With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof
They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one
Who yet could do and dare;
With the crown, the King was stript away —
The Knight was reft of his battle-array —
But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth —
Sir John Hall was his name:
With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault
Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the King
A man right manly strong,
And mightily by the shoulderblades
His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,
Sprang down to work his worst;
And the King caught the second man by the neck
And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;
And a long month thence they bare
All black their throats with the grip of his hands
When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,
But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
Oh James! so armed, thou hadst battled there
Till help had come of thy bands;

And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne
And ruled thy Scotish lands!

But while the King o'er his foes still raged
With a heart that naught could tame,
Another man sprange down to the crypt;
And with his sword in his hand hard-gripp'd,
There stood Sir Robert Graeme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart
Who durst not face his King
Till the body unarmed was wearied out
With two-fold combating!

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
As oft ye have heard aright:
"O *Robert Graeme, O Robert Graeme,*
Who slew our King, God give thee shame!"
For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked King turned round at bay,
But his strength had passed the goal,
And he could but gasp: "Mine hour is come;
But oh! to succour thine own soul's doom,
Let a priest now shrive my soul!"

And the traitor looked on the King's spent strength
And said: "Have I kept my word?
Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
No black friar's shrift thy soul shall have,
But the shrift of this red sword!"

With that he smote his King through the breast;
And all they three in the pen

Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him there
Like merciless murderous men

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Graeme,
Ere the King's last breath was o'er,
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above:
"If him thou do not slay,
The price of his life that thou dost spare
Thy forfeit life shall pay!"

O God! what more did I hear or see,
Or how should I tell the rest?
But there at length our King lay slain
With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God! and now did a bell boom forth,
And the murderers turned and fled;
Too late, too late, O God, did it sound!
And I heard the true men mustering round,
And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
Somewise did I creep and steal;
And lo! or ever I swooned away,
Through the dusk I saw where the white face lay
In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scotish maids who have heard
Dread things of the days grown old —
Even at the last, of true Queen Jane
May somewhat yet be told,

And how she dealt for her dear Lord's sake
Dire vengeance manifold.

'T was in the Charterhouse of Perth,
In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
That the slain King's corpse on bier was laid
With chaunt and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm
Was the body purified;
And none could trace on the brow and lips
The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep
With orb and sceptre in hand;
And by the crown he wore on his throne
Was his kingly forehead spann'd.

And, girls, 't was a sweet sad thing to see
How the curling golden hair,
As in the day of the poet's youth,
From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
That throbbed beneath those curls,
Then Scots had said in the days to come
That this their soil was a different home
And a different Scotland, girls!

And the Queen sat by him night and day.
And oft she knelt in prayer,
All wan and pale in the widow's veil
That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt:
And only to me some sign
She made; and save the priests that were there
No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace;
And now fresh couriers fared
Still from the country of the Wild Scots
With news of the traitors snared.

And still, as I told her day by day,
Her pallor changed to sight,
And the frost grew to a furnace-flame
That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,
She bent to her dead King James,
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath
She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Graeme
Was the one she had to give,
I ran to hold her up from the floor;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its end,
And still was the death-pall spread;
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,
And of torments fierce and dire:

And naught she spake — she had ceased to speak --
  But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
  Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three times
  She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said, "My King, they are dead!"
  And she knelt on the chapel floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud smile,
  "James, James, they suffered more!"

Last she stood up to her queenly height,
  But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left her body, and all were turned
  To winter of life-long grief.

And "O James!" she said, "My James!" she said,
  "Alas for the woeful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
  Should needs be born a King!"

VII

LADY JANE GREY

"Seventeen — and knew eight languages — in music
Peerless — her needle perfect, and her learning
Beyond the Churchmen; yet so meek, so modest,
So wife-like humble to the trivial boy
Mismatched with her for policy! I have heard
She would not take a last farewell of him;
She feared it might unman him for his end.
She could not be unmanned — no, nor outwoman'd.
Seventeen — a rose of grace!
Girl never breathed to rival such a rose;
Rose never blew that equalled such a bud."

— TENNYSON.

WHEN the hapless daughter of Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, offered up her fair young life upon the scaffold at Tower Hill she was still in her "teens" —with the simplicity and freshness of girlhood upon her. There is a tender and pathetic beauty about the tragic tale which no repetition can wholly dim or wear off.

The reader needs not to be told that she was the eldest daughter of Henry Grey, third Marquis of Dorset. She was allied with royal blood, her mother being Frances the eldest daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and Mary Tudor, second daughter of Henry VII. She came also of royal stock on the father's side.

