## THE EX-PRIEST CAMPAIGN IN NEW ZEALAND.

SLATTERY AND HIS BOGUS 'EX-NUN' IN AUCKLAND.

## SLATTERY'S CAREER.

The Catholic body of New Zealand are doomed to go through a third agony of coarse public abuse and vibilitation. Some years ago the campaigns of insult were conducted by Edith O'Gorman and Chiniquy. Now it is ex-priest Joseph Slattery and his female companion, a bogus 'ex-nun,' who have descended upon our shores On Monday evening, as we learn by telegram, they inaugurated their evil work in Auckland. They are now busily engaged, as far as lies in their power, in exciting sectarian passion and making it a source of revenue in this new and prosperous country where people of every creed are willing to live in mutual good-will towards each other and to work together in harmony for the common weal.

It was the distinguished Anglican Archbishop Whateley who said that in religious controversy insult and mockery are as cowardly as the slaughter of women and children in war. The great Protestant churchman declared, moreover, that it was the duty of the State to protect law-abiding citizens from the grosser forms of outrage upon their religious sentiments. Much has been effected in the present century to soften the old-time asperities of religious controversy and to unite people of all creeds in the bonds. THE Catholic body of New Zealand are doomed to go through a

effected in the present century to soften the old-time asperities of religious controversy and to unite people of all creeds in the bonds of good fellowship for the public weal. But side by side with this growth of friendly feeling there has risen up a small but noisey and malodorous class of professional purveyors of lewd anti Catholic ribaldry—'ex-priests' and 'ex-nuns,' mostly of the bogus variety—whose evil trade is to revive or intensify sectarian enmity, to cater for a certain itching for pruriency, and to turn both into a means of lining their pockets with chinking coins of the realm. This campaign is carried on by means of calumnious 'lectures' which are an outrage upon common decency and upon the cherished religious sentiments of every Catholic mind. It is helped on by the circulation of a class of 'literature' which a leading English newspaper condemned as 'a mass of disgusting obscenity, scandalously untrue and viciously impure.' Such gross forms of attack are opposed to the principles of natural morality that are known and practised by even a decent pagan. Language of strong invective against New Zealand Catholics would be intelligible to us if we had outraged justice and decorum in onslaughts upon the faith and the outraged justice and decorum in onslaughts upon the faith and the outraged justice and decorum in onslaughts upon the faith and the religious sentiments of our Protestant fellow-citizens. But in this we have not offended. Neither in this Colony nor elsewhere does any Catholic priest or layman make a living, after the Slattery fashion, by lectures 'to men only' and 'to women only' in coarse vilification of the members of another creed. If a Catholic priest so far forgot the decencies of life and the laws of charity and justice as to descend to this mode of controversy for any purpose, he would promptly find himself under ecclesia-tical censure.\* A Catholic layman guilty of such proceedings would be denounced from pulpit and altar. And neither would find a Catholic audience to listen to their evil tale, † evil tale.†

## The Gospel of Assafœtida.

Catholic theology expressly recognises the respect which is due to the honesty and bona fides of the religious convictions of those who do not belong to our fold. We have no objection to arguments against our beliefs and religious practices, so long as they are put forward in a reasoning, candid, and inoffensive spirit. When this is done, we meet them in the same spirit, inoffensively and with good feeling. But the trade of this class of 'lecturers' is one of open, coarse, and aggressive lying for filthy lucre. The staple of their attacks is infamous calumnies against the Catholic priesthood, gross and indecent attacks on the virtue of Catholic womanhood, and attacks is infamous calumnies against the Catholic priesthood, gross and indecent attacks on the virtue of Catholic womanhood, and charges of wholesale and phenomenal immorality, infanticide, etc., against those pure and high-minded women who leave the world and its joys and embrace the religious life to educate the little ones, to minister to the orphan, the poor, the leper, the abandoned, and to the sick and wounded soldier where bullets fly and shells burst—as many of them are now doing at Kimberley and Mafeking and Ladysmith—and all this without fee or reward of any kind save what many of them are now doing at Kimberley and Mafeking and Ladysmith—and all this without fee or reward of any kind save what
they hope to receive from God alone. The chief attraction in the
'lectures' of 'ex-priests' and 'ex-nuns' is their pruriency or obsconity. The circulars of the 'lecturers' one and all are couched in
terms which are expressly and purposely so worded as to excite impure curiosity with the promise of indecent 'revelations.' The idea
is strengthened by the catchy expedient of lectures 'to men only'
and 'to women only.' It is carried out still further in the flood of
infamous pamphlets, the sale of which adds to the revenue of the apostles of filth. It is on the prurient and
the impure that the crusade thrives best. An idea of the scandalous nature of this part of the campaign may be gathered from
the fact that the circulation of such literature was stopped last year
by order of an Edinburgh court, and that Riordan (alias Ruthven),
and Joseph Slattery (who is now doing the devil's work of arousing
sectarian passion in New Zealand at so much per night) were bost
sentenced to terms of imprisonment for its circulation in the United
States, where the law-courts are supposed not to be over-squeamish
in such matters. in such matters.

