

Remarks  
on  
Mr. Motley's Letter

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REMARKS

ON

MR. MOTLEY'S LETTER

IN THE

LONDON TIMES

ON THE

WAR IN AMERICA.



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## REVIEW OF MOTLEY'S LETTER.

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Mr. Motley, the historian, addressed a letter, a few weeks since, to the London Times, "on the causes of the American civil war." The letter was a great success. It made the writer an ambassador. He is now minister for the United States at the Court of Vienna. The pay followed closely on the service; so closely that there must have been a previous understanding, a contract of purchase and sale, between the clever recruit and the despotism in Washington. No venal pen before has ever been so speedily and amply rewarded. Whether the letter adds anything to the author's honors as a writer or a man, is much more doubtful.

Mr. Motley begins with a gentle appeal *ad misericordiam*. The people of England, he complains, are in too great haste to believe in the downfall of the "Great Republic." They have been too willing to *accept the fact*. He seeks comfort in the "Tristia" of Ovid, and quotes, in a tone of tender upbraiding, "the plaintive language of the poet:"

"Donnee eris felix, multos numerabis amicos,  
Tempora cum fuerent nubila, nullus erit."

The lines, freely translated, may mean: The Northern States have invaded the South with fire and sword, and England, alas! gives the assailants neither men, money, nor sympathy.

Can the people of England do otherwise than accept what everybody has accepted? Can they fail to observe a fact that is obvious as the sun at noonday, that takes the shape of a confederacy embracing eleven States, in a coun-

try almost as large as Europe, with President and Congress and courts and treasury and armies and victories — a fact that all perceive plainly except the men who have brought it about, and who, for that reason alone, refuse to see it? Mr. Motley says the end is uncertain: “the ordeal of battle is hardly commenced, and the result is unknown.” But whatever be the result, the “*Great Republic*” exists no longer. It can never be reconstructed. It would be as rational to believe that France and England may return to the union of five hundred years ago, as that the people of the North and South can live again under one Government. Every blow struck increases the mutual hatred. The season even for friendly commercial treaties is past already. Relations, political or social, with the Northern States, are now odious to Southern men. They will become more so as the war continues. This is what Mr. Motley calls the “*de facto*” side of the question. It is not a pleasant prospect for his employers; but it is one of their own making, and they must make the best of it.

Mr. Motley proceeds to answer a question put to him by European curiosity and surprise. Why, they ask, have the United States plunged into this “wicked war?” He reiterates the plausible but false pretences by which Lincoln and Seward succeeded in exciting the Northern people to arms. These pretences were a *reported threat* made somewhere, by somebody, that the Confederates would attack Washington; the necessity of defending the country’s capital; the duty to protect the honor of the national flag. But what was plausible in April, is plausible no longer. Time has stripped the falsehood of its mask. The Lincoln troops have been marched into Virginia. They have committed every possible outrage against decency, humanity, and the laws of civilized warfare. They have burned houses, wasted fields, murdered men, abused women, kept prisoners of war in chains, passed laws to confiscate property, and proclaimed a war of subjugation against the Southern States. The Confederates have made no attack on any part of the United States. They have



sought peace repeatedly, by every effort in their power. They are waging a defensive war only for the protection of their homes and their firesides, most wantonly and wickedly assailed.

Mr. Motley proceeds to discuss the question *de jure*, the question of right. The Southern States, he thinks, have no right to leave the Union. He arraigns them before the tribunal of the civilized world and of future ages, on a charge of *rebellion* against legitimate authority. The South accepts the appeal. It is not a rebellion. The very title of Mr. Motley's letter includes a misnomer. The conflict is not properly a "civil war." It is a war waged by one nation on another nation; by the Northern States on the Southern States. It is made by the assailants in defiance and contempt of all the received maxims of American liberty. It is instigated by a desire to retain bounties, monopolies, commercial agencies, commissions, freights, and the exclusive control of the Southern carrying trade. This is the true nature of the war, and these are its purposes. It is a war of wrong, carried on with infamous atrocities, for sinister and selfish ends. For these things, the Southern people in turn arraign the North as criminals before the civilized world.

