

The woman who accompanies him gives her maiden name as Mary E. McCabe. In her *Convent Life Exposed*\* (p. 1) she tells us, among other things, (1) that she was 'born on the 2nd March, 1867, near the town of Cootehill, County Cavan, Ireland'; (2) that her mother's name was Katherine O'Neil and her father's (p. 2) James McCabe; (3) that in 1883 she was (p. 42) a novice and afterwards a nun in the Convent of Poor Clares, Cavan, Ireland; † (4) that there were at that time in the same convent nuns named Mother Joseph, Sister Loyola, Sister Ursula, Sister Justine, and an 'Hon. Blanche Coote,' who was known as Sister Mary Frances; (5) that she (Mrs. Slattery) was 'rescued' from the convent by her cousin, Lady Morton, who, she tells us (p. 12) was wife of the Right Rev. Sir Robert T. Morton, of Devonshire, 'a bishop of the Anglican Church.' And more which will be dealt with in detail in our article on this bold impostor.

Now there is overwhelming evidence available to prove on oath that these and other statements of the alleged ex-nun are inventions pure and simple. (1) No person named Mary E. McCabe was born in the town or district of Cootehill on March 2, 1867. (2) No person named James McCabe, with a daughter named Mary E. McCabe and a wife whose maiden name was Katherine O'Neil, has resided within living memory in the neighbourhood of Cootehill. (3) No Mary E. McCabe from that district ever entered the Convent of Poor Clares, Cavan, or ever lived in it as postulant, novice, or nun; and no person known as Sister Mary Elisabeth was ever an inmate of the convent or a member of the community. (4) There never was in the convent a Mother Joseph, or a Sister Loyola, or a Sister Justine, or an 'Hon. Blanche Coote' who was known as Sister Mary Frances. If these were living persons and not—as they are—fictions of a vulgar impostor's imagination, Mrs. Slattery's career would long ago have been stopped by the operation of the law of libel. (5) No professed nun ever left the Convent of Poor Clares, Cavan, or was 'rescued' from it, or ever needed 'rescuing' from it. Moreover, the *Blue Book* and other official lists give the lie direct to this imaginative 'Mary E. McCabe'; for they show that there is and has been no baronet in Great Britain named Morton. Even the *Clergy List* is against her; for no such name as that of Rev. Robert J. Morton is to be found in it. The names 'Lady Morton' and the 'Right Rev. Sir Robert J. Morton' were published in the American edition of *Convent Life Exposed*. They were judiciously omitted from the English edition, ‡ which was published in a country where the story of the triple-tiered Dorsetshire bishop-squire-baronet could not stand the light for half an hour. Now this woman has been lecturing as a former member of the Convent of Poor Clares, Cavan. Money was charged for admission to those lectures. That money was, in plain terms, obtained under a false pretence. The woman is, in point of fact, an impostor and fraud. It may be argued that Slattery has no knowledge of this fact. But the nature of the evidence against the *bona fides* of 'Sister Mary Elisabeth' has been brought before him by pamphlets, by registered letters, by large displayed posters (one of which is in our possession), and by repeated public challenges both in Europe and Australia, some of which he has referred to in the Press and on the platform. Thus far he has taken no steps to clear his wife of the serious and well-proven charges levelled against her on three continents. And she is still termed on his handbills 'the Escaped Nun.' In the circumstances it is extremely difficult to free Slattery from the imputation of being either the silly tool or the willing accomplice of a notorious impostor.

### Those 'Testimonials.'

Slattery makes a half-hearted pretence of defending his character in that curious publication which he entitles his *Complete Refutation of Popish Lies*. We have already indicated the nature of the 'defence' he essays against three of the charges which have been made against him. For the rest, his sole reply consists in the publication of a list of random testimonials that refuse to give the testimony which he most urgently needs. They remind one of the illogical defence of the off-quoted individual who, when charged with being a materialist, replied: 'I am not a materialist; I'm a barber.' It is thus with Slattery's testimonials. They are simply an example of the fallacy of proving the wrong conclusion—a fallacy which, as Professor Jevons reminds us, 'is very common with orators and those who have to make the best of a bad case.' The testimonials may be briefly dismissed with the following remarks:—

1. Not one of his testimonials touches or in any way qualifies or palliates the serious charges that he was dismissed from the ranks of the Catholic clergy for intemperance, that he was imprisoned in America for the sale of indecent literature, that he is a wholesale and self-convicted perverter of sacred truth, and that he is the dupe, if not the abettor or the accomplice, of an itinerant female impostor.

2. All his testimonials, without a single exception, are subsequent to his dismissal by Archbishop Walsh. The great bulk of them are dated 1889 and 1890. Five only are dated 1897. Between 1890 and 1897 no information is forthcoming. The reader will make a mental note of this.

3. Four of these so-called certificates of character are undated; a goodly number of the collection make no direct reference whatever to his personal character or history; and at least two do not mention his name or give the signature or address of the persons by whom they are alleged to have been written. Doubts have, therefore, been not unreasonably cast upon their genuineness.

\* The references hereunder, unless where otherwise stated, are to the American edition of this scurrilous and mendacious book.

† The title-page of her *Convent Life Exposed* (American edition) runs as follows: 'Convent Life Exposed. By Mrs Slattery, otherwise Sister Mary Elisabeth, Abbey of Poor Clares, Cavan, Ireland. Published by Mrs. Slattery, Cliftondale, Mass., 1892.' We have been in communication with witnesses who can testify on oath that at her meetings in Glasgow, Manchester, and Edinburgh she said she was a nun in the Convent at Cavan.

