

Thus Edward likely ended his formal education with heart-felt relief in June, 1552. His Journal he laid aside at the end of November, 1552. Nichols suggests that this may have been due to illness, though he adds that Edward's fatal illness is not supposed to have shown itself till the following January. Edward had begun the Journal systematically in March, 1550. I rather suspect that he regarded it also as part of his boyish school duties, and now felt emancipated from it too. It is likely, therefore, that Edward's "Thank God" on June 12, 1552, is his valedictory speech at the end of his formal schooling. It was a fitting one, but it came too late. For it would have required a very strong constitution to withstand such onslaughts, and our verdict can scarcely be other than "dead in the course of duty."⁵⁹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. It is sometimes only less fearful to fall living into the hands of godly men. Cox and Cheke had consecrated themselves to the task of making a godly king of Edward. And godly they made him—but a king of dust.

⁵⁹ It is not likely that Dudley's regime of strenuous physical exertions improved matters at all—one remembers the case of Prince Henry some sixty years later.