

park is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant."

"And how came you, madam," quoth he, "to this deep knowledge of pleasure? And what did chiefly allure you unto it, seeing not many women, but very few men, have attained thereunto?"

"I will tell you," quoth she, "and tell you a truth which, perchance, ye will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me is that He sent me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently, sometimes with pinches, nips and bobs, and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without reason misordered, that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr. Aylmer; who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping, because, whatever I do else but learning is full of grief, trouble, fear and whole misliking unto me."

Ascham did not see her again after this memorable interview. "I remember this talk gladly," he wrote, "both because it is so worthy of memory and because also it was the last talk that ever I had and the last **time** that ever I saw that noble and worthy lady."

In his letters to his learned friends, however, he frequently commented on the sweetness of her character and the depth of her erudition. He spoke of Lady Mildred Cooke and the Lady Jane Grey as the two most learned women in England; and summed up his praises of the latter in the remark that "however illustrious she was by her fortune and royal extraction, this bore no proportion to the accomplishments of her mind, adorned with the doctrine of Plato and the eloquence of Demosthenes."

Her illustrious rank, her piety and her erudition necessarily made the Lady Jane an object of special interest to the leaders of the Reformed Church in England and on the continent. The learned Martin Bruce, whom Edward VI. had appointed to the chair of divinity at the University of Cambridge, watched over her with prayerful anxiety. Bullinger, a minister of Zurich, corresponded with her frequently, encouraging her in the practice of every virtue. Under the direction and counsel of these and other divines she pursued her theological studies with great success, so as to be able to defend and maintain the creed she had adopted, and give abundant reason for the faith that was in her.

The Marquis of Dorset, in October, 1551, was raised to the dukedom of Suffolk; and on the same day the subtle and ambitious intriguer, John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who was to exercise so malignant an influence on his daughter's destiny, was created Duke of Northumberland.

The Lady Jane was then removed to the metropolis, residing with her family at her father's town house, in Suffolk Place. She necessarily shared in the festivities of the court; but she would seem to have been distin-

guished always by a remarkable plainness of apparel; in this obeying the impulse of her simplicity of taste, supported and confirmed by the advice of Bullinger and Aylmer.

On one occasion the Princess Mary presented her with a sumptuous robe, which she was desired to wear in recognition of the donor's generosity. "Nay," she replied, "that were a shame, to follow my Lady Mary, who leaveth God's word, and leave my Lady Elizabeth who followeth God's word." A speech which the Lady Mary doubtless remembered.

Early in 1553, men clearly saw that the life and reign of Edward VI. were drawing to an abrupt termination. His legitimate successor was his elder sister Mary; but her morose temper and bigoted attachment to the old Church had filled the minds of the Reformers with anxiety. Her unpopularity, and the dangers to the Reformed Church to be apprehended from her accession, led Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, to conceive an audacious design. He resolved to raise his son to the throne. But for this purpose it was necessary to ally him to the blood-royal, and he therefore planned a marriage between his young son, Lord Guilford Dudley, and Lady Jane Grey.

There were such elements of fitness in the match that on neither side was any obstruction thrown; and in June 1553 the bridal ceremony took place at the Duke of Northumberland's palace in the Strand. The Duke then obtained from King Edward, by an appeal to his zeal for the Church, letters-patent excluding Mary and Elizabeth from the succession and declaring Lady Jane Grey heir to the throne.

A few days afterwards the young king died; and on

the evening of the 9th of July, the Duke of Northumberland, accompanied by the Marquis of Northampton, the Earls of Arundel, Huntingdon and Pembroke, appeared before the young bride in her quiet chamber at Northumberland House, and urged her acceptance of a crown which was fated to become, for her, a crown of thorns.

"How I was beside myself," she afterwards wrote, "how I was beside myself, stupefied and troubled, I will leave it to those lords who were present to testify, who saw me overcome by sudden and unexpected grief, fall on the ground, weeping very bitterly; and then declaring to them my insufficiency, I greatly bewailed myself for the death of so noble a Prince, and at the same time turned myself to God, humbly praying and beseeching Him that if what was given to me was *rightly and lawfully* mine, His divine Majesty would grant *me* such grace and spirit that I might govern it to His glory and service and to the advantage of this realm."