The itinerant 'ex-priest' and 'ex-nun' are usually careful to limit themselves to broad and general charges of wickedness and immorality against the Catholic body. Did they single out specific living individuals, with their real names—and not merely supply fictitious names, as Slattery's wife does—they would speedily find themselves in the grip of the law. Their charges rest directly or in their final resort on their own unsupported assertions or assumptions. This fact at once raises the question of the personal character and credibility of the accusers. But they are singularly shy of inquiry into the facts of their past career. And with good reason. For in every instance in which—whether by the action of the police or otherwise—the facts of their history have come to light, their anteced into have been such as to hopelessly damage them as witnesses either in their own favour or against any other person or corporate body—and least of all against those whom they have a strong pecuniary interest in vilifying. The itinerant 'ex-priest' and 'ex-nun' are usually careful to

## A New Gallery of Gods.

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1. They are almost invariably obscure individuals from remote villages and little-known places in distant lands. The only 'credentials' which they usually possess as to critical periods of their past career are the good which they affirm of themselves and the evil which they ascribe to others. We find among them no leader of men, no brilliant mind, no one prominent either for piety or for talent. Men of recognised ability, and, at the same time, of bitter anti-Catholic feeling, have from time to time severed themselves of their own accord, or been severed by ecclesiastical sentence, from the communion of the Catholic Church Among them were such men as Blanco White, Reinkens, Loyson, Döllinger. They searched the Church, as one author puts it, 'like a horse-fly on the look for sores.' They knew her and her theology far more intimately than Slattery. And they did not spare her wherever they discovered what they fancied was a vulnerable spot. But not one of them ever prostituted his talents by abandoning honest and clean controversy for the coarse and brutal calumnies that form the stock-in-trade of the 'ex-priest' and the 'ex-nun' business that is now in full operation in New Zealand.

2. Another striking feature in the alliance of bigotry with pruriency is the enormous—we might say overwhelming—percentage of the alleged 'ex-priests' and 'ex-nuns' who are not and have never been Catholics. This is easily accounted for. There's money in the business, and plenty of it. An affidavit of Slattery's nephew, John Slattery, states that the 'ex-priest made £800 in three weeks by his Melbourne' lectures.' Chiniquy is said to have taken £30,000 out of Australia. In fact, the profits of the business were for some years so great that the 'profession' became uncomfortably overcowded, until the congestion was relieved by the action of the police and criminal courts and the pamphets of the Catholic Truth Society. The capital necessary for embarking in it is merely a flithy tale that may be concocted direct 1. They are almost invariably obscure individuals from remote

female companion there has been little or no originality in the style of faction that finds favour with the prurient-minded supporters of this Zolaesque class of low romancists. It is simply Maria Monk,\* with variations.

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3. Another peculiarity of this strange profession is this: that the 'ex-priest'—whether real or bogus—is invariably accompanied by the usual female companion, who almost as invariably poses as an 'ex-nun.' (There is at present no genuine ex-nun on the lecturing platform—Ellen Golding and Edith Gorman having been compelled to retire into obscurity owing to the exposure of the facts of their career by the Catholic Truth Society). The 'ex-nun'—whether real or tictitious—has been, in every instance that we know of, accompanied by a husband or by a 'protector' of the male sex. The Morning Star, a non-Catholic paper, had the following comment on a genuine ex-priest who lectured at Fort Wayne (U.S.A.) towards the close of 1893: 'Odd as it may appear, every time a priest becomes converted and renounces Catholicism, he promply plunges into the deep sea of matrimony. Just as soon as the animal in a priest begins to overbalance the spiritual, he at once becomes deeply impressed with the fallacy of his religion, and converts himself into a Protestant, and then hunts up a wife. The wife is usually an "escaped nun" or something of the kind.' Here we have, from an American non-Catholic editor, a variant on the sarcastic comment of Erasmus on converts of this class: 'Two things are they in search Erasmus on 'converts' of this class: 'Two things are they in search of—cash and a wife.'

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4. We have referred to the marked unwillingness of these itinerant lecturers to court a frank and fair inquiry into the facts of their past history. This unwillingness is quite intelligible to anybody who has taken the trouble, as we have, to watch and note their records whenever obtainable. As a result of inquiries extending over several years we have succeeded in tracing the careers of some thirty or more gross 'ex-priest' slander-mongers. The greater part of them were not priests, a big percentage of them were not even Catholics. Such of them as were priests were, without a single exception, driven forth, as Slattery was, from the sacred ministry for conduct unworthy of their high and holy calling. We have failed to find amongst this whole class of coarse 'lecturers' one man of unblemished character. With one or two possible exceptions every one of them—whether real or or two possible exceptions every one of them—whether real or fictitious ex-priests—'is known to the police' and has made the acquaintance of a prison cell. It would be impossible in this rapid sketch to give even the briefest summary of the notorious facts of the lives of those unhappy men as told in the columns of the daily press and in the records of the police and criminal courts of England,

<sup>\*</sup>An Australian Catholic bishop—we believe it was the bishop of Lismore—recently declared in a letter to the local press that he would, in such a case, immediately visit the oftending cleric with ecclesiastic dicensures.

† When 'Sister Mary Agnes, O.S.B.,' wrote her Nunnery Life in the Church of England in 1890 both she and her book were boycotted by the Catholic

of England in 1830 both she and her book were boycotted by the Catholic body.

1 London Truth, in November, 1838, had the following regarding a notorious bogus 'ex-priest' and gaol-bird who rivalled slattery's outrageous atterances in Great Britain, and who, like Slattery, is also a Bapbist minister: I have before me one of the handbills of his lectures at Southampton, which are obviously worded in such a way as to appeal to the most prurient tastes and instincts, and any person of average intelligence would see in these handbills that the man is a thorough blackguard. Protestantism seems to be very unfortunate in enlisting the services of champions of this character.'

| Dress and in the recomb of the postorious of Mrs. Slattery. The story was attributed to, but not written by, a poor, half-witted non-Catholic fallen woman named Maria Monk. This poor or at time an immate of a refuge for 'soiled doves,' and spent most of her career—where she also ended it—behind the iron doors of a Canadian gaol. A complete exposure of the Maria Monk fraud will be found in The True Story of Maria Monk (Catholic Truth Society, 1d), mainly a reprint of an article in the Dublin Review of May, 1836.