

[For the Scientist.]

## WINTER WORK FOR NATURALISTS.

HERE in Nova Scotia, as well as in other countries with an equally severe winter climate, but little out-door work, in the way of collecting, can be done by the naturalist during that long cold season. It is true that if he be enthusiastic he will not be debarred from his favorite employment by times and seasons. He can still, with the exercise of a little perseverance, find materials for the study of insect life in decayed logs and under the loose bark of trees; he can gather mosses and fungi and make a collection of wood sections in the forest; he can secure specimens of such of our native birds as choose to remain and brave with us the frosts and snows of our northern winter rather than seek more genial climes with their summer companions. But, though work may lack in one direction it abounds in another. If he improved the shining hours during the preceding summer and autumn he has on hand, demanding his care, a large lot of specimens, uncleaned, unarranged, and unlabeled, and a confused jumble of notes that will require more than one long winter evening to decipher, rewrite, and arrange. Though he intensely enjoyed the summer's labor, he is grateful that living growing nature has, for a time, closed her doors upon him and given him, perforce, an opportunity to care for the collection that he has already made.

But it is just here that the young collector is liable to err. He is apt to forget or not comprehend the fact that a small collection, well classified and arranged by himself, is a much more desirable attainment than a large promiscuous one without order or arrangement. The collecting of specimens merely out of curiosity or for the sake

of excelling in number or quantity, as boys collect postage stamps and coins, is no part of science. The young collector should therefore remember that his work is only half done when he has brought home his specimens, but that there remains the study, arrangement, and classification of them. Of this work the greater part will usually be left till the busy collecting season is over and winter brings days of leisure. Then the keys, microscope, blowpipe, etc., can be used more frequently and the specimens prepared, labeled, and arranged in cabinets.

This is also the season for making exchanges and conducting correspondence with persons similarly situated in other countries; while the notes jotted and observations made during the preceding season should be elaborated and such parts as would be of general interest published in *THE ACADIAN SCIENTIST* or some other scientific magazine or paper.

I will just add a few hints for the benefit of young collectors. Now that the coming season is almost upon us, everything required for the campaign should be got in readiness while there is leisure. Every collector will, of course, choose some one department to which he will give his chief attention. If it be botany, collecting box, press, dryers, etc., should be put at hand. If insect hunting is to be the absorbing pursuit, nets, hunting-boxes, and a generous supply of pill boxes and small tin boxes, suitable in size for carrying in the pocket, should be secured, as well as pins, and boards for setting and drying the insects. And similarly, for whatever other department the collector may choose, every requisite should be secured and placed in readiness.

Again, the collector needs to exercise a little moral courage in facing the inevitable ridicule of those who are so ignorant as not to understand the sig-