

BOOK XIX

CHAPTER VII

Wherein Anne Boleyn relates the history of her life.

“I am going now truly to recount a life which from the time of its ceasing has been, in the other world, the continual subject of the cavils of contending parties; the one making me as black as hell, the other as pure and innocent as the inhabitants of this blessed place; the mist of prejudice blinding their eyes, and zeal for what they themselves profess, making everything appear in that light which they think most conduces to its honour.

“My infancy was spent in my father’s house, in those childish plays which are most suitable to that state, and I think this was one of the happiest parts of my life; for my parents were not among the number of those who look upon their children as so many objects of a tyrannic power, but I was regarded as the dear pledge of a virtuous love, and all my little pleasures were thought from their indulgence their greatest delight. At seven years old I was carried into France with the king’s sister, who was married to the French king, where I lived with a person of quality, who was an acquaintance of my father’s. I spent my time in learning those things necessary to give young persons of fashion a polite education, and did neither good nor evil, but day passed after day in the same easy way till I was fourteen; then began my anxiety, my vanity grew strong, and my heart fluttered with joy at every compliment paid to my beauty: and as the lady with whom I lived was of a gay, cheerful disposition, she kept a great deal of company, and my youth and charms made me the continual object of their admiration. I passed some little time in those exulting raptures which are felt by every woman perfectly satisfied with herself and with the behaviour of others towards her: I was, when very young, promoted to be maid of honour to her majesty. The court was frequented by a young nobleman whose beauty was the chief subject of conversation in all assemblies of ladies. The delicacy of his person, added to a great softness in his manner, gave everything he said and did such an air of tenderness, that every woman he spoke to flattered herself with being the object of his love. I was one of those who was vain enough of my own charms to hope to make a conquest of him whom the whole court sighed for. I now thought every other object below my notice; yet the only pleasure I proposed to myself in this design was, the triumphing over that heart which I plainly saw all the ladies of the highest quality and the greatest beauty would have been proud of possessing. I was yet too young to be very artful; but nature, without any assistance, soon discovers to a man who is used to gallantry a woman’s desire to be liked by him, whether that desire arises from any particular choice she makes of him, or only from vanity. He soon perceived my thoughts, and gratified my utmost wishes by constantly preferring me before all other women, and exerting his utmost gallantry and address to engage my affections. This sudden happiness, which I then thought the greatest I could have had, appeared visible in all my actions; I grew so gay and so full of vivacity that it made my person appear still to a better advantage, all my acquaintance

pretending to be fonder of me than ever: though, young as I was, I plainly saw it was but pretence, for through all their endeavours to the contrary envy would often break forth in sly insinuations and malicious sneers, which gave me fresh matter of triumph, and frequent opportunities of insulting them, which I never let slip, for now first my female heart grew sensible of the spiteful pleasure of seeing another languish for what I enjoyed. Whilst I was in the height of my happiness her majesty fell ill of a languishing distemper, which obliged her to go into the country for the change of air: my place made it necessary for me to attend her, and which way he brought it about I can't imagine, but my young hero found means to be one of that small train that waited on my royal mistress, although she went as privately as possible. Hitherto all the interviews I had ever had with him were in public, and I only looked on him as the fitter object to feed that pride which had no other view but to show its power; but now the scene was quite changed. My rivals, were all at a distance: the place we went to was as charming as the most agreeable natural situation, assisted by the greatest art, could make it; the pleasant solitary walks the singing of birds, the thousand pretty romantic scenes this delightful place afforded, gave a sudden turn to my mind; my whole soul was melted into softness, and all my vanity was fled. My spark was too much used to affairs of this nature not to perceive this change; at first the profuse transports of his joy made me believe him wholly mine, and this belief gave me such happiness that no language affords words to express it, and can be only known to those who have felt it. But this was of a very short duration, for I soon found I had to do with one of those men whose only end in the pursuit of a woman is to make her fall a victim to an insatiable desire to be admired. His designs had succeeded, and now he every day grew colder, and, as if by infatuation, my passion every day increased; and, notwithstanding all my resolutions and endeavours to the contrary, my rage at the disappointment at once both of my love and pride, and at the finding a passion fixed in my breast I knew not how to conquer, broke out into that inconsistent behaviour which must always be the consequence of violent passions. One moment I reproached him, the next I grew to tenderness and blamed myself, and thought I fancied what was not true: he saw my struggle and triumphed in it; but, as he had not witnesses enough there of his victory to give him the full enjoyment of it, he grew weary of the country and returned to Paris, and left me in a condition it is utterly impossible to describe. My mind was like a city up in arms, all confusion; and every new thought was a fresh disturber of my peace. Sleep quite forsook me, and the anxiety I suffered threw me into a fever which had like to have cost me my life. With great care I recovered, but the violence of the distemper left such a weakness on my body that the disturbance of my mind was greatly assuaged; and now I began to comfort myself in the reflection that this gentleman's being a finished coquette was very likely the only thing could have preserved me; for he was the only man from whom I was ever in any danger. By that time I was got tolerably well we returned to Paris; and I confess I both wished and feared to see this cause of all my pain: however, I hoped, by the help of my resentment, to be able to meet him with indifference. This employed my thoughts till our arrival. The next day there was a very full court to congratulate the queen on her recovery; and amongst the rest my love appeared dressed and adorned as if he designed some new conquest. Instead of seeing a woman he despised and slighted, he approached me with that assured

