

To Frederick Hale Thomson

Frederick Hale Thomson Esqr 4 Clarges St Piccadilly London W

Clarkes Castle Hotel Taunton
Tuesday June 22d 1858

Dear Sir In the first place you rather transpose the fact; for if you remember, so far from “communicating my pecuniary views”! to that loathsome reptile Sir Liar Coward Bulwer Lytton – being my “express injunction” you expressly asked me to write to you, what I wanted, which I thought kind, and gentlemanlike of you at the time; as indeed I did your whole bearing under the circumstances, could I have divested myself of the recollection of the infamous blackguard under whose convoy you came; my gratitude for this towards me unwonted conduct would have approached still nearer to what Sir Henry Wotton¹ said of Sir Philip Sydney’s² wit, and have been “The very measure of congruity”;³ – but for this recollection. *Maintenant, revenons à nos moutons.*⁴ Considering that that reptile Sir Liar has been warned by friends and foes, for the last fifteen months, in his own interest (the only thing he really understands, or ever attends to) that after having seared with every wrong, and goaded with every outrage, he had better not push his legal victim to extremities, – by after hampering her with a heavy debt, and preventing her, earning her own bread, by setting his venal and dastardly Press gang to falsify and unscrupulously abuse every book she writes; with the same fifty perjuring power of the forge bellows that Puff’s his barefaced, wholesale plagiaries and Brothel Philosophy; they had warned him I say, not to drive me to extremities, by leaving me to starve, and vainly struggle against such a maelstrom of degrading, and unmerited pecuniary misery. ’ But, the brute, who justly values, the smallest coin of the realm above his own sin-steeped and crime mortgaged soul, disregarded the warning calculating too surely; upon his victims penniless – friendless position, – but with only God! and right! it is astonishing how far, even a crushed and hunted woman, can prevail against “The gates of Hell” and as he may take his oath, that I shall not allow, the communication you asked me to make to him; (for I never should have lost my time in making it) to remain quietly in his waste paper basket, or contribute to Mr Disraeli’s sinking fund! – the same indomitable resolution, which took me to the Hertford Election, shall take me with far wider, and more efficient results, to London tomorrow, where I shall have the honor of calling upon you about noon. We all know what a venal, Infernal machine the English Press is more especially the great National Typographic weathercock “The Times”, which for a con-sideration would sell its own Father, – and utilize the ashes of its mother to throw dust

in the Eyes of the purchaser; but here again, – the miserable Charlatan reckons without his host; for there are means, by which to force – a nolens, volens⁵ entrance into the Universal Press – without even committing the same brutal outrage that was committed upon the privacy of my Bedroom the other day; and as my Lord Derby has thought fit to make the most Stygian private vice, the high road to public honor(?) that high road being first carefully Mcadamized⁶ with all Gods broken commandments; he must only take the consequences, and before he, and his creditable! Colonial secretary are three days older, the noble Premier may set about inditing Conversations, on the Perjurers; – as an artistic contrast, and pendant to his “conversations on the Parables”! “and Dives being in Hell, – looked up and saw Lazarus afar off in Abrahams bosom⁷ & & &” which particular parable The Right Honble! (faugh!) Colonial Secretary, would do well to ponder on – as a refresher in this appropriate weather – I am sorry to bore you with so much of my any thing but “Divina Comedea”⁸ – But causes will persist, both in the moral, and physical world, in always producing commensurate effects: and since the good old times, when Noah⁹ was a Midshipman and unlike Sir Liar, took his legal incumbrance a yachting with him, boredom has been “the great, and mighty shadow”¹⁰ that ever stalks, dark and cold, before, – a Fiendish chronic, and ever increasing injustice. Now that charming! man Sir Janus All Puff¹¹ Bulwer Lytton, who has laboured so indefatigably in his printed plagiaries, and carefully culled immoralities, to debauch matrons and sap spinners – (for truly says Nathaniel Hawthorne in his “Mosses from an old Manse”

“There is no hope for the English people, as long as Bulwer finds a single Printer, Publisher or reader! – for he is the very pimple, on the ages Humbug!”¹² a month before my poor young martyr first child was born, – the Pimple kicked me till I was nearly dead, – and fearful were the agonies this kicking caused me at her birth: – the moment she was born! the inhuman brute, had her sent out of the house, saying he would not have my time and attention taken up with any d—d child!” what then? – this was his sacred!! private life! Mockana – donned his glittering veil, to dazzle the Donkeydom of that concrete ass “The British Public! – and in that bundle of pompous plagiaries on stilts “Zanoni”¹³ – there is a whole chapter! upon a Fathers “love for his first born”! the blasphemous hypocrite! and slimy serpent! – a year before I, and my Children were turned out of our home to make way for one of his then “Social Evils”, Miss Laura Deacon – since figuring as Mrs Beaumont! and he, as guardian to his own Bastards: – the cowardly ruffian sprang upon me, in one of his Tigerish rages and made his hidious teeth, meet in my cheek, leaving the piece hanging and me matted in my blood, – to this, some of his servants are still the living witnesses: – and above all, his own letter full of lies – (for what else did he ever write, or utter) saying having eternally disgraced himself he should go abroad change a name that was odious to him take £200 a year (!!!!!!!) and leave me all the rest: – that for this

purpose, he had arranged everything with his Lawyer (the Patent Blackguard Loaden to wit) This precious Epistle! – which you shall see, ended with these words. – “Rosina you have been to me an incomparable wife I do not ask your forgiveness which I know your generosity would freely give – I could neither bear it nor your reproaches – why trample on a fallen man?”

