

from *Utopia*

SIR THOMAS MORE

In Book One of Utopia, More describes how he and a friend met Raphael Hythlodaye, a sailor who has seen much of the newly discovered world. In their discussion Hythlodaye criticizes the evils of the poverty and the luxury he has seen in England. In Book Two, Hythlodaye tells about a faraway land called Utopia that does not have the inequalities or injustices of England. Here, everyone is educated and everyone has work. No one owns property in this land, and all that is produced is shared equally in a spirit of cooperation and reason. At this point, Hythlodaye talks about the various jobs men and women in Utopia have.

Occupations

Agriculture is the one pursuit which is common to all, both men and women, without exception. They are all instructed in it from childhood, partly by principles taught in school, partly by field trips to the farms closer to the city as if for recreation. Here they do not merely look on, but, as opportunity arises for bodily exercise, they do the actual work.

Besides agriculture (which is, as I said, common to all), each is taught one particular craft as his own. This is generally either wool-working or linen-making or masonry or metal-working or carpentry. There is no other pursuit which occupies any number worth mentioning. As for clothes, these are of one and the same pattern throughout the island and down the centuries, though there is a distinction between the sexes and between the single and married. The garments are comely to the eye, convenient for bodily movement, and fit for wear in heat and cold. Each family, I say, does its own tailoring.

Of the other crafts, one is learned by each person, and not the men only, but the women too. The latter as the weaker sex have the lighter occupations and generally work wool and flax.¹ To the men are committed the remaining more laborious crafts. For the most part, each is brought up in his father's craft, for which most have a natural inclination. But if anyone is attracted to another occupation, he is transferred by adoption to a family pursuing that craft for which he has a liking. Care is taken not only by his father but by the authorities, too, that he will be assigned to a grave and honorable householder. Moreover, if anyone after being thoroughly taught one craft desires another also, the same permission is given. Having acquired both, he practices his choice unless the city has more need of the one than of the other.

1. **flax:** plants with stem fibers that are spun into linen thread.

