



### "THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT."

(Special despatch to Montreal Star.)

QUEBEC, Dec. 11th.—The night before last, during the debate on the budget, Hon. Mr. Mercier, in response to charges of extravagance made by the Opposition, said amongst other things that the accusation of raising the salaries of the members laid against the Government would not hold water, as he could prove that it was the members of the Opposition who had first asked for it, and not only for \$800, but for a thousand dollars. This remark was taken up before the doors of the House were thrown open yesterday afternoon by the Hon. Mr. Blanchet, leader of the Opposition, who asked that all papers referring to this matter be put on the table. The papers asked for, it is understood, have amongst them a round robin signed by forty of the members, asking for an increase, and more or less to the astonishment of the House, Mr. Mercier expressed himself quite ready to comply with the demand, and immediately sent a messenger to get the papers, stating at the same time that one of the members who was the first to complain of Government extravagance was one of the first to sign the petition.

This was taken up by Mr. Leblanc, who was the gentleman referred to, and who said the words attributed to him had been spoken the very day that the races at Lepine Park took place.

This remark was evidently taken as a personal insult by Mr. Mercier, for he excitedly challenged Mr. Leblanc to repeat it outside of the doors of the House, promising at the same time that he would not look towards the courts for protection.

### A MODERN CHRISTMAS CAROL

WITH A MORAL FOR THE TIMES.

EVERY star was shining brightly  
And the breeze was singing lightly,  
As it swept across the meadows that were covered deep with snows,  
Full of wonderment and pity  
For the sins of that great city  
At whose head uprears a mountain; at whose feet a river flows.

But in spite of every steeple  
Pointing heavenward, the people  
Heeded little of the warning that the churches raised on high,  
For within those buildings holy  
The Devil entered slowly  
With a scheme for making money and to catch souls on the sly.

Sin, like water, finds its level  
In man's soul, and so the Devil  
Sometimes steals inside a church instead of haunting a saloon,  
And he does it with the notion  
That beneath the best devotion  
There is weakness in the armor that will wear out late or soon.

So I dreamed the Devil entered  
In a church that was well centred,  
With a moneyed congregation and a debt that figured large,  
And he stood beside a column,  
Quite respectable and solemn,  
As he planned a little plan, whereby his sin he might discharge.

First he whisper'd, "Girls! you're pretty,  
And it's certainly a pity  
Such sweet charms should all be wasted on the worldly thoughts  
that are;  
How much better if your beauties  
Were employed in holy duties,  
Let us say a tableau vivant or an innocent bazaar."

Then he talked to married ladies,  
For the Devil much afraid is  
That his influence without them would not quite induce the men  
To open wide their purses  
Without a stream of curses,  
And of course for active church-work that would prove a bad omen.

And the girls thought "How delightful!  
We could get the school-house quite full;  
How the fellows could admire us! How the other girls would feel!  
We will have it for The Mission,  
At a quarter for admission,  
And we'll scoop the dollars somehow, if we borrow, beg or steal."

So the mothers left their babies  
And they called their husbands gabies  
If they did not enter warmly on the Church's latest scheme;  
And they begged and borrowed mainly,  
But they told the tradesmen plainly,  
Though they did it for the Lord's sake, for themselves they wouldn't  
dream.

And the Devil sold a ticket,  
Or took money at a wicket,  
Or he'd pass you in for nothing with a smile so sweetly set,  
And if you'd ask the reason  
He would say "It's Christmas season,  
And it's all for God's great glory and to get us out of debt."

So they made their heap of money  
Though it certainly seemed funny  
When they closed each night's proceedings both with hymn and holy  
word;  
For I thought of Jesus spurning  
And those tables overturning  
When the money changers traded in the Temple of the Lord.

As I left the sacred portal  
The old Devil, like a mortal,  
Flapped his fat and greasy fingers in my hand and grimly smiled,  
"Glad you didn't quite let this pass,  
And I wish you 'Merry Christmas,'"  
And he chuckled such a chuckle that the Church door rattled wild.

But he disappeared in silence  
And I saw about a mile hence  
That old Devil flying onward for the next town and bazaar,  
In his hellish form Titanic  
And I heard him laugh Satanic,  
"O! these pillars of the Churches! what an easy prey they are.

Then I walked far from the city  
Praying God would show us pity  
For the blasphemy we practise and hypocrisy we preach,  
And I looked to where the Seven  
Show their starry lights in Heaven  
And I asked God if we sinners to His Throne might hope to reach.

Faintly fell the angels' singing  
And the bells of Heaven ringing  
And the music of the harpers of the bright celestial host,  
And the blessed words came to me  
While the joyous praise thrilled through me;  
"Glory be to God the Father, to the Son and Holy Ghost."

Montreal.

P. QUILL.

### AT THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

MR. KULCHAW (*pausing before a mutilated piece of  
statuary*)—"Ah, how unequalled was the work of  
the ancients! Now, that is grand. What a magnificent  
torso!"

MISS FRESHIE (*of Bobcaygeon*)—"Yes, Mr. Kulchaw.  
But how did it git tore so?"