

**ST. STEPHEN'S; OR,
PENCILLINGS
OF POLITICIANS**

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St. Stephen's; Or, Pencillings of Politicians by James Grant (Mask)

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BY MASK.

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INTRODUCTION.

NINE tenths of the parties who figure in the following sketches ought to be exceedingly obliged to me for having taken up the pencil of a historical portrait painter ; for it is highly probable that by my aid, and by my aid only, will the good people who may happen to exist some hundred years hence have an inkling that such persons ever lived upon the earth.

“History will do me justice,” cry half the self-sufficient nobodies of the day, when they have strutted their after-dinner hour upon the floor of the House of Commons, and have been coughed down in the middle of the best bit of tinsel in their whole harangue. “History will do me justice,” cries some sudden turncoat, when all the newspapers

are barking at him simply for unsaying all he had ever said, and abusing every body and every thing which he had ever eulogised. "History will do me justice," cries some microscopic statesman, after he has been kicked out for some piece of petty impertinence, magnanimously wrapping himself round in the mantle of his own virtue. God help you, good people! History has a great many other matters to attend to. She will take no more notice of these very important incidents, in your very important lives, than she will of the wagging of the tails of the gold and silver fish which your ladies and daughters keep in glass globes and amuse themselves by feeding.

History do *you* justice? She will never hear of you except by chance, and what she does record of you will probably be something which she has cursorily hit upon in some forgotten page of an old magazine, or in some worm-eaten letter, from your best friend or your worst foe, as the case may happen, which may turn up after your death; or perchance in the relics of some contemporary Horace Walpole who may be now inditing something caustic and sarcastic enough to be very amusing about you all.

I have read a great deal of History, but I always have found that these form the raw material whence she spins her yarn. Look into Hume and you will

find that a full half of Reresby's Memoirs has been turned into "History of England;" look into Walpole's historic doubts, and Henry the Fifth; and you will find how history has laid her hand upon the two first daubs which she could find, and, after giving them a touch, sent them down as portraits of the crook-backed tyrant and the conqueror of France.

If she treats such people as these thus unceremoniously, how can you expect, ye men of little Lilliput, that she will ever condescend to care how she kicks or cuffs you, in her way through the crowd? When she looks at the scenes in which you took part, she will take an inverted telescope, and dispatch in a single line the whole story of your existence. If she were to do more than this all mankind would agree to strangle her.

It is to save Dame History a vast deal of trouble—a great deal of raking in old chests, and dusting her fingers among old magazines and newspapers, that I have taken the pains to strike off for her use a series of descriptions and biographies, which will dovetail nicely into her narrative and save her all care upon the subject. Depend upon it, most famous politicians, she will take my assistance in vastly good part, and that the only history of you that will ever be read will be taken from these pages.