

At nightfall the king was at Wolf-hall, in Wilts, telling the news to his elected bride; the next morning he married her. It is commonly asserted that the king wore white for mourning the day after Anne Boleyn's execution; he certainly wore white, not as mourning, but because he on that day wedded her rival. Wolf-hall,¹ the scene of these royal nuptials, was a short distance from Tottenham-park, in Wiltshire. Of the ancient residence some remains now exist, among which is the kitchen, where tradition declares a notable royal wedding-dinner was cooked: a detached building is likewise still entire, in which the said dinner was served up, the room being hung, on this occasion, with tapestry.² As late as the time of Defoe the same building, which he calls "the large barn at Wolf-hall," in which the nuptial-feast of Henry VIII. and queen Jane Seymour was served, had tenter-hooks, on which small bits of tapestry were hanging. "The people of the neighbourhood showed these tatters as proof of the honourable use to which the barn had been put. Between Wolf-hall and Tottenham was a noble avenue bordered with lofty trees, in which the royal bride and bridegroom walked; it was in the seventeenth century known by the name of 'king Harry's walk.'³

Several favourite members of the king's obsequious privy council were present at the marriage, therefore the authenticity of its date is beyond all dispute. Among others, was sir John Russell, (afterwards earl of Bedford,) who, "having been at church⁴ with the royal pair," gave as his opinion, "That the king was the goodliest person there, and that the richer queen Jane was dressed the fairer she appeared; on the contrary, the better Anne Boleyn was apparelled the worse she looked; but that queen Jane was the fairest of all Henry's wives, though both Anne Boleyn, and queen Katharine in her younger days, were women not easily paralleled."⁵ The bridal

¹ It was the inheritance of sir John Seymour from his grandmother, the heiress of Esturmy. Previous to this lucky marriage, the family of St. Maur (Seymour) were settled in Monmouthshire, at Woundy: they were some of the marchmen who kept the Welsh in bounds.

² Britton's Wiltshire, p. 685.

³ Defoe's Tour through Great Britain, vol. ii. p. 43.

⁴ Probably Tottenham church.

⁵ Lord Herbert's Life of Henry VIII.