

Nonetheless, this book is a wide-ranging and pleasurable read. It testifies to the exuberance and profusion with which purveyors of fairy tales and nature writers overlapped; it is useful too for the sheer number of texts it uncovers and avenues it suggests (not all of which it has the space to explore in equal detail). This is an interesting and enjoyable book, and it is a welcome addition to studies of natural history and fairy writing in the Victorian period.

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Parnell Reconsidered, edited by Pauric Travers and Donal McCartney; pp. x + 214. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013, £24.00, \$53.00.

Is there still room for collected volumes in an era of declining scholarly publishing and even faster diminishing library book purchases? Often assembled from several conference panels, these books typically bring together a number of essays on a common theme, topic, or figure. In some cases the commonalities between the essays end there, leading, as often as not, to staid and mechanical reviews that simply walk through the chapters. The best of these volumes feature essays that are in dialogue and collectively advance some shared thesis. *Parnell Reconsidered* falls somewhere between these models, but cohesion is not the sole criteria for judging a collected volume. Relatively few people read this type of book in its entirety, turning instead to the essay or essays that apply directly to their own research. Therefore, perhaps a better indicator of a collected volume's success is how many of its essays are cited in and inform other work in the years after publication. A good volume should offer essays that will contribute to a variety of subfields within the larger topic. Judged by these standards, *Parnell Reconsidered* passes the test and in doing so demonstrates why these books of specialized essays that might not otherwise appear elsewhere are still important and useful to scholars.

The subject of this volume, Charles Stewart Parnell, the so-called Uncrowned King of Ireland, continues to fascinate, as evidenced by a fairly steady stream of journal articles and essays published over the past twenty years. It has been longer than that since the last long form biography of Charles Stewart Parnell appeared, but the last few years have seen the publication of an important study by Paul Bew in 2011, a revised version of Alan O'Day's classic short biography in 2013, and a highly readable historical novel told through the eyes of Parnell's secretary James Harrison by Brian J. Cregan in 2013. Popular interest in Parnell is also evidenced by the great success of the Parnell Society and its annual Summer School at Avondale, now nearing their thirtieth year. Edited by the current President and Chairperson of the Parnell Society, Donal McCartney and Pauric Travers, this collection brings together eleven essays read at Society meetings and related events in 2010 and 2011.

The essays can be roughly divided into two groups: those that explore Parnell's thought and political philosophy and those that illuminate more broadly (and sometimes tangentially) the political and social world in which he lived and operated. Two of the essays from the latter group also examine Parnell in his most famous role: the political

tightrope walker who uniquely managed to assemble and lead a disparate transatlantic coalition of Irish nationalists and others and for a time bring this coalition into partnership with William Gladstone and the Liberal party. D. G. Boyce's essay explores this latter relationship with particular emphasis on Gladstone, the "concerned schoolmaster" to Parnell's head boy (39). Boyce offers a generous and convincing verdict that both men "had an honesty of purpose" and that, as they saw it, their aims (to bolster the Union and establish an Irish legislature, respectively) were not incompatible (43). The alliance Parnell forged with Gladstone's party and its nonconformist base presented a genuine threat to the economic interests of Parnell's supporters in the Irish drink trade, who were important allies in grassroots political mobilization. Fionnuala Waldron examines how the Irish leader ably balanced between the temperance and drink interests, in part through his trademark ambiguity and strategic silences but more importantly with his demand that the Irish drink question could only be properly addressed by a native legislature.

One group that Parnell could not successfully co-opt was the Ladies' Land League, led in part by his sister Anna. Margaret Ward demonstrates how Anna and her compatriots resolutely refused the gendered and relatively minor role assigned to them by the male leaders of the Land League, envisioning their organization as a solidly political movement rather than merely a charity group. Their moment arrived in the fall and winter of 1881 to 1882, when the imprisonment of Parnell and his lieutenants afforded Anna the opportunity to push the Land War in a genuinely radical direction, much to her brother's consternation. Ward further explores the ways in which Charles and the other male leaders deployed contemporary anxieties over "disorderly women" in an attempt to rein in Anna, but ultimately his most potent weapon was his control over the League's funds, and the Ladies' Land League was forced to wind up its operations after he cut the taps (47). Parnell's personal control over the League's "Paris Funds" also figures into Pat Power's chapter exploring the links between that city, Parnell, and his family. These funds played a critical role in the operation of and Parnell's dominance over the Irish Parliamentary Party and National League, explaining why they became the subject of such deep rancor during the Split.

