

**THE PROSE WORKS OF THE RIGHT
REVEREND THOMAS KEN, D.D.,
SOMETIME BISHOP OF BATH AND
WELLS. NOW FIRST COLLECTED
AND EDITED WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL**

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The Prose Works of the Right Reverend Thomas Ken, D.D., Sometime Bishop of Bath and Wells. Now First Collected and Edited with a Biographical by W. Benham

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W. BENHAM

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*NOW FIRST COLLECTED AND EDITED WITH A
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE*

BY THE
REV. W. BENHAM, B.D.,
BISHOP ELECT OF CANTERBURY.



LONDON
GRIFFITH, FARRAN, OKEDEN & WELSH
(SUCCESSORS TO NEVEBRY AND HARRIS)
WEST CORNER ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD
AND SYDNEY, N.S.W.



BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

THE admirable biography of the saintly Bishop Ken by the Dean of Wells, which was published last year, will probably always remain the standard work. Very little additional information is likely to be forthcoming. We therefore have no intention of detailing events at length, but refer the reader who seeks knowledge concerning Ken's life and character, or concerning the times in which he lived, to Dr Plumptre's fascinating volumes, and only set down the simple outlines of his life by way of introduction to the following collection of his prose works, the fullest that has ever yet been published. His "Practice of Divine Love," and "Manual" for the Winchester Scholars, are easily accessible; and his sermons, though less common, are not very difficult to procure, but the first work in the present volume is excessively rare, and the last is seldom met with except in old libraries.

Thomas Ken was born at Berkhamstead in July 1637. His mother died when he was four years old; his father, when he was fourteen. Happily for the boy, he had a half-sister, Anne Ken, twenty-seven years his senior, who, five years before her father's death, had married Izaak Walton, then fifty-three, thus giving the boy a brother-in-law forty-four

years older than himself. Faithfully they fulfilled all their lives a parental part to their young brother. In 1651 he became a scholar at Wykeham's famous school at Winchester, thence in due course went to Oxford, became a fellow of New, and was ordained on his fellowship in 1661.

In 1663 appeared anonymously the pamphlet "Ichabod," which we have placed first amongst his prose writings. There is no hint, as will be seen on examination, which connects it with his name, no clue whatever to guide to the authorship. In 1689 it was reprinted, under the title of "Lachrymæ Ecclesiarum," but not by the author, as is evident from the preface, in which the editor says that he has chanced to meet with it, and finds it so admirable and so likely to be useful, that he has republished it. And two months after Ken's death a new edition appeared under the title of "Expostulatoria," in which for the first time it was stated to be his. Hawkins, Ken's great-nephew and executor, immediately published advertisements in the London papers denying Ken's authorship, but Dean Plumptre adduces arguments proving it to be almost certain that Hawkins was mistaken. Ken was a young man when he wrote it, of fervid piety, and eager for the spread of religion among the people; he had rejoiced in the Restoration of the Monarchy and the Church, and had been proportionately disappointed when the manifest worldliness of the clergy had well-nigh dashed his ideal to pieces. Hence this remarkable, even startling, pamphlet. In 1663 he was appointed, by Lord Maynard, Rector of Little Easton, Essex, and his friendship with Lady Margaret Maynard was one of the privileges and blessings of his life. He resigned in two years and returned to Winchester; the Dean thinks that he did so in simple conscientiousness, from the conviction

that the pleasantness and ease of the pretty country living and his surroundings there, were not such as a young man should rest in, but that he should go forth to harder and more busy life. Dr George Morley, who was now Bishop of Winchester, had been greatly befriended by Walton in the dark days of the Commonwealth, and had now brought his kind friend and his son, Ken's nephew, to his palace in the city, and there the old angler made his home until his death in 1683. The bishop was no doubt glad to have the devout young clergyman as his chaplain, and as Ken had already resolved not to marry, his fellowship afforded him the means of livelihood. He was elected fellow of Winchester College in 1666, and for a short time held the living of Brighstone, in the Isle of Wight. His fame as a preacher had by this time risen to a supreme height; we know from Pepys, that when he was announced to preach in London, the church was crowded. But apparently he preached extempore, for all the sermons which have survived are those in the present volume.

He soon retired from Brighstone, and after a while accepted the charge, without emolument, of a poor parish in Winchester, and now he wrote his "Manual" for the Winchester scholars, and probably his Morning and Evening Hymns. The first edition of the "Manual," however, was published in 1674, and the hymns do not appear in it before the edition of 1695.

Immediately after publishing his "Manual," Ken went abroad with his nephew, the younger Izaak Walton, and travelled about the Continent for two years, then returned to Winchester. In 1679 he went to the Hague as chaplain to the Princess Mary, the future Queen, returning next year, when he was appointed chaplain to Charles II. The next two years were spent quietly at Winchester, but in 1682 he

phesier of smooth things. Queen Mary was well known to Ken, who loved her faithfully, and recognised the good side of her character. But he must have felt that it was her duty to ask for her father's forgiveness, or at least for reconciliation with him. She had done nothing of the sort. Was she a person to receive extravagant laudation from the Primate of all England? In the bitter grief which this act, as he deemed it, of unfaithfulness, caused, he wrote the letter which forms our last document in this volume.

Having thus delivered his conscience, it is instructive and also helpful to us, to watch him afterwards refraining, as we have already said, from violence of expression against the Government, and bringing on himself from hot-headed Non-jurers the imputation of lukewarmness. He went calmly on his way, as they went ill-judgingly on theirs, and he has left hereby the record of a life of self-sacrifice, and also of forbearance and abstinence from retaliatory spirit. Much of his time in his last years was spent in writing poetry. The greater portion of it has never been reprinted. Should the reading public shew that they find the present volume acceptable, we may hereafter be encouraged to publish a companion volume, containing his epic, "Edmund," and his poems on the Christian Year. He died March 19th, 1709, and was buried at sunrise of the 21st beneath the chancel window in the churchyard of Frome Selwood, the nearest parish of his diocese to Longleat.

W. B.



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