

Perhaps just then a pale, soul-harrowing phantom passed before his mind, and a glance at the past showed him the beautiful and unfortunate mother * of Elizabeth, whom he had sentenced to a cruel death at the hands of the public executioner, and whose last word nevertheless was a blessing and a message of love for him.

He passionately seized Catharine's hand and pressed it to his lips. "I thank you! You are unselfish and generous. That is a very rare quality, and I shall always highly esteem you for it. But you are also brave and courageous, for you have dared what nobody before you has dared; you have twice on the same evening interceded for one condemned and one fallen into disgrace. The fortunate, and those favored by me, have always had many friends, but I have never yet seen that the unfortunate and the exiled have also found friends. You are different from these miserable, cringing courtiers; different from this deceitful and trembling crowd, that with chattering teeth fall down and worship me as their god and lord; different from these pitiful, good-for-nothing mortals, who call themselves my people, and who allow me to yoke them up, because they are like the ox, which is obedient and serviceable, only because he is so stupid as not to know his own might and strength. Ah, believe me, Kate, I would be a milder and more merciful king, if the people were not such an utterly stupid and contemptible thing; a dog, which is so much the more submissive and gentle the more you maltreat him. You, Kate, you are different, and I am glad of it. You know, I have forever banished Elizabeth from my court and from my heart, and still you intercede for her. That is noble of you, and I love you for it, and grant you your request. And that you may see how I love and trust you, I will now reveal to you a secret: I have long since wished to have Elizabeth with me, but I was ashamed, even to myself, of this weakness. I have long yearned once again

* Anne Boleyn.

to look into my daughter's large deep eyes, to be a kind and tender father to her, and make some amends to her for the wrong I perhaps may have done to her mother. For sometimes, in sleepless nights, Anne's beautiful face comes up before me and gazes at me with mournful, mild look, and my whole heart shudders before it. But I could not confess this to anybody, for then they might say that I repented what I had done. A king must be infallible, like God himself, and never, through regret or desire to compensate, confess that he is a weak, erring mortal, like others. You see why I repressed my longing and parental tenderness, which was suspected by no one, and appeared to be a heartless father, because nobody would help me and make it easy for me to be a tender father. Ah, these courtiers! They are so stupid, that they can understand only just what is echoed in our words; but what our heart says, and longs for, of that they know nothing. But you know, Kate; you are an acute woman, and a high-minded one besides. Come, Kate, a thankful father gives you this kiss, and this, ay, this, your husband gives you, my beautiful, charming queen."

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY THE EIGHTH AND HIS WIVES.

THE calm of night had now succeeded to the tempest of the day, and after so much bustle, festivity, and rejoicing, deep quiet now reigned in the palace of Whitehall, and throughout London. The happy subjects of King Henry might, without danger, remain for a few hours at least in their houses, and behind closed shutters and bolted doors, either slumber and dream, or give themselves to their devotional exercises, on account of which they had

that day, perhaps, been denounced as malefactors. They might, for a few hours, resign themselves to the sweet, blissful dream of being freemen untrammelled in belief and thought. For King Henry slept, and likewise Gardiner and the lord chancellor had closed their watchful, prying, devout, murderous eyes, and reposed awhile from the Christian employment of ferreting out heretics.

And like the king, the entire households of both their majesties were also asleep and resting from the festivities of the royal wedding-day, which, in pomp and splendor, by far surpassed the five preceding marriages.

It appeared, however, as though not all the court officials were taking rest, and following the example of the king. For in a chamber, not far from that of the royal pair, one could perceive, from the bright beams streaming from the windows, in spite of the heavy damask curtains which veiled them, that the lights were not yet extinguished; and he who looked more closely would have observed that now and then a human shadow was portrayed upon the curtain.

So the occupant of this chamber had not yet gone to rest, and harassing must have been the thoughts which cause him to move so restlessly to and fro.

