



# **Anecdote Lives of Wits and Humourists, Vol. 2 (Classic Reprint)**

*John Timbs*

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Excerpt from Anecdote Lives of Wits and Humourists, Vol. 2

It rarely happens that the heritage of genius can be more immediately traced than in the parentage of the wit, orator, and dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, born in September, 1751, at No. 12, Dorset-street, Dublin. He was christened in St. Mary's Church, after Brinsley Butler, Earl of Lanesborough, though he usually dropped the "Butler."

His grandfather, Dr. Sheridan, and his father, Mr. Thomas Sheridan, attained a celebrity independent of that which Richard Brinsley conferred on them. Dr. Sheridan was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, distinguished himself in the classics, took orders, and then set up a school in Dublin. Swift, who was his friend, obtained for him a living in the south of Ireland. But he was "an ill-starred, good-natured, improvident man," careless and indigent, his animal spirits seeming to supply every other deficiency. Lord Cork says of him, "Not a day passed without a rebus, an anagram, or a madrigal His pen and fiddlestick were in continual motion." Early in life he spoiled his expectations by preaching a sermon on the 1st of August, (the anniversary of the accession of the House of Hanover) on the text, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," in consequence of which he was struck off the list of chaplains to the Lord-Lieutenant, and forbidden the Castle.

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