

## MOTLEY'S LETTERS.

BY GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

IT is nearly twelve years since Motley the historian died, and the two volumes of his letters now published vividly recall one of the most picturesque figures in American literary history. Like Prescott, he climbed to renown by no "cold gradations." He was virtually unknown until he became famous, and his first great work from a national point of view was one of poetic justice.

Irving's *Knickerbocker's History* was the first broad smile in American literature. It was published only eighty years ago, but the day when, as Wendell Phillips said, the New England air was black with sermons was not yet passed, and the general tone of our literature, which began in New England, indicated a people which could still say

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll—  
Damnation and the dead."

The charming humor of Irving, like a cheerful dawn, penetrated this gloom, and its kindly spirit has been perpetually renewed in our later literature. The Knickerbocker legend is a story of pure good-humor. It is a merry caricature, a rollicking burlesque full of youthful spirits; but the caricature is so obvious that, as it is not poisoned by ill-nature, it leaves no sting. Yet it has been sometimes gravely resented by later Knickerbockers. It has been even alleged that it was a kind of ingratitude in a son of New Amsterdam to make the world laugh, however good-naturedly, at the fathers of Manhattan; and it was held to be a reproach to American literature that its first distinctively creative work should caricature the people to whom America owes so great a debt.

This feeling, perhaps, only deepens the humor of the famous burlesque. But if anybody ever really felt that it was an ungracious return to the land of Leyden, "a fair and beautiful city, and of a sweet situation," the feeling has long since vanished. The great debt of America to Holland has been greatly discharged, for if Irving raised a smile at the Hollander, Motley won for him the admiration of the world. The old republic hospitably sheltered the Puritan on his way to plant the new. Except for Holland, New England

might not have been, and it is a signal stroke of poetic justice that a son of New England has told imperishably the splendid tale of Dutch heroism and achievement.

It was a noble subject, one of the most stirring and interesting chapters in the history of liberty, and it is surprising that it was left for so long a time without adequate treatment. But it is fortunate also that it was reserved for so romantic and fervid a genius as that of Motley. He was born in New England when its severe Puritanic tone of life was beginning to soften. His famous *bonmot* in reply to his father's remonstrances upon his tastes and habits in college, "My dear father, I can spare the necessaries of life, but not the luxuries," was the voice of a changed New England. But both the persistence and the modification of the Puritan type were strikingly illustrated in the college trio at Harvard sixty years ago of which Motley was one.

This trio was composed, beside himself, of Wendell Phillips and Thomas Gold Appleton, brother of Mrs. Longfellow. They were all Boston boys, and neighbors, playmates, and constant comrades. Appleton was a man of remarkable wit and quaint originality, with strong literary and artistic tastes, which, however, did not reach the point of high creative power. A sybaritic temperament, favored by prosperous circumstance, held him satisfied all his life within the conservative circle of the most delightful social companionship, in which the wonder was that the latent forces of his nature took no definite and enduring form, so that "Tom Appleton" remains only a marvelous memory, a man tenderly beloved in life, and now affectionately remembered.

But in him as in the others were the stern old Puritan conscience and truthfulness, a scorn of dishonor and indirectness, yet blended with such suavity and accomplishment, such grace of mind, and rectitude of life, and delight in refined enjoyment, that in no other group of friends in New England probably were the characteristic and engaging qualities of Puritan and Cavalier more happily combined. Their careers were widely severed, although Boston was always

their home. Phillips passed on to the renown of a great orator and leader in one of the noblest causes in history; Motley won the highest laurels of literature in the works which record the defence and development of liberty in Holland; Appleton, placidly drifting with the current of his time, watched with the keenest interest and admiration the course of both, and if perhaps he sometimes felt, with Browning's Pictor Ignotus,

"I could have painted pictures like that youth's men praise so,"

there was no hint in word or manner that he regretted any prize he had not won. Long after the college days, and after Motley's first unprosperous literary ventures and his diligent study in Europe, he sent Appleton the sheets of his *History of the Dutch Republic*. Appleton received them in Newport, where he read them with delight, and one morning, bursting into the room of a friend, he exclaimed, with unwonted enthusiasm, "I've read it all, and, by Jove, Motley has done it at last!"

