

**Dr. George Oliver (1782 – 1867): a compilation with reference to Lodge Rising Star of Western India #342 S.C. By Furokh Santoke**

Dear brethren of Lodge Rising Star of Western India. Our Lodge was very fortunate to be contacted by Bro Ian R Mclachlan, Treasurer, The Doctor Oliver Lodge 3964 UGLE on our Lodge website, stating that “The Medal presented to Dr George Oliver in 1862 along with the original letter of presentation is still in possession of The Doctor Oliver Lodge 3964 UGLE. We also have his Certificate of Affiliation to your third Degree in 1846”. On requesting for a copy/photograph of the documents and medal, Bro Ian McLachlan very promptly sent them by return email. This raised my curiosity of the connection between Bro. Dr. George (Geo) Oliver (who never seemed to have visited India) and Lodge Rising Star. This is what I came up with.

Amongst the Masonic writers of the 19th century there was one who had during his life-time a tremendous following all over the world, and even now his statements, although uncorroborated, are often quoted as historical facts. This author was Dr. George Oliver. During his Masonic career Dr. Oliver probably wrote more books upon Freemasonry than any other brother has done. But, written in an uncritical age, it behooves us to test the reliability of statements made in those books by such outside evidence as may come to our knowledge.

Bro. Gilbert W. Daynes, England

The Masonic presentations to him were many. In 1839 the Witham Lodge presented him with a handsome silver salver and the Apollo Lodge with a handsome gold jewel, and in 1844 he was the recipient of a splendid testimonial consisting of a silver cup and service of Plate contributed to by Freemasons in all parts of the world. In 1862, the Rising Star Lodge, Bombay, presented him with a massive silver medal on the front of which was a design representing two native Freemasons, one on each side of an altar, in Masonic regalia and bearing wands and Masonic symbols. On the reverse was a portrait of the founder of the lodge.

Bro. Dudley Wright

From “The History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India” by D F Wadia, one gets the following: *“The historian of the Craft, Brother Dr. George Oliver, gave a short account of the inception of the lodge in his Freemason's Quarterly Review of 1844, at pages 108-9 which began thus : “ Bombay - The spell is broken. The Masonic sleepers are entranced, energy again prevails, and the Rising Star of Western India promises light and lustre to all within its circle embracing within its ample folds the citizen of the world and the native gentleman born under the Orient Sun” and it ended with a pregnant sentence full of deep sympathy and encouragement. “May the foundation stone prove the superstructure of a building that shall endure for all ages.” ”.*

The book further continues: *“At the fifth regular meeting, held on 10th September, 1844, it was resolved to order out from England the whole of Brother Dr. George Oliver's works on Masonry. Brother Oliver's works subsequently arrived and some of them still form a part of the library of the lodge.”*

The book further continues: *“DURING the second year (1845) the Lodge maintained its progress. Twelve new members were enrolled, two of whom were initiates, three joining members and seven honorary members ..... The seven honorary members were Bros. Capt. Frederick W. Birch, Dr. George Oliver, C. F. Crucifix, J. Lamart, De Caravon, Lord Elphinstone, and the Very Worshipful Brother W. A. Laurie.”*

We are indeed fortunate that his Certificate of Affiliation to the third Degree is in the possession of Doctor Oliver Lodge #3964 UGLE, and a copy of the same has been sent to us by W.Bro Ian R McLachlan, LGR Prov. Grand Std Bearer ( Northants and Hunts), Treasurer Dr Oliver Lodge as shown below:



The book gives Bro Dr Oliver's acceptance letter as :

*"Mr. MANECKJEE CURSETJI,  
Secretary, Lodge Rising Star of Western India."  
Scopwick Vicarage, June 24th 1845.*

*Dear Sir and Brother,*

*The unequivocal testimony which the Worshipful Master, Officers, and Brethren of the Lodge Rising Star of Western India have given of the approbation of my labours in behalf of the service of Freemasonry, by electing me an honorary member of the lodge, is peculiarly gratifying to my feelings and I request that you will communicate to them my unfeigned thanks and gratitude for the distinction which they have conferred upon me.*

*I became attached to the Order at a very early age, and a more intimate acquaintance with its humanising principles have given me no reason to think that the time I have devoted to its study and development has been unprofitably bestowed. And the unqualified approval of many learned and judicious members of the Craft has assured me that my earnest endeavours to explain its doctrines and to disseminate its sacred truth have not been unproductive of solid and substantial good.*

*With fraternal regards to the members of your lodge both Native and European.*

*Believe me, Dear Sir,  
Your faithful Brother,  
GEO. OLIVER."*

The book further notes that in 1862:

