

leithéidi de leigheasanna ach is leor féachaint ar ainmneacha na ndrugáí le feiceáil gur baineadh cuid mhór acu as na plan-daí agus mar sin de bhí bunús na fírinne le cuid de na tuairimí a bhí ag na sean-luibhleá. Samp-la maith de sin an caonach liath a fhásann ar arán. Baineadh usáid as seo le créachta a leigheas agus ainneóin go gceapfa gur nós míshláintiúil é bhí seansann go mbeadh pinisilin sa chaonach céanna. Agus ó tharla ag caint ar an sláinteachas, ghlac Lus gorm na ndreancaidí, nó Lus dréimneach na ndreancaidí nó fós Lus buí na ndreancaidí áit an D.D.T. sna laethanta sin.

PISEOGA

Ansin bhí piseóga ag baint leis na luibheanna. Chuirte Lus buí Bealtaine ar na dóirse agus ar na fuinneóga Lá Bealtaine. Bhaint an t-im de bhainne na comharsan tríd an mBiolar a ghearradh agus briocht a rá maidin an lae céanna agus chosctáí an briocht sin trí giota den Chaorthann a chur ar an gcuinneóg. Is dócha gur tháinig cuid de na rudaí sin anuas ón bpagánacht. Nach marthanach iad nósanna tuaithe! Is cinnte gur anuas ón am sin a tháinig an clú a bhain leis an Drualus. An Draoi-lus a tugtar air leis agus an Uile-ice. Bhí deas-ghnátha faoi leith ag na Draoithe chun an luibh seo a ghearradh go háirithe nuair a d'fhaightí í ag fás ar chrann darach. Bhíodh íobairt agus féasta faoin gcrann. Chuireadh

an draoi éide bhán air féin agus théadh sé in áirde chun an Drualus a bhaint le scian óir agus ligtí do titim isteach i mbráillín bán.

Chuirfeadh seo íobairtí "faoi gach crann glas" an tSean Tiomna i gcuimhne. Ní hionadh ar bith go bhfuil 'doire' agus 'dair' chomh flúirseach inar n-áitainmneacha. Tá cuma air go ndearna Naomh Colm-cille an rud céanna i nDoire agus i nDarmhá agus a rinne Naomh Beinidict ar Monte Cassino—mainistir a thógáil in áit a raibh seanscrín phagánach. Is dócha go ndearna Naomh Bríd an rud céanna i gCill Dara. Caithfid go raibh dair speisialta éigin ansin. B'fhéidir nach raibh an Mháthair Caoimhín, O.S.F. ach ag déanamh aithrise orthu siúd nuair a d'ionsaigh sí Crann na Circe Báine san Afraic agus clochar a bhunú ina áit. Bhí fonn ar daoine i ngach áit agus i ngach am urraim a thabhairt do na crainn. Ní hionadh sin mar is é an crann an cineál is sine den chine bheo. Agus féach, tá cosúlacht idir crann agus teanga. Mar an crann, fásann an teanga go mall réidh; fágann gach glúin a lorg uirthi mar a fhágann gach séasúr a lorg ar an gcrann. Ní fheiceann an t-ábharáí sa chrann ach adhmaid—ábhar airgid—agus scriosann sé obair na gcéadta bliain i ndeich móiméad le scréacháil saibh slabhra. Féachann sé ar an teanga mar a gcéanna. Cad é an mhaith atá inti? Níl aon airgead inti agus marbhódh sé an rud a chum agus a mhúnláigh ár dtír le dhá mhíle bliain.