This chamber was occupied by Lady Jane Douglas, first maid of honor to the queen. The powerful influence of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, had seconded Catharine's wish to have near her the dear friend of her youth, and, without suspecting it, the queen had given a helping hand to bring nearer to their accomplishment the schemes which the hypocritical Gardiner was directing against her.

For Catharine knew not what changes had taken place in the character of her friend in the four years in which she had not seen her. She did not suspect how fatal her sojourn in the strongly Romish city of Dublin had been to the easily impressible mind of her early playmate, and how much it had transformed her whole being.

Lady Jane, once so sprightly and gay, had become a bigoted Romanist, who, with fanatical zeal, believed that she was serving God when she served the Church, and paid unreserved obedience to her priests.

Lady Jane Douglas had therefore—thanks to her fanaticism and the teachings of the priests—become a complete dissembler. She could smile, while in her heart she secretly brooded over hatred and revenge. She could kiss the lips of those whose destruction she had perhaps just sworn. She could preserve a harmless, innocent air, while she observed everything, and took notice of every breath, every smile, every movement of the eyelashes.

Hence it was very important for Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, to bring his "friend" of the queen to court, and make of this disciple of Loyola an ally and friend.

Lady Jane Douglas was alone; and, pacing up and down her room, she thought over the events of the day.

Now, that no one was observing her, she had laid aside that gentle, serious mien, which one was wont to see about her at other times; her countenance betrayed in rapid changes all the various sad and cheerful, tempestuous and tender feelings which agitated her.

She who had hitherto had only *one* aim before her eyes, to serve the Church, and to consecrate her whole life to this service; she whose heart had been hitherto open only to ambition and devotion, she felt to-day wholly new and never-suspected feelings springing up within her. A new thought had entered into her life, the woman was awakened in her, and beat violently at that heart which devotion had overlaid with a hard coating.

She had tried to collect herself in prayer, and to fill her soul so entirely with the idea of God and her Church, that no earthly thought or desire could find place therein. But ever and again arose before her mind's eye the noble countenance of Henry Howard, ever and again she fancied that she heard his earnest, melodious voice, which made her heart shake and tremble like a magical incantation.

She had at first struggled against these sweet fancies, which forced upon her such strange and undreamed-of thoughts; but at length the woman in her got the better of the fanatical Romanist, and, dropping into a seat, she surrendered herself to her dreams and fancies.

"Has he recognized me?" asked she of herself. "Does he still remember that a year ago we saw each other daily at the king's court in Dublin?"

"But no," added she mournfully, "he knows nothing of it. He had then eyes and sense only for his young wife. Ah, and she was beautiful and lovely as one of the Graces. But I, am not I also beautiful? and have not the noblest cavaliers paid me homage, and sighed for me in unavailing love? How comes it, then, that where I would please, there I am always overlooked? How comes it, that the only two men, for whose notice I ever cared, have never shown any preference for me? I felt that I loved Henry Howard, but this love was a sin, for the Earl of Surrey was married. I therefore tore my heart from him by violence, and gave it to God, because the only man whom I could love did not return my affection. But even God and devotion are not able to entirely fill a woman's heart. In my breast there was still room for ambition; and since I could not be a happy wife, I would at least be a powerful queen. Oh, everything was so well devised, so nicely arranged! Gardiner had already spoken of me to the king, and inclined him to his plan; and while I was hastening at his call from Dublin hither, this little Catharine Parr comes between and snatches him from me, and overturns all our schemes. I will never forgive her. I will find a way to revenge myself. I will force her to leave this place, which belongs to me, and if there is no other way for it, she must go the way of the scaffold, as did Catharine Howard. I will be Queen of England, I will——"

She suddenly interrupted her soliloquy, and listened. She thought she heard a slight knock at the door.

She was not mistaken; this knock was now repeated, and indeed with a peculiar, significant stroke.

"It is my father!" said Lady Jane, and, as she resumed again her grave and quiet air, she proceeded to open the door.

"Ah, you expected me, then?" said Lord Archibald Douglas, kissing his daughter's forehead.

