a third type, 'the Prince who is truly Christian', who has a threefold task. He 'will first weigh the difference between men, born for peace and good will', and animals, 'born to prey upon one another'.⁴ Second, he will 'reflect how desirable, how beautiful, how wholesome is peace; how calamitous and accursed, war; remembering what a host of sufferings even the most just war (if any war can be called just) brings in its train'.⁵ Third, he should count the cost—which in a war is the bankruptcy of mankind and the destruction in a greater or less degree of civilization.

In view of its appalling consequences, Erasmus was willing to doubt the justice and question the necessity of any war. To those (St. Augustine among the number) who maintained that war could be just—and what Prince does not think his cause as just as it is necessary—to the Prince and to St. Augustine Erasmus preferred the authority of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and Peter and Paul, who 'everywhere teach the contrary'.⁶

21. 'Accordingly, the good and Christian Prince should regard every war, however just, as a thing suspect. . . . A good Prince measures all things in terms of the public good, otherwise he would not be even a Prince.'⁷

It is often said by those who seem to begrudge Erasmus his place in the sun that he prostrated himself before the great and the mighty; that he flattered them for his selfish purposes; and that he was sincere only in his own behalf. This is a grave charge against a priest who, as we have said, was offered a bishopric by his Prince, to whom he had addressed the tractate on the *Christian Prince*, in appreciation of the appointment as his counsellor, and whose 'worldliness' may be appraised by his refusal of a cardinal's hat, with a prospect of the Vatican in sight. None but an enemy could maintain that the comment on the measures which a good Prince should take was only calculated to curry favour with the mighty, and especially with Charles. 'There is no such right over men', Erasmus finely declares, 'as there is over cattle.'⁸ If it should be said that this was a general observation, merely calling attention to the difference between men and cattle, the answer is that

¹ *Ibid.*, chap. xi, p. 57.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Erasmus follows this truism with another even more displeasing to an hereditary Prince, that 'an important part of government is the consent of the people', which was, he informs us in this connexion, 'the origin of kings'.¹ The conclusion which Erasmus draws, in the form of a question, from both of these truisms, as we venture to call them, could not have been pleasing to a lad to whom the consent of the people meant little. 'If a dispute arises between Princes, why do they not resort to arbiters?'² For there were 'many bishops, many abbots and learned men', not to speak of 'many worthy magistrates, whose judgement, rather than butchery, robbery, and universal calamity, should settle the matter',³ and 'a righteous and merciful Prince will also bear in mind that the great sufferings which every war entails fall in great part to the lot of persons who have no concern in the conflict, and who have done nothing to merit calamity'.⁴

Quidquid delirant reges, plectantur Achivi, as Victoria was later to say.

22. 'Let the good Prince strive always for that glory which is neither stained with blood nor built on another's downfall'; for 'in war, at the best, the fortune of one side is ruin for the other, and often even the victor weeps too dear a victory'.⁵

As in the introduction to the *Christian Prince* Erasmus stated the thesis which he was to prove, so in the closing paragraphs he sums up what he had proven. As the first paragraphs were in the language of Erasmus, so are the concluding ones:

'If we are not moved by patriotism nor by world-calamity, at least let us respect the honour of the name Christian, . . .

'How brief and fugitive is the life of man, how open to calamity, assailed as it is by infinite maladies, continual accidents, falling ruins, shipwreck, earthquakes, thunderbolts. No need was there of war to inflict suffering, yet the sufferings of war are more than all the others. The preachers should have expelled discord from the hearts of the multitude. But now Angle hates Gaul and Gaul hates Angle for no other reason than that he is an Angle. The Scot, only because he is a Scot, hates the Briton; the Italian hates the German, the Suevan the Helvetian, and so on for the rest; region hates region and city city. Why are we divided by these stupid names, rather than bound together by the common name of Christ?

'Even assuming that some war may be just', nevertheless it would be the opinion of both the Christian Princes at war that 'Christ is in both camps, fighting, as it were, against Himself. . . .

'If the whole doctrine of Christ is not everywhere opposed to war, if one instance can be cited where it is commended, then let us Christians

¹ Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, chap. xi, pp. 59-60.

² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

fight. . . . Even against the Turks, I think we should not go thoughtlessly to war. . . . First let us see to it that we are truly Christian, and then, if it seems good, attack the Turks.¹

'Peace and concord', he continues, 'may flourish among peoples linked by so many pledges. To this end let them display their genius, put forth their strength, combine in council, straining every nerve to reach the common goal. . . . As it is, every one seeks his own ends—Pontiffs and bishops worry about power and wealth, Princes are led headlong by passion and ambition, their subjects all follow them for gain, and it is no wonder that, under folly's leading, we run into tempests. But if with one mind we bent ourselves to the common task, even our own affairs would prosper more. Now we lose that for which alone we fight.'²

Such was the Christian answer to the Pagan Prince of Machiavelli, although Erasmus did not know it at the time, for the Florentine's *Prince* lay then in manuscript.

Later we shall have the answer of Francisco de Vitoria, moralist and jurist, prepared the year of the *Prince's* publication, in 1532.

