

THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER IN AMERICA



By
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Meagher in America

The loss of Meagher's mother at the age of 28, almost in his infancy, was provided by the maternal care of an exemplary aunt, whose life was entwined with the life of the boy. From her care he passed to the charge of the Jesuit institutions, where his education was completed. His reverence for these institutions, and the system practised there, never faded. Writing, years after he left them, he says:

“All over the world the colleges of the Jesuits are precisely alike. I have spent six years in Clongowes, their Irish college. I have spent four years in Stoneyhurst, their English college. I have visited their college in Brussels, their college in Namour; their college in Georgetown, in the District of Columbia; visited their college in Springhill, a few miles front Mobile, in the state of Alabama; visited their college in New Orleans, on the banks of the great Republican river of the Mississippi; and in each and all, whether as an inmate or a visitor, the prevailing identity in each and all, no matter what the clime, what the government – the prevailing identity has been to me not only very perceptible, but singularly striking. Not only singularly striking, but from the completeness of its identity, suggestive of a grand belief – the belief that there is, or can be, with all the strifes, vagaries, incongruities, or enmities of the world, a code of moral excellence, gentleness, and beauty which may reconcile and blend the diversities and antipathies which our common nature, diseased by the fatal Fall, has thrown out and multiplied malignantly.”

Meagher and McManus escaped from Tasmania in 1852 to the United States; McManus settled in San Francisco – Meagher in New York. Meagher soon became distinguished as a popular lecturer. His first subject was Australia.

His impression of Australia was full of admiration:

In most if not all, those features which constitute the strength, the wealth, and grandeur of a country, it has been endowed. The seas which encompass it, the lakes and rivers which refresh and fertilise, the woods which shadow, and the genial sky which arches it – all bear testimony to the excellence of the Divine Hand, and with sounds of the finest harmony, with signs of the brightest colouring, proclaim the goodness and munificence of heaven on its behalf. The climate is more than healthful. It is invigorating and inspiring ... Oh! to think that a land so blessed – so rich in all that makes life pleasant, beautiful and great – so formed to be a refuge and a sweet abiding place, in these latter times, for the younger children of the old, decrepit, worn-out world at home – to think that such a land is doomed to be the prison, the workhouse and the grave, of the Empire's outcast poverty, ignorance and guilt!

Other subjects followed, principally upon affairs relating to Ireland – her poets, orators, statesmen, and men of letters – until Meagher became a favourite lecturer in every State and city in the Union, where his voice was soon familiar to the ear of his countrymen. As a public writer and speaker, also, his reputation became great. In September, 1855, after studying with Judge Emmet, he was admitted to the New York bar, where he made at least one famous effort in the United States Court, in the case of Fabens and the other Nicaragua filibusters. He soon conceived the idea of undertaking an expedition to Central America, for the purpose of exploring that wild and luxuriant country, much of the wealth of which was still undeveloped, and through whose entangled forests new pathways had to be cut to facilitate the transit to the Pacific. Accordingly, accompanied by Senor Ramon Pacz, son of the late venerable President of Venezuela, Meagher started for Costa Rica, and made a most valuable tour through that country, encountering vast difficulties in traversing the hitherto untrodden wilds,

amidst which he discovered a new line of transit, which may be one day made available. On his return to this country the information he had thus acquired was communicated to the public in a series of lectures admirably illustrated in panoramic form, and was published in a more permanent shape in Harper's Magazine. Some of the passages in these papers exhibit his brilliant descriptive powers.

The following is extracted from a publication of his speeches:

In 1853, Meagher published, from the press of Redfield, New York, a volume of his speeches on, 'The legislative Independence of Ireland.' This collection, together with its introduction, furnished to the American public the salient points in his antecedent history, as well as the motives which impelled him to his patriotic career in his native country. The speeches were the reflex of Meagher's mind in its youthful vigour, and we know of nothing which he has since spoken or written that excels them in that ornate language so peculiar to him, or that fervour which the inspiration of 1848 only could supply. In the poesy of words with which his eloquence clothed every idea – the fine pictorial effect and rich colouring that adorned everything he said, Meagher probably had no model. If he followed the style of Curran or Grattan – and he inclined most to the latter – he invested it with an originality of thought and expression that made his glorious eloquence all his own.

In the 'Preface' to this volume of speeches Meagher not only gives the reason for publishing them, but the motives which brought them into life. He says

'The anxiety will not be censured which induces me to save from injury the proofs of an interest early taken in the condition of my native land. Nor will it be wholly ascribed to vanity, if the hope escapes me that even yet these words of mine may conduce to her advantage. To some extent the speeches may be considered out of date. The tone inspired by a people in the attitude of resistance sounds strangely upon the ear when the chorus which hailed the coming of the contest has ceased and the fire upon the altar has been extinguished.

'To revive in Ireland the spirit which, in the summer of 1848, impetuously sought to clear a way, with an armed hand, to the destiny that lay beyond an intervening camp and throne, may be for the time forbidden. But in the pursuit of humbler blessings – in the endurance even of defeat, the vices which adversity engenders or exasperates may be resisted – hope, activity, and courage be awakened – all those virtues be restored and nourished, which, in a loftier mood, were loved so dearly for the strength and ornament they bestowed. The suppressions of sectarian fends – the blending of the various races that have at different seasons been cast upon our soil, and have taken root therein – the love of truth, liberality, and labour – the necessity of disinterestedness, integrity, and fortitude amongst the people – the necessity of a high order of intellect, honour, and propriety amongst our public men – these were the lessons taught, – these the virtues encouraged and enforced – when, breaking through a corrupt system of politics, the young Democracy of Ireland claimed for their country the rank and title which was hers by natural law, by covenant, and prescription.'

In the month of April, 1856, Meagher made his first and only essay as a journalist. On the 9th of that month he published the first number of the *Irish News*, in New York. In this enterprise he was assisted by two worthy gentlemen, Richard J. Lalor and Gerald R. Lalor, who continued to publish the paper until its decline in July, 1860. For some time after the paper was started, John Savage was amongst its most active contributors. Meagher himself wrote much for the journal in its early days, furnishing many humorous reminiscences of his Irish life, but not exhibiting in his other articles, to any remarkable degree, that vigour of thought and richness of language with which his lectures and speeches abounded. Journalism was, in

fact, not Meagher's best field of action, and he had become convinced of that before he abandoned it for the stormy life of the soldier and the politician.

Catherine Meagher Travels to Ireland

While her husband grew famous in America, his wife Catherine after the death of her son, Henry Emmett Fitzgerald Meagher, was arranging her departure from Van Diemen's Land. Four-month old Henry died on the 8th of June 1852 in the hamlet of Richmond where Catherine was visiting friends to say farewell and to show-off the son.

She was to proceed to the home of her father-in-law in Ireland, and then she and Thomas



Meagher Snr, were to sail on to America and join her husband in New York. This was the instruction she had been awaiting for many months. This had been a time of frantic activity and trauma for Catherine. After the loss of her baby, she had to recuperate. She felt the separation from her adoring parents and siblings and the journey itself was a challenge. This was all daunting for a young lady sheltered from the perils of the outside world. Catherine had many farewells and on at least two occasions prior to her sailing, was to meet and dine with William Smith O'Brien. The fact that the Catholic Bishop of the colony, Bishop Willson, was to sail with her was no doubt pleasing to her parents. Father William J. Dunne, friend and confidante to the Irish rebels, would have made the arrangements. It is interesting to note that a group of young orphan girls had arrived in Hobart Town directly from Ireland, aboard the *Calcutta*. Among the girls was Bridget Phillips, from Killadysart in County

Clare. The girls were put into service and Bridget went into the employ of Bryan Bennett, Catherine's father, at New Norfolk. There is no record of Bridget after Catherine sailed off to Ireland and there is the strong possibility that the young orphan girl from Clare went back to Ireland as a servant to Catherine.

