

Current Topics

Slattery in the States

The movements of the unfortunate Slattery will always be of some interest to New Zealanders, because, as will be well remembered, it was in New Zealand that this unhappy adventurer met his Waterloo, and received such an exposure—per medium of Dr. Cleary's pink pamphlets—as ultimately compelled him to abandon his campaign of calumny, and beat a hurried and ignominious retreat from these southern lands. About a year ago we chronicled the fact that he was touring the United States, and was having, on the whole, a bad passage, the Mayors of some American cities absolutely refusing him a permit to lecture. Latest information to hand indicates that he is now in Boston, telling his squalid tale to a handful of Orange followers. The following letter—which explains itself—from a Boston correspondent is published in the *Edinburgh Catholic Herald* just to hand:—'Dear Editor,—I want to ask you about a certain individual by name Slattery, who is at present in Boston and causing no end of trouble. He claims to be an ex-priest, and is giving all kinds of information, mostly to Orangemen and the more bigoted class of Protestants who go to hear him. Some of his questions and stories have been brought to me, as a Catholic, by some of my fellow-workers who are of the opposite faith. The first and main question I have been asked is—Was Slattery ever a priest, and, if not, why don't I go and hear him and he will tell me all about it. Needless to say, I didn't accept the invitation, because no doubt I should have got my head broken, as I couldn't have sat and listened, ex-priest or not. So I thought I wouldn't go. This Slattery claims he is Irish, as he no doubt is by his speech, so I thought you could let me know if he ever was a priest, and if so, would you please also let me know why did he leave? Or did he get silenced for something? Dear Editor, I must once more apologise to you for taking up your valuable time, and hope you will see your way clear to do me this favor, as I know you certainly can give these ex-priest gentry the "knock-out." I will now draw to a close; wish you and all your readers a happy New Year.—I am, etc.,

'BERT CALDWELL.

'217 Brighton Avenue, Allston, Mass, U.S.A.,
'January 2, 1911.'

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The editor of the *Catholic Herald* wisely advised the young man to leave Slattery severely alone, and not increase the excitement about him by attending his meetings. At the same time he sent to the Boston correspondent a copy of the Catholic Truth Society's pamphlet, entitled *The Slatterys*. Assuredly there is no lack of material for the refutation and exposure of this precious pair. The most complete and detailed account of their careers is that given in the two pamphlets published by Dr. Cleary—*Joseph Slattery: The Romance of An Unfracked Priest*, and *Mrs. Slattery: The Romance of a Sham Nun*. The English Catholic Truth Society's pamphlet—*The Slatterys*—contains all the necessary and salient facts in their history; and the pamphlet entitled *The Business of Vilefication, Practised by 'Ex-Priests' and Others*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of America, gives a brief but sufficient summary of the circumstances which led to Slattery's expulsion from the priesthood. Certainly there is no reason why any American Catholic should remain long in ignorance of the real facts and true inwardness of the Slattery campaign.

'Mixed' Marriages in South Africa

'Principles,' says Richter, 'like troops of the line, are undisturbed, and stand fast.' Those who are governed by principle can be depended on to be consistent—in marked contrast to those who are guided by an ever-changing, make-shift expediency. The Catholic Church has always stood, for example, for the sacredness of marriage and for her right to determine the conditions on which shall depend its validity as a sacrament of the Church. Rather than be unfaithful to principle on this point, she has been content—as in the case of the rupture with Henry VIII.—to lose a whole kingdom. Her attitude on this same question, as expressed in the recently promulgated decree *Ne Temere*, has given rise to widespread comment and to not a little criticism—but praise and blame alike have left her unmoved. An interesting illustration of her consistency, and unflinching adherence to this great principle—the right of religion to a paramount say in regard to marriage—in whatever direction it may have to be applied, comes to us from South Africa. There, when the new Marriage Bill was under discussion in the Union Parlia-

ment on the 1st of December last, a proposal was made that marriages between white and colored persons, called 'mixed' marriages in South Africa, should be forbidden by law. In bringing the matter forward, according to *The Cape Times*, the member for Rustenburg (Mr. Grobler) moved that the following be a new sub-section to follow Sub-section 4: '(5) The marriage between European and colored persons, no matter of what race, is prohibited.' The hon. member in doing so, said that they were now building up a new nation in South Africa, and they must see that they kept the race pure. Europeans preferred to see the race pure, and not mixed with coloured blood, while he thought that pure-blooded natives also strongly objected to people of their color marrying white people. After a lengthy speech, the honorable member concluded by urging that now was the proper time to deal with the matter.

