

Equality—A Political Romance (1802)

While the Declaration of Independence famously stated that “all men are created equal,” the equality in question was often understood in such a narrow sense that it did not even include, for example, universal white male suffrage. However powerful the equality concept was, ideas of economic equality were extremely rare. This conservatism made the ideas expressed in *Equality--A Political Romance* all the more stunning, for this work, serialized in a Philadelphia publication between May and July of 1802, imagined a society in which every person worked, in which all lands and goods were held in common, and in which money was banned. Utopian writings were popular in North America before this moment. Thomas More’s *Utopia* was well known, and had seen a Philadelphia reprint in 1753. 1785 saw the anonymous publication of *The Golden Age: or, Future Glory of North America* and the French writer Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s *L’An 2440 (The Year 2440: the English translation was renamed *The Year 2500*)* was popular as well. These last were cautious works: Mercier still imagined a king seven hundred years in the future, and *The Golden Age* envisioned the solution to slavery and the land struggles with Native Americans by locating non-white populations to “Nigrania” and “Savagenia” respectively. In this context, *Equality* was much more radical: it imagined the creation of “the system of separate property” as one of the evil moments of history, while condemning the rich “idlers” who live off others, and the clergy “paid and maintained...to teach the people...that a little good, mixed with a

great deal of evil, had always been, and always would be, the lot of humanity.”

How such a work came to be published in the United States has much to do with the circumstances of deism at the turn of the century. Deism is often treated as if it were a personal, private philosophy, as distinct from the collective belief systems of Christian denominations. But at the moment of *Equality*’s appearance, deism was an organized movement, sponsoring gatherings, proselytizing lectures, and publications. The Deistical Society of the State of New York founded a deistic weekly newspaper, *The Temple of Reason*, in November, 1800. Its opening editorial stressed that christianity (uncapitalized) was no more the official religion of the United States than “Mahometism” (Islam), despite assumptions to the contrary. Because deism was so constantly under attack from Christians, deists had resolved to “shew to the world, the purity of our doctrines and the soundness of our principles, exposing at the same time, the corruption of those of our adversaries” (cite opening issue). *The Temple of Reason* thereafter appeared in eight-page issues every Saturday, at the subscription rate of \$3/year, each issue typically including book reviews of relevant philosophical, political, or theological works; short didactic essays, original or reprinted, on scientific, political, and philosophical topics; and synopses of news, foreign and domestic, from a deistic perspective. The paper had a difficult time finding subscribers in New York, and in the early months of 1801 shifted to the capital city of Philadelphia. The new editorial statement announced a greater attention to be paid to “the middling and industrious class of citizens,” who, it was

assumed, would be as motivated by matters of political liberty as those of philosophical enlightenment (Apr 22, 1801, p 119). The serialization of *Equality--A Political Romance* was clearly part of this attempt to speak to a broader population, but by late 1802 the paper was struggling, finally ceasing publication in February of 1803. There was a successor publication, *Prospect, or View of the Moral World*, which ran from December, 1803 to March, 1805, but this wave of deist activism was clearly on the defensive.

As a non-Christian movement frequently critical of Christianity, deism was frequently the subject of conspiracy theories--often involving the Bavarian Illuminati or the Freemasons--and attacks of “infidelity” linked with political conflicts, most famously in the person of Thomas Jefferson around the time of his 1800 election. Political figures privately friendly to deism often hid their beliefs, while many journalistic attacks on political leaders foregrounded deist beliefs, frequently conflated with atheism (a prominent target of deist writings, in fact) and sexual libertinism. Deism was also commonly associated with French culture, through such figures as Voltaire, Count Volney, Rousseau, Diderot, and the Abbé Raynal, not to mention many prominent figures of the French Revolution, and the increasing Francophobia of the 1790s often attempted to taint deism as an alien movement. In such an environment, deists struggled for access to the press or public meeting spaces. Newspapers in New York, for example, largely refused to publish advertisements for *The Temple of Reason* or deist pamphlets and books.

This hostile environment was not, however, unusual to many of the figures associated with *The Temple of Reason*. While Elihu Palmer, the most prominent deist associated with *The Temple of Reason*, was a Connecticut native who had moved away from a very traditional New England Calvinism—first becoming a

Baptist, then a Universalist, before becoming a deist—many of the figures associated with the movement and its publications were radicals who had fled the British islands to the United States. Dr. James Reynolds, to whom *Equality* is dedicated, became active in the United Irishmen, a group that by the end of the 1790s was advocating an Irish independence uprising against the British empire. In 1793, Reynolds had been arrested by the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, and served several months as a political prisoner. Even after fleeing to the United States in 1794, he was targeted by Federalist journalists and prominent Philadelphia citizens, eventually facing arrest by the administration of John Adams under the Alien and Sedition laws. Denis Driscoll, who edited *The Temple of Reason* in New York, was another Irish radical engaged in political publishing in the 90s; by 1799 he too was in the United States, where he became a defender of the Jefferson administration. John Lithgow, who became the editor of the *Temple of Reason* after Driscoll, was also an immigrant, probably from Scotland; in the US he was an advocate of large-scale manufacturing and a sharp critic of British policies; by 1802 he was affiliated with the Jeffersonians against Federalists, publishing with the encouragement of another immigrant, the Philadelphia-based publisher, Mathew Carey. Carey, with his brother James, had come to the US from Ireland in the early 1790s, and were later supporters of the United Irishmen.

Several scholars have argued that Reynolds was the author of *Equality*, while Michael Durey has claimed that John Lithgow wrote this utopia. We do not know definitively who authored *Equality*, but it was drafted within this environment of radical immigrants, and this broader radical tradition may help us think about the different concerns addressed in *Equality*. To be sure, the deist position is evident throughout, from the early

comment about religion contaminating everything it touches, to the later observation about the religious figures teaching ordinary people to accept “a great deal of evil” as their lot. One of the sharpest critiques of Christianity appears in the long account of the Lithconian origin story, in which the single days of God’s creations, as narrated in the book of Genesis, are refigured as “epocha” of millions of years of slow development, in keeping with the latest discoveries and theories of geology. Nonetheless, religious belief seems far from a central concern, while the narrator himself declares that sacred institutions are hard to locate in a society whose religion is essentially “the love of order and harmony.” The economic organization of society seems the primary concern, especially if one considers the Lithconian history. As mentioned earlier, society’s critical lapse is the creation of “the system of separate property,” a disastrous moment making possible the creation of the dangerous “idler” class, not to mention such barbarous practices as shopping. The meaning and social value of labor, furthermore, is practically the first twist in the plot: the narrator cannot buy his way through Lithconia, but must work steadily through his three months’ residence. Likewise, one of the first things we learn about the Lithconians is that their workday ends at four in the afternoon. As for the setting, the entire island is presented as “one large city upon a large scale,” and as a “vast manufactory” and “immense machine.”

This broad conception of the economy provides new ways of thinking about less obviously economic phenomena, like the printing press, the pursuit of artistic reputation, the rational development of some system of travel along “tracts,” or even improvements in the experience of friendship. It is also radical enough in scope to allow the author to explore how political problems seem quite different without private property as their

underlying basis. If the rich idlers and their obedient priests do not run things, who does? How are local communities organized? Who serves the society on political matters? In thinking about forms of democratic participation and public service, *Equality* is also able to invite reflection on the value of constitutions—an unchanging constitution is ridiculous—or forms of resistance to poor government, as when the “intelligent class” promotes social reasoning that encourages actions like jury nullification. We should also keep in mind how the preface introduces the utopia: through the problems of love, sexuality, and “the contract betwixt the sexes.” The first statistics resented suggest that in a given population of women “capable of enjoying the pleasures of love,” half will find marriage, a quarter will become prostitutes, and a quarter will be caught “in expectation.” As *Equality* later discusses, married women without rational avenues of separation will be miserable too.

Many of the later editions, it’s worth noting, emphasized *Equality*’s focus on prostitution while downplaying some of its economic radicalism. The text was republished as a pamphlet in Philadelphia in 1837, where it was associated with the Philadelphia Trades’ Union’s paper, the *National Laborer*. Shortly thereafter, it was serialized in London’s *The New Moral World: or Gazette of the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists* in late 1838-early 1839; this publication, associated with the Welsh radical Robert Owen’s utopian socialism, hailed *Equality* as “in many respects, far superior to the imaginary republics of Bacon, Harrington, or More” but nonetheless marred by the “imperfect perception of the real qualities of human nature.” The text appeared again in Boston in 1863, published by Josiah Mendum who also put out *The Boston Investigator*, a periodical devoted to “Universal Mental Liberty.” An historical reprint was published in Philadelphia in 1947, and since then it has been twice reprinted

in anthologies of utopian writings: a 1952 collection, *The Quest for Utopia: An Anthology of Imaginary Societies* (eds. Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick), published selections, and it appeared in the 1971 anthology, *American Utopias: Selected Short Fiction* (ed. Arthur Orcutt Lewis). Typically, the later editions have used the 1837 text, which recast the original periodical installments as chapters, retitled the work *Equality, or A History of Lithconia*, foregrounded the issue of prostitution, and muted some radical formulations. To give a simple example, the 1802 phrasing “when property became in common” was changed, in 1837, to “when things were put on a rational footing,” and the prefatory discussion of prostitution prompted several editorial footnotes about the alarming spread of prostitution and the state of a society in which “man sells his soul, and woman her body.” The following edition reproduces the original text of 1802-03, noting the breaks from one newspaper installment to the next.

Suggestions for further reading: In a review of a 1952 anthology of utopian writing, A.L. Morton argues that for late eighteenth century European radicals (who seemingly ignored the horrors of enslavement) “America and Utopia were almost identical,” in the sense that they “saw it less as a geographical entity than as a symbol of the coming liberation of humanity.” As such, Morton argues, “a whole host of utopian communities, Owenite, Fourierist, Icarian, Warrenite, and the rest were drawn thither as a place where their dreams could be realized. Similarly many of the literary utopias of the early nineteenth century—Spensonia, Lithconia, and New Britain—appear to be little more than the logical development of the free life of the American frontier, a life in which the freedom persisted after its hardships and barbarism had been overcome;” see, Morton, “Utopias Yesterday and Today,” *Science & Society* 17:3 (1953), 261. Charles

