

the minutes provide 'a coherent and stable identity for the Presbyterians of the north-east of Ireland', who were in essence 'strangers in a strange land' (p. 38). The book also provides insight into the Church's broader external relations with their confessional counterparts in Scotland and with the indigenous Catholic-Irish population. Furthermore, the Presbyterian church's wariness of the Cromwellian administration in Dublin is hinted at by the fact that it is barely mentioned in the minutes and by the Meeting's handling of certain controversial issues such as the observance of state fasts.

The editorial decisions taken have been on balance both sensible and warranted. First of all, a well-written, lengthy introduction discusses the significance of the main themes of the minutes (see above), as well as providing a concise overview of the early years of the Presbyterian church in Ireland. Furthermore, apart from silently expanded contractions to a few words, the spelling and punctuation of the original manuscript have been retained, and thus the integrity of the source preserved. Furthermore, where damage has made it difficult or impossible to read the text this has been clearly indicated by the editor. Although the inclusion of some images of the original manuscript (apart from those on the dust cover) would have been welcome, in order to give those who have not used it before at least some indication of its 'look and feel', though this would, presumably, have raised publication costs. There is also an excellent glossary of archaic terms and place-names to aid the non-specialist. The main index however would have benefited from the inclusion of subjects and place-names as well as personal names, but these omissions are to a certain extent mitigated by the inclusion of the manuscript's original marginal notes. A map giving the location of a few of the places mentioned in the minutes has also been provided but this could have been more detailed and perhaps more aesthetically pleasing.

The minutes of the Antrim Meeting are an extremely rare and important document and provide a fascinating insight into the religious, social and cultural life of the Ulster-Scots diaspora in the north of Ireland in the 1650s. Furthermore, given the genealogical and geographical data they contain, this book will not only be of use and interest to academics and students but to family and local historians. The fact that the survival of documents such as these, even in institutional settings, is not always guaranteed for the use of future generations makes their publications all the more necessary and valuable.

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GENDER AND MEDICINE IN IRELAND, 1700–1950. Edited by Margaret H. Preston and Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh. Pp I, xviii, 315. New York: Syracuse University Press. 2012. £33.95, €39.95.

*Gender and medicine in Ireland* is an ambitious collection of thirteen articles exploring Irish medical and social history over a broad 250-year period. Two of the articles, Pauline Prior's 'Gender and criminal lunacy in nineteenth-century Ireland' and Oonagh Walsh's 'Cure or custody' consider attitudes towards, and treatment of, mental health. Women's experiences of disease and ill-health are explored by Greta Jones in 'Women and tuberculosis in Ireland' and Elizabeth Malcolm's 'Between habitual drunkards and alcoholics'. Issues surrounding the emergence and development of coherent medical services is considered by James Kelly in 'I was glad to be rid of it', Philomena Gorey's 'Managing midwifery in Dublin' and Ciara Breathnach's 'Lady Dudley's district nursing scheme'. There are three chapters on venereal disease: 'Prophylactics and prejudice' by Leanne McCormick, 'The wages of sin is death' by Laurence Geary and 'A probable source of infection' by Susannah Riordan. Cormac Ó Gráda looks at infant and child mortality in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century and Mel Cousins considers

gender and Ireland's National Insurance scheme. Sandra McAvoy explores the 1935 ban on contraception in 'A perpetual nightmare'.

It can sometimes be the case that collections such as this fall short of their intentions. Articles can be disparate, collections disjointed to the extent that they lack the cohesion necessary to provide an over-arching narrative or idea. *Gender and medicine in Ireland*, however, fulfils all of its lofty ambitions. This is a vibrant contribution to the study of the experience of medicine and healthcare in Ireland, especially with regard to women. Greta Jones, for example, considers the high incidence of T.B. among working women and argues that such was the rate of infection that Ireland developed a 'romantic picture of youthful affliction' with its own ascetic and religious undertones (p. 38). Elizabeth Malcolm's article on Ireland's reformatories explores nineteenth century attitudes to alcoholism and 'deviant women' (p. 110). Societal attitudes towards women and their medical treatment is ably explored through the medium of Ireland's system of lunatic asylums in the articles by Oonagh Walsh and Pauline Prior. Institutionalism is also considered in Laurence Geary's article on lock hospitals, prostitution and venereal disease.

The emphasis on sexual health, reproduction and sexually transmitted disease is both apt and appropriate. As Leanne McCormick argues 'both North and South of the island were united in the belief that V.D. was largely unknown in Ireland, and their reluctance to engage in major preventative treatment schemes' (p. 222). By the 1940s, however, that taboo and wilful ignorance regarding sexually transmitted diseases was beginning to break down. In 1943, as Susannah Riordan points out, the prevalence of V.D. was such that even the Catholic hierarchy, in the person of the archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, was discussing the issue (p. 205).

However, there is more here than the title of the book might suggest. Cormac Ó Gráda uses the Pembroke area of Dublin to provide a snapshot of social indicators at the beginning of the twentieth century. A further wealth of statistics is provided by Mel Cousins in his consideration of the Irish National Insurance scheme. Societal attitudes, economic circumstances and the development of healthcare provision are all considered in the articles by James Kelly, Ciara Breathnach and Philomena Gorey. Similarly, the politics of sexuality and reproduction and religious attitudes towards contraception are discussed vividly by Sandra McAvoy.

Overall, *Gender and medicine in Ireland* offers a coherent study of health, healthcare, medicine and society in the period under discussion. The essays here are concise, immensely informative and eminently readable and constitute a significant contribution to what has become a lively and growing field of study.

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SCIENCE, POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND: THE REVEREND WILLIAM RICHARDSON. By Allan Blackstock. Pp 193. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. 2013. €65.

Allan Blackstock's short volume on William Richardson is conceived as a contribution to the growing field of science and society in nineteenth-century Ireland. In that regard the book is remarkable in two ways: much recent scholarship on nineteenth-century Ireland focuses on the period after the 1830s and on the geographical region that later became the Irish Republic. Blackstock, in contrast, looks at the decades immediately following the Act of Union and at the figure of the provincial clergyman, amateur geologist and agricultural improver Reverend William Richardson, originally from provincial Ulster. A peripheral figure in most histories of Ireland, Richardson was, as Blackstock shows, both a unique