developed what Campbell sees as generally successful Irish settlements. The emphasis of these two chapters is on cross-national similarities, not differences, bolstering Campbell's view that there was considerable regional diversity within the U.S., and that historians have wrongly taken the Irish experience in the Northeast as typical. The final three chapters return to the national level, positing a gradual convergence in the Irish experience in each society from the 1860s to the early 1920s.

This is a work of numerous strengths. Ambitious, expansive and vigorously argued, the book successfully establishes that prevailing economic conditions and social patterns in a new host society were at least as important as cultural background in shaping immigrants' lives. Campbell's emphasis on the pre-Famine period is rewarding, and his sub-national studies are very effective. His suggestion that what he calls the 'Pacific Irish' of California and eastern Australia were not just *similar* but also *interconnected* by the flows of people and ideas around the Pacific Ocean points towards a transnational approach to Irish-America that goes beyond the Atlantic focus of most previous work, and Campbell is currently at work on a history of the Irish in the Pacific world from the 1760s to the 1940s.

There are some problems. Campbell's comments on the Fenians seem unduly harsh, and overlooks recent work that emphasises their broadly democratic character. He overstates the originality of his emphasis on the regional diversity of the Irish-American experience, which, in fact, has been recognised by specialists in this field since the 1970s. More generally, by choosing to construct his book as an argument against earlier historians, Campbell sometimes minimises their contributions, especially those of Miller, whose *Emigrants and exiles* (1985) was not only an exploration of the exile motif but a richly detailed and nuanced transnational work, highlighting (among many other things) Irish-American regional diversity. Still and all, *Ireland's new worlds* makes a real contribution in its sustained comparative approach, and should serve to make historians of the Irish diaspora aware of alternatives to their habitual assumptions and explanations.

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John Mitchel. By James Quinn. Pp 128. Dublin: University College Dublin Press. 2008. €17.00 paperback. (Life and Times New Series)

The Historical Association of Ireland and University College Dublin Press have recently renewed the Life and Times Series with a fresh selection of biographies, to date including titles on Thomas Kettle, Denis Guiney and John Mitchel. James Quinn's contribution to the series is a brief but entertaining and impressively researched revision of the main episodes in Mitchel's life: his recruitment to the staff of the *Nation* in 1845, his increasing differences with other Young Ireland leaders, his trial and transportation to Tasmania in 1848, his escape to the U.S. in 1853, his controversial career as an advocate of slavery and the Confederate cause, his brief connection with the Fenian movement, and, finally, his election for County Tipperary a few weeks before his death in March 1875. While this sequence of events may be familiar to the scholar of Irish nationalism, Quinn fleshes it out with new information gathered from research at the N.L.I., P.R.O.N.I., the Belfast Central Library, the Royal Irish Academy and the National Archives at Kew, among others. This array of primary sources alone makes Quinn's biography well worth examining.

John Mitchel is not a comfortable subject for a biographer, however, and Quinn struggles at times to justify paying renewed attention to a bitter, confrontational and unapologetically racist figure who famously longed for his own plantation of 'healthy negroes' in Alabama, scoffed against the right to life, liberty and happiness, and, in an assertion of proto-Nazi eugenics, welcomed epidemics as a way to dispose of the sickly 'who would otherwise ... propagate perhaps their unhappy species' (pp 56, 58–9, 82). Still, the author gives

coherence to Mitchel's most outrageous statements by pointing at Carlyle's influence, and placing Mitchel's ideas in the context of his spartan republicanism and his general rejection of nineteenth-century 'progress'. Thus, in Mitchel's distorted view (in which, however, he was not alone), paternalistic slavery was more conducive to the welfare and happiness of the weaker classes than the 'degrading cash nexus' and utter lack of protection of industrial relations (p. 57); and ultimately, Mitchel's vicious Anglophobia emerges not simply as the ruling principle behind his separatism, but a reaction against the ruthless materialism that he saw as characteristic of the new economic world order dominated by Great Britain.

On the other hand, Quinn's view of Mitchel's influence on later Irish nationalism is overwhelmingly negative. He associates Mitchel's anti-liberal views and his glorification of physical force with the early twentieth-century 'backward-looking romanticism' that despised industrial progress and welcomed violence as a catalyst of change (p. 89). He concludes, somewhat regretfully, that 'Mitchel is an easy figure to deplore, but one who cannot be ignored' if only because his 'fierce and uncompromising rhetoric' became a durable component of the Irish nationalist makeup (p. 90). Still, in Quinn's own analysis of Mitchel's ideological system lies the basis of a more rounded and slightly less negative assessment of Mitchel's contribution to Irish nationalism.

In the author's own words, 'Like the United Irishmen, the Young Irelanders were influenced by the tradition of classical republicanism and sought to transform the Irish masses into a virtuous self-reliant citizenry, rather than a gullible mob blindly following a charismatic leader' (p. 33). As the explanation continues, Thomas Davis aimed to achieve this through education, whereas John Mitchel advocated the assertion of military strength. It is partly for this reason that Mitchel claimed credit as the 'father of Fenianism' (p. 79), but it is his emphasis on political self-reliance rather than the method proposed to assert it that arguably forms the core of Mitchel's contribution not only to Irish nationalism but to nineteenth-century Irish political life as a whole. Irish republicanism after Mitchel was not only revolutionary, but also democratising: it encouraged 'the people' to disregard elite leadership and to take politics into their own hands. The adoption of physical force was one vehicle of political expression; the establishment of an underground alternative to the parish grass-roots network was another. Unfortunately, Mitchel's venomous Anglophobia and his regressive social opinions constitute a far more evident and less flattering aspect of his legacy.

Ciaran Brady, the Life and Times New Series editor, states that the new volumes 'will be expressly designed to be of particular help to students preparing for the Leaving Certificate, for G.C.E. Advanced Level and for undergraduate history courses' (p. vii). The book's compactness and such features as the introductory chronology are well designed to achieve this. But James Quinn's solidly researched biography also provides academic readers with an excellent overview of Mitchel's life and thought, and whets their appetite for a fuller-length version that will hopefully be undertaken in the future, in spite of the subject's less than rosy personality and his sometimes untenable opinions.

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THE GLORY OF BEING BRITONS: CIVIC UNIONISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BELFAST. By John Bew. Pp xviii, 269. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2009. €39.95

To see what John Bew's book is about – or, rather, what it is not about – it is only necessary to look at the index. In a study devoted to unionist politics in Belfast, John Bates, the solicitor whose formidable organisational powers were credited with establishing the long hegemony of the Conservatives in the reformed borough and municipality, does not receive a single mention. Sir Samuel Ferguson, the greater part of whose career took place elsewhere, gets six.