It is difficult to say when anything first happened. Some there are who maintain that Columbus was not the first to cross the Atlantic to the New World, although through him the New World came into the ken of the Old. It might be too much to say that Erasmus discovered the opposition of humanism to war in all its forms. If, however, he was not the first, nevertheless, like Columbus, it is through him that the discovery became the common possession of the world. In any event, we as well as Charles should be the better for the *Institutio Principis Christiani*.

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It would be difficult to find a layman of his day more interested than Montaigne in America, or any one whose writings have shown more clearly than his *Essays* the effect of the great discovery upon the thought of his time and of succeeding generations. Others, indeed, had interested themselves in the discovery of America and its immediate consequences. Through the Latin of their writings they had appealed to the learned. Montaigne used his native tongue, then coming to the front and within a century to make a universal appeal. Curious and inquisitive by nature, he was bound sooner or later to discover America for himself. His knowledge of that vast Continent and of its native peoples was not first-hand, for he had not set his foot upon the promised land. He had, however, in his employ a countryman who had spent some ten or eleven years in Brazil, a simple-minded man who could be trusted, because in his master's opinion he did not have the ability required to create what he had not seen. Off and on in Bordeaux, of

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.

which he was the leading citizen, Montaigne met seafaring people who had been to America, and later he came into personal contact and converse with some natives of the New World who happened to be on exhibition in Rouen. Then, too, he had more than fingered the books and accounts of America which had come under his eye. With his knowledge his interest grew, and from a casual spectator, as it were, he entered the lists in behalf of America and its peoples. Through Montaigne the American entered the world's literature.

Disregarding many references and allusions which Montaigne makes to America and the Americans, it may almost be said that he devotes two of his essays to the subject, the first under the somewhat uninviting title of 'Cannibals', and the second on 'Coaches', in which he surprises his readers by a long digression upon the grievances of the Americans at the hands of the Old World. His interest in America seems to have been aroused by the attempt of one Villegagnon to establish in Brazil a French settlement known as 'La France Antartique', and to this day an island off Rio de Janeiro recalls the attempt and the name of the French adventurer. Villegagnon was at the time of the outing a Calvinist, and the undertaking had the blessing as well as the support of Coligny, then the head and front of the Huguenots in France. Difficulties arose among the motley group, composed alike of Protestants and Catholics, and the settlement broke up for all practical purposes when the leader of the expedition confessed his belief in transubstantiation, thus forsaking the new love for the old. But however unsuccessful the expedition, it was the first of the attempts to find a refuge in the New World against the intolerance of the old. Montaigne's informant had been a member of Villegagnon's ill-starred undertaking, and from him Montaigne learned many things, to be supplemented by others and by the account of travels already in print. To Montaigne America was a new world, not the old Atlantis, and its inhabitants simple-minded folk who, growing up in a new environment, were unspoiled by the peoples of the Old World. If he did not find himself in the presence of primitive man, the American was nevertheless closer to Nature, and in the essay on 'Cannibals' Montaigne endeavoured, it would appear, to show the differences between the natural man of America and the artificial man of Europe. There may be exaggeration and irony in his contrast of the social conditions of the two worlds, and it may well be that he did not take himself seriously at the time. It is, however, evident that he wondered as he wrote whether, after all, it would not be better for the world to get closer to Nature and the natural instead of the artificial way of doing things. We are so made that we are inclined to look upon our own views and the conditions surrounding us as the standard of comparison, and we are also inclined to look with suspicion upon the views of others in so far as they

differ from our own, and to belittle conditions with which we are unfamiliar. To the Greeks the foreigners were barbarians, because in the first place they wore beards, and the bearded men whom they knew were different from themselves. They were competing types in civilization which neither comprehended. Not so to Montaigne, who probed beneath the surface of things.

1. 'Unless men call that barbarisme which is not common to them', he observes, 'there is nothing in that nation, that is either barbarous or savage'.

2. 'We have no other ayme of truth and reason than the example and *Idea* of the opinions and customes of the countrie we live in.' In justification of this statement Montaigne adds: 'There' (meaning again America) 'is ever perfect religion, perfect policie, perfect and compleat use of all things.'

3. 'They are even savage', he grants, in the sense that 'we call those fruits wilde, which nature of her selfe, and of her ordinarie progresse hath produced'. Montaigne, however, was of the opinion that 'we should rather terme savage' our own fruits, which 'are those which our selves have altered by our artificiall devices, and diverted from their common order'.¹

4. 'We may then well call them barbarous, in regard of reasons rules, but not in respect of us that exceed them in all kinde of barbarisme.'

This must have seemed strange doctrine to Montaigne's contemporaries, and many of those of our day who read the *Essays* would be inclined to shake their heads. Montaigne doubtless felt the need of what we may call a bill of particulars, and from this we may select certain items.

'Their warres are noble and generous, and have as much excuse and beautie, as this humane infirmitie may admit.'