Like a fool I did not – I helped him up and shie[l]ded him – though the event proved every word in this stilted, artificial letter was a lie – he had not made a single preparation for going abroad! on the contrary – he had been boating about the Thames, in treaty – for lady Dysants Villa at Richmond!! and when a year after this the brute turned me, and my children out of our home; and I reminded him – I not only saved, – but like an over generous fool – to shield him from a humiliation, he never had the grace to feel, exalted him in the worlds eyes more than ever. – His manly! gentlemanlike! and characteristic reply was – “More fool you Madam, for I’ll not give you another opportunity – and you’ve concealed every thing – even from your mother, all the years that we have lived together- that now you’ll get no one to believe you – and remember you have neither father nor brother, I’ve got every shilling of your own money out of you, and what I shall allow you will be only for my life – therefore you are completely in my power!” – not quite my Lord Derby’s tool – for as long as there is a God in heaven – no honest and therefore thoroughly fearless person, can be (once your villainy is made indisputably public and proclaimed from pole to pole, as it shall be) can be in the power of so complex and consequently so vulnerable a villain as you! and though well aware as I am, that masculine vice, and more especially marital profligacy, is always held sacred in “Moral England”!! yet there are limits, to Fiendish brutalities – leapt over by perjurers even, according to the Tariff of English conventionality! and, as there is a God in Heaven – I am not going to be fooled any longer or to crouch, wait, sue, and cringe for the hard crust that the Law, one sided as it is, and that great pick lock Public opinion – can and shall compel him to give me, and as I loathe him as a Profligate, despise him as a Coward, defy him as a liar, and laugh at him as the most ridiculous Political mountebank in England! – he and his whole clique shall see before they are 3 days older what one woman though crushed and penniless, who is not a fool, can do, against an unscrupulous, and therefore powerful legion – of bold bad men, who with all their Brummagen “cleverness”! are fools, by dint of being villains. – That monster has torn out my heart and trampled on it, he has compassed my life with a snare and crowned it with a curse and as he has taken every thing else from me by the living God! he shall share this too – Eight years ago – I was sent by the Editor¹⁴ of a Penny Paper “The Family Herald” a notice of correspondents – which he refused to insert; it was not actually written by Sir Liar Coward Bulwer Lytton, who never normally performs his own dirty work, any more than he actually blacks his own boots – oh! dear no, he merely like the onions in

Sydney Smiths¹⁵ Salad “unsuspected animates the whole”¹⁶ so this “curiosity of Literature”¹⁷ was written by one of his mistresses, or minions, who indiscriminately compose his truly oriental seraglio – the purport of it was that one of the reasons, he did not allow me more, was that from my habits of gross intoxication!!! my appearance was so disgusting I was not fit to be seen in any society! so doubtless you were informed that my insanity was the result of Delirium tremens!! had I the taste for this pretty feminine little talent de societé¹⁸ – he has taken care that I should not have the means of indulging it, – so that the Pump, is at one my Butler, and my seller as he treats his lies as he does his minions, or his mistresses, casts them off for a new one when they have served his turn, – he of course would not scruple to deny this upon oath! (his oath!) but the written and living proofs – remain to confront him. If I have the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow (Wednesday) some deeper villainy I will yet tell you; but having told you enough to show, how completely that Fiend by his life long outrages, and persecutions, has not only unsphered but unsexed me; you will not perhaps now so much wonder at my “shocking language”! as the Cowardly villain reminded me that I had neither Father nor brother! (no verily! or every bone in his ugly skin would have been broken long since) he shall find that I can be my own father, and brother as far as smashing him goes – with many apologies for taking up so much of your time, with my miserable affairs

I Have the Honor to Be Dear Sir-yr obedient servant
Rosina Bulwer Lytton

HALS

1. Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639) was an author and diplomat, who was ambassador to Venice and various other European states.
2. Philip Sydney (1554–86) was an Elizabethan courtier, poet and wit.
3. Sir Henry Wotton said this of Sir Philip Sidney, quoted in Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert and Dr Robert Sanderson* (London: John Major, 1825), p. 131. These biographies were first published separately between 1640 and 1678.
4. Literally: let us get back to our sheep (French); let us get back to the subject.
5. Whether willing or unwilling (Latin).
6. ‘Originally: to make or repair (a road) according to McAdam’s method’ (*OED*).
7. When the beggar Lazarus died, an angel took him to Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22). See RBL, 4 April 1858.
8. ‘Divine Comedy’ (Italian) and the title of Dante’s poem, written during the early fourteenth century.
9. Genesis 5–9.
10. ‘Great and mighty cloud’, 2 Esdras, 15:40–2.
11. RBL uses this name for EBL in her novel *Very Successful!*.
12. See RBL, 21 July 1857.
13. EBL’s novel *Zanoni*. See RBL, 30 September 1845.
14. Revd James Elimalet Smith.

15. Sydney Smith (1771–1845) was a writer and clergyman, whose daughter was Lady Holland. See below, n. 16.
16. 'Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,/ And half-suspected, animates the whole.' Quoted in Lady Holland, *A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1855), vol. 1, p. 373. This is part of a recipe for a salad, which Smith created in verse as well as in the kitchen.
17. A reference to Isaac Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature* (1791–1823).
18. Gift from society (French).

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