air which is common to successful coxcombs. At the same time I perceived I was surrounded by all those ladies who were on his account my greatest enemies, and, in revenge, wished for nothing more than to see me make a ridiculous figure. This situation so perplexed my thoughts, that when he came near enough to speak to me, I fainted away in his arms. Had I studied which way I could gratify him most, it was impossible to have done anything to have pleased him more. Some that stood by brought smelling bottles, and used means for my recovery; and I was welcomed to returning life by all those repartees which women enraged by envy are capable of venting. One cried 'Well, I never thought my lord had anything so frightful in his person or so fierce in his manner as to strike a young lady dead at the sight of him.' 'No, no,' says another, 'some ladies' senses are more apt to be hurried by agreeable than disagreeable objects.' With many more such sort of speeches which showed more malice than wit. This not being able to bear, trembling, and with but just strength enough to move, I crawled to my coach and hurried home. When I was alone, and thought on what had happened to me in a public court, I was at first driven to the utmost despair; but afterwards, when I came to reflect, I believe this accident contributed more to my being cured of my passion than any other could have done. I began to think the only method to pique the man who had used me so barbarously, and to be revenged on my spiteful rivals, was to recover that beauty which was then languid and had lost its lustre, to let them see I had still charms enough to engage as many lovers as I could desire, and that I could yet rival them who had thus cruelly insulted me. These pleasing hopes revived my sinking spirits, and worked a more effectual cure on me than all the philosophy and advice of the wisest men could have done. I now employed all my time and care in adorning my person, and studying the surest means of engaging the affections of others, while I myself continued quite indifferent; for I resolved for the future, if ever one soft thought made its way to my heart, to fly the object of it, and by new lovers to drive the image from my breast. I consulted my glass every morning, and got such a command of my countenance that I could suit it to the different tastes of variety of lovers; and though I was young, for I was not yet above seventeen, yet my public way of life gave me such continual opportunities of conversing with men, and the strong desire I now had of pleasing them led me to make such constant observations on everything they said or did, that I soon found out the different methods of dealing with them. I observed that most men generally liked in women what was most opposite to their own characters; therefore to the grave solid man of sense I endeavoured to appear sprightly and full of spirit; to the witty and gay, soft and languishing; to the amorous (for they want no increase of their passions), cold and reserved; to the fearful and backward, warm and full of fire; and so of all the rest. As to beaux, and all of those sort of men, whose desires are centred in the satisfaction of their vanity, I had learned by sad experience the only way to deal with them was to laugh at them and let their own good opinion of themselves be the only support of their hopes. I knew, while I could get other followers, I was sure of them; for the only sign of modesty they ever give is that of not depending on their own judgments, but following the opinions of the greatest number. Thus furnished with maxims, and grown wise by past errors, I in a manner began the world again: I appeared in all public places handsomer and more lively than ever, to the amazement of every one who saw me and had