'They contend not for the gaining of new lands; for to this day they yet enjoy that naturall ubertie and fruitfulness, which without labouring toyle, doth in such plenteous abundance furnish them with all necessary things, that they need not enlarge their limits. They are yet in that happy estate, as they desire no more, than what their naturall necessities direct them: whatsoever is beyond it, is to them superfluous.'²

They hold their goods in common and these pass 'without other claime or title, but that which nature doth plainly impart unto all creatures, even as she brings them into the world'.³

'They require no other ransome of their prisoners, but an acknowledgment and confession that they are vanquished.'⁴

¹ *Essayes*, Florio's translation, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 219.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 224-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

The two principles which the old men of America impress upon the youth are, according to Montaigne, '*First, valour against their enemies, then lovingness unto their wives*'.¹

He admits that the victors 'roast, and then eat' their enemies in common, and that they send 'some slices . . . to such of their friends as are absent'. This is not done 'to nourish themselves'; but, as Montaigne is anxious to have us believe, 'to represent an extreme, and inexpiable revenge'.² If this stood alone, the Americans would have a hard time of it with Montaigne's readers, but bad as this habit is, the European custom is worse. 'I am not sorie we note the barbarous horror of such an action, but grieved, that prying so narrowly into their faults we are so blinded in ours.' And to drive his point home: 'I thinke there is more barbarisme in eating men alive, than to feed upon them being dead; to mangle by tortures and torments a body full of lively sense, to roast him in peeces, to make dogges and swine to gnaw and teare him in mammoeces (as wee have not only read, but seene very lately, yea and in our owne memorie, not amongst ancient enemies, but our neighbours and fellow-citizens; and which is worse, under pretence of pietie and religion) than to roast and eat him after he is dead.'³

5. 'The lawes of nature doe yet command them, which are but little bastardized by ours.'

And in Montaigne's conception 'with such puritie, as I am sometimes grieved the knowledge of it came no sooner to light, at what time there were men, that better than we could have judged of it. I am sorie, *Lycurgus* and *Plato* had it not'.

6. 'What in those nations we see by experience, doth not only exceed all the pictures wherewith licentious Poesie hath proudly embellished the golden age, and all her quaint inventions to faine a happy condition of man, but also the conception and desire of Philosophy.'⁴

With the 'poesie' of America he said he was so conversant that he quotes an 'amorous canzonet' which has no 'barbarism' in its invention, and which in his opinion was 'altogether Anacreontike'. The canzonet, the substance of which he quotes in his own good prose, was one day to interest the inquiring Herder, and the many-sided Goethe:

*Adder stay, stay good adder, that my sister may by the patterne of thy partie-coloured coat drawe the fashion and worke of a rich lace, for me to give unto my love; so may thy beautie, thy nimbleness or disposition be ever preferred before all other serpents.*⁵

7. 'They' (*Lycurgus* and *Plato*) 'could not imagine a genuitie so pure and simple, as we see it by experience; nor ever beleeve our societie might be maintained with so little art and humane combination.'

¹ *Essayes*, Florio's translation, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 221.

² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Leaving Lycurgus aside, Montaigne stated the entire case for the American in a literary reply to Plato which the great Shakespeare did not disdain to appropriate literally in *The Tempest*. 'It is a nation', he says, 'that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kindred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falsehood, treason, dissimulations, covetousness, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginarie commonwealth from this perfection!'¹

Thus was America, in Montaigne's conception, a light in an otherwise darkened world, 'the light that never was, on sea or land', or, to use Montaigne's own prose: 'Surely, in respect of us these are very savage men; for either they must be so in good sooth, or we must be so indeed: There is a wondrous distance betweene their forme and ours.'²

I have said that Montaigne had seen some of the natives at Rouen in the time of King Charles IX, 'who talked with them a great while'. What passed Montaigne thus recounts: 'They were shewed our fashions, our pomps, and the forme of a faire Citie; afterward some demanded their advise, and would needs know of them what things of note and admirable they had observed amongst us.'³ In the first place 'They found it very strange, that so many tall men with long beards, strong and well armed, as it were about the Kings person (it is very likely they meant the Switzers of his guard) would submit themselves to obey a beardlesse childe, and that we did not rather chuse one amongst them to command the rest'. On this statement Montaigne makes no comment. They had a manner of phrase, Montaigne continues, whereby they called 'men but a moytie one of another'; and their second observation was: 'They had perceived, there were men amongst us full gorged with all sortes of commodities, and others which hunger-starved, and bare with need and povertie, begged at their gates: and found it strange, these moyties so needy could endure such an injustice, and that they tooke not the others by the throte, or set fire on their houses.'⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 220. The passage referred to in *The Tempest* is Gonzalo's speech in Act II, Scene i:

I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things: for no kind of traffic
Would I admit: no name of magistrate:
Letters should not be known: riches, poverty,
And use of service—none: contract, succession,
Bourne, bound of land, tilth, vineyard—none:
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil:
No occupation, all men idle, all:
And women too, but innocent and pure:
No sovereignty—

² *Ibid.*, p. 227.

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³ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-9.

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⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

On this Montaigne is likewise silent. There was a third observation which the Americans had made, but which Montaigne had forgotten. In view of the two which he has given, it is perhaps just as well that his memory was faulty.