Mr. Motley rests his whole case on the *assumption* that the Union is a commonwealth; the Government supreme; the States corporations, provinces, counties, and nothing more. He founds his assumption on statements of pretended historical facts. His statements of facts are false; his assumption therefore has no basis to support it; his conclusions consequently stand on nothing.

Mr. Motley assumes that the United States is "not a Confederacy, not a compact of States." He believes with his patron, Mr. Lincoln, that the Union made the States, not the States the Union. The Constitution, he declares, was "*not drawn up by the States.*" "*It was not ratified by the States.*" *The States never acceded to it, and possess no power to secede from it. It was established over the States by a power superior to the States—by the people of the whole land acting in*

*their aggregate capacity.* All parties, he declares, the friends and the foes of the Constitution, believed in 1788 that the Government was a consolidated government, and not a Confederacy. "Whether it were an advantageous or a noxious change, all agreed that the thing had been done." There is not a shadow of truth in any one of his assertions. It is impossible that Mr. Motley should not know the history of his own country. He has therefore made false statements of pretended facts, deliberately, to accomplish a political or selfish purpose.

Mr. Motley says the Constitution was not drawn up by the States. In May, 1787, the general Convention of States met in Philadelphia. It was called a Convention of the States. They were engaged until September in drawing up a Constitution. In every stage of their progress, on every article adopted, the vote was by States. The Constitution was signed when completed by the members, not individually, but as representatives of States.

Mr. Motley says, the Constitution was not ratified by States, but was imposed on them by the people of the whole land in their aggregate capacity. The Constitution was referred to the States severally in their State Conventions. These Conventions were conventions "of the people of the State of New York," "of the people of the State of Connecticut," "of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," so styled in their proceedings of ratification, each acting independently of all others, and uncontrolled by their decisions. The Constitution became the Government of every State that ratified it, and of no other. It succeeded in Virginia and New York after a desperate struggle only. Two States refused or neglected to adopt it, and were out of the Union for a year after the inauguration of the Government. If three more States had rejected the Constitution, it could not have been established. Eight States were not enough.

The Constitution, Mr. Motley says, is not a compact. In the Conventions of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, it is declared to be an explicit and solemn compact

made for the United States by the delegates of the United States, and it is ratified as such in the name and in behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and of the people of the State of New Hampshire.

Mr. Motley asserts that all parties, friends and foes, believed, in 1788, that the Government was a consolidation and not a confederacy. It would be as near the truth to say all parties agreed that the Government was a monarchy. It is only necessary to look into the records of the State Conventions to see the falsehood of Mr. Motley's assertion. In the Virginia Convention, the debate was continued for a month. Among the foes arrayed against the new Constitution, Patrick Henry was perhaps the most vehement and able. He made numerous speeches in the Virginia Convention against the proposed Government. He augured from it a hundred dangers of every sort. Among other objections, he charged it with being a consolidated Government. Mr. Motley quotes from one of Henry's speeches. But not a word is given by Mr. Motley of the replies. Did the friends of the Constitution agree with its foes as to this particular feature of the new Government, as Mr. Motley says they did? Did they admit the consolidation and defend it? Nothing like it! The friends repelled the imputation as a false and unfair charge of prejudiced enemies. Mr. LEE said: "Sir, he (Mr. Henry) tells us, this is a consolidated Government, and most feelingly does he dwell on the *imaginary dangers of this pretended consolidation*. If this were a consolidation, ought it not to be ratified by a majority of the people as individuals, and not as States? Suppose Virginia, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania had ratified the Constitution, these four States, being a majority of the people of America, by their adoption of the Constitution, would have made it binding on all the States. But it is binding on those States only that may adopt it. If the honorable gentleman will attend to this, we shall hear no more of consolidation."

