

**HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF  
STATESMEN WHO FLOURISHED  
IN THE TIME OF GEORGE  
III. SECOND SERIES. VOL. I**

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Historical sketches of statesmen who flourished in the time of George III. Second series. Vol. I  
by Henry Brougham

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**HENRY BROUGHAM**

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THE TIME OF GEORGE III.  
SECOND SERIES.  
VOLUME I.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE misstatements which were circulated respecting the First Series of these Sketches make it necessary to mention that nothing can be more untrue than representing the work as a republication. By far the greater part of the articles which had ever appeared before were materially altered or enlarged, some of them almost written over again; while a great many were entirely new in every part: as those of Lords Mansfield, Thurlow, Loughborough, and North, Chief Justice Gibbs, Sir W. Grant, Franklin, Gustavus III., Joseph II., Catherine II., Queen Elizabeth.—The same observation is applicable in at least the same extent to the Second Series. Much of George IV., the Emperor Napoleon, Lord Eldon, Sir W. Scott, is new; and Mirabeau's public character, with the whole of Sir P. Francis, Mr. Horne Tooke, Lord King, Mr. Ricardo, Charles Carroll, Necker, Carnôt, Lafayette, and Madame de Staël, are new.

No distinguished statesman of George III.'s time has been omitted, except one very eminent person, Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Laus-



downe, to whom, however, occasion has been taken of doing some justice against the invectives of mere party violence and misrepresentation by which he was assailed. The reason of the omission has been of a personal nature. The long and uninterrupted friendship which has prevailed between the writer of these pages and Lord Shelburne's son and representative, both in public and private life, would have made any account of him wear the appearance of a panegyric or a defence of his conduct, rather than a judgment pronounced on its merits. If it should be urged that a similar reason ought to have prevented the appearance of other articles, such as that upon Sir S. Romilly, Mr. Horner, and Lord King, the answer is plain. Personal friendship with those individuals themselves gave him the means of judging for himself; and that friendship was only another consequence of the merits which he was called upon to describe and to extol. But in Lord Shelburne's case, friendship for the son might have been supposed to influence an account of the father, who was personally unknown to the author.

It is a matter of sincere gratification to find that justice has been very generally done to the impartiality which was so much studied in the composition of the First Series. To maintain this throughout the Second has been the chief aim of its author; and if he has ever swerved from this

path which it was so much his resolution to tread, the deviation has, at least, been unintentional, for he is wholly unconscious of it.

It would be a very great mistake to suppose that there is no higher object in submitting these Sketches to the world than the gratification of curiosity respecting eminent statesmen, or even a more important purpose, the maintenance of a severe standard of taste respecting Oratorical Excellence. The main object in view has been the maintenance of a severe standard of Public Virtue, by constantly painting political profligacy in those hateful colours, which are natural to it, though sometimes obscured by the lustre of talents, especially when seen through the false glare shed by success over public crimes. To show mankind who are their real benefactors—to teach them the wisdom of only exalting the friends of peace, of freedom, and of improvement—to warn them against the folly, so pernicious to themselves, of lavishing their applauses upon their worst enemies, those who disturb the tranquillity, assail the liberties, and obstruct the improvement of the world—to reclaim them from the yet worser habit, so nearly akin to vicious indulgence, of palliating cruelty and fraud committed on a large scale, by regarding the success which has attended those foul enormities, or the courage and the address with which they have been perpetrated—these are the views that have guided the pen which

has attempted to sketch the History of George III.'s times, by describing the statesmen who flourished in them. With these views a work was begun many years ago, and interrupted by professional avocations—the history of two reigns in our own annals, those of Harry V. and Elizabeth, deemed glorious for the arts of war and of government, commanding largely the admiration of the vulgar, justly famous for the capacity which they displayed, but extolled upon the false assumption that foreign conquest is the chief glory of a nation, and that habitual and dexterous treachery towards all mankind is the first accomplishment of a sovereign. To relate the story of those reigns in the language of which sound reason prescribes the use—to express the scorn of falsehood and the detestation of cruelty which the uncorrupted feelings of our nature inspire—to call wicked things by their right names, whether done by princes and statesmen, or by vulgar and more harmless malefactors—was the plan of that work. Longer experience of the world has only excited a stronger desire to see such lessons inculcated, and to help in tearing off the veil which the folly of mankind throws over the crimes of their rulers. But it was deemed expedient to direct the attention of the people, in the first instance, to more recent times, better known characters, and more interesting events. In this opinion these Historical Sketches had their origin.