

demands of the quarry manager or the developer. Perhaps this should be remembered. Roman remains at Dover may be important, but how about the excavations of the Somerset Levels, Wharram Percy, Star Carr, Sutton Hoo, the West Kennet long barrow? None of these were rescue excavations, and the first chairman of *Rescue* has excavated as much on unthreatened sites as on threatened ones. There are indeed two major research projects in post-Roman archaeology; the Royal Archaeological Institute's Castle

Project seems almost moribund, but the project on church archaeology inspired from the Continent is beginning to produce some results through excavation.

Excavation is not the whole of archaeology. It is the servant of the archaeologist, not his master. The rescue archaeologist must remember this and occasionally lift his eyes from exciting finds to the general advancement of his subject, from the post-holes to the structure they once supported.

Demography & Demagogy

On the History of Rural People—By JOHN BOSSY

“MOST HISTORIANS”, says Frank E. Huggett, “are members of the urban middle class.” So they are, but does it matter? It matters to him, because he thinks it has led them to undervalue the importance of rural communities, to treat them as an “unchanging background against which the drama of . . . history [is] played out.” This is hardly the case if you judge by the present crop of books, which are concerned almost entirely with rural people and their problems from (practically) China to Peru during the centuries since the Renaissance.

Whether or not Huggett is a member of the urban middle class—he certainly writes as if he had mud on his boots—he has written a brisk, solidly well-read and sensible account of the European rural scene since the 16th century.¹ His frame of mind is Tawneyesque with a dash of contemporary conservationism, but he gives his due to Tawney's pursuer, Eric Kerridge, is fair to landlords, good on the cultural aspects of peasant life, and informative about parts of Europe we do not usually hear about: Denmark, for example, which turns out to be a remarkably successful example of 18th-century “enlightened” reform. He leaves us with the information, duly illustrated, that left to itself wheat will go back to grass in four seasons, which should leave members of the urban middle class hoping that the art of cultivation will not be forgotten. The only thing wrong with his book is its title, which joins a 19th-century cliché to a 20th-century one; it should make a good start for courses in Peasant Studies.

¹ *The Land Question and European Society*. By FRANK E. HUGGETT. Thames and Hudson, £1.50.

² *Death, Disease and Famine in Pre-industrial England*. By LESLIE CLARKSON. Gill and Macmillan, £8.75.

As Huggett to (say) Slicher van Bath and his crop-yields, so Leslie Clarkson to (say) the Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and its art of family reconstitution, which has always reminded me of dried egg. *Death, Disease and Famine*² is demography with a human face, as you realise in Clarkson's preface when you meet his wife, “whose experience of demography is more practical than mine”; or demography in a truer sense, as in his account of childbirth in early modern England, which

frequently occurred in dirty, overcrowded conditions, attended by untutored midwives whose obstetric skills had been refined by groping and fumbling, and assisted by assorted neighbours who busied themselves by casting horoscopes, muttering incantations, shutting doors, blocking windows, and spreading infection.

His subject is the incidence of death, the things that caused it, the human reaction to it as revealed in funerals, and the transformation of the English régime of mortality in the middle of the 18th century. His list of death-dealing agents is a long one: hunger, disease, the medical profession and violence, which includes warfare, murder, capital punishment (conceivably, he hazards a guess, the cause of 1% of all deaths in England in 1600), and infanticide. The only thing which seems missing is old age, which some people must have died of.

APART FROM THE general humanity of the book and its genial attitude to quantification, *Death, Disease and Famine* sticks in the mind for its resistance to total explanations. Events of extreme importance in the subject are allowed to be mysteries, like the cessation of plague in England after 1665. Shrewsbury's *History of Bubonic Plague in England* is quietly disposed of.

Malthus's theorem of human fertility outrunning the means of subsistence does not work. The two great exterior checks on the size of the population—an insecure food supply and the ravages of disease—operate, except in restricted cases, independently of each other. Plague, influenza and smallpox come and go of their own accord, "determined by mysterious epidemiological causes that had nothing to do with economic or social conditions." Dysentery, diarrhoea and syphilis flourish irrespective of the price of grain. The social obligation felt by people to give a decent burial to their dead defies both poverty and plague. Murder, then as now, is a "part of family life", not a gesture of social protest. The industrial revolution, which he regards as a mercy to all concerned, arrives upon a pullulating scene whose character cannot be briefly described, let alone explained.

I imagine there are many people who will regard this detotalising effect as a betrayal, a counsel of despair, a symptom of inveterate English empiricism, or simply reactionary. Sartre says that all pluralisms are right-wing. Maybe: all left-wings are certainly monist. Try this:

The modern bourgeoisie . . . arose and thrived on its ability to transform labour-power into a commodity and thereby revolutionise every feature of thought and feeling in accordance with the fundamental change in social relations.