"Yes, I expected you, my father," replied Lady Jane with a smile. "I knew that you would come to communicate to me your experiences and observations during the day, and to give me directions for the future."

The earl seated himself on the ottoman, and drew his daughter down by him.

"No one can overhear us, can they?"

"Nobody, my father! My women are sleeping in the fourth chamber from here, and I have myself fastened the intervening doors. The anteroom through which you came is, as you know, entirely empty, and nobody can conceal himself there. It remains, then, only to fasten the door leading thence into the corridor, in order to be secure from interruption."

She hastened into the anteroom to fasten the door.

"Now, my father, we are secure from listeners," said she, as she returned and resumed her place on the ottoman.

"And the walls, my child? know you whether or no the walls are safe? You look at me with an expression of doubt and surprise! My God, what a harmless and innocent little maiden you still are! Have I not constantly reiterated the great and wise lesson, 'Doubt everything and mistrust everything, even what you see.' He who will make his fortune at court, must first of all mistrust everybody, and consider everybody his enemy, whom he is to flatter, because he can do him harm, and whom he is to hug and kiss, until in some happy embrace he can either plunge a dagger into his breast wholly unobserved, or pour poison into his mouth. Trust neither men nor walls,

Jane, for I tell you, however smooth and innocent both may appear, still there may be found an ambuscade behind the smooth exterior. But I will for the present believe that these walls are innocent, and conceal no listeners. I will believe it, because I know this room. Those were fine and charming days in which I became acquainted with it. Then I was yet young and handsome, and King Henry's sister was not yet married to the King of Scotland, and we loved each other so dearly. Ah, I could relate to you wonderful stories of those happy days. I could——"

"But, my dear father," interrupted Lady Jane, secretly trembling at the terrible prospect of being forced to listen yet again to the story of his youthful love, which she had already heard times without number, "but, my dear father, doubtless you have not come hither so late at night in order to relate to me what I—forgive me, my lord—what I long since knew. You will rather communicate to me what your keen and unerring glance has discovered here."

"It is true," said Lord Douglas, sadly. "I now sometimes become loquacious—a sure sign that I am growing old. I have, by no means, come here to speak of the past, but of the present. Let us, then, speak of it. Ah, I have to-day perceived much, seen much, observed much, and the result of my observations is, you will be King Henry's seventh wife."

"Impossible, my lord!" exclaimed Lady Jane, whose countenance, in spite of her will, assumed an expression of delight.

Her father remarked it. "My child," said he, "I observe that you have not yet your features entirely under your control. You aimed just now, for example, to play the coy and humble, and yet your face had the expression of proud satisfaction. But this by the way! The principal thing is, you will be King Henry's seventh wife! But in order to become so, there is need for great heedfulness, a complete knowledge of present relations, constant observation of all persons, impenetrable dissimulation, and

lastly, above all things, a very intimate and profound knowledge of the king, of the history of his reign, and of his character. Do you possess this knowledge? Know you what it is to wish to become King Henry's seventh wife, and how you must begin in order to attain this? Have you studied Henry's character?"

"A little, perhaps, but certainly not sufficiently. For, as you know, my lord, worldly matters have lain upon my heart less than the holy Church, to whose service I have consecrated myself, and to which I would have presented my whole being, my whole soul, my whole heart, as a sacrifice, had not you yourself determined otherwise concerning me. Ah, my father, had I been allowed to follow my inclination, I would have retired into a convent in Scotland in order to spend my life in quiet contemplation and pious penances, and close my soul and ear to every profane sound. But my wishes have not been regarded; and, by the mouth of His venerable and holy priests, God has commanded me to remain in the world, and take upon myself the yoke of greatness and regal splendor. If I then struggle and strive to become queen, this is done, not because the vain pomp and glory allure me, but solely because through me the Church, out of which is no salvation, may find a fulcrum to operate on this weak and fickle king, and because I am to bring him back again to the only true faith."