Burgess deftly traces how deist conceptions of science, education, and happiness inform the representation of Lithconian history in *Equality*. After suggesting that the serialized text was, perhaps, *The Temple of Reason*’s “one lasting contribution to the growing hope that society could be reconstructed by reasoned choice,” Burgess contends that “the chronicler of the Lithconians must have enjoyed working many of the latest scientific and rational speculations about the nature and genesis of man into his narrative;” see Burgess, “Thought in the New Nation: America as a Presbyterian’s City on a Hill or as A Deist’s Island in the Sea,” *Paedagogica Historica* 4:2 (1964), 336 & 334. In a survey of pre-1900 Anglophone utopian fiction, Lyman Tower Sargent notes that “*Equality* is also interesting in that it includes an ambivalence toward both urban and rural life that is a major secondary theme throughout the nineteenth century; in Lithconia the problem is solved by having houses spread equally over the entire country with no concentration that would constitute an urban area but without the isolation of rural life either;” see Sargent, “Themes in Utopian Fiction in English before Wells,” *Science Fiction Studies* 3:3 (1976), 278. The historian Richard J. Twomey considers *Equality* a pivot “in the transition from pre-industrial Jacobinism to the nineteenth-century critique of private property” because of how the text “traced the roots of social evil not to hereditary privileges or to private property in land but to private property itself and to the class structure which was its social formation,” in the course of a larger argument he makes about the international circuits of exchange conjoining late eighteenth-century radical republicans; see Twomey, *Jacobins and Jeffersonians: Anglo-American Radicalism in the United States, 1790-1820* (Garland, 1989), 214. Lyman Tower Sargent reexamined *Equality* in a later essay, as a foundational example of how nineteenth-century utopias “had a single economic message

throughout the century,” advocating the need to “socialize both production and distribution;” see Sargent, “Utopian Literature and Communitarian Experiments before Bellamy,” *ATQ* 3:1 (1989), 139-140. Michael Durey is less convinced of the importance of *Equality* because of the limited number of subscribers to *The Temple of Reason*, a fact which causes him to object to how “this obscure work of fantasy” has “been spliced into the socialist tradition of the United States” a “generation earlier than is customary” in order to draw “attention to interconnections between Jacobinism and socialism.” The main thrust of Durey’s argument, aside from countering “claims for the tract’s stature as a seminal text,” is to establish John Lithgow (and not James Reynolds) as *Equality*’s author; see Durey, “John Lithgow’s Lithconia: The Making and Meaning of America’s First ‘Utopian Socialist’ Tract,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 49:4 (1992), 676. The political theorist Gregory Claeys points to *Equality* as an American manifestation of late eighteenth century “Anglo-Scottish property debates” in which some dissenters had advocated for “restricting labor to four hours daily and for abolishing money;” see Claeys, “The Origins of the Rights of Labor: Republicanism, Commerce, and the Construction of Modern Social Theory, 1796-1805,” *The Journal of Modern History* 66:2 (1994), 254. Peter Linebaugh locates *Equality* as an example of the kind of thinking prevalent among dissent United Irishman who had migrated to the United States after their failed rebellion in 1798. In short, Linebaugh understands the text as “a coded intervention in an international political discussion,” one which embodied a “blithe disregard of the prevailing orthodoxy” and a decidedly “antinomian view;” see Linebaugh, “‘The Red-Crested Bird and Black Duck’—A Story of 1802: Historical Materialism, Indigenous People, and the Failed Republic,” *The Republic* 1:1 (2000), 107 & 108. Eric Slauter briefly mentions *Equality* as an

illustration of how “the age of the written constitution and the printed enumeration of rights was also an age deeply divided about textualizing rights;” in so doing, he positions the text as exemplifying an operant fantasy about “a citizenry that governed itself with few or even no written laws;” see Slauter, “Being Alone in the Age of the Social Contract,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62:1 (2005), 46-47. As part of his consideration of the work of “radical” early nineteenth century U.S. social reformers, John Carson argues that *Equality* presents “a kind of reworking of Rousseau’s tale of the move from the state of nature to civilization” with “an added twist,” in that it underscores that “a return to nature” could only “overcome civilization’s inequalities” if it was “guided by ‘the united reason of man;”” see Carson, *The Measure of Merit: Talents, Intelligence, and Inequality in the French and American Republics, 1750-1940* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 42. Anthony Galluzzo offers an extended reading of *Equality* in his 2008 dissertation. For Galluzzo, “the period of revolutionary upheaval book-ended by the American and French Revolutions witnessed a resurgence of the literary Utopia pioneered by Thomas More in the sixteenth century.” After countering Durey’s claims about Lithgow’s authorship, reasserting the attribution to James Reynolds, Galluzzo argues that *Equality* presents “a proto-socialist ideal,” which “inscribes the radicalization of Reynolds’ own Jacobin theories as they encountered the vicissitudes of political life in the early republic;” see, Galluzzo, *Revolutionary Republic of Letters: Anglo-American Radical Literature in the 1790s* (Proquest, 2008), 118 & 131. In his analysis of Barack Obama’s political philosophy, Mark S. Ferrara sketches the evolution of utopian thinking in the United States and notes that *Equality* was the “first full American literary utopia” and that it also established the idea of “a society where land was held in common, money was abolished, and women

had full rights,” as central to American utopian imaginings; see, Mark S. Ferrara, *Barack Obama and the Rhetoric of Hope* (McFarland, 2013), 18. Mark A. Lause briefly mentions “Lithconia” as an example of the “reasoned skepticism” that early nineteenth century “freethinkers” had about “capitalism,” making special note of how the text “dated the rebirth of” the Lithconian civilization “from their decision to think past the lies” of the “upper classes” and “share the land and the bounties of Nature;” see Lause, *Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class* (University of Illinois Press, 2015), 6. Charles Fanning references *Equality* as an example of the reformist writing published by “Irish intellectuals who fled to America” in 1798, suggesting that Reynold’s figuration of the Lithconian utopia as a “communal society” liberated from the influence of “priests, doctors, soldiers, and lawyers” reflects some of the central tenets of the United Irishmen; see Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years of Irish-American Fiction* (University of Kentucky: 2015), 9.

For a more detailed textual history of earlier editions of *Equality*, we recommend the introduction to the 1947 Prime Press edition, available through the Hathi Trust Digital Library (<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000782645>). For some consideration of deism as a movement, we recommend Adolf Koch’s *Republican Religion: The American Revolution and the Cult of Reason* (Holt & Co., 1933) and Herbert M. Morais’s *Deism in Eighteenth-Century America* (Columbia University Press, 1934). For further information on immigrant radicals, we recommend James Jacob and Margaret Jacob (eds.), *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (Humanities Press International, 1991), Michael Durey’s *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic* (University Press of Kansas, 1997), David A. Wilson’s *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic*

(Cornell University Press, 1998), and Seth Cotlar’s *Tom Paine’s America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (University of Virginia Press 2011). For a further discussion of the biography of James Reynolds, assumed to be the author of *Equality*, see Richard J. Twomey, *Jacobins and Jeffersonians: Anglo-American Radicalism in the United States, 1790-1820* (Garland, 1989) and chapter three of Anthony Galluzzo’s *Revolutionary Republic of Letters: Anglo-American Radical Literature in the 1790s* (Proquest, 2008). For background reading in eighteenth-century British utopian thinking, we recommend Gregory Claeys’ usefully annotated anthology *Utopias of the British Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[*The following introduction, dedication, and preface, appearing in the May 15, 1802 issue of The Temple of Reason, announced the serialization of Equality in subsequent issues.*]

A captain of a vessel has politely favoured us with a manuscript, found among the papers of a gentleman who died at sea, and which we have titled, *Equality a Political Romance*. We shall continue it in each successive number till the whole is laid before the public; and then, if a subscription can be obtained for 500 copies, at a price not exceeding half a dollar, it will be printed in a pamphlet by itself.¹ For the present we shall content ourselves with publishing only the dedication and the author's preface.

DEDICATION.

To Dr. Reynolds,²

SIR,

As you are the only person known to us, who has visited the country of Lithconia, we beg you will take the following work more immediately under your protection, as we are certain you can, better than any other man, vouch for its authenticity. Several great travellers, with whom we have conversed on the subject, have assured us that there is no such place on the maps; and that consequently there is no such place on the earth; but as we can make no such deduction, and are inclined to trust to the captain's veracity, we would refer those that are sceptically inclined to read

¹ *Printed in a pamphlet by itself*: this printing never happened; *Equality* was not published as a standalone pamphlet until the 1837 reprint discussed above.

² *Dr. Reynolds*: see the introductory note.

³ *It has been said...*: In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), the king of Brobdingnag tells Gulliver, "that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon

some of the former numbers of the Temple, where it is demonstrated that in large seas the water does not freeze, even under the Pole. We should not, therefore, be surprised, if the island where equality reigns be not some where thereabouts: be that as it may, it is certain, that if there be not such an island, it is possible there will be, some time or other.

We are your obliged friends,

THE EDITORS.

PREFACE.

IT has been said, that the man who could find out the means of making two blades of grass, or ears of corn, grow where there was only one, would deserve the gratitude and thanks of mankind:³ so it may, with equal truth, be asserted, that he who should be able to shew the manner of multiplying human enjoyments would deserve well of the human race. The *summum bonum*, like the philosophers stone,⁴ has been long sought for without being found. The only approach that has been made towards the discovery has been in the form of governments. A few are happy, or at least have sufficient enjoyment, under every possible form; but that is the most desirable, and what we should seek after with assiduity, which would diffuse enjoyments, rational and substantial enjoyments, among the greatest number of citizens. Men have some enjoyments which are founded in nature, and

a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together."

⁴ *Summum bonum*: the highest good; *Philosophers Stone*: a substance believed to have special alchemical properties which could transform inexpensive metals into gold.

others that are factitious or imaginary. If we take up those only which nature holds out, endeavour to multiply them, and make them common to the human race, we are then doing the greatest possible good. Friendship, love, and a well-regulated industry, are blessings which might amply compensate for all the evils which flesh is heir to, if we were suffered to enjoy them: but friendship is poisoned by self-interest and worldly pursuits—love loses its charms by restraint, and the fatal consequences flowing from illicit amours, and industry has been no where well regulated. Why should love ever be illicit? Nature is continually inviting us to the feast of love, while men are as sedulously pushing each other from the banquet: and is it not possible to prevent jarring interests from cutting the bands of friendship? If the construction of our political association be unfavorable to these enjoyments, in vain may we seek for the blessings of life. A society where friendships are with difficulty formed or retained, where love brings only a train of evils as, in some instances, a numerous family, in others disease and infamy, and where industry is wound up to oppression, can never be on a good construction. There may be abundance of wealth, but not much enjoyment. Is it living, to exist without friendship? Is life worth the possessing, without love? Do men enjoy themselves in either idleness or slavery? No: These are what we are always seeking after, but on finding that they elude our grasp, we lay the fault on the construction of the universe and the God of nature, when it is only in the folly of human institutions. Whatever is within the power of man, either as an individual or associated, would be folly to expect from the gods. Man must seek for resources in his own mind, when that fails, it is sufficient time to apply to heaven for assistance.—Inferior animals, without reason, or having very little, are formed in the perfection of their nature: but man, being endowed with reason, is furnished only with the materials of perfection, it is his duty to work upon these materials;

and it is for this reason that his affections are carried forward to millions of generations yet unborn, and that he feels a pleasure in being able to contribute his mite to their enjoyment. Next to the utility of multiplying the means of human enjoyment, is the endeavor to root out the malevolent passions, or remove their causes. Hatred, jealousy, pride, revenge, have their origin also in the imperfection of the social compact—We are all subject to these passions when placed in certain circumstances, and if by the constitution of society these circumstances are often recurring, we begin to think these passions are so implanted in our nature, that it is impossible to avoid them. The doctrine of waging an eternal warfare against the passions has not been successful; we would rather remove their causes than enter into such a conflict. One nation has obtained the character of being proud, another of being jealous, a third of cherishing a spirit of revenge. It is the same with individuals. What has given them this character, but the circumstances in which they have been respectively placed, and the nature of their institutions. In order to make an essential difference in the character of a nation, it must be accomplished by an alteration in the laws of descent, in religion, in the nature of the contract betwixt the sexes, or in the distribution of the political powers of the state. Where the laws of descent divide the estates among the children, there can be no family pride, and where there is no established religion, the cause of hatred and animosity, which always reigns betwixt those who hold opposite opinions, is totally removed. With respect to marriage, or a contract between the sexes: sometimes it has been a political and at other times a religious institution. Every thing that religion has touched it has contaminated. Under the specious pretext of giving purity to the conjugal embrace, the most brutal and unnatural practices have been forced upon the people. In a city of 50,000 inhabitants there must be twelve thousand women capable of enjoying the pleasures

of love; but, how have they managed the matter? Six thousand, more by chance than superior virtue, enjoy the sweets and sour of matrimony: three thousand live in expectation, and three thousand, as good as the rest, but more unfortunate, live in a state of shameful prostitution, a disgrace (not to themselves) but to the human understanding, for having so long neglected the most essential regulation in civil society, and for permitting the clergy to intermeddle with it. But those nations who have viewed the contract betwixt the sexes in a political aspect, have not been more successful in diffusing the blessing of love than the clergy, and the reason is obvious: to multiply enjoyments, or destroy malevolent passions, was not their object; they considered more the bringing up of children and the population of the state, than the happiness of the people; and they forced on the heads of families obligations which nature sufficiently enforces without the aid of human laws, without ever thinking of relieving them from any public burden. Among the Christians there is only one species of contract, that is, marriage with one woman for life; and this is the reason there is so much prostitution. Among the Mahometans⁵ there are several orders of wives, the children of whom are acknowledged by various rules—"It would be contrary to reason (says Montesquieu)⁶ that the law should stigmatize the children for what it approved in the father," and we may add, it is a shame that women should be stigmatized, by custom, for what is approved in a man. It would certainly be a pleasing reflection, if the necessity for prostitution could be cut off. It is a blot on the character of

