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978-1-108-02509-6 - The Life of William Wilberforce, Volume 5

Edited by Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce

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The Life of William Wilberforce

William Wilberforce (1759–1833) was a politician, philanthropist and evangelical Christian, now best known for his work to end the slave trade. Elected to Parliament in 1780, he campaigned unsuccessfully for penal and electoral reform. In 1787, at the encouragement of his friend William Pitt, he took up the cause of abolition at Westminster and lobbied influential people tirelessly, but humanitarian and ethical arguments were slow to overcome the economic interests of those who had made fortunes from the slave trade or the use of slave labour. It was not until 1807 that the Abolition Bill (which applied only to British practitioners of the slave trade) was finally passed. Wilberforce continued his work for the emancipation of slaves (not achieved until 1833, just days before his death), and also campaigned for religious liberty until ill-health led to his withdrawal from public life. This biography, based on his own writings, was published by two of his sons in 1838, but sheds more light on religious than on political aspects of his life. Their version of the campaign for abolition was contested by Thomas Clarkson, who believed they had diminished his involvement to increase their father's identification with the cause. Volume 5 covers the period from 1818 until Wilberforce's death.

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VOLUME 5

EDITED BY
ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE
AND SAMUEL WILBERFORCE



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THE
L I F E
OF
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

BY HIS SONS,
ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M. A.
VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE;
AND
SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A.
RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

Happy is the state
In which ye, father, here do dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempests of these worldly seas.
SPENCER.

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