

“Her parents, the Duke and Duchess with all the household of gentlemen and gentlewomen were hunting in the park. I asked her why she should lose such pastime. Smiling, she answered me: ‘All their sport in the park is but a shadow to what I find in Plato. Alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant.’ ‘And how came you, madame, to such a deep knowledge of pleasure, and what did chiefly allure you to it, seeing that not many women and but very few men have attained thereunto?’ ‘I will tell you,’ quoth she, ‘and tell you a truth which perchance you will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave is that he sent me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in the presence of either father or mother, whether I speak, keep silent, sit, stand or go; whether I eat, drink, be merry or sad; whether I be sewing, playing, dancing or 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 sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, that I think myself in Hell till time comes that I must go to Mr. Aylmer. He teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, that I think all the time nothing while I am with him. Thus my book hath been so much my pleasure and bringeth daily to me more pleasure; and more so that in respect of it, all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles to me.’ ”

Thus, the severity of her parental education in the manner of stately etiquette, had made her find in her milder tutor and in her studies a grateful relief. To the classics therefore, as a source of daily comfort she applied with enthusiasm and this fortunate direction of her youthful energy was rewarded by those intellectual achievements which have secured to the youthful student a praiseworthy reputation which will never die.

But the talents and amiable qualities of this beautiful girl were the cause of her downfall. She attracted the attention of the ambitious and unscrupulous Duke of Northumberland, who conceived the plan of marrying her to his son, Guilford Dudley, and then, at the death of the king, whose health was rapidly failing, of placing her upon the throne. The plot was well laid and had the favor and support of many of the most influential noblemen in the kingdom. Accordingly, at the death of Edward VI, Lady Jane, urged by her husband and her parents and, no doubt, unconscious of the extent of the