Montaigne was not to be outdone by the King, for he had some conversation with them, but apparently did not profit as much by the occasion as he had hoped because of the interpreter's shortcomings. To the question 'what good' one of the Americans who appeared to be a captain and was called King by the French mariners, got from his position, Montaigne received in reply: 'it was to march foremost in any charge of warre.' And asking whether the King's authority expired after war was ended, that worthy answered 'that hee had only this left him, which was, that when he went on progresse, and visited the villages depending of him, the inhabitants prepared paths and highwaies athwart the hedges of their woods, for him to pass through at ease'. Perhaps this is a fairly good substitute for the third question, and with a couple of phrases which furnish food for thought for us of to-day he dismisses the cannibals. 'All that is not verie ill; but what of that?' And this time he gives his own answer without the intervention of King, interpreter, or savage. "They weare no kinde of breeches nor hosen."¹

The more Montaigne thought about America and the Americans, and the more he reflected upon them and their ways, the more his heart went out to them, as appears from the essay on 'Coaches', the sixth of the third book, published some eight years after the disquisition on 'Cannibals'. The cruelty with which the Americans were treated appalled him, although, as he himself tells us, he lived in an age of cruelty. He lived in a France which was convulsed by religious wars, and his observations of his own country, in his essay on 'Cruelty', are applicable to the Low Countries, where the attempts of the Spaniards to stamp out religious dissent and political rebellion were the scandal of the world. The passage therefore would seem to have for our purpose a double interest:

I live in an age, wherein we abound with incredible examples of this vice, through the licentiousness of our civill and intestine warres: And read all ancient stories, be they never so tragicall, you shall find none to equall those, we daily see practised.²

Montaigne did not often yield to his feelings, for he practised the moderation which he preached. On the subject of cruelty, however, he was 'inexorable'. 'Amongst all other vices, there is none I hate more than crueltie, both by nature and judgement, as the extremest of all vices.' He was indeed so faint-hearted that he could not 'chuce but grieve' to see 'a chickins necke puld off, or a pigge stickt'. And he could not well endure, as he said, 'a seellie dew-bedabled hare to groane,

¹ *Essayes*, Florio's translation, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 229.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 121.

when she is seized upon by the houndes; although hunting be a violent sport'.¹ Sir Thomas More had already expressed his opinion to the same effect in his *Utopia*. Not only was hunting a violent sport, but it was one much more common in his day than in ours, when many persons not addicted to that form of recreation or amusement are inclined to condemn it, especially in the New World. And in this very connexion Montaigne returns to his cannibals, saying that neither they nor savage people offend him so much 'with roasting and eating of dead bodies, as those which torment and persecute the living'. He could not even 'behold the execution' of any man, albeit the law demanded it, 'with an unrelenting eye', for even in matters of justice, 'whatsoever is beyond a simple death' he deemed it to be 'meere crueltie'. 'And especially amongst us, who ought to have a regardfull respect, that their soules should be sent to heaven, which cannot be, having first by intolerable tortures agitated, and as it were brought them to dispaire.'² A little later in the essay Montaigne is inclined to doubt 'that imaginary sovereigntie that some give and ascribe unto us above all other creatures', saying, in a much quoted passage, but which can assuredly never be too often quoted on this side of Heaven: 'yet is there a kinde of respect, and a generall duty of humanity, which tieth us not only unto brute beasts that have life and sense, but even unto trees and plants. *Unto men we owe Justice, and to all other creatures that are capable of it, grace and benignity.*'³

These were deep-seated views, and to be found in the first collection of his *Essays*, from which we may conjecture, if need there were, what his attitude would be against the opening up of America to adventurers from the Old World intent on conquest, plunder, and gain.

In the essay on 'Coaches' Montaigne confirms, to use a phrase dear to diplomacy, the views which he had set forth in his previous communication on 'Cannibals', a guaranty for his earnestness. Two passages may be lifted from the latter essay: 'Our world hath of late discovered another . . . no lesse-large, fully-peopled, all-things-yeelding, and mighty in strength, than ours: nevertheless so new and infantine, that he is yet to learne his A.B.C. It is not yet full fifty yeares that he knew neither letters, nor waight, nor measures, nor apparell, nor corne, nor vines. But was all naked, simply-pure, in Natures lappe, and lived but with such meanes and food as his mother-nurce afforded him.'⁴ A little later he says: 'It was an unpolluted, harmeless infant world; yet have we not whipped and submitted the same unto our discipline, or schooled him by the advantage of our valour or naturall forces, nor have wee instructed him by our justice and integrity; nor subdued by our magnanimity.'

Montaigne was of the opinion that the conduct of the Americans

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 141.

in their negotiations with the Europeans was marked at least by an equal degree of natural wit and intelligence; that their 'hardiness and undaunted courage' could be opposed 'to the most famous ancient examples, we may with all our industrie discover in all the Annales and memories of our knowen old World'.¹ He is amazed at the 'undismayed resolution against paine, smarting, famine and death it selfe' which they were called upon to endure and suffer through the death and destruction which we call the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, and the even greater brutality and cruelty suffered by the Incas of Peru at the hands of Pizarro, who himself suffered death at the hands of his followers. So lawless were the *conquistadores*, more tolerable in retrospect than in life, that divers of their chieftains 'have beene executed to death, even in the places they had conquered, by the appointment of the Kings of *Castile*, justly offended at the seld-seene horror of their barbarous demeanours, and well nigh all disesteemed, contemned and hated'.² And Montaigne's earnestness is seen in his further comment that 'God hath meritoriously permitted, that many of their great pillages, and ill gotten goods, have either beene swallowed up by the revenging Seas in transporting them, or consumed by the intestine warres and civil broiles, wherewith themselves have devoured one another'.³

