

of the splendid trees, and beautiful ferns which have so impressed the fossil botanist with the magnificence and luxuriant growth of the vegetation of the carboniferous era, and which form the models from which he is enabled to restore its flora. To the miner they are the most certain evidence of the presence of coal. In the short account which we now purpose giving of these fossils, we labour under the great disadvantage of having no plates to illustrate our descriptions. We shall therefore endeavour to describe them so plainly, and make their distinctive features so apparent, that the reader, with ordinary attention, will at once be able to recognize them in the cabinet, or rock. The museum of the Mechanics' Institute contains a very fine collection of the coal fossils, to which we would refer the attention of the reader. But at the same time we would warn him, that they are so mixed up with ammonites and other fossils of different periods, that it may serve rather more to puzzle than instruct him; and here we may remark that we consider the management of this museum not at all creditable to the Institute or the City; for not only are the fossils badly arranged, and little taken care of, but the mineral collection, which consists almost altogether of zeolites, very fine of themselves, and perhaps unsurpassed in the beauty and perfection of their crystals by those of any other collection on this continent, yet presenting us with too many duplicates, for fine as these zeolites undoubtedly are, they are the very class of minerals we least require, being those for which Grand Manan, and the Bay of Minas, Nova Scotia, are so celebrated, and which are found in all our amateur collections, and are most familiar to our people. It seems to us that the great object of the museum should be to teach the masses in the simplest way possible; and to this end we think that each mineral should be labelled, not only with its proper name but with its chemical contents, as also the locality in which it is found. The duplicates also should be exchanged, and a larger variety of specimens procured. We write feelingly upon this subject, because we would long ago have liked to present the Institute with some fine fossils and minerals, but we valued them too highly to place them in the way of the almost certain destruction to which the present system of management would probably doom them.* In conclusion, we may remark that we hope when the Prince of Wales is shown the museum, it will not be in its present state, or in the room in which it is now contained. Hoping our readers will excuse this digression,

* Many of the minerals, the crystals of which may be scratched by a pin, are allowed to lie upon the tables, and are handled by the boys who crowd into the museum on lecture nights. We have been informed that many of them have been lost in this way. In like manner, the Chinese collection has been most shamefully abused; while in the Natural History department we have noticed that some of the stuffed animals have lost their tails, etc., and that some very fine flamingoes (which are every year becoming more scarce) are placed on the top of the mineral cases, unprotected by glass, and the consequence will be that in a very few years they will be completely destroyed by dust, insects, etc.