The charge of consolidation rested on a phrase in the preamble of the Constitution, on the words, "We, the

people," of the United States. Mr. MADISON, the most prominent advocate of the Constitution, replies to Mr. Henry: "You consider the phrase 'We, the people,' as indicating consolidation. But who are the parties? The people; but not the people as composing one great body. It is the people *as composing thirteen sovereignties.*" In the Convention of Pennsylvania, Mr. WILSON, one of the ablest men of his day, says: "*The United States may adopt one of four systems. They may become consolidated into one Government. They may reject any plan of Union. They may form two or more Confederacies. They may unite in a Federal Republic.*" He rejects the first, a consolidated Government, *as involving unqualified and unremitted despotism.* He states objections to the second and third, and he advocates the fourth, the Federal Republic, as the most eligible system for the American States. In Massachusetts, Fisher Ames, a distinguished statesman, while insisting on the importance of the Senate as a part of the federal system, maintains that the Senators will be in *the quality of ambassadors of the States.* "*They will be a safeguard,*" he says, "*against consolidation, which would subvert the Constitution. Too much provision cannot be made against a consolidation. The State Governments represent the wishes and feelings of the people. They are the safeguards and ornament of the Constitution. They will protract the period of our liberties. They will be the natural avengers of violated rights.*"

We solicit the reader's special attention to the language of Mr. Ames. It is almost prophetic in reference to the dangers to be apprehended from consolidation and the solemn duties which the State Governments would perform in defending the "violated rights" of the people. Every one knows the character and position of ALEXANDER HAMILTON. He was the advocate of a strong Government. He wished for one stronger than the Government adopted. But he took the Constitution frankly as the best that could be got. In the New York Convention he calls the Government *a confederacy of States.* He declares that the State Governments will always command a controlling influence

with the people; that "The States can never lose their powers till the whole people of America are robbed of their liberties. They must go together; they must support each other or meet one common fate." He controverts, as "a curious sophistry," the opinion that the Federal Government is supreme, and the States subordinate. "The laws of the United States are supreme as to all their proper constitutional objects. *The laws of the States are supreme in the same way.*" Each is supreme in its sphere. We would ask Mr. Motley whether the great statesman and orator of New York considered the Constitution as a consolidated Government, the United States a commonwealth, and the States departments or counties?

Notwithstanding all the assurances and reasonings of such men as Hamilton, Ames, Madison, Wilson and Lee, that the Government was not consolidated, that it was a confederacy of States, the foes of the Constitution were dissatisfied and suspicious. To remove suspicious and satisfy all doubts, amendments were proposed for additional security, and every effort was made by the friends of the Constitution to allay what they continued to believe groundless and unreasonable alarm. Of these amendments, the most important declares that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States are reserved to the States respectively or to the people." The foes of the Constitution were appeased. The Government was adopted and inaugurated under these circumstances. And yet, Mr. Motley, in the face of all this evidence, assures his English readers that all parties, friends and foes, agreed, in 1788, in believing the United States to be a commonwealth with supreme power, and the States nothing more, substantially, than counties are in England.

Let us see how Mr. Motley's assertions agree with the records to which we have referred. Mr. Motley says the Union is not a confederacy. Hamilton declares that the Government is a *confederacy of States*. Mr. Wilson describes it as a *Confederate Republic*. Mr. Motley says it is

not a compact; there are no parties; who ever heard of a compact, he asks, made by a single person with himself? Mr. Madison avers that, not a single person, but thirteen sovereignties were the parties; that the *Constitution was not made or established by the people as one body, but by the people of the States severally*. Massachusetts and New Hampshire call the Constitution an *explicit and solemn compact*. Mr. Motley insists that the Government is a consolidated commonwealth. Mr. Ames warns the people *to guard against consolidation; it would inevitably subvert the Constitution*. Mr. Motley says the States bear the same relation substantially to the United States as a county to England or a department to France. Mr. Hamilton says the States are supreme within their reserved rights, and Mr. Ames calls the State Governments the safeguards of the Constitution, the shelters from abused power, and the avengers of violated rights. Instead of asserting, as Mr. Motley asserts, that all parties, in 1788, agreed in the opinion he has imputed to them, it would be vastly nearer the truth to declare that it was admitted by universal consent, in 1788, that the Constitution ought not to be, was not, and should not be a consolidated government.

Mr. Motley covers up his sophistry under an ambiguous use of the word "States." When he says the Constitution was not ratified by the States, he means the *State Governments*—the *State Governments* did not ratify the constitution, the *State Governments* did not *accede* to the Union, and therefore cannot *secede* from it. All very true. But the State Governments are not the States. They are the creatures of the States. They may act as agents for their creators. They did so act in 1775. The Confederation of that time was a confederacy of State Governments acting for the States. The Constitution of 1787 was a confederacy of States acting directly for themselves. The State Governments did not ratify the Constitution, nor accede to it, but the States did. The State Governments cannot secede from the Union, but the States may. The people of the several States are the States.

