

her almoner is continually with her, and hath been since two o'clock after midnight." There must have been one powerful tie to bind the hapless queen to a world from which she appeared eager to be released. She was a mother, and was leaving her infant daughter to the domination of the treacherous beauty who was to take her place in Henry's state, as she had already done in his fickle fancy, and Anne Boleyn had no reason to expect that Jane Seymour would prove a kinder step-dame to Elizabeth, than she had been to the princess Mary,—an agonizing thought in the hour of death. It is not known whether Anne requested to see her little one, who was quite old enough to know her and to return her caresses, for Elizabeth was at the attractive age of two years and eight months; but if the unfortunate queen preferred such a petition, it was fruitless, and she was led to the scaffold without being permitted to bestow a parting embrace on her child. Perhaps she felt that such an interview would unfit her for acting her part in the last trying scene that awaited her with the lofty composure which its publicity required.

That great historian, lord Bacon, assures us that Anne protested her innocence with undaunted greatness of mind at the time of her death. He tells us, "that by a messenger, faithful and generous as she supposed, who was one of the king's privy-chamber, she, just before she went to execution, sent this message to the king: 'Commend me to his majesty, and tell him he hath been ever constant in his career of advancing me. From a private gentlewoman he made me a marchioness, from a marchioness a queen; and now he hath left no higher degree of honour, he gives my innocency the crown of martyrdom.' But the messenger durst not carry this to the king, then absorbed in a new passion, yet tradition has truly transmitted it to posterity."¹ This sarcastic message is noted as a memorandum on the letter which Anne

¹ Lord Bacon's account of these celebrated words of Anne Boleyn is well worthy the attention of the reader, considering how intimately connected his grandfather, sir Anthony Cooke, was with the court of England, being tutor to Edward VI.; his aunt was lady Cecil, and his mother lady Bacon, both in the service of queen Mary: he therefore knew when they were uttered, as all these persons must have heard these facts from witnesses.