

**FRANCIS WILLIAM
BIRD: A BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCH**

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Francis William Bird: A Biographical Sketch by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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F. W. Bird
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TO OUR CHILDREN

WE Dedicate this Book

TRUSTING THAT THEY MAY ACQUIRE FROM THE BRIEF
SKETCH OF OUR FATHER'S LIFE AND CHARACTER AN
INCREASED SENSE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO
THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS A GREATER
REGARD FOR HONESTY AND CONSCIENTIOUS
INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION,
QUALITIES SO PRONOUNCED
IN THEIR GRANDFATHER'S CHARACTER

FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD:

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

I.

WELL worthy of study and admiration is the life of a man who, in spite of obstacles and discouragements, attains success; who, though never abounding in robust health, lives with unimpaired faculties and capacity for enjoyment beyond the Biblical term of four-score years; who, outgrowing the narrow limits of a prescribed creed, comes into the sweet serenity of a liberal Faith; who has taken an intimate part in many national crises, been the trusted friend and counsellor of the most distinguished statesmen of his day, and won the hearty respect of opponents with whom it was his fortune to cross swords in strenuous strife.

Such a man was FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD.

He has many claims on remembrance. As a manufacturer, his reputation for sterling honesty was unimpeached; he had the good will of his associates, the love and veneration of his em-

ployés, to whom he stood in a peculiarly gracious and winning relationship. As a politician — using the word in its best significance — he preserved a sturdy independence which invariably led him to prefer the paramount interests of the whole country to the ephemeral considerations of section or party. He stood on a height of mental and moral sincerity, which enabled him to see through and look beyond the mists obscuring many of the questions of the day; and though he was often blamed for the attitude he took, time usually proved that he was right. As a man he was generous, public-spirited, optimistic. Though abstemious, he was fond of good cheer; sometimes brusque in his manners, he was cordial and friendly. He was one of the unique characters of his day, an individuality of striking force. It was a genuine tribute to his usefulness that he was affectionately called “The Sage of Walpole.”

During his long life he many times received assurances from notable men, of the regard in which he was held.

In the early days of the war (January, 1862), Governor John A. Andrew wrote him: “You are as good and true a friend, patriot, and man, as there is in the world.”

Eight years later, Henry Wilson (October, 1870) wrote from Natick, pouring out his heart's bitterness over the unfriendly criticism that had been