

# The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES,  
Vol. I. No. 11.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES  
Vol. XX. No. 11.

## Poetry.

### The Mummy Wheat.

Among the marvels of the natural world, few things are more surprising than the fact that some seeds are capable of retaining the principle of vitality unimpaired for centuries. Of late years we have had abundant examples of grains of corn, whose living germs, after having lain dormant during the revolutions of kingdoms, the change of dynasties, the extinction of languages, and the transfer of the great seats of civilization, learning and commerce, have germinated and sprouted, and given birth to abundant harvests, whose increase is now feeding the children of men in the present generation. Many of these wondrous seeds have been taken from the mud lining of the mummy cases of Thebes, where they were interred at least three thousand years ago.

Behold how pleasant to the eye  
You waving corn appears;  
The slender stalks swayed to and fro  
Beneath the golden ears.

Strange is the story of the seed  
That first was planted there;  
How marvellous the wither'd grain  
"An hundred-fold" should bear!

Within a silent tomb it passed  
A lapse of ages slow;  
Bound in a dark Egyptian's hand,  
Three thousand years ago.

Pourtrayed upon the massive walls  
Might all his deeds be viewed,  
But none had ever yet disturbed  
The awful solitude.

At length within the sculptured cell  
A stranger dared to tread;  
And lo! with sacrilegious hand,  
He stole the ancient dead.

Far from the gorgeous sepulchre  
He bore his prize away,  
Till here on British ground he laid  
His venerable prey.

With careful fingers he removed  
The swathings one by one;  
And gazed at last upon the form  
Of Egypt's swarthy son.

And straight arose the fragrant scent  
Of spices, oils and balm,  
And grains of corn went rolling down  
From off the blackened palm;—

Grains that perchance were treasured up  
In Canaan's time of dearth;  
Dry as they were, we planted them,  
In hope, beneath the earth.

The gentle rain of heaven came down;  
And soft refreshing dew;  
The mummy-wheat their influence felt,  
Awoke to life, and grew.

And lo! the springing blades come forth,  
As tender, fresh and green,  
As though the parent grain last year  
Within the ear had been.

And now the tall and fragile stem  
Its graceful head uprears;  
And see! within the bursting husk,  
The yellow corn appears.

Come hither ye whose patient hands  
"Beside all waters" sow;  
The lovely crop ye long to view  
In God's good time will grow.

In faith and hope a mother taught  
Her lisping babe to pray;  
The seed she planted in his heart  
Sprang when his head was gray.

Go forth with courage; still your bread  
"Upon the waters" cast;  
Tho' vainly sought for many days,  
It shall be found at last.

JOSEPHINE.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Roman Catholicism in France.

THE established religion of France is the Roman Catholic—slightly modified by certain privileges which have been claimed. The Gallican church claims the right of the pope to interfere in the temporal affairs of the nation. It affirms that his spiritual power is limited by the decisions of ancient councils—and that, though the head of the church, he is not superior to a general council. These maxims have been vigorously defended, and the maintenance of them has given to Catholicism in France an appearance of freedom which we do not find in other Catholic countries. Bossuet, the bitter enemy of Protestants, was an earnest and eloquent advocate of the rights of the Gallican church, and the council of Trent. French churchmen were the most determined opponents of the supremacy of the pope. At present there are in France two parties, the Gallicans who maintain the privileges of the church of France, and the Ultramontans, who are labouring for the extinction of those privileges, and who would confer on the pope the same supremacy in the church, and the same power in the senate, which now, (by the late concordat) he may exercise in Austria. The contest between these parties is waxing warmer every day, and victory seems inclined to the Ultramontans.

In viewing the condition of Roman Catholicism in France we at once perceive that it can bring many powerful influences to bear on the minds of the people.

The church calls to her aid the dressmaker and the painter, the sculptor and the musician, with their assistance she can exhibit spectacles well fitted to interest the worldly—to excite the imaginations of the susceptible, and to call forth admiration from many who would neither adore nor obey. The splendid services of the church are admirably adapted to interest a people, above all others fond of parade and show. The associations of a venerable antiquity, and the mechanical skill of the present age unite to assist the doctrines of the faithful, and to increase that respect and admiration which their church is at such pains to excite. Magnificent cathedrals, imposing processions, solemn music and splendid dresses might make even the lover of the theatre religious. The cathedrals of France are admirably adapted to set off to the best advantage the services of the Roman Catholic church. For this purpose they are too, superior to the gorgeous temples, and the domed Basilicas of Rome itself. Neither rich marbles, nor gilded ceilings, nor exquisite symmetry, nor giant bulk, nor domes ascending to the sky affect the imagination, as do the sombre hues, and the dim religious light, antique carvings and lofty vaults of the gothic cathedrals.

France can boast of many of these structures. The most remarkable are those of Paris, Amiens, Rouen, Bourges, Orleans and Strasbourg. Many of them bear the impress of a venerable antiquity. All of them are groups of the wonderful influence the church once exercised, and all are noble specimens of gothic architecture. They are the productions of geniuses—and tell us that even in those dark ages which we are accustomed to despise, there was mighty though perverted minds, and strong though misdirected faith. Time, and the violence of war and revolution have dealt mightily with these structures, and now they stand before us almost as perfect as when first

they were completed, rich in historical associations and venerable from their antiquity.

