

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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NOTICE.

All subscribers who are in arrears for more than one year are hereby notified that if the arrears are not paid up on or before the first of May next their paper will be stopped, because the prompt payment of subscriptions is of vital importance to the financial standing of THE TRUE WITNESS. Montreal, 5th March, 1894.

"THE DAWN."

When Phaeton took charge of the burning chariot of the Sun, his father, the Day-god, advised him to take the "midway as being the safest," and Ovid tells us that the heedless youth came to smash for having undertaken a task beyond his powers and for having disregarded the advice of Apollo. The Rev. Mr. Amaron, M.A., B.D., has taken in hands the reins of "L'Aurore"—the Dawn—and is wheeling his chariot above the horizon. To him applies the advice given to Phaeton, to avoid extremes, and evidently he is bent on ignoring it. The result will simply be that, very soon, some second Ovid will have to write upon Mr. Amaron's literary mausoleum:

"Hic situs est Amaron,
Currus aurea religionis;
Quam si non tenuit,
Magnis exoidit ausis."

"Here lies Amaron, the driver of a religious chariot, which, if he did not guide safely (hold), he failed in a great undertaking." This Aurora of his recalls the remark of a French statesman, when speaking of its namesake in Paris, "It is the Dawn of perdition." It seems to us that it resembles somewhat the Aurora Borealis; the flickering, shifting, changing, mock brilliancy, uncertainty and baselessness of both, are most apparent to even the least attentive observer.

In order to herald the Dawn of his new crusade Mr. Amaron went up to Ottawa and held forth in the Bank Street Presbyterian Church on the "Situation in Quebec and its needs." He was announced as a prominent writer and theologian. As to the first we have yet to see, whether prominence is the only characteristic of the writer or not; as to the second we are at a loss to find any theological erudition in the gentleman's works. But men, nowadays, are called theologians regardless of the meaning of the term; providing they can spout texts of Scripture and hurl historical misstatements at Rome, they become Doctors of Divinity and profound theologians. Probably one of them would not be able to construct a syllogism or develop a theorem—but that don't matter. In our time we meet with "professors" at every corner; a teacher of philosophy is a professor, and so is a pugilist. "Captains" are as numerous as

the deer in our forests; some are military captains, others captains of scows and barges. The fact of a man being called a captain, or a professor, or a theologian by no means indicates what he actually is or what his merits and standing really are. But supposing Mr. Amaron to be a deeply-read master of the "science of all sciences," that does not take from the fact that he is not over careful in his statements regarding the Province of Quebec and the French Canadians. Some years ago he was incumbent of the Presbyterian Church in Aylmer. Most certainly it was not there that he got possession of the facts that he sees fit to place before his Ottawa audiences. But since his departure from that town he has been rubbing against a number of French-Canadian evangelists and probably has picked up his mistaken ideas from them.

He says that "the personal work of the missionaries (Protestant) among the French accounts for" the augmentation in the number of converts from Rome. The truth is that the increased number of French Protestants in Canada is due to the natural increase in the population of the country and the large influx of Protestants from France as well as the advent of a colony of French infidels, and offshoots of the socialistic anticlericalism. In the next place Mr. Amaron claims that the French Canadians who left Canada were driven out of it by the Catholic Church. Now two classes of French Canadians have gone away from this country to make homes abroad—and a large number of them are returning to again take up their abode in this very Province. One class—very few in number—consists of French Protestants; the other class is composed of French Catholics. To say that the French-Canadian Catholics emigrated from Canada on account of the Catholic Church is so absurd that the mere mention of it creates an amusing smile. If it were to escape from the domination of the Catholic Church these French Canadians would not have formed such Catholic centers as are to be found in different parts of the American Republic—for example in Lowell, Worcester and other large cities. The very first act of these French-Canadians was to secure churches, presbyteries, convents, schools and consequently priests and nuns to keep alive the flame of Catholic Faith and to train their children in the ways of their fathers. Therefore to say the Church is driving that class away, is to talk the rankest nonsense and to set at defiance the most glaring facts of history. It is that same Church which has established, along every river in Canada, its colonization centers, and has its missionaries in the remotest parts of the country, opening up new commercial avenues, turning the wilderness into a garden and planting the cross in the midst of every group of Canadians. From the shores of Lake St. John, in Quebec, to the rock that frown on Lake Temigami, in Ontario, the Catholic Church is attracting colonists to the fertile spots, where to-day stands the pine forest, but where in a short time villages and towns will flourish. Does that look like driving the French-Canadians out of the country? That same Catholic Church has just recently appointed missionaries in each district of this Province to encourage agriculture. A joint pastoral of the Archbishops and Bishops has been issued to that effect. This does not look like forcing the people out of the country. But argument is only thrown away in this case. In fact the contention of Mr. Amaron is so preposterous that no serious person would lend any weight to it.