It is a curious fact that the date of the birth of this lady is not exactly known; but, according to Fuller, it

took place in 1536, at her father's stately mansion, of Bradgate, near Leicester. She was the eldest of three daughters, Jane, Katherine and Mary. At a very early age her budding gifts gave abundant promise of a fair womanhood; so serene her temper and so remarkable her love of knowledge. She was fortunate in living at a time when the education of women was as comprehensive and exact as that of men; and her father provided her with two learned tutors in his two chaplains, Thomas Harding and John Aylmer. To the latter she seems to have been more particularly given in charge; and the teacher being as zealous as the pupil was diligent, Lady Jane soon gained a thorough acquaintance with Latin and Greek, and also some degree of proficiency in Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldaic, French and Italian.

These grave and serious studies were relieved by **a** cultivation of the graces. Her voice was melodious, and she sang with much skill and expression; she also played on various musical instruments. Her needlework and embroidery excited the admiration of her contemporaries; she acquired a knowledge of the medical properties of herbs; dainty dishes, preserves, and "sweet waters" she concocted with dexterous hand; her caligraphy was a marvel of ease and elegance; in this last-named art she was instructed by the erudite Roger Ascham, who was one of its most famous professors.

Thus it happened that even in her early girlhood she surpassed in general scholarship her equals in age. But her tutors did not forget the spiritual side of her education, and she was well grounded in the dogmas of the Church as well as in the truths and lessons embodied in the life and teaching of her Lord.

After the death of **Henry VIII.** Lady **Jane went**

to reside with the widowed Queen, Katherine Parr, at Chelsea; and when that lady married Lord Seymour of Dudley, she accompanied them to Hanworth, in Middlesex, a palace which Henry VIII. had bestowed upon Queen Katherine in dower. The Queen did not long survive her second nuptials, but died at Dudley Castle, September 5, 1548, in the thirty-sixth year of her age. Lady Jane acted as chief mourner at the funeral.

It was soon after this event that Lady Jane addressed the following letter to the Lord High Admiral. As the composition of a girl of twelve it shows no ordinary promise: —

October 1, 1548.

My duty to your lordship, in most humble wise remembered, with no less thanks for the gentle letters which I received from you. Thinking myself so much bound to your lordship for your great goodness towards me from time to time, that I cannot by any means be able to recompense the least part thereof, I purposed to write a few rude lines unto your lordship, rather as a token to show how much worthier I think your lordship's goodness than to give worthy thanks for the same; and these my letters shall be to testify unto you that, like as you have become towards me a loving and kind father, so I shall be always most ready to obey your godly monitions and good instructions, as becometh one upon whom you have heaped so many benefits. And thus, fearing lest I should trouble your lordship too much, I must humbly take my leave of your good lordship.

Your humble servant during my life,

JANE GREY.

It is not impossible that at Bradgate Lady Jane may have regretted the indulgent ease and splendid hospitality of Dudley Castle. Her parents acted upon the maxim that to spare the rod is to spoil the child; and notwithstanding her amiability and honourable diligence, subjected her to a very severe discipline. She

was rigorously punished for the slightest defect in her behaviour or the most trivial failure in her studies. Her parents taught her to fear, rather than to love, them; and insisted upon reverence, rather than affection, as the duty of children. It is no wonder, therefore, that from the austere brow and unsympathetic voice she turned with ever-increasing delight towards that secret spirit of knowledge which has only smiles for its votaries.

In the pages of the wise she met with divine words of encouragement and consolation; they soothed her sorrows, they taught her the heroism of endurance, they lifted her into that serene realm where dwelt the Immortals—the glorious minds of old. "Thus," says she, "my book hath been so much my pleasure, and bringeth daily to me more and more pleasure, that in respect of it all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles unto me."

From an interesting passage in Roger Ascham's "Schoolmaster," we can form some idea of the melancholy girlhood of this daughter of a royal race. Ascham visited Bradgate in the summer of 1550 on his way to London. He found, on his arrival, the stately mansion deserted; the Lord and Lady, with all their household, were hunting merrily in the park to the music of horn and hound. Making his way through the deserted chambers, he came at length upon a secluded apartment, where the fair Lady Jane was calmly studying the pages of Plato's immortal "Phaedon" in the original Greek. Surprised and delighted by a spectacle so unusual, the worthy scholar, after the usual salutations, inquired why she had not accompanied the gay lords and ladies in the park, to enjoy the pastime of the chase.

"I wis," she replied, smiling, "all their sport in the