Maurice Lenihan had not yet found the paper or the town that gave him full satisfaction. As has been said, he stayed in Limerick only about a year and a half. Yet in that short time he seems to have been fascinated with the city and its history. In later years, when he came to write his Reminiscences, he could draw on a fund of stories that he had picked up during his first sojourn in Limerick. It must be remembered that he was only thirty years of age when he took on the editorship of the Limerick Reporter, so it is not to be wondered at that, when offered the chance of a position on the more widely circulating Cork Examiner in March 1843, he availed himself of his new opportunity—though not without regret at leaving Limerick. His superior officer in the new venture was John Francis Maguire. His association with the Cork Examiner was to be short-lived. He remained only for six or seven months, yet some of his most notable journalistic work belongs to this period. His graphic reports of O'Connell's Repeal Meetings in the Southern Province were regarded as second to none; as a matter of course, Lenihan's reports were copied into the Nation, Davis's paper, which had been founded only the previous autumn. Many years later when Lenihan was an old man, he returned to Cork for the Fr. Mathew centenary celebrations. He recalled with pleasure that, on the occasion of this visit, he was still remembered and cordially received by his former colleagues of the Cork Examiner after his absence of nearly fifty years.

A few words on his friendship with Fr. Mathew will not be out of place here. We learn from the obituary memoir written by his son that: "It was during his short stay in Cork that he formed that close intimacy with the apostle of Temperance which lasted until Fr. Mathew's death. He was one day at a dinner in Cork to which Fr. Mathew had been invited. Before dinner a few young men mentioned to him that they had taken the pledge. He was rather shocked at what he considered their inconsiderate promise. But Fr. Mathew spoke a few words to him of the good he could do to others and of the reward he should have for his sacrifice. The inspiration came; then and there Lenihan knelt down in the drawing-room of his host and took the pledge, to which he remained faithful to his death. He always spoke of Fr. Mathew in words of veneration and never missed an opportunity on the platform or in the press to assert the moral and social benefits of his principles." The foregoing account is true in the main, if we change the places and the time. Lenihan met Fr. Mathew for the first time at a dinner given by his
In the late autumn of 1843 Lenihan left Cork to found a newspaper of his own. Nenagh was to be the scene of his new labours. He had been prevailed upon by many people in public life, including of Killaloe, Rev. Dr. Power, and Daniel O'Connell, to found a newspaper of his own in the repeal interest, and Nenagh had been suggested by them as the place most in need of such a paper. It is necessary to recall once more that Lenihan was now only thirty-two years of age, and yet his high public character and acknowledged ability to use his good offices with O'Connell's group of the younger generation within Young Ireland was already apparent that a brilliant and vigorous personality was at hand. The Young Ireland group were pessimistic of O'Connell's ultimate success and were becoming more and more outspoken in their divergence of outlook. It might have been expected that Lenihan, who was of the younger generation, would have thrown in his lot with what came to be known as the Young Ireland group. Rightly or wrongly, however, he chose the plan outlined by O'Connell and vigorously defended constitutional agitation as the best means of furthering the repeal of the Union. He held openly by O'Connell's policy and wrote strongly against what he believed to be a 'policy of impulse, uselessness and risk'. He was a pacifist in outlook, but this does not mean that his outlook was peace at any price. We shall see later that he showed fighting spirit when principles were involved.

To return to the foundation of the Tipperary Vindicator. Early in the New Year 1844 Lenihan received a letter from O'Connell encouraging him in the work he had just undertaken. This letter was specially treasured by Lenihan, and for many years it was to be seen framed on the wall of his newspaper after he had transferred business finally from Nenagh to Limerick.