"Very well played!" cried her father, who had stared her steadily in the face while she was speaking. "On my word, very well played. Everything was in perfect harmony, the gesticulation, the play of the eyes, and the voice. My daughter, I withdraw my censure. You have perfect control over yourself. But let us speak of King Henry. We will now subject him to a thorough analysis, and no fibre of his heart, no atom of his brain shall remain unnoticed by us. We will observe him in his domestic, his political, and his religious life, and get a perfectly clear view of every peculiarity of his character, in order

that we may deal with him accordingly. Let us, then, speak first of his wives. Their lives and deaths afford you excellent finger-posts; for I do not deny that it is an extremely difficult and dangerous undertaking to be Henry's consort. There is needed for it much personal courage and very great self-control. Know you which, of all his wives, possessed these in the highest degree? It was his first consort, *Catharine of Aragon*! By Heaven, she was a sensible woman, and born a queen! Henry, avaricious as he was, would gladly have given the best jewel in his crown, if he could have detected but a shadow, the slightest trace of unfaithfulness in her. But there was absolutely no means of sending this woman to the scaffold, and at that time he was as yet too cowardly and too virtuous to put her out of the way by poison. He, therefore, endured her long, until she was an old woman with gray hairs, and disagreeable for his eyes to look upon. So after he had been married to her seventeen years, the good, pious king was all at once seized with a conscientious scruple, and because he had read in the Bible, 'Thou shalt not marry thy sister,' dreadful pangs of conscience came upon the noble and crafty monarch. He fell upon his knees and beat his breast, and cried: 'I have committed a great sin; for I have married my brother's wife, and consequently my sister. But I will make amends for it. I will dissolve this adulterous marriage!'—Do you know, child, why he would dissolve it?"

"Because he loved Anne Boleyn!" said Jane, with a smile.

"Perfectly correct! Catharine had grown old, and Henry was still a young man, and his blood shot through his veins like streams of fire. But he was yet somewhat virtuous and timid, and the main peculiarity of his character was as yet undeveloped. *He was not yet bloodthirsty*, that is to say, he had not yet licked blood. But you will see how with each new queen his desire for blood increased, till at length it has now become a wasting disease. Had

he then had the system of lies that he now has, he would somehow have bribed a slanderer, who would have declared that he was Catharine's lover. But he was yet so innocent; he wanted yet to gratify his darling lusts in a perfectly legal way. So Anne Boleyn must become his queen, that he might love her. And in order to attain this, he threw down the glove to the whole world, became an enemy to the pope, and set himself in open opposition to the holy head of the Church. Because the Holy Father would not dissolve his marriage, King Henry became an apostate and atheist. He constituted himself head of his Church, and, by virtue of his authority as such, he declared his marriage with Catharine of Aragon null and void. He said that he had not in his heart given his consent to this marriage, and that it had not consequently been properly consummated.* It is true, Catharine had in the Princess Mary a living witness of the consummation of her marriage, but what did the enamored and selfish king care about that? Princess Mary was declared a bastard, and the queen was now to be nothing more than the widow of the Prince of Wales. It was strictly forbidden to longer give the title and to show the honor due to a queen, to the woman who for seventeen years had been Queen of England, and had been treated and honored as such. No one was permitted to call her anything but the Princess of Wales; and that nothing might disturb the good people or the noble queen herself in this illusion, Catharine was banished from the court and exiled to a castle, which she had once occupied as consort of Arthur, Prince of Wales. And Henry likewise allowed her only the attendance and pension which the law appoints to the widow of the Prince of Wales.†

"I have ever held this to be one of the most prudent and subtle acts of our exalted king, and in the whole history of this divorce the king conducted himself with admirable consistency and resolution. But this is to say, he

* Burnet, vol. i, p. 37.