After his graduation in 1831, Motley lived much in Europe as a student. But he changed his sky only, not his mind. He was a passionate American; but his ideal of his country was noble, not ignoble. Lincoln's "plain people" were not, in Motley's view, a mob to be flattered. They were intelligent men, with whom, as one of them, to reason and remonstrate upon proper occasion; and he scorned to flatter the people, as he would have scorned to cringe to a king or to insult him because of his crown. It was always the best, not the worst, qualities of his fellow-citizens that Motley had in mind when he spoke of America. His work was necessarily accomplished in Europe, where the documents could be consulted; and after he was made known by it both at home and abroad, he was very little upon this side of the sea. This made personal misrepresentation easy, and a Senator of the United States, arriving in London firmly persuaded that "Senators make foreign ministers," was comically wroth with Motley because, upon the Senator's demand to be taken at once to Windsor Castle and introduced to the Queen, the Minister replied that certain forms must be observed. The indignant statesman returned to America vehemently proclaiming

that our Minister in England was a crawling parasite of royalty.

It was fortunate for us that Motley was not only so true, but so intelligent and able and conspicuous an American. For at the beginning of the civil war, when he was a personage in London "society," and that powerful society with mingled disdain and ignorance scornfully turned its sympathy and its voice against the government of the Union, Motley in his two letters to the London *Times* stated the American situation so accurately, comprehensively, and vigorously that even the dullest could understand, and no Englishman afterward could pretend ignorance. There was no American at that time in Europe who could have spoken with such authority; and his lofty enthusiasm for liberty and America not only absolutely vindicated the cause of the Union, but it was a great public service, illustrating the spirit and tone with which the cause was defended.

Nothing is pleasanter in the letters of Motley than this essential American spirit. His profound studies in the history of liberty had confirmed his instinctive confidence in the people. He understood the conditions and the limitations of popular government, and, as we have said, he did not worship the mob nor the monarch. He knew the subservience of ignorance to audacious intelligence. But because a demagogue might sway an ignorant or frantic multitude he did not doubt, for experience showed, that the institutions of free government are the conditions of progressive liberty. He was bred in that Boston conservatism which was as strict and severe as the Puritan character, the conservatism whose "mob of gentlemen" to suppress free speech first kindled in Wendell Phillips the consuming antislavery fire. Unlike his old playmate and comrade, Motley was not an abolitionist. But as time passed he too perceived the real foe of America, and his patriotism glowed into passion as the irrepressible conflict of ideas deepened toward open war.

There was doubtless a certain Oriental cast in his temperament. The brilliant youth of Harvard was noted for Byronic beauty, which, as the letters show, was often remarked afterward in London. He impressed all who saw him with a sensitive, high-bred elegance of aspect and bearing, so that Bismarck said of him

that "he never entered a drawing-room without exciting the curiosity and sympathy of the ladies." When he was minister in England Dickens wrote to a friend in this country, "Last week I was at your minister's, and it was a mixture of the Alhambra and the *Arabian Nights*." He had been impressed not only with the fine house and its decorations and its dazzling company, but with the air of the host—an air superb and graceful, which seemed native to elaborate splendor. But this disposition was suggested and implied only. There were the utmost simplicity and affectionate New England domesticity in the master of the house, and no unseemly pretence or haughtiness. For a young man who could dispense with the necessaries of life but not with the luxuries, the half-Eastern glamour of the Russian imperial court and the gilded indolence of "high society" might have seemed a fitting sphere. But when he was secretary of legation at St. Petersburg the stately ceremonial touched only his sense of humor, until, impatient of the magnificent monotony, and bent upon serious aims, he resigned and retired.

