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EDUCATION.

School days of Eminent Men in Great-Britain.

By JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

XLII.

BOYHOOD AND LEARNING OF KING EDWARD THE SIXTH.

The most munificent patron of education who ever sat upon the British throne was Edward VI., the only son of Henry VIII, who survived him. He was born at Hampton Court in 1537, on the 12th of October, which being the vigil of St. Edward, he received his Christian appellation in commemoration of the canonized king. His mother, Queen Jane Seymour, died on the twelfth day after giving him birth. Sir John Hayward, who has written the history of his life and reign with great fullness, says that he "was brought up among nurses until he arrived at the age of six years. He was then committed to the care of Dr. (afterwards Sir Anthony) Cook, and Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Cheke, the former of whom appears to have undertaken the prince's instruction in philosophy and divinity, the latter in Greek and Latin." He succeeded to the throne when little more than nine years of age. The conduct of the young prince towards his instructors was uniformly courteous; and his generous disposition won for him the highest esteem. In common with the children of the rich and great, he was from his cradle surrounded with means of amusement. It is related that at the age of five years, a splendid present was made to him by his godfather, Archbishop Cranmer; the gift was a costly service of silver, consisting of dishes, plates, spoons, &c. The child was overjoyed with the present, when the prince's valet, seeking to impress on his mind its value, observed: "Your highness will be pleased to remember that although this beautiful present is yours, it must be kept entirely to yourself; for if others are permitted to touch it, it will be entirely spoiled." "My good Hinbrook," replied the prince, mildly, "if no one can touch these valuables without spoiling them,

how do you then suppose they would ever have been given to me?" Next day, Edward invited a party of young friends to a feast, which was served upon the present of plate; and upon the departure of the young guests, he gave to each of them an article of the service, as a mark of regard.

Cranmer, to encourage Edward in his studies, was in the habit of corresponding with him once a week, and requiring of him an account of what he had done during that time. The prince also complied with the request of his venerable godfather, by keeping a journal, for which purpose he divided a sheet of paper into five columns, and under that arrangement recorded his progress in mythology, history, geography, mathematics, and philosophy.

At the age of fifteen, Edward is said to have possessed a critical knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages; and to have conversed fluently in French, Spanish, and Italian. A manuscript is still preserved in the British Museum, containing a collection of his exercises in Greek and Latin; several of his letters, in French and Latin, written with singular accuracy of diction, are also extant. In the Ashmolean and Cottonian collections are other papers in his handwriting; some of which relate to state affairs, and evince an intimate knowledge of the domestic and foreign policy of his government, and his anxious concern for the welfare of his people; and when to his other accomplishments it is added that he was well versed in natural philosophy, astronomy, and Logic, his acquirements will be allowed to have been extraordinary. "This child," says Carden, the celebrated physician, who had frequently conversed with Edward, "was so bred, had such parts, was of such expectation, that he looked like a miracle of a man; and in him was such an attempt of Nature, that not only England, but the world, had reason to lament his being so early stretched away."

In a register kept for the purpose, Edward noted down the characters of public men; and all the important events of his reign, together with the proceedings in council, were recorded in a private journal, which he never allowed to pass out of his possession. The original of this journal (1) still remains; and a soundness of judgment is displayed in the various entries, and the reflections with which they are accompanied, far beyond Edward's years. "It gave hopes," says Lord Oxford, "of his proving a good king, as in so green an age he seemed resolved to be acquainted with his subjects and his kingdom." He was quite familiar with the value of money and the principles of finance; and the mercantile and military affairs of the country. He was inflexibly just both in public and private; and his attention to his social duties was no less remarkable than his strict discharge of the regal functions. In disposition he was meek, affable, and benevolent; dignified, yet courteous in conversation; and sincere and disinterested in his friendship. "If ye knew the towardness of that young prince," observes one that

(1) This is preserved, with some other Remains of the young King, in the British Museum, and printed, though imperfectly, in the collection of Records, forming vol. ii, part ii, of Burnet's History of the Reformation.