

The youthful couple were both averse to taking upon them the cares and responsibilities of the regal power, much rather preferring the calm, sweet pleasures of a private life. Their remonstrances were, however, at last overcome by the entreaties of their friends; for the Lady Jane was brought up to render implicit obedience to her father and mother.

The tempting advisers first gained Lord Guildford Dudley's favor to their ambitious scheme, and then he persuaded his wife to yield to the dazzling promise of success and glory. Her father, the Duke of Suffolk, took great pains to explain to her how King Edward, now deceased, had solemnly given her the crown, with the clear approbation of his Privy Council and the magistrates and citizens of London.* Then he and Northumberland, both fell on their knees, and paid their duty to her, as Queen of England. She was utterly astonished; but soon recovering self-possession, made this eloquent and affecting reply:

"My liberty is better than the chain you offer me, with what precious stones soever it be adorned, or of what gold soever framed. I will not exchange my precious peace for honorable and precious jealousies, for magnificent and glorious fetters; and if you love me sincerely, and in good earnest, you will rather wish me a secure and quiet fortune, though mean, than an exalted condition exposed to the wind and followed by some dismal fall."†

Roger Ascham recorded her words to himself on one occasion, which shows her disposition and the way she was governed at home, so clearly, that I will repeat it here: He had asked her, "How came you, madam, to this deep knowledge of pleasure?" [She had been telling him how much she enjoyed reading Plato] "and what did chiefly allure you unto it, seeing not many women, but very few men, have attained thereunto?"

"I will tell you," replied Lady Jane, "and tell you a truth, which, perchance you 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 any thing 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

* Biogra. Britan., Val. V.

† Howard's Lady Jane Grey and her Times.