⁵ Mahometans: Muslims

⁶ *Montesquieu*: The French political theorist Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu (1689-1755), best known for *De l'Esprit des Loix* (*The Spirit of the Laws*), popular in Anglo-America. The passage cited here appears in

civilization and on republicanism, and shews, though much has been gained to the enjoyments of man, yet, in this respect, that is, in the pleasure of love, we are yet Goths and Vandals.⁷

If the laws of Lithconia will throw any light upon this subject, it will be a sufficient recompence for all my trouble in writing an account of their customs and manners.

That we have gained considerably by a better distribution of the power of government cannot be denied. Institutions that bent down the moral faculties of man are not now so sacred, and may be touched with impunity; from this every thing may be expected, as it opens to the human faculties a new career which can only end in a state of perfect happiness.

THE AUTHOR.

[The following installment appeared in the May 22, 1802 issue, under the heading "EQUALITY—A POLITICAL ROMANCE." While 19C reprintings added chapter breaks, all subsequent installments in *The Temple of Reason* used the simple title heading, generally with "[Continued.]" as well.]

IN those regions lately discovered by political philosophers, there is an island, the singularity of whose government and manners deserves the attention of the curious, and the particular notice of those who would wish to make discoveries in those latitudes in time coming.

Book XXIII, "Of Laws in the Relation They Bear to the Number of Inhabitants."

⁷ *Goths and Vandals*: two "barbaric" populations responsible for the collapse of classical Roman culture.

Having been engaged in exploring those seas where lie the countries of Utopia, Brobdignag, Lilliput, &c.¹ and touching to take in fresh water at an island, which I afterwards found to be called Lithconia, I was so struck with the order and regularity with which every thing was conducted, that I was resolved to stay some time amongst them, to observe whether there was any thing in their constitution or form of government, worthy of being recorded for the instruction of our modern politicians.

For that purpose I prevailed upon the master of the vessel to permit me to remain on the island, and call for me on his homeward passage. This he readily agreed to, being equally curious with myself to know some further particulars respecting a people so apparently happy. As soon as I had packed up what necessaries I supposed would be wanting, the boat was ordered to carry the captain and myself on shore, he being willing to see what reception I should meet with from the natives, upon their being acquainted with my intention of staying among them. It was about four o'clock P. M. A great number of the people came down to meet us on the beach: I was surprised that there should be more this time than ever I had seen before, at any of our former landings: but I afterwards found that it was past their hour of labour, and that they were then beginning their sports and pastimes, as is their custom, every day in fine weather, after the hour of four o'clock.

We immediately informed them of my intention, upon which I was conducted to a man, who seemed to be past the prime of life, but active, healthy and robust. His first enquiry was, how I intended to employ myself during my residence on the island? I informed him, that I wished to travel, and visit the principal towns

and villages, in order to make such observations on the manners, customs, and laws of the people, as my time and abilities would permit.—When the elder understood this, he let me know the impracticability of my scheme, by reason of my not being furnished with those marks or signs, by which alone I could obtain provisions on my journey. These signs I immediately supposed to be money; upon which I drew out my purse and shewed him an hundred guineas, which I imagined would be a sufficient passport to every town in the island, at least, for the short time I had to stay. He smiled at my simplicity; and, at the same time, gave me to understand, that such pieces of metal would be of no service to me in the country of Lithconia. But the good man, when he saw my disappointment and embarrassment, bid me have comfort, for that I surely would be willing, as he saw I was able, to perform some labour, at the appointed times, which alone could obtain for me the privilege of travelling. By making further inquiries I found, that there was no money in the country, that the lands are in common, and that labour is a duty required of every citizen, till a certain age, and that duty being performed, the remainder of his time is his own. I therefore agreed to take my share of labour, being convinced I should have sufficient time to spare both for excursion and observation.

Four hours each day is set aside for work; this I could easily accomplish, and walk a moderate day's journey afterwards—and this is the manner in which I spent my time, during a three months residence on the island: in the forenoon I performed my work, which was sometimes in the field, and often in the *work-shops*, where

¹ *Utopia, Brobdignag, Lilliput*: *Utopia* was the name of Thomas More's 1516 ideal society, and Brobdignag and Lilliput were fictional societies visited in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

shoes are made, of which trade I had some knowledge, having served part of an apprenticeship to it before I went to sea.

Having obtained my certificate and dined, I would walk 16 or 20 miles along the best roads in the world, before supper, to obtain which I had nothing to do, but present my certificate to the *Menardon*, or director of labour, who, immediately, shewed me where I might sup, sleep, and what I should employ myself in next day. Sometimes I stayed several days in one place, and at other times I would travel several days successively; but when I had an intention of doing the latter, I used to perform two days labour in one, for as many days as I intended to travel; this being noted in my certificate, gained me permission to travel on, without any interruption of labour.

There is the same regulation for the natives. No man is permitted to do another's work, though he may anticipate his own—the practice of suffering the work allotted to one man to be performed by his neighbour, was formerly, say the Lithconians, the beginning of barter, and barter produced money, which was the root of all evil. Therefore, if a man were to perform three days labour in one, he cannot bestow it upon any individual, supposing it a thing which might be separated from other labour; for industry is a duty which every man owes the state, and which he is not required to perform, unless he be able. There is, therefore, no occasion to perform it by proxy.

Nothing but fame or love of country, can induce a Lithconian to extra labour, but these two passions frequently produce great exertions. All the ornamental part of the country, whether it be the decorations of buildings, or statues and paintings, are all produced by these principles—for the regulations of the state require only the useful.

A clock-maker made a curious clock at leisure hours: the metal, the wood and tools, were all the property of the

community—he could not purchase them. By making the materials into a clock, he had only improved the goods of the community, and, as he could not, in justice, bestow the clock upon any person, it became the property of the state, and no people being more fond of public ornament than the Lithconians, it was put up in the great work-shop for workers in metal, adorned with some elegant mason work, and a handsome copy of verses engraved underneath, celebrating the genius of the artists, and transmitting their names to posterity, together with that of the poet. The whole was the extra labour of young men, stimulated by no other motives than the passions above mentioned.

There are no towns or markets in all the island of Lithconia—the whole is only one large city upon a grand scale; for the roads, from one end of the island to the other, have houses (with a small opening betwixt each house) on both sides all the way, and there are fifty such roads from north to south, the length of the island, and upwards of 200 from east to west.

The houses are all built upon one plan, two stories high, which contain nine sleeping apartments, a kitchen and public hall, with offices behind: no houses are built on the back ground, except for cattle; so that there is no such thing as a cluster of houses that may be called a town. At the crossings a square of 100 yards is left vacant, without any houses, adjoining to which the public buildings, such as granaries, work-shops, &c. are regularly erected.

I found in the history of the country, that there were formerly large towns, as in Europe; but the evils, natural and moral, which are the concomitant of great cities, made them think of abandoning them, and building in the manner above described—but what finally determined them, was, an earthquake, which destroyed 1000 houses, a fire which burned 3000 in the principal city, and the plague which swept away 500,000 inhabitants, from the

different cities of the empire. But since the people have spread themselves over the country, no such calamities have afflicted them.

As to markets, there are three large stores in each district; one for provisions of every kind, one for clothing, and a third for household utensils and furniture. The keepers of provisions, whose stores are supplied from the field, send round, twice a week, in covered carts, to each house, every necessary for the consumption of a family. Clothing is distributed once a year, and household utensils as they are wanted; so that no idle people are seen lounging behind the counters, anxiously expecting customers, whom they may impose upon. Two men will distribute as much provisions, as half the hucksters, grocers, bakers, and butchers, in Philadelphia; and two more can distribute as much clothing in one month as all the Quakers in Pennsylvania will sell in a year.—Hence that host of shopkeepers which seem so necessary in barbarous countries, is here unknown.

The agriculturist and manufacturer has only to deposit his commodities in the public stores; he has nothing to do with the knavery of merchandise, and the words, “a good market,” if such a term were in use here, could only have one idea, viz, *a plentiful supply*; whereas it is well known, that what is a good market for the seller, is a bad one to the buyer in all the disjointed countries in Europe and America.

Every person above the age of fifteen, has a separate apartment—from five to fifteen, two sleep together; and children under five sleep in the mother’s chamber. They are distributed in the houses as chance, passion or accident direct, male and female promiscuously.

² *When property became in common*: this phrase was changed to “when things were put on a rational footing” in the later 19C printings, a sign of how the 1802 work was deradicalized.

[To be continued.]

[*The following installment appeared in the May 29, 1802 issue.*]

Marriage, formerly, I understand, was held as sacred here as in other countries; but when property became in common,² it fell gradually into disuse—for children being the property of the state, educated and brought up at the public expense, and as women could live as well single as united, young people were seldom at the trouble to make such a contract. Children were born, and no man thought it his business or interest to inquire who was the father. But a thousand inconveniences arose out of this legislative negligence, which, for the sake of order, and to make love a blessing to society, it was necessary to correct.—The great evil that called for legislative interference was, the frequent quarrels that took place between rival lovers.

Weak women were too often unable to determine betwixt two admirers, which should have the preference, and it was necessary, for the good of society, that she should decide. To accomplish this, it was decreed, that all the young women of each district, who had arrived at a certain age, should, on the first day of the year after, inscribe the name of her lover in the matrimonial register of the district.—Next day, all the young men, unengaged, go to examine this register, and as many as are satisfied with the girls who have chosen them, signify their assent to the recorder. After which it would be a crime, punishable by imprisonment, and

sometimes flagellation,³ if either of the parties should be found to admit, or give encouragement to another lover.

This kind of marriage, however, occasions no separation of property from the stock of the community, nor any of the property of the parties.—They continue to live in separate apartments, and never sleep together only every seventh night.—Whether this last regulation is a positive law, or only a political custom, I could never learn; but it certainly has the happiest effects. It seems to be an institution or custom, calculated to make the most of love, the only solace of mankind, and to make it last to the longest possible period of our existence. Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that lovers thus united, become dissatisfied with each other, and that for the happiness of one or both of the parties, a separation is necessary.-- --- In that case the party aggrieved announces his or her intention of erasing the opposite party's name from the matrimonial register—four weeks is then given for further deliberation, and if at the end of that time the same resolution is persisted in the process of separation is recorded, and the parties are at liberty to inscribe other names on the register.