Or this:

Both Portuguese economic expansion and Portuguese missionary activities overseas were but different aspects of the same imperial drive which was and remains one of the hallmarks of western capitalism.

The authors, Eugene D. Genovese, in *Roll, Jordan, Roll*,³ and Edward A. Alpers, in *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*,⁴ each purport to be giving a potted history of Europe during the centuries covered by Clarkson. Admittedly, Europe is not their immediate concern, but there is an awful disparity between what they need the history of early modern Europe to be and what a decent European historian, and particularly a decent European economic historian, will tell them that it was.

AL PERS AND GENOVESE are both concerned with the relation between whites and blacks created in the age of European discovery and expansion, Alpers at one end, in Africa, Genovese

³ *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. By EUGENE D. GENOVESE. Pantheon Books, \$17.50; André Deutsch, £7.50.

⁴ *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*. By EDWARD A. ALPERS, Heinemann, £2.80.

The Valois Tapestries

FRANCES A. YATES

Dr Yates gives a detailed historical elucidation of the meaning of the Valois Tapestries, now in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. She describes how the tapestries arose out of Catherine de' Medici's marvellous series of festivals at the court of the Valois in the sixteenth century which were intended to bring together hostile religious factions in a 'politique' conciliation. The record of a 'lost moment in history' described by Hugh Trevor-Roper as 'a marvellous book'.

9½ x 7½ ins., 120 half-tones, £8.75

Recent Archaeological Excavations in Europe

EDITED BY RUPERT
BRUCE-MITFORD

This major work describes the most interesting and important archaeological sites in Europe today. Chapters cover recent excavations of sites from the Neolithic up to the Medieval period. The chapter on 'The most important archaeological discoveries in European Russia,' is unique in making accessible so much vital material. 9½ x 7½ ins, 335 pp, 98 plates, 113 figures, £12

Memoirs of William Hickey

EDITED BY
PETER QUENNELL

These famous memoirs give an incomparable picture of life in the eighteenth century in London, India, China, Jamaica. Living social history by a clever barrister who lived life to the full and was able to write it all down in his old age. This new edition contains material which has never before appeared in print.

470 pp, 15 plates, £5.95

ROUTLEDGE

at the other, in the United States. Both are totalists, and Marxists. Both have difficulty in fitting fissiparous facts within their totalism. But that is where the resemblance stops. In Alpers's *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*, the gap is simply between the thesis, as stated, and the facts, as stated, which do not seem to me to bear any relation to each other. The thesis is that the "underdevelopment", or impoverishment, of East Africa, and by implication of Africa as a whole, is a consequence not of European colonial rule as such, but of the impingement of international trade on the region during the centuries between the Portuguese passage round the Cape and the territorial division of Africa. The region dealt with is roughly Mozambique, with some reference to Tanzania, where Alpers has lectured. Despite the quotation given above, the "capitalism" in question is not purely western, but also Arab and, to a surprising degree, Indian.

What Portuguese, Arab, Muslim African and Indian merchants were looking for in the area was, for a short time, gold, then ivory, and finally slaves; the slave trade here became important during the later 18th century, and very important when the British began to suppress the West African trade after 1807. What they offered in exchange was cloth, beads and some firearms. The ivory went to India, later to Europe; the slaves to the Middle East, to the French Indian Ocean islands, and finally to Brazil. Alpers argues that the trade was inherently exploitative, since what Africans were getting was usually much less valuable than what they were giving. Since the African peoples who did the trading, like the Yao, were under no pressure and were, he says, "receiving otherwise unobtainable goods of both great practical and prestige value in exchange for raw materials which were of little value in their own societies", the argument seems dubious.

Except perhaps for a short period during the early 19th century, when it would seem that the size of the slave trade had a serious effect on the demography of some coastal peoples, I cannot see any evidence here that the traffic made the Africans who remained any poorer than they would otherwise have been; in their own judgment it clearly made them wealthier. They had no use for elephant's tusks, and slaves were by and large the product of their own systems of criminal law or of warfare between them. It is certainly conceivable that the opening of an external market in slaves tended to encourage Africans to go to war with one another more often or to intensify the use of slavery as a punishment; but evidence that the trade "contributed . . . to an increasingly divisive differentiation within and between the peoples of East

Central Africa" is scarcely offered, or comes in the form of shaky hypotheses.