heard of the affair between me and my lord. He himself was much surprised and vexed at this sudden change, nor could he account how it was possible for me so soon to shake off those chains he thought he had fixed on me for life; nor was he willing to lose his conquest in this manner. He endeavoured by all means possible to talk to me again of love, but I stood fixed to my resolution (in which I was greatly assisted by the crowd of admirers that daily surrounded me) never to let him explain himself: for, notwithstanding all my pride, I found the first impression the heart receives of love is so strong that it requires the most vigilant care to prevent a relapse. Now I lived three years in a constant round of diversions, and was made the perfect idol of all the men that came to court of all ages and all characters. I had several good matches offered me, but I thought none of them equal to my merit; and one of my greatest pleasures was to see those women who had pretended to rival me often glad to marry those whom I had refused. Yet, notwithstanding this great success of my schemes, I cannot say I was perfectly happy; for every woman that was taken the least notice of, and every man that was insensible to my arts, gave me as much pain as all the rest gave me pleasure; and sometimes little underhand plots which were laid against my designs would succeed in spite of my care: so that I really began to grow weary of this manner of life, when my father, returning from his embassy in France, took me home with him, and carried me to a little pleasant country house, where there was nothing grand or superfluous, but everything neat and agreeable. There I led a life perfectly solitary. At first the time hung very heavy on my hands, and I wanted all kind of employment, and I had very like to have fallen into the height of the vapours, from no other reason but from want of knowing what to do with myself. But when I had lived here a little time I found such a calmness in my mind, and such a difference between this and the restless anxieties I had experienced in a court, that I began to share the tranquillity that visibly appeared in everything round me. I set myself to do works of fancy, and to raise little flower-gardens, with many such innocent rural amusements; which, although they are not capable of affording any great pleasure, yet they give that serene turn to the mind which I think much preferable to anything else human nature is made susceptible of. I now resolved to spend the rest of my days here, and that nothing should allure me from that sweet retirement, to be again tossed about with tempestuous passions of any kind. Whilst I was in this situation, my Lord Percy, the earl of Northumberland's eldest son, by an accident of losing his way after a fox chase, was met by my father, about a mile from our house; he came home with him, only with a design of dining with us, but was so taken with me that he stayed three days. I had too much experience in all affairs of this kind not to see presently the influence I had on him; but I was at that time so entirely free from all ambition, that even the prospect of being a countess had no effect on me; and I then thought nothing in the world could have bribed me to have changed my way of life. This young lord, who was just in his bloom, found his passion so strong, he could not endure a long absence, but returned again in a week, and endeavoured, by all the means he could think of, to engage me to return his affection. He addressed me with that tenderness and respect which women on earth think can flow from nothing but real love; and very often told me that, unless he could be so happy as by his assiduity and care to make himself agreeable to me, although he knew my father would eagerly embrace any proposal from him, yet