'Bennie' Catherine O'Meagher set out for Ireland in February 1853 on the ship *Wellington*. On her arrival in London she was met by her father-in-law, Thomas who escorted her to Waterford. She was astonished at the welcome she received when thousands of the citizens met them at the railway station.

The Mayor of Waterford, Thomas F. Strange, and twenty thousand citizens formally greeted her and the following address was proffered:

The Citizens of Waterford

To: Mrs. T. F. Meagher.

Madam,

We the fellow citizens of your gifted and beloved husband, desire in the warmest manner to convey to you the lively gratification we feel at your presence amongst us, and to greet you with our kindest welcome to the land for which he laboured and loved.

Our connection with the name of your husband is of no ordinary character; the son of one of most esteemed citizens, he has grown up amongst us from his childhood, and, in his ripper

years, by many a manly and graceful trait of character, he has won his way into our deepest regard and admiration; gifted with a noble intellect, enlarged and beautified by a generous and kindly disposition, in all relations of life he has endeared himself to those who enjoyed the happiness of his society, and it was one of our most anxious hopes, that the genius by which his mind was enriched, and the honourable and straightforward righteousness of his character, would ultimately raise him to the highest rank of citizenship in our power to bestow.

We have watched him with no small degree of interest through many a phase of his short but eventful career in this country – we beheld him rise gradually to a remarkable position amongst the citizens of his native land – we have heard him in those wonderful moments when, like an inspiration, he swayed multitudes by his grand and commanding eloquence – we have seen him with a single minded enthusiasm, plunge into a course of action on which we, composed of all shades of politics, offer no opinion save this one, that no matter whether that course met our approbation or not, we believe that the purest of motives and the most honourable of intentions were the principles which guided him to it.

We probably may not dwell longer on those matters, as they must naturally awaken painful considerations in your mind, and have often been a source of deep sorrow to many of us, but we cannot fail to give expression to the deep regret we feel at his exile, and while we most sincerely congratulate you on the happiness of soon meeting him in a land of liberty, we shall ever deem it a pleasing duty on our part to cooperate in every honourable movement, having for its object his restoration to his native land.

We confess, Madam, that we look forward to that event with much interest. We believe that his fine and noble character, chastened by suffering and strengthened by experience, must elevate him to a prominent position among the men of his age. He already enjoys a worldwide reputation. The grandeur of his eloquence has penetrated into every clime, and the generous truthfulness of his character has won the esteem of every honest mind. We regret, therefore, that a foreign land should be the sphere of his labours; and, believing that amongst his own fellow citizens, where he is best known and loved, his legitimate position exists, we earnestly trust that the day may not be far distant when we may share in the glory of his genius and the pleasure of his society.

We congratulate you, Madam, on the possession of so gifted and so excellent a husband: he is generous and brave; truthful and good; he possesses those peculiarly amiable traits which endear him in the domestic circle, and we heartily wish you and him many a long year of happiness and love.

From the nature of our feelings towards him, we recognise in your conduct that which demands our best expressions of respect. You found him a lonely exile, separated from all that could comfort and console him, and you renounced home and friends to cheer his loneliness and soothe his sorrows; you, with one of those heroic actions of which a noble woman alone is capable, abandoned every consideration of yourself, and thereby enabled him to procure in another land a home and a position more congenial to his feelings and his hopes – you endured the long and painful suspense of his dangerous absence, augmented by the loss of the dear pledge of your affection. You crossed twelve thousand miles of ocean in search of him, and have thousands yet to traverse before the termination of your fatigues; these, Madam, are no ordinary actions, and they demand our unbounded admiration.

We beg to repeat the deep gratification we feel at your presence, and in order that you may carry to a distant land some memorial of our regard, accept from us this trifle, which we now present to you, that it may in after years occasionally bring to both your minds – apart from

all political bias – the lasting esteem and affectionate respect entertained for THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER by the citizens of Waterford.

Signed on behalf of the Citizens of Waterford.

Thomas F. Strange, Mayor.

Reply to the address of the citizens of Waterford by Catherine.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

You will not be surprised to hear that the kind and generous welcome to the native city of my dear husband, conveyed in the Address with which you greet and honour me, is so overpowering, that, unaccustomed to any such manifestation, and wholly unprepared for this, I am quite unable to make that suitable acknowledgement that would adequately testify my grateful feeling, and repay your too flattering notice. You will therefore indulgently accept the simple but sincere expressions with which I desire to thank you.

For all you so kindly express in regard to one so dear, and by which I am deeply affected, I must leave you to imagine how he would himself thank you and respond to those sentiments, which, evinced as they are ... (text indecipherable)... feelings.

For what you are pleased to say of myself in connection with his exile and subsequent freedom, I can only claim the merit of that affection with which I am contented to be the companion of his solitude, whilst I aspired to share in the happier life he now enjoys; and that affection is this day fully appreciated in the opinions you entertain in his regard.

In years to come, should it please the Divine Providence, which has so generously watched over and preserved him amid so many perils, to fix his abode in the land that has given him so gratifying a welcome, and still honours him by many a cordial reception, or restore him to the 'Old Country' he loved so well, I shall, under every circumstance, cherish the deepest sense of the congratulations with which you favour me; and in the enjoyment of the years of happiness you so earnestly wish, and to which I now look forward with brighter hope, be assured it will be amongst my most pleasing recollections, to have experienced your kindly feelings and gained your valued esteem; nor is the handsome souvenir which accompanies your Address necessary to preserve in my mind the remembrance of my obligations to the Citizens of Waterford, or to prompt me to offer unceasingly my fervent prayers for your welfare.

July 1853. Catherine Meagher.

The Irish harp featured in each corner of the documents highlighted the beautifully embossed 'Welcome' and 'Reply'.

After speeches of welcome had been delivered the party was escorted by the throng to the Meagher home on the Mall.

Catherine Dies

Catherine and her father-in-law, Thomas Meagher, sailed to New York. If Catherine had been overwhelmed by her reception in Ireland, the scene that awaited her in America must have been astonishing. Her husband, whom she had last seen in the wilds of her island home, was now a star, glittering among the frenetic activity of a huge metropolis. The Metropolitan Hotel was antithetical to their isolated retreat at Lake Sorell. There was the constant pressure

of needing to be enthusiastic about every mundane happening. For Catherine it was tiring and meaningless and an environment totally against her liking. Her husband, conversely, was in his element.

Catherine and Thomas Francis lived at the Metropolitan Hotel but relations were strained and, after only four months, when Meagher was offered a free passage to San Francisco for a speaking tour he argued that Catherine should return to Ireland with his father. Catherine, who had struggled to adapt to the New York situation, found herself unwell. On the journey home she told Thomas senior that she was pregnant. She returned to Ireland with her protective father-in-law to await the birth of her child. The intention was for Catherine to return to New York after the birth and the recovery of her health.

Catherine returned to Ireland and settled in at the family home on the Quay at Waterford. In Spring 1854, Meagher was informed that Catherine had delivered of a son, Thomas Francis Meagher III. Catherine died of typhus on 9 May 1854 six weeks after the birth.

Kilkenny Journal 9 May, 1854:

Death of Catherine Meagher at Waterford City.

