

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### Daniel Gray.

BY J. G. HOLLAND.

If I shall ever win the home in heaven,  
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,  
In the great company of the forgiven  
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

I knew him well; in fact, few knew him better;  
For my young eyes oft read for him the Word,  
And saw how meekly from the crystal letter  
He drank the life of his beloved Lord.

Old Daniel Gray was not the man who lifted  
On ready words his freight of gratitude,  
And was not called among the gifted,  
In the prayer meetings of his neighborhood.

He had a few old-fashioned words and phrases,  
Linked in with sacred texts and Sunday rhymes;  
And I suppose, that, in his prayers and graces,  
I've heard them all at least a thousand times.

I see him now,—his form and face and motions,  
His homespun habit, and his silver hair—  
And hear the language of his true devotions  
Rising behind the straight-backed kitchen-chair.

I can remember how the sentence sounded—  
"Help us, O Lord, to pray, and not to faint!"  
And how the "conquering-and-to-conquer" rounded  
The loftier aspirations of the saint.

He had some notions that did not improve him;  
He never kissed his children,—so they say;  
And finest scenes and fairest flowers would move him  
Less than a horseshoe picked up in the way.

He could see nought but vanity in beauty,  
And nought but weakness in a fond caress,  
And pitied men whose views of Christian duty  
Allowed indulgence in such foolishness.

Yet there were love and tenderness within him;  
And I am told, that, when his Charley died,  
Nor Nature's need nor gentle words could win him  
From his fond vigils at the sleeper's side.

And when they came to bury little Charley,  
They found fresh dew-drops sprinkled in his hair,  
And on his breast a rose-bud, gathered early,  
And guessed, but did not know, who placed it there.

My good old friend was very hard on fashion,  
And he held his votaries in lofty scorn,  
And often burst into a holy passion  
While the gay crowds went by on Sunday morn.

Yet he was vain, old Gray, and did not know it!  
He wore his hair unparted, long, and plain,  
To hide the handsome brow that slept below it,  
For fear the world would think that he was vain!

He had a hearty hatred of oppression,  
And righteous words for sin of every kind;  
Alas, that the transgressor and transgression  
Were linked so closely in his honest mind.

Yet that sweet tale of gift without repentance,  
Told of the Master, touched him to the core,  
And fearless he could never read the sentence:  
"Neither do I condemn thee; sin no more!"

Honest and faithful, constant in his calling,  
Strictly attendant on the means of grace,  
Instant in prayer, and fearful most of falling,  
Old Daniel Gray was always in his place.

A practical old man, and yet a dreamer,  
He thought that in some strange unlooked-for way,  
His mighty Friend in heaven, the great Redeemer,  
Would honor him with some golden day.

This dream he carried in a hopeful spirit,  
Until in death his patient eye grew dim,  
And his Redeemer called him to inherit  
The heaven of wealth long garnered up for him.

So, if I ever win the home in heaven,  
For whose sweet rest I humbly hope and pray,  
In the great company of the forgiven  
I shall be sure to find old Daniel Gray.

—Atlantic Monthly for August.

## Selections.

### The French Canadians.

BY REV. N. CYP.

We find among the French Canadians three classes of individuals, differing widely in their attachment to the Romish Church, and their obedience to its requirements, viz., the devotee, the moderate Catholic, and the practical infidel.

The first, the devotees, appear to be the legitimate successors of the Pharisees of old. They regularly attend all the services of the church, during the week, as well as on the Sabbath, go punctually to confess and commune frequently. They are exceedingly partial to beads, medals and scapulars, and much prefer cheating their neighbors to eating meat on Friday. I do not speak of their deeds of charity, as these bigots are generally less inclined to give their money than their prayers to the poor. Making great pretensions to holiness, their

righteousness is merely outward and superficial, and while they appear moral and religious to men, their hearts oftentimes are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. They go about to establish their own righteousness, building their hope of Heaven upon their personal merits, or rather upon their vain and useless performances.

The devotee or bigot is exceedingly credulous. He is a firm believer in all the miracles that Rome has ever invented, and he finds nothing too absurd, provided it come from the priests. He is as superstitious as credulous. He will be careful never to commence any work or enterprise on a Friday, for he is confident it would never succeed. He thinks the dead occasionally return to our world, especially when they are in want of prayers and masses to be released from purgatory. If he has not seen any of these ghostly apparitions, his brother or his cousin has, and he believes this as firmly as we do the Gospel of Christ. He believes that one day in the year—the 2d of November—the spirits of the departed are going to and fro upon the earth, and it is supposed by the most ignorant and credulous that on that day the bodies of the dead come nearer the surface of the soil, not only in the burying ground, but wherever they may lie. So great is their faith in this nonsensical idea that they dare not plough their farms on that day, lest they strike against some unhappy corpse.