he would suffer that last of miseries of never seeing me more rather than owe his own happiness to anything that might be the least contradiction to my inclinations. This manner of proceeding had something in it so noble and generous, that by degrees it raised a sensation in me which I know not how to describe, nor by what name to call it: it was nothing like my former passion: for there was no turbulence, no uneasy waking nights attending it, but all I could with honour grant to oblige him appeared to me to be justly due to his truth and love, and more the effect of gratitude than of any desire of my own. The character I had heard of him from my father at my first returning to England, in discoursing of the young nobility, convinced me that if I was his wife I should have the perpetual satisfaction of knowing every action of his must be approved by all the sensible part of mankind; so that very soon I began to have no scruple left but that of leaving my little scene of quietness, and venturing again into the world. But this, by his continual application and submissive behaviour, by degrees entirely vanished, and I agreed he should take his own time to break it to my father, whose consent he was not long in obtaining; for such a match was by no means to be refused. There remained nothing now to be done but to prevail with the earl of Northumberland to comply with what his son so ardently desired; for which purpose he set out immediately for London, and begged it as the greatest favour that I would accompany my father, who was also to go thither the week following. I could not refuse his request, and as soon as we arrived in town he flew to me with the greatest raptures to inform me his father was so good that, finding his happiness depended on his answer, he had given him free leave to act in this affair as would best please himself, and that he had now no obstacle to prevent his wishes. It was then the beginning of the winter, and the time for our marriage was fixed for the latter end of March: the consent of all parties made his access to me very easy, and we conversed together both with innocence and pleasure. As his fondness was so great that he contrived all the methods possible to keep me continually in his sight, he told me one morning he was commanded by his father to attend him to court that evening, and begged I would be so good as to meet him there. I was now so used to act as he would have me that I made no difficulty of complying with his desire. Two days after this, I was very much surprised at perceiving such a melancholy in his countenance, and alteration in his behaviour, as I could no way account for; but, by importunity, at last I got from him that Cardinal Wolsey, for what reason he knew not, had peremptorily forbid him to think any more of me: and, when he urged that his father was not displeased with it, the cardinal, in his imperious manner, answered him, he should give his father such convincing reasons why it would be attended with great inconveniences, that he was sure he could bring him to be of his opinion. On which he turned from him, and gave him no opportunity of replying. I could not imagine what design the cardinal could have in intermeddling in this match, and I was still more perplexed to find that my father treated my Lord Percy with much more coldness than usual; he too saw it, and we both wondered what could possibly be the cause of all this. But it was not long before the mystery was all made clear by my father, who, sending for me one day into his chamber, let me into a secret which was as little wished for as expected. He began with the surprising effects of youth and beauty, and the madness of letting go those advantages they might procure us till it was too late, when we might wish in vain to bring them back again. I

stood amazed at this beginning; he saw my confusion, and bid me sit down and attend to what he was going to tell me, which was of the greatest consequence; and he hoped I would be wise enough to take his advice, and act as he should think best for my future welfare. He then asked me if I should not be much pleased to be a queen? I answered, with the greatest earnestness, that, so far from it, I would not live in a court again to be the greatest queen in the world; that I had a lover who was both desirous and able to raise my station even beyond my wishes. I found this discourse was very displeasing; my father frowned, and called me a romantic fool, and said if I would hearken to him he could make me a queen; for the cardinal had told him that the king, from the time he saw me at court the other night, liked me, and intended to get a divorce from his wife, and to put me in her place; and ordered him to find some method to make me a maid of honour to her present majesty, that in the meantime he might have an opportunity of seeing me. It is impossible to express the astonishment these words threw me into; and, notwithstanding that the moment before, when it appeared at so great a distance, I was very sincere in my declaration how much it was against my will to be raised so high, yet now the prospect came nearer, I confess my heart fluttered, and my eyes were dazzled with a view of being seated on a throne.

