

"Complain! complain!" he said, why, "officers and men and all around, hoot me, morning, noon and night, in the barrack-room and barrack-yard! Complain!"

"Well, Dennan——"

"And, Mr. Seymour, you spoke of him?"

"Well, yes!"

"He bade me be sure never give in, but fight away."

Father Hayes lost his last plank with Dennan, but he kept his *principle*.

Poor Dennan came in a fortnight, his arm in a sling. He looked woe-begone, yet hopeful, and he was evidently in pain. He came into Father Hayes's room.

"Hah! you have met an accident, Dennan?"

"Well some'at, sir—some'at."

"What is the matter?"

"Well, sir, you see. I hain't been so patient as I should, and I did not wait to finish my prayers. A fellow did strike me with a dead cat,—him. Oh, I beg your pardon, sir! But instead of waiting to finish my prayers, as I always did, the cat vexed me, you see; I got off my knees and ran after the vagabond. He drew the door of the barrack-room after him, and the blow I made at the fellow brought my wrist down upon the key!—and my wrist is dislocated."

"Poor fellow! I pity you, indeed!"

"Well, then, I said to myself, as it would be a couple of months before I could fight any other fellow, that I would go to confession, and I came."

Father Hayes now laughed loudly.

"You are determined to fight, 'break people's jaws,' and so forth, and in that frame of mind you come to confession. Ah, Dennan, you want much of the moral spirit of the Christian law. Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; pray for those who calumniate and persecute you."

"And be buried under old boots, stockings, and porringers in a barrack-room! Oh, Father Hayes!"

Father Hayes said that Dennan's blood was too hot; and he begged of the soldier to come on another day. He felt, he said, that, with so honest a mind as Dennan's, he would soon come to better dispositions.

In a month after, came Dennan. He was nearly well—indeed, quite well—

and he looked unpreoccupied and hopeful. Now, Father Hayes thought, "All is right."

"Well, Dennan, glad to see you restored."

"Thank, you, sir; I came for your reverence's blessing."

"Blessing! What! Going to get married?—going on furlough?"

Dennan looked around his left shoulder and bent his ear down to the lock of the door. He then came on tip-toe across the apartment and whispered low into the priest's ear.

"I am going to desert."

"Desert! desert! Did you say de——"

"I go to-night, sir, and I came for your blessing."

"My blessing! Stay. You do not mean to say that you are going to become a perjurer—a rock of scandal!"

"Perjurer? Oh, no, Father Hayes—not a perjurer."

"Did you not swear fidelity to your standard and loyalty to your sovereign?"

"But, Father Hayes, I did not swear to live under showers of old shoes and stockings and turnip peels, and day and night to be elbowed and jeered and scoffed at and tried in every dog-like way. I never swore that as a life—never!"

"You bound yourself to risk and even lay down your life."

"Agreed, sir, in battle; but not under old boots and shoes and muddy gaiters."

"I tell you, Dennan, these are merely accidental transitory, and, even if they were permanent, they would not justify you in breaking your oath and causing the enemies of the Church to blaspheme. 'There is the convert!' all will cry aloud. 'There is what comes of joining the Roman Catholic Church!'"

Dennan paused.

"Will you let me fight my way? I shall beat two score of them."

"Oh! Dennan, you know already the mandate of religion on that subject."

"I am not to fight?"

"No."

"Then I go."

"If you go——," but Dennan had disappeared ere the sentence could be completed.