It was resentment against the claim of the Europeans of his day to superiority over the inhabitants of the New World which caused Montaigne to plead for justice to those who were different but not necessarily inferior, and it was the lawlessness of the Spanish adventurers, intent on gain, which had caused some fifty years earlier, the period from which Montaigne dated our knowledge of the New World, the law-abiding in Spain to protest against acquisition without right and warfare without law, and in so doing, to bring into being a newer law of nations which condemned and indeed outlawed such actions. Others there were who had written of America and, like the good Las Casas of Spain, had protested against the unjustified and inhuman treatment of the Americans at the hands of European adventurers coming from countries which claimed to be civilized, and indeed were universally regarded as leaders in what they were pleased to call their civilization. But they either wrote in Latin, making a large yet limited appeal, or in the mother tongue which did not cross their frontiers. Montaigne alone made a universal appeal, using a language which, without displacing others, was widely read in foreign countries, and using that language in such a way as to make of his *Essays* the priceless possession of readers without regard to nationality. Our English Shakespeare felt his influence, and Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, with Shakespeare's own autograph(?) is the only book which we certainly know to have belonged to the supreme poet of the English-

¹ *Essayes*, Florio's translations, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³ *Ibid.*

speaking world. Montaigne's influence has been hardly less in other countries, and, indeed, the preference of succeeding centuries for natural society with its natural man, to artificial society with its artificial man, dates from Montaigne. Conditions in America, real or alleged, have attracted and still attract the attention of the Old World.

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The interest of my Lord Bacon in America, although later, was none the less keen than that of Montaigne. There is a relationship between their writings in that both insisted on the facts, and from the facts derived conclusions. The experimental method was common to both, although Montaigne approached the New World from the standpoint of the moralist, and his interest lay in the social condition of the Americans; Bacon's interest was not that of the moralist, in whom character counts for much, but of the scientists, or rather of those addicted to what may be called the physical, the mathematical, or the exact sciences, and the services which they might render to mankind. From his early youth, he had been obsessed with the idea that he was reserved for great things. Money he required to carry them into effect, or great position, which would bring him money and facilitate the accomplishment of his self-imposed mission. The result has measurably justified the opinion which he had of himself; but it would have been better for him and for the world if he had devoted himself to his scientific ideal without wasting his life and ruining his character in the search for wealth and the prestige of position.

In 1592, when he was engaged in the practice of law, and but thirty-one years of age, he stated his aim and purpose, saying, 'I have taken all knowledge to be my province'; and the 'best state of that province', he himself said, consisted 'in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries'.¹ And in an interlude for the Court composed the same year, entitled 'The Conference of Pleasure', he anticipated the power 'to endow the life of man with infinite commodities'.² There was a 'sovereignty of man' which lay 'hid in knowledge', which kings could not 'buy, nor with their force command', of which their spies could give no news, and whither seamen could not sail. Nature we govern indeed 'in opinions', but are dependent upon her in necessities. We would, however, command her in action, if we were 'led by her [in ?] invention'.³ Somewhat later Bacon, confessing that he was born 'for the service of mankind', and asking in what way he could best serve mankind according to the services which he felt himself 'best fitted by nature to perform', found, he said, 'none so great as the discovery of new arts,

¹ *New Atlantis*, by Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Albans, edited, with introduction and notes, by Alfred B. Gough (1915), p. ix.

² *Ibid.*, p. x.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

endowments, and commodities for the bettering of man's life'. The self-imposed mission was indeed great, and the time short at any man's disposal; but he would have been content to construct the machine, even though he should 'not succeed in setting it on work'.¹ He did construct the machine, although he did not put it to work.

In 1594, in a composition for the Christmas revels of Gray's Inn (one of the law-courts of London, of which he was then a member, and to-day one of its permanent glories), Bacon anticipated the *New Atlantis*. Addressing the sovereign, 'the Prince of Purpoole' (Bacon was always appealing to princes), he said: 'I will commend to your Highness four principal works and monuments of yourself.' The first of these was 'the collecting of a most perfect and general library'; the second was 'a spacious, wonderful garden' to which the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea might be added—we would call it a botanical and zoological garden; the third was 'a goodly huge cabinet'—as we would say, a museum—containing the inanimate things which 'nature hath wrought' and whatever the hand of man had made; and lastly, a laboratory, or, as Bacon has chosen to put it, 'a still-house, so furnished with mills, instruments, furnaces, and vessels as may be a palace fit for a philosopher's stone', the consequences of which, he goes on to say, shall be that 'Miracles and wonders shall cease, by reason that you shall have discovered their natural causes'.²

Of the many writings in which Bacon spoke of 'the new instrument' through which Nature's secrets were to be obtained for the benefit of mankind, the *New Atlantis*, written but a couple of years before his death in 1626, stands out as the best statement of his views, as admittedly the best written, and due at least in its outward form to the discovery of America, as was the *Utopia* of his great predecessor, which is in some respects the model of his own *New Atlantis*.