“My imagination presented before me all the pomp, power and greatness that attend a crown; and I was so perplexed I knew not what to answer, but remained as silent as if I had lost the use of my speech. My father, who guessed what it was that made me in this condition, proceeded to bring all the arguments he thought most likely to bend me to his will; at last I recovered from this dream of grandeur, and begged him, by all the most endearing names I could think of, not to urge me dishonourably to forsake the man who I was convinced would raise me to an empire if in his power, and who had enough in his power to give me all I desired. But he was deaf to all I could say, and insisted that by next week I should prepare myself to go to court: he bid me consider of it, and not prefer a ridiculous notion of honour to the real interest of my whole family; but, above all things, not to disclose what he had trusted me with. On which he left me to my own thoughts. When I was alone I reflected how little real tenderness this behaviour showed to me, whose happiness he did not at all consult, but only looked on me as a ladder, on which he could climb to the height of his own ambitious desires: and when I thought on his fondness for me in my infancy I could impute it to nothing but either the liking me as a plaything or the gratification of his vanity in my beauty. But I was too much divided between a crown and my engagement to Lord Percy to spend much time in thinking of anything else; and, although my father had positively forbid me, yet, when he came next, I could not help acquainting him with all that had passed, with the reserve only of the struggle in my own mind on the first mention of being a queen. I expected he would have received the news with the greatest agonies; but he showed no vast emotion: however, he could not help turning pale, and, taking me by the hand, looked at me with an air of tenderness, and said, ‘If being a queen would make you happy, and it is in your power to be so, I would not for the world prevent it, let me suffer what I will.’ This amazing greatness of mind had on me quite the contrary effect from what it ought to have had; for, instead of increasing my love for him it almost put an end to it, and I began to

think, if he could part with me, the matter was not much. And I am convinced, when any man gives up the possession of a woman whose consent he has once obtained, let his motive be ever so generous, he will disoblige her. I could not help showing my dissatisfaction, and told him I was very glad this affair sat so easily on him. He had not power to answer, but was so suddenly struck with this unexpected ill-natured turn I gave his behaviour, that he stood amazed for some time, and then bowed and left me. Now I was again left to my own reflections; but to make anything intelligible out of them is quite impossible: I wished to be a queen, and wished I might not be one: I would have my lord Percy happy without me; and yet I would not have the power of my charms be so weak that he could bear the thought of life after being disappointed in my love. But the result of all these confused thoughts was a resolution to obey my father. I am afraid there was not much duty in the case, though at that time I was glad to take hold of that small shadow to save me from looking on my own actions in the true light. When my lover came again I looked on him with that coldness that he could not bear, on purpose to rid myself of all importunity: for since I had resolved to use him ill I regarded him as the monument of my shame, and his every look appeared to me to upbraid me. My father soon carried me to court; there I had no very hard part to act; for, with the experience I had had of mankind, I could find no great difficulty in managing a man who liked me, and for whom I not only did not care but had an utter aversion to: but this aversion he believed to be virtue; for how credulous is a man who has an inclination to believe! And I took care sometimes to drop words of cottages and love, and how happy the woman was who fixed her affections on a man in such a station of life that she might show her love without being suspected of hypocrisy or mercenary views. All this was swallowed very easily by the amorous king, who pushed on the divorce with the utmost impetuosity, although the affair lasted a good while, and I remained most part of the time behind the curtain. Whenever the king mentioned it to me I used such arguments against it as I thought the most likely to make him the more eager for it; begging that, unless his conscience was really touched, he would not on my account give any grief to his virtuous queen; for in being her handmaid I thought myself highly honoured; and that I would not only forego a crown, but even give up the pleasure of ever seeing him more, rather than wrong my royal mistress. This way of talking, joined to his eager desire to possess my person, convinced the king so strongly of my exalted merit, that he thought it a meritorious act to displace the woman (whom he could not have so good an opinion of, because he was tired of her), and to put me in her place. After about a year's stay at court, as the king's love to me began to be talked of, it was thought proper to remove me, that there might be no umbrage given to the queen's party. I was forced to comply with this, though greatly against my will; for I was very jealous that absence might change the king's mind. I retired again with my father to his country seat, but it had no longer those charms for me which I once enjoyed there; for my mind was now too much taken up with ambition to make room for any other thoughts. During my stay here, my royal lover often sent gentlemen to me with messages and letters, which I always answered in the manner I thought would best bring about my designs, which were to come back again to court. In all the letters that passed between us there was something so kingly and commanding in his, and so deceitful and submissive in mine, that I

