

The Dominion Presbyterian

IS PUBLISHED AT

323 FRANK ST., - OTTAWA

AND AT

MONTREAL AND WINNIPEG

Terms: One year (50 issues) in advance, \$1.50.

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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,
P. O. Drawer 563, Ottawa.

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OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6, 1909.

One of the most fatal temptations to the weak is a slight deviation from the truth for the sake of apparent good.

'Cowardly blackguardism' Goldwin Smith calls college hazing. And that is precisely what it is, adds the Orillia Packet.

The tenth annual convention of the Canadian Forestry Association is to be held in Toronto on Thursday and Friday, the 11th and 12th of February, 1909. This is a month earlier than usual; the change being made to suit many of the lumbermen whose business engagements compel them to be abroad in March.

The Post Office Department shows a surplus of \$1,982,301 on the year's business—the largest surplus on record. Mr. Lemieux will have reason, when Parliament meets, to point with satisfaction to all the figures relating to the work of his Department. The number of letters posted in Canada during the official year has been 398,011,000, or more than one a week for every man, woman and child in the Dominion. And there are 446 more post offices than there were last year.

The result of the license reduction vote in Toronto is most gratifying. The by-law was carried by a substantial majority. Mayor Oliver, whose able management of civic affairs during the past year, well entitled him to a second term, was re-elected by a majority greater than the total votes polled for his three opponents, and he favors the reduction, and so, with a council favorable to the by-law, it should go into early operation with a good chance of being well supported by the authorities and citizens. This victory of the temperance people of Toronto will have a far-reaching influence throughout Ontario.

JOHN MILTON'S ANNIVERSARY.

The three hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Milton has recently been celebrated, more especially in England and the United States. He stands second only to Shakespeare as a poet. He was born in London, Dec. 9, 1608, and lived to the age of 66. Coming into the world in the period just preceding the movement against kingly usurpation, inaugurated by Oliver Cromwell, Milton became identified with him as one of his most useful and trusted associates and helpers. In the year of his birth a number of the Puritans, who had increased rapidly during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were forced to flee to Holland. Milton's father was a Puritan, and the poet being reared in the ways of that community, naturally espoused their cause. In the civil war which followed, Milton was an adviser of Cromwell, and in 1649, at the age of 41, he was Cromwell's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and had also become distinguished as a poet.

While Milton's prose articles formed an important part of the political and ecclesiastical controversial writing of the period, he will always be better known as the author of Samson Agonistes, Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained. Paradise Lost is without question the greatest epic poem ever produced. Yet it was written under serious difficulties, for Milton was blind.

Peculiarly he had small reward for his labors. It is said that his publishers gave him five pounds for Paradise Lost, and promised him five pounds more when the sale had reached thirteen hundred copies. He left an estate of only fifteen hundred pounds. But he wrote for a higher reward than money, and could he come back now he would discover that the world acknowledges his work and gives him recognition which it was slow to do while he was yet alive.

The Herald and Presbyter, referring to the Supreme Court of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, speaks of the Great Assembly and the Little Assembly. The former is the General Assembly, the latter the Executive Commission, to which a large amount of the business has been relegated. There are some who say that the Great Assembly has ceased to be a deliberative body, and has become simply a ratifying convention, the business being done in committees. There is some truth in this, but a large part of the business of all deliberative bodies is done in committee. This point of the Herald and Presbyter's criticism is, however, that the General Assembly is too large, being in the United States composed of nearly nine hundred members. The object of creating the Executive Commission was that it might do the work of the special committee. In the Canadian church likewise the General Assembly is too large. It was found advisable not long ago to reduce the representation. It may be necessary to do so again. In a growing country it is difficult to give adequate representation and at the same time prevent the representative body from becoming too large and unwieldy.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS.

(By Knoxonian.)

This is the season for "swearing off" and making good resolutions. Of late it has become rather popular to say sarcastic things about the resolutions made on New Year's Day. The persons who hold a meeting in their inner consciousness and propose, second and carry good resolutions unanimously are held up to ridicule because said resolutions are not always kept. Well, some of them are kept. Others are kept for a short time and even that is a good thing. If a man resolves on New Year's Day that he will drink no more for a year and does not taste until Dominion Day, he has been sober for six months, and surely that is a good thing. It may be urged that the breaking of the resolution weakens his moral nature. Probably; but six months' drinking would do his nature more harm than fracturing the resolution. Even if a resolution is not kept six months it may be a good thing. The making of a resolution is a wholesome exercise. It brings conscience into play; it involves self-examination; it makes the man look back and forward and take a moral reckoning of himself. Such reckoning should be made oftener than once a year, but once a year is better than not at all. Let no one despise the resolutions of New Year's Day because they are not all kept. The making of them shows that the maker thinks, and that is a great deal.

The number of topics that might be embraced in a good set of resolutions for 1909 is large. A family man who wishes to grow symmetrically with a well rounded character and fight the devil along the whole line will generally begin with some

Family Resolutions.

The family is the basis of society. The Church is an aggregate of families, and what the families are the Church must be. To improve church life by anything that lowers the tone of family life is an impossibility. The State is an aggregate of families, and what the families are the State must be. The Dominion can never be any better morally than the families that constitute the Dominion. If, on reflection, a man finds out on the first day of '09 that he does not spend as much time with his family as he should do, he ought to make a good strong resolution to mend his ways—and keep it. Business must be attended to of course, but sitting on inverted soap boxes in a corner grocery hearing and relating the village gossip is not business.* It is unfortunately necessary to go to a good many evening meetings in towns and cities, but the number might well be reduced and the meetings made much shorter. To go to the Lodge once a month may be a duty, but some men go to the lodge when there isn't any lodge. All that class of citizens—ministers among the number—who spend so many of their evenings in public should solemnly resolve this week to spend more time in their homes during 1909. One of the weakest points in Canadian society is the little attention that many give to home life. If husbands would give their wives a little of the attention they used to choke them with before marriage it would be a good thing for the family. The husband may possibly not be always to blame. Then let wives also resolve this week to make their homes brighter and happier for 1909 than they have ever been before.