

open, in many cases, they are; but Boards themselves are in a constant state of unrest, and it is somewhat difficult for new members to be convinced that credentials of a highly flattering description can by any means have emanated from the sources their signatures indicate, without containing at least some germs of reliability. Yet, that such is the case no one at all conversant with the subject will for a moment think of denying. In reply to every advertisement to fill a vacancy, scores of applicants furnish so-called testimonials almost *ad infinitum*, setting forth in superlative terms the eminent qualifications of Mr. or Miss So-and-so. In many cases, as already indicated, those employed on the strength of such recommendations prove the most miserable of failures. Wherever Boards of Trustees are of a permanent type, and their members have long worked together, the impression amongst them is, that the engagement of teachers is pretty much like drawing a ticket in a lottery. Now, next to, if not before, his professional certificate, a teacher's testimonials ought to be his most highly prized, because most dearly and deservedly won, *credentials*.

It should be as difficult to get credit from a clergyman for being "an excellent teacher" as it is presumably difficult to obtain an endorsement of one's qualifications for the post of churchwarden or elder. In the matter of Miss Namby or Miss Pamby, a recommendation is given just because she is a "nice person;" or, "It is such a pity to see her out of a situation;" or, "Well, poor thing! what could I do?" She has, in all likelihood, boarded with the chairman-trustee, or at any rate with one of the trustees, who, knowing her intimately as a lady, takes it for granted that she must be equally "nice" in school; but even if she isn't, he knows that "folks is jealous" because she boards

at his "place;" so, to spite "folks," as much as to please Miss Pamby, Mr. Scrubs gives her a first-rate "recommend!" Ah! but there are the inspector's testimonials! Yes, and it must be admitted that, as a rule, the recommendations that these gentlemen make are all they ought to be; but not seldom do papers appear, signed "P.S.I.," that would seem to have been granted more for the purpose of assisting teachers *out of their counties* than for the sake of advancing education without or within them.

Another misleading form of recommendation consists in the indiscriminate presentation-making so prevalent in some districts and sections. That this practice is contrary to law, without the consent of the trustees, avails nothing. It simply resolves itself into this:—Given that the fashion prevails, even the worst teacher has some friends, who, if only to spite those who are foes, "get up" the price of a walking-cane, a writing-desk, or a family Bible. The proceedings at the presentation, copied or cut from a newspaper, are not unfrequently made use of by the recipient when applying for a new situation.

Now, what we require, and what in our own interests we should demand, is the placing, in some way, of such restrictions upon the practice of giving recommendations and of making presents to teachers, as may enable those who get them, because they deserve them, to profit thereby to the fullest extent, and to prevent, as far as possible, the receipt of credentials by the undeserving, because incompetent, itinerant.

Confining our attention wholly to what even teachers sometimes call "recommends," it would appear as if the remedy lies altogether in our own hands. My suggestion is that we should use only testimonials in the form of affidavits, properly attested by a magistrate or commissioner. The