It certainly requires an incredible amount of imagination and superstition to entertain such an absurd belief, but the devotee's mind is equal to any thing and every thing in the line of self-delusion. We may remark further, that all these absurd superstitions are more or less directly fostered by the Romish clergy. A few years ago I sent a letter to the *Avenir*, pointing out to the priests some of the common errors, and calling upon them to use their influence to enlighten their parishioners on those points. On the following week a correspondence appeared in the same paper, taking notice of my letter and saying it would be a very fine thing, no doubt, to spread light among our people and destroy these numerous superstitions, but added the writer, the Romish clergy will do no such thing, for it is for their interest to keep their people in ignorance and darkness! And as far as I know, instead of making efforts in the right direction, they are introducing every year some new practices which tend necessarily to make their adherents more superstitious than ever.

I have dwelt on the superstitions of the French Canadians in this connection, as these are most entirely confined to the class of Roman Catholics I have endeavored to describe, viz: the devotees or bigots. Let me conclude what I have to add on this class of persons by saying when you pass near the Roman Catholic churches, and people are flocking in, you can distinguish the devotee from all others, especially if you recall to your mind the Pharisee, as portrayed in the New Testament. They resemble each other so strikingly that, as I have said, the modern bigot seems to be the legitimate successor of the old Pharisee.

The second class, that of the decent and moderate Roman Catholics, is composed of the respectable farmers, mechanics, merchants and others, who cannot live without some form of religion, and would think it disgraceful to neglect the services of the church and its ordinances. They make less pretensions to religion than the devotees, but in truth they are much more religious and moral. Though they respect their pastors, they do not always believe what they teach, nor are they ready to acquiesce in every article of the catechism. Priests or bishops may affirm that out of the "Catholic, apostolic and Romish church" there is no salvation, they will nevertheless believe that their honest Protestant neighbors are to be saved as well as themselves. These liberal, but sincere Roman Catholics are not afraid of Protestants; we can easily have access to them and converse with them on the subject of religion. As they are less prejudiced and have more spiritual wants than those of the other two classes, we find them more ready to receive the

truth as it is in Jesus. And this class has furnished most of the converts in the Missionary field.

The third and last class we find among the French Canadians, can be designated by the term *indifferent* in religious matters or practical infidels. This class comprises the generality of the professional men, that is, the more enlightened and better educated portion of the community. Some of these men still attend church, yet they do so from no religious motive, but merely to while away time; and lessen the tediousness of the day of rest.

### The Church Independent of Secular Aid.

THE Church of Jesus needs no civil law to protect any of her institutions. Some turn pale and shake with alarm, as if our temples were about to be destroyed, our Saviour torn from our hearts, and the entire fabric of religious worship demolished. Poor things, we pity them. Why, before the sword was ever drawn to protect Christianity it had ranged over the entire old world, and collected millions of converts; and the very torments inflicted by human law were the seeds of life to multitudes more; the placidity of their faces gave such a picture of the peace speaking blood, their joyful death-song gave such a thrilling call to seek Jesus, the light that illumined their saintly countenances showed so clearly the hollowness of heathenism and the glory of the cross, their contempt of pain and death gave such a view of the power of God within them, and their dying prayers for pardon for their murderers painted so vividly their heavenly birth-places, that nothing could withstand their gospel. Out of their scorched bodies or from the ashes to which the flames reduced them that gospel issued Consuls, Generals, Imperial Cæsar himself, and rolling onward with the irresistible and beneficent march of spring, covering hills with the beauty of holiness and valleys with the flowers of piety, making the songs of heaven ring through their innumerable heathen temples from the lips of converts turned from the worship of hosts of hideous gods; and never did Christianity receive a vital stab till Constantine took it under his protection. When his government gave the force of law to religious institutions, forthwith the light of piety was eclipsed; state favour paralyzed power with God; extensive importations were made from Jupiter and Juno, Diana and Moses, and addition after addition was made to them, until, in the fifteenth century, Christianity was a monster horrible to be seen, impotent for good, mighty for mischief, rioting in the excesses of Venus, and ruled by the sceptre of Mammon. Nowhere on earth is infidelity more rampant than in the British Isles. The leaders in our Sunday Institutes, the preachers in our infidel Synagogues, the guests at our banquets in honour of Paine, are generally from the other side of the Atlantic, where the golden favour of the State to the Church, and the power of civil law, given to religious observances, have plunged the dagger of infidelity deep in the hearts of thousands, and made them hate religion with a bitterness, and assail it with an energy never found except in a State Church atmosphere. Nor should we feel at all surprised if the recent appeals in our own midst to secular law to protect the observance of the Lord's day, appeals in some cases moderate, but in others intemperate and unchristian, should lead to a temporary rebellion against our established usages, and to the partial injury of our holy worship. But what need has the Church, of State aid in anything? Jesus says, "All power is mine in heaven and on earth. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." What need we besides? Must Hercules borrow aid from the wing of a humming-bird? Must the Church, with the present God, beg the policeman's protection and the shield of State legislation? A fable tells us, "There stood on a great rock in the centre of the earth, a castle; its top reached the clouds, the thickness of its walls could not be measured by cubits. A few moles at the base of the rock tossed