The parties formed during the ratification of the Constitution continued after the inauguration of the Government. Its first opponents were watchful over its operations. The Federal party wishing to give strength to the Government as far as was consistent with its nature, desired to mould the action of the Government as nearly as possible in conformity with their peculiar views. Washington strove to neutralize his administration. He made Jefferson, who was the leader of one party, Secretary of State, and placed Hamilton, the chief of the other, at the head of the Treasury. The bitter personal disputes of the two Secretaries never ceased. They harassed the President beyond measure. He remonstrated, but in vain. Party hatred was so intense as to suspend all social intercourse between the members of the opposing factions. The Federal party when in power under Adams passed laws which were held by their opponents to be invasions of personal liberty and liberty of the press. When the Jefferson party came into power, in 1801, the obnoxious laws were repealed, and the fines imposed under them returned to the sufferers. In the meanwhile, appeals were threatened to the power of the States for protection against the usurped powers of the Federal Government. Again, during the war of 1812, the New England States assembled in Convention to defend their liberties and interests from what they deemed the oppressive measures of the general Government. What proceeding or plan was in preparation is unknown and is unimportant. It was an appeal of some kind to the State powers from those of the Government at Washington. All parties in turn were ready to look to the States as the safeguards of their liberties. And yet, in defiance of these facts of our history so familiar to all readers, Mr. Motley has the audacity to tell the European world that all parties acquiesced in his imaginary imperial Government until Mr. Calhoun's factious dialectics began to disturb the peace in his opposition to the tariff robberies of the Northern States.

The veracity of Mr. Motley seems to be borrowed from the Italian school of politicians, with which his historical

studies have made him familiar. His reasoning comes from a less ingenious quarter. He builds a whole theory of government on three words of a preamble—the words: “We the people.” The Indian philosopher’s device of setting the world on an elephant’s back is a much more sagacious project. The preamble is a mere straw for drowning politicians to catch at. It is a captious objection answered in the Virginia Convention by Madison and Lee. Their answer is conclusive. The history of the preamble is still more conclusive. It proves, in a very pointed manner, the danger, in State affairs, of indulging in vague, empty, rhetorical flourishes, instead of adhering closely to the sober language of truth. The history of the preamble is this: The general Convention of the States met on the 14th of May, 1787. On the 6th of August, after three months of deliberation, the committee appointed for the purpose reported a Constitution. The preamble reported was as follows: “We the people of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, do ordain, declare and establish the following Constitution for the government of ourselves and our posterity.” On the 7th of August, the question was put in the Convention, on the preamble as reported, and it was adopted *unanimously*. No suggestion of change in its language was ever made *in the Convention*, then or subsequently. The Constitution was fully discussed, various alterations were made in its details and some amendments offered. It was referred, on the 8th of September, to a committee of five, appointed to *revise the style and arrange the articles* agreed to by the House. The committee *on style* reported the Constitution as revised, polished and arranged, on the 12th of September. On the 17th, the Constitution was engrossed and signed. In the Constitution, as polished by the committee, the preamble was changed. It was thought that the long, clumsy enumeration of States was not euphonic. The committee, of their own motion, made the



preamble what it now is—"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility," etc. They contrived a fine introductory flourish, very ornamental, as they thought, to the instrument, and very useful certainly to gentlemen, like Mr. Motley, seeking advancement by literary services and willing to turn a rhetorical phrase into an argument. Not a word was said on the subject of the alteration. What Mr. Motley regards as a sufficient foundation for a theory of government was received by the Convention as a mere change in the diction of their preamble, too unimportant for particular attention or remark. They little imagined that it would be used for the purpose of turning their confederate republic into the consolidated government which they denounced as "unremitted despotism."

