

A MUSEUM ENEMY—DUST.

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Dust is an enemy we are always fighting; every day our rooms are dusted (whether necessary or not!), and once a week, may be, various cabinets containing choice china or other valuable objects are cleared, their contents dusted and replaced. Taken altogether the time occupied in dusting is by no means inconsiderable; to say nothing of the deterioration or danger of damaging the articles of *virtù* so frequently handled.

The principle demonstrated in this essay although thought-out primarily for museum requirements, is alike applicable to general and domestic purposes.

Whilst at the Leeds Museum, I carried out some experiments for Mr. T. Pridgin Teale, M.A., F.R.S., who, at the time, was making observations on dust; more especially with a view to excluding it from cupboards, drawers, &c. As the outcome of these experiments, together with others conducted at his own house and elsewhere, Mr. Teale read a paper before the Manchester Meeting of the Museums Association, entitled—"Dust in Museum Cases, how to battle with it."*

The subject is so fraught with interest and importance to all who are in any way connected with museums, that no apology is needed for introducing a matter with which museum administrators have so persistently to contend. It is usually the aim of those who are responsible for the well being of a museum, to make their cases dust-proof; but as Mr. Teale points out, this, by all ordinary methods, is impossible. Air is bound to pass in and out of a case, and why? because the pressure is always changing; the barometer shows us this; a rise of the mercury in the tube, indicates that the pressure on our case has been largely increased, and no workman, after these facts have been pointed out to him, will continue to maintain that his fittings will resist a pressure sufficient to burst in the plate glass front. As a matter of fact, the instances are few where the maker claims anything approaching to air-tightness. It will be the experience of most of us, that all except the newest and most modern cases are the very reverse of this. I have myself seen more cases than otherwise, through the chinks of which one could blow out a lighted candle.

* Report of Proceedings, 1892, pp. 81—86.