

enemies sit as my accusers and as my judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shames. Then shall you see either mine innocency cleared, your suspicions and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that, whatever God and you may determine of, your grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your grace may be at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party² for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could, some good while since, have pointed unto,—your grace being not ignorant of my suspicion therein. But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the joying of your desired happiness, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin herein, and likewise my enemies, the instruments thereof; and that he will not call you to a strait account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me at his general judgment-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear; and in whose just judgment, I doubt not, (whatsoever the world may think of me,) mine innocency shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

"My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burden of your grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen, whom, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight,—if ever the name of Anne Bolen have been pleasing in your ears,—then let me obtain this request; and so I will leave to trouble your grace any further, with mine earnest prayer to the Trinity to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions.

"From my doleful prison in the Tower, the 6th of May.

"ANN BULEN."

The authenticity of this beautiful letter has been impugned for various reasons, but chiefly because the hand-writing differs from the well-known autograph of Anne Boleyn; but the fact that it was found among Cromwell's papers four years after her death, proves it to be a contemporary document. The cautious but pathetic indorsement, "To the king, from the ladye in the Tower," identifies it, no less than the peculiar nature of the contents, as the composition of the captive queen. The original, we may reasonably suppose, had been forwarded to the king by Mr. secretary Cromwell. The only real objection which occurs to us is, that the letter is signed "Ann Bulen," instead of "*Anna the quene*." It is, however, possible, in the excited state of feeling under which this passionate appeal to the fickle tyrant was written, that his unfortunate consort fondly thought, by using that once-beloved signature, to touch a tender chord in his heart. But the time of sentiment, if it ever existed with Henry, was long gone by; and such a letter from a wife whom he had never respected, and had now

² Jane Seymour.