It is our heartfelt sorrow to announce the death of this amiable and beautiful young lady. We knew her as the wife of the gifted and exiled Meagher. Since she has lived amongst us we have witnessed the gentle innocence and sweetness of her character that endeared her to all who had the happiness of knowing her and which now wrings many a sorrowing pang for her loss from the hearts of all to whom her name is familiar. It is indeed a bitter affliction. Contemplate it in any light; the lovely and gentle child of a southern clime links her destinies to the stricken son of this poor land; far away, in the distant Pacific, she is taught by a patriot father to love and cherish the name of Ireland.

Death interferes. It is, indeed, a mysterious and sorrowful lesson! Deeply do we sorrow for that old man, far away, in the southern isles. A few months ago he lost, in the prime of life, his eldest child; and today, in the little churchyard of Faithlegg, with the whole earth between them, lies the dearest darling of all his affections. Deeply do we sorrow for her adopted relatives; theirs is a grief as unbounded as their affections for her were unbounded. With all the devoted tenderness of a widowed parent did Thomas Meagher love this girl, with all the enthusiastic affection of an only brother did Henry Meagher's undying attention accompany her. Deeply do we grieve for that dear baby boy whose infant prattle can never be blessed with a mother's love; and such a mother!

Death Notice: 9 May, 1854 Catherine (Bennett) Meagher.

Since her return to Ireland she was idolised by all who knew her. Young, beautiful, unaffected and pious, with the halo of her husband's genius and fame surrounding her, she was cherished by the people of Waterford as a pledge of Thomas Francis Meagher's love for the old land, and for his own time honoured and historic city.

A few weeks since we recorded with pleasure the birth of her second son, the first died in Van Diemens Land; it is now our painful duty to announce her death. It took place at 12 o'clock on Monday night, at the residence of her father-in-law, Thomas Meagher.

How general the regret felt at this circumstance through Waterford is we need not say, a regret alleviated only by the fact that the now orphaned boy of Thomas Francis Meagher enjoys health and strength unconscious of his irreparable loss. Mrs Meagher was only twenty-two years of age.

Meagher Dies in Montana

Thomas Francis Meagher continued on with the lucrative lecture tours and also managed to complete sufficient study under Judge Emmett, to be admitted to the New York Bar in September 1855. He entered into legal practice with a Malcolm Campbell in a complex in Ann Street. He, like his rebel colleague, John Mitchel, was not over excited about committing himself to the legal profession but it did hold some element of prestige and was a worthy stage if one could feature in a prominent case. Meagher had his opportunities.

He was part of the defence team involved in the case of flamboyant politician, Dan Sickles, who had shot dead Philip Barton Key, the popular district attorney of the District of Columbia. The shooting occurred in Washington's Lafayette Square, adjacent to the White House and it is said to have been witnessed by the incumbent President, Buchanan. Key, the son of the composer of 'The Star Spangled Banner', had been the lover of the wife of Dan Sickles. Despite overwhelming evidence against him, Sickles was to walk free, and, ironically, go on to become a Brigadier General in the forthcoming civil war as did his defending attorney, Thomas Francis Meagher. Sickles, who lost a leg during the civil war, was a recipient of the Medal of Honour and according to Meagher's soldiers'; Meagher should have also been a recipient.

There were many incidents in Meagher's life in Ireland which seemed to identify his future connection with the American Republic. One of them had a peculiar significance. During the height of the Irish famine of 1847, the ship *Victor*, from New York, arrived in Dublin, loaded with corn for the starving Irish. The captain of the ship was entertained at a splendid banquet in the Pillar-room of the Rotunda, Dublin, over which Richard O'Gorman presided. Meagher, in proposing the health of the ladies of America, concluded his beautiful speech with these words, 'Should the time come when Ireland will have to make the choice, depend upon it, Sir, she will prefer to be grateful to the Samaritan rather than be loyal to the Levite.' These were prophetic words. The pledge they inspired, Meagher kept to the death. On one occasion during the war he happened to meet the captain of the *Victor*. Meagher had then fought his brigade all through the Peninsular battles. Captain Clark was a lieutenant on one of the gunboats. Their meeting was of the heartiest kind. The captain recalled what Meagher had said in the Pillar-room, and, shaking him with both hands, exclaimed – 'General, you have nobly kept the promise you then made.'

During his visit to Central America, Meagher made many friends among the most distinguished men of that country; and some of the most enthusiastic congratulations of his gallant conduct in the war were afterwards bestowed by these gentlemen.

When the war in the South broke out, Meagher entered promptly into the army of defence;



but he did not take this course with undue precipitancy, as from his ardent nature might be supposed. On the contrary, it was not until his conscious judgment determined him that it was his duty, that he took up arms on the side of the Government. But, his resolution once formed, he never for an instant wavered or grew cold. Both morally and physically his support of the Union was genuine and vigorous, such as any patriot or soldier might stake his reputation upon. When he returned after his resignation of the command of the brigade, and with it his commission, the enemies of the Administration counted surely on his siding with them, -partially at all events,

for it was the general opinion that neither he nor his brigade had been justly treated. They were grievously and bitterly disappointed. At the dinner given him in the Astor House by a number of distinguished citizens, June 25th, 1863, on which occasion a magnificent gold medal was presented to him, he flung his private vexations, whatever they may have been, to the winds, and made one of his most impassioned and splendid appeals in favour of the National cause. It has been the positive characteristic of Meagher never to give up either a cause or friend until he found the one to be false and the other to be bad. So true did Meagher prove himself to the National cause, both in and out of the field, from first to last, and all through the conflict, that President Johnson, in a communication addressed to the Adjutant-General, United States Army, setting forth Meagher's claims to promotion, urged them in the strongest language.

Meagher's bearing as a soldier, from beginning to end, was the subject of universal admiration, which was equally shared by the men he commanded, the generals associated with him, and even by the enemy, from whom many acknowledgments of his courage and daring emanated on several occasions. His devotion to his men was unceasing. While observing all the rules of military discipline rigidly, as an efficient commander should do, he was always frank, joyous, and considerate with them; careful of their wants when sick or wounded; cheering them by pleasant words and smiles on the dreary march, and inspiring them in the hour of battle by his example. It has been alleged against the character of Meagher as a careful general, that he often exposed his brigade to unnecessary danger; but it was never yet asserted that during the whole period of his command he ever took his men into a dangerous place without being the first to go himself. As Col. McGee said in his speech on the occasion of the presentation of colours to the Sixty-Ninth Regiment at Carrigmore, the residence of the late Daniel Devlin, Manhattanville, in December, 1863: 'The words of our general when danger had to be faced were not, 'Go, boys, go,' but 'Come, boys, follow me.' Yet, as we have stated, slanderous insinuations were bruited abroad, such as those of Mr Russell, of the London Times, and as substantially squelched, by the denial of those who had the best opportunity of knowing their utter falsity. However it may have been sought by jealousy or malice to fasten upon Meagher charges of recklessness in time of danger and indifference to the safety and comfort of the men under his command, every such charge has been amply disproved and repudiated by those best qualified to bear testimony. When the general was appointed to a command in the West under General Steadman, the revered Principal of the St Xavier's Jesuit College, Sixteenth Street, New York, in his letter of introduction to the Father Provincial at St Louis, said of Meagher that "in all the battles to which Gen. Meagher led his soldiers, he acted as a true Christian gentleman, with a truly Irish faith."

If further evidence were necessary to rebut the stories of the many gossips and unthinking people who weakly assailed a gallant soldier's reputation, it can be found in the address presented Meagher at the head-quarters of the Brigade by all its officers, upon, the occasion of his taking leave of them.

