

Gemeinschaft to *Gesellschaft*. The Middle Ages, or ancient China, or all human societies since the beginning, had both. To use a category proposed by Henry Maine in 1861, there was indeed in the nineteenth century especially, praise the Lord, a transition from a society largely of status to one much more of contract. But the historical anthropologist Alan Macfarlane showed long ago that the English were already individualist in matters such as family formation a thousand years ago. Any medievalist can tell you more.

The growth of the liberal market, I would argue, promotes virtue, not vice. Most of the clerisy—themselves, as Bismarck described them with disdain, having “no property, no trade, no industry”—think the opposite: that it erodes virtue. And yet we all take happily what the market gives—polite, accommodating, energetic, enterprising, risk-taking, trustworthy people with property, trade,

and industry; not bad people. Sir William Temple attributed the honesty of Dutch merchants in the seventeenth century “not so much [to] . . . a principle of conscience or morality, as from a custom or habit introduced by the necessity of trade among them, which depends as much upon common-honesty, as war does upon discipline.” In the Bulgaria of socialism, the department stores had a policeman on every floor—not to prevent theft but to stop the customers from attacking the arrogant and incompetent staff charged with selling shoddy goods that fell apart instantly. The way a salesperson in an American store greets customers makes the point: “How can I help you?” The phrase startles some foreigners. It is an instance in miniature of the bourgeois virtues. Or of the liberalism that Deneen rejects in favor of hierarchy and reaction. †

Shed Archeology

William Logan

Everything stored
had married rust: my father's
red gas-mower, the scythe he swung

against the tall grass
before it went to scrub,
tools inherited from his father—

bent rake, chipped hoe, blunted ax.
In a corner squatted a rotten bucket
of ten-pennies, democratically

fused. That final spring, it looked
like a porcupine hibernating—
or the dog curled up at Pompeii.