When a young woman is within three months of her time, she announces the same to the senior, who has the immediate direction of her work, who exempts her from attendance, and a nurse is allowed, if necessary, and everything else convenient to accommodate her; and if she have a safe delivery, there is always rejoicings, entertainments and mirth among the neighbours.

Here are no parents repining at the increase of a family, from the fear of being unable to support them.

Here the laws do not make the trembling female swear to the father of her child; for no man can have any reason to deny or confess his offspring—and child-murder, a crime so frequent in barbarous nations—a crime which the happier females of Lithconia would shudder at the idea of, is totally unknown.

Here there is no occasion for asylums for the wretched and outcast female, because none are wretched or outcast.

Here also there is no seduction, except it be on the part of the women—they are the only seducers; their bewitching manners had nearly seduced my unwary heart;—unaccustomed to see nature unveiled, I was insensibly allured by their native and artless simplicity, how much more charming than the studied coyness of our English fair: and I must say, that the freedom and gaiety of their manners made me regret, more than anything else, my departure from the country. Every where the female character is superior to the male, but here, women are transformed to angels.

Every evening the chief of my entertainment proceeded from them. They would invite me to dance on the green, an amusement which was practised every fine evening, and they seemed to take a pleasure in shewing me the beauties of nature and the decorations of the public buildings, such as work-shops, &c. At supper they vied with each other in helping me to the most delicate morsels; and I was often charmed with the soft music of their fine voices: some singing in their own apartments, and others in the hall or public room; for in each house there is a hall for public recreation free to all. But no person presumes to enter, or even make advances, towards the private chamber of another, without being asked. *These* are sacred to retirement, to love and friendship.

³ *A crime, punishable by imprisonment, and sometimes flagellation:* this phrasing was also changed in some later editions, replaced by the milder “regarded as a high misdemeanor.”

In short, the duties of hospitality in this country seemed to be given up to the women, and they are not backward in performing it; yet when I made this observation to a Lithconian, he remarked, that the men were equally attentive to women who were strangers, and so I found afterwards.

Friendship I found to be more frequent and durable here than in any other country. For, if we consider that it is the equality of men's conditions and the similarity of their pursuits, that unite men in the bonds of friendship, we shall not be surprised to find attachments more lasting in this country, where all men are equal. What is it that produces false and inconstant friends in barbarous nations, but the fickleness of fortune (occasioned by a want of government) which is forever altering men's conditions and changing their pursuits. It is well known that a rich and poor man, not having the same views, nor the same objects to pursue, are never united in the intimate bonds of friendship: but in this country, where there are no rich or poor, and where the terms are even unknown, friendships are as durable as the existence of the parties. Hence I heard no complaints of false and deceitful friends in all my travels through this island, a theme so frequent in every other country.

And so much are their institutions favorable to friendship, that if two persons of congenial spirits meet, and find a pleasure in the company and conversation of each other, they have the liberty of dwelling in the same house if they please;—for a person may remove to any part of the island, or to any house where there is a vacancy: nothing can hinder him but the want of a certificate that he has performed the accustomed labour; having done *that* he is at perfect liberty; nor has the senior the power (if it could be supposed they were willing) to refuse a certificate. Hence the houses are in general occupied by nine or ten persons, whom love or friendship has drawn together. If any difference arises (which is but seldom)

one of the parties retires to another house, where he thinks of meeting with people more congenial to his temper and disposition.

Every year at the end of harvest, all the men and women above 50 years, assemble together in their respective districts; the oldest presides and the youngest is the secretary: those above 60 may attend or not as they please.

Those who have the superintendence of the work-shops, the care of the warehouses and granaries, and the distribution of every necessary, being all above fifty years, and necessarily present in the assembly, give in their accounts of the produce of the fields, of the work-shops, of the consumption, and of what remains in stock. Likewise what has been received from and delivered to other districts; all which is laid before the meeting. The secretary makes out a general return, which is carried, with other matters, to the grand assembly of the ancients, in the centre of the island, by the oldest man of each district, who chuses to go, above 60; and if all above 60 decline, which they have the privilege of doing, then he or she that is nearest that age is obliged to go. It therefore happens that all the public business of every kind generally falls upon those betwixt 50 and 60.

Here is no election, and consequently no intriguing for places. Every man or woman, if they live long enough, will succeed in their turn to the duties of administration. None can be excepted but those who are suffering the punishments due to crimes.

Elections for the purpose of chusing men of great abilities, or men best acquainted with the interests of nations, or who are most conversant in the constitution and laws of the state; or, those who have much at stake in the country, and are supposed on that account to have the greatest interest in its prosperity and grandeur—is quite unnecessary here. Every man's stake in the country is equal. The laws are not contained in huge volumes—they are written in the hearts of the Lithconians. Every child of five

years can repeat, without book, the whole code: and the abilities required of those whose duty it is to attend the grand assembly, is not so great as the ordinary duties of superintending work-shops, instructing youth, adjusting differences, &c. require. Besides, those who have a right to attend the grand assembly never think of making new laws—they assemble to fulfil the laws already made, which say, “Let thy neighbours partake of thy abundance, that thou mayest partake of theirs.”

In this meeting the accounts from every district are read over, and the wants of one directed to be supplied out of the abundance of another. It is also settled, what quantity of each article of necessity should be produced, or manufactured, in the districts for the ensuing year, and likewise, what quantity may be exported or imported.

These matters being arranged, every one retires to his home, and communicates the result to a meeting of the seniors in his district, who make the necessary regulations for the reception of such articles as they may want, and for the conveyance of the superfluities to the districts requiring them.

This whole country has the appearance of one vast manufactory, conducted by one mind; and although it was some time before I could understand the motions of this immense machine, it being so new, and what I had no previous conception of; yet after I had got a perfect comprehension of all its parts, it appeared much more simple than any other form of government in the world.

Labour is performed by every citizen equally—The exceptions are—

1st. Infants under five years.

2d. Women in the last three months of their time, and nine months afterward, if they have a happy delivery.

3d. All sick persons whatever.

4th. Every man and woman above 50 years, who have in right of their age, the direction of labour; the instruction of youth; the distribution of goods; and the exercise of the judicial powers.

As to what in other countries is called the legislature, there is no such thing, unless we call the district meetings, which have been already noticed, a legislative body, or the grand assembly of ancients: but both these bodies have more the appearance of an executive deliberating upon the best mode of carrying the principles of justice into execution, than a legislature.

By the fundamental laws, or constitution of Lithconia, crimes are divided into two classes—personal and public. Personal comprehending every thing which may be done to injure the person of another—such as murder, maiming, striking, abusive language, and want of respect or attention. Public crimes are such things as injure the community; as idleness, waste and negligence, or disobedience to the command of the seniors.

In personal crimes (except murder) he who receives the offence must be the accuser: but for murder or public crimes, any of the elders may, and it is their duty, to accuse. The punishment for murder is death—every other crime is punished at the discretion of the jurors. For personal crimes the party offended may forgive—but for crimes against the society or public, there is no pardon.

In every district there is a person who is called the serastedor or recorder, whose business it is to keep a list of the jurors, and the record of the trials.

Every man and women in the district, above 50, are ranged alphabetically in the list of jurors: on each trial fifteen are taken as they stand on the list—every succeeding trial has five struck off and five added, which makes every juryman stand three trials. In pronouncing a man guilty, they must be unanimous—but in affixing the punishment, the majority is sufficient. There is no other judge. The recorder has no further business but to record, minutely, the

proceedings, and receive the verdict. The oldest man of the jury pronounces the sentence.

As there is no such thing as debtor and creditor, so there is no property to contend for, consequently no lawyers.

As every trial commences immediately after the accusation, and as no person can possibly escape from justice, so there are no jails, which are the nurseries of vice in barbarious nations.—To give instruction and advice being the duty of the seniors, there is no occasion for priests or physicians, and it being every man's duty to defend his country, there can be no soldiers by profession.

(To be continued.)

[The next installment appeared in the June 5, 1802 issue.]

The period of life of *one* man is employed in nearly the same manner as any other. To give the history then, of one Lithconian, is to describe the manners of the nation.

Children, as has been already observed, until five years old, remain with the mother. From their earliest age they are instructed in the principles of equal rights—No such words as *mine* and *thine* are ever heard. Ours and yours are words which are made use of, when speaking of districts, and even that phraseology is discouraged; and, consequently, not reckoned so polite as to mention the name of the district.

Children are also taught to repeat by memory, the short sentences which are the principles of their government—their politics and morals—upon which the verdicts of juries are founded, and which serve them for a constitution and laws. For the

Lithconians are not a people that are progressing from a state of nature, to what is vulgarly called, civilization; on the contrary, they are progressing from civil society to a state of nature, if they have not already arrived at that state: for in the history of the country, many and surprising revolutions are recorded.

But previous to the revolution which settled the present system of things, there was a wonderful propensity or desire, in the men of those times, to form constitutions, or fundamental laws, which *should*, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, be unalterable and eternal.⁴

History records no less than ten infallible constitutions, all declared to be founded on the rights of man, in the short period of forty years; each of which, in its turn, gave way to its successor, and was buried in oblivion. After the failure of the first ten, the idea of infallibility was abandoned, and the period of their existence was then limited to a certain number of years, when a revisal was to take place. This scheme also failing, it was at last discovered, that the will of the people was paramount to every system of laws; and the only good thing produced by this fermentation of opinion and changes of government, was, that of getting the people into the habit of peaceably expressing their will, and of having it accurately known—this was indeed one great point gained, as it was the first step to every subsequent improvement.

But quitting this digression, let us proceed in shewing how the life of a Lithconian is spent. At five he begins to be under the direction of one of the seniors, who instructs him *gradually* in all the duties of a citizen. His first task is to work at some easy employment one hour a day, and one hour more is employed in learning to read;

⁴ *The laws of the Medes and Persians*: a proverbial phrase in Anglo-American political writing, almost always used to criticize the idea of unchanging law, with reference to two past empires centered in present-day Iran.

the rest of his time is spent in play in the open air. These are the duties of the sixth year.

The seventh year, half an hour per day is added to the time required for work; and so on, half an hour every year, till it comes to four per day,—which has been found, upon experience, to be sufficient for all the labour of the state.

All labour is performed either in the public work-shops_ or in the fields. At my different stages I made a point of going thro' as many of the work-shops as my time would allow, there being always in them something curious to be seen, if it were nothing but the order and regularity with which every thing was conducted—here was always industry, without bustle, hurry, or confusion.

Instead of workshops being mean, cold and inconvenient, as in other countries, I found them elegant, well finished, and furnished with every convenience. The first I entered was the joiners' shop of the district; one hundred benches were ranged on each side of the lower apartment: on the second storey were as many lathes and benches for turning. Adjoining was a large hall for placing the work when finished, and previous to its distribution.—The company of so many young active men at work together, makes labour rather a recreation than otherwise—and the senior who has the superintendence of the shop feels delighted, at the alacrity and promptness with which his orders are obeyed—no bad debts sour his mind—he rejoices in the ease, independence, and superiority, which crowns his old age.