Her prudent reluctance, however, was overruled. History records the brief twelve days' pageant of her reign.

On the 19th of July her opponent, Mary entered London in triumph.

"Great was the rejoicing," says a contemporary; so great that the like of it had never been seen by any living. The number of caps that were flung into the air at the proclamation could not be told. The Earl of Pembroke cast among the crowd a liberal largess. Bonfires blazed in every street; and what with shouting and crying of the people, and ringing of bells, there could no one man hear what another said.

Lady Jane was at first confined in the house of one

Partridge, a warder of the Tower. Thence, after she and her husband had been tried for high treason and found guilty, they were removed to the Tower. During her captivity she occasionally amused herself with the graceful pursuits of her earlier and happier years, engraving on the walls of her prison, with a pin, some Latin distich, which turned into English read :

"Believe not, man, in care's despite,
That thou from others' ills art free
The cross that now I suffer might
To-morrow haply fall on *thee*."

"Endless all malice, if our God is nigh:
Fruitless all pains, if He His help deny,
Patient I pass these gloomy hours away,
And wait the morning of eternal day."

Her execution was fixed for the 12th of February 1554. On the night preceding she wrote a few sentences of advice to her sister on the blank leaf of a New Testament. To her father she addressed the following beautiful letter, in which filial reverence softens and subdues the exhortations of a dying saint:

The Lord comfort Your Grace, and that in His Word, wherein all creatures only are to be comforted; and though it hath pleased God to take away two of your children, yet think not, I most humbly beseech Your Grace, that you have lost them; but trust that we, by leaving this mortal life, have won an immortal life. And I, for my part, as I have honoured Your Grace in this life, will pray for you in another life.—Your Grace's humble daughter,

JANE DUDLEY.

The stern Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Brydges, had been vanquished by the gentle graces of his prisoner and he sought from her some memorial in writing. In a

manual of manuscript prayers she wrote a few sentences of farewell:

Forasmuch as you have desired so simple a woman to write in so worthy a book, good Master Lieutenant, therefore I shall, as a friend, desire you, and as a Christian require you, to call upon God to incline your heart to His laws, to quicken you in His way, and not to take the word of truth utterly out of your mouth. Live still to die, that by death you may purchase eternal life, and remember how Methuselah, who, as we read in the Scriptures, was the longest liver that was of a man, died at the last; for, as the Preacher saith, there is a time to be born and a time to die; and the day of death is better than the day of our birth.—Yours, as the Lord knoweth, as a friend,

JANE DUDLEY.

Mary and her advisers had originally intended that both Lady Jane and her husband should be executed together on Tower Hill; but reflection convinced them that the spectacle of so comely and youthful a pair suffering for what was rather the crime of others than their own, might powerfully awaken the sympathies of the multitude, and produce a revulsion of feeling. It was ordered, therefore, that Lady Jane should suffer within the precincts of the Tower.

The fatal morning came. The young husband—still a bridegroom and a lover—had obtained permission to bid her a last farewell; but she refused to see him, apprehensive that so bitter a parting might overwhelm them, and deprive them of the courage needful to face death with calmness. She sent him, however, many loving messages, reminding him how brief would be their separation, and how quickly they would meet in a brighter and better world.

In going to his death on Tower Hill, he passed beneath the window of her cell; so that they had an opportunity

of exchanging a farewell look. He behaved on the scaffold with calm intrepidity. After spending a brief space in silent devotion, he requested the prayers of the spectators, and, laying his head upon the block, gave the fatal signal. At one blow his head was severed from his body.

The scaffold on which the girl-queen was to close her stainless career had been erected on the green opposite the White Tower. As soon as her husband was dead the officers announced that the sheriffs waited to attend her thither. And when she had gone down and been delivered into their hands, the bystanders noted in her "a countenance so gravely settled and with all modest and comely resolution, that not the least symptom either of fear or grief could be perceived either in her speech or motions; she was like one going to be united to her heart's best and longest beloved."

So, like a martyr, crowned with glory, she went unto her death. Her serene composure was scarcely shaken when, through an unfortunate misunderstanding of the officer in command, she met on her way her husband's headless trunk being borne to its last resting-place.

