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One of the means which Cardinal Wolsey employed to please the capricious Henry was to converse with him on favourite topics of literature. Cavendish, who was gentleman-usher to Wolsey, and who wrote his life, tells us that "his sentences and witty persuasions in the council-chamber were always so pithy, that they, at occasion moved them, continually assigned him for his filed tongue and excellent eloquence to be expositor unto the King in all their proceedings."

Education had done much for Henry; and of his intellectual ability we need not trust the suspicious panegyrics of his contemporaries. His state papers and letters are as clear and powerful as those of Wolsey or of Cromwell. In addition to this, Henry had a fine musical taste, carefully cultivated; he spoke and wrote in four languages; and he possessed a knowledge of a multitude of subjects. He was among the first physicians of his age; he was his own engineer, inventing improvements in artillery, and new constructions in ship-building. His reading was vast, especially in theology, which could not have been acquired by a boy of twelve years of age, for he was no more when he became Prince of Wales. He must have studied theology with the full maturity of his understanding.

EDUCATION.

School days of Eminent Men in Great-Britain.

By JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

XXXVII.

EARLY LIFE AND CHARACTER OF HENRY VIII.

Henry VIII., the second son of Henry VII. and Elizabeth of York, was born in 1491, at his palace in his "manor of Pleaunce," at Greenwich.

Henry was from the first destined to the Archbishopric of Canterbury; "that prudent King, his father," observes Lord Herbert, (in the History of his Life and Reign.) "choosing this as the most cheap and glorious way for disposing of a younger son." He received, accordingly, a learned education; "so that," continues this writer, "besides his being an able Latinist, philosopher, and divine, he was (which one might wonder at in a King) a curious musician, as two entire masses, composed by him, and often sung in his chapel, did abundantly witness." But the death of Henry's elder brother, Arthur, in 1502, made him heir to the crown before he had completed his eleventh year, and his clerical education was not further proceeded with. However, he was tutored into the learning of the ancients, and though he was so unfortunate as to be led into the study of the barren controversies of the schools, which were then fashionable, he still discovered, says Hume, "a capacity fitted for more useful and entertaining knowledge." He founded Trinity College, at Cambridge, and amply endowed it; and the countenance given to letters by the King and his ministers rendered learning fashionable. The Venetian Ambassador to England, Sebastian Giustinian, describes Henry at this period, (1515,) as "so gifted and adorned with mental accomplishments of every sort that we believe him to have few equals in the world. He speaks English, French, and Latin; understands Italian well; plays almost on every instrument; sings and composes fairly."

XXXVIII.

ILL-EDUCATED NOBILITY.

Some amongst the highest in rank affected to despise knowledge, especially when the invention of Printing had rendered the ability to read more common than in the days of precious manuscripts. Even as late as the first year of Edward the VI. (1547,) it was not only assumed that a Peer of the Realm might be convicted of felony, but that he might lack the ability to read, so as to claim Benefit of Clergy; for it is directed that any Lord of the Parliament claiming the benefit of this Act, (1st Edward VI.) "though he cannot read, without any writing in the hand, loss of inheritance, or corruption of his blood, shall be judged, taken, and used, for the first time only, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, as a clerk convict."

That the nobility were unfitted, through ignorance, for the discharge of high offices in the State at the time of the Reformation, is shown by a remarkable passage in Latimer's "Sermon of the Plough," preached in 1548:

Why are not the noblemen and young gentlemen of England so brought up in knowledge of God, and in learning, that they may be able to execute offices in the commonweal? . . . If the nobility be well trained in godly learning, the people would follow the same train; for truly such as the noblemen be, such will the people be. . . Therefore for the love of God appoint teachers and schoolmasters, you that have charge of youth, and give the teachers stipends worthy their pains.

Honest old Latimer thus demanded that "the young gentlemen" of England should be educated, and be "well brought up in the learning and knowledge of God," so that "they would not, when they came to age, so much give themselves to other vanities."