It is proper to premise a few observations of a more general nature before taking up the thesis of the *New Atlantis*. The wayfarers (fifty-one in number, of whom seventeen were ill at the time), seeking a port of distress, were asked if they were Christians—from which it would appear that the vast island which they had approached was a Christian community, and the Christian religion had been introduced centuries ago. Judaism, as the accredited ancestor of Christianity, was tolerated. The great king who made the island what it was, was Solamona by name, who approached the original in his wisdom, but was without his prototype's foibles; for in the New Atlantis the doctrine obtained of one man, one wife, and there was not 'under the Heavens, so chaste a Nation, as this of Bensalem'—for such was its official name—'Nor so free from all Pollution, or foulness'. Indeed, Bacon would have us believe that it was 'the Virgin of the World'.

¹ *New Atlantis*, p. xii.

² *Ibid.*, p. xi.

The *New Atlantis* is indeed a fiction, but as Dr. Abbott has said, 'Bacon has put into it perhaps more of his own self, his tastes, his preferences, his ideals, than into any other of his writings'.¹ Hythloday and his companions started from Brazil, in the east of the Continent, and made their way to the west, and to the south, until they set foot upon Utopia—the only travellers, it may be observed, who have ever found that spot. In Bacon's romance, which is related, apparently, by the leader of the expedition, the point of departure is Peru, '(wher wee had continued by the space of one whole yeare,) for *China and Iapan*, by the South Sea'.² Driven by 'Strong and Great Windes from the South, with a Point East' they were giving themselves up for lost 'in the Midst of the greatest Wildernesse of Waters in the World, without Victuall', when they saw in the distance 'thick Cloudes, which did put vs in some hope of Land'. They bent their course thither, and on the dawning of the next day, discerned the land of their hopes. It was an inhabited country, and some eight persons put out in a boat to meet them, handing them a scroll of parchment, on which these words were written 'in Ancient *Hebrew*, and in Ancient *Greeke*, and in good *Latine* of the Schoole, and in *Spanish*, these wordes; *Land yee not, none of you; And provide to be gone, from this Coast, within sixteene daies, except you haue further time giuen you*'.³

'Our Answer', according to our informant, 'was in the *Spanish* tongue.' There was nothing strange in that, because they had spent a year in Peru, then the capital, so to speak, of Spanish America; and Spain itself was at that time the dominating country of Europe. And the answer was, '*That for our Shipp, it was well; For we had rather mett with Calmes, and contrary windes, then any Tempests. For our Sick, they were many, and in very ill Case; So that if they were not permitted to Land, they ran danger of their Liues.*' Some hours later 'a Person (as it seemed) of place' came to them, and 'with a loud voice, in *Spanish* asked, *Are yee Christians?* We answered; *We were*', whereupon the person, well pleased with the answer, said, '*If yee will sweare, (all of you,) by the Meritts of the SAVIOVR, that yee are no Pirates; . . . you may haue License to come on Land.*' They took oath, whereupon they were allowed to land, and were installed in 'the *Strangers House*'. The country was the New Atlantis, which the Australians might be inclined to claim as Australia.⁴

And what of the old, that this should be called the 'new'? In the opinion of the natives, the old was none other than '*the great Atlantis (that you [addressing himself to the travellers] call America)*'.⁵ They admitted the disappearance of the island because of a flood; but they were of the opinion that with the subsidence of the waters, the 'great Atlantis' which we all call America presented itself, to be discovered anew by the Old World.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.² *Ibid.*, p. 3.³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

This was the belief of many, which Bacon shared. 'The discovery of America', says Mr. Gough, in his excellent edition of the *New Atlantis*, 'and especially of the strange isolated civilizations of Mexico and Peru had aroused much speculation, and Bacon's belief that America was the wreck of the submerged Atlantis was shared by many in his age. The wonderful tales brought from newly-discovered lands, both in East and West, aroused in various minds the fancy that somewhere there might yet be found an ideally happy and virtuous community.'¹ Bacon's purpose was to show how the New Atlantis was not an idle hope, but a virtuous community; and he founded it, not upon political or social institutions, as had his predecessors, but upon the exalted place which he gave to science, through which, and through which alone, he professed to believe that mankind might be made prosperous and happy.

How had this happened? What one people had done, others could do. The experience of one might well be the experience of others. What was this experience? Bacon's description was interesting then, and it is now. The people of the Old Atlantis who lived in the valleys perished either by drowning or 'for want of Food, and other things necessary'.² Those of the mountains survived, and '*being simple and sauage People, (Not like Noah and his Sonnes, which was the chiefe Family of the Earth) they were not able to leaue Letters, Arts, and Ciuillity, to their Posterity*'. '*So as maruaile you not at the thin Population of America, nor at the Rudeness and Ignorance of the People; For you must account your Inhabitants of America as a young People; Younger a thousand yeares, at the least, then the rest of the World*'.³ In the upper regions, they had been accustomed to clothe themselves with the skins of animals, which they discarded because of the intolerable heat of the valley. And because they '*knew no meanes of lighter Apparell, they were forced to beginn the Custome of Going Naked, which continueth at this day*'.⁴

The government of the New Atlantis was monarchical. The King, Solamona, 'the Law-giuer' of the island, '*had a large heart, inscrutable for good*' and, at least in fiction, '*was wholly bent to make his Kingdome and People Happy*'.⁵ The island was to be self-sufficient, and to maintain itself without foreign aid. The laws which the King issued were so fundamental that they were still in force and vigour at Bacon's advent. He was a conservative, and for this reason the New Atlantis has nothing to do with the community of property which had been an integral part of the ideal commonwealths of Plato and Sir Thomas More.