During all the long years of European absence and study, whenever he was separated from his family, and especially when his wife was not with him, Motley wrote, constantly and fully, letters which are delightful chapters of autobiography. Dr. Holmes's memoir tells the simple story of the historian's life, and the long and intimate friendship of the two men, with Holmes's acute perception and exquisite skill and grace of expression, enabled him to produce a beautiful and characteristic portrait. No further memoir was necessary. The letters happily supplement the picture drawn by his friend, and with subtle and unconscious self-delineation reveal the very man.

The letters are addressed mainly to members of Motley's family, and have been collected by his daughters, and they are published as they were written, with such omissions of personal comment as undoubtedly the writer himself would have made. The first duty in preparing such correspondence for the press is to the writer. However innocently meant and perfectly understood in the atmosphere in which they are written and read, personal allusions and comments may easily give pain to others, while they do great injustice to the writer. Sarcasms, hu-

morous portraiture, and sparkling exaggeration, which are mutually intelligible and perfectly allowable to the private writer and reader, may none the less be unfair and improper for the public eye. No wit and cleverness with which the shaft may be barbed is any excuse for letting it fly, unless the editor be sure that the writer would have flown it. Without that confidence, he needlessly invites condemnation of the dead. Happily in this instance, whatever may have been properly omitted, there is no sense of omission or loss in the correspondence as published.

There is, indeed, little allusion in the letters to the circumstances of Motley's retirement from the missions to Austria and England, but the circumstances in both instances are detailed in Holmes's memoir, and as nothing could be added to the statement of facts, the comment upon them in letters would only reopen controversy without giving further information and without shedding light upon Motley's character or career. Only an occasional reference has been retained which shows his deep feeling upon the subject. In both cases he felt that he had been sorely wronged, and none of his friends doubt that his feeling was fully justified.

It is as true of Motley's letters as of his books that the generous, impulsive ardor of the man vitalizes every page. He was a quick and sensitive observer, and the mental activity, the instinct of research and thoroughness which distinguish the scholar, are constantly obvious in his correspondence. The letters begin when he was a boy of ten, at school in the neighborhood of Boston, and later at the famous Round Hill school at Northampton upon the Connecticut, the school of Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Cogswell. The early specimens are capital boy's letters. His nose has bled, but he believes it will not bleed much more. He was to go into water, they were all so dirty. He has read Cooper's *Lionel Lincoln*, which he thinks very interesting. He is reading Hume's *History of England*, which Mr. Cogswell lent him, and he finds that also very interesting. He wants some nankeen pantaloons sent up, as his woollenets are uncomfortably tight, and, besides, woollenet is too thick. He has left off butter and gravy, to eat no more until next vacation, nor then either. He has received his paint-box by Tom Appleton, but some kind of cake must be sent up. When he is fif-

then he announces that *Hope Leslie* is better than *The Prairie*—in fact, it is the best novel he has read for two or three years, except Scott's.

Upon graduating Motley went to Europe, and studied civil and international law at Göttingen and Berlin, and made the grand tour. His letters give capital glimpses of German university life, with the *Kneipen* and the duels, which he describes in detail. He sees Tieck and Madame Goethe. At Göttingen Bismarck is his fellow-student, and in Berlin Tagliani in her prime is dancing. Bismarck was deeply impressed by the young Motley, and the warm friendship between them, which began at Göttingen, continued with unchanging affection to the end. Last winter, in the speech made by Bismarck to which it may be truly said that all the world listened, he quoted the old college song,

"In good old colony times,  
When we lived under the King"—

a song, he said, which he learned at Göttingen long ago from his dear friend John Motley. In the student letters Motley says little of Bismarck, but in later letters we have the most graphic and intimate accounts of the man and his domestic life. These glimpses are among the most valuable parts of the letters.