I do not know how Alpers reconciles his assertion that Portuguese trading and missionary activities were different aspects of the same capitalist drive with his account of the disruptive interference of the Inquisition at Goa with an East African trade which needed the services of Muslims and Hindus. And who will take the Portuguese for the vanguard of European capitalism? Alpers is entitled to his views about what African countries should and should not do in the present, but if he is going to persuade us to take them as history he will have to transpose them a good deal more carefully than he has done here.

EUGENE GENOVESE, too, in what is much the most ambitious and the longest of these books, is grappling with the contrast of what theoretically ought to be and what actually is. But he is a good deal more honest and slightly more subtle about it. The language is more self-consciously Marxist (or Hegelian, or Gramscian), the drama more tangled:

Cruel, unjust, exploitative, oppressive, slavery bound two peoples together in bitter antagonism while creating an organic relationship so complex and ambivalent that neither could express the simplest human feelings without reference to the other. Slavery rested on the principle of property in man—of one man's appropriation of another's person as well as of the fruits of his labour. By definition and in essence it was a system of class rule. . . .

In practice it was commonly a paternalistic system, genuinely governed by an idea of landlord responsibility and reciprocal obligation inherited from the European past, respectful in certain ways of the humanity and personality of slaves, and providing them with a way of life which was not necessarily unattractive. This does not do anything to endear it to Genovese, rather the reverse: "wherever paternalism exists, it undermines solidarity among the oppressed by linking them as individuals to their oppressors."

Yet his respect for evidence suggests a less dogmatic appreciation, a conflict of theory and practice in himself. One of the reasons why *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is so long is that he is determined to see every confusion of feeling which arose between master and slave as a "contradiction" in the historical process. Sometimes the description seems fair enough: when he shows the law in the South as tying itself in knots trying to deal with the legal rights and responsibilities of persons who were not supposed to be persons, one accepts the term "contradiction" as meaningful, while doubting whether it can be "socially"

interpreted as a conflict between the individual and the collective interests of a class, or between a supposedly bourgeois law and a seigneurial social system. One accepts it, too, when movingly expressed in the owners' attitude to slave marriage: unrecognised by the law, encouraged on the plantations as a Christian ritual, in which the slave partners are nevertheless not entitled to say "till death do us part." But when it is relentlessly applied to every case where the economic or legal chattelhood of the slave is confronted with the social fact that he is treated and acts as a person, the word begins to irritate. You begin to feel that Genovese is inventing difficulties for himself, that the confusion is somewhere in his mind rather than in the condition of master or slave.

The difficulty may lie in the totalising view of history itself, with its inability to tolerate plurality of interpretation. It may lie in the unfortunate history of the word "social", reduced by a phase of historiographical imperialism to the status of a slave-appendage of "economic." It may lie in failing to give the "economic" its due as "what is related to household management." I can see no real reason why Genovese's fundamental contradiction should not be inverted, why we could not equally well say that what was real in the slave's social situation was, as it was commonly expressed by slaves as well as by masters, his membership of a "family"; while what is artificial is to ascribe to him membership of a class he only belongs to in virtue of a common status before the law which is evidently in some sense a legal fiction. I cannot see why Genovese should privilege one half of his scrupulously presented evidence at the expense of the other half, except by reference to an interpretation of early modern European history which I do not think any serious historian in the field, east or west, would nowadays find acceptable.

"Contradictions", if they are worth talking about, should surely play some part in the dénouement of the historical situation of which they are posited, and I cannot see that Genovese's had any part in bringing about the abolition of slavery in the South: they remain purely descriptive, or decorative. My advice to the reader is to forget about his contradictions, ignore his *obiter dicta* (and his typography), and gratefully accept his luxuriant wealth of information about slave religion, work, domestic life, rituals and amusements as a tribute to the power of human nature to make something out of a frustrating and in many respects vicious condition. If one wants to see how a situation of this kind can be expounded with sympathy towards the underling and no complaisance towards the seigneur, but at the same time with a submission to historical

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The Book of Abigail & John

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1762-1784

L H Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender and
Mary-Jo Kline, editors

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Century of Struggle

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United States

Eleanor Flexner

First published in 1959 before the latest "women's lib" movement began, this book explores all levels of American life and history from the Colonial period to the adoption of women's suffrage, in 1920. It was the first serious attempt to put the struggles of black women in perspective as part of the search by all American women for an education, for the franchise, for equal pay, and for equal work opportunities. This revised edition includes a new chapter linking the first woman's rights struggles with those taking place today. £8.25

The I G in Peking

Letters of Robert Hart
Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907

John K Fairbank, Katherine Frost
Bruner, Elizabeth Macleod Matheson,
editors. Introduction by L K Little

