

dumped, often to be submerged by vice or drunkenness." In his excitement he slips at times into errors on the level of the schoolboy howler — as in his reference to "Poyning's laws."

Professor O'Farrell's book is not a good one — from the standpoint of historical scholarship — but it is fascinating as a revelation of how deep seated is the malaise that afflicts the Irish people. When John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, came back from Vatican Council II he told his people to relax, nothing was about to change in Holy Church in his diocese, and it fills the reader with a sense of wonder to see this same King Canute mentality presented in the form of historical argument by such an able and intelligent person as Patrick O'Farrell. Yet this same backward-looking mentality still exists among intellectuals in both Irish cultures, and O'Farrell's almost comic bias shows how intractable is the nature of the endemic cultural warfare in Ireland.

As the events of the last four years have shown us, there is no easy answer to the problem of Ireland's two cultures and their warfare. At the conclusion of James Lydon's book there is a reference to a report on the state of Ireland made in 1515. In it the author tells the story of St. Brigid asking her good angel in which land were most souls damned. She was shown a land in the west where Christian folk died most out of charity: "... for there is most continual war, root of hate and envy, and of vices contrary to charity: and without charity the souls cannot be saved. And the angel did show her the lapse of the souls of the Christian folk of that land, how they fell down into hell as thick as any hail shower." The author was sure this was Ireland, for: "there is no land in the world of so long continual war within himself, nor of so great shedding of Christian blood, nor of so great robbing, spoiling, preying and burning, nor of so great wrongful extortion continually as Ireland." One can see little change in our year of grace 1974, and no one has the answer to the Irish cultural struggle.

For all their attempts to be "interpretative" rather than "narrative," Professors Lydon, Edwards and O'Farrell give comparatively few insights which will help the reader to understand the dynamic of Ireland's continuing tribal and cultural warfare. Perhaps the problem is beyond human ingenuity to explain, and we must fall back on the wisdom of Giraldus Cambrensis in the early thirteenth century. Professor Lydon tells us how he explained the continuing warfare of the two peoples:

The Irish had not so strictly offended God that it was his will that they should be entirely subjugated; nor were the deserts of the English such as to entitle them to the sovereignty over and possible obedience of the people they had partly conquered and reduced to obedience. Therefore, perhaps, it was the will of God that both nations would be long engaged in mutual conflicts.

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BRIAN PULLAN. — *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.

The stability of the Venetian republic and its comparative immunity from large scale revolutionary commotions have long exercised the curiosity and interest of historians. In the sixteenth century a long succession of admiring commentators, from Gasparo Contarini to Jean Bodin, explained the phenomenon by reference to the social cohesion and political sagacity of the Venetian patriciate, to the excellence of the presumed "mixed" polity of the republic, and to its salutary legislation. By way of addition to these *loci communes* Contarini emphasized the comprehensive welfare activities of the republic: its provision of food for the populace at low cost, its encouragement and supervision of philanthropic institutions, its support of the sick and aged, and its relief of the poor. The

present study tests the validity of Contarini's thesis by examining the dispensation of charity through the five great lay confraternities of the *Scuole grandi* (Part I), by tracing the development of a more discriminating system of relief under governmental impulse (Part II), and by elucidating the vital role of the *Monti di pietà* in furnishing low cost loans to the small borrower (Part III).

The transformation of the *Scuole* from devotional and penitential associations into institutions of lay charity converted them into a "transmission system by which the rich passed on a limited amount of their wealth to the poor" (p. 83) in the interest of social stability. But this judgment by no means covers the whole spectrum of motivations which prompted charitable giving. The ethical imperatives of the medieval Church, though greatly attenuated, had not lost all power. The conviction that wealth was the legitimate reward of endeavour had not yet transcended the doctrine that wealth was stewardship, and that almsgiving was a correlative to the right of private property. Indeed, St. Thomas Aquinas had insisted that a Christian in evident and extreme need had not merely a claim, but an unqualified right to relief from those who possessed a superfluity of goods. Beyond this extreme case the Thomist school had refrained from specifying the various degrees of "need" and "superfluity" which transmuted the giving of charity from a command into a counsel. In this flexible framework the conscience of the individual giver was afforded full play. In casting his final account with Eternity the Venetian merchant, influenced by civic pride and the lingering doctrine of *beati pauperes*, could not safely ignore the standing spectacle of less fortunate fellow-citizens deeply sunk in misery and destitution. Thus the assumption that the *Scuole* were bare administrative devices to muffle social discontent scarcely does full justice to the complex socio-ethical ambience in which they functioned.