Descending into Italy, Motley comments as he runs on the land of romance and exhaustless interest, and describes in elaborate detail the ascent of Mount Etna. He sees Paris, Vienna, and Salzburg; crosses to England and Ireland, his restless and eager eye noting the charms and the characteristics of countries which fascinate the sensitive and educated young American in a degree and manner which the European cannot understand. His remarks are those of a self-possessed and clever youth, touched often with a certain *Keckheit*, or, as we might say in this day, "cheek." But the gay spirits are unailing, and if thirty venerable centuries look down upon the youth, he confronts them with the easy assurance of Young America.

He returned to Boston, and in 1837 he was most happily married. His literary tastes and skill were shown in a novel which was published in 1839. It was a tentative work, and its success did not indicate that his talent had found its congenial sphere. Two years later his ap-

pointment as secretary of legation at St. Petersburg seemed to open the opportunity for the man of singular social charm, who was also an accomplished student of international law. Colonel Todd, of Kentucky, was the minister, and Motley was to meet him in London and proceed to his post. Both the minister and the secretary had left their families behind, the secretary doubtful whether it would be wise for the young mother and her children to join him in so uncertain a residence. His letters from Russia to his mother and wife contain admirable pictures of the capital and its life nearly half a century ago. Here his formal diplomatic life began. But there was nothing to do, and he hastened home.

Motley was at home after his return in 1842 until he sailed again for Europe in 1857. During these years his studies and literary labors continued, and his interest in public affairs carried him into the Legislature of Massachusetts, where he served, however, but one term. He published another novel, which was praised, but was not successful, and he wrote several papers, especially one upon Peter the Great, and one upon the Polity of the Puritans, which were published in the *North American Review* when it was especially the organ of American scholarship. These papers disclosed the apt historic sense which, with his fervent love of liberty, forecast his career, and which was already determining his studies toward the great republican story which he was to tell with the deepest sympathy and picturesque power.

He was already accumulating the material for his history, and, as Dr. Holmes relates, having heard that Prescott, then in the fulness of his reputation, was meditating a work which would probably cover the period which Motley proposed to treat, the younger man went to the older, and proposed to abandon his enterprise if it would in any degree conflict with Prescott's plans. It is one of the beautiful incidents in the history of our literature that the older man cordially welcomed the younger to the common field, urged him to undertake the work, offered him the use of his books and manuscripts, and in the preface to his *Philip II.*, which was published in the same year with the *History of the Dutch Republic*, announced in the most generous manner Motley's forthcoming book. He had been busy

upon it for some years when he found that it could not be properly completed in this country, and that indispensable documents could be consulted only in Europe. For this purpose he crossed the ocean again in the summer of 1851, and the series of letters is resumed.

Motley's residence at this time was chiefly in Dresden, but he studied also in Berlin, Brussels, and the Hague. He was absorbed in his work, but his family was with him, and his letters, mainly to his mother, are full of descriptions both of the social life and the art treasures of the Saxon capital. The humor of the state pageant again constantly strikes him. "His Majesty is a mild old gentleman, wadded and bolstered into very harmonious proportions. He has a single tooth, worn carelessly on one side, which somewhat interferes with his eloquence. I do not think that I took notes enough of his conversation to be able to give you a report. He was glad to hear, in answer to a question, that I proposed passing the winter here, and as I felt how much unalloyed satisfaction the circumstance must really cause to his bosom, I internally resolved not to change my plan." To his friend Dr. Holmes, with whom he corresponded constantly, and whose letters to Motley are a delightful part of the work, Motley describes his student life. He was very loath generally to speak of himself and his occupations, and experience had perhaps taught him to restrain his hopes, for there is no trace of enthusiastic expectation of the success of his history. Indeed he writes to his father in 1855 that he does not expect encouragement enough to finish it.

In May, 1854, he goes to London to find a publisher, and his letters to his wife narrate his adventures in that enterprise. He writes that he has cut away at his manuscript with a broadaxe, but he could not squeeze it into less than three volumes. He finally arranged with Mr. John Chapman to publish the work at the author's expense, and in the early part of the year 1856 it appeared. But there is very little in the letters to denote its extraordinary success. The author writes to his father in April, 1856, that he supposes very few copies have been sold. A little later a hearty letter from Prescott assures Motley that he has more than fulfilled the predictions which he had made, and the praise of reviews and

newspapers which gradually reaches him, and the increasing sale of the book, confirm the generous congratulations of the senior historian, and show the untiring student that he has at last accomplished the work that he has longed to do.

