

was about his person, "your hearts would melt to hear him named; the beautifullest, creature that liveth under the sun, the wittiest, the most amiable, and the gentlest thing of all the world." His compassion for the poor and the distressed was enlarged, yet unostentatious; and the distribution of his charities was rendered doubly valuable by the promptitude and considerate delicacy with which they were conferred.

Perhaps, however, the most prominent features in the character of the young king were his sincere piety and zeal in the cause of religion. He showed this strength of feeling even in his infancy. One of his companions having stepped upon a large Bible for the purpose of obtaining a toy which was out of his reach, he rebuked him severely for so doing, and left the play in which they were engaged. At his coronation, when the swords of the three kingdoms were carried before him, he observed that one was still wanting, and called for the Bible. "That," said he, "is the sword of the Spirit, and ought in all right to govern us, who use them for the people's safety, by God's appointment. Without that sword we can do nothing: from that, we are what we are this day. Under that, we ought to live, to fight, to govern the people and to perform all our affairs. From that alone we obtain all power, virtue, grace, salvation, and whatever we have of divine strength." Such indeed was Edward's regard for religion, and for everything connected with it, that it was usual to compare him to Josiah; and he had also acquired the characteristic appellation of "Edward the Saint." It was his custom to take notes of the sermons which he heard; particularly of those which seemed to bear any immediate relation to his own duties and difficulties; and the attention which he paid to the precepts inculcated in the discourses of the eminent divines who preached before him, frequently produced a visible and permanent effect upon his conduct, as will be seen presently.

XLIII.

EDWARD VI. FOUNDS CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

Few events in the history of Christian benevolence are so minutely recorded as the foundation of this the noblest institution in the world. At the same time, Edward founded St. Thomas's and Bridewell Hospitals; the three foundations forming part of a comprehensive scheme of charity, resulting from a sermon preached before the King by the pious Bishop Ridley, at Westminster, in 1552. The Bishop, discoursing on the excellence of charity, "made a fruitful and goodly exhortation to the rich to be merciful unto the poor, and also to move such as were in authority, to travail by some charitable ways and means, to comfort and relieve them." Edward's heart was touched by the earnestness of the appeal, and "understanding that a great number of poor people did swarm in this realm, and chiefly in the city of London, and that no good order was taken of them," he sent the Bishop a message when the sermon was ended, desiring him not to depart till he had spoken with him. As soon as he was at leisure, he took him aside into a private gallery, where he made him sit down, and be covered; and giving him hearty thanks for his sermon, entered into conversation on several points, which, according to his usual practice, he had noted down for special consideration. Of this interview, the venerable Ridley remarked: "Truly, truly, I could never have thought that excellency to have been in his grace, but that I beheld and heard it in him."

Adverting, at length, to the Bishop's exhortation in behalf of the poor, Edward greatly commended it, and it had evidently made a powerful impression upon his mind. He then acknowledged the application of Ridley's exhortation to himself, and prayed the Bishop to say his mind as to what ways were best to be taken. Ridley hesitated for a moment to reply. At length, he observed that the city of London, as well on account of the extreme poverty which prevailed there on the one hand, and of the wise and charitable disposition of its more wealthy inhabitants on the other, would afford a favourable opening for the exercise of the royal bounty: and advised that letters should be forthwith directed to the Lord Mayor, requiring him, with such assistants as he might think meet, to consult upon the matter. Edward wrote the letter upon the instant, and charged Ridley to deliver it himself; and his delight was manifested in the zeal with which he undertook the commission, for the King's letter and message were delivered on the same evening. On the following day Ridley dined with the Lord Mayor, who, with two Aldermen and six Commoners, took the King's proposal into consideration; other councillors were added, and at length the plan recommended to his Majesty was to provide Christ's Hospital for the education of poor children; St. Thomas's, for the relief of the sick and Bridewell, for the correction and amendment of the idle and the vagabond.

For Christ's Hospital was granted the monastery of the Grey Friars.

For the second hospital, an almonry was fitted up; and for the third hospital, Edward granted his royal palace of Bridewell. He then bestowed certain lands for the support of these foundations: and having signed the instrument, ejaculated in the hearing of his Council—"Lord, I yield thee most hearty thanks, that thou hast given me life this long, to finish this work to the glory of thy name."

