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## Current Topics

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AS we were going to press last week we received a **AN UNFAVOURY** copy of the *Southern Echo*, a newspaper published at Southampton, and in which there appeared a long correspondence touching the notorious Miss Biddy O'Gorman. We had time only to refer to the matter in a short paragraph acknowledging the efforts being still made by Mr Frederick Fulton to expose this infamous impostor, and in which he recalls his offer made to her in Dunedin to bear the costs of an action for libel brought by her, if she dared, against the Most Rev Dr Moran and the N.Z. TABLET, as well as his communication with the Right Rev Dr Potter of New York, respecting the position which the man Aunray said he had held in the Episcopal Church in that city, and Dr Potter's denial of the man's assertion, all as Mr Fulton, in the letter alluded to, claims, duly published in the Dunedin papers. When the woman was here a good deal that appeared in our columns, if it had not been both true and justifiable, was no doubt, libellous and actionable. But, although we said what we had to say without fear or favour, to tell the truth, we were never very anxious to oppose the wretched woman or to stop her disgraceful tongue. We personally hold a theory, in fact, based on certain events within our knowledge and experience, to which it is not necessary for us to refer in detail, that Biddy O'Gorman, Chiniquy, and people of the kind do actual service to the Catholic Church, and that the results of their denunciations amply atone for any passing annoyance given by them to Catholics. The devil, as we know, for example, from the case of Job, is sometimes permitted or obliged to employ himself in the service of God. The late Cardinal Wiseman took a particular interest in the manner in which conversions were wrought, and is said seldom to have met a convert without seeking to elicit from him an account of how in his particular case the great change had been brought about. The fact that so many and such different roads led to Rome seemed to him especially significant. Now, for our own part, we hold, and believe, and have valid reasons for our belief, that, paradoxical as it may appear, one of the roads to Rome is an uncompromising bigotry—a solid, active, outrageous sentiment, that allows no rest to the man possessed of it. There is nothing harder to deal with than indifference, and failing bigotry, indifference is the sentiment that must necessarily predominate in the non-Catholic mind. The use of such people as Biddy O'Gorman, Chiniquy, and other abandoned wretches of their class, appears to us to be that of keeping the Catholic Church prominent before the eyes of non-Catholic crowds. Human nature, indeed, is not of such a kind as to be repelled by blood-curdling and scandalous rumours or details. On the contrary, we see that everything with which such things are connected is a subject of intense popular interest. To give the Catholic Church a bad name, therefore, gives her an interest in the eyes of non-Catholic people that she would not otherwise possess. It is obvious that such a state of mind is one much more likely to lead to inquiry than a condition of indifference, and, indeed, we know that many converts had been egregious bigots. It is a so suggestive fact that all the opposition given to the Catholic Church is of the same character. There seems to be a consent among her enemies that one method alone of combating her can be effective. They, as a rule, know nothing of moderation, and whenever, in a solitary case, they do attempt to make use of it in any degree they fail to produce any impression. Cardinal Newman, in his Lectures on Catholicism in England, dwelt at some length on this point, contrasting in illustration Banco White and Maria Monk. "A writer of name, of character, of honour, of gentleman-like feeling," he says, "who has the *entré* of the first and most intellectual circles of the metropolis, and is the friend of the first Protestant ecclesiastics of his day, records his testimony against Catholicism; it is in the main true, and it fails—a worthless stroller gets her own testimony put into writing; it is a heap of fables, and it triumphantly succeeds. Let, then, the Protestant public be itself the judge. Its preference of Maria Monk to Banco White reveals a great fact; truth is not equal to the ex-

igence of the Protestant cause; falsehood is its best friend." Some years ago when the unhappy lady, who was once known as the Nun of Kenmare, published her autobiography in Boston, a copy of the book was sent to us, with a letter requesting that we would review it. We did so, and forwarded a copy of the TABLET containing our review to the person who had sent us the book. We then gave a piece of advice which we see has been acted upon—whether as received from us or from some other quarter—it was to the effect that if Miss Ousack meant her campaign to pay, it should take the ordinary form. Her book was the namby-pamby quarrelsome complaint of a conceited and self-sufficient woman, but contained nothing that could possibly recommend it to the public demanding anti-Catholic entertainment. The authoress, we see, has now altered her style, and has adopted the stink-pot fulminations usual to her platform. And that is exactly what we told her in our review she must do if she wanted to succeed. She now proceeds on her way a rival of Biddy O'Gorman, and, no doubt, will run her dirty little course with equal success. Meantime, that such people do no harm has long been apparent even to some bigoted Protestants. The late Canon Kingsley, for example, saw this clearly, and denounced the folly of those who encouraged them. For our own part were we of the mind towards the Catholic Church of the audiences who listen to such lecturers, we should suspect the sincerity of such people, and be strongly of the opinion that they were no converts at all, but decoys indulged by Rome to play a part on the whole conducive to her interests. They do no harm in any case. At the worst, the majority of those who listen to them hear only their own thoughts repeated in words, and there is a minority who are placed in a fair way of having their eyes opened. The Catholic Church is kept well in view of people who would otherwise think or know nothing about her, and indifference, the most hopeless of all conditions of mind, is counter-acted. Catholics themselves, moreover, are stirred up by indignation to a better recognition and performance of their duties. While, therefore, we should do nothing to encourage such folk as O'Gorman, Chiniquy, and Ousack, for we must not do evil that good may come, we are not at all anxious to see them silenced. We believe they are doing more good than harm, and that the devil, by means of them, is acting in his own despite. We may add, for Mr Fulton's information, that, after he had left Dunedin a report was published in one or other of the New Zealand papers of a lecture delivered by the delightful Miss Biddy somewhere in Australia, and in which she represented him as having publicly apologised for every word he had uttered against her. As to the correspondence in the copy of the *Southern Echo* received by us, with the exception of Mr Fulton's letter, it bears out what we have said as to these people addressing audiences whose own thoughts they repeated to them. Not one of these correspondents had anything to learn from Biddy. The fact is that it was from the mouths of people like them she had taken up her parable at the first going off. But we have said too much on an unsavoury subject, and I must crave the indulgence of our readers.

ANOTHER of the roads that lead to Rome strikes us ANOTHER ROAD as discernible in the conduct of the anarchists, as compared with that of excellent Evangelicals who sit under Biddy O'Gorman and the like of her. We have, indeed, referred to this road before, but it seems important that it should be kept in view. Our Evangelical friends will hardly refuse to acknowledge the source whence the anarchists derive their inspiration. There, at least, they must see a body of men plainly under the guidance of the devil and proposing to them various such ends as they must admit to be wicked and un-Christian. Yet the object of attack chosen by these men is the Catholic Church, in which they recognise their chief and only truly formidable enemy. Have our Evangelical friends forgotten the words of Christ that Satan cannot be divided against himself? They say, with a profanity which, even for the sake of argument, we shrink from quoting—that the Church is the great stronghold of the devil. Let them, then, explain, if they can, in accordance with the words of Christ, why the devil himself seeks to tear her down? On the other hand, let them consider what company they are in. If the anarchists hold one rope they hold another, and, although the pull may not be strong, or perhaps long, it is certainly a pull all together. They may differ in many respects from