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But the debate in Cape Town at once called forth a weighty and outspoken letter from Bishop Gaughren, Vicar-Apostolic of Kimberley. The letter appeared in the *Transvaal Leader*, and after a short introduction, ran as follows: 'The matter is not concerned with politics, as such, in which I should not care to interfere, but with something vastly more important. While all are agreed that marriages between the black and the white races are, generally speaking, very undesirable, and while we can, therefore, give Mr. Grobler credit for the best of intentions in introducing the prohibitory clauses in the Marriage Bill, nevertheless, in view of the deplorable consequences certain to result from the adoption of this clause, it is the duty of every lover of the country to protest against it, and to oppose it by every legitimate means. The result of a mixed marriage of the kind referred to is, at worst, but a physical evil, while the prohibition will issue in a flood of moral evil incomparably more ruinous and degrading. An effect probably not foreseen by the author of the clause is that it will, if accepted, bring men, whose great desire is to live as dutiful and law-abiding citizens, into conflict with the law. Whatever the new law may enact, it will be the duty of the Catholic clergy, for whom I speak with authority, to bless marriages of the kind referred to, if their people call upon them to do so. They must take the consequences of their opposition to the law of Parliament, in order to be faithful to the law of God. I have no right to speak for the clergy of other denominations, but I feel sure that many of them will take the same view of their duty. A law which thus conflicts with conscience cannot long be maintained. Universal experience proves that, speaking generally, the less the State interferes in the matter of marriage, and the more the freedom of the citizen is respected, the better. Beyond prohibiting what the moral law plainly forbids, and determining the legal status and rights consequent on marriage, it ought to be enough for the State to be satisfied that marriage has been contracted according to the formula of any recognised religious body, and to accord it formal sanction. In a country such as this it is only by a certain self-restraint on the part of our law-makers that serious difficulties and complications can be avoided.' The general principle here in question—that of fidelity to the law of God—is precisely the same as that involved in the decree *Ne Temere*; and Bishop Gaughren's letter shows the consistency of the Church in her readiness to apply the principle, as well in the direction of allowing marriages which the State might forbid, as in rejecting marriages which the State might recognise.

'Romish' Tyranny'

The Rev. Dr. Hanson, who for some years occupied a London pulpit and is now minister of the Duncairn Presbyterian Church, Belfast, is perturbed in spirit at the approach of Home Rule; and has delivered his soul in the congenial and hospitable columns of the *London Times*. Dr. Hanson, it seems, is a Liberal in politics; but Mr. Asquith's promise of a measure of self-government for Ireland has put his Liberalism to a heavy strain. He calls his letter to the *Times* an 'Appeal to Nonconformists'; and in the course of it he entreats his 'old comrades in arms'—the Revs. J. H. Jowett, R. F. Horton, F. B. Meyer, Dr. J. Monro Gibson, C. S. Horne, J. H. Shakespeare, and others—to hesitate before championing a measure the accomplishment of which would, in his opinion, be but the advancement of the power of Rome. After resurrecting the venerable bogey about 'Home Rule,' being 'Rome Rule,' he continues: 'It is not that your Ulsterman is unwilling to trust his Roman Catholic countrymen with his life and fortune; he is profoundly and incorrigibly distrustful of the Church of Rome, which, he is convinced, would be put in a position of unchecked supremacy, and would use her authority for all it is worth to oppress Protestants. What he dreads is Popish ascendancy and intolerance. You may call him a bigot if you will; but he is a bigot as Dr. Clifford is a bigot, in his uncon-