

would talk to him about them, their origin and their uses. Late in life Werner could vividly recall the very minerals that were the playthings of his childhood—various ores and spars, as well as some varieties of which his father did not know the names. When he could read, his favourite books were lexicons of mining and manufactures, wherein he specially selected the articles on mineralogy. His tendencies, thus early shown, were further fostered by his father, who in hours of leisure would entertain him with stories of the mines.

In his tenth year the boy went to school at the old fortified town of Bunzlau in Silesia, and after a few years returned in 1764 to assist his father and become controller of the smelting houses at Wehrau. But the aspirations he had formed to devote himself to minerals seem at last to have grown too strong to be resisted, so that after doing his duty at the foundries for five years, he resolved to betake himself in 1769 to the Mining Academy of Freiberg, which had been founded two years before, and of the attractions of which he had no doubt heard much. Amid what was there thoroughly congenial to him, he threw himself with enthusiasm into the work of the school, not only availing himself of all the formal instruction in the art of mining to be had from the teachers, but visiting all the chief Saxon mines, especially those of most importance in the Freiberg district, descending the shafts, joining in the manual labour of the miners, and thus making himself master of the whole art of mining, below ground as well as above. His zeal and capacity were soon recognized