up a little earth, and some mice are reported to have said to the moles, 'Why are you disturbing the tranquility of the lord of this castle?' 'We are not disturbing his tranquility,' was the reply; 'We are only throwing up a rampart to defend his castle.' Such is the Church of God and the secular laws defending her. She rests upon the Rock of Ages, God is her citadel, and like the rampart made by moles, are State laws protecting her. She needs them not; she wants not prisons, but souls—not fines, but hearts—not a posse of policemen, but the power of faith in the hearts of men, and the power of love felt all over their lives. The Gospel is that stone, cut without hands, little once, that shall crush every earthly power, fill the whole world, and never be destroyed—that ark before which every Dagon of time must fall—that breath of God which shall palsy whole armies of temptations and legions of devils, penetrate the thickest atmosphere, and warm into life the coldest and guiltiest soul.—*Rev. Wm. Cathcart.*

### Wealthy Marriages.

At the ordination of Independents, it is customary for the ordaining minister, after the confession of faith, and a prayer for the Divine blessing and influence to attend the union that has been publicly recognized between the pastor and the church, to address to each of the parties a charge, containing suitable instructions, cautions, admonitions, and encouragements with regard to their respective duties. No person was more calculated than Mr. Jay to perform strictly, and without favour or affection, this part of his vocation. He had observed a growing evil amongst his brethren, with the cause of which he was well acquainted, and he therefore determined to rebuke and denounce it. He addressed some candidates for admission into the church of Christ as Independent ministers: "My young brethren, it is deeply to be regretted that many young men, after having been educated for the church, which has thus a claim on their services, no sooner enter the ministry than they begin to look about them for a wife, taking care, however, that she be possessed of a fortune; if successful in their search, after a time they begin to grow weary in well-doing. They take cold; it results in a cough, or a spitting of blood; they are so weak that they cannot attend to the duties of their office. They resign, and live upon their wife's fortune. I know five cases of this kind; may it never be your lot!"

During the delivery of this keen rebuke, there was a young minister, or rather, an ex-minister who did not seem very comfortable. After the service was closed, the merits of the discourse were canvassed; and the general opinion was, that it was such a one as could be delivered only by Mr. Jay. "How did you like Mr. Jay?" said one of the hearers to the ex-pastor; "it was fine, quite a treat, wasn't it?" "Well, I liked him very well," replied the ex-pastor; "but I think he was rather personal." "Personal, eh? how so?" "Why, you must have noticed his reference to ministers out of health resigning." "Yes, yes, he was a little close there, I must admit." "I shall speak to him about it," said the delicate, fastidious ex-minister, who, true to his word, sought the vestry, and found Mr. Jay there. He congratulated him on his health and discourse, but hinted that he was personal in his remarks, and would like to know if he referred to him. "Personal," said Mr. Jay, "personal, eh! in what part of the discourse?" "When you were speaking about ministers resigning," replied the ex-pastor. "O," said Mr. Jay, "I see, you have resigned." "Yes, sir." "Did you marry a rich wife?" "Yes, sir." "Did you have a cough, and become disabled for service?" "Yes, sir." "Ah, my friend," said Mr. Jay, "yours is the sixth case, then." This young man, having reaped the reward of his folly, retired confused and abashed.—*Recollections of Rev. William Jay.*

[Jay himself married a very rich wife in his very old age, and was pretty well laughed at for it.—*Eds. Chris. Mess. C. W.*]