



## Correspondence

## \* and Contributed.

## Our Language.

In this present age when life is at such a rush that there is just time enough to breathe in fulfilling our daily avocations, not much attention is given by the average citizen to refinement of thought and language. This fact is forced upon us more and more each day as we look at our daily journals or listen to the speech of the ordinary business man. Who cares, for instance, how beautiful and correct an advertisement appears as long as it reveals the truth or obtrudes the truth before the eyes of all. And yet, is there so little in a mere advertisement? Apparently not, for some large business houses have built up their name and fortune by judicious, pleasing, and beautifully expressed language in newspapers. If this be true then in the most trifling affairs, is it not much more so in our periodical literature? If we understand the position of our periodicals it is to educate the people, and not merely this, but to do so in a pleasing manner; still, articles appear before us constantly which may contribute largely to our mirth and even stir our intellect, yet they are often marred by language ungrammatically expressed and by thoughts written in a coarse and clumsy way.

Are we writing to please or instruct, or are we trying to force ourselves on the public, courting notoriety and so revealing strongly the lowness of our natures? Do we not know that the best of everything is sure to last longest? Compare the works of Abraham Cowley with some of our 19th century novelists. Have we the depth of thought, beauty of language and purity of speech in the latter that we possess in the former? We feared not. How then did he and how shall we obtain this purity of thought and beauty of speech? By going to richest stores of literature and by spurning the trivial trash poured forth every day as language too vulgar, crude, and unchaste for the developing of the intellectual mind. Perhaps no line of literature has suffered so much in impurity of language—by this is meant violation of etymology and correctness (purity) of speech—as fiction. Science has been championed by our ablest and best educated men. Notice Lyell's Geology, Dr. Carpenter's Mental Physiology, Huxley's Physiology, or Darwin's works.

Would science have the hold on the public mind which it has at present if its literature had been of an inferior kind? Most certainly not, for its devotees would be filled with disgust and readily give up the study.

Let us then at all times advocate loftiness and purity of speech, and if we are at a loss for a guide what better book can we have than the grand old Bible, a book recognized by all critics of literature as the finest work in our English tongue.

PERCY MAX.

## Progress of Life and Length of Geological Time.

We are now assured through the researches of eminent scientists that the time intervening, between the period when the earth was in a nebular state to where authentic history begins, was of almost immeasurable length. Many no doubt will ask what

proof there is for this assertion; to those we would answer three men through long years of research and study have accumulated evidence which goes to prove that the earth has passed through several different stages of development and changes that are clearly defined in layers of rocks, which are by some termed "the eternal leaves of history." By these leaves, or the rock masses of which they are composed, we are enabled to judge time with a fair amount of accuracy by comparing them with a rock disintegration and soil formation within the period embraced in man's history. Among the most notable of these are the Niagara Falls and the Coral reefs. The former has made a gorge six miles in length, which, at the present rate of retrogression, viz: One foot per year, would take 31,000 years to accomplish. But this does not give us a very satisfactory answer to the question of time, for evidences are forthcoming to prove that the waters of the great lakes went out by way of the Mississippi River, so that at some period long ago there must have been an immense rift in the rock through which the St. Lawrence now flows, and only since then would the Niagara act as a gauge of time.

We have still another register in which is recorded the evidence of centuries, viz: The Coral reefs, the rate of whose increase is about one-sixteenth of an inch per year. The thickness that some of these have attained is 2,000 feet; therefore, at the present rate of increase, it would take 31,000 years for them to accumulate. That these are fairly accurate we may judge from the fact that the great depression or the sea bottoms and the elevated lakes or continents have always maintained much the same position which they now occupy.

The record of time as deciphered in the rocks by that eminent scientist, Sir Wm. Thompson, is 100,000,000 of years, which no doubt is accurate enough for all ordinary purposes.

I have omitted the rock layers considering that you would deem them hard subjects. Next let us consider what has been adduced to substantiate our heading, viz: The "Progress of Life." The first life or germ is thought to have originated in the Archean age, or the beginning of the Paleozoic, and was of the most simple form. The Rhizopod, the first among animals, without limbs, without any sense beyond the general sense of feeling, no stomach, no respiratory system, nothing, but a mere protoplasmic mass; such, we have reason to believe was the beginning of life, from this small beginning we can note the gradual development or progress of life, from the one called Rhizopod up through long ages in successive periods during which different creatures held sway to the present, where we find man, the last limit to which the law of cephalization can be carried in the system of life. Condensation anteriorly and abbreviation posteriorly is the law of all progress in embryonic development. Thus man stands at the head of all vertebrates in having only the posterior limbs required for locomotion, the anterior having higher uses, viz: the worship of his God, and also in having the head most compacted in structure and brought into the least compass consistent with the amount of brain. The idea of system in all structure and of progress through the ages, under laws of specialization and cephalization according to a scheme that may be compared to the opening of a flower, or the development of a germ, instead of being æsthetic, it is the only view of the history of life that is consistent with its Divine origin. Were there no such order or succession, no such unity of law and structure, this would be complete demonstration that a being of infinite wisdom had not ordered or controlled events.