But the spinning and weaving far surpassed my conception—both which are performed by the power of water. Cotton, woollen and linen, are all spun by machinery, but in different districts. In the fourth part of the island, where cotton grows, there it is spun and wove. In the middle of the country, where there are the best sheep, *there* wool is manufactured into cloth; and

towards the north, where the land is suitable for flax, linen, is the staple commodity.

The looms are also moved by the force of water, in which cloth is wove ten yards wide. A great deal of time, attention and labour is saved in all their manufactories, by not having any necessity for weighing the materials, upon delivery to the workmen, and entering the same in books—Hence there are no clerks employed, as in other countries, merely to keep men honest: indeed the temptation to steal, or embezzle the materials, or finished work of the manufactories, is reduced to nothing, since no man can appropriate any thing to his own use, or conceal it from the public eye.

From the age of 15, he begins to be taught the nicer branches of the arts: at 18 he is generally considered a finished adept in his profession—he amuses himself with the use of arms; is fond of all kinds of exercise and diversion; attachments take place with some favorite female; and in this manner his life is spent betwixt love, friendship, amusements, and the arts, till he arrives at fifty years, when he undertakes the direction and management of some portion of the national industry, or assists in the instruction of youth, and the distribution of justice. At 60, no social duties are any longer required, though they are not forbidden him; and peace, serenity, and independence, accompany him through the remainder of his days.

Such is the life of the Lithconians.

Poverty and riches, as may be easily conceived, are words not to be found in the language. There are no distinctions, but what are founded in nature; no artificial inequalities. When a person's rank in society is mentioned, it is only by the natural distinctions of infancy, youth, manhood, and seniority—Hence the sources of the malevolent passions are dried up. No man looks upon his neighbours' riches with envy, nor with contempt upon another's poverty. The only pride or ambition is, in that of excelling in the

mechanic arts, or handling with dexterity the tools of a man's profession.

Family pride has long been extinct in this island; there being only one great family which comprehends all the Lithconians. Even national pride is unknown, as they have never been at war for many ages. So their seniors have not had occasion to deceive them by a false estimation of themselves, or degradation of their neighbours. They have no *natural enemies*, as is frequent with barbarous nations. The people of the neighbouring islands, or the more remote inhabitants of the continent, are all naturally *friends* (without being allies) of Lithconia, however they may disagree and quarrel among themselves.

Variety of dress and equipage is also unknown. Every citizen having a certain quantity of clothes distributed to him at stated periods, the whole country appears almost in uniform—The only difference that I could perceive was, that some people, better economists than others, had their clothes fresh and clean, consequently had a better appearance. But the women, without exception, are remarkable for economy and neatness in dress.—In their head-dress I remarked a fanciful variety, which I found to be decorations of their own invention—this being the only part of their dress which is subject to fashion or fancy.

The whole island may be compared to a city spread over a large garden: not a spot can be seen but what is in a high state of cultivation. Every district is divided into as many fields as is thought convenient and advantageous for culture, and numbered from one upwards: each field is entered in a book—on one page the crops and management, and on the other the produce. The management for each succeeding year is determined at the annual meeting of each district; a matter which is easily settled, as the approved routine of crops is always preferred, except in a limited number of fields, reserved for experiments.

The old men who have the superintendance of those fields, may, if necessary, demand from the workshops, as many hands over and above the ordinary agriculturists, as will execute the intended labour.

Any man who finds out a method of making the soil produce more abundantly, may, if he pleases, be exempt from work.—He who invents a machine, to facilitate or expedite labour, has the same reward. Here are no idle disputes about the propriety of introducing machines into practice: no vain fears of depriving the poor of work, and of the means of subsistence. Every man is convinced, that he who can make useful labour more easy and expeditious, or who makes three grains of wheat to grow where there were only two, augments the number of the enjoyments of every Lithconian, and deserves the applause of his country. Therefore, no country in the world has such excellent tools, or perfect machinery, as are to be found here. Nothing excites ridicule so much as a man labouring with a bad instrument, or machine out of repair. On the other hand, nothing seems to give a Lithconian so much pleasure, as the sight of a dextrous workman, using an excellent machine.

The genius of this people has been displayed in nothing so much as in their aqueducts, public baths, canals, and roads, which excel every thing of the kind I ever saw: besides, they have a kind of road peculiar to this country, for the transportation of heavy commodities in those places where a level may be, without much difficulty, obtained, yet not sufficient water for the supply of a canal. These are first made upon a perfect level, by means of bridges, mounds of earth, or cutting a little from the tops of hills—then a tract of cast iron is laid for each wheel, which is concave, and rises above the road about a foot; the carriages having their wheels made convex to fit the tract, so that the carriage runs upon a smooth surface, on level ground, and by this means one horse can draw as

much as four on the ordinary roads. One horse carriages are in most use here; but one man will conduct five or six along these roads, at those seasons of the year when the interchange of commodities takes place between the districts: at other times the roads are not much occupied, except in leading to and from the fields, or on the *seventh* day, which, as in other countries, is a day of cessation from labour—and, consequently, devoted to pleasure and recreation. It is on those days that they mount their wicker coach, which is impelled forward, not by the power of horses, but by the force of the persons within, who, turning a crank, gives motion to the axle-tree and wheels fixed thereon. Along the roads above described, these carriages move with incredible swiftness, and are turned at pleasure, by the action of a set of reins, upon the fore wheels, which are made, as in other four-wheel'd carriages.

These roads, though they require a great industry to perfect them at first, are easily kept in repair. I have been told, that one of them extends above 500 miles, besides the smaller branches which run into it.

Here are no idle people employed to collect tolls, nor annuitants⁵ living in splendid idleness upon the profits of these tolls; indeed it would be endless to recount the many institutions which are found necessary to barbarous countries, to patch up a bad government; but which are not wanting, because unnecessary, in the perfect government of Lithconia. For example—of what use would an infirmary be here, where not only the sick, but those in health, are all maintained from the public stock—or an insurance company from fire, where no loss can fall upon an individual—Or banks, where there are no bills to discount—Or hospitals for the poor, where there are no poor—Or for orphans, where there are no

⁵ *Annuitants*: people granted an annual salary for filling a position, here, for example, toll-collector

orphans—Or Magdalens,⁶ where there are no prostitutes to reform. In a word, there is no charitable institution of any kind. In this country charity remains where nature placed it—in the heart.

Although they are not destitute of religion, I could perceive neither an order of men, nor a place, dedicated to divine worship. That part of the duty of the priesthood, which consists in teaching morality, is chiefly practised by the old men, who have made eloquence their favorite pursuit.

The principal theme of their declamation, is the evil of idleness, and waste of the public stores—from whence (say they) proceeds the judgement of famine, upon the whole land. Indeed their morality is so intimately interwoven with their constitution and laws, that a stranger would find it a hard matter to distinguish whether their discourses belonged properly to law or religion—whether it was a priest, or lawyer, that spoke—when it was neither one nor the other. Their religion is the love of order and harmony, their constitution and laws, is that order and harmony systemized.

As to the mysterious rites of their religion, which I did not understand, I shall say nothing, only that they appeared to consist chiefly of vocal and instrumental music and dancing, in which every person joined, and was always performed in the open air. Every instrument was also equally sacred. The organ has no peculiar privileges here. String'd instruments have the preference of wind instruments, in general, because the performer can play and sing at the same time; for without a vocal accompaniment, instrumental, in the opinion of the Lithconians, is only half music. When they play in concert, which they sometimes do, with a thousand voices and instruments; it is always some studied piece adapted to the occasion—the grandeur and harmony of which would astonish an

⁶ *Magdalens*: reformed prostitutes, so-called after Mary Magdalen, who appears in the Christian gospel of John 20:1-18.

inhabitant of the barbarous nations of Europe, unaccustomed as they are, to such concerts. But when an individual performs it is always an extempore piece,⁷ except when they are either learning to play, or practicing for the public festivals; for it would be deemed puerile to amuse themselves with the lessons even of the greatest masters. The subject of these extempore pieces is always love, or religion, or more properly devotion; for they seem to have no idea of any other subject being adapted for music; and therefore they have no hunting, historical, drinking or war songs; nevertheless beautiful descriptions of nature are not wanting in their songs of love. Music may be considered here as a principal branch of liberal education; if the word *liberal* be a proper expression where a thing is rather *taken* than *bestowed*.

Education, or instruction, is bestowed or held out, to every member of the community alike; but some, as in every other country, not having so great a genius, talent or capacity, for knowledge, as others, will not imbibe so great a quantity.

[To be continued.]

[*The following installment appeared in the June 12, 1802 issue.*]

Painting, and the lovers of that sublime art, are held in high estimation. All the workshops are ornamented with the labors of young men and women, whose genius had led them to study that noble art.

There are also few young men or women, of bright parts, but who are taught the art of printing—there being one printing-press to each district, with a sufficient number of types of various founts. Every person is at liberty to use them under the direction of a senior, and to throw off a limited number of sheets at spare hours,

of any piece of his own production; but if the work be judged of sufficient importance, by the grand assembly, and time can be spared from the necessary labours of the state, it is then ordered that a certain number of copies be printed in the ordinary time of labour, and distributed to the districts.

It has been already observed, that there are in Lithconia, no soldiers by profession; but it must also be observed, that every man is a defender of his country, and obliged to learn the art of acting in the field together, as soldiers in other countries; for, under the old government, and during the infancy of the new, they had been so frequently attacked by their ambitious neighbours, that it was found necessary to continue the use of arms.

Every male is furnished with a complete set of arms and accoutrements, as soon as he arrives at the age of 18: for two years he is considered as in a state of pupilage. After twenty years every man is classed in different requisitions—The first from 20 to 25; the second from 25 to 30; the third from 30 to 35; and the fourth from 35 to 40—and the last class includes all the healthy male citizens above forty.

When the first requisition is called out, they are officered by the oldest men of the second, and when the second are called out, they are in like manner officered by the oldest men of the third, and so on—but when the nation rises in mass, all the officers are taken from the senior class, or men above 50—And at all times the commander of any expedition, consisting of 1000 men, is taken from the class of seniors. Nothing can be so easy as to raise and organize an army upon this plan.

Upon the first supposition of an invasion, the first requisitions are ordered to be in readiness, to march towards that quarter, from whence the attack is expected, together with all those

⁷ *Extempore*: without preparation

in their 30th year—these are all officers, and the whole is divided into as many small divisions as there are officers: Every thousand is then put under the command of a senior, who organizes his regiment in the following manner: The right wing, consisting of 500 men, is commanded by the oldest man among the class of officers, and the left wing by the next eldest—he next divides each wing into two grand divisions, giving the command of these to the four next eldest—He then proceeds to divide each grand division into two divisions, and gives the command of these to the eight next eldest, and so on, continually dividing till there are no officers left. All of whom are armed with long pikes.

Formerly, when an invasion had actually taken place, the men of the second requisition were generally called on, and they were either marshaled into separate regiments, or mixed with the first requisition, as was deemed most advantageous for defence or annoyance; but, in general, they were kept separate. I was not informed of their having any cavalry, for the purpose of fighting, but the troops at a distance from the scene of action, were often transported thither on horseback.