The word "fascinating" was constantly applied to the *History of the Dutch Republic*. The impulsive, emotional temperament, the tropical nature, of the author throb and beat along his pages. The grave, deliberate Dutchmen, starched and ruffed, with pointed beard and wary eye, long since obscured and half forgotten, start under his spell into vigorous and passionate life. Once more the high and earnest debate proceeds. Those long-vanished politics become as fierce and furious as our own. Questions settled forever, which we know only by name, arise and storm before us as living controversies. The historian himself is kindled by the fire that he blows into life. He takes a part, he reveals his sympathies, he throws himself with ardor into the arena, he argues, he defies, he defends, and we read with all the vivid excitement with which we follow the fortunes of mighty contests yet undecided, upon which the welfare of the world depends. This is the power, due to the temperament of the author, which his fellow-historian Froude felt so deeply that he said of the *History of the Dutch Republic*, "it will take its place among the finest stories in this or any language," and he declared of the author that "his place will be at once conceded to him among the first historians in our common language."

It is in the true sense the romance of history which Motley felt with his whole sympathetic nature, and which makes his pages glow. The personal spell is so strong because, as he pushes on through the realm of his narrative, amid men and events that have so largely moulded the course of political liberty, he unconsciously says, with Tennyson's Ulysses,

"I am a part of all that I have met."

He feels the essential humanity of men under alien conditions. The unwonted circumstance does not deceive him, and the moral of his tale is applicable to his own country and countrymen.

Tracing his life in his letters, we find that in the year 1855, when his work was printing, Motley met his old university friend Bismarck at Frankfort. "If I had

been his brother," he writes, "instead of an old friend, he could not have shown more warmth and affectionate delight in seeing me." Bismarck was Prussian ambassador at Frankfort, and Motley says:

"In the summer of 1851 he told me that the minister, Manteuffel, asked him one day abruptly if he would accept the post of ambassador at Frankfort, to which (although the proposition was as unexpected a one to him as if I should hear by the next mail that I had been chosen Governor of Massachusetts) he answered, after a moment's deliberation, yes, without another word. The King the same day sent for him, and asked him if he would accept the place, to which he made the same brief answer, 'Ja.' His Majesty expressed a little surprise that he made no inquiries or conditions, when Bismarck replied that anything which the King felt strong enough to propose to him, he felt strong enough to accept. . . . Well, he accepted the post, and wrote to his wife next day, who was preparing for a summer's residence in a small house they had taken on the sea-coast, that he could not come because he was already established in Frankfort as minister. The result, he said, was three days of tears on her part. He had previously been leading the life of a plain country squire with a moderate income, had never held any position in the government or in diplomacy, and had hardly ever been to court. He went into the office with a holy horror of the mysterious nothings of diplomacy, but soon found how little there was in the whole 'galimatias.' Of course my politics are very different from his, although not so antipodal as you might suppose, but I can talk with him as frankly as I could with you, and I am glad of an opportunity of hearing the other side put by a man whose talents and character I esteem, and who so well knows *le dessous des cartes*."

Again he gives this picture of the Bismarck household:

"I am there all day long. It is one of those houses where every one does what one likes. The show apartments where they receive formal company are on the front of the house. Their living-rooms, however, are a salon and dining-room at the back, opening upon the garden. Here there are young and old, grandparents and children and dogs, all at once, eating, drinking, smoking, piano-playing, and pistol-firing (in the garden), all going on at the same time. It is one of those establishments where every earthly thing that can be eaten or drunk is offered you; porter, soda-water, small-beer, champagne, Burgundy, or claret are about all the time, and everybody is smoking the best Havana cigars every minute. Last night we went to the theatre to see the first part of *Henry IV.* The Falstaff was tolerable, the others very indifferent. By-the-way, I was glad to find that both Bismarck and his wife agree with me that Emil Devrient was a very second-rate actor."

