Regardless of temporary frustrations and defeats, Pingree left a lasting legacy to Michigan and the nation, although his historical importance faded in the years following his death in 1901. Melvin Holli has blown the dust from Pingree’s record and has provided a sharp, exciting picture of the urban reformer who saw corrupt business and corrupt politics as the cause of antidemocratic urban stagnation. Analyzing social and structural reforms, Holli concludes that the business interests that wanted a streamlined government “also proved to be the greatest obstacle to social reform in Pingree’s Detroit” (p. 181).

Some historians argue that the Progressive Era began with the emergence of President Theodore Roosevelt, others agree that the era vaguely dawns with the publication of Henry Demerest Lloyd’s *Wealth Against Commonwealth* in 1894. Holli’s admirable work, covering a still earlier period, perhaps inadvertently indicates that a progressive era knows no span of time. Instead a period of reform depends upon men and circumstances that call forth the best in leaders who support a legitimate public interest, not a perverted private right.

*National Archives and Records Service,* John D. Macoll
*Washington, D. C.*


Paolo Coletta’s second volume focuses on Bryan’s efforts to make the Democratic party an instrument of progressive reform in 1912 and on his tenure as Woodrow Wilson’s secretary of state. It is a thorough, prodigiously researched account, largely sympathetic to Bryan—“the persistent plodder of progressive Democracy” (p. 92). For information about Bryan, drawn mainly from primary materials, it is a useful source.

Bryan was “Wilson’s Warwick” in 1912 in the sense that “even if by indirection” he cleared the way for Wilson’s nomination “by hectoring the conservatives and insisting that all moves be made in the open” (p. 78). Later his influence on his friends in Congress helped to secure Wilson’s New Freedom legislation. When he approached foreign affairs, it was as “a nationalist idealist—one who saw the national interest upheld and protected by the spread of democracy abroad” (p. 181). Coletta indicates that such idealism was susceptible to a paternalistic, moralistic diplomacy. In Latin Amer-
ica it sometimes produced results contrary to the very concepts of self-determination and international peace in which Bryan believed. Still, since Bryan had the best of intentions, Coletta believes that he ultimately evoked a trust among Latin Americans which encouraged a genuine Pan Americanism to progress after only a temporary delay.

Coletta generally gives Bryan good marks as secretary of state. He grants that Bryan sometimes naively spurned instruments of coercion—except in the Caribbean—and viewed complex issues with an old-fashioned faith in simple morality and in the efficacy of reason. Yet he emphasizes that on a number of issues Bryan was ahead of his times. He describes, for example, Bryan's attempts to establish governmental rather than private credit in aiding undeveloped nations as "the forerunner of our modern diplomacy" (p. 210). Or regarding Bryan's early suggestions for mediation between World War I's belligerents: "As so often happened, Bryan's ideas were laughed at for the moment, then used at a later time" (p. 259). Or: "As so often happened in his career . . . his ideas were fully adopted by a later generation, in the neutrality laws of 1935 and 1936" (p. 360). With apparent approval Coletta quotes Josephus Daniels who, when recalling Bryan's struggle to keep American ships out of the war zone, asserted that Bryan had been correct and that "events showed that he saw farther than most of us" (p. 360). Coletta thus appears to suggest that in significant ways Bryan was less an anachronism who had outlived his time—as Walter Lippmann wrote—than a man whose time had not yet come.

The general thrust of Coletta's book is, however, all too often buried beneath a surfeit of detail. The reader learns, for example, that at Wilson's first inauguration "Bryan was second only to Taft to shake Wilson's hand in congratulations" (p. 92); or that Bryan "wisely ate dinner at home before attending public banquets" and sometimes broke his diet "when away from Mrs. Bryan's keen eye, as by munching radishes while riding in the morning" (p. 99); or that Bryan made his farewell visit to the White House at 12:35 P.M., and that the Associated Press released news of his resignation at 5:26 P.M. Such detail too often pushes more important themes into the background. When Coletta cites Bryan's belief in 1912 that four fifths of America was "radically progressive," he provides an insight into Bryan's perspective on reform. But, rather than develop this theme, he turns instead to blow by blow accounts of the maneuverings and rhetoric of the Democratic convention. In a way, Coletta's narrative falls victim to the mass of information he has assembled.

University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, Conn. Darrel LeRoy Ashby