Mr. Motley admits that, "had the Union established in 1788 been a confederacy of States, it might be argued that the States which peaceably acceded might peaceably, at their pleasure, secede from the Union." The admission is fatal to his argument. It is as certain as any fact in history that the Union was meant by all parties to be a confederacy, and that each State peaceably acceded to it. It has been shown from the records that every leading advocate of the constitution declared it to be a confederacy of States. Ample amendments, eleven in number, were admitted to allay the fears and remove the doubts of all opponents. There is in the form of Government the strongest internal evidence that it is a confederacy—the structure of the Senate elected by the States as States; the apportionment of direct taxes among the States as States; the election of President by States in Congress when the election has failed before the people. But, independent of all this, there is one fact so broad, plain and irresistible as to set all dispute at defiance. The Federal Government was inaugurated in March, 1789. The States of North Carolina and Rhode Island were not members of it. They had not acceded to it. They were independent sovereign

States, so declared to be by the treaty of peace with England, not unitedly, but severally. They remained in this independent position, out of the Union, until 1790. What was the little State of Rhode Island in the interval between March, 1789, and May, 1790, an interval of more than a year? The United States Government claimed no authority over her. The confederation of the Revolution was dead. It had been ordained and established to be perpetual, and it lasted twelve years. For fifteen months Rhode Island stood alone, an independent State. In May, 1790, she *peaceably acceded* to the new Federal Government. Can Mr. Motley devise a fact more conclusive to prove that Rhode Island "peaceably acceded" to the Union? And has he not admitted that a State which peaceably accedes to the Union may peaceably, at pleasure, secede from it? Did he remember anything of Rhode Island and North Carolina when he ventured to assert that no State acceded to the Federal Government; that the Constitution was not ratified by the States; that it was imposed on them by the people of the whole land in their aggregate capacity? What reply can be made to such assertions but that they are boldly and impudently false.

There is yet another fact that Mr. Motley must accept. It is the prominent, insuperable fact that the States are existing, organized Governments; each one, as Hamilton says, supreme in the exercise of its legitimate powers. Each State has its executive, judicial, and legislative departments, its unlimited power of direct taxation, its militia armed, equipped and officered, of which the Governor of the State is the Commander-in-Chief. This is a stubborn fact that must be accepted. To tell his readers, as Mr. Motley ventures to do, that the State so constituted is a mere county, is to mock their understandings. The States are States, people, nations, having supreme power over their civil and domestic relations, and as independent, one of the other, within that limit, as they are of England and France. They are armed powers, and will protect the liberties of the States. To establish a Government such

as Mr. Motley assumes the Federal Government to be, it would become necessary to wipe out from American geography the boundaries of States, and to arrange the country under a new form. The plan was suggested in 1787, but it had no advocates. It found favor nowhere with any party in the convention.

Mr. Motley labors with more than common earnestness to persuade the people of England that there is some essential difference between the present action of the Southern States and that of the American colonies in the Revolutionary war. There is a difference certainly. In 1775, the colonies were British possessions. The people of the colonies were subjects of the British crown. The action of America was a rebellion. The American people were rebels. But the Southern States have never been possessions of the North. The Southern people are not subjects of New England and her partners. The withdrawing of the South from the Union is not a rebellion. The people of the Southern States are not rebels. If Mr. Motley will not accept this distinction, and will insist that we are subjects and rebels, then the only difference between the case of 1775 and that of 1861, is the old difference which *Æsop* illustrates in the fable of the lawyer, the countryman and the gored ox—it was John's Bull formerly, and now it is brother Jonathan's.

Mr. Motley professes to find a parallel between the United Kingdoms of Scotland and England and the United States of America. Admirable logician! There is no objection to the comparison, except that the objects compared are alike in nothing. To make them similar, each kingdom must be in full possession of its own Government, its king, lords and commons. Each must be independent of the other, except in relation to certain specified objects. They must be united in a common Government, sitting neither in London nor Edinburgh, and exercising limited, delegated powers only, in some common place. Then, suppose that these delegated powers were exceeded; that one party to the partnership was seeking to injure the

other: that the party oppressed determined to withdraw from the compact, then, and then only, we shall have a condition of things in Great Britain resembling that which exists in America. But, again, although the position of the two countries is dissimilar, still the union between England and Scotland is based on certain fundamental articles of a solemn compact. Suppose these articles violated: suppose that England should attempt to impose on Scotland a religion different from her form of faith, or that the English Parliament should refuse to admit to their seats the lords and commoners sent up from Scotland, and so deprive the sister kingdom of her whole representation, would the land of "William the Lion and Robert Bruce," submit to the outrage? Would it not justify an armed resistance on the part of the aggrieved power? Would such armed resistance be a sufficient reason, "before the tribunal of the civilized world," for England to declare a war of subjugation against Scotland, to march armies into her borders, and perpetrate every atrocity of arson, murder and rape, that the most lawless banditti are capable of committing?