A large picture, (attributed to Holbein,) which hangs in the Great Hall of Christ's Hospital, portrays this interesting scene. The young monarch sits on an elevated throne, in a scarlet and ermine robe, holding the sceptre in his left hand, and presenting with the other the Charter to the kneeling Lord Mayor. By his side stands the Chancellor holding the seals, and next to him are other officers of State. Bishop Ridley kneels before him with uplifted hands, as if supplicating a blessing on the event; whilst the Aldermen &c. with the Lord Mayor, kneel on both sides, occupying the middle ground of the picture; and lastly, in front, are a double row of boys on one side, and girls on the other, from the master and matron down to the boy and girl who have stepped forward from their respective rows, and kneel with raised hands before the King.

Edward lived about a month after signing the Charter of Incorporation of the Royal Hospitals: in the spring of 1552 he had been seized with the small-pox, when he had scarcely recovered from the measles; a consumptive cough came on; his medical advisers were dismissed, and his cure entrusted to the ignorant empiricisms of an old nurse; this disorder was greatly aggravated, and he died in the arms of Sir Henry Sidney, on the 6th July, 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, praying God to receive his spirit.

The Hospital, with the church of the monastery, was destroyed by the Great Fire, but was soon rebuilt. Later was added the Mathematical School, founded by Charles II., in 1672, for 40 boys, to be instructed in navigation; they are called "King's Boys," and wear a badge on the right shoulder; and there was subsequently added, by the legacy of a Governor, a subordinate Mathematical School of 12 boys ("The Twelves"), who wear a badge on the left shoulder; and lastly, to these have been added "The Twos."

This was the first considerable extension of the system of education at the Hospital, which originally consisted of a grammar-school for boys, and a separate school for girls, the latter being taught to read, sew, and mark. A book is preserved containing the records of the Hospital from its foundation, and the anthem sung by the first children.

The dress of the Blue-Coat Boys is the costume of the citizen of London at the time of the foundation of the Hospital, when blue coats were the common habit of the apprentices and servingmen, and yellow stockings were generally worn. This dress is the nearest approach to the monkish costume now worn; the dark-blue coat, with a closely-fitting body and loose sleeves, being the ancient tunic, and the under coat, or "yellow," the sleeveless under-tunic of the monastery. The red leathern girdle corresponds to the hempen cord of the friar. Yellow worsted stockings, a flat black woolen cap, (scarcely larger than a saucer, and a clerical neckband, complete the dress.

The education of the boys consists of reading, writing, and arithmetic, French, the classics, and the mathematics. There are sixteen Exhibitions for scholars at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, &c. There are also separate trusts held by the Governors of the Hospital, which are distributed to poor widows, to the blind, and in apprenticing boys, &c. The annual income of the Hospital is about 50,000*l.*; its ordinary disbursements 48,000*l.*

Among the eminent *Blues* are Leigh Hunt; Thomas Barnes, many years editor of the *Times* newspaper; Thomas Mitchell, the translator of Aristophanes; S. T. Coleridge, the poet, and Charles Lamb, his contemporary; Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta; Jeremiah Markland, the best scholar and critic of the last century; Samuel Richardson, the novelist; Joshua Barnes, the scholiast; Bishop Stillingfleet; Camden, "the nourrice of antiquitie;" and Cambrion, the learned Jesuit of the age of Elizabeth. Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt have published many interesting reminiscences of their contemporaries in the school.

The subordinate establishment is at Hertford, to which the younger boys are sent preparatory to their entering on the foundation in London. At Hertford there is likewise accommodation for 80 girls.

Besides the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, and twelve members of the Common Council, who are Governors *ex officio*, there are between 400 and 500 other Governors, at the head of whom are the Queen and Prince Albert, with the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred. The Duke of Cambridge is President. The qualification for Governor is a donation of 500*l.*: an Alderman may nominate a Governor for election at half-price. There are from 14.0 to 1500 children on the foundation, including those at the branch establishment at Hertford. About 200 boys are admitted annually, (at the age of from seven to ten years) by presentations of the Gover-