

embracing the Protestant religion, Milton doubtlessly imbibed, besides his taste for literature and music, those high and unbending views of civil and religious liberty of which he afterwards became so strenuous an advocate. His mother also, who is described as "a woman of incomparable virtue and goodness," must have exercised no small influence in the formation of his character. In this refined home, Milton was carefully educated by a Scotch tutor, Thomas Young, a graduate of the University of St. Andrew's, to whom, during his college career, he addressed his *Fourth Latin Elegy* in language of the warmest affection. Young, who subsequently became Vicar at Stowmarket in Suffolk, was a rigid Puritan, and one of the authors of the *Treatise by Smectymnuus*. His friendship and intimacy with the future defender of the English People lasted for many years, and it is more than probable that the views inculcated by the father were confirmed by the teachings of the tutor. At the age of eleven, Milton was sent to St. Paul's School, where he remained until his fifteenth year, under the tuition of Alex. Gill and his sons. From his very childhood Milton manifested an intense love for knowledge, which his father too readily encouraged; and by sitting up till midnight at his lessons, he increased the tendency to weak sight he had inherited from his mother. Even before his departure for

1624 Cambridge he had composed *Paraphrases*¹ of two Psalms, which are the earliest specimens extant of his literary powers.

The first sixteen years of Milton's life were the last sixteen of the reign of James I.; and his boyhood was therefore spent amid the growing discontent of the people with the rule of the King and his minister, Buckingham. The Puritan Party, though still in the minority, was gaining strength, and those forces were developing that produced the Revolution.

In April, 1625, when Charles I. had been a fortnight on the throne, Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he studied till July, 1632, frequently visiting London and his father's house. Among his contemporaries at Cambridge are to be noted the Church historian, Thomas Fuller; the poets, Edmund

¹ Account for the form of these earliest compositions of Milton.