A vast structure encrusted with sculpture, springs from the ground to a great height, carrying with it a thousand pinnacles—sending far on high its towers or spires, and exhibiting all around a sense of grandeur. We enter by a huge portal, are at once impressed by the solemn gloom which reigns within, by a dim light which streams through the thickly stained windows, the interior of the building is revealed. All around are pictures, statues, beautiful carvings, and graceful pillars. Above us is the vault, at a height perhaps of 150 feet, which, from the imperfect light of the building, appears more lofty than it really is. Two long rows of columns arise to meet and support this vault and its arches.

Now let the priest stand before the bright altar, with the chalice in his hand, and let the devotees prostrate themselves on the bare pavement, let the organ peel forth its anthers, and send them reverberating through the vast cathedral, then the spectator can form some idea of the power which solemn music and architecture can exert over the mind even apart from any religious idea which the scene may suggest, there he may learn how powerful a means of influence the church of Rome possesses in the cathedrals, and cathedral worship. Then again the church is well aware of the charm there is in variety, and from this knowledge she derives an additional means of influence. The French are proverbially a fickle people, they readily tire at any thing monotonous, they ever crave some new thing. It is said that if Louis Philippe had paid a little more attention to this characteristic of his subjects, he would not have lost his throne. Be this as it may, the church has no idea of losing her influence by neglect in this respect. She is ever ready to satisfy the most insatiable love of variety, and while thus engaged she knows well how to reap advantage from her ingenuity and benevolence. Now some bones are taken from the exhaustless supply which the catacombs furnish. But these are not the remnants of a common mortal, the church pronounces them to be the relics of a saint worthy of the homage of the faithful. Processions are made, services are held, sermons preached, and money is collected from vespers to the old bones which a few days before were reposing in the catacombs, unconscious of the honour which awaited them.

We suppose the excitement occasioned by the discovery of these relics to be passing away, when attention is excited by a phenomenon more important and wonderful. A miracle is wrought. An image of some saint has been seen by a credible witness to wink. The glorious news is widely circulated. Now let all who doubt the supremacy of the pope, or the holiness of his church be for ever silent. A proof has been given that the age of miracles has not passed away—that the seal of the divinity is still in the hands of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church! The place where the marvellous event occurred is to be deemed peculiarly sacred, worthy of additional services, and above all, of additional contributions. Then when this strange event is passing away from the minds of men, another more startling occurs. Perhaps the Virgin herself comes down from heaven, and in the shape of a portly matron appears to two shepherd girls. If any doubt the reality of the vision, or skeptically and impiously imagine the possibility of fraud or self-deception, let them be anathema. They verily are no better than Protestants. Now let a new chapel be erected to the Virgin, let pilgrimages be made in her honour, and let her replenish the coffers of the apostolic

church which has raised her to the rank of fourth person in the Godhead.

But the church does not thus exhaust her powers. She has other means of influence, fitted to operate on those who would pay but little heed to relics, or winking statues, or the visitation of the Virgin. Many of the French are fond of gambling. They are fond of lotteries and card playing. The church would not lose sight of such persons. In a sense similar to Paul she becomes all things to all men. As once she consecrated an image of pagan Jupiter into that statue of St. Peter which now stands in his cathedral at Rome, with one foot half worn off by the myriad kisses lavished on it. So at the present day. She consecrates a vile lottery into a holy scheme for the advancement of religion. Many will subscribe to a lottery who would not make a contribution. And so the church receives aid alike from those who wish a chance of winning money, and pleasing the Virgin, and also from those who wish a chance of money-making, without any special reference to the Virgin.

There is still another means of influence of which the church has availed herself. The arm of the government is powerful, and to this she clings with desperate tenacity. She has sought and received aid from the kings who flourished before the revolution, from Bonaparte, Charles, Louis Philippe and Napoleon the Third. In her palmy days she maintained the divine right of kings. In 1848 she consecrated liberty trees. When the throne is upright she is horrified at democracy, when that throne is upturned, she writes Liberty, Equality and Fraternity on the walls of her churches. She respects the mighty, but instinctively shrinks from the weak.

With all these means of influence the church seems to be omnipotent in France. Within the last three years the Protestant chapels have all been closed, and the Protestant schools all dispersed. Thoughtful Christians have been fined and imprisoned, their pastors have been in a measure silenced, and their colporteurs prevented from disseminating the word of God. The church thinks that she has triumphed and flourished with apparent victory, she is imagining new schemes for the complete overthrow of heresy. But she need not too soon sing her psalm. When she can not only shut up Protestant temples, but fill her own with worshippers. When she procures something like respect from the mass of the intelligent people of France. When she can win some expression of affection from those who lead the nations thoughts, then she may sing her song of triumph.

Splendid shows, magnificent cathedrals, miracles made to order, supernatural visitations on demand, have not given her the affections and respect of the nation. She may dig still more deeply in the catacombs for dead men's bones, she may sanctify many more lotteries, and fawn yet more affectionately on the powers that be, and still she will find that France is not hers—and never may be. Kings and Emperors may fine and imprison all who openly worship God in accordance with the dictates of their consciences, but no king nor emperor can transfer to her that faith and love which once she possessed, which now she has lost, but which alone can give her real strength. Twice has she nearly annihilated the conscience of France. She has already learnt that it was not a wise policy to transform open foes into malignant hypocrites, or to provoke a vengeance which the heart of humanity pronounces just.

There is a vast amount of infidelity in France. The schemes and plans devised by the Catholic church to retain influence