IDEAL COMMONWEALTHS: PLUTARCH'S LYCURGUS, MORE'S UTOPIA, BACON'S NEW ATLANTIS, CAMPANELLA'S CITY OF THE SUN AND A FRAGMENT OF HALL'S MUNDUS ALTER ET IDEM

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HENRY MORLEY

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AND A FRAGMENT OF

HALL'S MUNDUS ALTER ET IDEM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

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INTRODUCTION.

PLATO in his "Republic" argues that it is the aim of Individual Man as of the State to be wise, brave and temperate. In a State, he says, there are three orders, the Guardians, the Auxiliaries, the Producers. Wisdom should be the special virtue of the Guardians; Courage of the Auxiliaries; and Temperance of all. These three virtues belong respectively to the Individual Man, Wisdom to his Rational part; Courage to his Spirited; and Temperance to his Appetitive; while in the State as in the Man it is Injustice that disturbs their harmony.

Because the character of Man appears in the State unchanged, but in a larger form, Plato represented Socrates as studying the ideal man himself through an Ideal Commonwealth.

In another of his dialogues, "Critias," of which we have only the beginning, Socrates wishes that he could see how such a commonwealth would work, if it were set moving. Critias undertakes to tell him. For he has received tradition of events that happened more than nine thousand years ago, when the Athenians themselves were such ideal citizens. Critias has received this tradition, he says, from a ninety-year-old grandfather, whose father, Dropides, was the friend of Solon. Solon, lawgiver and poet, had heard it from the priests of the goddess Neith or Athene at Sais, and had begun to shape it into a heroic poem.

This was the tradition:—Nine thousand years before the time of Solon, the goddess Athene, who was worshipped also in Sais, had given to her Athenians a healthy climate, a fertile soil, and temperate people strong in wisdom and courage. Their Republic was like that which Socrates imagined, and it had to bear the shock of a great invasion by the people of the vast island Atlantis. This island, larger than all Libya and Asia put together, was once in the sea westward beyond the Atlantic waves,—thus America was dreamed of long before it was discovered. Atlantis had

ten kings, descended from ten sons of Poseidon (Neptune), who was the god magnificently worshipped by its people. Vast power and dominion, that extended through all Libya as far as Egypt, and over a part of Europe, caused the Atlantid kings to grow ambitious and unjust. Then they entered the Mediterranean and fell upon Athens with enormous force. But in the little band of citizens, temperate, brave, and wise, there were forces of Reason able to resist and overcome brute strength. Now, however, gone are the Atlantids, gone are the old virtues of Athens. Earthquakes and deluges laid waste the world. The whole great island of Atlantis, with its people and its wealth, sank to the bottom of the ocean. The ideal warriors of Athens, in one day and night, were swallowed by an earthquake, and were to be seen no more.

Plato, a philosopher with the soul of a poet, died in the year 347 before Christ. Plutarch was writing at the close of the first century after Christ, and in his parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans, the most famous of his many writings, he took occasion to paint an Ideal Commonwealth as the conception of Lycurgus, the half mythical or all mythical Solon of Sparta. To Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus, as well as to Plato, Thomas More and others have been indebted for some part of the shaping of their philosophic dreams.

The discovery of the New World at the end of the fifteenth century followed hard upon the diffusion of the new invention of printing, and came at a time when the fall of Constantinople by scattering Greek scholars, who became teachers in Italy, France and elsewhere, spread the study of Greek, and caused Plato to live again. Little had been heard of him through the Arabs, who cared little for his poetic method. But with the revival of learning he had become a force in Europe, a strong aid to the Reformers.