It Was Written by Col. James E. McGee, then commanding the Sixty-Ninth, and is as follows:

The undersigned officers of the original regiments of the Irish Brigade, in the field, having learned with deep regret that you have been compelled, by reasons of paramount importance, to tender your resignation as General of the Brigade, and the Government having accepted your resignation, you are about to separate yourself from us, desire in this manner, as the most emphatic and courteous, to express to you the sorrow we personally

feel at your departure, and the sincere and heartfelt affection we entertain, and shall ever entertain, for you under all circumstances and changes of time and place.

We regard you, General, as the originator of the Irish Brigade, in the service of the United States; we know that to your influence and energy the success which it earned during its organization is mainly due; we have seen you, since it first took the field-some eighteen months since-sharing its perils and hardships on the battle-field and in the bivouac; always at your post, always inspiring your command with that courage and devotedness which has made the Brigade historical, and by word and example cheering us on when fatigue and dangers beset our path; and we would be ungrateful indeed did we forget that whatever glory we have obtained in many a hard-fought field, and whatever honour we may have been privileged to shed on the sacred land of our nativity, that to you, General, is due, to a great extent, our success and our triumphs.

In resigning the command of the remnant of the Brigade, and going back to private life, in obedience to the truest dictates of honour and conscience, rest assured, General, that you take with you the confidence and affection of every man in our regiments as well as the esteem and love of the officers of your late command.

With this sincere assurance, we are, General, your countrymen and companions in arms.

At the banquet given to the returned veterans of the Brigade in Irving Hall, January, 1864, Gen. Meagher boldly appealed to his comrades, demanding from them a denial of all these charges. He said (we quote from a daily paper)-

‘Comrades, officers, and privates of the Irish Brigade, now that you are assembled together publicly in this city, I call upon you to answer me plainly, unreservedly, and honestly, whether the charges which have been circulated concerning me are true or false. It has been said of me that I have on several occasions wantonly and recklessly exposed the lives of my men. Is this true or not? [Cries of ‘No, no,’ in all parts of the house.] Have I ever brought you into the face of danger except when ordered there?

[Renewed cries of ‘No.’] When I brought you where danger was to be encountered, was I not always the first in myself, and was I not always at your head? [‘Yes, yes,’ and the most uproarious applause.] having brought you in, was I not the first out? [‘Yes, yes. Yes,’ and a cry of ‘First and last in the danger,’ from one of the rue!].] I thank you for this contradiction of the malicious falsehoods which have been asserted against me, and I hope that this answer of the Irish Brigade will be sent not only over this land, but over to Europe, where the enemies of this country have many sympathisers and abettors.”

That will suffice upon this subject. It is not an agreeable task to have even to appear to enter upon a defence of a brave soldier, whose laurels are the proudest as well as the strongest rebutting testimony to all charges or insinuations, but as matters of history, I have chosen to put these facts upon the record.

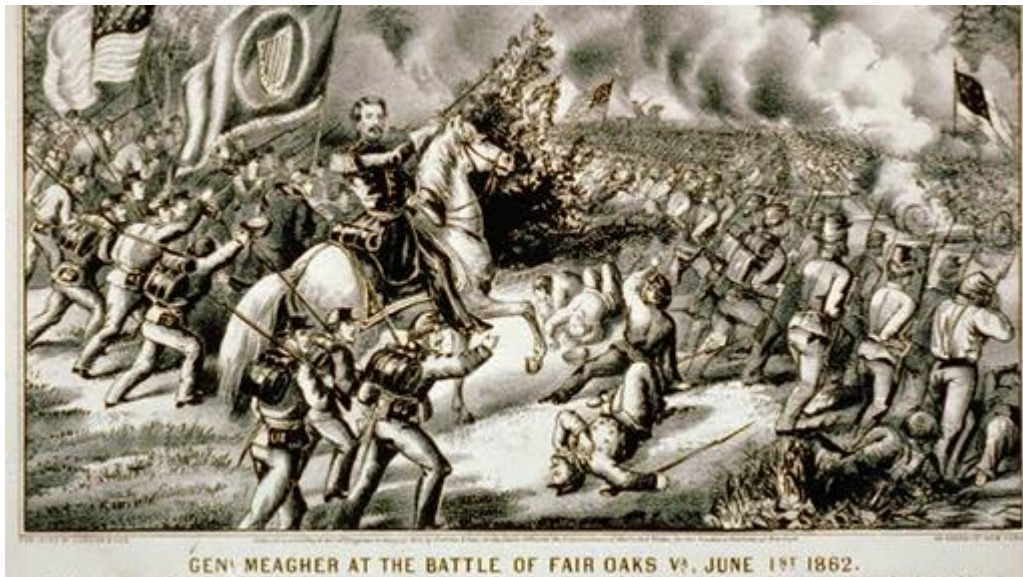
Meagher was the recipient during the war of many well-deserved honours from the citizens of New York. We have already seen that he was entertained at the Astor house by a large number of his friends, and decorated with a magnificent medal, a description of which will afford some idea of the taste of design and skill of execution displayed in its manufacture. It is wrought in the finest gold, and is about three inches in diameter, the centre being formed by a beautiful miniature of an ancient Irish Cross; in fact it is a perfect fac-simile of the old Cross of Monasterboice, the tracery on the original being faithfully represented on the gold. Round the outside and bound with wreaths of Shamrocks to the points of the Cross, is a scroll or ribbon of gold, edged with enamel, and bearing the motto of the general’s family “*In periculis audacia et firmitas in caelo,*”

(Boldness in dangers and trust in heaven.)

Behind this appear rays of glory emanating from the centre and typifying the “Sunburst.” The medal is suspended from a military “ribbon”—red, white, and blue edged with green—fastened by two pins: the upper ones bearing the words Irish Brigade, U.S.” the lower one is formed of a bundle of Irish *skenes* and *sparths* bound together by wreath of laurel, which forms the loop in which the ring the medal is inserted. On the ribbon are twelve clasps, each bearing the name of one of the battles at which the Irish Brigade was present, in the following order:- York town, Fair Oaks, Gaines’ Mills, Peach Orchard, Savage Station, White Oak Swamp, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Scott’s Mills, Chancellorsville. On the reverse of the medal is the inscription—“ General Meagher, from Citizens of New York, June, 1863.”

The officers of the Brigade also presented him with a splendid gold medal with the Irish harp resting on the American and Irish flags, surrounded with a wreath of Shamrocks—as a token of their high appreciation and esteem. The presentation was made at the residence of General Meagher, Fifth Avenue, by Col. Nugent, in the presence of a large body of the officers of the Brigade and a number of distinguished citizens. The hospitalities of the city were tendered to him by the Common Council, through a committee headed by Mayor Opdyke, at the Astor House; and on that occasion the Kearney Cross,” upon which was the inscription- “To Gen. Meagher, of the Irish Brigade Kearney’s friend and comrade of the Old Division.” The Cross was presented by Alderman Farley on behalf of the Corporation.

When the Irish Brigade was more than decimated, after the series of battles which preceded that of Chancellorsville, Meagher resigned his command; tendering his services to the Government at the same time, in any other capacity. He was soon after appointed to the command of the military district of Etowah, where he distinguished himself by the skill with which he held Chattanooga secure from the attacks of the enemy, with a small force, at one of the most critical points of Gen. Sherman’s grand movement towards the Atlantic.



GEN. MEAGHER AT THE BATTLE OF FAIR OAKS VS. JUNE 1ST 1862.

