

Letters to Moses Montefiore

from Oliver Wendell Holmes and John Greenleaf Whittier

[In 1884, Sir Moses Montefiore, of London, the most distinguished Jew of nineteenth-century Europe, celebrated his one hundredth birthday. Many Americans, who admired him for his generosity and broad humanitarian sympathies, sent him greetings. Among them were the two letters which follow. They are found in the Montefiore Papers at Ramsgate, England.]

Beverly Farms, Mass.
October 5th, 1884.

Venerable and Beloved Sir:

I send my congratulations across the Atlantic to join the unnumbered tributes which will greet you on your first centennial anniversary. A useful and noble life has made the occasion memorable. Others have counted as many years—how few have filled them so full of good deeds!

If the God of Israel would prolong your days until you counted as many centuries as the oldest of the Patriarchs, the world would still feel that you were taken away prematurely when you were called to leave it.

This note comes to you with all the best and warmest wishes for your prolonged life and health and happiness from one who has climbed three quarters of the way from the cradle to the summit of years upon which you are now standing.

Believe me, with the highest respect,

Most truly yours,

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

To Sir Moses Montefiore, on His 100th Birthday.

Let me earnestly and reverently congratulate thee on reaching the great age of one hundred years, years devoted to the service of our Common Father in heaven by ministering to the needs of his children on earth, and by promoting every good cause which he has inspired and blest. His love and peace be with thee!

JOHN G. WHITTIER

Oak Knoll
Danvers, [Massachusetts] U. S. A.
Oct. 5, 1884