

NATURE STUDY No. XXXVIII.

SCHOOL EXHIBITS OF PRESSED PLANTS.

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Largely as an outcome of the Nature Study movement, much attention has recently been given in rural schools to the formation of collections of various Natural history objects. The appreciation of the value of this work has found expression in the efforts made by the authorities of local Fairs and Exhibitions to encourage the teachers and scholars of their several districts, by offering prizes to be competed for under stated conditions. It cannot be doubted that the small expenditure involved has in the main been amply justified by the results. There are, however, some features of this work which may be advantageously considered by the teachers when themselves entering upon these competitions or persuading their scholars to do so. In this, as in every other kind of work, the first consideration should be: Is it advisable? If this is decided in the affirmative, then some definite idea should be formed beforehand as to the educational use the effort is to be put to and the way it is to be carried out. The writer has had many opportunities during the past ten years of examining and judging collections of plants, native woods and seeds, etc., which have been entered for competition at various Exhibitions. In most cases, there has been evidence of much energy, patience and care in making and preparing the specimens for exhibition; but there have also been signs that the makers of some of the collections have not quite understood the main principles involved in making a collection at all, or of making it educationally valuable. Most of the short-comings seem to have been due to a lack of knowledge of what the results of long experience, gathered from many different students, have shown is the best way to make a representative collection of natural history objects. It is with the hope of helping my many friends among the teachers and scholars of our country that I write this note. I believe that the encouragement of these natural history competitions, extended by Exhibition Associations, is a very wise one:—from their own point of view in the first place, the large number of visitors who invari-