

## SCHOOL MUSEUMS.

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IF it be taken for granted that Natural Science is a proper subject for treatment in the Public School course, the question immediately presents itself, as to the best method by means of which the necessary information may be imparted to the pupil, simultaneously with the carrying on of the educating process. With reference to this point, scientists and educators, almost without exception, occupy common ground, declaring it their opinion that time devoted merely to the memorizing of bald, text-book technicalities, and *viva voce* explanations, even when assisted with elaborate diagrams, is little better than frittered away. To this may be added the scarcely less important argument, that the almost inevitable tendency of such a plan is to disgust young people with the study to so great an extent, that very few of them will think of devoting even the smallest portion of their time to the consideration of biological topics, after the business portion of life has been fully entered upon.

What the spirit of the age demands in this, as in some other fields, is close, direct, personal observation and manipulation. For us, of to-day, it is not enough that this, that, or the other great man, be he saint, seer or scholar, has said so-and-so. What any or all of them have bequeathed to us for our edification may be all right, but it may not be. The Genius of Inquiry, with his crooked wand, directs the movements of the explorer

in every path of knowledge. An individual *ipsi dixit* no longer demands a general amen. The mantle of inspiration has been dropped, and has fallen—nowhere, or everywhere.

In no department of knowledge, during recent years, has the influence of persistent, original investigation been more powerfully felt than in Natural Science, and most assuredly, in none other has so much been done to prove that two and two make four, outside the pale of Mathematics. Despite all that has been effected in the way indicated, ten thousand times more remains to be accomplished. "The harvest indeed is ripe, but the laborers are few." Shall Ontario, with its much vaunted system of education, do nothing to aid the movement? How long will school examination speech-makers continue to set up the pulpit, the bar and the legislature, as the great attainable goals of manhood? Do teachers themselves propose to stand by admiring silently the efforts of workers in the field of Nature, without offering to lend a hand?

To teach Natural Science profitably, as has already been hinted, actual specimens are a prime necessity. This, however, need frighten no one. Hundreds of valuable and interesting objects are procurable within a few minutes walk of nearly every school-room—certainly every rural one—in the Province, and, for the benefit of any who may feel disposed to do even a little towards unlocking Nature's