To the Montgomery Improvement Association

6 October 1958
New York, N.Y.

My dear Friends and Co-Workers of the MIA:

While convalescing here in New York from an act of violence which was inflicted upon me two weeks ago, my mind inevitably turns toward you. Over and over again during these difficult days I have thought of you and our long association together.

First, let me relieve your minds by saying that I am doing quite well. The five physicians who have been at my side from the moment of the operation have all agreed that I have made an amazing recovery.¹ I am gradually regaining my strength and the natural pain that follows an operation is gradually passing away. On last Friday I was dismissed from the hospital and now I am convalescing in a spacious home on the outskirts of New York city.² I will have to be here for three weeks in order to stay in close contact with my physicians.

Words are inadequate for me to express my appreciation to you for your prayers and words of consolation during these days of confinement. They have come as a great spiritual lift. Just this morning I was reading the many messages that you so graciously sent to me prepared by Mrs. Doris Parker.³ You can never know what this thoughtful expression meant to me. All of these things I am sure will make my complete recovery even more speedier.

May I urge you to continue in the noble struggle for freedom and justice that has been so courageously started in the Cradle of the Confederacy. Fortunately, God has given Montgomery several marvelous leaders and my absence does not in any way have to impede the program of our movement. I hope you will give the Reverends Abernathy, [Solomon S.] Seay, [William J.] Powell, [B. D.] Lambert and the other stalwarts in the front of leadership in our movement your abiding cooperation, although we have made great progress, we have a long way to go. Our final destination is the city of freedom and we must not stop until we have entered the sublime and lofty Metropolis.

I solicit your continued prayers. I can assure you that God has already heard them, for without them I could not have come this far. And let me say that in spite

¹. King likely refers to Aubré Maynard, Emil Naclerio, John Cordice, Farrow Allen, and Helen Mayer.
². King recuperated at the Brooklyn parsonage of Sandy Ray, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church.
³. Doris R. Parker was an MIA member.
of the pain and suffering that I have undergone in the last few days, God has been abundantly good to me. Through this whole experience I can't remember one moment that I became excited or even upset nor did I have one iota of bitterness for Mrs. Izola Curry, the lady who committed the act of violence upon me. And today I joyously accept the scars on my body as the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ and proudly sing, “Where He Leads Me, I will Follow,” even if it is to a painful and agonizing cross. I have come to see that even in the midst of the pains of life, His yoke is easy and His burden is light, precisely at the moment you feel that you can't bear it.

I say good-bye to you now and look forward to seeing you very soon. Remember! God lives. They that stand against Him stand in a tragic and an already declared minority. They that stand with Him stand in the glow of the world's bright tomorrows.

Your servant in the cause of Christ and Freedom,
Martin Luther King, Jr.

From R. D. and Effie Crockett

10 October 1958
Montgomery, Ala.

While recuperating, King received daily summaries of his office phone calls and correspondence from his secretary Maude Ballou. With her 16 October report Ballou forwarded this “very beautiful letter” from Dexter members Effie and R. D. Crockett. R. D. Crockett, a professor at Alabama State College and a friend of King's from Boston University, occasionally served as a guest preacher at Dexter during the fall of 1958.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Harlem Hospital
New York, New York

Dear Brother King,

The sentiments of this letter have been in my mind ever since the shocking news of your tragic experience reached us, but until now I have not been able to put

1. For similar reports, see Ballou to King, 25 September, 10 October, and 21 October 1958. Effie Bell Crockett (1917-), born in Birmingham, Alabama, and raised in Montgomery, received a B.S. from Alabama A&M University and an M.S. from Columbia University. Crockett worked as a college administrator and educator at Alabama State, Philander Smith College, Bennett College, and Howard University.