Though they have not had occasion to marshal an army of late years, their young men still learn the art of war. They are taught to fire six times in a minute, and to perform various evolutions—to advance or retreat with either a more extended or more contracted front—to wheel upon the right or left flank, or upon the center, in order to change their position—all which is performed without any word of command or beat of drum. A standard, with two crosses, is lifted up in the centre, to which all the officers eyes are directed. The first is the signal of attention, which shews the crosses in their natural position—they are then moved by pulleys and strings, which pass down the side of the shaft of the standard, and being pulled by the operator at the order of the commander, throws the crosses into various figures, expressive of the movement he means should be

performed. Each officer has small crosses upon his pike, with which he repeats the signals to his division. All which can be easily done amidst the greatest confusion and noise of musquetry, cannon, or the cries and groans of the dying. They have signals performed by lights for the night also.

While the island had foreign possessions during the old form of government, they kept up a powerful fleet at an amazing expence, and it was at that time deemed the only sure defence of the island; but one of their wise reformers, in a small pamphlet, ridiculed the folly of going out to fight their enemies upon the ocean, when they had no longer distant possessions to maintain, with so much success, and demonstrated the wisdom of waiting till their invaders should actually land, when they might be so easily driven into the sea, that the Lithconians agreed to burn the whole fleet, which they actually put in force. Since which they have never thought of fighting upon an element, which has, in its own nature, evils and dangers sufficient, without adding that moral evil, *war*, to the catalogue.

This political philosopher demonstrated, that no nation, who has not distant foreign possessions, has any occasion for ships of war, even if the sea-coast was ever so extensive—and that it would be cheaper, and more certain, to defend the country on shore, than at sea—And in answer to those who objected, that commerce could not be so well defended, it was observed, that commerce was not, particularly, for the benefit of one nation; but for the reciprocal advantage of all; and that no individual nation could expect to monopolize the trade of intelligent nations, by warfare, although ignorant countries have been, in former times, deluded and over-reached by a superior naval force. Such an instance was never more to be expected in the enlightened state in which nations are at this day—as the juggler hath no more power when his tricks are known. While there were wild and barbarous

nations to discover, conquer, and keep in awe, a navy might be of use; but since the world has been discovered, and considerably enlightened, those nations who have a large navy, may, as it is said of Alexander, sit down and weep, that there are no more worlds to conquer; for upon such enterprises their navies depend, as well as formerly did his conquering army.

Such was the subject of the arguments adduced by this political reformer, enforced with such a vein of irony and wit as did not fail, (bursting from the bonds of prejudice as they were) to convince the Lithconians.

[*The following segment also appeared in the June 12, 1802 issue, but separated by a double line and with the following heading.*]

HISTORY
OF THE
LITHCONIANS.

THAT strange propensity in all nations, of tracing their history to the remotest antiquity, is also to be found in Lithconia.—Like the Jews, they commence the history of their nation, with a fabulous account of the creation. Their first chapter runs so much in the style of the first of Genesis, that if there had followed an account of the fall of man, and the flood, we should have been led to think, that the one had been taken from the other—but of these events no mention is made, neither have they any account of a race of giants, or of the sons of God being smitten with the fairness of the daughters of men,⁸ so that we must conclude, notwithstanding

⁸ *Giants...*: these are allusions to passages like Genesis 6:4, which reads, “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to

the similarity, that the first historians of Lithconia were totally unacquainted with the writings of Moses.

Although I only intend to give an abridgement of the histories I have read, and that from memory only, I cannot resist the desire I have of giving the world a few verses of the first chapter as I read it myself—it is in these words.

When the gods began to create the planetary system, this world was only a round globe of liquid matter, of a diameter four times larger than the earth is, moving in the immensity of space, void of inhabitants, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And God said, “let there be light,” and the spirit of God, exerting itself, on the surface of the waters, produced light, and the revolution from darkness to light was the first epocha.

And God said, let there be a light in the middle of the system, to divide the day from the night, and let it be for seasons, and for days and years.

At this period, God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the reflected light to rule the night: he made the stars also: and it was so. This is the second epocha.

And God said, let there be firm land, in the midst of the waters, and let it percolate the fresh from the salt waters.

And God said, let the salt waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so. This is the third epocha.

And God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life; and God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind. This is the fourth epocha.

them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown” (KJV). This kind of passage was often cited by deists to demonstrate the pagan and mythological elements of the Old Testament.

And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit, and it was so. This is the fifth epocha.

And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and man to govern and subdue the earth, and all that is therein, and to direct nature to the best end, and it was so. This is the sixth epocha.

After this the historians proceed to relate, that God delegated to man a certain power of directing the principal operations of nature on this globe of the earth.

And the earth teemed with man and beast, and fruits, and herbs, and flowers, which an eternal spring continued in gay succession. And God said unto the men whom he had created, Behold, I have given you the whole earth to inhabit, and have stored it with every thing necessary for use and for enjoyment. I have also given you the means of knowledge, whereby you may discover the road to happiness; and for your good I have strewed a few difficulties in your paths, to spur you to enquiry, and to exercise the means of knowledge. Consider yourselves as one great family, cherish and comfort each other; but beware of dividing your patrimony.

So, we never hear of the agency of superior powers, every thing is ascribed to natural causes, or men directing these causes.

Ten millions of years (according to the historians) rolled away in plenty, innocence and peace, without affording matter for the historian, who only delights to record great and terrible events—but abundance for the peaceful muse, whose pleasure is the beauties and the charms of nature. This is called the age of innocence.

While men contented themselves with fruits and herbs, they lived in harmony with the brute creation; and while their lands were undivided, and the whole stock continued in common, they

cultivated peace and friendship with each other. But, in process of time, several causes co-operated to destroy this state of felicity.

The liquid element, or salt sea, was continually diminishing, from two natural causes constantly operating—one was, the immense beds of shell-fish, which being formed from the liquid, but never returning to that element, raised strata of limestone at the bottom of the deep;—and, secondly, that immense body of water annually converted into vegetable and animal substances, but which never return to water again, caused, in time, new islands to rise above the surface of the ocean, and the old continents to extend further into the clouds. This caused a great inequality, and changed the climates from temperate to a greater degree of heat and cold. Summers became intense, and winters severe. During the age of innocence men multiplied prodigiously on the earth; and therefore a greater foresight was necessary to provide against future contingencies. The necessities of man increased faster than his knowledge—instead of making experiments and inquiring into the operations of nature, in times of plenty and peace; the days were suffered to pass away in pleasure and enjoyment—this lost time has never been recovered in any country, except in Lithconia. They only have improved their situation, by a knowledge of their errors, and made industry and experience get the start of their wants.

The face of the earth changing, by the mountains increasing in height—marshes being formed by the retiring of the waters, rendered the face of the globe more unhealthy, diseases began to appear before man had a knowledge of their cure—the heats of summer caused droughts and a scarcity of herbs, before the use of irrigation was known: thus, a change of climate, an increase of population, and, above all, ignorance—all contributed to bring to a period the age of innocence, and to usher in the age of iron, so called, from men beginning to prey on the inferior animals, and by seeking, in the bowels of the earth, the materials for sharp

instruments of destruction. Then began men to be dreaded by his fellow animals, and these, to seek refuge in caverns, rocks, and impenetrable forests, to hide themselves from his view. From this period, for 20 millions of years, nothing is to be found in the history of man worthy of recording, or if recorded, would give any pleasure to the philanthropic mind. Famine, pestilence, and war, had nearly extinguished the human race—and those who survived, were little superior to the beasts of the forests. Their wants, and the passions those wants created, made man a savage and an hostile animal—so much had they departed from their native innocence, that some have asserted, that man is only a superior species of monkey, capable of improvement, which the common monkeys are not.

How deplorable and unsatisfactory would this history have been, if we had not seen, in the foregoing pages, the redemption of man in the country of Lithconia. And from thence the pleasing inference may be drawn, that such will be the case all over the globe. Let it not damp the spirits, or obliterate the hope of the chosen few, that the day of regeneration is slow in its approaches; or that ten millions of years was the short period of the age of innocence, while thirty millions have elapsed, and man has not renewed his nature in any other country but in that small island—But good example is like a grain of mustard-seed.⁹

[To be continued.]

[*The following installment appeared in the June 19, 1802 issue.*]

Man had not long commenced a warfare upon the brutes, than they divided themselves into separate hunting parties, for the better securing the prey—and very few generations had elapsed,

before these separate hunting parties, forgetting their original, considered themselves as distinct nations,—and, on the slightest offence, cherished the most implacable hatred, rivalry and animosity; and waged against each other, fell and bloody wars: peace was only brought about, by necessity, and from a fear of being mutually exterminated. Such was the lot of human nature, (with only now and then an effort in some great minds to elevate man to his native dignity) for more than 20 millions of years.

What a number of circumstances must combine before any effort can be successful in favour of human nature! Time; place; the dispositions of the people to receive instruction; and above all, the powers, or capacity of the instructor to give it—If one of these fail, the process is incomplete, and the condition of our species is thrown back, at least a million of years.

Happily for mankind, the same causes which had put an end to the age of innocence, contributed, in some degree, to put an end to the age of iron, which had made the globe almost a desert, and assisted in putting in train another era, which, though not in itself much preferable to the age of iron, yet tended, in its effects, to bring about the regeneration of the human race: and when we applaud the subsequent revolutions that have taken place in the affairs of mankind, it is not so much on their intrinsic merit as that they are harbingers of that glorious era, when the reign of equality shall be universally established all over the world, and the age of innocence be renewed.

Islands rising above the surface of the ocean—mountains towering to the clouds—having been the cause of the decline of the age of innocence, are now shewn to be the cause of the age of brass.

⁹ *Mustard-seed*: a favorite New Testament metaphor, as in Mark 4:31, Matthew 13:31 and 17:20, and Luke 13:19 and 17:6.

In a small island, a few leagues from the continent of Europe, a number of people had taken up their hunting quarters, thinking themselves safe from the intrusions of that fiercer enemy, man, on the continent.—But what happened? In a few years the island was destitute of prey—almost all the quadrupeds were destroyed; so that those islanders were in the greatest distress imaginable, at a season too when it was hazardous to sail to the continent. In this extremity a council was called, of those reputed the wisest men of the nation, in which it was determined, that the few cattle and sheep remaining, should be caught alive, preserved, and domesticated for a breed, to supply the wants of the island. Such a proposition, when first made, was treated with sovereign contempt by the great body of the people, and considered as a thing totally impracticable. The trouble of rearing and tending of herds and flocks, was deemed too great to be compensated by any profits that could arise from it: however, the necessity of the case, and a conviction of some of the wisest men, made the resolution to be followed.—Patience and perseverance, for a few years, and hope, which every day was growing into certainty, convinced the most sceptical of the propriety of the measure. Now, we may fancy we see the country spread over with herds and flocks—and success in one undertaking always having the effect to stimulate the mind to fresh pursuits, the arts of making cheese and butter, followed almost as a matter of course: it could not fail to strike these men, that every part of the animal might be rendered more useful and commodious, than they had hitherto seen it—hence tanning of hides, and spinning and weaving of wool, were arts which followed each other in quick succession.

These people, living in peace, and at a distance from their turbulent neighbours, increased in population and wealth; and the

first evil that presented itself to these otherwise happy people, was a claim that some discontented minds set up to a few choice and particular cattle, which they had paid more attention to in breeding and rearing, than the rest. Those contentions and claims growing frequent, and likely to embroil the whole community, it was resolved to divide the flocks, into equal parts among each family; and soon after, by reason of other contentions, a division of the land took place.

