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Editorial

In recent literature both the Irish and the Scots have been described as ‘migrant peoples’, and both nations have a constantly refreshed relationship with an identified global diaspora. These diaspora in turn exercise real political and cultural power across the Anglophone world. Yet this characteristic of these two Celtic peoples was a direct consequence of the politics of place in the homeland. Both Ireland and Scotland had, and continue to have, a contested relationship to the divisions and subdivisions, the management and improvement of the agricultural land which they inhabit. The Great Famine and the Clearances attest to that.

This issue of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* brings together a set of occasional papers which reflect on the complex weave of migration and the politics of land since the nineteenth century. These essays include reflections of the Irish land war and the break-up of the Scottish estate; on the loss of an emigrant ship off Islay in 1847 and the experience of Scottish ministers in the spiritual oversight of those who landed in New Zealand. The issue also contains an intervention into the ongoing discussion about the distinctive nature of Irish and Scottish attitudes to imperial encounter. Throughout attention is given to the specificity of people, place, and the movement between locations. The volume concludes with a close study of the Irish landlord Arthur High Smith Barry, and opens by asking appropriately, ‘what were the Irish landed gentry for?’ That question, and its counterpart asking to explain the utility and identity of the Scottish landed gentry, is pertinent throughout the volume, and the answers given here illuminate the vagaries of the politics of movement and settlement in these twinned Celtic societies.

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