Mr. Motley says, the term *sovereignty* is of feudal origin, and not applicable to our American institutions. There is sovereignty only where there are kings and princes, as in the old feudal monarchies of Scotland and England. It is a pity Mr. Motley would not carry his philology a little farther. The terms loyalty, allegiance, rebel, rebellion, so common in the mouths of the Lincoln faction, are equally of feudal origin and equally inapplicable to our American institutions. What does Mr. Motley mean when he talks of loyalty as due from a citizen of Virginia to Abraham Lincoln? What does he mean by "rebellion" applied to independent States? Can Virginia rebel against Massachusetts? The Southern people are rebels against whom? The term "rebel" is intelligible in the vocabulary of Lord North or his master, but what meaning has it from the lips of Mr. Seward or Mr. Lincoln? Is it the Federal Government that claims allegiance and loyalty, and against whom

the States are said to rebel? What is the Federal Government? It is the creature of the States. It lives by sufferance only. If the States merely kept back their Senators from Washington, the Government would cease to exist. The Federal authorities are the grantees of power, not the grantors: the employed, not the employers; the political agents, not the principals. And this grantee, this agent, claims loyalty from its masters. Abraham Lincoln demands allegiance from Georgia and Texas. Allegiance, loyalty, are for kings; rebellion, rebel, mark the relations of subjects. To apply them as the Northern people are applying must excite the world's laughter only.

It is for this reason that a new term, the term secession, has been used so freely. It grew out of the necessity for a new word to designate a new thing. Mr. Motley may insist, if he pleases, on calling the secession of a State from the Union rebellion, and the citizens of the seceding State rebels. He may go on to claim their loyalty and allegiance if he will. But it is evidently applying terms of one form of society to another form in which they have no signification. There is no resemblance between a State regularly organized declaring its independence against former partners, and a disorderly crowd of revolters asserting freedom against their rulers; between the citizens of a State obeying the State's decrees, and a band of insurgents acting on their own authority. To insist on confounding things so dissimilar by applying to them the same words and forms of language is simply ridiculous.

But if Mr. Motley will confound them, if he will call the action of the Southern States rebellion, we are willing to indulge him. Let it be rebellion. "*No man,*" he says, "*of Anglo-Saxon blood will dispute the right of a people or of any portion of a people to rise against oppression, and take up arms to vindicate the sacred principles of liberty.*" Least of all, can any man of America dispute the right of American citizens in its largest possible latitude. The right of rebellion against Government made the Colonies independent States in 1783. It has been proclaimed ever since in every possi-

ble shape as a sacred right never to be abandoned. It was clearly asserted in many of the State Conventions on the ratification of the Constitution. In the New York Convention, it was resolved unanimously, that *the powers of Government may be reassumed by the people whenever it shall become necessary to their happiness.* The declaration is repeated in the same words in the ratification of the Constitution by Rhode Island. The right to reassume, let it be observed, is claimed, not in cases of oppression only, but whenever in the judgment of the people, the resumption of the powers delegated to government shall be deemed necessary *to the happiness of the people.* In the exercise of this broad, undisputed right of rebellion, if Mr. Motley will call it rebellion, which belongs to every man of Anglo-Saxon descent; in the exercise of that especial right which appertains to every American by universal consent, and by the formal assertion, in the broadest form, of State Conventions when adopting the Constitution, we, the Southern States and people have abandoned forever a partnership that has grown odious and insupportable. We judge this proceeding to be *necessary to our happiness,* to the preservation of our interests and liberties, and we deny that, in so acting, we give any just cause of offence, far less of war, to any other State or people.

