LEONARD BLOOMFIELD ON SOUND CHANGE

Leonard Bloomfield 1925 (‘On the sound-system of Central Algonquian’, *Language* 1.130-156), an immortal statement about the regularity of sound change:

‘I hope, also, to dispose of the notion that the usual processes of linguistic change are suspended on the American continent (Meillet and Cohen, *Les langues du monde*, Paris 1924, p. 9). If there exists anywhere a language in which these processes do not occur (sound-change independent of meaning, analogic change, etc.), then they will not explain the history of Indo-European or of any other language. A principle such as the regularity of phonetic change is not part of the specific tradition handed on to each new speaker of a given language, but is either a universal trait of human speech or nothing at all, an error.’ (p. 130, n. 1)

Leonard Bloomfield 1928 (‘A note on sound-change’, *Language* 4.99-100), a further endorsement of the notion of regular sound-change:

‘The postulate of sound-change without exceptions will probably always remain a mere assumption … As an assumption, however, this postulate yields, as a matter of mere routine, predictions which otherwise would be impossible. In other words, the statement that … sound-changes have no exceptions … is a tested hypothesis: in so far as one may speak of such a thing, it is a proved truth.’ (p. 100)