

**Letter to Miss Emily Hobhouse**

5th January, 1914

Dear Miss Hobhouse,

It was a perfect pleasure to have received your very kind and generous letter.

Had I known how to approach you before, I would undoubtedly have endeavoured to enlist your large heart in our behalf.

It was during the Boer war that I came to admire your selfless devotion to Truth, and I have often felt how nice it would be if the Indian cause could plead before you for admission; and it is evident to me that your first telegram uttering a note of warning was an answer to that yearning.

I am loath to write to you on this question, as Miss Molteno has told me how feeble you are now in health. She was good enough to read to me a part of Miss Greene's letter, telling her in most pathetic tones how it was the duty of those who loved you to refrain from imposing fresh burdens on you.

I am, therefore, torn by conflicting emotions. But, as Miss Molteno, who knows you better assures me that to expect you now not to interest yourself in our cause is to misjudge you and to aggravate your illness, because you would, she says, fret about us without being enabled by us to render your assistance effective.

If your health permits and if the climate on the North Coast of Natal would not be too trying for you, I would esteem it a privilege if you could take rest on the little settlement at Phoenix where *Indian Opinion* is published.

Miss Molteno knows the settlement well. It is situated about eighty feet above sea-level and is exposed to certain winds which sweep across the hills that overlook the settlement and purify the atmosphere.

The scenery around is certainly very charming, the site is beautifully isolated, there is no bustle or noise, it is two miles from the nearest station and I venture to think that you will find loving hands to administer to your wants, and nothing would give me personally greater pleasure than, if I were free, to be able to wait upon you and nurse you.

You will, I hope, consider this offer as coming from the heart without the slightest hesitation accept it if you can.

I will not weary you with copies of correspondence and details about the question. I enclose the telegrams exchanged between General Smuts and myself, which speak for themselves.

We have always accepted what we could get in matters of details, but, in this matter of the Commission, we are solemnly bound to sacrifice ourselves for the principle of consultation.

In striving to secure this recognition of an elementary right, if we must, for the time being, forfeit public sympathy, we must be prepared to do so.

Knowing that the truth is on our side, past experience will enable us to have patience, and, as days go on, the mists of ignorance will be removed, the cloud will lift and I have no doubt that Truth will conquer.

What we have asked for is the smallest measure and, if the Government obstinately refuses to grant that measure of justice, surely it will be an indication of their disinclination to recognise the status of British Indians throughout the Union.

Indeed, through my twenty years' experience, I have been able to gather many an indication of the same spirit and it is really against that that we are fighting.

In those matters to which Passive Resistance is directed, I hold there can be no compromise. Could Daniel have compromised by bowing to one of the laws of the Medes and Persians and not to others, or would the whole body of those laws have represented the influence of Satan and, therefore, been unacceptable in toto?

The last paragraph of your letter seems to assume that we are following the tactics of the high-souled militants of England.

May I say that we have not only not copied them, but, wherever it has been necessary, I have drawn a sharp distinction between their methods and ours.

Indeed, I used to have long discussions with the followers of the great Mrs Pankhurst on this very question.

At no stage, do we believe in the use of physical force, but I am free to confess that we have certainly been encouraged, in the hour of our weakness, by the noble example of devotion to duty and self-sacrifice that the militants have set, though we condemn their methods and tactics as suicidal and beneath the dignity of woman.

I hope that God will restore you to health and spare you for many a long year to continue your noble and unassuming work in the cause of Humanity.

I am,

Yours truly

M.K. Gandhi

**Gandhi in South Africa**

**Some unpublished letters**

Letters obtained by E.S. Reddy from the Molteno-Murray family papers through the courtesy of the University Cape Town Libraries)

**Letters to Elizabeth M. Molteno**

Phoenix  
19th May 1914

7 Buitencingle  
Cape Town  
23rd Feb 1914

Dear Miss Molteno,

My impression is that I said we would call on you tomorrow (Tuesday), but Dr Gool does not remember. Not to make any mistake we shall be coming there between 3 and 4 tomorrow and take our chance.

The visit to Miss Hobhouse was entirely successful. It was a perfect pilgrimage for me. Mrs Botha was all you described her. She was most kind to both of us and most loving towards Mrs Gandhi. Thank you for all this. Incidentally we met Lady Gladstone too... Are you not pleased?

With our regards to you and Miss Greene

I remain  
Yours sincerely  
M.K. Gandhi

7 Buitencingle  
Cape Town  
8th March 1914

Dear Miss Molteno,

I am sorry both of you had to rush away yesterday. I was in the act of shaving when you were announced. You had hardly gone when I came out of the bathroom.

You will be glad to learn that Mrs Gandhi is decidedly better today.

I had a most anxious week but if today's condition continues the danger is over for the time being.

I enclose for your acceptance and Miss Greene's copy of Mr Andrews' lecture.

If you want more copies or if you want me to send copies elsewhere please let me know.

With regards to you both from us both

I am  
Yours sincerely  
M.K. Gandhi

7 Buitencingle  
24th Feb 1914

Dear Miss Molteno,

I am sorry to have to inform you that Mrs Gandhi has had a relapse and she is at the time of writing lying in bed. She wants me therefore to say that whilst she would try her best to keep the appointment for tomorrow, she might not be able to go out at all.

I thought that I should let you know this. In any case I shall expect you tomorrow afternoon and we shall be able to discuss. If she is very ill I would also have to remain in to be by her side. It is a great pity events have turned out so. But man proposes?

I am  
Yours sincerely  
M.K. Gandhi

**LETTERS OF OLIVE SCHREINER TO GANDHI**

(Obtained through the courtesy of the South African Library, Cape Town).

15 August 1947  
30 St Mary Abbots Terrace  
Kensington  
London W.  
Telephone 3350 Western  
Saturday

My dear Mr Gandhi

I have at last got your address from the Steamship's Company. I want much to see you. Could you and Mr Kallenbach perhaps come and see me here, or could I meet you anywhere. I was struck to the heart this morning with sorrow to see that you, and that beautiful and beloved Indian poetess whom I met in London some months ago and other Indian friends had offered to serve the English Government in this evil war in any way they might demand of you.

Surely you, who would not take up arms even in the cause of your own oppressed people cannot be willing to shed blood in this wicked cause. I had longed to meet you and Mr Kallenbach as friends who would understand my hatred of it. I don't believe the statement in the paper can be true.

Yours very sincerely  
Olive Schreiner

*"If we all believed in 'an eye for an eye', the whole world will be blind"*

- Gandhi

**Vivian Reddy of**



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