

equitable authority over every thing which could be a matter of judicial inquiry.

In consequence, bills and petitions multiplied to an unprecedented degree, and notwithstanding his despatch there was a great arrear of business. To this grievance he applied a very vigorous remedy, without any application to parliament to appoint Vice-Chancellors;—for of his own authority he at once established four new Courts of Equity by commission in the King's name. One of these was held at Whitehall before his own deputy; another before the King's almoner, Dr. Stokerby, afterwards Bishop of London; a third at the Treasury Chamber before certain members of the Council; and a fourth at the Rolls, before Cuthbert Tunstall, Master of the Rolls, who, in consequence of this appointment, used to hear causes there in the afternoon.¹ The Master of the Rolls has continued ever since to sit separately for hearing causes in Chancery. The other three Courts fell with their founder.

Wolsey himself used still to attend pretty regularly in the Court of Chancery during term, and he maintained his equitable jurisdiction with a very high hand, deciding without the assistance of common law judges, and with very little regard to the maxims of the common law.

If he was sneered at for his ignorance of the doctrines and practice of the Court, he had his revenge by openly complaining that the lawyers who practiced before him were grossly ignorant of the civil law and the principles of general jurisprudence; and he has been described as often interrupting their pleadings, and bitterly animadverting on their narrow notions and limited arguments. To remedy an evil which troubled the stream of justice at the fountain-head, he, with his usual magnificence of conception, projected an institution to be founded in London, for the systematic study of all branches of the law. He even furnished an architectural model for the building, which was considered a master-piece, and remained long after his death as a curiosity in the palace at Green-

¹ In Reeves's History of the Law it is said that this is the first instance of the Master of the Rolls ever hearing causes by himself, he having been before only the principal of the council of Masters assigned for the Chancellor's assistance; but there have lately been found in the Tower of London, bills addressed to the Master of the Rolls as early as the reign of Edward IV.—See ; Reeves, 369.