Robert Hart administered China's customs service for 45 years, during which time his only confidant was James Duncan Campbell, his London commissioner, to whom he wrote weekly or fortnightly letters. Bearing sole responsibility for the Chinese Maritime Customs as Inspector General, he built up an international staff of thousands, facilitated foreign trade, gave the late Ch'ing court its principal new revenues and fostered China's modernity in many areas. His career, which included behind-the-scenes diplomacy, represented the constructive side of the unequal treaty system and of Britain's informal Empire in East Asia. These letters give an intimate, inside view of Robert Hart's problems and methods, reveal his personal life, and comment pithily on the complex flow of events and personalities. He speaks from a time long past and brings a vanished era back to life. The Belknap Press £30.00 Published shortly

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reality which one instinctively trusts, one should read Arnold J. Bauer's *Chilean Rural Society*.⁵ It

⁵ *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930*. By ARNOLD J. BAUER. Cambridge Latin American Studies, 21. Cambridge University Press, £7.90.

is a rare historian who can use the word "capitalism" without making you wince. In Bauer's case I should have been glad to know his views about what is going on nowadays in the country of his affections. But demagogues rush in where demographers fear to tread.

Two Hundred Years

Anglo-American Relations—By H. C. ALLEN

WITH THE APPROACH of the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence, there has, predictably, been an increasing flow of books from the presses about the American Revolution and related subjects. As the Bicentennial year goes on it will no doubt become a spate, especially of course from the United States.

Our American cousins, as the phrase used to run, are naturally launching large-scale celebrations of the event, and we in Britain are on the whole happy to go along with the idea, for there has always been, from the time of the Revolution itself, a vocal pro-American school of thought in this country; and since the work of such Whig historians as George Otto Trevelyan in the 19th century there has tended to emerge what almost amounts to a national consensus that the victory of the United States in the War of Independence was a Good Thing for Britain. It did us no end of good because it taught us the lesson that it is, as we now put it, almost entirely counter-productive to try to hold on to colonies unwilling to be held.

Still, actually to concentrate on raising our glasses in 1976 to that particular event of 1776 seems to some Britons to be pushing it a bit. For this reason there has been an inclination here to celebrate not the Revolution itself but rather the

ultimate repairing of the great breach between Britain and America, especially at the end of the 19th century, in what Lionel Gelber, the historian of that period, called in 1938—it is the title of his book—"The Rise of Anglo-American Friendship."

This study has a long and respectable historiography in both Britain and America, though on balance we in Britain have tended to write much more about the history of Anglo-American relations after independence while, oddly in one way, the American historians for years had a near-monopoly of what they call the Colonial Period of American history. Oddly, because it is the only period in the history of the United States itself in which the sources in Britain are plentiful and of the greatest importance.

The natural American dominance of this one early part of British Imperial history has, however, weakened of late. We have recently had from British pens, for example, works on the Colonial Period as diverse as D. B. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America 1481-1620*,¹ P. S. Haffenden, *New England in the English Nation 1689-1713*,² Roger Thompson, *Women in Stuart England and America*,³ and Esmond Wright (Editor), *A Tug of Loyalties: Anglo-American Relations 1765-85*,⁴ half of the contributions to which are by Britons.

¹ *England and the Discovery of America 1481-1620*. By D. B. QUINN. Alfred A. Knopf, \$15.00; Allen & Unwin, £6.50.

² *New England in the English Nation 1689-1713*. By P. S. HAFFENDEN. Clarendon Press, £5.75, \$18.50.

³ *Women in Stuart England and America*. By ROGER THOMPSON. Routledge, £4.25, \$13.25.

⁴ *A Tug of Loyalties: Anglo-American Relations 1765-85*. Edited by ESMOND WRIGHT. Institute of United States Studies Monographs. Humanities Press, \$4.50; Athlone Press, £1.50.

⁵ *The American Problem in British Diplomacy, 1841-1861*. By WILBUR DEVEREUX JONES. University of Georgia Press, \$13.50; Macmillan, £5.95.

⁶ *The Alabama Claims: American Politics and Anglo-American Relations, 1865-1872*. By ADRIAN COOK. Cornell University Press, \$13.50, £7.40.

IN THE FIELD of Anglo-American history since the recognition of American independence by the Treaty of Paris of 1783, there have been two interesting recent studies of almost consecutive periods, one by an American, the other by a Briton: Wilbur Devereux Jones, *The American Problem in British Diplomacy, 1841-1861*,⁵ and Adrian Cook, *The Alabama Claims: American Politics and Anglo-American Relations, 1865-1872*.⁶ These years span the American Civil War, the conflict which arguably