

a modern elementary science class. But I had gained for myself what these science classes so seldom infuse into the pupils—an enthusiastic love of the subject, and a determination to get somehow at the living truth of which the rocks are the records. I had learnt to treat fossils not as mere dead mineral matter, or as mere curiosities valuable in proportion to their rarity or perfection of preservation, but as enduring records of former life; not as species to fill a place in a zoological system, or specimens to take up so much room in a museum, but as the remains of once living organisms, which formed part of a creation as real as that in which we ourselves pass our existence. They were witnesses of early ages in our planet's history, and were ready to tell their tale if one could only learn how to read it from them. Few occupations possess greater power of fascination than to marshal all these witnesses, and elicit from them the evidence which allows us to restore one after another the successive conditions through which the solid land has passed. To realise how this is done, and to take part in the doing of it, is for a boy a lifelong advantage. He may never become a geologist in any sense, but he gains such an enlarged view of nature, and such a vivid conception of the long evolution through which the present condition of things has been reached, as can be mastered in no other way. A single excursion under sympathetic and intelligent guidance to an instructive quarry, river ravine, or sea-shore, is worth many books and a long course of systematic lectures.