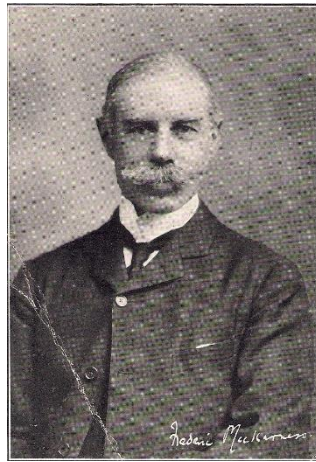
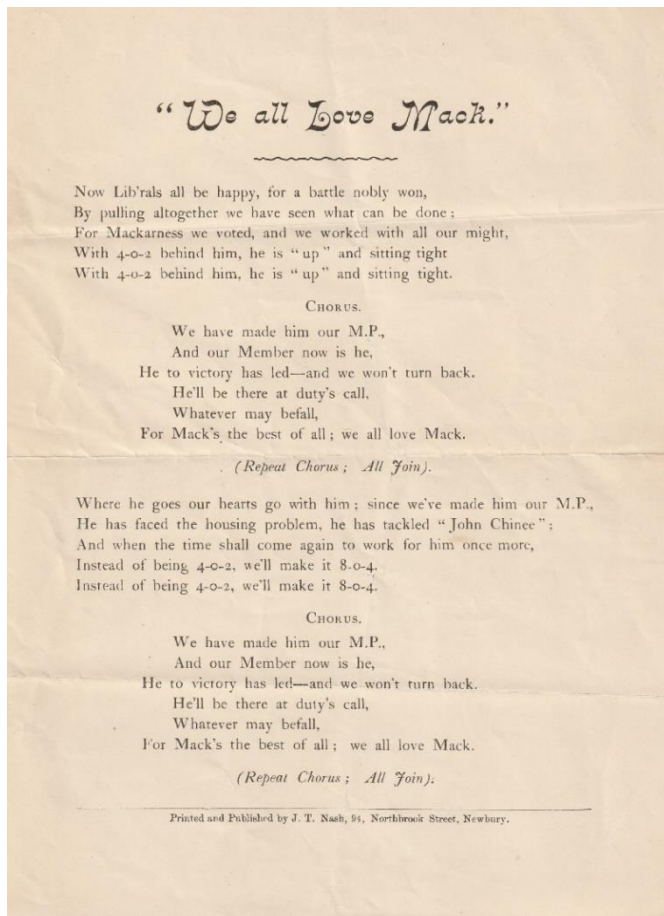


## FREDERIC MACKARNESS (1854-1920)

Campaigning Liberal politician and judge



Frederic Michael Coleridge Mackarness, second son of Bishop John Fielder Mackarness of Oxford, was Liberal member of Parliament for Newbury from 1906 to 1909. Championing a number of controversial causes, he served on the anti-war South African Conciliation Committee, was a supporter of Irish Home Rule and of the civil rights of Indians under British rule. More details about FCM's life and work can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Coleridge\\_Mackarness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Coleridge_Mackarness)



Left: the text of 'We All Love Mack', a song for the candidate's supporters.

Next pages: letters to Frederic from two well-known personalities of the day: the novelist 'Ouida' and Louis Botha

## Letter from Ouida to Frederic Mackarness

This letter, undated and written in purple ink, was sent to Frederic 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.

bellarek.

