

said an old railway hand, "you had better hurry home; a telegram has just come that a North-West blizzard is upon us." The sky was cloudless, without a breath of air, but keen frost. Before he had gone a mile he was involved in a wild whirl of snow—the mercury many degrees below zero, and the wind rushing at fifty miles an hour. Of course he lost his bearings; but, as soon as the storm came on, his bright sister put a lamp on the window-sill upstairs, and placed a large looking glass behind it for a reflector. He saw it through the storm, mistook it for the headlight of a storm-bound locomotive, and hastened to it as his only refuge. Picture his joy when he found himself at home. She doubtless saved her brother's life, for an hour on the prairie in such circumstances means death. All is not gold that glitters; and farmers in Ontario with half a chance of a livelihood are better off than are a majority of farmers in a prairie country. Growing on prairies is the "Compass plant," the edges of whose broad leaves always point north and south. Let your readers do their own moralizing.

After spending a few more days with my boys and with other dear friends at St. Paul and Minneapolis, I returned home in health of body and peace of mind, ready for any work the Master may assign me.

Faithfully, W. WETHERALD.

Fenwick, Dec. 6, 1886.

MR. EDITOR,—Perhaps you will permit me space for a few lines in review of the article in your last number on "How to Secure Purity of Communion in our Churches."

The writer of that article recognizes the supreme importance of having in our membership only "spiritual and believing persons," and in order to do this, he advises "both caution in receiving persons into fellowship, and faithfulness in subsequently disciplining those who dishonour their Christian profession," and yet he dashes his pen at "standing committees," "a committee of two" and "the pretence of infallible inquisitors," etc.; and, referring to the customs of the primitive church, he says that "whoever is willing to make public his allegiance to the Lord should be received into the church, and should be told that the years following such confession and oath-taking form the only proper and sufficient test of Christian character and conduct," and adds, "This is apostolic."

Well, it may be freely admitted that it *was* apostolic, and yet it may be fairly claimed as equally so, when an entirely different state of society has arisen, that the Apostles would themselves have advised so decided a change of procedure as would meet the new order of things. The primitive church had its communion guarded by the fact that everywhere the

Christian name was spoken against, and Christians often persecuted; the temptation then was to be ashamed of Christ and His cause. The Gospel then was "foolishness" and a "stumbling-block" to the world, and the very shame of avowing the discipleship of the crucified Nazarene was a sufficient guard of the purity of communion in apostolic times. How different in the present age? Not only do not the surrounding circumstances help to defend our purity of communion, they are intensely the other way. It is now eminently genteel to be a member of a church, and not only have we many individuals who do not know anything about the spiritual nature of Christ's claims, we have even whole denominations whose idea of fitness for church membership is almost entirely limited to knowledge of a catechism, etc.; and the chief difficulty in the churches I have been connected with has been to avoid receiving those who have never known what true discipleship means, or the spiritual nature of the relationship they seek to enter. Hence, whether the pastor be a committee of one, or there be a "standing committee," or a "special committee" in each case, or whether the church recognize the possession by certain brethren or sisters of a special qualification for exercising the required care, each church will in fact, if it is well managed, have representative persons charged with its exercise. Doubtless the church should use the utmost care that "stupid people" should not be included among them, but it yet remains true that if the care is needed, and if it is better to run to the extreme of purity, etc., each church must have a recognized means by which it will endeavour, to its uttermost ability, to exclude those who are not spiritual, and not lay itself open to an avalanche of worldly people, ready to make a verbal profession, without any capacity to judge of their own fitness.

This being granted, the question at once presents itself to our mind, In what should this care consist, and how ought we to exercise it? And, in order to make very distinct the answer I conceive to be necessary, I would place two words alongside of each other by way of contrast between what I believe to be the right way and the wrong way. Those words are

JUDICIAL AND EDUCATIONAL.

By the first I would imply the effort on the part of the church representative to form a judgment in his own mind whether the candidate is a converted person or not. By the second I would imply his aim to be to enlighten the mind and conscience of the candidate—if necessary—as to the spiritual nature of Christ's claims upon our heart and life, and that only those who desire by grace faithfully to comply with His claims can have a right to be received into the fellowship of His people.

It will undoubtedly be true that a judicious person