values so individualistic that they undermined the social order that other *fêtes* supported. This schizophrenic character is further complicated by carnivals, masques and dancings, which expressed a collective medieval penchant to evade even group social interests for a realm of fantastical disguises.

Clearly Heers' thesis, that medieval *fêtes* fill all roles that society collectively or otherwise thought worth playing, is uncontroversial. Readers will appreciate, however, his dashing comprehensiveness, his unexpected yoking together (as *fêtes*) of seemingly unrelated practices, and his multi-faceted exemplification. Narrowness in scope, though, appears, for the title is a misnomer (Germany, Spain and the Low Countries are seldom mentioned) and Heers avoids using extant play-texts. Also, his emphasis on a collective mentality using *fêtes* for power valuably, if unpleasantly, balances Huizinga's unmentioned theory of autonomous, intrinsically desirable play.

This book, for English readers, has one obvious, depressing fault: serious innocence regarding scholarship on English Corpus Christi drama. Because Heers depends wholly on W. Marriot's *Collection of English Miracle Plays* (1838), J. J. Jusserand's *Histoire littéraire du peuple anglais* (1896), and an unpublished thesis by one of Heers' Paris students (thirteen such theses are used), the dozen-odd pages on the English plays are riddled with errors. For instance, the northern cycles did not, like Canterbury, attract crowds from London (74); the Towneley cycle was not given annually by the Woodkirk canons, and the *Ludus Coventriae* is not from Coventry (75); the cycles do not depict stereotyped caricatures, "maladroit, peu nuancé" (96). By one distortion Heers identifies *fêtes* as instruments of popular power. He incorrectly argues the Chester and York guilds so excluded the church from control of their cycles that the clergy opposed them with the more religious, rural "Woodkirk" and "Coventry" cycles, and that ultimately the guilds bore their financial burden unwillingly, to avoid public discontent – the people demanding, as Rome its *panem et circenses*, the plays as a right (75, 95-97).

If such misconceptions represent current continental scholarly opinion, someone should immediately translate Chambers, Craig, Gardiner, Salter and Kolve, or rewrite Jusserand. When Toronto's Centre for Medieval Studies has for six years sponsored touring revivals of these cycle plays, the dissemination of such views by Montreal's *Institut d'Études Médiévales* is sad testimony that more than politics separates *les deux nations*.

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Thomas Rogers Forbes. *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. (Canada: Montreal, McGill – Queen's University Press) Pp. xx, 251. \$11.

The parish records of St. Botolph without Aldgate between 1558 and 1625 are rich in detail far beyond the average of their kind. As such they are jam for the London antiquarian, an essential though possibly misleading source for the demographer in an age of spotty material, a temptation and a snare to the social historian. Professor Forbes – who, by the way, is a professor in the medical school at Yale – has been tempted to write a work of demo-

graphy and social history out of this single source. His material is undoubtedly interesting. His tables of life expectancy and so on would have been more valuable if they had been published a few years ago, before demography in England became the professional branch of historical research that it is now. St. Botolph's, Aldgate, was one of the poorer out of about ninety tiny parishes in the crowded capital; it provides a statistical sample that is woefully inadequate and not at all random, and apart from infant mortality there is no way of matching its births to its deaths. A poor quarter naturally contained a high proportion of transients, and the records reflect this fact without giving us any real power to measure it. The figures are not without value, but they are already on the point of becoming out of date.

We can still be grateful for the (comparative) wealth of detail. Most parish registers, when they even survive from this date, record the bare names of those baptized, married and buried; in these, a succession of unusually gossippy clerks (not, apparently, ministers) kept what was almost a journal of parish events – in fact, as Professor Forbes calls it, a chronicle. A “small-beer chronicle,” of course. Professor Forbes quotes extensively; there is no room for quotation here, and odd sentences could not do justice to the cumulative effect of all these ordinary happenings, petty excitements and family tragedies.

History is a hobby interest to Professor Forbes, and he makes some statements that are calculated to make a historian wince. I think he might have noticed that he has accepted about three widely differing estimates of the population of London for the same period. It is easier to excuse his mistaking a “pottle” (which is half a gallon) for a “bottle” (p. 28). A “swaddler” (p. 10) is certainly not a Methodist preacher (in 1600!), and a pursuivant is as likely to be a petty police officer as a herald. “Newhaven” (p. 125) is Le Havre in France. In Chapter 7, on “Care of the Indigent Sick,” he gives a traditional, folklore picture of the effects of the Dissolution of the Monasteries and of Tudor enclosures which can only be accepted nowadays with serious reservations. Absence from church (p. 30) was indeed taken to imply Roman Catholicism, but it was the absence, not the catholicism, that was punishable by law, and there was nothing illegal about burying catholics in the parish graveyard. One minor error is the direct result of treating this unique set of records as if they were typical: he states (p. 31) that keeping the records was the main duty of a parish clerk. In fact it was not his duty at all, but the minister's. The multifarious duties of a parish clerk need not concern us, but I may mention that it was the custom in London to employ much better educated men than elsewhere, usually musicians. If keeping the records *had* been their duty, other London parishes might have provided material as rich as this one. Our knowledge of life and death in Shakespeare's London might have been more securely based than Professor Forbes, for all his enthusiasm and industry, has been able to make it.

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Patrick Cullen. *Spenser, Marvell and Renaissance Pastoral*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970. Pp. lx, 212. \$7.

The remarkable vitality and variety of pastoral is the focus of this intriguing book. It makes an important addition to the literature on the subject.