

Letter from Ouida to Frederic Mackarness

This letter, undated and written in purple ink, was sent to Frederic Mackarness by 'Ouida' (pen name of novelist Maria Louise Ramé 1839-1908). She was living in Italy, FM in London. References to the South Africa Conciliation Committee, on which FM served, and to Queen Victoria, suggest the letter was written around 1900.

6 March

Dear Sir -

I did not mean my writing to the newspapers. These few who are not sold to the financiers are too timid to say anything worth saying. I thought yr. Committee might publish something. If I may say so without offence yr. Literature Committee is not strong; & I cannot imagine why it is entirely feminine.

Surely 'Conciliation' is no longer to be dreamed of; who can reconcile the tiger & the dog? What Joe Chamberlain has always intended is to steal the Orange State & Transvaal for some of their riches; and the general moral obliquity of the nation, from the Queen downward through all classes, makes this act not only permitted but applauded.

*This is the kind of thing which needs to be said. Allow me to ask you if you be a grandson of my unforgotten friend dear old Planché?**

Allow me to remain faithfully yours

Ouida

* 'dear old Planché' – presumably either Matilda Ann Mackarness née Planché 1825-1881, a famous children's author and wife of Frederic's uncle Henry Smith Mackarness, or Matilda's father James, 1796-1880. Neither was Frederic's blood relative.

Images of the envelope, and part of the letter, are below.

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Dear Sir; —

I did not mean my
writing to the News
papers. There are few
who are not sold

1 of the denunciations

Englittered
Frederic Mackerness Esq
Talbot House
Strand St. Strand
W.C. London



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