"My Dear Lenihan,

I was extremely sorry that I have allowed the pressure of any business, even the trials, to prevent me from writing to you sooner. I did not know how to express myself, and you may, however, be assured of this that my silence was not occasioned by any want of regard for you or any doubt of your qualifications to conduct a public newspaper. I am perfectly convinced of your trustworthiness in every delusive manner you could in any way forward your view with respect to the establishment of a Liberal paper at Nenagh, you should have my best assistance. You know that such a paper is exceedingly badly wanted there. You have the support of mine, a young gentleman whom I hold in high respect, is about to edit that paper in Nenagh. He is a creature of the city which produced him, as he will be to the town of his adoption. He possesses claims on our consideration and support: no man deserves them better. No man is better calculated to effect the object which he is about to take in hands. If he should have my best assistance, I would not say it."

The role of vindicator, which O'Connell indicated for the new journal, gave Lenihan the idea of its title; so he decided to name his new paper the Tipperary Vindicator. Its policy was to publish: (1) the disestablishment of the State Church and (2) the repeal of the Act of Union by constitutional means. Then, while preparations were being made for the establishment of the new paper, Maurice was married on the 29 November in that city to Maria Spain, of Nenagh in the parish church of St. Mary's. It may be remarked, in passing, that he apparently did not live in Nenagh itself for a few years afterwards, as the names of none of his children are on the baptismal registers of St. Mary's.

It has just been said that Lenihan adopted, as a primary aim of his newspaper, the Repeal of the Act of Union by constitutional means. By this time it was already apparent that a brilliant group of the younger generation within the repeal movement were not content with publishing an organ of truth and sincerity to contradict the mischief and to expose the falsehoods of the Orange rag for that is the proper name to give it. I trust that you will regard the Paper as the instrument of justice which you certainly deserve, the entire support of the Catholics and of all the liberal Protestants of the neighbourhood. I know you well and long and know that you deserve the confidence and support of all the friends of civil and religious liberty.

Believe me, my dear Lenihan.

Very faithfully yours

Daniel O'Connell".

When the cleavage came between O'Connell and the Young Ireland Party, Lenihan chose to remain on O'Connell's side, his intransigent stand of fairplay, however, did not allow him to find friends with the members of the Young Ireland Party to undergo any change. He could see, too, that the popularity of O'Connell was already on the wane; and yet his political convictions were such that he refused to change over to the party which now was coming into favour especially in Tipperary. He describes O'Connell's last journey to Derrynane through Nenagh: "O'Connell reached Nenagh about 2 p.m. Here he was met by Tom Steele and Maurice Lenihan and by a few other friends, who gave
him a hearty welcome. A crowd gathered about his carriage, but it was not such a crowd as had collected on former occasions of his visits to the North Riding of Tipperary. There was very little enthusiasm, no fervour, none of the spirit of former years — a sort of silence pervaded all. The work of mischief had been done by the new party”. When O’Connell reached Limerick on his journey home, he was too ill to go to pay his respects to the Bishop, as he had always been his custom; so he deputed Lenihan and another gentleman to do so on his behalf.

Of Honest Tom Steele Lenihan has much to say in the Reminiscences and especially during his years at Nenagh. He had known Steele, of course, since the brave days of the tithe-war. “I had frequent opportunities”, he says, “of meeting Honest Tom in after life, and I became one of his most intimate friends. He spent many of the latter days of his life with me, when I had occasion to perceive how thoroughly earnest he was and how perfectly chivalrous and disinterested in all his public proceedings”. Poor Steele seems to have been quite crazy during his last days. To Lenihan’s embarrass-ment, he insisted on driving Maurice out every morning during his visit, in a carriage decorated with placards and bunting. Even when O’Connell’s shares were falling, Honest Tom always made a strong personal appeal of his own. Maurice devoted much time during this last visit to get the unfortunate man to express some belief in the principal mysteries of revealed religion, reasoning with him that so many Christians throughout the ages could not be in error while only a few faddists of the French Revolution were in the right — but all in vain.

