

**THE NEW TIMON: A
ROMANCE
OF LONDON**

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The New Timon: A Romance of London by Edward Bulwer Lytton

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EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

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OF LONDON**

THE
NEW TIMON.

A ROMANCE OF LONDON.

FIRST AMERICAN
FROM THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.

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THE NEW TIMON.

PART THE FIRST.

I.

O'er royal London, in luxuriant May,
While lamps yet twinkled, dawning crept the day.
Home from the hell the pale-eyed gamester steals;
Home from the ball, flash-jaded Beauty's wheels;
The lean grimalkin, who, since night began,
Hath hymn'd to love amidst the wrath of man,
Scared from his captures by the morning star,
Flits finely by, and threads the area bar;
From fields suburban rolls the early cart;
As rests the revel, so awakes the mart.
Transfusing Mocha from the beans within,
Bright by the crossing gleams the alchemic tin,—
There halts the craftsman;—there, with envious sigh,
The houseless vagrant looks, and limps foot-weary by.

Behold that street;—the Omphalos of Town!^{*}
 Where the grim palace wears the prison's frown,
 As mindful still, amidst a gaudier race,
 Of the veil'd Genius of the mournful Place—
 Of floors no majesty but Grief's had trod,
 And weary limbs that only knelt to God!†

What tales—what morals of the elder day—
 If stones had language—could that street convey!
 Along that space the blood-hound crowd array'd
 Howl'd round the shrine where last the Stuart pray'd;‡
 See to that space the self-same blood-hounds run
 To lick the feet of Stuart's vile son!.

* A phrase respectfully suggested to the classic taste of Mr. George Robins, as a substitute for the more prosaic synonym —“a central situation.”

† Where now stands St. James's palace stood the hospital dedicated to St. James, for the reception of fourteen leprous maidens.

‡ Charles the First attended divine service in the Royal Chapel immediately before he walked through the park to his scaffold at Whitehall. In the palace of St. James's, Monk and Sir John Granville schemed for the restoration of Charles II.

There, through the dusk-red towers—amidst his ring
Of Vans and Mynheers—rode the Dutchman king;
And there—did England's Goneril thrill to hear
The shouts that triumphed o'er her crownless Lear!
There, where the gas-light streams on Crockford's door,
Bluff Henry chuckled at the jests of More.
There, where you gaze upon the last H. B.,
Swift paused, and muttered, "Shall I have that see?"
There, where you pile, for party's common weal,
Knits votes that serve, with hearts abhorring, Peel,
Blunt Walpole seized, and roughly bought his man;—
Or, tired of Polly, St. John lounged to Anne.

Well, let the world change on,—still must endure
While Earth is Earth—one changeless race—the Poor!
Within that street, on yonder threshold stone,
What sits as stone-like?—Pennry claim thine own!
She sate the homeless wanderer,—with calm eyes
Looking thro' tears, yet lifted to the skies;
Wistful but patient—sorrowful but mild,
As asking God when He would claim his child.
A face too young for such a tranquil grief,
The worm that gnawed the core had spared the leaf;

Tho' worn the cheek, with hunger or with care,
Yet still the soft fresh child-like bloom was there—
And each might touch you with an equal gloom,
The youth, the care, the hunger, and the bloom;—
As if, when round the cradle of the child
With lavish gifts the gentler fairies smiled,
One vengeful sprite, forgotten as the guest,
Had breathed a spell to disenchant the rest,
And prove how slight each favour, else divine,
If wroth the Urganda of the Golden Mine!

Now as the houseless sate, and up the sky
Dawn to day strengthened, pass'd a stranger by:
He saw and halted;—she beheld him not—
All round them slept, and silence wrapt the spot.
To this new comer Nature had denied
The gifts that graced the outcast crouch'd beside:
With orient suns his cheek was swarth and grim,
And low the form, tho' lightly shaped the limb;
Yet life glowed vigorous in that deep-set eye,
With a calm force that dared you to defy;
And the small foot was planted on the stone
Firm as a gnome's upon his mountain throne;

Simple his garb, yet what the wealthy wear,
And conscious power gave lordship to his air.

Lone in the Babel thus the maid and man;
Long he gazed silent, and at last began:—
“Poor, homeless outcast—dost thou see me stand
Close by thy side—yet beg not? Stretch thy hand.”
The voice was stern, abrupt, yet full and deep—
The outcast heard, and started as from sleep,
And meekly rose, and stretched the hand, and sought
To murmur thanks—the murmur fail’d the thought.
He took the slight thin hand within his own:
“This hand hath nought of honest labour known;
And yet methinks thou’rt honest!—speak, my child.”
And his face broke to beauty as it smiled.

But her unconscious eyes, cast down the while,
Met not the heart that opened in that smile:
Again the murmur rose, and died in air.
“Nay, what thy mother and her home, and where?”
Lo, with those words the rigid ice, that lay
Layer upon layer within, dissolves away;

And tears come rushing from o'erchargèd eyes:—
“There is my mother—there her home—the skies!”
Oh, in that burst, what deeps of lone distress!
O desolation of the motherless!
Yet through the anguish how survived the trust,
Home in the skies, though in the grave the dust!
The man was moved, and silence fell again;
Upsprung the sun—Light reassumed the reign;—
Love ruled on high! Below, the twain that share
Men's builded empires—Mammon and Despair!

At length, with pitying eye and soothing tone,
The stranger spoke: “Thy bitterer grief mine own;
Mine the full coffers, but the beggared heart,
Amidst the million, lonely as thou art.
But Gold—earth's demon, when unshared—receives
God's breath, and grows a God, when it relieves.
Thou trust'st our common Father, orphan one,
And He shall guide thee, if thou trust the son.
Nay, follow, child.” And on, with passive feet,
Ghost-like, she followed through the death-like street.