Little did those islanders think, that a trifling regulation, made to remedy a great evil, should, in its consequences, disturb the felicity of mankind, and put back the regeneration of the human race at least ten millions of years.

If we were to enumerate all the evils that have spring out of this system of separate property, it would fill a volume, and divert us from the main subject of this history. It was from this small island that the larger one of Lithconia was afterwards peopled, and hither they brought their principles of government, founded on the system of separate property. As yet the ground had not been tilled—they lived on milk, some fruit, and the flesh of animals. The first dawn of the pastoral life had many charms, in a country with few inhabitants: the range for their cattle being almost unbounded, they had abundance of leisure to contemplate the beauties and grandeur of nature—hence astronomy, and music, were cultivated, and characters¹⁰ were invented in that age. The poets still sing of the enjoyments of shepherds, and their scenes are laid at that period of time.

Indeed the pastoral life was infinitely superior to the life of a hunter, which preceded it, or to the more stormy scenes which followed after—during the life of a hunter one man was sufficient for

¹⁰ *Characters*: system for writing

every square mile, but during the pastoral life 20 might be maintained on the same spot.

A greater increase of population in either of these stages, brought on poverty, contentions and war—in a few hundred years that event took place—the population became too numerous for their manner of life, and they were also liable to frequent invasions, for the sake of plunder, from their neighbours. The first evil that shewed itself, springing from the system of separate property, was, that the people in the interior not being liable to be plundered, would not march to assist their brethren on the coast. Neither would those on the one coast move to the assistance of those on the other. As long as a man's own property was safe, he gave himself no cares about his neighbors. In the mean while population increased—poverty and want was the consequence. While these things were going forward, a fortunate event took place, which should be recorded as a remarkable æra in the history of man. A few invaders from the continent, had taken possession of a corner of the island, both as a shelter from the islanders and the ravagers from the main; but being destitute of herds or flocks, and well knowing that if they attempted to supply themselves by depredations, the consequence would be a certain extermination—they therefore attempted to multiply, by art, the fruits and herbs which the peninsula spontaneously produced—their success surpassed their most sanguine expectation, insomuch, that the Lithconians, who had not yet turned up the glebe,¹¹ and who were consequently in want of such articles, made the generous and noble proposal of exchanging the skins of animals for the fruits and herbage of the peninsulians. What a pity that the name of these inhabitants of the peninsula was not transmitted to after times—but it is probable they had no name as a distinct people, but retained that of their ancestors on the continent,

until they mixed with the Lithconians, which it is probable they very soon did. Those events, which have produced the greatest revolutions in the affairs of mankind, and have shewn man under a variety of aspects, which have sunk his character sometimes below the brutes, and at other times elevated him above the angels, (if there are such beings)—having been considered of little moment at the time they happened, the actors have been suffered to sink into oblivion, and future historians have passed them over in silence. Thus we have to lament our ignorance of the people and time when those two important events occurred, the first ploughing of the earth, and the introduction of barter.

The present age will hardly believe, that upwards of thirty millions of years had passed away, before tillage or barter could be introduced among men, though they had frequently been suggested and recommended for experiment, by wise men in different ages; several millions of years before necessity, situation and peculiar circumstances, brought them into use.

The historians then proceed to shew the happiness and flourishing state of Lithconia, and the increase of population; as also the evils that were averted from that country by the introduction of barter and tillage, and the union of the agricultural and pastoral life. Still they have to lament and describe other evils springing up out of the system of separate property and the silly means that were taken, from time to time, to patch up that system. It was too common for children to fall out about the lands and other property of their deceased parents; and it is equally curious to observe the various customs that were adopted, and grew up, in different parts of the island. At first, the females were heirs to all the property of the deceased, and the youngest son was heir to the homestead, or dwelling house—because it was thought that the females and the

¹¹ *Glebe*: soil, though by 1802 this usage was mostly poetic and archaic.

youngest son would generally be incapable of acquiring property, whereas the eldest, while there was land uncultivated, might easily acquire by their greater experience and strength, new acquisitions—and this plan succeeded very well while there was land capable of improvement, and in cases where the females or youngest son had arrived at the age of maturity, and were capable of managing the property; but where that was not the case, and the elder sons obliged to take care of the property for the helpless younger branches of a family, they generally embezzled or gave a very bad account to their wards.

[To be continued.]

[*The following installment appeared in the June 26, 1802 issue.*]

Innumerable were the laws and regulations made, from time to time, respecting the rights of individuals to separate property, insomuch that no man knew his own right. From hence a new order of beings sprung up, who, under the pretence of explaining their rights, acquired an authority over the lives and property of their fellow men, which nearly deprived them of all right. In those days the acquisition of property was every thing, and the cunningest knave was the best man.

Such was the progress of evil which arose out of the system of separate estates, that nine-tenths of mankind groaned under the most oppressive tyranny, labouring from morning till night for a poor and scanty diet, and hardly clothes to protect them from the inclemency of the seasons, while the other tenth enjoyed every luxury, and rioted in waste and profusion.

But as wealth and property was the object of every man's pursuit, it was, sometimes, hardly gained before it was snatched away by another more dexterous knave; so that it was no unfrequent thing to see the man of affluence reduced to poverty, and the poor man

elevated above the necessity of labour, which begat an habit of idleness, which begat disease. The wise man was the slave of a fool, and an idiot commanded the man of talents. All these evils were ascribed to fortune, or to the gods; and no man dreamt of its being the effects of the system of separate property, agreed to at first by fools, and continued by knaves. However, if the system had been compleat in all its parts, the evils resulting from it would not have been so terrible. This will be better understood by the following explanation.

When nations enjoyed their patrimony in common, during the age of innocence, and while they continued to be hunters, they were then merely numerical societies without any local boundaries—their divisions were into tribes, families and individuals; and the duties of each were prescribed, without any regard to place; but when the division of land and separate property commenced, each nation lost its numerical character, or boundary, and assumed a local one. The divisions and subdivisions were also of necessity local, but the misfortune was, that they retained the family division, which is a numerical one.—This ought not to have been done. In a local society or government, there should be no numerical division—nor in a numerical society should there be any local section.

By this inadvertency in their first institutions, nine-tenths of the families were excluded from any local inheritance, and the whole country was in possession of the other tenth.

When tribes was the division under the numerical government, all the children born in the tribe were maintained and educated out of the public stock of the tribe: but when local governments took place by the division of the land, then families were left to shift for themselves, and children remained a heavy burthen on parental affection. Nature has, indeed, made that affection very powerful; but sometimes it has sunk under the weight imposed on it, by this abominable institution. It is fine talking of a

social compact, where a pair, who have eight or ten children, are obliged to provide for them all; and where the society, local or numerical, to which that family is said to belong, takes no share in their burthen. As far as it respects them, it is a dissolution of the social compact, and they would have been justified before God, if they had committed depredations upon such an ill-organized society.

After a long term of years and infinite wretchedness, the loud cry of nature was, in some degree, attended to, and a partial return to reason took place, in certain districts, and the extreme of misery was, in a small degree, relieved by private and public institutions. The poor contributed to the support of the poorest: but the rich, who governed every thing, made a great shew of charity, without doing any real good—the bread was by them snatched from the mouth of the indigent, that part of it might be returned in ostentatious alms.

This misery and distress of families, prevented prudent people from entering into the state of matrimony, and by this means half the women were thrown into a state of prostitution, disease and infamy—Which, however distressing such a life must be, it was often preferred to the still more miserable condition of being obliged to support a large family of children.

In those miserable times, when men saw the innumerable evils with which they were surrounded, they could not help inquiring sometimes into the cause of it; and it astonishes the Lithconians that their ancestors were so stupid as not to discover, with a very little reflection, that those evils sprung out of the division of property. But their wonder ought to cease when it is known, that the rich actually paid and maintained an order of men to teach the people, that all the evils which afflict the generations of men were appointed by God the Supreme Ruler,—that a little good, mixed with a great deal of evil, had always been, and always would be, the lot of humanity; so that it was of no use to repine, or study

how to avoid that which was unavoidable. To make this matter more feasible to the wretched poor, these hired deceivers told them, that the possession of wealth was the cause of still more misery—that the poor had many enjoyments, whereas with riches it was impossible to be happy; and, to crown all, they pretended to receive these hellish doctrines from God himself.

That such a state of things was permitted for a time, by the Almighty, is not to be denied; but since we have seen, that the happiness of man, in society, altogether depends upon their own wisdom in organizing their communities, and forming their institutions, and that God has provided no other means but the united wisdom and reason of men to work out their happiness on earth, it must be highly criminal in those who obstruct its operation and prevent the full exercise of reason and enquiry.

However, to shew that this state of things was not useless, and that although mind was fettered in one way, it had free scope in others. This was the age in which the genius and powers of the mind were displayed more than in any other—It might be very properly termed, the age of invention—So many thousands of families without any inheritance were continually striving to make the most of their ingenuity and wit, and it would fill a volume itself to describe the various means by which men of genius converted everything to their use—the wealth of the rich and the labour of the industrious.

It is certain that the Lithconians, with all their system of equality, are indebted for the principal part of their enjoyments, and even their art of government, to the state of things we are now speaking of. It was evidently a link in that great chain of events, which is certainly drawing mankind to a state of happiness on earth. It had been a dogma of the schools, that God created the world out of nothing, by the word of his power, and for this reason they have complained against their Maker, because all his operations are not

performed in the same manner, because in many cases, especially in that of the perfection of the social system, he has employed the agency of finite beings; because his purposes are to be accomplished by wisdom, acquired by experience, which necessarily supposes time. Nature is a wonderful machine, put in motion by immense power, and all its operations are consequently precognizable by that wisdom which contrived it. But they would change this admirable order, and have a nature which, like an instrument in the hands of power, might be used to correct the general principles of being.—The Lithconians are contented to use the means which God hath appointed to accomplish human happiness, namely, the united reason of man; and, finding that sufficient, smile at their forefathers for expecting any immediate interference of the Gods.

But what gave me the most entertainment in this part of the history, while it made me blush at the folly of the times, was, the absurdity, not to say criminality of some of their laws.

It was difficult for me to conceive the design of some of them; but I could easily discover that the greater part were framed for the purpose of keeping the power in the hands of those who governed, and seldom with any view to the public happiness.

It was strictly forbidden for any person to scratch, however he might itch, without permission; and it was held infamous to perform the necessary evacuations before a certain hour in the day. In some places no person was admitted to eat flesh till they arrived at a certain age, and whatever kind of meat was chosen at the first time, must be the person's food for life, however it might disagree with the appetite—This meat was also chosen without tasting, and frequently without seeing it. It is not difficult to conceive the innumerable evils that must follow from such an obvious opposition to the principles of nature—But what appeared worst of all, was, that few of their laws extended to every member of the community, and notwithstanding there were laws prohibiting

murder, robbery, larceny, swindling, cheating, extortioning and idleness, yet there were various classes of men who were licensed to commit these crimes—For example, there was a class of privileged murderers, who were held in high estimation and honour—another class of avowed robbers, equally respected. The class of swindlers were very numerous, and lived in great pomp. The cheats were looked up to with the most profound reverence and holy fear. And the extortioners, as they were only licensed from year to year, though they were not considered so honorable as the other classes, yet held a considerable rank in the country, and as it was a lucrative trade, and raised the envy of the other classes, the journeymen murderers were frequently quartered upon them; to keep the one down, and raise the spirits of the others; for murder was but a lean trade, though it was, of all others, the most honourable, and was also a proof of honour—for if a murderer's honor was called in question, he had only to appoint a time, when he would, before witnesses, murder or be murdered, to prove how very honorable he was.