One of the peculiarities of the New Atlantis was the prohibition

¹ *New Atlantis*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

of strangers unless in the case of distress, when they were treated, one might say, as wards of the island, and allowed to stay for a time which might be prolonged or become permanent. In the latter case, they became in effect naturalized subjects or 'Bensalemites' (if the term be permitted). However, while the New Atlantis was closed to strangers, the islanders possessed a knowledge of foreign parts; for it appeared that every twelve years, two ships were dispatched to obtain '*Knowledge of the Affaires*' of the countries to which they had been sent, '*especially*', Bacon is careful to inform us, '*of the Sciences, Arts, Manufactures, and Inuentions of all the World*', and of course, '*Bookes, Instruments, and Patternes, in euery kinde*'¹ were not overlooked. The ships turned homewards after landing the envoys, who were to remain in foreign parts until a new mission should be sent. The remarkable thing about it was that their commerce with the outer world was strictly intellectual and scientific. The islanders had indeed a trade, but it was not '*for Gold, Siluer, or Iewels; Nor for Silkes*'—of which Bacon himself was, it must be said, overfond—'*Nor any other Commodity of Matter*'. For what, then, did they trade, it may be asked. It was '*onely for Gods first Creature, which was Light*'. '*To haue Light*', Bacon reports his interlocutor as saying, '*of the Growth of all Parts of the World*'.²

So much for this phase of the subject, for neither the value nor the interest of the New Atlantis lies in its government, or laws; but in the one institution which was the very eye of this kingdom, or rather, we may say, the very apple of Bacon's eye from early manhood to the day of his death. This was the creation of an order, or society, which the leaders called 'Salomons House', dedicated to the '*Study of the Works, and Creatures of God*', and in their opinion—which Bacon most assuredly shared, for the institution was nothing but the realization of an imaginary commonwealth of his dream of a lifetime—'*The Noblest Foundation, (as wee thinke,) that euer was vpon the Earth; And the Lanthorne of this Kingdome*'.³ Bacon's interlocutor remarked that the name perhaps should be 'Solamona's House', after the King who had founded it; but he was of the opinion that their great King and law-giver founded it in honour of the historic Solomon, from the hand of whom the islanders possessed works which did not exist elsewhere. And he was strengthened in this view by the fact that the house was sometimes called '*the Colledge of the sixe Daies Workes*', '*whereby I am satisfied*', the informant continued, '*That our Excellent King had learned from the Hebrewes; That God had created the World, and all that therein is, within sixe Dayes*'.⁴

As happens so easily in fiction, the wayfarers were to catch a glimpse of one of the Fathers—that is, a member of 'Salomons House', who was about to visit the city in which they were installed. None of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

the 'Colledge of the sixe Daies Workes' had visited the city within the past twelve years, and had it not been for the arrival of the strangers, there was apparently no telling when he would have honoured it with his presence. Indeed, the 'Father' of 'Salomons House' had not only taken note of their arrival, but had decided to admit them all to his presence, and to '*haue priuate Conference with one of you, that ye shall choose*',¹ and to whom he should give his blessing. Naturally, Bacon, as the leader of the imaginary expedition, was chosen.

The interview was had. The others withdrawing, the 'Father' asked the chosen of the strangers to sit down beside him, and, if Bacon is to be believed, recounted to him 'in the *Spanish Tongue*' the marvellous things of 'Salomons House' and the 'Colledge of the sixe Daies Workes'.

First of all, the Father gave Bacon his blessing, and proceeded to state the end of the foundation; the preparations and instruments which were used in their investigations; the several employments and functions to which the fellows of the college were assigned, and the ordinances and rites which were observed. Of the first, he said, '*The End of our Foundation is the Knowledge of Causes, and Secrett Motions of Things; And the Enlarging of the bounds of Humane Empire, to the Effecting of all Things possible.*'² After which he set forth the preparations and instruments which, without going into detail, may be said to be a universal laboratory of sciences, with an imaginary equipment—for none existed in Bacon's time, although to-day it may be found everywhere.

The employments and offices of the fellows of the college are stated at length; some were to visit foreign countries, and were called 'Merchants of Light'; others were to 'Collect *the Experiments which are in all Bookes*'. These were the 'Depredatours'. Still others were to collect the experiments of mechanical arts and liberal sciences. These were the 'Mystery-Men'. Some, the 'Pioners or Miners', were to try new experiments; and the 'Compilers' were to 'Drawe *the Experiments of the Former Foure into Titles, and Tables, to giue the better light, for the drawing of Obseruations and Axiomes out of them*'. Another group was to draw from them 'Things of Vse, and Practise for Mans life, and Knowledge, as well for Workes, as for Plaine Demonstration of Causes, Meanes of Naturall diuinations, and the easie and cleare Discouery, of the Vertues and Parts of Bodies'. These were the 'Dowry-Men or Benefactours'.³

All these things were past experiments. What of the future? The members of the House were to meet, to consult, and to consider all the former labours and collections, and out of them still another group was 'to Direct New Experiments, of a Higher Light, more Pene-

¹ *New Atlantis*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

trating *into Nature then the Former*. *These wee call Lamps*. Some of their number, called 'Inoculatours', were to 'Execute the Experiments so Directed, and Report them'. And finally the 'Interpreters of Nature' were to 'raise the former Discoveries by Experiments, into Greater Obseruations, Axiomes, and Aphorismes'.¹

Novices and apprentices there were, so that the House should remain the centre of science and of experiment. Consultations were to be had, to determine which of their inventions and experiments should be published and made known, or kept secret for the time being. The first group, whose duty it was to sail into foreign parts, was twelve; all of the others were three in number.