In his notable analysis of the "new philanthropy" of the sixteenth century (Part II) the author rightly rejects the hypothesis of a fundamental difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant methods of relief. In Venice as elsewhere the growing magnitude of the "social question" accounted for the increasingly investigative and discriminatory trend of charitable activities. Population growth, immigration from the countryside, epidemics and famine all combined to force the social problem on the attention of the public authority and to demand the more refined techniques of relief outlined by J. L. Vives in his *De subventionem pauperum* (1526). But the author might well have examined a further moving cause of governmental concern: the intimate relationship between poverty and crime. The diarist Sanuto, writing before the dawn of the "new philanthropy," was impressed by the ease with which the poor slipped into crime. The poor, he explained, turned to theft and larceny because they could not gain a living, and persisted in their evil ways because the municipal police (*birri*) were useless. In 1517 the right of sanctuary in churches and monasteries was denied to malefactors, and in 1531 those who harboured criminals and outlaws were declared accomplices after the fact and made subject to the same penalties. Legislation in defence of property was of medieval severity: the theft of over 40 *lire* entailed capital punishment. Finally, the upward thrust of prices towards the close of the sixteenth century and the lagging rise in wages bore hardly on workers in receipt of marginal remuneration and encouraged recourse to casual and petty crime.

The partial displacement of the Jews from the small loan business by the foundation of *Monti de Pietà* (Part III) marked perhaps the most promising attempt to aid the poorer *lavoratori* in periods of financial difficulty. These loan banks, inspired by the Franciscans and administered by communal officials, made short term advances at 5% to needy borrowers, who deposited household articles, clothes, and small valuables as security. Unredeemed pledges were usually sold after one year. On some important points, such as the percentage and value of pledges which remained unredeemed, we must await the fruits of detailed research. In the meantime the older study of Holzapfel might have been supplemented by reference to M. Weber, *Les origines des Monts-de-Piété* (Rixheim: 1920).

The author's conclusion is naturally worded with caution: "The efficiency of poor relief in Venice and its dominions may have contributed to the legendary stability of the Venetian government in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century." But Contarini's eulogy of social welfare policy in Venice ought perhaps to be considered in the light of the marginal wage rates which constituted one of the main ingredients of the social problem itself. According to Sanuto the minimum wage of the labourers in the Arsenal stood at 10 soldi *per diem*. At an estimated 250 working days during the year, this rate brought the worker 2.500 soldi or 20 ducats annually. The diarist calculated that a modest style of life by his standards would cost 250 ducats annually. A similar control of wages was exerted by the guilds, which prohibited associations of workers designed to procure better pay. Some exercise of charity was necessary to sustain the casualties of such a system. In sum, however, this is a scholarly and thought-provoking study, solidly based upon heroic labours in the Venetian archives, and distinguished by sound judgment and a masterly handling of highly intractable material.

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Démographie historique

PETER LASLETT and RICHARD WALL, editors. — *Household and Family in Past Time: Comparative Studies in the Size and Structure of the Domestic Group Over the Last Three Centuries in England, France, Serbia, Japan, and Colonial North America, with further materials from Western Europe, with an Analytic Introduction on the History of the Family by Peter Laslett*. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1972.

Quelques années après le démarrage remarquable de la recherche en histoire démographique, c'est maintenant l'histoire de la famille et du ménage qui bénéficie d'un regain d'intérêt. Ces deux domaines de recherche sont d'ailleurs étroitement liés à la fois par la problématique qui leur est sous-jacente et par les sources qui sont à leur base. En effet, la « nouvelle » démographie historique, celle qui a pris son essor dans les dernières quinze années, repose sur l'exploitation systématique des registres paroissiaux afin de reconstituer selon la méthode de Louis Henry les événements qui rythment l'histoire démographique des familles d'une paroisse, de leur constitution par un mariage à leur dissolution par le décès des époux, et ce, pendant plusieurs générations. Quant à la « nouvelle » histoire de la famille et du ménage, elle est axée cette fois sur l'exploitation systématique de recensements nominatifs afin d'obtenir des renseignements non seulement sur la taille mais aussi sur la structure, c'est-à-dire les relations de parenté dans le ménage et la famille. On s'engage ainsi plutôt dans la problématique des sociologues et ethnologues que dans celle des démographes. C'est Peter Laslett qui a montré la voie de la nouvelle histoire de la famille alors que le *Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and Social Structure* qu'il avait fondé s'engageait profondément dans l'utilisation des méthodes d'Henry pour les sources anglaises et dans l'automatisation grâce aux ordinateurs.

Pourquoi l'histoire de la famille, et quels sont ses rapports avec la démographie historique au point de vue de la problématique? La démographie historique nous a fourni des données considérables sur des questions posées par Malthus. Ces questions sont: dans le monde de l'Ancien Régime, était-ce la mortalité ou la natalité qui réglait les fluctuations de la population? La natalité était-elle au niveau biologique maximum ou bien existait-il un mécanisme de contrôle volontaire des naissances? Le contrôle des naissances était-il assuré par le biais de l'âge au mariage, du célibat, ou au contraire par des variations de fécondité à l'intérieur du mariage? Les fluctuations de la population étaient-elles amorcées par des pénuries de subsistance ou bien les épidémies avaient-elles des causes exogènes à l'économie? Sans qu'on n'ait encore des réponses satisfaisantes à toutes ces questions, sans qu'on n'ait encore pu expliquer les différences régionales et temporelles qu'on a découvertes, déjà s'ouvre la problématique toute différente de la nouvelle histoire de la famille et du ménage.