

**SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF THE REV. JOHN
SARGENT**

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Sketch of the Life of the Rev. John Sargent by Samuel Wilberforce

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SAMUEL WILBERFORCE

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1861.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHOEVER has read the *Life of Henry Martyn*, will be glad to know something of his biographer, the Rev. John Sargent. The following sketch is from the pen of the Rev. Samuel Wilberforce, then Rector of Brightstone, now Bishop of Oxford. Of the papers of Martyn, some, for reasons of a temporary and delicate nature, were not used by Sargent. These, after his (Sargent's) death, and the death of the lady to whom Martyn had been engaged, along with some other of his unpublished manuscripts, it was determined to give to the world. They were accordingly pub-

lished, under the editorship of the present Bishop of Oxford, the intimate friend of Sargent, and under the title of "Journals and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn, B.D." The work is fitly introduced by the following beautiful sketch of Sargent's life and character, from the pen of its accomplished editor. But as the "Journals and Letters" have not been republished in this country, the Life of Sargent is much less known among us than it deserves to be. The sketch here presented exhibits the picture of an eminently devout and holy man, humble, patient, and "zealous of good works." Born to high rank, and with talents and accomplishments fitting him for any station, he might not unreasonably have looked for a conspicuous and influential position. But his whole ministerial life was passed—contentedly passed—in an obscure parish, and amongst a rude and illiterate people. Earnest and courageous in maintaining

his own views of truth, he was singularly considerate and forbearing towards those who differed from him. Free from any blind and superstitious devotion to mere names and precedents and forms, he was yet truly reverent and loyal to the wisdom of the past, and to things long and lawfully established. With affections unusually sympathetic and warm, and with manners that drew everybody to him, it was still the religious element in his character, which gave it its greatest elevation and its highest charm. Admirably balanced, with nothing in excess, and nothing defective, Sargent's was indeed a character that belonged to better times; but which, for that very reason, may be fitly commended as a model for our own. If we gaze upon it as upon some rare and beautiful *antique*, in despair of ever coming up to it ourselves, we may yet bless God for bestowing such gifts upon men.

The sketch itself, was first brought to my

notice, by a very near relation, since gone to her rest. Her piety delighted in the contemplation of a character so remarkable for saintly loveliness as Sargent's; whilst her taste was charmed by the grace and beauty with which it is here delineated. It was suggested and arranged between us, that we should republish the sketch by itself, for wider and gratuitous distribution. But this was not to be. Before our little scheme could be accomplished, God took her, with whom it originated, to Himself, where she needs no longer the encouragement of saintly examples; for she sees and mingles with "the spirits of the just made perfect."

" 'Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
 Friends out of sight, in faith to muse
 How grows in Paradise our store."

KEBLE.

In addition, therefore, to the hope that good may be done by this republication, I have now

a melancholy pleasure in carrying out a little plan of usefulness, which beguiled some weary hours, and was among the latest thoughts of one, whose removal has made her own home desolate, and many hearts sad. Her high appreciation of such a character as Sargent's, is the best evidence and illustration of her own. And now, I doubt not, she "beholds the King in His glory," and with Martyn, and Sargent, and other kindred spirits, rests in "those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity." *Sit anima mea cum illis.*

S. B.

LANCASTER, March, 1861.

