

the forms reproduced. These examples tend to show that the imperfection of the record may not depend on the record itself, but on the incompleteness of our work. We must make large allowance for imperfect collecting, and especially for the too prevalent habit of remaining content with few and incomplete specimens, and of grudging the time and labour necessary to explore thoroughly the contents of special beds, and to work out all the parts of forms found more or less in fragments.

The point of all this at present is that patient work is needed to fill up the breaks in our record. A collector passing along the shore at Metis might have picked up a fragment of a fossil sponge, and recorded it as a fossil, or possibly described the fragment. This fact alone would have been valuable, but to make it bear its full fruit it was necessary to trace the fragment to its source, and then to spend time and labour in extracting from the stubborn rock the story it had to tell. Instances of this kind crowd on my memory as coming within my own experience and observation. It is hopeful to think that the record is daily becoming less imperfect; it is stimulating to know that so much is only waiting for investigation. The history never can be absolutely complete. Practically, to us it is infinite. Yet every series of facts known may be complete in itself for certain purposes, however many gaps there may be in the story. Even if we cannot find a continuous series between the snails of the Coal formation or the sponges of the Quebec Group and their successors to-day, we can at least see that they are identical in plan and structure, and can note the differences of detail which fitted them for their places in the ancient or the modern world. Nor need we be too discontented if the order of succession, such as it is, does not exactly square with some theories we may have formed. Perhaps it may in the end lead us to greater and better truths.

Another subject which merits attention here is the evidence which mere markings or other indications may sometimes give