† Burnet, vol. i, p. 120.

was excited by opposition. Mark this, then, my child, for this is the reason why I have spoken to you of these things so much at length. Mark this, then: King Henry is every way entirely unable to bear contradiction, or to be subjected to restraint. If you wish to win him to any purpose, you must try to draw him from it; you must surround it with difficulties and hinderances. Therefore show yourself coy and indifferent; that will excite him. Do not court his looks; then will he seek to encounter yours. And when finally he loves you, dwell so long on your virtue and your conscience, that at length Henry, in order to quiet your conscience, will send this troublesome Catharine Parr to the block, or do as he did with Catharine of Aragon, and declare that he did not mentally give his consent to this marriage, and therefore Catharine is no queen, but only Lord Neville's widow. Ah, since he made himself high-priest of his Church, there is no impediment for him in matters of this kind, for only God is mightier than he.

"The beautiful Anne Boleyn, Henry's second wife, proved this. I have seen her often, and I tell you, Jane, she was of wondrous beauty. Whoever looked upon her, could not but love her, and he whom she smiled upon felt himself fascinated and glorified. When she had borne to the king the Princess Elizabeth, I heard him say, that he had attained the summit of his happiness, the goal of his wishes, for the queen had borne him a daughter, and so there was a regular and legitimate successor to his throne. But this happiness lasted only a brief time.

"The king conceived one day that Anne Boleyn was not, as he had hitherto believed, the most beautiful woman in the world; but that there were women still more beautiful at his court, who therefore had a stronger vocation to become Queen of England. He had seen Jane Seymour, and she without doubt was handsomer than Anne Boleyn, for she was not as yet the king's consort, and there was an

obstacle to his possession of her—the Queen Anne Boleyn. This obstacle must be got out of the way.

"Henry, by virtue of his plentitude of power, might again have been divorced from his wife, but he did not like to repeat himself, he wished to be always original; and no one was to be allowed to say that his divorces were only the cloak of his capricious lewdness.

"He had divorced Catharine of Aragon on account of conscientious scruples; therefore, some other means must be devised for Anne Boleyn.

"The shortest way to be rid of her was the scaffold. Why should not Anne travel that road, since so many had gone it before her? for a new force had entered into the king's life: *the tiger had licked blood!* His instinct was aroused, and he recoiled no more from those crimson rills which flowed in the veins of his subjects.

"He had given Lady Anne Boleyn the crimson mantle of royalty, why then should she not give him her crimson blood? For this there was wanted only a pretext, and this was soon found. Lady Rochford was Jane Seymour's aunt, and she found some men, of whom she asserted that they had been lovers of the fair Anne Boleyn. She, as the queen's first lady of the bed-chamber, could of course give the most minute particulars concerning the matter, and the king believed her. He believed her, though these four pretended lovers of the queen, who were executed for their crime, all, with the exception of a single one, asseverated that Anne Boleyn was innocent, and that they had never been in her presence. The only one who accused the queen of illicit intercourse with him was James Smeaton, a musician.* But he had been promised his life for this confession. However, it was not thought advisable to keep this promise, for fear that, when confronted with the queen, he might not have the strength to sustain his assertion. But not to be altogether unthankful to him for so useful a confession, they showed him the favor of

* Tytler.

not executing him with the axe, but the more agreeable and easier death of hanging was vouchsafed to him.*

"So the fair and lovely Anne Boleyn must lay her head upon the block. The day on which this took place, the king had ordered a great hunt, and early that morning we rode out to Epping Forest. The king was at first unusually cheerful and humorous, and he commanded me to ride near him, and tell him something from the *chronique scandaleuse* of our court. He laughed at my spiteful remarks, and the worse I calumniated, the merrier was the king. Finally, we halted; the king had talked and laughed so much that he had at last become hungry. So he encamped under an oak, and, in the midst of his suite and his dogs, he took a breakfast, which pleased him very much, although he had now become a little quieter and more silent, and sometimes turned his face toward the direction of London with visible restlessness and anxiety. But suddenly was heard from that direction the dull sound of a cannon. We all knew that this was the signal which was to make known to the king that Anne Boleyn's head had fallen. We knew it, and a shudder ran through our whole frames. The king alone smiled, and as he arose and took his weapon from my hand, he said, with cheerful face, 'It is done, the business is finished. Unleash the dogs, and let us follow the boar.' †

"That," said Lord Douglas, sadly, "that was King Henry's funeral discourse over his charming and innocent wife."