Sociologists Look at the Irish Family

REV. LIAM RYAN

IN recent years, there has been a growing interest in social conditions in Ireland. On the heels of the foreign industrialist and tourist have come the journalist, the TV cameraman, and finally that latest biographer of twentieth-century life, the sociologist, complete with pencil and questionnaire and hot on the trail of some stray statistics. The difficulty for these in writing and reporting about Ireland is that they are acquainted with the name and reputation of Ireland too well but with the reality of Ireland too little. To describe reality is never quite the simple task that it seems. At the outset, one encounters the difficulty that facts are dumb and never speak for themselves. On the other hand, where Ireland is concerned, our observers far too often speak only for themselves—the Irish way of life has been seen as traditional or antiquated, venerable or primitive, religious or superstitious, leisurely or lazy, unspoiled or uncivilized, cute or crazy, according to the philosophy (or lack of philosophy) of the observer. Approaches vary from the sentimental, fatherly, emotional viewpoint of John A. O'Brien's "*The Vanishing Irish*" down to the biased, bigotted, can-anything-good-come-out-of-Galilee attitude of Paul Blanshard. The difficulty is that very little has been written from the strictly sociological standpoint, so that in the available works it is often impossible to distinguish what is true, false, or simply unknown.

STUDIES OF ARENSBERG AND KIMBALL

Perhaps, more than any other aspect of Irish life, it is our unique marriage pattern and the type of traditional family life that lies behind it that has most attracted the attention of the sociologist.

From 1932 to 1934 two Harvard sociologists, Conrad Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, studied the pattern of Irish rural life in two County Clare villages. Kimball presented his study as a Ph. D. dissertation in Harvard under the title "The Tradesman and His Family in the Economic Structure of an Irish town," (1935) and the entire research was later published in two books, "*Family and Community in Ireland*," and "*The Irish Countryman*." Their descriptions of the Irish family structure are useful and interesting, though both studies have been criticised for their complete neglect to take into account the influence of religion on the lives of the people. Indeed, both men seemed very impressed by the many magical and superstitious beliefs of the people, and in both books a chapter is devoted to what they call "the symbolic and functional relevance of superstition for the social structure of Irish life." Nowadays, at least, the fairies are kept for the benefit of American tourists, not usually for Harvard sociologists. But then, maybe things were a little different in West Clare in 1932.

In general, for Arensberg and Kimball, family life in Ireland is seen to centre on a pattern of matchmaking and dowry-giving which in turn is intricately connected with possession of land. The authoritarian position of the father, division of labour and family responsibilities on the basis of sex, the great family solidarity, kinship obligations, and the power and prestige granted to older people both in the family and in the community, are stressed. The uniquely advanced age at which parents accede to, and abandon family control is seen to generate the more specific values and sentiments usually associated with the Irish countryman. This practice, says Kimball, not only intensifies the Irishman's conservatism and traditionalism, it also begets emotional mechanisms that prolong well into adulthood a deep sense of inferiority, submissiveness and other marked juvenile traits.

There is reason to believe that this close pattern of family and community life described by Arensberg and Kimball has been invaded and loosened by alien influences since their fieldwork was done. The family structure they describe is one that developed in the post-Famine years, one which inevitably led to late marriage and few marriages; late because the sons waited for land and the daughters for dowries, few because only one son succeeded his father. It would perhaps be wise to regard this marriage pattern as nothing more than a temporary expedient in response to many pressures; today it tends to weaken as Ireland takes its material and social norms from those of human society at large.

TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO MARRIAGE

The post-Famine marriage pattern of rural Ireland is excellently described by Kenneth H. Connell of Queen's University in an Article entitled "Peasant Marriage in Ireland: Its Structure and

Development Since the Famine" in *The Economic History Review* (XIV, July, 1962). Of the peasant match he says:

"Marriage gratified only incidentally a couple's sexuality, their desire for companionship or for children. It was more conspicuously an economic than a biological institution; it was part of the mechanism that perpetuated the rural economy; more precisely, it established on a particular farm the nucleus of labour that would run it, accidents apart, for a generation. Marriage, it follows, was likely to be contemplated, not when a man needed a wife, but when the land needed a woman."

Usually, then, the timing of a man's marriage was determined, not by his emotions, but by his household's need for labour. The average peasant, it was said, 'took unto himself a mate with as clear a head, as placid a heart and as steady a nerve, as if he were buying a cow at Ballinasloe fair.' Connell emphasises especially the obsessive yearning for land that dominated the Irish countryman who saw in a landed family the image of immortality—nothing must jeopardize his family's land; there must be none of the folly of expecting it to support a second family before the first was dying, or dead, or dispersed; his son must marry a woman able to enhance the value of the land and ensure its succession; he must, in short, marry the bride of the old man's choice.