In 1855, after a few months at home, Motley returned to England in the first flush of his fame, and the letters describe his warm and flattering welcome to the dazzling society of "the centre of the world." Across the pages move the persons whose names are famous and fa-

miliar, and it is easy to see as they pass how captivating to an educated man who meets it upon equal terms such society must be. The constant personal sketches in the letters to his wife describing his London life in the season are very graphic:

"I believe you have never seen Thackeray. He has the appearance of a colossal infant, smooth, white, shiny, ringlety hair, flaxen, alas, with advancing years, a roundish face, with a little dab of a nose upon which it is a perpetual wonder how he keeps his spectacles, a sweet but rather piping voice with something of the childish treble about it, and a very tall, slightly stooping figure—such are the characteristics of the great 'snob' of England. His manner is like that of everybody else in England—nothing original, all planed down into perfect uniformity with that of his fellow-creatures. There was not much more distinction in his talk than in his white choker or black coat and waistcoat. As you like detail, however, I shall endeavour to Boswellize him a little, but it is very hard work. Something was said of Carlyle, the author. Thackeray said, 'Carlyle hates everybody that has arrived—if they are on the road, he may perhaps treat them civilly.' Mackintosh praised the description in the *French Revolution* of the flight of the King and Queen (which is certainly one of the most living pictures ever painted with ink), and Thackeray agreed with him, and spoke of the passages very heartily. I remember old Carlyle snarling at you at Dresden with 'Ye like his Beckies and his Dobbinses, do ye?' but I did not mention the circumstance. Of the Cosmopolitan Club, Thackeray said: 'Everybody is or is supposed to be a celebrity; nobody ever says anything worth hearing, and every one goes there with his white choker at midnight to appear as if he had just been dining with the aristocracy. I have no doubt,' he added, 'that half of us put on the white cravat after a solitary dinner at home or at our club, and so go down among the Cosmopolitans.'"

From a long account of Macaulay we take a few passages:

"His general appearance is singularly commonplace. I cannot describe him better than by saying he has exactly that kind of face and figure which by no possibility would be selected out of even a very small number of persons as those of a remarkable personage. He is of the middle height, neither above nor below it. The outline of his face in profile is rather good. The nose, very slightly aquiline, is well cut, and the expression of the mouth and chin agreeable. His hair is thin and silvery, and he looks a good deal older than many men of his years—for, if I am not mistaken, he is just as old as his century, like Cromwell, Balzac, Charles V., and other notorious individuals. Now those two impostors, so far as appearances go, Prescott and Mignet, who are sixty-two, look young enough, in comparison, to be Macaulay's sons. The face, to resume my description, seen in front, is blank, and, as it were, badly lighted. There is nothing luminous in the eye, nothing impressive in the brow. The forehead is spacious, but it is scooped entirely away in the region where benevolence ought to be, while beyond rise reverence, firmness, and self-esteem, like Alps on Alps. The under eyelids are so swollen as almost to close the eyes, and it would be

quite impossible to tell the color of those orbs, and equally so, from the neutral tint of his hair and face, to say of what complexion he had originally been. His voice is agreeable, and its intonations delightful, although that is so common a gift with Englishmen as to be almost a national characteristic. As usual, he took up the ribands of the conversation, and kept them in his own hand, driving wherever it suited him. I believe he is thought by many people a bore, and you remember that Sydney Smith spoke of him as 'our Tom, the greatest engine of social oppression in England.' I should think he might be to those who wanted to talk also, for it would take S— to talk him down thoroughly. I can imagine no better fun than to have Carlyle and himself meet accidentally at the same dinner-table with a small company. It would be like two locomotives, each with a long train, coming against each other at express speed. Both, I have no doubt, could be smashed into silence at the first collision. Macaulay, however, is not so dogmatic or so outrageously absurd as Carlyle often is, neither is he half so grotesque or amusing. His whole manner has the smoothness and polished surface of the man of the world, the politician, and the new peer, spread over the man of letters within. His style of talk is more like that of Frank Gray, or as his would have been had he possessed the enormous and well-won reputation of Macaulay. I do not know that I can repeat any of his conversation, for there was nothing to excite very particular attention in its even flow. As a talker, to judge him by this one occasion, he is not to be compared for a moment to Holmes. There was not a touch of the doctor's ever-bubbling wit, imagination, enthusiasm, and arabesqueness. It is the perfection of the commonplace, without sparkle or flash, but at the same time always interesting and agreeable. I could listen to him with pleasure for an hour or two every day, and I have no doubt I should thence grow wiser every day, for his brain is full, as hardly any man's ever was, and his way of delivering himself is easy and fluent."

