the slope. At one place I found that the crest of a ripple mark was cut by a small transverse channel draining the basin above the mark into the one below. Such a small channel must have been formed by an antecedent stream, that is, one in operation and maintaining its course across the rising fold as it emerged from the ocean. Such a river is the Green River described by Powell.

In a word we seem to have in these small ripple mark basins that I have described an epitome of the destruction of continents, of the formation of the continental shelf and the evolution of geographic form as brought about by subaerial denudation. The erosive work was particularly similar to that of an ordinary river because the water running down the slope was very slight in amount. The rills were not formed, as are ordinary rills, by the flowing back to the ocean of the water held in a considerable hollow of the beach. They were formed by the small amount of water held in the spongy material of the ripple marks and pulled down toward the hollows as the level of the water under the surface lowered with the receding tide. The amount of water thus being less than usual in the formation of rill marks, the process was slower and the result more delicate and more similar to ordinary subaerial erosion.

In was interesting to note that the erosion took place only on the seaward side of the ripple marks and the shoreward sides were left undissected. The reason for this seems to be that the water held in the sands was pulled vertically down by gravitative action and hence was drawn through between the particles of the beach deposit toward the next hollow on the seaward side. In this respect only, as far as I could see, did these small streams differ from the streams on a similar constructional slope in the more consolidated rocks of the continents.

It would seem from this instance and others that have been called to my attention from time to time that nowhere do we have such a chance to study dynamical geology in operation on a small scale as at the sea shore. Apart from the work of the ocean itself there are a large number of things similar to what I have mentioned above that are worthy of careful attention, even though they be small. One thing especially that can be studied to great profit at this time of the year is the shore work of frost and ice. I feel that our ocean shores have not been studied in sufficient detail in the past, and I am sure that no better place can be found to show erosive processes in their entirety than the sea shore at low tide.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

***Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as a proof of good faith.

On request in advance, one hundred copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

ANOTHER ROPE OF MAGGOTS.

THE note by Mr. Lynds Jones in *Science* of December 29 recalls a similar observation by myself. I was hastening to a train and observed a rope of maggots, such as is described by Mr. Jones, crossing my path, which I at first took to be the skin of a snake. It was on what is called the Gully Road in Newark, N. J., and the maggots were crossing the path from the gully of the road. I kicked it and noticed that the maggots appeared to be clinging to each other, so that they separated in flakes. I had not time to look, but I presumed that they were moving away from a carcass which had been exhausted. A year later along the same road I noticed in the gully the body of a dog which was being consumed by maggots, but I observed, when the food was exhausted, that they moved down the rocky gully not in a rope, but one by one, and scattered along, slender and emaciated, for a distance of perhaps fifty feet. WILLIAM HAYES WARD.

New York, Jan. 12, 1894.

SECRET LANGUAGE OF CHILDREN.

MR. OSCAR CHRISMAN'S article in *Science* of Dec. 1, 1893, recalls to my mind the "Hog Latin" that I and my school-boy companions used to use, and by means of which we were able to carry on conversations which were altogether unintelligible to our parents and teachers.

Our "Hog Latin" was formed by transferring the first consonant sound of a word to the end of the word, and then adding long *a*, as in the words doubt = oubt-da, book = ook-ba, house = ouse-ha.

Long words were sometimes split up into syllables, and these syllables treated as shorter words, as: Language = angla-agegwa, suspect = us-sa-ect-spa. This language was defective in that it did not sufficiently disguise those words which begin with a vowel, as: Are = are-a, either = either-a, any = any-a. We used to get around that by avoiding the word I; using *me* instead, or by placing the accent in the wrong place, as: Either-a, calling it *ee*-thra.

I remember that I learned to use the language in a day or two, and after a short time did not have to stop to think how to make a new word, but was guided by the sound entirely.

A couple of sentences will suffice to explain the language:

Where are you going this morning? *Ere-wha are-a oo-ya oing-ga is-tha orning-ma?*

When this language is spoken rapidly it is difficult for those not in the secret to catch what is said. *En-wha is-tha ang-la-edge-gwa is-a oken-spa apid-ra-e-la it-a is-a iffi-da-ult-ca or-fa ose-tha ot-na in-a e-tha e-sa-et-cra oo-ta atch-ca ot-wha is-a ed-sa.* D. T. MARSHALL.

Metuchen, N. J.

NOTES ON WATER LILIES, ETC.

J. E. TODD in *Science*, No. 567, mentions a "miniature water lily." Another variety of a very small water lily grows at Hyannis Port, Mass., in a long abandoned mill pond. None other of the numerous ponds in that locality, where water lilies grow abundantly, possesses this small and beautiful variety. The blossom is an exact copy of *Nymphea odorata*, and is but one-half inch in diameter; the leaves also, in shape, color and venation, are like those of *N. odorata*, and are but one and a half inch in full diameter. I did not look up the plant last summer, but had found it for several years before, and will search for it when I return to the shore.

Several notes on "coon-cats," etc., recalled to me a very large black and white tom cat, at Hyannis Port, a notable mouser, having the peculiarity of *double fore feet*. All the feet of this animal are particularly large and strong, and on the outer side of each fore foot grows a second paw more than half as large as the normal one. This cat was a vigorous digger; to effect entrance to a basement under my porch, he dug a large hole at an angle of 45° and about eighteen inches deep, passing under the boarding, and large enough for him to crawl