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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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J. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor

Ottawa, Wednesday, Dec. 23 1903.

We heartily tender to all readers of The DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

You can not do better than send your absent son, daughter or friend The DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN for 1904. As a New Year's gift it will carry weekly greetings from the home circle for twelve months. One dollar will pay the bill.

The blank schedules for Annual Returns and half yearly claims for Home Missions and Augmentation (western section) have been mailed to the Conveners of the several presbyteries. Should any Convener fail to receive them he is requested to write at once to Rev. Dr. Somerville, Owen Sound the Secretary of the committee, and others will be forwarded.

It is announced that the Rev. D. Stiles Fraser has demitted his charge to take the business management of the Presbyterian Witness. This involves no change in the editorial chair. Our good friend, Dr. Murray, who has so long and so ably conducted the paper, will continue to do so; and doubtless with new business methods there will come improvements and increased circulation. We wish Dr. Murray and Mr. Stiles Fraser happiness and prosperity in their new relations; and for the Presbyterian Witness thousands of new subscribers during the coming year.

In a recent dissertation President Eliot, of Harvard, states that "the whole store of knowledge now available is too vast for any man to master, though he had a hundred lives, instead of one, and its growth in the nineteenth century was greater than in all the thirty preceding centuries put together . . . Culture, therefore, can no longer imply a knowledge of everything. It must be content with general knowledge of some things, and a real mastery of some small portion of the human store."

SEASONABLE THOUGHTS.

Thoughts, naturally, of giving pleasure to the children. Some of the brightest strands in the web of your own life-memories are those of Christmas and New Years Day. Plant these same pleasant memories in the minds of the children. Do not be afraid of the innocent illusions of Santa Claus, any more than of the illusive existence of Jack-in-the-Bean-Stalk, Cinderella, Tiny Tim or Ivanhoe. The prose of life will make its appearance all too soon.

Thoughts, once a year at least, of unselfish consideration for others. Who can estimate the full effect, both upon givers and receivers, of this periodical world-wide outflow of good will?

Thoughts of the river of human existence. Say the elder folk, What! Another year gone! The night comes on. Work while there is daylight.

Thoughts of doing better than we did in the year 1903. We made resolutions a year ago, some of which have been carried out but very imperfectly. Never mind; let us make new resolutions; and do the best we can. This is at least a step and sign to be honestly and sincerely desirous of being better in 1904 than we were in 1903.

A TENDENCY TO BE FOUGHT.

Thoughtful people are united in looking forward with anxiety to the meral outcome of the strongly marked tendency of modern society towards undue pleasure seeking. The tendency alluded to is indicated in the columns of great daily newspapers, which give more space to so-called pleasures, than to anything else: amusements, sports, theatres, society doings, and the like.

In New York, a fortnight ago, Rev Dr. Morgan Dix, a competent observer, made an indictment against modern society in the United States, because of the growth of luxurious, riotous living; the misuse of money; and its reckless squandering on pleasure and pride.

As to old London, Lady Henry Somerset, in an article still smelling of the ink, says: "The society existence of West London begets a life which is absolutely divorced from duty. In fact it has come to be regarded as a sin to take any concern of life seriously."

Taking other strata of society, a few days ago, in San Francisco, a prize fight was witnessed by 6000 persons, many present being those usually considered respectable.

A recent book, "The Woman who Toils," shows the women operatives of several large United States cities, judging from their conversations while at work, immersed in thoughts of pleasure seeking.

C. A. Mason's book, "Lux Christi," speaks as follows: "All students of our time agree that never before in the history of the United States was such emphasis laid on the gaining of wealth by men, and the enjoyment of material luxury by women; causing shallow thinking, and the

craving for amusement and diversion as occupations, not as incidents.

The last number of The Nineteenth Century has a strong article on "The Deliberate Effect of Americanization Upon Women; the point of which is the demoralization witnessed on every hand because of the wild chase for wealth on the part of the men, and the wild chase for pleasure on the part of the women.

The tendency towards pleasure seeking is indicated also by the restlessness in family life, and the difficulty in inducing young people to remain in the home after the evening meal, if any excuse can be found for being out.

It is to be noticed also that some modern churches show a disposition in their services to cater to the craving for entertainment. The tendency of which we speak is seen even in the theatre, in the banishment of Shakesperian and other tragedy, and the complete enshroument of frivolous and often demoralizing plays.

Analogy is frequently made, and not unjustly, between the pleasure-seeking excesses of the present day, and the same phenomena in the later period of the Roman Empire. All philosophic historians agree the inroad of universal pleasure seeking was the cause or symptom of the ancient Empire's downfall. The warning of modern society is manifest. Another instance is the riotous pleasure seeking which preceded and largely caused the French revolution.

The root of the matter is, the pleasure seeker is on the wrong track, going west when he should be going east. He forgets he was not sent into this world to be a pleasure seeker; forgets that even the attainment of earthly happiness, while not to be despised as an incidental, is not a proper object of pursuit. The true ideal is that of duty, allied with work.

For those who think this a hard saying, there are reassuring considerations. The person who dutifully goes at his work, doing his best, presently finds satisfaction therein. Habit helps him. Habit is neither moral nor immoral. It is non-moral; and would as willingly assist a man to do right as to do wrong. It is rather important, therefore, to make of Habit a friendly ally and aid in well-doing.

"The Society of Aaron and Hur" is a new movement which has been started in the Synod of Iowa. Its purpose is to make the church more efficient in the Master's work by rallying the earnest members around their pastors and securing their hearty co-operation in the work of the church. We all remember the part played by Aaron and Hur, in sustaining the hand of Moses, while Joshua was fighting the Amalekites. Every minister of the Gospel needs to be loyally supported by the Aarons and Hurs of his congregation. The idea embodied in the Aaron and Hur Society seems to be all right, and there seems to be no reason why the recently organized "Men's Societies" in Ottawa church should not, in practice, be Aaron and Hur Societies.