Quest for Utopia, an Anthology of Imaginary Societies. By Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick. New York, Henry Schuman, 1952. pp. ix, 599. $6.75.

It was St. Thomas More who first coined the word, "Utopia," in 1516. Since that date this word has become well known in the literature of social thought. But St. Thomas More was not the first author to write of an ideal, imaginary society. "According to tradition, Lycurgus, guardian of a king of Sparta who probably lived about the ninth century B.C., drew up an ideal constitution and body of laws for that city" (p. 2052). Xenophon wrote the *Cyropaedia,* or Education and Life of the Perfect King, and Plato left for posterity his famous *Republic.* Plato's masterpiece is considered the fountain-head of all other Utopias.

Utopia is made up of two Greek words which literally mean "no place." The New Standard dictionary describes utopia as "an ideally perfect place, realm, or condition; hence any imaginary region or book describing one." Webster's International defines it as "any place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions; also an impracticable scheme of social regeneration." "Utopia" is currently used, it seems, to designate all impracticable schemes of social betterment. Although the word connotes impossibility, it is not always easy to prove that an ideal is "Utopian." Many inventions, says E. Beirac (Utopie, *Le Grande Encyclopedie,* 31:631), as well as many universal reforms now accepted and adopted were looked upon as *Utopian* by our ancestors.

The compilers of this anthology give three characteristics which distinguish the utopia from other forms of literature or speculation: 1. It is fictional. 2. It describes a particular state or community. 3. Its theme is the political structure of that fictional state or community. For their study they have selected 33 utopias, the greatest percentage of which have been hitherto unavailable. Campanella's *City of the Sun* is newly translated and Cabet's *Icaria* appears in English for the first time. Here too, are the Utopias of H. G. Wells, Robert Burton, Fenelon, Francis Bacon, and part of the *Utopia* of Thomas More. The compilers state in the preface: "What we intend to present here is a representative sample of utopian thought in Western civilization. . . . The critical chapters included in the text are intended to serve the purpose of historical continuity; their brief commentary is as selective and representative as the entire anthology necessarily had to be."

In every collection of Utopias, there are common features which are readily discernible. Many Utopias are reactions to the philosophy

current at the time. All attack social evils. All seek to solve the problem of human happiness. On this latter point, the majority teach that material prosperity is a prime condition. In fact they make earthly happiness their final end since they have either lost, or never had, faith in a future life of eternal happiness with God. Most Utopians are hedonistic. They do not have an adequate concept of human nature, of the effects of original sin and actual sin, and therefore cannot give a correct solution to social evils.

In assessing the value of this book, it is well to point out that just as a river never rises higher than its source, so the contributions of these societal dreamers flow from the basic beliefs, right or wrong, that motivate them in their day-to-day life. Each essay presents the author's answer to the problem of how society can best attain its end; few emphasize that the *temporal* happiness of man consists in promoting the common good.   R.A.

Pleased to Meet You. By John S. Kennedy. New York, Declan X. McMullen, Inc., 1952. pp. 151. $2.50.

To know one's self is a basic requirement for sanctity regardless of one's state in life. All spiritual writers have stressed it. Many have made it the theme in some of their works. Yet few have succeeded in making a reader see himself as he really is, with all his imperfections and shortcomings, in an easy and pleasant manner. This, I believe, Father Kennedy has accomplished in *Pleased to Meet You,* a collection of short stories and what-might-be-called informal essays.

Such an intention may not be the author's at all since he wrote no introduction or preface. Nevertheless, the contents of the book bear witness to it; even the work's title leads one to this assumption. It might be argued instead that it is the author who is introducing himself to the reader. Some of the stories are personal portrayals of Father Kennedy's experiences with his little nephew, his conversations with non-Catholics, his travels—just to mention a few. From these it is possible to gain an insight on his personality and opinions which might help to dispel some, if not all, of the doubts and fears held by many toward priests.

But I think the average reader will agree that it is himself whom he meets in a more striking manner. He will find that the characters in the individual stories, for the most part, think, speak, and act exactly as he does. Of course, they are not people whom one would really call "bad." But Father Kennedy's presentation will start the reader thinking. How ridiculous it is to ruin one's life by being inconsiderate,