Sir Thomas More's Utopia was written in the years 1515–16, when its author's age was about thirty-seven. He was a young man of twenty when Columbus first touched the continent named after the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci, who made his voyages to it in the years 1499–1503. More wrote his Utopia when imaginations of men were stirred by the sudden enlargement of their conceptions of the world, and Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyages, first printed in 1507, was fresh in every scholar's mind. He imagined a traveller, Raphael Hythloday—whose name is from Greek

words that mean "Knowing in Trifles"—who had sailed with Vespucci on his three last voyages, but had not returned from the last voyage until, after separation from his comrades, he had wandered into some farther discovery of his own. Thus he had found, somewhere in those parts, the island of Utopia. Its name is from Greek words meaning Nowhere. More had gone on an embassy to Brussels with Cuthbert Tunstal when he wrote his philosophical satire upon European, and more particularly English, statecraft, in the form of an Ideal Commonwealth described by Hythloday as he had found it in Utopia. It was printed at Louvain in the latter part of the year 1516, under the editorship of Erasmus, and that enlightened young secretary to the municipality of Antwerp, Peter Giles, or Ægidius, who is introduced into the story. "Utopia" was not printed in England in the reign of Henry VIII., and could not be, for its satire was too direct to be misunderstood, even when it mocked English policy with ironical praise for doing exactly what it failed to do. More was a wit and a philosopher, but at the same time so practical and earnest that Erasmus tells of a burgomaster at Antwerp who fastened upon the parable of Utopia with such goodwill that he learnt it by heart. And in 1517 Erasmus advised a correspondent to send for Utopia, if he had not yet read it, and if he wished to see the true source of all political evils.

Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis," first written in Latin, was published in 1629, three years after its author's death. Bacon placed his Ideal Commonwealth in those seas where a great Austral continent was even then supposed to be, but had not been discovered. As the old Atlantis implied a foreboding of the American continent, so the New Atlantis implied foreboding of the Australian. Bacon in his philosophy sought through experimental science the dominion of men over things, "for Nature is only governed by obeying her." In his Ideal World of the New Atlantis, Science is made the civilizer who binds man to man, and is his leader to the love of God.

Thomas Campanella was Bacon's contemporary, a man only seven years younger; and an Italian who suffered for his ardour in the cause of science. He was born in Calabria in 1568, and died in 1639. He entered the Dominican order when a boy, but had a free and eager appetite for knowledge. He urged, like Bacon, that Nature should be

studied through her own works, not through books; he attacked, like Bacon, the dead faith in Aristotle, that instead of following his energetic spirit of research, lapsed into blind idolatry. Campanella strenuously urged that men should reform all sciences by following Nature and the books of God. He had been stirring in this way for ten years, when there arose in Calabria a conspiracy against the Spanish rule. Campanella, who was an Italian patriot was seized and sent to Naples. The Spanish inquisition joined in attack on him. He was accused of books he had not written and of opinions he did not hold; he was seven times put to the question and suffered, with firmness of mind, the most cruel tortures. The Pope interceded in vain for him with the King of Spain. He suffered imprisonment for twenty-seven years, during which time he wrote much, and one piece of his prison work was his ideal of "The City of the Sun."

Released at last from his prison, Campanella went to Rome, where he was defended by Pope Urban VIII. against continued violence of attack. But he was compelled at last to leave Rome, and made his escape as a servant in the livery of the French ambassador. In Paris, Richelieu became Campanella's friend; the King of France gave him a pension of three thousand livres; the Sorbonne vouched for the orthodoxy of his writings. He died in Paris, at the age of seventy-one, in the Convent of the Dominicans.

Of Campanella's "Civitas Solis," which has not hitherto been translated into English, the translation here given, with one or two omissions of detail which can well be spared, has been made for me by my old pupil and friend, Mr. Thomas W. Halliday.

In the works (published in 1776) of the witty Dr. William King, who played much with the subject of cookery, is a fragment found among his remaining papers, and given by his editors as an original piece in the manner of Rabelais. It seems never to have been observed that this is only a translation of that part of Joseph Hall's "Mundus Alter es Idem," which deals with the kitchen side of life. The fragment will be found at the end of this volume, preceded by a short description of the other parts of Hall's World which is other than ours, and yet the same.

H. M.

March 1885.

PLUTARCH'S

LIFE OF LYCURGUS.