The Split is also discussed in two of the other chapters exploring Parnell's world, which examine the leading nationalist newspapers of the day, the *Freeman's Journal* and *United Ireland*. Felix Larkin, one of the leading historians of the Irish press, offers a characteristically detailed yet pithy account of how the *Freeman* came to support the Parnellites and its steady decline in the decades following. While there were numerous links between the *Freeman* and Parnell, the bulk of Larkin's chapter focuses on the trials and tribulations of the paper in the post-Parnell era, although ably so. Myles Dungan's chapter on the *United Ireland*, "Mr. Parnell's Rottweiler," analyzes Parnell's relationship with the press, and particularly his newspaper, in greater depth. While the radical journalism of its editor William O'Brien was less representative of Parnell's own views than the most popular nationalist newspaper, the *Freeman*, the paper proved quite useful in both keeping the *Freeman* onside and insulating Parnell from attacks on the left.

Parnell's own views are the subject of the remaining chapters, all written by the editors. In his first chapter, McCartney explores the much-debated question of what Parnell actually meant by Home Rule. He stresses that Parnell's aims were ultimately moderate but that he was always, above all, determined to keep his options open and follow the

journey wherever it took him. In a memorable phrase, McCartney posits that Parnell kept his cards close "because his cards were blank, and had yet to have their value added" (13). In his first chapter, Travers sets out to challenge the common assumption that Parnell had little or no personal religious conviction. However, while he demonstrates Parnell's consistent commitment to civil and religious liberty (not unimportant to him as the Protestant leader of Catholic Ireland), Travers ultimately concludes, like most contemporaries and historians, that what Parnell personally believed is impossible to pin down.

Travers's second chapter, on Parnell's *Ne Plus Ultra* speech, is much more satisfying. It examines the usually ignored context of Parnell's most famous speech in order to "explore what Parnell's words meant to Parnell" (180). In line with his co-editor's conclusions Travers stresses the pragmatic yet open-ended nature of Parnell's aims. He sought the best deal available at the time, but insisted that any measure of self-government adopted must not be prejudicial to "longer term national aspirations" so that future generations would be free to pursue Irish self-government as it suited them (185). This timeless, dynamic quality of the speech, Travers concludes, is why it remained relevant for the generations that followed.

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Science and Technology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland, edited by Juliana Adelman and Éadaoin Agnew; pp. 180. Dublin and Portland: Four Courts Press, 2011, \$70.00.

This book is a valuable addition to the literature on science and technology in Victorian Ireland. It consists of eleven chapters and an introduction based on papers from a conference held in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, with the support of the Society for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Ireland. For the reader interested in this subject, however, it must be realized that the volume, in spite of its broad title, does not attempt to provide a comprehensive view of science and technology in Ireland during these years. For this reviewer, based in Belfast, the principal omission in the book is the almost complete absence of any mention of this city, which was the main center of technological developments in nineteenth-century Ireland.

What the essays seek to do, according to the editors, is to expand the existing literature on the history of science in Ireland and to sow the seeds of future research. They seek to cast light on subjects such as the Irish response to Charles Darwin and different Protestant and Catholic attitudes toward science, and gender issues. The authors come from a range of backgrounds, including history, literature, philosophy, and astronomy, as well as the history of science. Their papers are arranged under the topics of "Innovations," "Individuals," and "Institutions," which are examined from new angles and include a diverse array of ideas and actors. The book looks at the participation of those beyond the intellectual elite and the well-known.

The first essay in the book by Thomas Duddy examines the Irish response to Darwinism. He points out that it is inaccurate to view the reaction of people in Ireland to Darwin's theory of evolution as simply either outright objection or enthusiastic support.