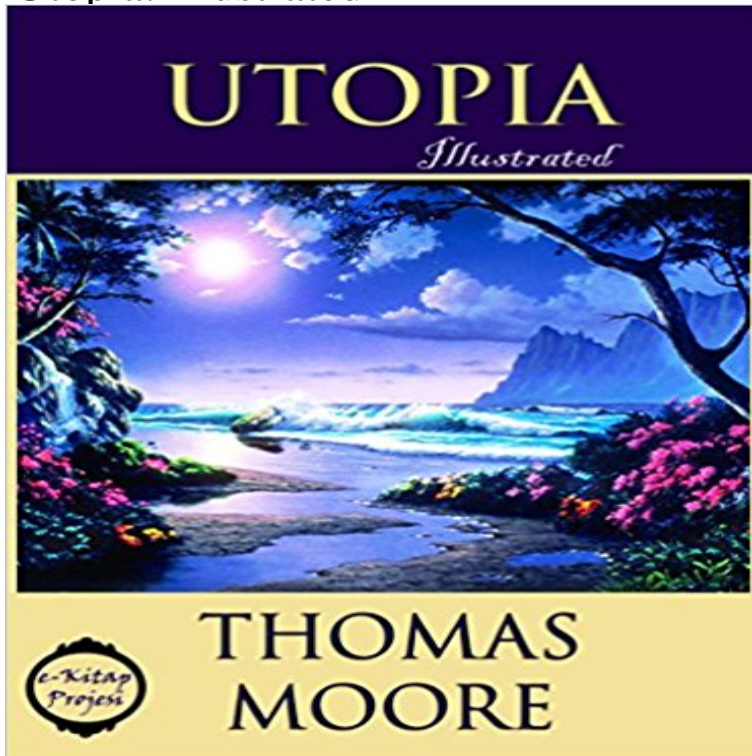


Utopia: Illustrated



Mores Utopia was written in Latin, and is in two parts, of which the second, describing the place ([Greek text]or Nusquama, as he called it sometimes in his letters Nowhere), was probably written towards the close of 1515; the first part, introductory, early in 1516. The book was first printed at Louvain, late in 1516, under the editorship of Erasmus, Peter Giles, and other of Mores friends in Flanders. It was then revised by More, and printed by Frobenius at Basle in November, 1518. It was reprinted at Paris and Vienna, but was not printed in England during Mores lifetime. Its first publication in this country was in the English translation, made in Edwards VI.s reign (1551) by Ralph Robinson. It was translated with more literary skill by Gilbert Burnet, in 1684, soon after he had conducted the defence of his friend Lord William Russell, attended his execution, vindicated his memory, and been spitefully deprived by James II. of his lectureship at St. Clements. Burnet was drawn to the translation of Utopia by the same sense of unreason in high places that caused More to write the book. Burnets is the translation given in this volume. The name of the book has given an adjective to our language we call an impracticable scheme Utopian. Yet, under the veil of a playful fiction, the talk is intensely earnest, and abounds in practical suggestion. It is the work of a scholarly and witty Englishman, who attacks in his own way the chief political and social evils of his time. Beginning with fact, More tells how he was sent into Flanders with Cuthbert Tunstal, whom the kings majesty of late, to the great rejoicing of all men, did prefer to the office of Master of the Rolls; how the commissioners of Charles met them at Bruges, and presently returned to Brussels for instructions; and how More then went to Antwerp, where he found a pleasure in the society of Peter Giles which soothed his desire to see again his wife and

children, from whom he had been four months away. Then fact slides into fiction with the finding of Raphael Hythloday (whose name, made of two Greek words [Greek text] and [Greek text], means knowing in trifles), a man who had been with Amerigo Vespucci in the three last of the voyages to the new world lately discovered, of which the account had been first printed in 1507, only nine years before Utopia was written. Designedly fantastic in suggestion of details, Utopia is the work of a scholar who had read Platos Republic, and had his fancy quickened after reading Plutarchs account of Spartan life under Lycurgus. Beneath the veil of an ideal communism, into which there has been worked some witty extravagance, there lies a noble English argument. Sometimes More puts the case as of France when he means England. Sometimes there is ironical praise of the good faith of Christian kings, saving the book from censure as a political attack on the policy of Henry VIII. Erasmus wrote to a friend in 1517 that he should send for Mores Utopia, if he had not read it, and wished to see the true source of all political evils. And to More Erasmus wrote of his book, A burgomaster of Antwerp is so pleased with it that he knows it all by heart. Sir Thomas More, son of Sir John More, a justice of the Kings Bench, was born in 1478, in Milk Street, in the city of London. After his earlier education at St. Anthonys School, in Threadneedle Street, he was placed, as a boy, in the household of Cardinal John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor. It was not unusual for persons of wealth or influence and sons of good families to be so established together in a relation of patron and client. The youth wore his patrons livery, and added to his state. The patron used, afterwards, his wealth or influence in helping his young client forward in the world. Cardinal Morton had been in earlier days that Bishop of Ely whom Richard III. sent to the Tower; was busy afterwards in hostility to Richard; and was a

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