



# Personal Sketches of His Own Times, Volume I

*Sir Jonah Barrington*

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This is volume one of three and was published in 1827.

Excerpts from the Introduction:

The compilation by me of a medley of this description may appear rather singular. Indeed, I myself think it so, and had got nearly half-way through it before I could reasonably account for the thing; more especially as it was by no means commenced for mercenary purposes. The fact is, I had long since engaged my mind and time on a work of real public importance; and so far as that work was circulated, my literary ambition was more than gratified by the approbation it received. But it has so happened, that my publishers, one after another, have been wanting in the qualification of stability; and hence, my "Historic Memoirs of Ireland" have been lying fast asleep, in their own sheets, on the shelves of three successive booksellers or their assignees; and so ingeniously were they scattered about, that I found it impossible for some years to collect them. This was rather provoking, as there were circumstances connected with the work, which, be its merits what they may, would, in my opinion, have ensured it an extensive circulation. However, I have at length finished the Memoirs in question, which I verily believe are now about to be published in reality, and will probably excite sundry differences of opinion and shades of praise or condemnation (both of the book and the author) among His Majesty's liege subjects.

The execution of this inflammatory project I immediately set about with vast assiduity and corresponding success; and doubtless, with very great advantage to the literary reputation of an immense number of my former correspondents as well as my own. After having made considerable progress, I found that some of the fragment amused myself, and I therefore began to consider whether they might not also amuse other people. I was advised to make selections from my store, particularly as I had, for near half a century, kept not a diary but a sort of rambling chronicle, wherein I made notes of matters which, from time to time, struck my fancy. Some of these memoranda were illegible; others just sufficient to set my memory working; some were sad, and some were cheerful; some very old, others recent. In fine, I began to select: but I soon found that any thing like a regular series was out of the question; so I took a heap indiscriminately,

picked out the subjects that amused me most, wrote a list of their several headings, which were very numerous; and, as his Majesty pricks for sheriffs, so did I for subjects, and thereby gathered as many as I conceived would make two or three volumes. My next process was to make up court-dresses for my Sketches and Fragments, such as might facilitate their introduction into respectable company, without observing strict chronological sequence, to which I am aware light readers have a rooted aversion.

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The first edition of the Personal Sketches of his own Times, by Sir Jonah Barrington, Member of the Irish Parliament, and Judge of the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland, was published in 1827; a second edition appeared in 1830, and a supplementary volume in 1832. The third volume has become not only scarce but a curiosity.

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