At the outbreak of the American Civil War Thomas Francis Meagher sought permission to raise a company of troops to attach to the 69th New York Militia. The 69th had attracted nearly 4,000 Irish volunteers in the first few weeks following the outbreak of hostilities at Fort Sumter. The New York Militia were under the control of the cities Fire Chief, Michael Corcoran, who enjoyed the rank of Colonel. Meagher advertised in the ‘New York Daily Tribune’, on the 17th April 1861: ‘One hundred young Irishmen, healthy, intelligent and active, are wanted to

form a company of Irish Zouaves under the command of Thomas Francis Meagher to be attached to the 69th Regiment, NYSM.' The ornate uniforms were to be supplied by wealthy supporters of the 69th.

Meagher, who had spent much of his time over recent years wheeling and dealing in the surreal world of South America, was soon brought back to the real world. As Captain T. F. Meagher, he needed to involve himself in the basic training of his troops. He had exceptional communication skills and was prepared to endure the same hardships as his soldiers. Meagher was a natural leader unlike most of the other permanent army officers who were often unable to control the 'civilian army'. These were volunteers on short time enlistments and were not prepared to accept the pomposity and martinet type of behaviour from senior officers.

In the little town of Sharpsburg, Md there is a lazy creek called Antietam . On September 17th, 1862 that little town and that lazy creek were witness to a great Civil War battle. In the south it was called the Battle of Sharpsburg, in the north they called it the Battle of Antietam; by either name it was the bloodiest single day in US military history. It was also a deadly day in the history of one of the most famous brigades of the Civil War, Meagher's Irish Brigade. The brigade had already been bloodied during the Peninsula campaign and there was another nightmare in their immediate future at Fredericksburg, but this day would be as harrowing as any they would ever endure.

Meagher's plan was to overrun the Confederate position without stopping to fire until they were almost in the face of the rebels. Many commander's had very similar plans at numerous other battles during the carnage of the Civil War, and most of the time the rifled musket negated those plans with a vengeance, this time would be no exception. As the Brigade advanced they were fired on by the Posey's Mississippi brigade from the left; the 63rd NY took horrendous casualties from this volley. At that point the Brigade stopped and poured a tremendous fire into the Mississippians with their smooth bore muskets loaded with 'buck and ball', a combination of a 69 calibre musket ball and three large buckshot, which were deadly at this close range. The routed Mississippians retreated to the road.

But the confrontation had stopped the Brigade's progress and fire from the road was continuing to drop men from the ranks. As they moved forward again they came to the crest of a rise and were halted by sheet of flame as the Confederates fired a volley into their faces. The staggering ranks of the Brigade then lay on the ground as they fired back at the rebels, so well hidden below the protecting road bed. Meagher tried several times to organize a bayonet charge. At one point Meagher was overheard yelling to Col. Francis Barlow, commander of a regiment of Caldwell's brigade, which was in reserve, 'Colonel, for God's sake come and help me!' But Barlow yelled back that he could not move without orders. Soon Meagher's horse was shot from under him and he was carried from the field.

The Brigade was being devastated by the rebel fire. Eight colour bearers fell in the 69th NY that day. Capt. James McGee would end the day with their green flag in his hands, the staff cut in two and the banner, like all the other Brigade flags, cut to pieces. Capt. Patrick Clooney of the 88th NY grabbed the 88th's green flag and, in spite of a bullet in his knee, tried to urge his men forward, but bullets hit him in the chest and head and he slumped to the ground and died. Capt. Jack Gosson, of Meagher's staff, had one horse shot from under him and procured another which soon took a bullet in the nose. The horse continued to support Gosson through the battle but covered him so thoroughly with blood that those who saw him were sure he was mortally wounded.

In spite of the Confederate's well protected defensive position, the buck and ball of the Brigade was also taking a heavy toll on them; but the Irish were rapidly running out of

ammunition, not to mention men. Their division commander, Israel Richardson called up Caldwell's brigade to relieve the beleaguered Irishmen. At that point there occurred one of the most remarkable withdrawals under fire by any regiment during any battle of the war.

Most units who found themselves in this sort of situation during the war retreated in much disorder once the order came; God knows that most brigades would have been routed from that field long before they ran out of ammunition. The Brigade rose up, formed a column and 'broke files to the rear,' ignoring the fire of the Confederates, disdaining it, as if on a parade ground, practicing brigade drill. As the brigade came off the field Gen Richardson called out to the men of the 88th NY, 'Bravo, 88th, I shall never forget you!' He had little chance to break that promise; he would be dead within minutes, killed by a rebel shell fragment.

Shortly after the Irish withdrew the road was taken by the fresh regiments that came up; but most who observed the fight agreed that the Irish Brigade deserved the lion's share of the credit for taking the position.

The Brigade that came off the field at Antietam was a shadow of the one that marched out. The 29th MA, which would soon leave the Brigade to be replaced by the Irish 28th MA, had been partially shielded by a dip in the ground during the fight and suffered only 28 casualties; but the three Irish regiments from NY, who went in with slightly under a thousand men, lost approximately 512 that day. The day before the battle the Brigade had received 120 recruits; they had been offered provost duty that day but they asked to fight instead and 75 of them lay dead or wounded on the field. What had been the Irish Brigade had been whittled down to the strength of a regiment in one day; less than two months later, at Fredericksburg, it would take one more day to reduce them to a battalion.

Meagher remarried on the 14th November 1855. He had met Elizabeth Townsend while living in New York. Elizabeth was quite a catch for the exiled Irishman. She was attractive, socially acceptable, from both her training and above all the wealth of her family. Despite the fact that her father did everything in his power to discourage the romance, the Irish rebel and the American steel heiress married. Elizabeth's father eventually accepted the union and the newlyweds moved in to the palatial home of her parents.

He was also a friend of Abraham Lincoln, and indeed, Lincoln saw him once from his sickbed after refusing all other visitors. He carried Lincoln's coffin.

Lincoln had visited the Fighting 69th once and noted their bravery, grasping their banner and stating "God Bless the Irish." Those were words that no British leader would ever speak and Meagher recognized that.

He became an outspoken opponent of slavery at a time when the majority of Irish in New York did not want to fight and die to free African slaves. He went further demanding they be granted full citizenship, not just freedom. "The Black heroes of the Union army have not only entitled themselves to liberty but to citizenship," he declared.

He was fearless in his commitment to causes involving injustice anywhere and his beloved Ireland.

At the end of the war there was a huge restructuring program put in place by the Government. Meagher had confidently expected a diplomatic appointment but he was offered the position of Secretary of the Territory of Montana.

The discovery of gold and other minerals had attracted a large cross section of people to the Territory of Montana. The area was home to several tribes of American Indians, who were beginning to resent the intrusion of the white-man into their lands. The earliest European settlers were trappers and farmers and seemed to pose no great problem for the indigenous people. Around 1860 the mineral discoveries encouraged thousands of speculators to head to the territory and with the influx came also the criminals of all persuasions. The expectation of a quick financial gain and the lack of civic order was a potent recipe. A lawless society was soon in existence.

In 1863 a group of citizens from the Virginia City Temple of the Masonic Lodge decided to address the matter of lawlessness. The 'Montana Vigilantes' were formed. Many of the supposed criminals were rounded up and put on trial. Several were apprehended, tried and hanged on the same day. No doubt many of the victims deserved their fate, but in the excitement of it all there is little doubt that innocent parties were executed. In a period of five weeks some thirty persons were despatched per the 'Vigilante Justice System'.

Criminal activity continued unabated despite the 'Vigilante's' crude attempt at righteousness and this was the atmosphere that General Meagher faced as the new Secretary of the Territory of Montana. Meagher took up residence in Virginia City, a former gold boomtown and was immediately faced with the added responsibility of Acting Governor. The former Governor decided that discretion was the better part of valour and departed.

