

**MEMOIR OF
KENELM
HENRY DIGBY**

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Memoir of Kenelm Henry Digby by Bernard Holland

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BERNARD HOLLAND

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BY
BERNARD HOLLAND, C.B.

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DEDICATED
IN MEMORY OF HER FATHER
TO MARY
THE HONBLE. M^{RS}. HUBERT DORMER.

PREFACE

KENELM DIGBY took no part in public affairs ; his history is that of his writings and private life. My motive in composing the present Memoir, with the approval of his descendants, is to direct the attention of, at least, a few readers, to the never well-known, and now almost forgotten works of this Author, to whom I myself owe so much that my own labour is payment of a debt of gratitude. A record of his life is, I think, the easiest and pleasantest method of so doing.

I must warn readers who expect to find in a Memoir a number of letters written by its subject, that in this case they will hardly find one. Most letters written by men in private life who died, like Digby, near forty years ago have been lost or destroyed, or are put away in unreachable places, and it seems to be so in his case ; at any rate I have not been able to discover any. It matters little, I think, because Kenelm Digby infused into his works a large amount of autobiography. One can reconstruct from them his childhood, and boyhood, and University days, and friendships, and the joys and sorrows of his family life. But as all this is scattered through nearly forty volumes of his books—most of them

not easily obtained now—it was necessary to bring the events together in a consecutive way.

The events of private life, when mirrored in a reflective mind, and felt by a feeling heart, and expressed by one who has the gift of expression, have, in narrative, this advantage over events in political, or other active life, that they turn on matters not transient, like those on the public stage, but at all times intimately interesting. For this reason a book like the *Récit d'une Sœur* will outlive masses of biography of once seemingly important men of action.

Catholic readers, not already acquainted with Kenelm Digby, may be especially glad to be introduced to him, but his writings ought to give pleasure to many not yet included within the bounds of the Central Church of Christendom.

BERNARD HOLLAND.

HARLEDOWN,
NEAR CANTERBURY,
March, 1919.