"Do you regret her, my father?" asked Lady Jane, with surprise. "But Anne Boleyn was, it seems to me, an enemy of our Church, and an adherent of the accursed new doctrine."

Her father shrugged his shoulders almost contemptu-

* Burnet, vol. i, p. 205.

† The king's very words. Tytler, p. 383. The oak under which this took place is still pointed out in Epping Forest, and in fact is not less remarkable as the oak of Charles II.

ously. "That did not prevent Lady Anne from being one of the fairest and loveliest women of Old England. And, besides, much as she inclined to the new doctrine, she did us essential good service, for she it was who bore the blame of *Thomas More's death*. Since he had not approved her marriage with the king, she hated him, as the king hated him because he would not take the oath of supremacy. Henry, however, would have spared him, for, at that time, he still possessed some respect for learning and virtue, and Thomas More was so renowned a scholar that the king held him in reverence. But Anne Boleyn demanded his death, and so Thomas More must be executed. Oh, believe me, Jane, that was an important and sad hour for all England, the hour when Thomas More laid his head upon the block. We only, we gay people in the palace of Whitehall, we were cheerful and merry. We were dancing a new kind of dance, the music of which was written by the king himself, for you know the king is not merely an author, but also a composer, and as he now writes pious books, so he then composed dances.* That evening, after we had danced till we were tired, we played cards. Just as I had won a few guineas from the king, the lieutenant of the Tower came with the tidings that the execution was over, and gave us a description of the last moments of the great scholar. The king threw down his cards, and, turning an angry look on Anne Boleyn, said, in an agitated voice, 'You are to blame for the death of this man!' Then he arose and withdrew to his apartments, whither no one was permitted to follow him, not even the queen.† You see, then, that Anne Boleyn had a claim on our gratitude, for the death of Thomas More delivered Old England from another great peril. Melancthon and Bucer, and with them several of the greatest pulpit orators of Germany, had set out to come to London, and, as delegates of the Germanic Protestant princes, to nominate the king as

* Granger's "Biographical History of England," vol. i, p. 137.

† Tytler, p. 354.

head of their alliance. But the terrible news of the execution of their friend frightened them back, and caused them to return when half-way here.*

"Peace, then, to the ashes of unhappy Anne Boleyn! However, she was avenged too, avenged on her successor and rival, for whose sake she was made to mount the scaffold—avenged on Jane Seymour."

"But she was the king's beloved wife," said Jane, "and when she died the king mourned for her two years."

"He mourned!" exclaimed Lord Douglas, contemptuously. "He has mourned for all his wives. Even for Anne Boleyn he put on mourning, and in his white mourning apparel, the day after Anne's execution, he led Jane Seymour to the marriage altar.† This outward mourning, what does it signify? Anne Boleyn also mourned for Catharine of Aragon, whom she had pushed from the throne. For eight weeks she was seen in yellow mourning on account of Henry's first wife; but Anne Boleyn was a shrewd woman, and she knew very well that the yellow mourning dress was exceedingly becoming to her."‡

"But the king's mourning was not merely external," said Lady Jane. "He mourned really, for it was two years before he resolved on a new marriage."

Earl Douglas laughed. "But he cheered himself during these two years of widowhood with a very beautiful mistress, the French Marchioness de Montreuil, and he would have married her had not the prudent beauty preferred returning to France, because she found it altogether too dangerous to become Henry's consort. For it is not to be denied, a baleful star hovers over Henry's queens, and none of them has descended from the throne in a natural way."

"Yet, father, Jane Seymour did so in a very natural way; she died in childbed."

"Well, yes, in childbed. And yet by no natural death,

* Tytler, p. 357. Leti, vol. i, p. 180.