There are two passages from the *New Atlantis* which should be quoted in Bacon's own words, inasmuch as they show what had been done, the respect in which the pioneers of science should be held, and the services which he predicted would result from his method—experiment followed by induction—services which actually have been rendered, or will be rendered in the future. The first passage, under the caption of 'Ordinances and Rites' is, therefore, in the informant's words:

*Wee haue two very Long, and Faire Galleries: In one of these wee place Patternes and Samples of all manner of the more Rare and Excellent Inuentions: In the other wee place the Statua's of all Principall Inuentions. There wee haue the Statua of your Columbus, that discovered the West-Indies: Also the Inuentor of Shippes: Your Monke that was the Inuentour of Ordnance, and of Gunpowder: The Inuentour of Musicke: The Inuentour of Letters: The Inuentour of Printing: The Inuentour of Obseruations of Astronomy: The Inuentour of Works in Mettall: The Inuentour of Glasse: The Inuentour of Silke of the Worme: The Inuentour of Wine: The Inuentour of Corne and Bread: The Inuentour of Sugars: And all these, by more certaine Tradition, then you haue. Then haue we diuerse Inuentions of our Owne, of Excellent Workes; Which since you haue not seene, it were too long to make Descriptions of them; And besides, in the right Vnderstanding of those Descriptions, you might easily erre. For vpon euery Inuention of Valew, wee erect a Statua to the Inuentour, and giue him a Liberall and Honourable Reward.*²

In the second passage the informant likewise said:

*Lastly, wee haue Circuites or Visits, of diuers Principall Citties of the Kingdome; wher, as it commeth to passe, we doe publish such New Profitable Inuentions, as wee thinke good. And wee doe also declare Naturall Diuinations of Diseases, Plagues, Swarmes of Hurtfull Creatures, Scarcety, Tempests, Earthquakes, Great Inundations, Cometts, Temperature of the Yeare, and diuerse other Things; And wee giue Counsell thereupon, what the People shall doe, for the Preuention and Remedy of them.*³

In the last passage to be quoted, Bacon himself speaks in his proper person; and if the blessing which he received at the hands of the Father is fictitious, that which posterity received from him, overlooking his shortcomings, is real:

And when Hee had sayd this, Hee stood vp: And I, as I had beene taught, kneeled

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

downe, and He layd his Right Hand vpon my Head, and said; God *blesse thee, my Sonne; And God blesse this Relation which I haue made. I giue thee leaue to Publish it, for the Good of other Nations; For wee here are in Gods Bosome, a Land vnknowne.* And so hee left mee; . . .¹

The Royal Society, founded in 1662, was the first step in the realization of Bacon's dream; the Royal Institution, founded in 1779, was the second; and the Imperial College of Science and Technology at South Kensington, founded in 1907, was the third in England.

In his *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century* Sir Sidney Lee makes a statement which would be immodest from an American, but which I may perhaps without impropriety venture to quote. Asking whether Bacon's idea may be realized, he says that conditions are 'not favourable for its emergency in this country' (meaning England). 'It seems'—it is still Sir Sidney Lee who is speaking—'more likely to come to birth in Germany or in America first. For both in Germany and in America things of the mind such as Bacon worshipped receive a public consideration.'² However, every college or university with laboratories amply equipped, whether in the Old World or in the New, and every school of science, wherever found, is but the realization of Bacon's vision. In very truth, these United States are, as a whole, the 'Salomons House' of my Lord Bacon. America is still the favourite field for experiment in government and political organization; for experiments in social relations in which human beings as such are to possess the rights which in the past were called natural; and for experiments in science dedicated to the service of mankind. 'Posterity will say', the great Napoleon predicted, 'that the old world had lost its rights and that the new world has reconquered them'.

If the discovery of America has influenced to such an extent the minds of humanists and of lawyers, and has in various ways caused them to suggest laws affecting the inhabitants of each of their fancied commonwealths, it may be asked, what has been the effect of the era of discoveries upon the law of nations, or the rules of conduct between those separate and distinct communities which, taken together, form the Community of Nations. Another Englishman, Churton Collins, has said it all in a single phrase: 'The *Intercursus Magnus* had laid the foundations of International Law.'³

And as interesting to internationalists, if not so spectacular as the great adventurer's discovery of America, is the consequent discovery by Francisco de Vitoria that the same principles of justice expressed in the same rules of law were applicable alike to the civilized nations of Europe, the primitive peoples of America, and indeed to all other peoples of the world.

¹ *New Atlantis*, p. 47. ² (London, 1904), p. 254. ³ J. Churton Collins, *op. cit.*, p. xxxi.