

under call is one *awake to the state of the world that now is*. I shall speak soon upon what is indestructible and unchangeable while man is man, but at present let me say that we shall betray ourselves as having anything but the spirit of the sons of Issachar, if we do not express our understanding of our own times, in our counsel to our own Israel, on what to do. The church of Christ has not passed this way before; she has therefore to lead her religious life amidst new surroundings; and, if her ministers do not recognize this, how shall they instruct the people to be religious, in the new religious circumstances?

Theologians may have some good hints on how to take this changing world—for changing *it* is, as everybody knows—from their brethren of the literary guild, who think *they* have reason to lament the disillusionizing processes of the last sixty years. Says a judicious and Christian critic (Delta—*D. M. Moir*). “I shrewdly doubt whether ‘Marmion’ or ‘Childe Harold’ would even now be hailed, as we delight to know they were hailed, sixty years ago. Still I do not despair of poetry ultimately recovering from the staggering blows which science has inflicted in the shape of steam conveyance, electro-magnetism, geological exposition, political economy, statistics; in fact, by a series of disenchantments. Original genius in due time must form out of new elements new combinations; and these may be at least what the kaleidoscope is to the rainbow, or an explosion of hydrogen in the gasometer is to a flash of lightning on the hills. In the foamy seas we need never more expect to see Proteus leading out his flocks; nor in the dimpling stream another Narcissus admiring his own fair face; nor Diana again descending on Latmos to Endymion. We cannot hope for another Una, making ‘a sunshine in a shady place,’ nor another Macbeth, meeting witches on the blasted heath; nor another Faust, wandering amid the mysterious sights and sounds of another May-day night. Robin Hoods and Rob Roys are incompatible with sheriffs and the county police. Rocks are now stratified by geologists as exactly as satins are measured by mercers; and Echo, now no longer a vagrant classic nymph, is compelled quietly to submit to the laws of acoustics.”

But upon what does our lively critic fall back for his new combinations under the new conditions of his favourite branch of *Belles Lettres*? On the elements of poetry in the immutable principles of our nature. Certainly. On what else? While men breathe there will ever be room for a new Shakespeare and a new Scott. The passing away of the old form is not the total loss of the old thing. This world has as much in it as ever it had, and more; and he shows but a faint faith in the world’s Maker or His modes of management who sighs over the disillusionings of his own day, as if they argued a loss of like enjoyment or profit, in other forms, to other minds thus made ready for other things. Nor is literature alone in this experience. Medicine has lost, if loss it is to be called, in like changes. “It has lost alchemy, incantation, and cure by the royal touch. Law has lost trial by wager of battle, the ordeal by touch, and the mysterious confessions of witchcraft. Yet who would not be tried by law as it is than by what it was”—though an eminent judge not many years ago said “that since evidence under torture was not procurable, he did not see how trials for high treason could be properly conducted.”

Theology has had to take a share of these losses, so-called. She has lost certain verbal excellencies, so some ancient men in Hebrew philology maintain; by losing the unpointed text, for instance, though the wonder to most of us is how Hebrew was ever read without the points. Formerly Hebrew pronunciation was traditional, now it is scientific; yet *Aleph* begins the alphabet still, and *Tau* ends it. Theology, within living memories, has lost the power to explain certain texts as they were once explained. She has to look at the Scriptures through improved spectacles; travel, discovery, new power of critical judgment, all have affected her. And yet a consensus of even conservative opinion grants that, upon the whole, the gains are clear, the real losses but dimly perceived, and consisting of what is of decreasing value to those born into the world as it now is. To fail to recognize this is to be literally “behind the times,” and in