

## Four Chapters from the Dialogue of the Novices.

BY THOMAS A KEMPIE.

### THE PROLOGUE.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost" (St John vi. 13), said Christ to his disciples. For when the omnipotent and merciful Lord had filled five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, he ordered the fragments that remained to be gathered up lest they should be lost. In a mystic sense, these fragments are the words of the doctors, and the example of good men, which ought often to be deeply thought of, and diligently noted and gathered up in the books and tablets of the heart, as those were in baskets.

Urged by this consideration, for the exhortation of the novices, with God's help, I have thought to note down in this work some few of the admonitions and examples of my predecessors; to the end that those who hear those good things may give greater praise to the highest God from whom all good proceeds; and that many, reading these things may be the more inflamed unto the contempt of the world.

THE NOVICE. 1. I pray thee, most dear Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, to take a watchful charge over me,—to teach me what is salutary, to correct my excesses with severity, to apply timely remedies to my passions; and if

you know of any good example, to propose it for my imitation: for to this end have I left the world, and the things that are in the world, that in a religious state I may more fully learn the will of God, and act so as I may live more secure from the temptations of this life, till, having finished my course I may deserve to obtain the reward of eternal blessedness with the faithful of Christ.

2. For I resolve, from this time to come, to order my whole life to the service of God, and to consummate the little time that yet remains unto me in the state of religion. Wherefore, behold me ready to undergo all labour, to acquiesce, in thine admonitions, and to comply with the rules of my elders, set forth for my salvation and progress, as becomes the noviciate, and the state of religion requires.

### THAT DISCOURSE OF GOD IS VERY PROFITABLE TO THE NEWLY CONVERTED.

1. THE SENIOR. With pleasure I listen to thy words; and as far as I can do thee good, I shall comply with thy request. And may the grace of the Holy Spirit be with me now, that I may speak worthily, and our converse be pleasing to God, and profitable to our neighbours.

If there be a great art in teaching, it is to propose just things duly, and to confirm them by sacred testimony. I wish to talk with thee somewhat of God, and of the servants of God; that for the hearing thereof, comfort may come.