Meagher was soon in conflict with many of the prominent and sometimes 'shadowy' figures who deemed it their right to run Montana their way. As Acting Governor, Meagher convened a meeting of the Territory Legislature on 6 March, 1866 to seek the appointment of a Surveyor General; an army presence; Federal recompense for settlers battling Indian threats; and most importantly, a convention in Helena to discuss statehood for Montana. His intentions were seen as a threat to the pecuniary interests of many who were comfortable outside the domain of civic order. Meagher had aligned himself against powerful enemies, Judges, Lawyers, and Merchants and they were generally against his Democratic political alliance. Meagher was labelled everything from a Catholic bigot to an alcoholic grandstander and a southern sympathiser, despite his war record. Meagher ignored all the threats and pressed on with his plans to reform Montana.

In 1866 a man named James Daniels was arrested by the 'Vigilantes', charged with murder, put on trial and sentenced to death by hanging. Thirty-two prominent citizens protested. They petitioned Meagher to seek clemency from the President. Meagher undertook the case and released Daniels, pending the review of the supposed crime. Judge Munson, a political enemy of Meagher and an associate of the Vigilantes, ordered the immediate re-arrest of Daniels. He was taken into custody and hanged on 31st March 1866. A note was attached to the boot of the dangling Daniels, stating 'If the acting governor does this again we will hang him too'.

With the increase of Indian activity (Custer's last stand was ten years later) Meagher had sought permission from Washington to form a Militia. He received approval from General W.T. Sherman to proceed. Meagher was to outlay \$1,100,000 in setting up the Militia and they were to skirmish with the Sioux and other tribes.

During the boom periods of Montana's development the majority of the goods brought into the territory were via the Missouri River, with the central discharge point being at Fort Benton. At the height of the mining boom in the early 1860's, 3000 wagons and 30000 oxen and mules were assembled in moving cargo out of Fort Benton on a continuous basis. This excluded the winter when the temperatures dropped to minus 30 degrees and any movement was impossible.

The Montana Militia expected a shipment of weapons and other associated equipment, to arrive at Fort Benton. Meagher, who had tendered his resignation and had hoped to return to the East, left Helena with a troop to ride the 160 miles to make the collection. It was June 1867 and the weather had been extremely hot. During the journey Meagher and several of the troop were sick. It was assumed to be dysentery, brought on by the poor quality of water they consumed and the effects of sunstroke. The troop was forced to layover at Sun River for several days to recuperate. They finally made it to Fort Benton on the morning of 1 July 1867 but were extremely disappointed to discover that their shipment had been off-loaded further down river.

The troop would need to stay overnight but because accommodation was at a premium, they decided to disperse and get whatever accommodation they could. Meagher was to meet up with an acquaintance by the name of John Doran, a pilot on the Missouri River. Doran had been on the 'Ontario' the previous year and had brought Mrs Meagher up the river to join her husband in the mountain country. Doran was now aboard the steamer G. A. Thompson. He had left St Louis in early April and had arrived at Fort Benton on 29 June. She had anchored between the steamers 'Guidon' and 'Amelia Poe' with 50 yards separating on either side. Doran had noticed General Meagher arrive with a troop of about twelve of his staff and the General had advised him that his arms and equipment had been dropped at Camp Cook, a further 120 miles below. Doran said he and Meagher wandered about the town, meeting several people, some who had offered to entertain them with drinks but Meagher gently declined in view of his illness at Sun River. Doran had invited the General to sleep over night in the stateroom on the G. A. Thompson and Meagher accepted.

Mystery surrounds the events that were to occur over the next few hours. Doran said that after Meagher had spent some time reading and smoking, he appeared to become agitated and said 'Do you know they are threatening to kill me? Do you have a gun?' Doran said he showed Meagher a revolver he kept handy by his bunk. Meagher then supposedly climbed into a bunk; Doran left the cabin after locking the door behind him but he later said the lock was defective. He went ashore on an errand but quickly returned on hearing loud voices calling out that someone had fallen into the water. As he went on board one of the crew said 'it is your friend, he has fallen overboard'. There was an immediate effort to search the water, but with a depth of 12 feet and a fast flow, the efforts in the black of the night were futile.

There were a number of factors that make the theory of an accidental drowning too convenient. There was the faulty door catch. Outside the door a coil of rope had been placed. Then there was a broken guardrail adjacent. Some suggested that his death was suicide; this was totally against his character and religion. The other theory, which is plausible, is that agents of the Vigilantes killed Meagher. Forty years after Meagher's death, a man by the name of Diamond, who, on his deathbed following an accident, stated that he was part of a ten-man team sent to assassinate Meagher. For his part he was he said personally paid \$8,000. Diamond however, was to make a recovery and, supposedly with some urging, recanted.

To further support the theory there was the appearance of a man named Wilbur Fisk Sanders. Sanders, who lived in Helena, arrived at Fort Benton at the time Meagher and his troop would have arrived had they not needed to stay over at Sun River to recuperate. He was still there when the troop arrived on the 1st of July. Wilbur Sanders was the nephew of former Governor, Sidney Edgerton, and more interestingly, was a founding member and the prosecuting attorney for the activities of the Vigilantes. Sanders, on being interviewed, admitted he had actually spoken with Meagher during the day and confirmed the story of Doran that Meagher had not been drinking and had in fact declined an invitation from a

saloon keeper to accept a drink. What will never be known is whether the threat Meagher had mentioned to Doran, was passed to him from Sanders.

Prominent historian Robert Athearn wrote about Elizabeth Meagher:

For nearly two months after the death of her husband, the grief-stricken daughter of wealthy old Peter Townsend pathetically patrolled the tawny banks of the Missouri, searching for her husband's body... When fall came to Montana that year, she reluctantly abandoned the search and returned to New York.

Elizabeth Meagher spent much time and money on having the river searched for the body of her husband but with no success. Perhaps they were searching in the wrong place. The man, who had made a confession on his near deathbed, claimed Meagher was tied, taken ashore, shot and buried.

We know that she did make her final departure, to live in the family home in New York, from Virginia City on the 12th of August. The Montana Post announced: "Mrs. General Meagher left yesterday [12 Aug] per private conveyance for Benton, thence by river for the East. It was with sincere regret our citizens bid good-bye to this most estimable lady, and her friends in Montana will ever cherish her memory fondly. Quite a number of the citizens turned out in Nevada and formed an escort of honor, while overhead the twin flags of Erin and Columbia floated out on the breeze."

The Virginia City Montana Post on August 31st gave Libby Meagher a fine send-off tribute: "Homeward Bound. – Mrs. Meagher takes passage on the steamer Gallatin, advertised to leave this day for St. Louis. The following from the pen of Miles O'Reilly is a deserved tribute to her who leaves our Territory to-day, and, perhaps, forever: 'How noble a wife she has been--with what fidelity of warm devotion she has clung to the varying fortunes of her brilliant but erratic lord – only those could tell whose lips must remain silent under the seal of social relationship. Reared in luxury, and as much flattered and followed for her beauty as Meagher has been in early days for his genius and gift of eloquence, she never faltered in her allegiance to the exile who reached his highest fortune where he won her heart. Whither he went she followed him; his people became indeed her people, and his God she made her God. We dare not write more upon this branch of the subject, though we write from an overflowing heart, and have many thoughts surging upward and clamouring for expression.'"

Mrs. Thomas Francis Meagher began her sad journey home to New York, a trip that would prove long and difficult. Boating conditions in that late season were atrocious.