‡ See pp. 9, 22, 128, English edition.

4. By far the greater part of these testimonials are from persons who employed him to lecture against Popery, and whose acquaintance with him was of a very passing kind. They are, briefly, a commendation of his noisome profession of itinerant slanderer, and their value may be estimated by the fact that most of the writers roundly assert that Slattery is 'courteous to Romanists,' 'avoids all abuse' of them, 'does not give offence' to them, that his vile crusade has brought great blessings, etc., etc. Most of these 'characters' come from individuals and associations engaged, like himself, in violent crusades of vituperation against 'Rome.' Among the former is the notorious Justin D. Fulton, whom Slattery terms 'a great Christian hero.\*' This Fulton, according to Mr. Britten, K.S.G., 'was lecturing for a short time in England some few years back, but his discourses were too bad even for the Protestants who like that kind of thing, and he soon went back to America. The late Bishop of Colchester severely censured an Anglican clergyman for being present on the platform at one of Fulton's lectures.† Fulton is the writer of a production which is described by Mr. Britten as 'even more vile, if that would be possible, than Slattery's prohibited pamphlet.' The *Boston Pilot* of March 19, 1898, says of this book that it 'had to be expurgated and fumigated before even the strong nostrils of Apaisism could stand it. A certificate of character from Justin Fulton is valuable only when it does not commend the recipient of it.' So much for Slattery's certificates of character. As regards the personal charges referred to above, they leave his character just where they found it.

### Slattery on Moral Theology.

Slattery is himself significantly shy of accepting challenges. But his handbills—some of which are before us—contain noisy invitations to priests to translate into English before his audiences certain extracts from some or other manual of Moral Theology. Such challenges may appeal to the groundlings. The judicious will merely recognise in them a cheap and somewhat nasty mode of courting notoriety. The matters to which they refer are not legitimate subjects for discussion before public audiences. Even if they were, Slattery's character and history, his association with a proven impostor, the scandalous nature and the revolting methods of his crusade of lying, would prevent any priest or layman with an honourable record from mounting the platform at his meetings. As Mr. Winter remarked: '† An officer in the army whose epaulettes have been torn off for dishonourable conduct could not expect his brother-officers to meet him to discuss any question. So it is with the priests of the Catholic Church and ex-priest Slattery.' Samuel Butler puts the following further bit of practical wisdom into the mouth of Hudibras:—

'That man is sure to lose  
That fouls his hands with dirty foes;  
For where no honour's to be gained,  
'Tis thrown away in being maintained.'

'The study of Moral Theology,' says Mr. Britten, 'forms an important part of the training of a priest. It involves a careful study of the Ten Commandments, and of the various obligations which they entail upon Christians. The priest is the physician of the soul, just as the doctor is the healer of the body; and each, in the course of his training, has to study the various diseases as to which he may be consulted, and upon which he must, therefore, be prepared to give advice. Sins against the sixth (which Protestants call the seventh) commandment have to be studied like the others.' An idea of Slattery's slanderous and prurient misrepresentations on this matter may be gathered from the following summary statements:—

1. The title of his lectures 'to men only' is 'The Secret Theology of the Confessional.' Now there is no 'secret theology' in the Catholic Church for use either in or out of the confessional. Our text-books of Moral Theology and manuals for confessors are on the catalogues of prominent publishers, and may be purchased by anybody who is willing to pay for them. §

2. The text-books of Moral Theology are written in a dead language. They are thus—while by no means 'secret'—practically restricted to the private professional use of those for whom they are primarily intended. 'Slattery and those like him,' says Mr. Britten, 'translate the passages most unsuitable for general perusal into English, and distribute them broadcast.' Moreover, Slattery has, through ignorance or malice, mistranslated portions of these extracts from Moral Theology; he has translated other passages not into their equivalent dignified English words, but into the most offensive language he could find; and by the use of blanks or *lacunae* he has in many instances conveyed the impression that perfectly innocent words (such as *os*, the mouth) would not bear translating. In most of this Slattery is merely following in the lead of a notorious disturber of the peace who created such mad excitement in England in 1867. Referring to this man's indecent pamphlets, a Protestant clergyman and historian, Rev. W. Nassau Molesworth, says: 'It was evident . . . that if these documents were calculated to suggest evil thoughts when used for the guidance of men of education, they must do far more mischief when they were thrown broadcast, as they were by Mr. Murphy, to women and young children.' || Test the logical value of Slattery's

\* *Complete Refutation*, p. 5. Fulton says, in his 'testimonial' (p. 6), that Madame Slattery was 'trained in Rome.' The Madame says she was not, Fulton says Slattery was 'a Baptist pastor.' Slattery, on the very same page, denies this; but he tells us in his *Secrets of Romish Priests* (p. 64) that he was 'ordained a Baptist minister' at Philadelphia on October 20, 1890. Fulton evidently knows very little about the Slatterys, after all.

† *The Slatterys*, p. 12. C.T.S.

‡ In his second challenge to Slattery, published in the *Melbourne Southern Cross* in June, 1899.

§ Herein they differ from the secret 'rituals' and 'lectures' of the Orange Order, which members are bound by oath not to divulge.

|| *History of England, 1830-1874* vol. III., p. 326. Murphy's pamphlets were subsequently seized by the police and destroyed.

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