

Henry Scott, Alexander Watt, and Wm Cowan, junior, ruling elders. The minutes of former meeting were read and approved. Papers being called for, there was laid on the table a petition from Sable River congregation, that a minister be sent to provide for an election of elders, and proceeded to their ordination with as much dispatch as practicable, and also to dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Mr. Burtie gave in a verbal report of his visit to the district towards Owen Sound—that he had preached to the presbyterians of Holland and Sullivan, and formed them into a congregation, now known as the Sable River United Presbyterian Congregation—that he had done the same among the presbyterians of Brant, and that on the third Sabbath of his appointment, he had preached in Garsfield.

The clerk then stated that he had written to the "Committee of Institutions," acquainting them with the vacancies in the Wellington Presbytery, and requesting a proportionate supply of preachers' services, but had received no answer.

Proceeds to take up the petition of Sable River congregation, when, after deliberation, it was unanimously agreed that its prayer be granted. Appointed Mr. Torrance to that region for the second, third, and fourth Sabbaths of December, in moderate time in the election of elders, and ordination, as he shall see proper, and likewise to dispense the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

It was moved by Mr. Duff, seconded by Mr. Watt, that the urgent wants of the presbyterians of the Owen Sound District, be pressed upon the attention of the committee of missions here, that they may be brought under the attention of the Board of Missions in Scotland.

Appointed the annual synodical visitation to take place at Garsfield, on the Monday after the second Sabbath of January, 1863; at Garsfield, on the Tuesday, and Elora, on the Wednesday of the same week.

Next meeting of Presbytery to be held in the church at Elora, on the Tuesday after the first Sabbath of March next, at eleven o'clock.—Mr. Torrance to preach.—Com.

[FOR THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

### THE SPIRIT OF THE CANADIAN PRESS.

It may be safely affirmed that there are few intelligent, moral living (not to mention christian) families, in Canada West, who do not take and read some political newspaper. This is just as it should be. For newspapers, when properly conducted, are the means of imparting to the community much important information and real enjoyment. How many articles are to be found in their pages, rich with intelligence, sparkling with gems of wit,—and with what intellectual vigour and earnestness they reason and remonstrate, when they attack or defend some topics in morals or politics. The politician could not exist without his newspaper. From it he learns the rise or fall of parties; and he laments or rejoices just as he sees his party in or out of power. "The village Hampden" learns from the newspaper the progress of liberty or the ascendancy of despotism; and rejoices when *Rossini* is triumphant, or grieves at his reverses. From it the merchant learns the state of different markets, and regulates his purchases accordingly. And the christian reads it as a page from the book of Providence, from which he sees the progress of truth, or the momentary ascendancy of error. All intelligent and honest men love the newspaper, and hail its arrival with feelings of delight. They know that when it is free, independent, and honest, it is the palladium of civil liberty—despotism and such a press cannot exist in the same country. It is the duty, therefore, of every lover of true liberty—of every friend of his country—to support an able and independent press.

The newspaper press of Canada West is in many respects worthy of esteem and support; but in other respects the spirit manifested by it is painful to every rightly-regulated mind. Is it not true that several Editors, speaking of each other, through their journals, use, sometimes, few courteous or gentle terms? They often impute to each other the basest motives; and if one journal is convinced that it is duty to support or attack public men or public measures, there are others who freely and openly impute to its Editor the most base and dishonest motives. The following are a few of their choice epithets:—"the charlatan"—"the public prostitute"—"the preacher of sentiments the reverse of his convictions"—"the receiver of bribes"—"the dog returning to his vomit, gulping down the precious stuff previously emitted"—and the character of the journal is said to be notorious for "disgraceful and disgusting inconsistency." There are many more such titles and expressions which they are in the habit of conferring on each other, which we may not quote. Then there is the garbled extract, stuck at the head of a leading article, as a text from which to preach defamation of character, or to contrast the

consistency, loyalty, independence, and unimpeachable disinterestedness of the writer and his friends, with the changeable, selfish, and unworthy title character of the person or journal attacked.

Again, there is the studied concealment of facts, well known to the writer, which should at once satisfy any candid person—may, these facts are such as might be regarded sufficient to satisfy integrity itself, though it were as insatiable as the grave. Yet these facts are designedly ignored, and character is held up to public reproach, as if the objects of their easy were unimpeachable villains. Moreover, when facts are so potent that they cannot be denied, and which are satisfactory to all honest men acquainted with them, there is often, notwithstanding these circumstances, a bold attempt made to wrest them, and to impart to them a certain colouring, that they may tell against the character of the person, or journal, that may be the objects of their attacks. Also, the lie direct is not infrequently given by one editor to another, which conduct, most certainly, degrades the person who is guilty of it, as much as the person against whom it is given.

The above statement is no fiction, but a true, though deplorable representation of the present condition of the Upper Canada newspaper press. Yet, if we take the report of the community, the gentlemen who edit the majority of these journals are persons of ability and considerable mental attainments. In private, they are kind, courteous, and sociable, and who would scorn being guilty of any act having the least impress of dishonesty or meanness. How comes it, then, that when they occupy their editorial chairs, they are transformed into such Ishmaelites? They are greatly mistaken if they suppose that their personal squabbles are interesting to the public. These may be read just because they are mixed up with some political question, or the conduct of some public character, whose acts or professions are proper subjects for investigation and remark, but apart from these, the only feelings which they excite, are pity and disgust.

But though, among the intelligent and wise, these are the sentiments which are produced by such editorial assaults, yet it is to be feared that they endanger the morality of many of the community. What can the public think of the morality of their leaders—of men in authority—men of intelligence—the reputed guardians of the public morals, and the liberties of the people—who so publicly and frequently charge each other with dishonesty and falsehood, and represent each other as the vilest impostors? These manifestations of editorial "malice and envy" may amuse the thoughtless among the Canadian populace, but certainly such amusement is dangerous to their morality. How lightly must they think of truth and honesty, when they are told by Journalists that *they* hold it in small reputation. What contempt must they have for moral and intellectual attainments, when, according to the aforesaid testimony, these are so frequently *perverted and abused*. What desires can they have for gentlemanly qualifications, when the editor of their favourite newspaper appears so completely destitute of these? What would be the character of a community, if editors, according to their representations of each other, were to be the examples followed?

It is also well known that most of these editors are professors of christianity—may, according to public report, some of them are preachers of the Gospel. Well, this makes bad worse. Where, in the pages of the scriptures, will they find a text from which to preach defamation of character? Are there any doctrines, or precepts, or examples, after which their conduct to each other is formed? There are no precepts, and but one example, viz. of that Being who is represented as the accuser of the brethren. What can christians think of such men, and what can the world think of such examples of christianity as they manifest? Let Journalists improve the spirit of their Editorials, or the community of Canada will have to agitate for a "R-form of the Spirit of the Press."

D.

When we received the above communication from our esteemed correspondent, we had resolved to write on the same subject. So far, the word is taken out of our mouth; but still, "line upon line" may not be unequalled for to a few of the Editorial fraternity. We are sorry to say it, but we say it because we believe it true, and we say it distinctly and decidedly, that the tendency of the spirit of a great part of the Canadian political press is to sap the foundations of public and social morality and constitutional order, and also, the very Constitution itself. The truth is, that many of the editors are mere political scribes, not politicians, and consequently are pliable and purchasable, by