In 1913, a man named Pat Miller claimed to have shot Meagher and pushed his body out the porthole, before escaping by jumping overboard and swimming to shore. He maintained he was paid \$4,000 by a man called Axel Porter on behalf of vigilantes who wanted Meagher killed. A few days later, he withdrew his confession, but the detail was so accurate it was impossible to discount.

Elizabeth M. J. Townsend Meagher was 36 years of age when she arrived on the Montana frontier. She had been with him at the first battle of Bull Run early in the Civil War, and she nursed him back to health after he was wounded in the battle. General Meagher and Libby lived in Virginia City, and their small log home was a social centre there.



Thomas Francis Meagher and Elizabeth 'Libby' had no children.

In Montana there is a magnificent statue of General Meagher on the forecourt of the Capitol Building in

Helena. Meagher is mounted on a rearing horse, full uniform; his sword is raised above his head, with the message 'FOLLOW ME'.

The Plaque on the statue reads:

THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER

American soldier and statesman; Brigadier General United States Army; raised and organized the Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac, and personally commanded it in the battles of Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, Caine's Mill, White Oak Swamp, Malvern Hill, Fredericksburg, Antietam and Chancellorsville; appointed to the command of the Etowah District as acting Major General in November, 1864; Acting governor of Montana from September, 1865 to July 1, 1867, when he was drowned in the Missouri River, at Fort Benton, Montana.

'My heart, my arm, my life are pledged to the National cause, and to the last it shall be my highest pride, as I conceive it to be my holiest duty and obligation to share its fortunes.'

From a speech at Jones' Woods, New York, 1861: 'The true American knows, feels and with enthusiasm declares, that of all human emotions, of all human passions, there is not one more pure, more noble, more conducive to good and great and glorious deeds, than that which bears us back to the spot that was the cradle of our childhood, the playground of our boyhood, the theatre of our manhood.'

From an address delivered in Virginia City,

Montana, March 17, 1866

Requiem for Meagher

A magnificent Requiem High Mass was celebrated at the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Sixteenth Street, New York, on the 14th of August, for the repose of the soul of the departed General, under the auspices of his brother officers of the Irish Brigade. On the same evening, Richard O'Gorman delivered a eulogy on the character of the deceased at Cooper Institute, in which, after detailing the circumstances of Meagher's death, he closed with the following touching peroration:

So he died. 'Would that he had died on the battlefield,' I think I hear some friend say. Would that he had fallen there, with the flag he loved waving over him, and the shout of triumph ringing in his ears; Would that his grave were on some Irish hillside, with the green turf above him. No; God knows best, how, and where, and when we are to die. His will be done. But Meagher has bequeathed his memory to us, to guard it, and save it; from evil tongues, that might not respect the majesty of death. What matter to him now whether men praise or blame? The whole world's tonsure could not hurt him now. But for us the friends who are left behind; for you, his companions in arms; for me, who was the friend of his youth, and who have loved him ever; for the sake of those who are nearer and dearer to him, of whose grief I cannot bring myself to speak – of his father, his brother, of his son, on whose face he never looked; for the sake, more than all, of that noble lady whose

endearing love was the pride and blessing of his life; for all this we do honour to his memory, and strive to weave, as it were, this poor chaplet of flowers over his grave.

His faults lie gently on him. For he had faults, as all of us have. But he had virtues too, in whose light his errors were unseen and forgotten. In his youth he loved the land of his birth, and freely gave all he had to give, even his life, to save her and do her honour. He never forgot her. He never said a word that was not meant to help her and raise her. Some things he did say from time to time, which I did not agree with, that seemed to me hasty, passionate, unjust. When men speak much and often, they cannot help sometimes speaking wrong. But he said always what he thought; he never uttered a word that was unmanly or untrue to the cause that was darling to his Youth. In Ireland, in America, he invited no man to danger that he was not heady to share. Never forget this: he gave all, lost all, for the land of his birth. He risked all for the land of his adoption, was her true and loyal soldier, and in the end died in her service. For these things, either in Ireland or America, he will not soon be forgotten, and the grateful instinct of two people will do him justice and cherish his memory in the heart of hearts. If it be, as we of the ancient faith are taught to believe, that the highest heavens are joined to this earth by a Mystic chain of sympathy, of which the links are prayers and blessings which ascend and descend, keeping ever the sacred communion eternal and unbroken – if thus fervent prayer on earth can reach the throne of God, the friend of my youth can never be forgotten there. His battle of life is fought. His work is done; his hour of repose is come, and love can utter no fonder aspiration than that which was chanted in the sad ceremonies of this morning. May he rest in peace. Amen!

There are few men in our day – but still there are a few – whose lives were more varied by remarkable incidents, more chequered, more twisted and tortured by the whirlpools of fate than was that of Meagher, and yet he bore himself gallantly through it all. Not always prosperous in worldly things, yet he treated adversity with a disdainful pride, even at the moment when his unselfishness inspired him to give, while prudence might have whispered him to retain. But he knew little of prudence in these matters. Generosity mastered him always. The brilliancy of his wit, the love of all that was gallant and noble, and his detestation of all that was ignoble in human nature, that constantly pervaded his social life, those who have shared his companionship will not forget. The fresh bright memory of these attributes will remain, with the recollection of his joyous laugh, the flush of his deep blue eyes, sometimes sparkling with merriment, oftentimes intensified by some passionate thought, and not unfrequently clouded with a shadow of compassionate regret – for Meagher never heard of sorrow or want in one of his race, that his heart did not respond, no matter what the condition of his exchequer might be.

Meagher's Son

John Mitchel refers to Meagher's son, in these loving terms:

‘In those same sombre rooms, surrounded by the same solemn environment, there grows up at this moment another young shoot of that old Tipperary stock, a youth now of fifteen years, and with many subjects for thoughtful musing, if he has a head for thought, as is likely. Perhaps he occupies at this day his father's little study, surrounded by his father's books, and haunted by his father's fame. What reflections must have passed through that youthful head, as the news used to arrive from day to day of some desperate battle on the Rappahannock or Chickahominy – and of the Green Flag of the Irish Brigade fronting the

red Confederate battle-flag (no unworthy match). Did the boy see in thought his father's dark plume careering through the battle, amidst the smoke and thunder, and the tempest of crashing musketry and fierce shouts of the onset? Did the young heart swell with pride, and hope, and a longing and craving to be riding that moment by his father's side?'

Thomas Francis Meagher III was born in Waterford in 1854. Thomas later changed his middle name to Bennett. He married Mary Lavinia Carpenter from California on 6 February 1884 (probably in New York) and had three children that survived to adulthood – a daughter named Eleanor, a son and another daughter, Catherine Mary (named for her grandmother, Catherine 'Bennie'). Another son Gerard C. Meagher died in 1886, age 1.

He was a civil engineer and he moved to The Philippines, where he died in 1909. It is said that he died from pneumonia after an attempted suicide. (His wife Mary had died at the age of 39 on January 18, 1893 and is buried in San Francisco.) Present at his funeral were representatives of the US Government and also members of the Manila Lodge of the Eagles, so he must have been a member. He is buried in Cemeterio del Norte in Manila, The Philippines.

This article is from the *Waterford News* 12th Feb. 1910. It is difficult to vouch for its accuracy in all areas as there is one glaring mistake. But some of it is likely to be close to the truth.

'We have already announced the death, which occurred last November, of Thomas Frances Meagher, son of Meagher of the Sword. In the issue of "*The Gaelic American*" just to hand there is an article on father and son.

After dealing with the former the *Gaelic American* goes on to say that Meagher, after his arrival in New York, "... started a weekly paper called Meagher's Irish News, but it was not a financial success and every other venture he engaged in turned out the same way Her only son, who was called after his father, was brought up and educated by her people in Tasmania.

