

are absolutely meaningless, but to you and to me they testify of things that have gone, of seething waves of fire, of terrible energies, of luxurious vegetation. We know that agencies have been at work, guided by unfaltering law, which have shaped the universe.

With equal assurance can we say that human speech is a result of law. It is a gradual evolution, a differentiating, a development similar to the development of the embryo within the egg, it is exemplified in all progress; in the growth of society, government, commerce, language. Although we do not claim to penetrate to the ultimate starting point and fix the very first sounds uttered by human tongue, we do claim that a monosyllabic form of language must of necessity have been the first; i. e., primitive words must have consisted of one vowel joined to one or more consonants. A, u, i, seem to have been the first vowels, from the various combinations of which others are derived; au equals o, ai e, etc. Perhaps these were uttered in imitation of some animal and it seems more than likely that this, the "bow wow" theory, as some contemptuously call it, along with the exclamation or "pooh pooh" theory, furnish the key to the origin of speech.

Let us understand this. The first of these views implies, that man, having vocal organs, exercised them in imitating sounds around him. He; heard a cuckoo, noticed its peculiar cry; his fellow-being doing the same, the sound cuckoo became at once the name of the bird. Repeating the sound to each other would recall the picture, the impression, and thus their vocabulary would have a beginning.

Again take such words as buzz, whiz, splash, cling, clang, gurgle, gargle, etc., and you will at once see the close connection between the word and the object. They coincide in a remarkable degree.

I have given these words for illustration. It is not said that we can account for all words by this method, but speech evidently might originate, could originate

in this manner. For there is no possible ground to think that any name was given to any object whatever, which did not describe or limit it in some way, just as cuckoo describes the bird, just as moon, mund, men, mouth, monat, mind, man and a host of derivations, date back to the root ma meaning to measure.

Still this would only account for demonstrative roots or the names of objects; we must suppose that signs and emotions expressed our verbs. This indeed seems certain. It is past all reasonable question that in the earliest communication between human beings, gestures played a considerable if not the most important part, and only gradually was this mode supplanted by spoken signs.

Even now with the highly developed far-reaching resources in our vocabulary we employ gestures, with remarkable effect; whole sentences are expressed by a single gesture, and sometimes more eloquently than with words because the meaning would flash upon the mind instantaneously.

In addition to this, exclamations, such as oh, ah, when pain is born or any similar expression uttered under various circumstances, would naturally supply some roots; these exclamations, I may remark in passing, are the same in all languages.

This, I confess, is the most difficult part of our inquiries, the one we cannot absolutely prove, hence analogical reasoning must be our guide and this is trustworthy. The causes which change and modify language to-day existed always. This tendency to diverge is plainly seen, its only check is, the necessity of mental understanding, that alone prevents too great a departure.

Taking this for granted that either of these theories would lead us to the starting point of human speech, the way becomes less cumbrous, and direct evidence in regard to the growth and differentiation of language can be supplied. This growth we will trace at another time; it is sufficient now to bear in mind that the