† Granger, vol. i, p. 119. ‡ Ibid.

for she could have been saved. But Henry did not wish to save her. His love had already grown cool, and when the physicians asked him whether they should save the mother or the child, he replied, 'Save the child, and let the mother die. I can get wives enough.'* Ah, my daughter, I hope you may not die such a natural death as Jane Seymour did, for whom, as you say, the king mourned two years. But after that period, something new, something altogether extraordinary happened to the king. He fell in love with a picture, and because, in his proud self-conceit, he was convinced that the fine picture which Holbein had made of *him*, was not at all flattered, but entirely true to nature, it did not occur to him that Holbein's likeness of the Princess Anne of Cleves might be somewhat flattered, and not altogether faithful. So the king fell in love with a picture, and sent ambassadors to Germany to bring the original of the portrait to England as his bride. He himself went to meet her at Rochester, where she was to land. Ah, my child, I have witnessed many queer and droll things in my eventful life, but the scene at Rochester, however, is among my most spicy recollections. The king was as enthusiastic as a poet, and deep in love as a youth of twenty, and so began our romantic wedding-trip, on which Henry disguised himself and took part in it, assuming the name of my cousin. As the king's master of horse, I was honored with the commission of carrying to the young queen the greeting of her ardent husband, and begging her to receive the knight, who would deliver to her a present from the king. She granted my request with a grin which made visible a frightful row of yellow teeth. I opened the door, and invited the king to enter. Ah, you ought to have witnessed that scene! It is the only farcial passage in the bloody tragedy of Henry's married life. You should have seen with what hasty impatience the king rushed in, then suddenly, at the sight of her, staggered back and stared at

* Burnet.

the princess. Slowly retiring, he silently thrust into my hand the rich present that he had brought, while at the same time he threw a look of flaming wrath on Lord Cromwell, who had brought him the portrait of the princess and won him to this marriage. The romantic, ardent lover vanished with this look at his beloved. He approached the princess again—this time not as a cavalier, but, with harsh and hasty words, he told her he was the king himself. He bade her welcome in a few words, and gave her a cold, formal embrace. He then hastily took my hand and drew me out of the room, beckoning the rest to follow him. And when at length we were out of the atmosphere of this poor ugly princess, and far enough away from her, the king, with angry countenance, said to Cromwell: 'Call you that a beauty? She is a Flanders mare, but no princess.'* Anne's ugliness was surely given her of God, that by it, the Church, in which alone is salvation, might be delivered from the great danger which threatened it. For had Anne of Cleves, the sister, niece, granddaughter and aunt of all the Protestant princes of Germany, been beautiful, incalculable danger would have threatened our church. The king could not overcome his repugnance, and again his conscience, which always appeared to be most tender and scrupulous, when it was farthest from it and most regardless, must come to his aid.

"The king declared that he had been only in appearance, not in his innermost conscience, disposed to this marriage, from which he now shrank back, because it would be, properly speaking, nothing more than perfidy, perjury, and bigamy. For Anne's father had once betrothed her to the son of the Duke of Lorraine, and had solemnly pledged him his word to give her as a wife to the young duke as soon as she was of age; rings had been exchanged and the marriage contract already drawn up. Anne of Cleves, therefore, was virtually already married, and Henry, with his tender conscience, could not make one already married

* Burnet, p. 174. Tytler, p. 417.

his wife.* He made her, therefore, his sister, and gave her the palace at Richmond for a residence, in case she wished to remain in England. She accepted it; her blood, which crept coldly and quietly through her veins, did not rise at the thought of being despised and repudiated. She accepted it, and remained in England.