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few weeks afterwards. (These clubs, O'Meara and Fulton were respectively named after the Parish Priest and Protestant Vicar of Nenagh in 1798). That night he went on towards Templederry, and thence he proceeded to Cashel on his way to Slieveramon. Later, £300 was offered for his capture, but he had fled the country and gone to France. O'Meara and Egan both forfeited their bail. After Doheny had escaped to France he was made the target of many calumnies in the press of the day. Nasty names like spy and thief were bandied about, but Lenihan put a stop to the despicable campaign by coming forward and defending Doheny's reputation. Doheny wrote to Lenihan from Paris thanking him for the splendid vindication of his character.

Thomas Francis Meagher was a very young man when Lenihan first made his acquaintance in the hey-day of the Repeal Movement. He was impressed by the enthusiasm and verve, and he records in the Reminiscences that he published in the Tipperary Vindicator young Meagher's first political speech - not for the value of the speech itself but simply to encourage the youth. When Meagher was sentenced to death at Clonmel in September 1848, Lenihan visited him in prison the same evening and spent many hours with him in the condemned cell. Happily the sentence was cancelled out any advantage that Nenagh might have possessed over Limerick. Lenihan now decided to buy up the Limerick Reporter and amalgamate his own paper with it. After the purchase and before leaving Nenagh for good, he reassured his newspaper readers at Nenagh and in the surrounding districts that the Tipperary Vindicator was not going to disappear but that, while preserving its identity, it should add to its stature in being joined with the city newspaper. The amalgamated journals would be published simultaneously in Nenagh and Limerick. In spite of the new double name of the paper - Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator - Limerick folk always referred to it as the Reporter, while the Tipperary folk admitted only to the name of the Vindicator.

The new offices at Limerick seem to have been situated in Denmark Street. They were in Denmark Street, at any rate, some years later when a disastrous fire occurred which involved the lives of seven people. Lenihan refers to this accident in the last chapter of his History of Limerick. When Maurice and Elizabeth Lenihan came to Limerick, they had a family of two sons and two daughters - Anastasia, James, Maurice, and Mary. Five other children, all girls, were born in Limerick. Their names were, Margaret, Elizabeth, Elen Agnes, Harriet Patricia and the youngest daughter, Anne, died in early childhood, as no reference to her is found in family letters of the period when the children were growing up.

Glancing at random through the files of the Limerick Reporter of the early fifties, one cannot fail to be impressed by the reading matter provided by Lenihan for his customers. He believed that as a journalist he had the special mission of giving his subscribers information not merely of a passing nature - the news of the day - but of providing them with information of the kind that endures. All through life he seems to have possessed an uncanny sense for discovering men and matters that make history in their day and forever. Thus we find in an issue of his paper one week-end of 1852 the full text of Cardinal Newman's Second Spring. There it appears, this masterpiece of lyrical English by one of the greatest masters of the language. The lectures of Cardinal Wiseman appear by weekly instalments just as they left the Cardinal's pen. For many years he gave generous space in his columns to aspiring poets; and when good verse was not forthcoming from Limerick or the vicinity, he regaled his readers with good verse published elsewhere. Some of the earliest ballads and religious verse of Michael Hogan (Bard of Thomond) found hospitality in Lenihan's paper, and it is reassuring to Limerick men to know that in later years when Hogan, mellowed by the years, laid aside his enmity for Lenihan, he began to contribute verse to the Limerick Reporter again. Some of the earliest of the poems of John Francis O'Donnell also found a place in the same paper.

Lenihan was scarcely three years settled in Limerick when he decided to enter public life as a member of the Municipal Council. At the elections in November 1853 he was successful in the old Patrick Street ward. The Patrick Street ward was merged the following year in the Customs House division under an act of parliament which overhauled the whole system of municipal representation. But again, Fr. Kenyon and Maurice Lenihan were glad that Lenihan continued as an O'Connellite, for by doing so his influence was all the more felt.

In the late autumn of 1849 James Rutherford Brown, the founder of the Limerick Reporter, and Lenihan were glad that Lenihan continued as an O'Connellite, for by doing so his influence was all the more felt.

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