Professor Connell's study is based on material collected by the Irish Folklore Commission and on information derived from a questionnaire on marriage circulated by some forty collectors of the Commission. It captures the feeling and the atmosphere of rural Ireland in a manner altogether lacking in the works of Arensberg and Kimball. In concluding, it emphasises the great social changes that are taking place before our eyes, as bicycle and bus, motor-car and dance-hall, radio and TV, all widen the horizons of the rural dweller. In the words of a Roscommon man in his eightieth year: "Parents today have no influence at all; them dance-halls makes everybody acquainted now; them two things, the motor-car and the dance-halls, have the country ruined; it's not like in my young days."

THE CHANGING IRISH FAMILY

Of the more sociologically orientated studies which seek to measure the impact of urbanization and industrialization on the Irish family and on Irish rural life generally, two are worthy of special attention. In 1953, an American Jesuit, Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys presented at Harvard University a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "New Dubliners: A Study of the Effects of Urbanization upon the Irish Family." The dissertation, based on intensive case studies of twenty-nine Dublin families—one generation removed from the country—attempts to sketch the family transformations that urbanization has produced and to weigh their significance. Fr.

Humphreys spent a year in Dublin completing the fieldwork. Unfortunately, the study has not been published. The second work worthy of note is Patrick McNabb's survey of social life in County Limerick, which constitutes Parts III and IV of the *Limerick Rural Survey* sponsored and published by Muintir na Tire. McNabb's fieldwork was done in the years 1959-'62 and centered mainly in the parishes of Bruff, Effin, Kilmallock, Kilfinnane, Crecora, Dromcollogher, Knocklong, and Kiltely.

I. "NEW DUBLINERS"

Humphreys points to the emergence of a new type of family adapted to the structure of modern society. Authority in family affairs shifts towards equality between the spouses who act more as partners and usually reach family decisions by agreement. Correspondingly, the ties between parents and children are more of a democratic and personal nature than formerly. Children discuss their affairs with greater familiarity and have greater liberty in recreation and association. Inevitably, the great family solidarity so common in rural Ireland begins to decline. In the city, the family is no longer a collective unit of production, and tends to act less and less as a unit in other respects. Young people especially engage in activities "all over town" with other individuals whose families are unknown to their parents. Where the countryman worried about land, the city dweller worries about wages and job security. Savings go into education rather than dowries, and children outstrip parents in ambition. At the same time, urbanization so transforms the family system in the city as to undermine the power of the aged, letting younger blood flow into the arteries of national life. Humphreys concludes that it is likely that in time these same trends will appear—if they have not already done so—in the rural areas. He seems surprised that all these changes have come about in the urban family without affecting the basic Christian values so long associated with family life in Ireland. In fact, he found that the city, by bringing the people into closer physical proximity to the church, had actually increased their devotion, reception of the sacraments and fulfilment of religious duties.

II. CHANGES IN THE FARM FAMILY

In describing life in County Limerick, McNabb, like Arensberg and Kimball, leaves the question of religion virtually untouched. Emigration, land and ownership, the class structure, education, marriage, dancing and hurling, are all discussed, and the part they play in the life of the farmer and his family is indicated. McNabb, too, concentrates on outlining the social changes that have come to rural Ireland in the present decade. The improvements in transport and communications have extended the limits of the local com-

munity; the influence of radio and cinema has revealed to the rural dweller in a very attractive way other norms and values, other ways of organizing life and all the advantages of a high level of prosperity. He continues:

"The reaction of the younger generation of rural people is what one should expect; they have fashioned a stereotype of the outside world and have made it their ideal. By comparison, the home community is inferior. They are demanding parity with their migrant brothers and sisters. This would mean greater independence of the society and the family, wider social and cultural opportunities at home, earlier assumption of responsibility and a fixed income. Under present circumstances, any one of these changes would involve a major social revolution."

He points out that the authority of the farmer and the social prestige of the farm family have been the dominant influences in the rural community. Now, however, modern developments necessarily bring about changes in the role of the family within society, and considering the family as a unit of interacting members, changes in the roles, status, and authority patterns within the family itself.

