

A FAMOUS IRISHMAN.

EDWARD BARRY O'MEARA was an Irish physician, on whom a connection with the first Emperor Napoleon has conferred the splendor of renown. O'Meara was born in 1778, in what is now termed Kingstown, but was then Dunleary—a village about six miles from Dublin. At an early age he devoted himself to the study of surgery and medicine, and obtained on board the "Bellerophon" an appointment as first surgeon of that man-of-war. When the ex-Emperor in 1815—amid the watching gaze of astonished crowds—stepped on board this celebrated vessel, O'Meara conceived an ardent attachment for the illustrious prisoner. He regarded *le sublime infortune* with the deepest sympathy, and rendered him every service in his power; and, as a natural consequence, the Emperor conceived a warm friendship for O'Meara. Napoleon, at his first interview, asked O'Meara where he was born, and where he studied medicine. "I studied medicine in London and surgery in Dublin," said O'Meara. "Which do you conceive the better school?" asked Napoleon. "Surgery is better taught in Dublin, but London is the best school of medicine." "Oh! you say Dublin is best because you are an Irishman," said the Emperor. "No, your Majesty," said O'Meara. "I say it because it is true." He then went on to explain that subjects were chiefly procured in Dublin, but in London dead bodies were much dearer. Therefore, surgery was taught in a more practical manner in Dublin. The scalpel was more diligently used and oftener seen in the student's hand.

When the eagle—to use the sublime imagery of Chateaubriand—which had so often soared amid the lightnings of artillery on the sulphury siroc of battle, folded his torn pinions, and alighted sorrowfully on the barren crags of St. Helena, Barry O'Meara accompanied him. In his dismal abode the Emperor loved to open his mind to the affectionate Irishman; and there was scarcely an event of his life which he did not converse about—"the battles, sieges, fortunes" of his wonderful and eventful career. The doctor took accurate notes of all that fell from the Emperor's lips, and in this way the materials of several

publications, which he subsequently brought out in Europe, were accumulated by the doctor. This was in perfect accordance with the Emperor's desire, for O'Meara was the most honorable of men, and would not publish a line without Napoleon's permission.

O'Meara spent many happy hours in the society of his illustrious patient, who often expressed his regret that he had not paid more attention to Ireland. He intended, he said, if he had succeeded in his designs on England, to make Ireland an independent republic. All went well with O'Meara while Admiral Cockburn was in command at St. Helena. But when that gentleman was removed, and Sir Hudson Lowe took his place, the aspect of affairs underwent a melancholy alteration. The new governor was base enough to expect that the doctor should play the spy, and secretly whisper to him every thing Napoleon said and did. O'Meara was indignant at the proposal, and refused, in the most emphatic manner, to fill such a discreditable office. Sir Hudson Lowe was furious, and vowed revenge.

During the succeeding three years O'Meara's life was one long agony, owing to the crafty malignity of the fiendish Scotchman, who had a heart of iron seated in a breast of granite. He accused O'Meara of conveying letters to and from Napoleon, of breaking the rules and regulations which he established for the safe keeping of the prisoner, and of entering into a complot to facilitate his escape.

In consequence of his incessant complaints and mendacious representations, Napoleon was deprived of his favorite physician, and Barry O'Meara was obliged to quit the Island in 1818, and return to Europe, where he was deprived of his rank. The work, which he entitled, "A Voice from St. Helena," published in 1822, went through forty editions. Its popularity was unbounded, and it certainly is one of the most readable books in English literature. After serving England twenty years he was deprived of official employment, and treated with the basest ingratitude. In his latter life he became a devoted admirer of O'Connell; and is said to have contracted at one of his meetings the illness of which he died, June 3, 1836.