to mould the plastic clay into animal forms, and plant in them ethereal fire. How reverently do we turn up the cleaving stone, and gaze upon a little *coral*, a *Lingula*, or a *trilobite*, and think that these were the forms which God first exerted his skill upon, and placed first in possession of our round and verdant planet! And how different those beings from all we know upon the earth to-day! What an infinite range of aptitudes between that humble *Lingula* and the majestic mien of man! Such is the exhaustless fertility of God's conception.

We place ourselves, then, upon the threshold of animal existence, and inquire what course creative Power will pursue. Shall we witness a series of experiments for the slow perfection of a plan—models and methods tried and abandoned—detached essays, having no intelligent connection with an ultimate or central scheme? With a finite intelligence such experiments would have been unavoidable; but Nature has served no apprenticeships; the end has been contemplated from the beginning.

There are two things which strike the attention of every one who studies the history of the ancient populations of our globe. First, their forms and features, their habits, and the details of their living, are often in wide contrast with any thing we behold at the present day. Secondly, while so peculiar in their *details*, their *fundamental* features are *identical* with those of existing animals, so that we call them by the same generic titles—corals, shells, crustaceans. And if we scan the long line of being from the Laurentian to the present, we shall find nothing which may not be embraced under the most general designations which we apply to existing animals.

Now which of these two features of the fossil world is most instructive? Their wild and extravagant forms astonish us, and attract the curiosity of the marvel-loving