

letters assail slavery and whatever was at that time associated with the system. For example, the slave-holders, with a view to increase their representation in Congress, agitated for a forcible annexation of a part of Mexico and its conversion into slave states. This agitation led to the Mexican war of 1845. Hosea's first letter appears on the occasion of his being solicited by a recruiting sergeant to join the army against Mexico. The sergeant represented to him that if the war were unjust the Government would be responsible for the wrong done; to whom Hosea replies:—

'Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Gov'ment ain't to answer for it,
God 'll send the bill to you.

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy
Wether I'd be such a goose
Ez to jine ye,—guess you'd fancy
The eternal being wuz loose!

Mr. Wilbur adds—

'The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it!'

The Mexican war also called forth the most famous letter of the series. It is entitled 'What Mr. Robinson Thinks.' Shortly after its appearance it was quoted by Mr. Bright in the British House of Commons and laid the foundation of Mr. Lowell's present immense popularity in Great Britain. It was written during the excitement preceding an election to the governorship of the State of Massachusetts. The question at issue between the two parties was the war with Mexico. The war party were carrying the day and Colonel Cushing, their candidate, would most certainly have been elected had it not been for the appearance of this letter of Hosea's in the *Boston Courier*. It exposed the injustice and the unchristian nature of the war and the immoral and selfish aims of its promoters, and this so effectually that the war party was defeated by a large majority. There is, I believe, no better illustration of the fact that wit is a moral agency of tremendous power. The voters who could not be influenced by the ordinary declamation against the war were carried irresistibly by the witty letter.

We were gettin on nicely up here to our village,
With good old ideas o' wut's right an' wut aint;
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an' pillage,
An' thet epyletts worn't the best mark of a saint;
But John P
Robinson he

Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

Parson Wilbur he calls all (their) arguments lies;
Sez they're nothin' on earth but jest *fee, faw, fum*;
An' thet all this big talk of our destinies
Is half on it ignorance, an' t'other half rum;

But John P
Robinson he

Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course, so must we.

The Rev. Homer Wilbur's notes derive a peculiar force from their quaint style and pedantic phraseology, and from the charming simplicity of manner in which entirely incongruous subjects are connected in his discourse. That the old gentleman was an exceedingly shrewd observer is evident from his remarks.

'In reading the Congressional debates, I made the discovery that *nothing* takes longer in the saying than anything else, for as *ex nihilo nihil fit*, so from one polypus nothing any number of similar ones may be produced. It has not seldom occurred to me that Babel was the first congress, the earliest mill erected for the manufacture of gabble!'

Mr. Wilbur expresses himself very vigorously on the question of the toleration of evil:

'There is a point where toleration sinks into sheer baseness and profligacy. The toleration of the worst leads us to look on what is barely better as good enough, and to worship what is only moderately good. Woe to that man, or that nation to whom mediocrity has become an ideal!'

In his next letter, 'The Pious Editor's Creed,' Hosea cuts with an unmerciful lash the American political editors of his time. It is to be regretted that his remarks have force in Canada even to-day.

'I don't believe in princerples
But, O, I du in interest,

I do believe in bein' this
Or thet, ez it may happen
One way or t'other handiest is
To ketch the people nappin';
It aint by princerples or men
My prudent course is steadied,
I scent which pays the best, an' then
Go into it baldheaded."

Mr. Lowell especially excels when exposing the falseness and hollowness of military glory. He does this most effectively in the form of three epistles from Mr. Sawin, who had been enticed to volunteer into the army operating in Mexico, by promises of fame and riches to be gained in the war. In these letters he describes his exceedingly disagreeable experiences.

'This going where glory waits ye haint one agreeable feetur,
An' if it worn't fer wakin snakes, I'd home again short meter.
The Mexicans don't fight fair, they piz'n all the water,
An' du amazin' lots o' things thet isn't wut they ought to;
Bein' they haint no lead they make their bullets out o' copper,
An' shoot the d—rn—d things at us, which Caleb sez aint proper.'

Mr. Wilbur remarks that 'Satan did not lack attorneys to advocate the Mexican war as for the spreading of free institutions and of Protestantism. But Mr. Wilbur conceives that if the people of the United States could be apprised by some system of direct taxation of the exact way in which the war-tax contributed by each was expended it would probably lead to greater economy in the national expenditure. Says he 'During the present fall I have often pictured to myself a government official entering my study and handing me the following bill:

Washington, Sept. 30, 1848.

REV. HOMER WILBUR TO UNCLE SAMUEL, DR.

To his share of work done in Mexico on partnership account, sundry jobs, as below:

To killing, maiming, and wounding about 500 Mexicans.....	\$2 00
" Slaughtering one woman carrying water to the wounded.....	10
" Extra work on two different Sabbaths (one bombardment and one assault) whereby the Mexicans were prevented from defiling themselves with the idolatries of high mass	3 50
" Throwing an especially fortunate and Protestant bombshell into the cathedral at Vera Cruz, whereby several female Papists were slain at the altar.....	50
" His proportion of cash paid for conquered territory	1 75
" " " " for conquering " "	1 50
" Extending the area of freedom and Protestantism	01
" Glory.....	10
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	\$9 87

Immediate payment is requested.

—A. STEVENSON.

REMARKS SUGGESTED BY SHAKESPEARE'S 'TEMPEST.'

With those who attempt to find allegorical meanings in the master-works of our men of genius, or to exhibit them as illustrating some leading ethical idea, we have no sympathy. The true ethical work of literature seems rather to consist in the gradual and almost imperceptible inworking of the spirit of its finest creations. As the mind is brought to love noble characters, personifications of truth and beauty, so it learns to love and act out the true and the beautiful. But the desire to find moral significance in each work of art, since it prevents the mind from becoming absorbed in the emotional element in which the artist works, and through which he alone seeks to aid our mental growth, has no other effect than a tendency to ruin that moral education, which the work should properly produce. No great imaginative work was ever written with a direct ethical aim. Didactic poetry is a contradiction in terms. If we have, then, a great drama or a great novel, we must try to appreciate it as such, convinced, in the words of the master-mind of the last two centuries, that 'everything great produces culture immediately we become aware of it.'

With any attempt to see in the 'Tempest,' for example, an allegory in which *Ariel* is the spirit, and *Caliban* the corporal part of man, we have nothing to do. Just as we ruin the 'Fairy