

to all this, he is possessed by a hobby in the special department he has made his own, and this breaks out in his books, in the papers he sets, and in his inspection, and examining. Against this quadrilateral assault what force, moral or physical, can the teacher interpose and maintain his integrity and his place? This is the question Head Masters are now anxiously asking themselves, and no friend of our educational system, who desires its weal and that of the profession, should let the masters ask in vain. It need only be added that this is neither a professional nor a trade, far less is it a personal, matter. It concerns the whole community, as no school is safe from the inroads of this vicious system which makes teacher and pupil the prey of self-interested Inspectors, who, in concert with intriguing publishers, make the interests of education subservient to that of their pocket. In this matter we cannot think that the Minister of Education is unwilling, as we know that he is not unable, to interfere. In the public interest, in regard to the price of text-books, he has recently interposed between the schools and the publishers. Let him now interpose between the schools and the inspectors. The case against the publishers was trifling compared with that against the Departmental officials, for the publications of the former, being authorized, could be controlled as to their price by the Minister. The Inspectors' works, however, are neither authorized nor are they controlled as to price. If this surreptitious book-trading of the Inspectors is to go on, let it at least be legalized and made subject to Departmental regulations. Only thus will Book-Rings be suppressed, teachers be relieved from immoral coercion, and the Inspectorate be kept free from taint.

DEFECTS IN COMPOSITION.

OUR attention has been drawn to some remarks lately made in one of our daily Toronto contemporaries as to the powers of composition displayed by the school teachers of Ontario. According to the editor of this paper, the letters received by him from

school teachers are often deficient in conciseness of matter and clearness of style, besides being open to the charge of displaying egotism. Now, we will not go into the question of the justness of this sweeping charge at present, but we may admit that some defects may not unnaturally be expected in the composition of teachers. Oliver Wendell Holmes has well said that he could imagine a clergyman becoming almost a heathen for want of attention to other than his own spiritual instruction. Similarly we may conceive a master allowing his own standard of style to deteriorate merely for want of contact with his equals and superiors in a literary standpoint. He criticises, but is never reviewed in turn. His word is law, and no doubt is hinted about that word having been badly chosen or incorrectly applied. In this difficult position nothing but practice and an intimate acquaintance with our best English writers can keep him from acquiring a slovenly and slipshod manner of expressing himself. The lack of style is noticeable in many clever and well-read men, in England as well as here. Take for instance Professor Blackie. In one page of a recent article of his in the *Contemporary Review* we notice three blots. He refers to "monstrous and clamant abuses," using a hideous word, and quite unnecessarily while the term "clamorous" remains in use. Still the meaning is plain. Not so when he speaks of "the freedom of testing." This is a crying example of the sin of coining words needlessly. To test has a plain, usual meaning, and a derivative scientific meaning. Why then burden it with a totally different one, and speak of "freedom of testing" when you mean "right of testamentary alienation?" These are verbal blots, but we come next to the misuse of a word that is of a graver nature. He refers to the "*epiphany*" of a statesman, and we at once feel that the word has been dragged, wrunched, and forcibly dislocated from its proper and usual surroundings, and that its use is utterly incongruous. A fault of an entirely different nature occurs a few pages before. "The Princely house of Torlonia *stands wedded* to the drainage of