Dear Sir; —

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

1 of L'Espresso

Englittor

Fredrick Mackintosh Esq

Talbot House

Strand St. Strand

W.C. London

**Letter from Louis Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa, to Frederic Mackarness MP**

**Prime Minister's Office,  
Pretoria.**

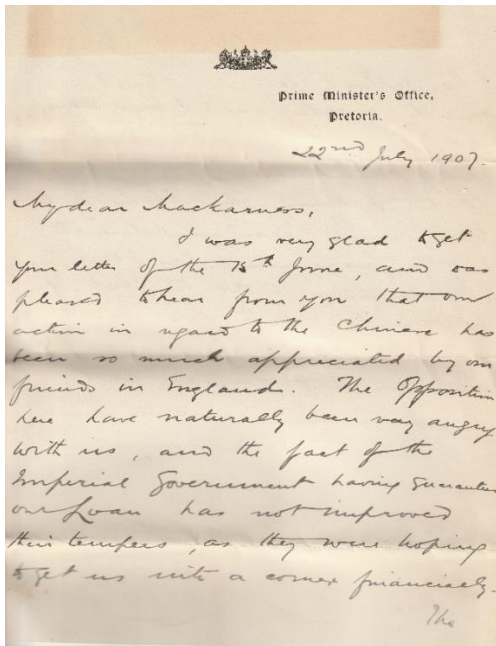
22<sup>nd</sup> July 1907

*My dear Mackarness,*

*I was very glad to get your letter of the 15<sup>th</sup> June, and was pleased to hear from you that our action in regard to the Chinese has been so much appreciated by our friends in England. The Opposition here naturally been very angry with us, and the fact of the Imperial Government having guaranteed our Loan has not improved their tempers, as they were hoping to get us into a corner financially.*

*The outlook here is, I think, much brighter and I am very hopeful of being able to replace every Chinaman by adequate Native Labour. The strike of the white miners was unfortunate but the government has been endeavouring to do the best for both parties with good results.*

*I trust Mrs Mackarness and yourself are very well. My sister and daughter join with me in kindest regards to you both.*



*Believe me*

*Sincerely yours*

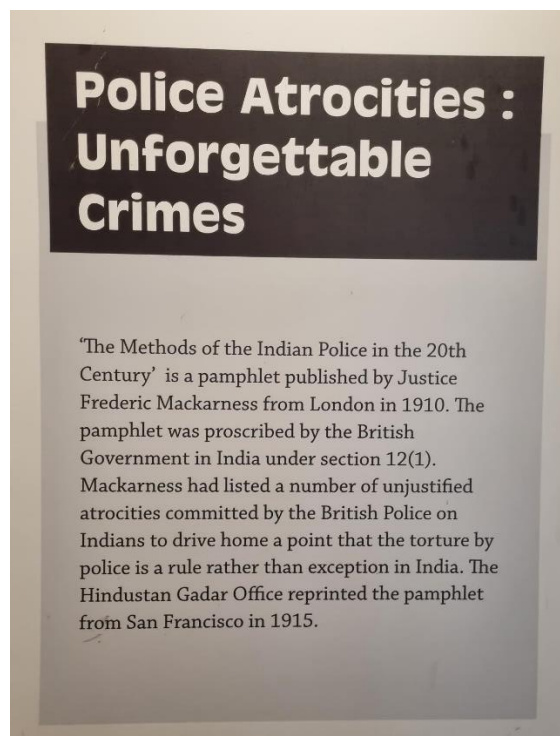
*Louis Botha*

Next pages: Frederic's pamphlet and campaign against abuse by the Indian police, 1910-11.

In 2025 Patience Mackarness, Frederic's great-great-niece, was surprised to find his name in a museum in Red Fort, Delhi, that's entirely dedicated to the struggle for Indian independence. Nearly every story and exhibit involved Indians executed, massacred, imprisoned or tortured by the British for acts of resistance including peaceful protests.



Frederic seems to be the only named Englishman whose contribution to this history was a positive one!



Below is Frederic's letter to the Westminster Gazette in December 1911.

DECEMBER 1, 1911

### THE INDIAN POLICE AND TORTURE.

To the Editor of THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.

SIR,—In the House of Commons yesterday attention was called to the latest instance of death by torture at the hands of the Indian Police. It is of so atrocious a character that I beg you to allow me, through your columns, to appeal to my fellow-countrymen, responsible as they are for the government of India, to realise what is going on. Public opinion is all powerful in such a case, and can insist upon really effective reform.

This is not a party matter. It was Lord Curzon who, in 1902-4, took the first vigorous step to expose the abuses of the police force. It is Lord Crewe and Lord Hardinge who are now endeavouring to remedy those abuses. It is not a racial question, because, though the rank and file of the force are Indian, the higher officers are British. No reflection can be cast upon the Indian nation, for we have largely recruited the police not from the educated and respectable Indians, but from the illiterate and even from the criminal classes. The appalling percentage of illiterate police in some of the Provinces is bad enough, but in one Province last year the Lieutenant-Governor notes that no less than sixty-five men were retained in the force after having been actually convicted by magistrates. If the British police were recruited in this way, what would they be like?

