

**LONDON; PAST,  
PRESENT  
AND FUTURE**

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London; Past, Present and Future by John Ashford

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**JOHN ASHFORD**

**LONDON; PAST,  
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AND FUTURE**



# LONDON:

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

BY

JOHN ASHFORD,

AUTHOR OF "THE LADY AND THE BOUND," "ITALY'S HOPE," ETC.

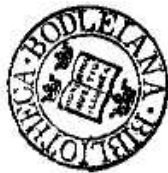
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LONDON:

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1858.

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## LONDON :

### PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

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LONDON ! Emporium of our Globe ! where dome  
And spire o'ererown a builded world. Oh ! vast,  
O marv'lous city ! not the present, past,  
To thee one rival yields ; not in great Rome,  
Nor Nineveh, nor Babylon, which loom  
On Time's horizon dim ; nor where the wave  
Wash'd opulent Tyre, and now moans o'er her  
grave,  
By thee all shrink, so wonderful thy doom.  
The world in little thou ; come seeking thee  
All nations. Thee, earth's universal mart,  
Where with each people for an artery  
Thou sittest, Commerce' overthrobbing heart.  
All through thee flow, thou harbour of the  
world,  
Nor breathes a clime but stirs thy flag unfurl'd.

How chang'd this scene since when thy ships,  
O Rome !

Where curious gazers rode, with trembling oars  
Dared (hugging cautious) these life-teeming shores  
As wild, more wild, the realm unknown did loom ;  
Whilst drear, of desolation-seeming bomb

O'er the uncharter'd, lonely, wond'ring Thame,  
The howl of hungry Lupa frequent came,  
Piercing the hollow of Cimmerian gloom.

As up the Yarra-Yarra, Hudson wide,  
Prime colonists from England. Vent'rous band !  
Steer'd marv'ling, slow explor'd their way  
through tide

That solemn lav'd, untrodden, silent strand ;  
So, when in swaddling clothes Britannia lay,  
Those ancient Mariners darkly prob'd their way.

Strange course pursued, ('twas Providence that led)

To regions savage, desolate, unknown,  
Realms some deem'd Pluto's, regions silent, lone,  
Save when howl'd wolf, or, roused from reedy bed,  
The savage started up, rear'd wond'ring head ;

Star'd from his cool retreat at noon, then rose  
Gaunt, painted, grim, and splashing mid rank  
In naked swiftness, fierce, to forest fled,— [ooze,  
Fled, glancing back, though oft halloo'd to stay,  
Bid pilot unexplor'd, wild, vanward way ;

Fled to hut-capital t' advise, alarm'd

His savage tribe of strange men clad, them arm'd  
With spear, hide-shield, scyth'd chariot—wild array !  
To head, on slimy shore, for yelling fray.

What outlines rude, unfinish'd portraits those,  
Our ancestors—on life's rude canvas rose !

Of man, rough sketches they, by Nature done :  
True artist, deigns she such low title own,  
She, who abhors all rules yet has alone [share.  
Harmonious blendings schools in vain would  
Man's semblance they, that lack'd art's hues,  
skill's care,

Civilization's slowly mellowing tone.

The sensuous savage features, bold rude lines  
Of bare humanity, bone, muscle, thew  
Of our poor nature, proving joys but few,

Much misery it owns where nought refines,—  
Arose before those Romans, thrill'd with awe,  
Where wild locks wav'd, where wild dance shook  
the shore.

Who'll tell of that more dim, more distant day,  
When rude canoe first cleav'd the briny way,  
Landed on Albion's mist-hung pallid coasts,  
The sires of yonder nude, loud yelling hosts ?  
Tell of that ancient hour when gazing o'er  
Main, never plough'd from Gallia's facing shore,  
The Gaul viewed first our cliff-bound isle, or when  
In hollow'd trees he dar'd th' inviting main ?  
Say, who through time's oft-lost, untrodden track  
May trace their history dim, may trace them back  
To when within civilization's bourne  
(That bright republic) they did dwell, or learn—  
Since civilized of yore, by what degrees  
They sunk to yon tumultuous savages ?