

All these things will take time. On the whole, it may be safely asserted that for another half-century at least the time will not be ripe for a successful Old Testament revision.

IV.

Nineteenth Century Massoretes.

Under these circumstances, the revisers adopted a safe middle course. In cases of evident mistakes in the "Old Hebrew Documents," or of very plausible readings in the "Other Old Documents," they acted as did the old Massoretic revisers long ago—merely give the correction a place in the margin, only in very rare cases indeed making changes in the text. The reader will easily understand that the circumstances which necessitated this cautious procedure must considerably lessen the value of the Old Testament revision for our purpose as an illustration of Biblical criticism. For a good illustration it would be requisite that the "Hebrew Documents" should be freely open to correction, and that the "Other Old Documents," the instruments of that correction, should be in proper condition for accomplishing their task.

However, by carefully selecting our specimens for examination, we shall probably make it answer sufficiently for our purpose.