
Record of the Rocks. *H. G. Richards.* The Ronald Press Company, New York. 1953. xiii + 413 pp. \$6.00.

The regional emphasis of this book is for the benefit of students of "general geology, . . . and local and field geology". The extensive treatment of the post-Paleozoic rocks of the Coastal Plain is intended to augment the reference value of the book. It is really a textbook of historical geology, of the orthodox form, with an unusually extended introductory section on rocks, time, stratigraphic interpretation, movements of land and sea, etc. This section is generally good, and especially so in the recognition of the arbitrary nature of period and era boundaries. The stratigraphic taxonomy shows little similarity to current practice, however "System" is used for both whole periods and parts of periods, and "series" is a unit intermediate between formation and group. The section on plant and animal classification includes too many names for the beginner and not enough descriptive detail for the advanced student: e.g., *Conularida* are listed, not illustrated, and described only as possessing "a thin shell and transverse septae". The digrammatic treatment of the hypotheses of earth origin is unusually good, but 1953 is too late a date to skimp on the exposition of the post-1940 hypotheses. The chapters on the several periods emphasize the aspect of a stratigraphic catalog, and include abundant formation and fossil names. This serves the reference purpose of the book, but provides only a slough of despair for the common student in a course in historical geology. Captions for the numerous fossil plates mix binomials, suprageneric names, and anglicized equivalents. The book contains a wealth of expository material on the eastern United States, but much of it in rather an outline form. In fact, the book reads rather like the lecture notes taken by a student; the suggestive key words and phrases are there, but by themselves they do not constitute descriptive text, and, filled out, they would represent professional specialization in the geology of the eastern United States. As a reference work for the professional this book is probably insufficiently specific. As a reference work for the amateur it is probably excellent. As a textbook administered whole it is likely to suffocate the student, and, if used only as a source to supplement lectures in historical geology, it is too provincial.

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