

As the strata of the earth preserve in rows the beings which lived in former times, so do the shelves of a library preserve in a like manner the errors of the past and expositions concerning them. Like those creatures, they too were full of life in their time and made a great deal of noise; but now they are stiff and fossilised, and only of interest to the literary palaeontologist.

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According to Herodotus, Xerxes wept at the sight of his army, which was too extensive for him to scan, at the thought that a hundred years hence not one of all these would be alive. Who would not weep at the thought in looking over a big catalogue that of all these books not one will be in existence in ten years' time?