[This of course is incorrect – young Meagher never saw Tasmania (although his infant brother is buried there) but was cared for by his father's family in Waterford and later by his step-mother in America].

General Meagher married a wealthy New York widow, Mrs Townsend, [this is also incorrect as Townsend was her family name. Elizabeth Townsend was born in New York September 20, 1830, the daughter of Peter and Caroline Parish Townsend of Monroe, New York. The Townsend family were wealthy Protestants.] who died last year at Nyack, N.Y. and after his tragic death on a Missouri steamboat she did not marry again. In the early seventies, she sent for her husband's son by his first wife and prepared him for West Point, in the hope that he would enter a military career in the American Army. He went to the Military Academy and spent three years there, but failed to pass. [This is also incorrect. This career choice was short lived as he was discharged some four months later.] While he resembled his father in face, feature and physique to a remarkable degree, and was very bright, he lacked application and his tastes were not military. After he left West Point he lived in New York for some years and was a familiar figure at Irish Nationalist gatherings. He inherited his father's political opinions, became a member of the Napper Tandy Club of the Clan-na-Gael and his associations were all Irish. His closest personal friend was the late Thomas F. Burke, who was sentenced to be hanged in 1857. He was a young man of fine presence and good manners, but was of a retiring disposition. His resemblance to his father was so striking that many of the veterans of 1848 and of the Civil War knew him for a son of the General on sight. P.M. Haverty, the Publisher, who knew the General in peace

and war used to say that the resemblance included gestures which characterized the General in certain frames of mind, although the young man had never seen his father.

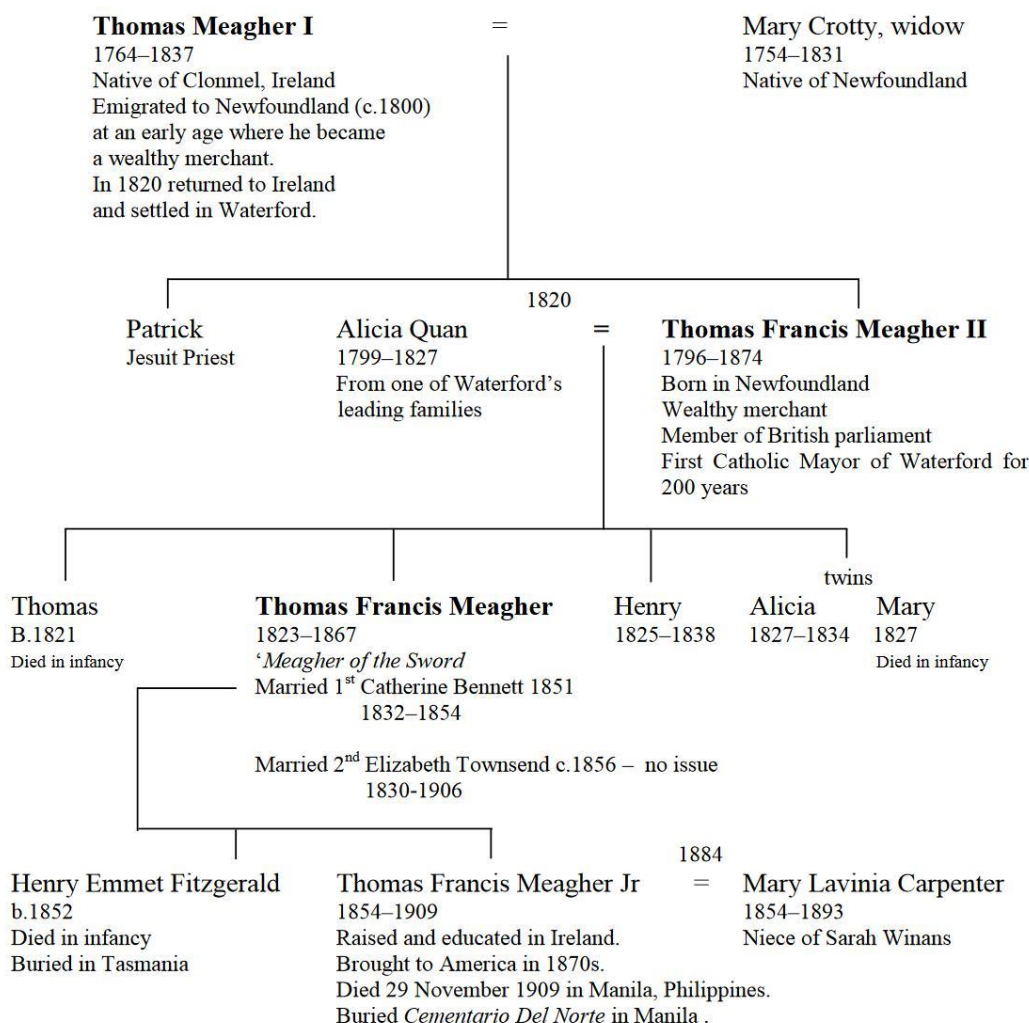
Young Meagher, after remaining some years in New York, went to California and married there. Irishmen in the East who knew him lost all knowledge of him and the news of his death in Manila came as a complete surprise.

The Funeral in Manila was a tribute worthy of the respect in which he was held in the American community. There were present, representing the United States Army, Major-General Carter and aide, and many others. The Insular Constabulary was represented by Commandant O'Phelan and other officers, Mr. Donovan, Recorder of the Philippine Assembly and Dr. Thormey, the Manila Lodge of Eagles with their members and regalia and the local branch of the Knights of Columbanus, among whom were Major Hartigan, Messrs Hugh Nolan, J. J. Dunbar, V. J. Crampton and other friends from the Insular Bureau of Supply, and the Municipality of the City of Manila was represented by Mr. J. C. Mehan, Director General of the Carnival and Chief of Sanitation and Transportation; Messrs J. W. McCormack, Powell and James. The American business community was represented by Mr. J.T. O'Flaherty, F. Shields and other well-known business men.

Numerous beautiful wreaths adorned the casket of the deceased, mute expressions of the sorrow of his friends. Among the most prominent and significant one there was a beautiful Irish Harp worked in flowers with the figures '48' with a simple card attached to it bearing the words 'from the Clan-na-Gael.' As the cortege passed through the streets of the old historic Spanish city the residents paid evident respect to the remains. The burial services were conducted by Father Finnegan, S. J. The estate will be administered by the Attorney General of the Philippine Islands.'

'Meagher of the Sword' lived life on the edge and some of the turbulences of his life can be gauged from the following facts: he hardly knew his mother who died when he was three-and-a half-years old, after the birth of twin girls. (One of the girls also died then; the other at age seven.) He never met either of his sons although he corresponded with his surviving son in Ireland. One of his sons, Henry Emmet Fitzgerald, died at 4 months of age and is buried in Tasmania and Thomas Francis Meagher III (known in the USA as Thomas Bennett Meagher) is buried in the Philippines. His first wife Katherine Bennet who was born in Tasmania is buried in Waterford, Ireland. He is buried, or at least his body was lost, in or around the Missouri River, United States. Elizabeth (Libby) Townsend Meagher, his second wife, died in New York July 5, 1906, and was buried at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York. Though his body was never found a gravestone for General Meagher was placed next to hers in 2008.

Thomas Francis Meagher's Family Tree



Thomas and Mary Lavinia's surviving son, also Thomas Francis Meagher, was born in 1884 and died in 1943. He married Edna Hayes about 1911. She was born 1892 and died in 1979. They had two children.

James Francis Meagher, born about 1916. Helen Meagher, born about 1917

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