

**NOTICES OF  
ARCHBISHOP  
WILLIAMS**

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Notices of Archbishop Williams by John Williams & B. H. Beedham

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**JOHN WILLIAMS & B. H. BEEDHAM**

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B. H. BEEDHAM.

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B. Abstract of the Will and Codicil of Sir Griffith Williams, Bart.

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I cannot enter upon these Notices without referring to the remarkable work which Bishop Hacket has devoted to the Biography of Archbishop Williams. Completed in 1657, it was not given to the world until six and thirty years later, when it appeared under the title of *Scrinia Reserata: a Memorial offered to the Great Deservings of John Williams, D.D.* The eminent subject of it has been, and we may be sure will continue to be, variously judged; but the simple fact that the record given of him by a man of the highest character reads like one long eulogy, is in itself no slight tribute to his memory, and satisfies us that there was in him much to admire, much to imitate, and much to love. The earnestness of the biographer appears in every line, and furnishes conclusive testimony that he wrote in the fulness of a full heart; yet are we not without further evidence of the deep conviction he entertained of the sterling qualities of the Archbishop,



with whom he was during many years in constant daily intercourse. There is extant a letter, intended only for him to whom it was addressed, in which Hacket, writing to his friend Hamond Lestrangle, not a general letter of friendship, but a learned epistle upon the subject of Consecration, nine years after the death of the Archbishop, takes occasion to relieve his mind by referring to him as the best of Bishops. To the many tributes to Hacket's work, I may add one, not hitherto made public, by that accomplished scholar the late Rev. Joseph Hunter, which came to me with my copy purchased at the sale of the late Rev. John Mitford, to whom the letter containing it was addressed, March 20, 1851; "I bought my copy of Hacket at Bath, some twenty or thirty years ago, and it became at once a very favourite book, and I became tolerably acquainted with its contents. If you have the catalogue of the Harleian Library, you will see a copy of Hacket with MS. notes mentioned in it. I am half inclined to believe that mine is that identical copy, and should be more than half so inclined were it not bound in rough calf, which Lord Oxford would hardly have admitted among the sprucer bindings of his magnificent collection."

Having thus referred to a work which overflows with great and varied learning, and which the more it is perused the better will it be appreciated, I proceed to set forth in such way as may appear best, the result of my investigations. These investigations have been to me a labour of love, and have furnished an object to many a pleasant journey;

for nothing is so satisfactory to me as to make researches personally and upon the spot. The materials are however, so widely scattered, that there are cases in which to do this has not been practicable, and I am indebted to others for the communication of some of the particulars recorded, as well as for access to documents consulted; and for the ready kindness which I have on all occasions experienced, I desire to express my heartiest acknowledgments.

Edmund Williams, Esq. of Conway, in the County of Carnarvon, was the fifth son of William Williams, Esq. of Cochwillan, in the Parish of Llanllechid, near Bangor, and of Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Griffith, Knight, of Penryhn, also near Bangor. Edmund Williams married Mary, daughter of Owen Wynne, Esq. of Eglws Bach in the County of Denbigh.

Of Cochwillan I shall have another opportunity to speak, but I may now take occasion to say that Eglws Bach is about five miles from Conway, a little to the east of that road to Llanrwst which passes through Llan-saintffraid-glan-Conway. In the afternoon of a beautiful summer's day, I once found myself at the top of the hill which rises eastward above the Ferry and Railway Station of Tal-y-cafn, when there opened before me a view, wanting indeed the grandeur of the Snowdon district behind me, yet so extensive, so varied and so charming, as to have left a lasting impression upon my mind. I was then, although at the time I knew it not, within a mile of the village where the mother of the Archbishop resided.

The family of Edmund Williams consisted of two sons and two daughters, who were born in the following order: 1. Robert; 2. John; 3. Dorothy; 4. Ellen. Hacket says there were five sons, but the Parish Register of Conway, which has been kindly searched for me with the greatest care by the Rev. Henry Rees, bears witness only to the four children whom I have named, and the evidence of authentic pedigrees is to the same effect. John, the younger son and second child of his parents, is said to have been born at Conway, March 25, 1582, and there seems no reason to doubt this statement, confirmed as it is by the Parish Register, which records amongst the *Baptizati* of that year:

Johāes Willims filius Edmundi Willims, 27 Marcij.

It was the lot of the future Archbishop to lose, at a very early age, the best of earthly friends. On October 10, 1585, his mother died, leaving her eldest child just five years of age, and her youngest not quite twice as many days. On the floor of the chancel of the Church of Conway is a memorial to her, consisting of a stone slab, with figure in low relief, and marginal inscription, both figure and inscription being now greatly mutilated. In 1859 I took a number of rubbings of the inscription, but I was able to recover it to a partial extent only. This is what I made out:

M . . . . . ONIVX . EDMVNDI : DE : STIRPE :  
 GWILLHELLIMORVM . . . . . NARIVM  
 PARTV . . . . . BINO . . . . . CVNDA . . . . .  
 . . . BRIS