Mr. Motley's letter is a medley of the boldest assertion and the feeblest reasoning. We have given examples of both, and add one or two more of the last. The Latin motto, *e pluribus unum*, performs as distinguished a part in his logical exploits as the vernacular, "We, the people." He gives to the motto all the weight of a syllogism. He infers from it nothing less than that the United States Government is a consolidated commonwealth. The motto might very properly be adopted by a great commercial house of twenty partners, would we therefore be at liberty to conclude that the twenty partners were consolidated into a sort of man mountain like Gulliver in Lilliput, and that Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones had lost their individual existence? It is the "plures," the part-

ners, the States, that have a substantial existence; the "*Unum*," the Company, the Union, are abstractions dependent for daily existence on the parties who form them.

The phrase "*e pluribus unum*" has been criticised as bad Latin. I am no judge. But if it be, it is only the better fitted for the purposes to which Mr. Motley applies it. What can be more thoroughly suited to absurdities in reasoning than solicisms in language?

Mr. Motley has still another reason, equally significant, for believing the United States to be a consolidated government. It is that the "Great Republic" is known every where, the States no where. What man in the civilized world, he asks, has not heard of the United States; what man in England can tell the names of the individual States? This is very much such reasoning as a Hindoo may have used ten years ago to prove that the East India company was the ruling power in England. Who, he might have said to his countrymen, ever heard, in all the kingdoms of India, of John Bull; who feels his authority; who knows anything about him? It is not John Bull, it is John Company of whom we hear. John Company raises armies and conquers empires and disburses millions of gold. John Company is England. The Federal Government is our political agency for foreign nations. Of course they know the agent only, except on particular occasions. But these occasions sometimes arise. When England made demands on the United States in relation to certain regulations of foreign colored seamen in the ports of South Carolina, what was the reply? The reply was that it was a subject over which the State was supreme and the general Government without authority. Its hands were tied.

Mr. Motley quotes Burke as saying that "a State ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, to be taken up for a little temporary interest and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties." Certainly the State should "be looked upon with other reverence," but the

State is a partnership nevertheless. Especially is a Union of States such a partnership. It begins in mutual advantage, is continued for mutual advantage, and must cease when the mutual advantage ceases. It is the law of States, of humanity, from which there is no escape. It is idle to enact laws to be in force forever; if not repealed by other laws, time will repeal them. They become obsolete, a dead letter on the statute book. It is vain for Conventions to ordain a Constitution for endless posterities. Posterity will inevitably undertake to judge of its own interests for itself. In such dissolutions of partnership in States there will be inconvenience and damage to the parties. But that consideration never arrests the progress of events. Least of all is it ever permitted to one of the parties to plead his apprehensions of future loss or disaster as a reason with his retiring partners for not seeking their fortunes in their own way. The rule of each is his own welfare; the guide of each is his own judgment.

Mr. Motley becomes lugubrious at the close of his letter. He mourns over the loss by the "rebellion" of "immense territories" to the Union. By the *Union*, he means the *Northern States*—by the immense territories, the Southern country. It ought to console him to know that the territory remains in the possession of those to whom it rightfully belongs. He laments the damage to the North from being deprived of the natural boundary of the whole Southern maritime frontier. It will be very inconvenient. But even the French empire has been unable to keep natural or advantageous boundaries at the expense of its neighbors. He grieves at the short memory of the Southern people. "It was only when *the evils of disunion faded away in the past*," he says, "that the *allegiance* to the Union in certain regions of the country seemed rapidly to diminish." It is hard to say where the evils of disunion are to be found in our past history. The evils of the Union are obvious enough. They took the shape of bounties, monopolies, and systematic detraction. Mr. Motley confesses that the tariff system was an oppression on the South. He