In short, both McNabb and Humphreys emphasise that Irish society is at the transitional stage and that the smoothness of this transition largely depends on the proper adjustment within the family to the urban way of life.

III. CHANGING ATTITUDES AND VALUES

To attain a more adequate picture of the attitudes of our younger generations towards marriage and the family, we decided to conduct a survey among a hundred university students selected at random. Fifty boys and fifty girls were each given twelve questions; each question consisted of two statements, one representing what we considered the more traditional conservative viewpoint, the other representing the more modern liberal attitude prevalent in the Western world. The students were asked to specify the sentence with which they were in more agreement. In reporting our findings here the traditional viewpoint is placed first in each question, but in the actual questionnaire this was not the case. Before each statement we give the percentage of the students who favoured it.

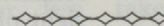
1. 38% A woman's education should prepare her mainly to be a good housewife, subject to her husband and mother to her children.
- 62% A woman's education should prepare her to be a culturally, professionally, and economically independent person.
2. 27% A good dowry is more important for a girl than a good education.
- 73% A good secondary education is more important than a dowry.

3. 42% Once she is married, a woman is subject to her husband in all important matters.
58% A married woman is equal to her husband and should not renounce her independent personality.
4. 80% A married woman should occupy herself exclusively with looking after the home like a good housewife.
20% A married woman is able to help maintain the home economically by working outside the home.
5. 0% The basic role of wife is that of housewife and she should not expect to accompany her husband outside the home.
100% A wife should be a companion to her husband on all occasions in life in a relationship of mutual affection, understanding, and companionship.
6. 76% Marriage should be indissoluble in all cases.
24% Marriage should be dissolved in some cases.
7. 34% A married woman is a mother rather than a wife.
66% A married woman is a wife rather than a mother.
8. 46% It is better to have many children despite economic difficulties.
54% It is better to have few children so that neither the husband nor the home is economically burdened.
9. 91% The education of children outside the home is better undertaken by private or religious organizations rather than by the state.
9% The education of children outside the home is better undertaken by the state.
10. 27% The authority of parents over children should be absolute.
73% The authority of parents over their children should not be absolute: authority is a duty towards one's children rather than a right.
11. 29% Children should revere and respect their parents rather than be friendly with them.
71% Children should be friendly with their parents in a mutual companionship.
12. 75% Happy family life without religion is impossible.
25% Happy family life without religion is possible.

Surprisingly, the pattern of replies received from the girls did not differ significantly from those of the boys. On the basis of the majority attitudes, we can construct the young Irishman's picture of an ideal family. The ideal family consists of a democratic, friendly, religious partnership of husband, wife and children, in which the wife does not work outside the home, in which there are some children but not so many as to be an undue economic burden so that they may all receive at least a secondary education; the marriage should, of course, be indissoluble. It is of interest to note

that in only four cases (questions 4, 6, 9, and 12) did the majority favour the traditional attitude, and in three of these (6, 9, and 12) there was a principle of religion involved.

The pattern of family life favoured by the majority in these replies is very close to that described by Humphreys as actually emerging in the urban areas of Ireland. Regrettably, the structure of Irish life, both urban and rural, is only slenderly documented with little serious sociological study apart from those mentioned. As it effects the social behaviour and attitudes of the people, the religious tradition of the Irish people, let alone of the countryman, has not been studied systematically. For centuries, religion along with the family has been the central value in Irish society, the rock on which all life is built. For centuries, too, the Irish people have coasted on these traditions and reserves of faith built up by our forefathers. As we have seen, these traditional patterns of family life are changing as the family accommodates to the values and attitudes of the outside world. Is there a similar process of accommodation taking place in the sphere of religion? As our half-conscious inherited beliefs and attitudes come into contact with the secular creeds and customs of the modern world, what survives and what perishes? Some prophets of our time would have us believe that *le catholicisme du type irlandais* will soon be an historical curiosity, but their conclusion is little more than an overgeneralization based on impressionistic data. Some systematic sociological research could provide us with a more realistic answer.



**IRELAND IS UNIQUE IN
HER FAITHFULNESS TO
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**