One significant feature there is, moreover, in this business. The victims in the recent torture cases have been always Indians. The present Under-Secretary dilates upon the difficulty of putting down torture; but there seems no difficulty in protecting Europeans from this barbarity. In the course of this year it has been officially admitted in Parliament that at least eight British Indian subjects have died while under the hands of the police. In two cases, on appeal, the police indeed have been acquitted, but the men are dead. In one, the Sessions Judge differed completely from the Committing Magistrate in favour of the police. I call public attention to the latest case (in which judgment was given on October 24 by the Sessions Judge of Ferozapore) because it shows what cruelty may occur as long as the law allows policemen to procure confessions or to take prisoners into private custody. I maintain that the lives of these innocent men might possibly have been saved if the law had been altered as it ought to have been five years ago. The judgment is reported *verbatim* in the *Lahore Tribune* of November 9.

A policeman and a *lambardar* were charged with (1) murdering and torturing a young married Indian named Chetu to procure a confession of supposed burglary, (2) unlawfully imprisoning him for some days and nights in a cowshed, (3) extorting money from him and his mother, who tried in vain to save him. The case for the prosecution was that he was thrown or compelled to jump into a well after being tortured. The finding of the judge on these charges is as follows:

"On the second charge (i.e., torture) the Assessors were of opinion that the two accused above-named did cause hurt to Chetu by thrusting a peg"—(Here for decency's sake, I must omit a few words.) "In this I agree with the Assessors; the evidence as to Chetu's statement to various persons is fully corroborated by the medical evidence, and there can be no sort of doubt on this point. His rectum was torn in two places, and the injuries set up intense pelvic inflammation, and were undoubtedly dangerous to life. I have no difficulty in finding the two accused (guilty) of voluntarily causing grievous hurt to Chetu in order to extract a confession from him or to induce him to restore property. . . .

"I also find that they undoubtedly kept him in wrongful confinement during the same night. . . .

"The charge of extorting twenty rupees from Chetu and his Mother is also, I consider, proved. . . .

"It is very difficult to say what really did happen on the 29th May. I have no doubt that Chetu was taken out of the village by one or more of the accused, and that efforts were made to induce him to confess. Owing to his previous injuries he was in a very weak state. He may have even succumbed to his injuries near the well and then been thrown in; or he may have run a short distance and thrown himself in to escape from his tormentors. . . . If they did not actually murder Chetu, they tortured him in a most atrocious and cruel way, and to all intents and purposes did him to death, whether he died of the hurt inflicted by them, or committed suicide to escape further ill-treatment. There was no tangible evidence to connect Chetu with the burglary."

The above needs no comment. The accused were acquitted of murder, though I don't understand why. For the torture they were sentenced, one to ten years' and the other to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. One was fined also to an amount, in rupees, of thirty guineas, and the other of six guineas. Out of these fines six guineas were awarded to the poor mother and the same to the widow, "a young girl of twenty," *if realised*. (Italics mine.) But the tragic story is not yet complete. When the mother heard that her son had been arrested and was likely to be tortured, she rushed to the train in order to go off and complain to the District Magistrate at Ferozapore. She was seized at the station (according to the prosecution), by order of the Head Constable—an officer of twenty years' service—and thrown into prison till her son was dead. For this unwarrantable act the Head Constable was tried, convicted, and sentenced to the tremendous punishment of one month's rigorous imprisonment! I ask, Sir, how many more lives are to be sacrificed, how many more mothers are to be made childless, and wives widows, before the law is so amended as to make such atrocities impossible? Administrative reforms will abate but not eradicate this evil.

Six years ago Lord Curzon's Commission reported. Since then many Acts have been passed in India increasing the powers of the police. When will a day be spared for legislation to stamp out the opportunities for torture?

I know how jealous the Under-Secretary is for the prestige of the police; but should not the reputation of the Government, under which these things occur year after year, be of more importance to him?—Yours faithfully,

FRIDERIC MACKARNES.

Temple, November 29.