

her marriage with Henry VIII. were proceeding with sufficient activity to allow her royal wedlock to take place the day after the executioner had rendered the king a widower. Henry himself remained in the vicinity of the metropolis, awaiting the accomplishment of that event. The traditions of Richmond-park and Epping-forest quote each place as the *locale* where he waited for the announcement of his wife's death. Richmond-park has decidedly the best claim, for the spot pointed out is a promontory of the highest portion of the cliff or ridge commanding the valley of the Thames, called Richmond-hill. About a quarter of a mile to the left of the town an extensive view to the west reposes under the eye. The remains of the oak beneath which Henry VIII. stood are now enclosed in the grounds at present occupied by lord John Russell, therefore we were prevented from personally examining this historical spot. Yet its geographical features could be ascertained, and they prove that Henry was a full hour nearer Wiltshire than if he had started from the hunting-tower at Pleshet, near East Ham.¹ On the morning of the 19th of May, Henry VIII., attired for the chase, with his huntsmen and hounds around him, was standing under the spreading oak, breathlessly awaiting the signal-gun from the Tower which was to announce that the sword had fallen on the neck of his once "entirely beloved Anne Boleyn." At last, when the bright summer sun rode high towards its meridian, the sullen sound of the death-gun boomed along the windings of the Thames. Henry started with ferocious joy. "Ha, ha!" he cried with satisfaction, "the deed is done. Uncouple the hounds and away!" The chase that day bent towards the west, whether the stag led it in that direction or not. The tradition of Richmond adds, that the king was likewise advised of the execution by a signal from a flag hoisted on the spire of old St. Paul's, which was seen through a glade of the park to the east.²

¹ The chief objection to this story is, that, robust as Henry then was, it would have been scarcely possible for him to have reached Wiltshire on the 19th of May, if he commenced his journey in the afternoon from Epping-forest.

² The dome of St. Paul's may be seen from the same spot.