

larger, more abstract, and more philosophical point of view. For centuries past English philosophers had been occupied with theories of government and social order, of popular representation, of freedom of thought and religious toleration. Nor had the spirit of romance and fiction been slow to embody these liberal ideas in fanciful pictures of a human society reconstituted according to rational principles. Of these the 'Republic' of Plato was the great forerunner and model. Such were in the classical literature of this country the 'New Atlantis' of Bacon (1624), the 'Oceana' of Harrington (1656), and, earliest and foremost of all, the 'Utopia' of Sir Thomas More (1516). Single attempts were also made to carry them out in practice, some of them highly successful, such as the life-work of William Penn, others fantastic and unrealisable like the earlier scheme of Bishop Berkeley or the later of Coleridge.¹

8.
Utopism in
earlier
English
literature.

¹ In 1670 an attempt was made in the colony of North Carolina to introduce a new system of government and form of social order called the "Fundamental Constitution," drawn up by John Locke at the request of the lords proprietors; but this and several subsequent attempts were so stoutly resisted by the colonists that the absurd and tyrannous scheme was formally abandoned. (See 'Encyclop. Brit.,' 9th ed., vol. xvii. p. 562). "The grant of the extensive territory called Pennsylvania, made by Charles II. in 1681 to William Penn, carried with it full proprietorship and dominion, saving only the king's sovereignty. Penn at once created a quick market for lands by publishing in England and on the Continent his liberal scheme of government

and his intention to try the 'holy experiment' of 'a free colony for all mankind.' . . . The desire to escape from spiritual and temporal despotisms and the chance of acquiring rich lands in a salubrious climate on easy terms, drew thousands of immigrants; English Quakers, Scottish and Irish Presbyterians, German Mennonites, French Huguenots, men of all religions were alike welcome. . . . In December 1682 Penn summoned delegates . . . to confer about government; . . . in March following representatives chosen by the people . . . agreed on a constitution based upon popular suffrage and guaranteeing liberty of conscience." "This constitution, savouring strongly of Harrington's 'Oceana,' . . . was democratical in the purest sense." "Such a con-