Here is Lord Brougham :

"Let me give you a photograph, while his grotesque image still lingers in the camera-obscura of my brain. He is exactly like the pictures in *Punch*, only *Punch* flatters him. The common pictures of Palmerston and Lord John are not like at all, to my mind, but Brougham is always hit exactly. His face, like his tongue and his mind, is shrewd, sharp, humorous. His hair is thick and snow-white and shiny; his head is large and knobby and bumpy, with all kinds of phrenological developments, which I did not have a chance fairly to study. The rugged outlines or headlands of his face are wild and bleak, but not forbidding. Deep furrows of age and thought and toil, perhaps of sorrow, run all over it, while his vast mouth, with a ripple of humor ever playing around it, expands like a placid bay under the huge promontory of his fantastic and incredible nose. His eye is dim, and could never have been brilliant, but his voice is rather shrill, with an unmistakable Northern intonation; his manner of speech is fluent, not garrulous, but obviously touched by time; his figure is tall, slender, shambling, awkward, but of course perfectly self-possessed. Such is what remains at eighty of the famous Henry Brougham."

In the House of Commons Motley heard John Bright.

"Afterwards Bright made a few remarks. He is one of the favorites of the House, belonging to the branch of that extreme Liberal party which has taken the present ministers under its protection, to annoy Palmerston on the one side and Lord John on the other. It was quite amusing to see him patting Disraeli on the head from the Opposition benches. His manner is easy, conversational, slightly humorous, rather fluent. The whole style of thing is very different in Parliament from the American way of proceeding in Congress or State Legislatures. Everything here is toned down to a gentle business-like mediocrity. The invisible but most omnipotent demon of good taste which presides over the English world, social, political, and moral, hangs over the heads of the legislators and suppresses their noble rage. The consequence is that eloquence is almost impossible. Nobody drinks up Esel or eats crocodiles, but at the same time a good deal of passion and rhetoric, which might occasionally explode to advantage, is forever sealed up. I doubt whether Sheridan or Burke in this age would not find the genial current of their soul to be frozen by this clear cold atmosphere of good taste which coagulates the common talk of Englishmen, however wise or witty."

Lady Dufferin was speaking to Motley of Disraeli :

"She said she had always known him and liked him in spite of his tergiversations and absurdities. When he was very young, and had made his first appearance in London society as the author of *Vivian Grey*, there was something almost incredible in his aspect. She assured me that she did not exaggerate in the slightest degree in describing to me his dress when she first met him at a dinner party. He wore a black velvet coat lined with satin, purple trousers with a gold band running down the outside seam, a scarlet waistcoat, long lace ruffles falling down to the tips of his fingers, white gloves with several brilliant rings outside them, and long black ringlets rippling down upon his shoulders. It seemed impossible that such a Guy Fawkes could have been tolerated in any society. His audacity, which has proved more perennial than brass, was always the solid foundation of his character. She told him, however, that he made a fool of himself by appearing in such fantastic shape, and he afterward modified his costume, but he was never to be put down."