"She was rejected because she was ugly; and now the king selected Catharine Howard for his fifth consort, because she was pretty. Of this marriage I know but little to tell you, for, at that time, I had already gone to Dublin as minister, whither you soon followed me. Catharine was very beautiful, and the king's heart, now growing old, once more flamed high with youthful love. He loved her more warmly than any other of his wives. He was so happy in her that, kneeling down publicly in the church, with a loud voice he thanked God for the happiness which his beautiful young queen afforded him. But this did not last long. Even while the king was extolling it, his happiness had reached its highest point, and the next day he was dashed down into the abyss. I speak without poetical exaggeration, my child. The day before, he thanked God for his happiness, and the next morning Catharine Howard was already imprisoned and accused, as an unfaithful wife, a shameless strumpet.† More than seven lovers had preceded her royal spouse, and some of them had accompanied her even on the progress through Yorkshire, which she made with the king her husband. This time it was no pretence, for he had not yet had time to fall in love with another woman, and Catharine well knew how to enchain him and ever to kindle new flames within him. But just because he loved her, he could not forgive her for having deceived him. In love there is so much cruelty and hatred; and Henry, who but yesterday lay at her feet, burned to-day with rage and jealousy, as yesterday with love and rapture. In his rage, however, he still loved her, and when he held in his hand indubitable proof of her

* Burnet.

† Tytler, p. 432.

guilt, he wept like a child. But since he could no longer be her lover, he would be her hangman; since she had spotted the crimson of his royal mantle, he would dye it afresh with her own crimson blood. And he did so. Catharine Howard was forced to lay her beautiful head upon the block, as Anne Boleyn had done before her; and Anne's death was now once more avenged. Lady Rochfort had been Anne Boleyn's accuser, and her testimony had brought that queen to the scaffold; but now she was convicted of being Catharine Howard's assistant and confidante in her love adventures, and with Catharine, Lady Rochfort also ascended the scaffold.

"Ah, the king needed a long time to recover from this blow. He searched two years for a pure, uncontaminated virgin, who might become his queen without danger of the scaffold. But he found none; so he took then Lord Neville's widow, Catharine Parr. But you know, my child, that Catharine is an unlucky name for Henry's queens. The first Catharine he repudiated, the second he beheaded. What will he do with the third?"

Lady Jane smiled. "Catharine does not love him," said she, "and I believe she would willingly consent, like Anne of Cleves, to become his sister, instead of his wife."

"Catharine does not love the king?" inquired Lord Douglas, in breathless suspense. "She loves another, then!"

"No, my father! Her heart is yet like a sheet of white paper: no single name is yet inscribed there."

"Then we must write a name there, and this name must drive her to the scaffold, or into banishment," said her father impetuously. "It is your business, my child, to take a steel graver, and in some way write a name in Catharine's heart so deep and indelibly, that the king may some day read it there."

CHAPTER VIII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

BOTH now kept silent for a long time. Lord Douglas had leaned back on the ottoman, and, respiring heavily, seemed to breathe a little from the exertion of his long discourse. But while he rested, his large, piercing eyes were constantly turned to Jane, who, leaning back on the cushion, was staring thoughtfully into the empty air, and seemed to be entirely forgetful of her father's presence.

A cunning smile played for a moment over the countenance of the earl as he observed her, but it quickly disappeared, and now deep folds of care gathered on his brow.

As he saw that Lady Jane was plunging deeper and deeper into reverie, he at length laid his hand on her shoulder and hastily asked, "What are you thinking of, Jane?"

She gave a sudden start, and looked at the earl with an embarrassed air.

"I am thinking of all that you have been saying to me, my father," replied she, calmly. "I am considering what benefit to our object I can draw from it."

Lord Douglas shook his head, and smiled incredulously. At length he said solemnly: "Take care, Jane, take care that your heart does not deceive your head. If we would reach our aim here, you must, above all things, maintain a cool heart and a cool head. Do you still possess both, Jane?"

In confusion she cast down her eyes before his penetrating look. Lord Douglas noticed it, and a passionate word was already on his lips. But he kept it back. As a prudent diplomat, he knew that it is often more politic to destroy a thing by ignoring it, than to enter into an open contest with it. The feelings are like the dragons' teeth of Theseus. If you contend with them, they always grow again anew, and with renewed energy, out of the soil.