Let us come to the French-Canadian

Protestants who have left the country. In the first place very few of them have emigrated, that is proportionately speaking. Had it been otherwise Mr. Amaron's boasted and exaggerated enumeration of them would not have even the shadow of a truth about it. Had they been driven from the country by the Church they would not still be here in as great numbers as he claims. But decidedly some of the French-Canadian Protestants have gone to the United States; but they have done so because they sought a more Protestant atmosphere, they felt a certain amount of shame amongst their own, and the scenes and surroundings—that all seemed to upbraid them with their lack of Faith—became uncongenial. These and other similar causes made it more pleasant for them to locate amongst people who knew them not, and amongst scenes that are not calculated to awaken sentiments of humiliation and disgrace. Had the Roman Catholic Church interfered with them, they would not be in the peaceful enjoyment of their different churches and missions. In truth the Church in no way ever troubled them nor sought to influence them beyond being willing to accept them back, if by the grace of God they ever opened their eyes to the errors of their ways. Has the Church ever tried to drive Mr. Amaron out of the province? In fact, were it not that as a journalist we came to the knowledge of the existence of "L'Aurore," we would never have known from our Church, that such a man as Mr. Amaron ever existed. In fact, the whole trend of his Ottawa lecture is historically, as well as otherwise, incorrect. He seems to be in a very zealous mood and determined, "by hook or by crook," to have a few blows at the Catholic Church. It would be advisable for him to be exact before becoming a journalist and an apostle of any cause. Extremists can scarcely ever be exact; but the fact of their minds being prejudiced and their eyes blinded by the dust of their own contradictory theories, by no means exempts them from the duty of dealing fairly with the public or gives them a permit to lead any section of the community into error.

DEVIL VS. CHURCH.

When last we touched upon this subject we treated the question of the Reformation. The Evil One having failed in his attempt to destroy Christ's Church through the means of the Pagans, the early Heretics and the Mahometans, had recourse to Luther and Rebellion. We already have pointed out how like the fall of Lucifer himself was that of Luther; both caused by pride and disobedience—both were irrevocably lost. In this article we wish to show, in a brief manner, that Protestantism has been a failure—or, at least, that the Devil has failed with that instrument to crush the Church against which he has declared unceasing war.

The world loves novelty and the world craves for liberty; anything that will draw man out of the everyday groove of life, or else make him feel that he is freer than he ever was before, is sure to enlist his attention and carry him off his feet—at least for a time. The Devil knows all this better than the most experienced of men could know it, and he made use of his knowledge in the case of the Reformation. The cry of Luther was something new; the supposed freedom from all religious restraint was something captivating; and, as a consequence, the plan succeeded most admirably at first. So did the persecutions of the Pagans succeed for a time, but the Church triumphed; so did the early schismatics succeed in creating trouble,

but the Church survived them all; so did the spirit of Mahometanism spread with the rapidity of a conflagration, but the Church came out of the contest stronger than ever; so, we will see, it was with the Reformation, in its early days, but the first great tidal wave receded and never again did it reach its highwater mark upon the Rock of Peter.

The novelty attracted thousands to the standard of Luther, and their enthusiasm lasted until that novelty began to wear off. Then they sought something still newer, and each one set out upon a track of his own, until the result was such a number of conflicting novelties, that they agreed only on one point—their opposition to Rome. Combined with that delicious sensation of the new was the supposed liberty that came with the revolt against the authority. Hundreds and thousands of hypocritical Catholics longed for an opportunity to cast off restraint, but were too cowardly to take the first steps themselves, while very willing to follow like sheep any one bold enough to raise the standard of rebellion. In what they called "religious liberty" these people saw all that license which they had long wished to enjoy. Some were anxious to give full play to their passions; too long had they fretted under the restraint placed upon them by the church; and any cry that served as a pretext was gladly seized upon by them. The idea of no more papal authority to check and to guide was a glorious piece of news for the men who wished to act according to the inclinations of the flesh. The confessional was an unpleasant tribunal for men who sought the indulgence of every evil passion, and the idea of no more confessionals was something to be encouraged with all their might. The attendance at Mass interfered with their amusements and the rules of mortification prescribed by the Church grated upon their natures; how happy they were to get rid of all these. The thought of purgatory, and above all, that of hell, was very unpleasant; but once each individual possessed the right to interpret God's word as best suited himself, it became an easy matter to stifle conscience and to get rid of a belief in the eternal punishment due to sin. Like the desert bird, that thinks when he hides his head in the sand his pursuers can no longer see him, they imagined that because they forced themselves to believe in the absence of all these great truths that the truths, therefore, ceased to exist. This great license—called spiritual or religious freedom—was sufficient of itself to draw thousands away from the Church and to swell the ranks of the rebel army. But, by degrees, the novelty wore off, and, by degrees, men grew satiated with a freedom that gave neither rest here below nor hope or consolation for hereafter. And as a result we find that the Reformation, after its first half century of wonderful success, began gradually to weaken, and during the after years—from that period down to the present—Protestantism made no perceptible advance. In fact the reaction was as marked as was the first great outburst of enthusiasm. It is true that the number of Protestants in the world increased; but greater was the increase in the number of Catholics. That augmentation of numbers was not due to the principles of the Reformation, but to the universal fact of the great multiplication of the human race. And if the number of individual Protestants became larger, with the lapse of years, still the influence and power of Protestantism have been equally on the decline. This is due mostly to the inborn weakness of the principle upon which the whole fabric is built. It