*"He (Bro Maneckji Cursetji) then also proposed that the Burnes Medal should be presented to the Grand Master of England, Brother George Oliver, the Historian of the Craft, and to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge La Glorie de FUnivers de Paris in which he first saw the light of Freemasonry. .... Brother Oliver had, it appears, taken a notice of the lodge in very flattering terms in his new Edition of Preston just then published. .... Brother Maneckji Cursetji was then duly commissioned to present the medals in person to the distinguished brethren and he executed the commission by making the presentation to Brother Sirget in person and to the others by letters as he could not see them."*

We are indeed fortunate that the letter forwarding the Burnes medal, and the Burnes Medal itself are now in the possession of Doctor Oliver Lodge #3964 UGLE, and copies of the same have been sent to us by W.Bro Ian R McLachlan, LGR Prov. Grand Std Bearer ( Northants and Hunts), Treasurer Dr Oliver Lodge. These are shown below:



Bombay 25<sup>th</sup> June 1862

To

Right Worshipfull Brother G. Oliver

Londan

Right Worshipfull Sir, & Dear Brother

It affords me much pleasure in informing you, that at a regular meeting of Lodge Rising Star of Western India held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1862 the following resolution was unanimously passed.

Resolution

"That a Burns Medal be presented personally by Right Worshipfull Brother Manockjee Cussetjee B. M. to the Right Worshipfull Bro: G. Oliver the historian of Masonry & the honorary Member of our Lodge to mark further our appreciation of his valuable & learned Labors in behalf of Masonry which extends back to nearly half a Century".

In conformity with the above resolution the Right Worshipfull B. M. Bro: Manockjee, the oldest Member, and one of the Originators of the Lodge, as well as the first native Gentleman on this side of India, who received Masonic light; now sojourning in Europe, with his family will avail himself of that circumstance to present to you in the name of this Lodge a Burns Medal struck in honor of the Founder of our Lodge, which I beg you will honor us by your acceptance and which I trust you will wear on all Masonic occasions & C<sup>o</sup> reunions.

Right Worshipfull Sir, we are really proud of having on our rolls your distinguished name as an honorary Member & it gives us an additional satisfaction now to present to you the Founders Medal at the hands of such a distinguished Mason on this side of India as Bro: Manockjee Cussetjee to be. <sup>as you are obliged</sup> May you live long in the enjoyment of every happiness

happiness & health to extend your useful career in behalf of  
Masonry as you have hitherto done.

I remain  
Dr Br Sir & dear Br

Yours gratefully

Wm. B. Burnes

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The book records Br Dr. George Olivers' acceptance letter as:

*“East Gate, Lincoln,  
September 12th, 1862.*

*,To THE' WORSHIPFUL MASTER, OFFICER, AND BRETHREN  
OF THE LODGE RISING STAR OF WESTERN INDIA.*

*My dear Brethren,*

*It has been remarked by a profound moralist that a token of respect to a man advanced in years conveys more real gratification to his mind than would have been produced at any earlier period by a similar demonstration. Your kind approval of my labours, communicated by our worthy and esteemed Brother Maneckjee Cursetjee, accompanied by a vote of a Burnes' Medal, affords a striking illustration of the above truth.*

*As you justly observe in the Resolution, I have laboured for more than half a century in the cause of Masonry and I have endeavoured to illustrate its transcendent beauties and to place it on its legitimate basis as a benevolent institution calculated to improve the morals and enlighten the understanding of*

*all worthy men of whatever climate or religion who have accepted it as a light to guide them through the devious wilderness of this world in their progress to another and a better.*

*Under the impression that the Lodge Rising Star of Western India is prosperous and flourishing I sincerely pray that although the distance prevents us from becoming personally acquainted with each other here, we shall meet in a more perfect state of happiness in the Grand Lodge above.*

*Believe me to be, my dear brethren, ever truly yours,  
GEO. OLIVER.”*

The book continues:

In 1862: *“The finances of the lodge were in a prosperous condition and the lodge therefore ordered out at the initiative of Brother Cama a complete set of masonic books of Brother Dr. Oliver, costing about Rupees three hundred, to form a lodge library for the use of the members who were to have the privilege of using one set of books each time, which they were not to retain for more than a week. Some of these books form a part of the present library of the lodge.*

In 1865: *“Brother Prescott, presented to the lodge a picture of Brother Dr. Oliver which was thankfully accepted.”*

In 1867: *“The Lodge had this year to perform the melancholy duty of mourning the loss of Brother Oliver, the Historian of the Craft, and to condole with his nearest relatives.”*

