

one day attracted by a jewel which Jane Seymour wore about her neck, and she expressed a wish to look at it. Jane faltered and drew back, and the queen, noticing her hesitation, snatched it violently from her, so violently that she hurt her own hand,<sup>1</sup> and found that it contained the portrait of the king, which, as she most truly guessed, had been presented by himself to her fair rival. Jane Seymour had far advanced in the same serpentine path which conducted Anne herself to a throne, ere she ventured to accept the picture of her enamoured sovereign, and well assured must she have been of success in her ambitious views before she presumed to wear such a love-token in the presence of the queen. Anne Boleyn was not of a temper to bear her wrongs patiently, but Jane Seymour's star was in the ascendant, hers in the decline: her anger was unavailing. Jane maintained her ground triumphantly, even after the disgraceful *dénouement* which has been related in the biography of Anne Boleyn. One of the king's love-letters to his new favourite seems to have been written while the fallen queen was waiting her doom in prison.

"HENRY VIII. TO JANE SEYMOUR.<sup>2</sup>

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND MISTRESS,

"The bearer of these few lines from thy entirely devoted servant will deliver into thy fair hands a token of my true affection for thee, hoping you will keep it for ever in your sincere love for me. Advertising you that there is a ballad made lately of great derision against us, which if it go abroad and is seen by you, I pray you to pay no manner of regard to it. I am not at present informed who is the setter forth of this malignant writing; but if he is found out, he shall be straitly punished for it.

"For the things ye lacked, I have minded my lord to supply them to you as soon as he could buy them. Thus hoping shortly to receive you in these arms, I end for the present,

"Your own loving servant and sovereign,

"H. R."

While the last act of that diabolical drama was played out which consummated the destruction of poor Anne, it appears that her rival had the discretion to retreat to her paternal mansion, Wolf-hall, in Wiltshire. There the preparations for

<sup>1</sup> Heylin. Fuller's English Worthies, 848.

<sup>2</sup> Published by Halliwell, in Letters of the Kings of England, vol. i. p. 353, being his modernised transcript from the Gough MSS. There is no authority as to the depository of the original, but it is in Henry VIII.'s style.—See his letters to Anne Boleyn.