"Oh Guilford! Guilford!" she exclaimed; "the antepast is not so bitter that you have tasted, and that I shall soon taste, as to make my flesh tremble; it is nothing compared to the feast that you and I shall this day partake of in heaven." This thought renewed her strength and sustained and consoled, we might almost believe, by ministering angels, she proceeded to the scaffold with as much grace and dignity as if it were a wedding banquet that awaited her.

She was conducted by Sir John Brydges, the **Lieu-**

tenant of the Tower, and attended by her two waiting-women, Mrs. Elizabeth Tylney and Mrs. Ellen. While these wept and sobbed bitterly, her eyes were dry, and her countenance shone with the light of a sure and certain hope. She read earnestly her manual of prayers. On reaching the place of execution she saluted the lords and gentlemen present with unshaken composure and infinite grace. No minister of her own Church had been allowed to attend her, and she did not care to accept the services of Feckenham, Queen Mary's confessor. She was not indifferent, however, to his respectful sympathy and when bidding him farewell, she said:

"Go now; God grant you all your desires, and accept my own warm thanks for your attentions to me; although, indeed, those attentions have tried me more than death could now terrify me."

To the spectators she addressed a few gentle words, in admirable keeping with the gentle tenor of her life.

"Good people," she exclaimed, "I am come hither to die, and by law I am condemned to the same. My offence to the Queen's Highness was only in consent to the device of others, which now is deemed treason; but it was never my seeking, but by counsel of those who should seem to have further understanding of things than I, who knew little of the law, and much less of the titles to the Crown. I pray you all, good Christian people, to bear me witness that I die a true Christian woman, and that I look to be saved by none other means but only by the mercy of God, in the merits of the blood of His only son, Jesus Christ; and I confess, when I did know the word of God, I neglected the same, loved myself and the world, and therefore this plague or punishment is happily and worthily happened unto me for my sins;

and yet I thank God of His goodness, that He hath thus given me a time and respite to repent. And now, good people, while I am alive, I pray you to assist me with your prayers."

She knelt to her devotions, and turning to Feckenham, inquired whether she should repeat the Miserere psalm (the fifty-first, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord").

He replied in the affirmative; and she said it with great earnestness from beginning to end. Rising from her knees, she began to prepare herself for the headsman and pulling off her gloves, gave them and her handkerchief to Mistress Tylney. The manual of prayers, in which she had written at the desire of the Lieutenant, she handed to Thomas Brydges, his brother. When she was unfastening her robe, the executioner would have assisted her, but she motioned him aside, and accepted the last offices of her waiting-women, who then gave her a white handkerchief with which to bandage her eyes.

Throwing himself at her feet, the headsman humbly craved her forgiveness, which she willingly granted. He then requested her to stand upon the straw, and in complying with his direction she for the first time saw the fatal block. Her composure remained unshaken; she simply entreated the executioner to dispatch her quickly. Again kneeling she asked him:

"Will you take it off before I lay me down?"

"No, madam," he replied.

She bound the handkerchief round her eyes, and feeling for the block, exclaimed,

"What shall I do? Where is it?"

Being guided to it by one of the bystanders, she laid her head down, exclaiming, in an audible voice:

"Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In an instant the axe fell, and the tragedy was consummated. An involuntary groan from the assembled multitude seemed to acknowledge that vengeance had been satisfied, but justice outraged.

Lady Jane — or Queen Jane, as she should more properly be called — was little more than seventeen years old when she thus fell a victim to Mary's jealous fears and hate. She had hardly entered upon womanhood, and the promise of her young life had had no time to ripen into fruition. We may well believe, however, that she would not have disappointed the hopes which that promise had awakened. Her heroic death showed how well she had profited by the lessons she had imbibed in her early years.

There was no affectation, no exaggeration, in her conduct upon the scaffold; but she bore herself with serene dignity and with true courage. It was worthy of her life — which, brief as an unhappy fortune made it, was full of beauty, full of calmness, and truth, and elevation and modest piety. The impression which it made upon her contemporaries, an impression taken up and retained by posterity, is visible in the fact to this hour we speak of her as she was in her sweet simple maidenhood — we pass over her married name and her regal title, and love to honour her, not as Lady Jane Dudley, or Queen Jane, but as Lady Jane Grey.