After a long and sparkling draught of this pleasure, Motley continued, with enthusiasm and confidence, his historical studies and the preparation of his second work, the first two volumes of which were published early in 1861. It was received with universal applause, and confirmed the conviction that another master of history had appeared. But his mind turned anxiously homeward. A letter to Holmes in March, 1860, shows his deep interest in American politics and his ardent anti-slavery feeling. There is animated description of his daily life in the letters, and we see in them also the aspect of this country in the dark days of 1860-61 through the quick eyes of his friend Holmes. In March, before hearing of

Lincoln's inauguration, Motley writes to his mother that his deepest regret is that his "work should be for the present on the wrong side of the Atlantic." Then came the news of the opening war, and unable from profound interest in the state of his country to pursue his work, he returned suddenly to America in June, 1861.

He went to Washington, and saw the forming camps of Union soldiers, and in the middle of August he returned to Europe as American minister to Vienna. But his literary work was relaxed by his absorption in the great struggle. During the years of the war his letters are constantly engrossed with its progress and fortunes. Like a sponge passed over an old picture, the passionate eagerness of his interest and the strength of his convictions and sympathy restore the very form and pressure of those heroic days. The distant thunders of the older battles which he was studying were lost in the loud and incessant crash of the nearer bolt. As the contemporary testimony of one of the most celebrated Americans of the time, these letters of Motley are very valuable. They reveal the feeling, in that tremendous time, of earnest and educated Americans of the highest character and loftiest patriotism. Meanwhile Motley's most important official negotiation was concerning the expedition of Maximilian to Mexico, by which he arrested the march of the Austrian force, and his accounts of other European politics and of the social life of the Austrian capital are full of interest. Of the character and value of his official despatches, his successor, Mr. Jay, who is the most competent witness, bears the most generous testimony. He was a representative whose personal character and accomplishment and great literary distinction were most honorable to his country. He was in every way admirable and efficient as a minister, but his mission was ended in a manner deeply discreditable to our government.

In the letters written after the war there are the most interesting and intimate accounts yet published of the private life of Bismarck, who is a figure of massive, manly simplicity in Motley's description, and in the later letters his cordial relations with the Queen of Holland give a pleasant picture of royal friendship. In 1868 the last two volumes of the *United Netherlands* were published, and returning to Boston in the same year, he deliv-

ered there a speech in favor of the election of General Grant, and in New York an address before the Historical Society upon a theme which was very dear to him, "Historic Progress and American Democracy." In 1869 he was sent as minister to England, whence he was recalled suddenly, and in a manner which he felt to be peculiarly humiliating, and which his friends believed showed him to have been an innocent victim of political and personal resentment.

The recall was a bitter blow to Motley, and he turned again to his literary activity. His original design was a history of the eighty years' war for liberty, to extend from the Rise of the Dutch Republic to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Before resuming this scheme he wrote, as an episode, the *Life and Death of John of Barneveldt*, which was published in 1874, a work which enhanced his reputation. But in 1873, the year in which he finished it, he suffered an apoplectic attack, and in the next year occurred the death of his wife, "the grief which broke his heart, and from which he never rallied." He returned to Boston for a time in 1875, then went again to England, where his daughters are married, and at the end of May, 1877, at the home of one of his daughters, Motley died.

The letters that cover this closing period of the historian's life are not only interesting from their personal allusions and comments, but they are very touching from an unwonted tone of gentleness. At the opening of the year 1870 Motley would have been called one of the most fortunate of men. His fame, his honors, his domestic happiness, were complete. But from that moment the clouds gathered rapidly and deepened. After the lapse of the intervening years it is delightful to turn these pages and to see once more, and more intimately than ever before, the brilliant and buoyant youth, the ardent student of liberty, the eloquent and fascinating and renowned historian of one of its noblest achievements, the diplomatist, the favorite of the most accomplished and refined society. In Westminster Abbey Dean Stanley spoke of Motley in words which the hearts of those who knew him best fondly echo, as the high-spirited patriot, the faithful friend of England's best and purest spirits, the brilliant, the indefatigable historian, the ardent, laborious, soaring soul.