

*A debt of gratitude  
to Lord Lytton*



A debt of gratitude to Edward Robert Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lytton, GCB, GCSI, GCIE, PC, Viceroy of India 1876–1880, British Ambassador to France 1887–1891. First published in: *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, No. 2, November 1879, pp. 34-35. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A THUNDER CLOUD WITH A SILVER LINING) II pp. 140-43.

“All comes in good time to him who knows to wait,” says the proverb. The small party of New York Theosophists, who arrived at Bombay eight months ago, had scarcely enjoyed the friendly greeting of the natives when they received the most unmerited and bitter insult of an accusation of political intrigue, followed by a shower of abuse and slander! We had come with the best and purest of intentions — however utopian, exaggerated, and even ill-timed, they may have seemed to the indifferent. But lo! who hath “believed our report”? Like Israel, the allegorical man of sorrow of Isaiah, we saw ourselves for no fault of ours “numbered with the transgressors,” and “bruised for the iniquities” of one for whose race we had come to offer our mite of work, and were ready to devote our time and our very lives. This one, whose name must never pollute the columns of this journal, showed us *his* gratitude by warning the police that we were come with some dark political purpose, and accusing us of being *spies* — that is to say, the vile of the vile — the *mangs*<sup>1</sup> of the social system. But now, as the last thunder-clap of the monsoon is dying away, our horizon too is cleared of its dark clouds. Thanks to the noble and unselfish exertions of an English friend at Simla, the matter has been brought before His Excellency, the Viceroy. The sequel is told in the Allahabad *Pioneer*, of October 11<sup>th</sup>, as follows:

. . . It will be remembered that in the beginning of this year, their feelings were deeply hurt on the occasion of a trip they made up-country by an insulting espionage set on foot against them by the police. It appears that some groundless calumny had preceded them to this country, and that the police put a very clumsy construction upon certain orders they received from Government respecting the new arrivals. However, since then the subject has been brought especially to the Viceroy’s notice, and, satisfied that the Theosophists were *misrepresented in the first instance*, he has given formal orders, through the Politi-

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<sup>1</sup> [*Māng* — Sanskrit *Mātanga* — a very low aboriginal tribe in India. They make ropes, mats; baskets, and muzzles for bullocks, and, when settled in the outskirts of villages, they act as village watchmen, guides, scavengers, and as executioners. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

cal Department, to the effect that they are not to be any longer subject to interference.

From the bottom of our hearts we thank his Lordship for having with one single word rubbed the vile stain off our reputations. We thank Lord Lytton rather than the Viceroy, the *gentleman*, who hastened to redress a wrong that the Viceroy might have overlooked. The high official has but done an act of justice, and would not have been wholly blameable if, under the temporary pressure of political work of the highest importance, he had put it off to the Greek calends.<sup>1</sup> We love to feel that we owe this debt of gratitude to the son of one whose memory will ever be dear and sacred to the heart of every true Theosophist; to the son of the author of *Zanoni*, *A Strange Story*, *The Coming Race*, and *The House and the Brain*; one who ranked higher than any other in the small number genuine mystical writers, for he knew what he was talking about, which is more than can be said of other writers in this department of literature.<sup>2</sup> Once more we thank Lord Lytton for having prompted the Viceroy.

And now, for the last time in these columns, as we hope, we will say a few words more in reference to this sad page in the history of our Society. We first wish to thank those many outside friends, as well as Fellows of the Theosophical Society, who, regardless of the danger of associating with strangers so much ostracized, kept true to us throughout the long trial, scorning to abandon us even at the risk of loss of employment, or of personal disgrace. Honour to them; most gladly would we, were it permitted, write their names for the information of our Western Fellows. But we can never forget, on the other hand, the two or three instances of shameful, cowardly desertion, that have occurred. They were among those who had talked the most, who had most loudly protested their changeless and eternal devotion to us; who called us “brothers” near and dear to their hearts; had offered us their houses, their carriages, and the contents of their purses — if we would only accept them — which we did not. At the first apprehension that idle rumour might become a reality, these were the swiftest to desert us. One, especially, whose name we will refrain from mentioning, though we would have a perfect right to do so, acted towards us in the most disgraceful way. At the first hint from an official superior, cowering like a whipped hound before a danger more imaginary than real, he hastened to repudiate not only his “brothers,” but even to pointedly disclaim the remotest connection with the Theosophical Society, and conspicuously published this repudiation in an Anglo-Vernacular paper!

To him, we have no word to say, but as a lesson for such others as in the future may feel like imitating him, we will quote these words of an English gentleman (not the

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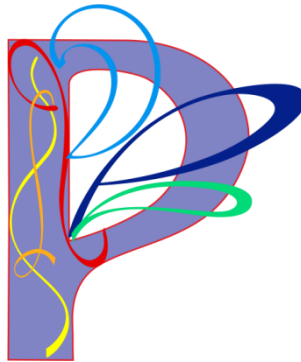
<sup>1</sup> [The Hellenic calendar — or more properly, the Hellenic calendars, for there was no uniform calendar imposed upon all of Classical Greece — began in most Greek states between Autumn and Winter except the Attic calendar, which began in Summer. The Greeks, as early as the time of Homer, appear to have been perfectly familiar with the division of the year into the twelve lunar months but no intercalary month *Embolimos* or day is then mentioned. Independent of the division of a month into days, it was divided into periods according to the increase and decrease of the moon. Thus, the first day or new moon was called *Noumenia*. The month in which the year began, as well as the names of the months, differed among the states, and in some parts even no names existed for the months, as they were distinguished only numerically, as the first, second, third, fourth month, etc.]

<sup>2</sup> [Edward George Earle Lytton, Bulwer-Lytton, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lytton (1803–73), the famous English novelist, was the father of Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lytton (1831–91), who became Viceroy of India in 1875. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

lowest among Government officials) who has since joined our Society, who writes us in reference to this personage:

. . . If I were you, I would bless my stars that such a sneak left our Society of his own accord before he put us to the trouble of expelling him. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.*<sup>1</sup> A Fellow who, after pledging his *word of honour*<sup>2</sup> to protect the interest of his Society, “also the honour of a Brother Fellow,” even “at the peril of his life,”<sup>3</sup> breaks it and turns traitor without any other cause than his own shameful cowardice, offers but a poor guarantee for his loyalty even to the Government that he has sworn allegiance to . . .

In all their search after strong words to fling at it, our enemies never once thought of charging the Theosophical Society with harbouring and honouring poltroons.



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<sup>1</sup> [i.e., “false in one, false in all,” Roman legal principle indicating that a witness who falsifies one matter is not credible on any matter.]

<sup>2</sup> The Theosophical Society requires no oaths, as it deems no pledge more binding than the word of honour.

<sup>3</sup> *Rules*, Art. II