admits that in the tariff controversy of 1831, which almost ended in secession, the South were right and the North wrong. Has the wrong ever ceased? Have the Northern States ever forbore for a moment to make the Southern people their dependents, by law, for every article of manufactured goods? We have escaped the burdens of the Morrill tariff only by escaping from the Union. Is this system of legal sectional plunder the single wrong or evil inflicted on the South by her Northern brethren, and patiently borne for many years from sincere attachment to the Union? Have not Northern politicians, and divines, and journalists, and authors of every description, reviled the character of the Southern people over all Europe, systematically, for many years? So successfully had they persuaded themselves, by their libels, to their great satisfaction and comfort, that the people of the South were in all respects utterly contemptible, that they were amazed, in the sharp refutation of their opinion, on the field of Manassas, to find they had men to fight against more than equal to themselves. This was Governor Sprague's confession to the people of Rhode Island. They went to war because they thought the conquest of the South would be an easy task. They ventured because they believed their opponents effeminate boasters and cowards. The work would be slight and the profit immense. They are grieved to find that they were mistaken in the calculation. The blood they have shed goes for nothing. It was not the *fading away of imaginary evils*, belonging to an apochryphal period of disunion, that has destroyed the unity of the Government and torn the Republic to pieces. It has been the insolence, arrogance, presumption and impudent intermeddling of the Northern people with matters in which they had no earthly concern. They had grown prosperous beyond their wildest hopes on the profits produced to them from Southern resources. They had waxed fatter than their exhibition pigs or prize oxen, and had been playing those unseemly tricks in the face of Heaven, which always go before a nation's downfall. They are now making war

on the Southern people under pitiful subterfuges and false pretences. Under the mask of patriotism they are seeking purely selfish ends, by means of atrocities more infamous than were ever witnessed before among civilized nations. They are rapidly arriving at the bitter conviction that they have lost wantonly, wickedly, stupidly, incalculable advantages that no craft, strength, or wisdom can ever regain. The suffering will fall on the laboring masses. Mr. Motley, and others like Mr. Motley—men who will live and fatten on the taxes wrung from the distresses of the people—find no evils to deplore in the war they are waging on the Southern people. The chiefs are unprincipled, unscrupulous adventurers. They will divide among themselves 400,000,000 of dollars, in every possible form of plunder, and the people will be deprived of their freedom and ground into dust. The whole story will supply an instructive commentary on written Constitutions and on parchment guarantees of personal liberty and the rights of property. The American people have relied on them as bands of iron to bind designing and ambitious demagogues; they have proven to be wisps of straw and ropes of sand.

One word remains to be said of Mr. Motley, the historian who relates the triumphant achievements of the Dutch people in asserting and establishing their liberties. His whole work of three volumes is a panygeric on the vindicators of their country's freedom, and a denunciation of hatred and scorn on the oppressors of the Netherlands. But Philip was at least a king by every law and principle of the age. He was doing a great duty according to his narrow judgment and bigoted conscience. He was governed by no mean aims of emolument or office. He was not false to his principles to secure a petty appointment. There was no base truckling to vulgar demagogue power in his character or proceedings. Tyrant as he was, he was a tyrant in conformity with the received and settled limits of imperial rule. He was a bad and cruel master, but he was master by universal consent. And what is the tyrant of our day—the object of Mr. Motley's praise and support?

A coarse demagogue, thrust into power by party trickery, the patron and representative of office hunters of the baser sort, the deliberate violator of every principle of the Government which he has sworn to administer faithfully, and which Mr. Motley professes to admire; the man who has carried fire and sword, and arson and murder, and rape into the peaceful homes of Virginia; a man more base, more cruel, more treacherous, more false than Philip or his instruments; a vulgar despot who is feeling his way to every atrocity that the worst tools of the Spanish tyrant ever perpetrated, and who is surrounded and urged on by advisers and abettors worse than Alva or Parma, or the inquisition at Madrid—by Seward and Blair and Greeley, and the clergy of the North, who preach robbery and assassination as Christian duties. These are the men who are organizing a conspiracy of rape and robbery against the American Netherlands, and whom Mr. Motley has prostituted his pen to support. Assuredly, he will receive his reward. A part he has already secured in a foreign appointment—the remainder, the scorn and rebuke of all honorable men, he will as certainly receive. Can any man doubt what course Mr. Motley would have taken had he lived in the days of Egmont and Horn? Would he have gone to the block with the victims of Spanish cruelty? would he have taken part with the poverty and suffering of William the Silent, who had nothing of importance to give? or would his pen have been the purchased slave of those who could give office and wealth, dukedoms and principalities? Who will not understand at once the truthfulness of Mr. Motley's pretended enthusiasm for Dutch liberty, and his hatred for Spanish cruelty and tyranny, when he denounces the South for imitating Dutch example, and sustains and praises a horde of brutal despots worse than Philip or Alva?









