

EX-PRIEST SLATTERY

WHY HE DID NOT SPEAK IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE.

A few years ago, when the A.P.A. was rampant, the notorious "Father" Slattery was engaged by that un-American society to "lecture" in the South cities. It was arranged that the campaign of slander should begin in Memphis, Tenn., U.S.A. (says the *Pittsburg Observer*).

The Catholic population of that beautiful, progressive city have always been remarkable for their intelligence and patriotism, and are foremost in politics, education, and business.

The coming of Slattery was announced by insulting posters. His press agent was ingenious and industrious. The columns of the local papers were filled with accounts of the terrible things threatened by members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other Catholic organisations. Slattery was represented as a martyr, a victim of a modern Inquisition, and the right of "free speech" was to be utterly abolished.

The saddest thing about the affair was that Protestant ministers espoused the cause of the reprobate.

As the night of the lecture drew near the excitement grew intense, and at last even many Catholics believed there would be trouble. Then the deputies began to invade the Mayor's office. The Chief of Police was a Catholic. He knew that apprehensions of violence were groundless. The other side pretended to be suspicious of him.

The morning Slattery was billed to arrive, a deputation of ministers waited on the Mayor. They were dreadfully in earnest. They insisted that a body of "trusted" special police should be appointed to guard the lecturer. The Mayor at last believed that the situation was alarming. He assured the ministerial deputation that he would give the matter his personal attention, and requested them to return in one hour.

The Mayor was a man of culture and liberality, one of the leading citizens of Memphis, and deserving of the confidence which all classes reposed in him. He at once sought the Catholic pastors and some of the leading laymen. When the ministers returned, his plans were made. He told them the course he intended to follow. He intended to take charge of "Father" Slattery himself. All reception committees and guards were to be dispensed with. He would meet the "lecturer" at the railroad station with his own carriage and make him a personal guest.

The press heralded abroad that the Catholics were snubbed, that the "Reverend" Slattery had to be saved from death by the personal interference of the Mayor. The Mayor, in the carriage, met Slattery at the depot. There were no policemen in evidence. The Mayor briefly explained the situation, promised him complete protection, and ordered his coachman to drive to different points of interest in the city which he wished his guest to see.

They first visited the educational institutions, public and parochial, then the churches, libraries, and the magnificent hospital erected by the city for the Sisters. Though the Mayor treated his visitor with the utmost kindness, the latter seemed bored and could not be led into conversation. Evidently the Mayor was not the kind of man he relished, and the absence of violence on the part of the Catholics was monotonous and mortifying.

The Mayor inquired of his guest if he was weary, and politely asked him if he cared to see any more of the city. Slattery bluntly told him that he had seen enough. The Mayor told him that there was one more place of interest which he wished to show him. They were soon at the gate of a cemetery. They entered and walked toward a marble shaft that towered as high as the beautiful Southern trees that draped it with their luxurious frondage.

"Mr Slattery," said the Mayor, "I have a purpose in bringing you here." His voice was husky with emotion, and his eyes gleamed, more in sorrow than

in anger. "Let me read what is written here." The Mayor read aloud the inscription which stated that the monument had been erected to give testimony to the everlasting esteem and love and to commemorate the heroism, devotion, and self-sacrifice of the Catholic priests and nuns who laid down their lives on the altar of Christian charity in the dark days of the terrible plague.

The Mayor's eyes filled with tears.

"Read the names upon that shaft," he continued. "The pastor heads the list. He was of that race to which you are a disgrace. He was Nature's nobleman, benevolent, pure, faithful to every trust, and a lover of liberty. The other men whose names are there were like unto him. They had neither kith nor kin in our city. Read that long death-roll of those devoted women whose earthly names even were given up for charity. Where can you find a parallel of heroism and Christian devotion? No earthly motive moved them. Until the dark days of our sorrow came they were unknown to us. Then, when dread and sorrow filled every heart, when the most sacred ties and obligations failed to save our sick from desertion, when there were no hands to smooth the throbbing brow or give drink to the parched lips, when all hope of succor seemed gone, these heroic priests and angelic women entered our homes, dared the horrors of the plague, smiled at the spectral face of death itself, and for the lives of our children and our wives gave up their own.

"Look at the fourth name on that roll of angels. I do not know her name, but she was a beautiful girl, and her voice had the mellow brogue of the South of Ireland. I have an only daughter, just her age. She was stricken down; the terrible death-mark of the plague set its seal on her beautiful brow. I, too, was ill. In my anguish I cried to God for help. There was a rustle at my door. That girl, garbed in black, holding the crucifix in her hand, knelt beside my daughter's bed. Man, do you think she could die while an angel was caring for her? No, my daughter lived, but her ministering angel died. This is enough.

"Now to you. Do you think you can pollute the air of our beautiful city by the foul slanders about that priesthood and those Sisters? Why, man, the very stones of our pavement would fly in your face. If the men of our city would prove so dastardly recreant to the memory of those noble men and women who gave up their lives for us, the women of our city would rise and stone you to death. Get your foul presence from our city!"

It is needless to say he went, and the press were hard put to explain why Slattery did not speak in Memphis.

THE COMFORTERS.

When I crept over the hill, broken with tears,

When I crouched down on the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the soft croon of the wind bend to my ears,
I felt the light kiss of the wind touching my hair.

When I stood lone on the height my sorrow did speak,
As I went down the hill I cried and I cried,
The soft little hands of the rain stroking my cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

When I went to thy grave, broken with tears,
When I crouched down in the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the sweet croon of the wind soft in my ears,
I felt the kind lips of the wind touching my hair.

When I stood lone by thy cross sorrow did speak,
When I went down the long hill I cried and I cried,
The soft little hands of the rain stroked my pale cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

—DORA SIGERSON, in *Current Opinion*.

CLINCHER CYCLES are guaranteed six, ~~nine~~, twelve and fifteen months. If your dealer is out of stock, try the next Cycle Shop.