

in 1619, slaves were held equivalent to "horses, dogs, and real estate." Georgia, oddly enough, briefly outlawed slavery in 1730; more gradual, lasting reforms came in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. In general, however, equal justice proved elusive. Indeed, Higginbotham contends, with the famous *Sommersett* case (1772), England proved itself "more hostile to domestic slavery than the colonies." Does his legal study give too restricted a view of slavery? Perhaps. But as abolitionist William Goodell put it, "no people were ever yet found who were better than their laws."

**THE TWILIGHT LORDS:**

**An Irish Chronicle**  
by Richard Berleth  
Knopf, 1978  
316 pp. \$12.95  
L of C 77-15125  
ISBN 0-394-49667-1

Nowhere was the dark underside of the reign of Elizabeth "Gloriana" (1558-1603) demonstrated with more ferocity than in Ireland, where for 30 years Protestant England fought a kind of Vietnam War against feudal, Gaelicized Norman Catholic lords. The long fighting resulted in the near depopulation of the country as the peasants, "mere Irish" discounted by both sides, died by sword and rope or from starvation, exposure, and disease. Destruction of forests, cattle, and cropland, as well as people, was particularly heavy during the "Desmond Wars" (1568-83) in the once rich southeast province of Munster. Here the defending twilight lords, descendants of William the Conqueror's followers, fought against the encroachment of such new English landlords as Sir Walter Raleigh and poet-courtier Edmund Spenser. Berleth displays a grasp of detail and sense of a tragic story's inexorable sweep. Admittedly, he skimps a bit on the last uprising led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, a true Gael who, though raised in England, in 1595 united his countrymen and went on to defeat Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Essex. But O'Neill's forces lost in the end, and the English established their first authentic colony with the Ulster plantation. "The face of Ireland," Berleth says, "was altered permanently," and the estrangement of the two countries hardened finally into a lasting enmity that still haunts them.