



Personal Sketches of His Own Times, Volume III

Sir Jonah Barrington

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This is volume three of three and was published in 1832.

Some excerpts from the Preface:

The Introduction prefixed to the first volume of these Sketches somewhat develops the origin of the work, and the source of its materials. Commenced to wear away the tedium of a protracted winter, it continued, for nearly three months, the amusement of my leisure hours. During that short space the entire of the two first volumes was collected and composed. whatever they may be, I alone am responsible. Not one anecdote character sentence observation line or even thought, was contributed or suggested to me by any living person ; nor was a single page of the MS. even seen by any friend save one (and that but very partially), on whose suggestion it had been commenced, and on whose recommendation I transmitted the two first volumes to my present publisher, but with (I own) very great diffidence as to their catastrophe.

.....

Ireland has been ever celebrated by every author who characterised it, as the most amatory of islands ; and the disinterestedness of its lovers, and their inveterate contempt of obstacles, and abhorrence of any species of procrastination, has been a subject of general eulogium.

Love is the only object of liberty and equality as yet enjoyed by the Irish people. Even among the better orders, money, not being in general there the circulating medium of matrimony, is always despised when it does not attend, and abused behind its back as inveterately as if it was a sub-sheriff.

.....

Of the egotistical tone of these volumes I am also most gravely accused. The best reply I can make, (and it seems rather a decisive one,) is,

that it would be a task somewhat difficult for the wisest author that ever put pen to paper, to separate egotism from autobiography ; indeed, I believe it has never yet been practically attempted. Were I to leave myself out of three volumes of my own personal anecdotes, I rather think I should be consigned to Miss Edgeworth for the destiny of increasing her volume of Irish Blunderers. I fancy also that with most ladies and gentlemen in these civilized parts of this terrestrial globe, the amour propre (alias egotism) holds a very considerable rank amongst their intellectual gallantries ; and, as in garcon Cupid's amours, it would be no easy matter for either sex to enforce profound silence on the matter of their adoration ; and I apprehend the singular number will hardly be turned out of service in the English grammar to gratify my commentators by making me write nonsense.

These observations are addressed to my good-humoured and playful critics ; but there is another class of a very different description. I have been honoured by the animadversions of as many of these sharp-set gentry as any uncelebrated author could possibly expect, or indeed any reasonable writer could possibly wish for; and, though the comparison may be considered as out of course, I shall nevertheless add it to the rest of my errata, and compare my orchestra of cavillers to the performers in a Dutch concert, where every musician plays his own tune, and no two of their airs or instruments are in harmony.

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Christopher Jaeger:

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Peter Lombard:

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