To support, and do greater honor to these classes of men, severe punishments were inflicted upon those, who, in any manner, degraded, dishonored, or opposed their interest. For example, when the class of murderers was required to be filled up, if a man refused to join them he was put in prison, and otherwise severely handled, till at last he was forced to comply; and if afterwards any qualms of conscience should happen to seize him, and he was induced to run away from a scene of iniquity which would have harrowed up the soul of a reasonable being, he was, for the first offence, flogged most severely, and shot for a coward for the second.

As an encouragement to the licensed extortioners who dealt in the necessary article of drink, other people who were contented with a reasonable profit, were prohibited from selling it in small

quantities to the poor, under severe penalties, which ruined many an industrious honest man.

As the deceivers could only be detected by the free use of reason and investigation, this faculty was cried down as dangerous to civil society; and, *doubt*, that state of the mind which calls forth the exercise of reason, was threatened with eternal punishment. In short, every person was deterred by temporal or eternal punishments, either by the laws of fools or the prejudices created by knaves, from using the faculties given him by the God of nature, to discover the tricks of the class of deceivers. As for the public robbers, that class of privileged thieves, pretending as they did, to rob by rule, and steal under the sanction of law, having also the whole class of murderers at their nod, it was in vain to resist them.

There must have been a wonderful sympathy between those classes—they cherished and protected each other with a zeal which astonishes; and as all the officers of government and legislators were generally in one or other of these classes, we need not be surprized that their laws were numerous, and all calculated for the benefit and protection of themselves.

But the idlers, the most powerful and influential class in the state, because they possessed all the land, was, perhaps, of all others, the most pernicious and destructive—they were the canker worms which preyed upon the vitals of the people—they were protected in the high privilege of doing nothing, by a variety of statutes, denominated poor laws, and laws against vagabonds. It was highly criminal in any person not of this class to turn vagabond.¹² They were right in one respect, for no state can maintain many of these.

In those days, men were so ignorant as to believe, that this class had no right to work, or any social duties to perform, and when

any of them yielded to this dictate of nature, it was considered as an extraordinary act of virtue and uncommon merit.

[The following installment appeared in the July 3, 1802 issue, with the added notation "Concluded."]

We shall now hasten to that part of the history which gives an account of the revolutions which led them to the genuine system of property. It appears, as has been already observed, that for many thousands of years there had been always men of superior talents, who considered all the evils, with which they saw themselves surrounded, had certainly their origin in the folly of human institutions; and, that the remedy was within the powers of human reason, if it could only be exerted to that end. But these men were continually watched, and persecuted, by the privileged classes above mentioned; and, particularly, by the class of deceivers, who were urged on by the robbers, and abetted by the swindlers, &c.

Notwithstanding the intelligent class saw the pernicious tendency of the others, their artillery was directed only against the deceivers, by this means the other classes, not seeing themselves attacked, either stood neutral, or joined the intelligent class. The deceivers, thus abandoned, soon lost their influence, and the lies by which they had imposed upon mankind, were every day detected. No sooner was the power of the deceivers abridged and investigation laid open, in some measure, to the people, than they began to suspect the class of public robbers; and the men of intelligence, seeing the people on their side, took courage, called in question their right of plunder; and, what was fortunate for them was, that the murderers took part against the robbers, and their power was also

¹² *Vagabond*: a homeless person who moves from place to place

very much curtailed, though the class still had an existence, and continued to commit great depredations on the community.

The intelligent class now became so formidable, and were so much respected by the people, as to create a considerable alarm in the minds of the privileged orders, but it was too late; reason could not be made to take a retrograde movement, but she unfortunately became stationary, for a considerable time.

It appeared then, even to the most intelligent, that every thing depended on the form of government. One form, namely monarchy, was universally condemned; but it was not so clearly seen what would produce the happiest result, and lead the human to a state of felicity, suitable to their nature. Long after it was acknowledged, that men had the right of self-government, the privileged classes (which still continued to exist, though not to be so formidable) were afraid of trusting men with that power, to its full extent.

Certain fundamental principles of government, or what was then called constitutions, were not to be touched or altered, but at certain periods by select individuals, and much formality,—whatever might be the general opinion concerning them; and, as we have mentioned in the first part of this work, notwithstanding they considered these constitutions, or forms of government, as the foundation of human happiness, it was not easy to please the privileged classes in this particular; and, therefore, we find them often changed without ever producing any considerable alteration on the sum of human happiness.—Public plunder was still carried on—The murderers indeed were not so often employed, but they were still a separate class, and treated with respect. The swindlers did more business than ever, living on the contentions naturally

bred out of the system of separate property. The idlers were still as numerous, so that the only benefit that accrued, for a long time, was the humiliation of the deceivers, and the elevation of the mortal enemies of all the classes, the intelligent beings.

After having experienced the truth of these lines of a celebrated poet,

For forms of government let fools contest—

*Whate'er is best administered is best.*¹³

The world seemed to be satisfied, that election and representation, and a total annihilation of the class of deceivers, if not the best possible form, would ultimately lead to it.—Accordingly, men of intelligence having seen this point gained, were determined to try the strength of reason, and to mark its effects, in changing the condition of human society. It was soon discovered, that a great portion of the evils of which mankind complain, lurked under the laws, unperceived, and unquestioned, by reason of the sacred character they had assumed. Reason would have nothing sacred, she now entered boldly into the sanctuary of the law, as she had before done into the sanctuary of the deceivers. Every law which militated against the eternal principles of justice and reason was proscribed, and it was thought better to have no rule of conduct than one which admitted uncertainty or doubt; and it was founded upon this principle, that where there is no law there is no transgression. — Jurors began to give in their verdict, in these words,—“*The law is silent*” —or when the first lawyers of the country discovered a diversity of opinion, by long harangues, and numerous quotations, the jury was sure to bring in a verdict of, *The law is obscure*, from which verdict no judge could pass a sentence of punishment. Such conduct frequently occurring, among rational jurors, had two good

¹³ The author here quotes Alexander Pope, “An Essay on Man” (1733), Epistle III, lines 302-03.

effects; first, to make legislators more attentive and correct; and second, to banish from the bar, that host of swindlers who had been so long fanning the flames of discord, and living on the contentions of their fellow citizens. It was not long after the class of swindlers had been swept from the courts of justice, and the legislators had simplified the laws, before the inutility of the judges themselves was apparent, and jurors, as has been mentioned in the first parts of this work, were found adequate to all the purposes of distributive justice.

In those days it seemed to be the first object in the attention of intelligent men, to endeavor, with all their might, to bring law and justice into union; and the genuine system of property began to be spoken of, as no visionary phantom, but as a *good*, which might be realized. Philosophers mentioned it in terms of approbation, and the people listened with attention: but the class of idlers, which was the only formidable class that remained, was its bitter and avowed enemies.

Every man of reflection, saw that a revolution in the system of property of such magnitude, could not be accomplished without great difficulty, and hazarding the peace of society, and the wisest were puzzled to find an opening that would admit an entering wedge. But when men are zealous in a cause, and never lose sight of the darling object, occasions will present themselves which would otherwise be overlooked, and which the attentive and intelligent observer seizes with avidity.—When by the force of the elective principle the people had placed men of intelligence, their steady friends, into the legislature, it became a maxim, that as long as moral evil existed, a government could not be called the best possible; it was presumable that there was still occasion for the exertion of his faculties, and that it was folly to look beyond the moon, for remedies

¹⁴ *Excrescence*: outgrowth

which, if infinite wisdom rules on high, must be placed within his grasp.

The evils which called forth the attention of the men of those times, and produced considerable agitation, was the care society as such, ought to take of the aged, the lunatic, the widow, orphan, illegitimate children and their mothers, and finally, to put an end to prostitution, and the diseases which accompany it. It was proposed that an adequate provision should be made, by law, for people reduced to the above circumstances; and the idlers, fearing that the burden should principally fall on this class, wished to have no alteration or innovation upon the ancient practice, or if anything was done, it should be by a tax that should operate equally upon the citizens; and as for the mothers of illegitimate children and their offspring, and the whole host of prostitutes and their encouragers, nothing but the severest punishment, said they, could put a stop to the growing evil, which, it is true, had increased to an alarming degree, ever since the threatenings of eternal punishment had ceased with the class of deceivers.

On the contrary it was insisted on, by the intelligent, that society were bound to relieve every kind of distress, brought on by the operations of nature—That getting children was an irresistible dictate of nature, and ought not to be held as a crime, or subject to punishment; that prostitution was an excrescence¹⁴ from a bad law, which would perish when the law which gave it being, ceased to exist: and in order to find a stepping stone by which the river might be crossed, it was proposed, instead of a tax, that the laws of descent should be altered, and the benefits arising therefrom, extending to those objects of, what was then called, charity. In a word, the law of descent was confined to the descendant in a right line¹⁵; and those of a collateral branch were cut off from the succession.

¹⁵ *Right line*: direct descent from the father's line

It was therefore enacted, that all real and personal estates which had no heirs in a right line should be vested in the nation for the benefit of that description of people above enumerated, whom the ancient institutions had abandoned to chance, to infamy, or at best, to a miserable and scanty subsistence.

The natural operation of this law, in a short time, made an ample provision for those who had before been the outcasts of society. It had also that effect, which was foreseen by the promoters of it, namely, to prevent young women of no fortune from entering into the state of matrimony,—they saw that themselves and their offspring would be treated with more care and attention, from that fund, than they possibly could be, by the industry of the best man that ever existed—from that moment there were few marriages, except among the rich—so that while the funds were increasing, the objects which it was destined to support were increasing also.

At the commencement of this institution, these bastards were put apprentices to mechanical arts, at the age of 15; at 21 a handsome sum was bestowed on them to begin the world; but, as it frequently happened, that these young people saw their children educated under the same institution, and whatever fortunes they might gain in life naturally, or rather lawfully descended to the same fund—they procured a law by which they were permitted to remain attached to the institution from this period, that part of the community who possessed separate property, were every year diminishing in number, and they saw themselves subjected to a thousand cares and anxieties from which those who lived in common were totally exempt; while at the same time all the riches and property of the nation was running with a rapid current into the aggregate fund.

This state of society is described by the historians as being very stormy and factious; when the two parties became nearly balanced, the separate property-men who still had the government

in their hands, and being pressed for money, as all such governments are, proposed to seize upon the aggregate property, and sell it, as they said, for the benefit of the nation. But the equal right men who had laboured indefatigably to render the aggregate fund beneficial to those, whom the law had placed under its protection, were convinced that it would be better for mankind, and produce a greater sum of happiness, if all the property in the community were under like regulations, and many men of intelligence, though possessed of great fortunes, thought it to their advantage, to sink it in the aggregate fund, rather than expose their children to the caprice of fortune. These contentions continued for many years—in the mean while the families possessing separate property were growing fewer in number: they saw themselves loaded with a thousand anxieties, from which those who lived under the genuine system of property were totally exempt. Pride, however, for a long time, prevented them from joining the institution, and the same pride pushed on the society to take every step which should render the members of it comfortable and happy.

To give retirement and peace to the aged, every person after the age of 60, was exempted from duty: and to give wisdom and experience to their councils, the principle of election was laid aside for that of seniority, which had an effect, not at first foreseen, that of producing almost perfect unanimity.