

knowing more than he knew himself, he soon picked up much knowledge of that wonderful history of the earth, which may be read in its rocks and soils.

6. In due time he entered the college, and though he was proud to put on the scarlet gown then worn by the students of Pictou, he was even more delighted to have the privilege of using the books in the library and the specimens in the museum. Besides studying Greek, Latin, and the other subjects of the regular course, he took as many extra lessons as possible. These covered a wide variety of subjects. He studied drawing and elocution with teachers who came for a time to his native town. He also learned the art of preparing specimens of birds and insects for the museum. Later, at a time when he thought of becoming a minister of the gospel, he studied Hebrew.

7. When only fifteen he was sent by his father on business to Boston, and this first long journey—made by stage-coach and sailing vessel—was, of course, an event to be remembered. By visiting different collections in Boston, William added something to his knowledge of natural history, but probably this trip to the great city was of less interest to the young geologist than a long, delightful day he spent alone amongst the strange coast-cliffs of Cumberland Bay. Here he saw different kinds of rock resting one upon another in clearly marked strata, and amongst them were beds of coal, fossil plants, and sandstone “casts” of extinct trees.

8. In the year following his visit to Boston he delivered his first scientific lecture before the Literary and Scientific Association of Pictou. He had already, however, often taken part in the debates of this society.