

# JOURNAL OF EDUCATION.

FOR THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.

**ERRATA.**—In the October issue of the *Journal* one page was overlooked by the proof-reader, on the supposition from some errors marked, that it had previously been corrected. The consequence was the number of mistakes which occur in first proofs of manuscript matter.

## MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

Generally in Nova Scotia, winter is the season for self-culture and study. Especially is this the case in rural districts where young men remain at home, and frequently with larger boys, who labor during the summer, attend the section school. In a few neighborhoods societies are formed for debates and lectures, but in many districts such things are neglected, and the winter evenings are allowed to pass almost unimproved. These neglected or mis-spent hours are important to the young man, and may be made valuable in the acquirement of a fitness for future life. Those interested in the dissemination of knowledge find winter the time to reach the people, especially the young, and they have accomplished vast results by lectures and readings. Much more might be effected by such means, and a little additional effort and interest would bring into play a much greater variety and adaptation of talent.

Among the teachers of this Province, there is at the present time a very respectable amount of learning and ability, which, with a little encouragement, might effect most valuable results. In Nova Scotia, the school-master is abroad, and, we think, prepared for his work. And especially, is the position of a first class teacher, such as will secure that influence which a generous and cultivated mind always craves,—he is a teacher of youth, a moulder of mind, and to many, a fountain of knowledge, and in most cases may, with a little persevering effort and laudable ambition, become to the section where he resides, a popular lecturer. Under the influence of the teacher, societies may be formed, the members of which would gladly pursue a course of reading, prepare papers on various literary subject and venture upon an occasional lecture. By such means young men come to understand self-culture, and to realize the value of those means for improvement that lie within the reach of all. Teachers may well take the lead in such things and encourage them, and where the relation between section and teacher continues, these efforts would react with the happiest effect. During the summer a teacher might accustom himself to a scientific exploration of every object of interest in his locality, with a knowledge of the elements of science possessed by every reading man; and accompanied by the intelligent part of his school, he might explore forests and shores, mountains and valleys, and gather in each excursion valued specimens for future study. We can imagine the delight of youth thus engaged, feeling, that while indulging the youthful longing for fun and play, at the same time, with fun and frolic comes the pleasure of knowledge. The best educa-

tionists have pursued this plan, and thereby excited a love for science and research, which in future years become portions of the world's intellectual wealth.

A little corner of every school-house might be devoted to the museum, and the weekly rambles would soon supply the well furnished shelves. We can imagine the advantage to the teacher of such rambles, the excitement to study they necessarily produce, and the additional interest he must take in his own inquiries as he prepares to answer the question of his youthful companions in research. The lecturer to school boys may one day become the teacher of scientific men; and he who had arranged a museum in the school-house will soon be able to do this same work for the College and University. Step by step the student advances to the stature of intellectual manhood—gradually thoughts expand and gather power, and he who pursues the path with unwearied diligence and plod, will one day reach the summit where "fame's proud temple shines from far." A summer spent in this way,—the spare time devoted to research and the gathering of various specimens, with reading and conversation on the trophies of each day's or week's labor, will be a most complete preparation for a winter's exercise, in which all the section will find profit, and experience delight. After such a season, an intelligent teacher will find no difficulty, but rather a profitable and delightful exercise to give a course of lectures, with illustrations from the school museum.

The teacher will not, we are sure, urge that this suggestion imposes much extra labor, it assuredly will require study; but what of that teacher who does not study, and what will be his future? Study yields knowledge, and knowledge to the student is capital invested for the future of life. Success, happiness, enjoyment, moral power, reputation and influence, are parts of the inheritance of the man who, by virtuous industry and toil, acquires knowledge. Knowledge which fits men to act their part in life, and qualifies them to accomplish the design of their Creator, is surely worth all the toil and self-sacrifice by which it can be possessed. As we pen these lines, we have in our mind more than one of the sons of this favored land, who by dint of just such efforts as those to which we now direct attention, have risen to an enviable distinction, and now, though yet young, stand among the honored names of the literary world.

Strong motives might be urged to induce our teachers to accept and act upon these few hints. The advantage of such a course to themselves. Begin it, and it will be the beginning of a life of literary progress—the first step to an honorable and useful life—a first lesson pointing to a familiarity with the most profound developments of modern science.

Teachers will find in their school numbers of active-minded boys to co-operate with them in such exercises as are proposed, and upon such these efforts will quickly manifest results. The elements of the natural sciences will be implanted, their minds opened, and accustomed to the language and deductions of sciences.

There might be in every section school-house a school museum, and young ladies who are generally fond of flowers, and love the woods, fields and gardens, would soon have in their department specimens of the rich and varied flora of Nova Scotia. Every first class teacher might, with profit to himself and the youth under his instruction, study in the way hinted at, the elements of the natural sciences, and in many cases succeed in favoring the people during the winter with profitable and entertaining lectures. Let a few of our active-minded teachers take this matter into consideration, and if at first sight difficulties appear on mature consideration, such will vanish; and he who first enters the field will, we think, enjoy the largest reward.