Fisheries Society, which played a key role in Highland development, as well as the Highland Destitution and Emigration Societies of the early nineteenth century, were essentially Lowland conceptions.

The sections of the study which deal with smuggling, distilling (licit and illicit) and the important kelp-burning industry are also revealing. They stress again the essential conservatism of the people of the Highlands, their reluctance to launch out on change, the backward-looking attachment to their sub-divided crofts, even when these could hardly provide a subsistence. The dilemma of landlords, who received the same small rent from crofts sub-divided many times, and carrying numerous families, as they had received from the croft when inhabited by one tenant, is clearly depicted. This is an aspect of the problem which has never been explained so clearly before. Here, as in the study as a whole, Youngson brings out the validity of his main contention — namely that the problem was deep-rooted in the conflict of cultures, and really insoluble, without drastic measures and changes in outlook among the Highlanders themselves, which would have been unthinkable in the context of the time. As Youngson puts it, when examining the clearances, and the viewpoints of landowners and displaced tenantry, that phenomenon was only "the visible crest" of a great and long-lasting wave of change. As impoverishment set in increasingly, between 1790 and 1820, and the fisheries languished, and the kelp-burning industry failed, and the population went on increasing relentlessly on a potato diet, there could be no recourse but emigration either abroad or to the Lowlands.

In its conclusion, the book raises some interesting speculations — what if there had been minerals, as in the not unsimilar backward region of Northern Sweden? Is the "development" of the region today, in modern terms, really desirable? Could there possibly have been any successful alternative to depopulation, and must that depopulation continue?

These questions are, wisely, left open. As for the main argument of the book, it is convincing, informative, and enlightening, and opens up new vistas in our approach to one of the most interesting phenomena in the story of Modern Western-European cultural clash and folk-movement. The volume is a remarkably fine piece of book production, very handsomely illustrated, with over thirty fine reproductions of contemporary maps, drawings and engravings of Highland scenes.

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Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt. — *Children in English Society. Volume 2: from the eighteenth century to the Children Act 1948.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

In the century of the child, it is natural, desirable and inevitable that the history of the child should be written. Indeed since the child is father (oftimes, mother) to the man, a study of the child should throw considerable light upon the man; not only should one be able, through a knowledge of the circumstances of childhood, to understand better the men and women who developed in those circumstances, but also to understand better those who believed such circumstances were proper for their children. A book entitled *Children in English Society,* therefore, promises much. But the interests of the authors are restricted almost exclusively to pauper and/or delinquent children, and almost entirely to the handling by government and reformers of the problems created by these children. (There is a brief foray at the beginning into the changing legal status of women vis-à-vis their children.) Children in their own right rarely appear, and children above the poverty line never appear. To criticize the book that was not written is unhelpful; but the reader should be aware that the title is broader than the contents.

Within their limitations, Pinchbeck and Hewitt cover the period meticulously. There is a great deal, indeed an exhausting amount, of research behind this book. The history of the legislation affecting the children from the eighteenth century (this is the second volume; the first volume started in Tudor times) to the Children Act of 1948 is given in detail. Selected points of view are illustrated from the debates in Parliament and in the newspapers and especially from the evidence given before Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions. The work of volunteer societies is examined at length. The compilation is full and useful and one must be grateful for this valuable source book. But with reservations.

It is hard going. The dullness of historical writing is deservedly proverbial and there seems, from this instance, to be no light relief in sight. *Children in English Society* smacks of the undigested and indigestible Ph.D. thesis in which the comprehension the author has gained of the period is not communicated through the detail of the research. Perhaps in this case it is just as well because, when occasionally the authorial voices rise above the notes, it is to sing in the all-too-common whinese, the popular refrain. "Why can't our ancestors be more like us?" To quote precisely, "From the security of the twentieth century, it is possible to wonder at a society which could report such events with composure" (p. 596). Surely we are not, on the whole, such a marvellous people; present crime and recidivist rates do not justify much wonder.

There are two reasons for the bitterness of my criticisms. It is unhistorical to wonder at another age instead of trying to understand it. The nineteenth century contained men and women in much the same proportions of good and bad and indifferent as the twentieth. The task of the historian is to comprehend the values and philosophies of another age and transmit that comprehension to her readers; wonder, if it still remains, should not be derisive. I do not think such a task is a dull one; I am not advocating the abdication of historical judgment but the exercising of it within the historical context. In any case, in the present instance, most unfairly, dullness and contemporary prejudices go hand in hand.

The second reason, closely allied with the first, is that the contemporary assumptions in the book distort, in my view, the people and their efforts in the nineteenth century. I do not believe that if our adult forebears had only been less selfish and harsh, they would have recognized that children have rights like every other group of noble savages, and the problems of delinquency and pauperism would have been solved. Pinchbeck and Hewitt, by implication, put down to callousness and selfishness that which was the result of neither, but of a genuine belief in a different method of obtaining happiness and the good in society. A belief in local rather than central control, in individual initiative over government action, in parental responsibility against its abrogation by a state institution, these may no longer underlie most of our social philosophies, especially those relating to delinquent children or paupers, but such beliefs are not necessarily false in our time, let alone in their own. The authors' assumptions seem to me a hindrance to an understanding both of nineteenth-century society and of recidivist rates.

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J. F. Bosher, ed.—*French Government and Society, 1500-1580. Essays in Memory of Alfred Cobban.* London: The Athlone Press of the University of London, 1973.

Ce volume de Mélanges, publié en hommage au regretté Alfred Cobban, spécialiste bien connu de l'histoire de la Révolution française, renferme treize contributions rassemblées par J. F. Bosher, professeur à York University, Toronto. C'est ainsi que Julian Dent a traité du rôle des clientèles dans l'élite financière française à l'époque de Mazarin, Nora Temple des élections municipales et des oligarchies urbaines, T. J. A. Le Goff