sometimes could not help reflecting on the difference betwixt this correspondence and that with Lord Percy; yet I was so pressed forward by the desire of a crown, I could not think of turning back. In all I wrote I continually praised his resolution of letting me be at a distance from him, since at this time it conduced indeed to my honour; but, what was of ten times more weight with me, I thought it was necessary for his; and I would sooner suffer anything in the world than be any means of hurt to him, either in his interest or reputation. I always gave some hints of ill health, with some reflections how necessary the peace of the mind was to that of the body. By these means I brought him to recall me again by the most absolute command, which I, for a little time, artfully delayed (for I knew the impatience of his temper would not bear any contradictions), till he made my father in a manner force me to what I most wished, with the utmost appearance of reluctance on my side. When I had gained this point I began to think which way I could separate the king from the queen, for hitherto they lived in the same house. The Lady Mary, the queen's daughter, being then about sixteen, I sought for emissaries of her own age that I could confide in, to instil into her mind disrespectful thoughts of her father, and make a jest of the tenderness of his conscience about the divorce. I knew she had naturally strong passions, and that young people of that age are apt to think those that pretend to be their friends are really so, and only speak their minds freely. I afterwards contrived to have every word she spoke of him carried to the king, who took it all as I could wish, and fancied those things did not come at first from the young lady, but from her mother. He would often talk of it to me, and I agreed with him in his sentiments; but then, as a great proof of my goodness, I always endeavoured to excuse her, by saying a lady so long time used to be a royal queen might naturally be a little exasperated with those she fancied would throw her from that station she so justly deserved. By these sort of plots I found the way to make the king angry with the queen; for nothing is easier than to make a man angry with a woman he wants to be rid of, and who stands in the way between him and his pleasure; so that now the king, on the pretence of the queen's obstinacy in a point where his conscience was so tenderly concerned, parted with her. Everything was now plain before me; I had nothing farther to do but to let the king alone to his own desires; and I had no reason to fear, since they had carried him so far, but that they would urge him on to do everything I aimed at. I was created Marchioness of Pembroke. This dignity sat very easy on me; for the thoughts of a much higher title took from me all feeling of this; and I looked upon being a marchioness as a trifle, not that I saw the bauble in its true light, but because it fell short of what I had figured to myself I should soon obtain. The king's desires grew very impatient, and it was not long before I was privately married to him. I was no sooner his wife than I found all the queen come upon me; I felt myself conscious of royalty, and even the faces of my most intimate acquaintance seemed to me to be quite strange. I hardly knew them: height had turned my head, and I was like a man placed on a monument, to whose sight all creatures at a great distance below him appear like so many little pigmies crawling about on the earth; and the prospect so greatly delighted me, that I did not presently consider that in both cases descending a few steps erected by human hands would place us in the number of those very pigmies who appeared so despicable. Our marriage was kept private for some time, for it was not thought proper to make it public (the

affair of the divorce not being finished) till the birth of my daughter Elizabeth made it necessary. But all who saw me knew it; for my manner of speaking and acting was so much changed with my station, that all around me plainly perceived I was sure I was a queen. While it was a secret I had yet something to wish for; I could not be perfectly satisfied till all the world was acquainted with my fortune: but when my coronation was over, and I was raised to the height of my ambition, instead of finding myself happy, I was in reality more miserable than ever; for, besides that the aversion I had naturally to the king was much more difficult to dissemble after marriage than before, and grew into a perfect detestation, my imagination, which had thus warmly pursued a crown, grew cool when I was in the possession of it, and gave me time to reflect what mighty matter I had gained by all this bustle; and I often used to think myself in the case of the fox-hunter, who, when he has toiled and sweated all day in the chase as if some unheard of blessing was to crown his success, finds at last all he has got by his labour is a stinking nauseous animal. But my condition was yet worse than his; for he leaves the loathsome wretch to be torn by his hounds, whilst I was obliged to fondle mine, and meanly pretend him to be the object of my love. For the whole time I was in this envied, this exalted state, I led a continual life of hypocrisy, which I now know nothing on earth can compensate. I had no companion but the man I hated. I dared not disclose my sentiments to any person about me, nor did any one presume to enter into any freedom of conversation with me; but all who spoke to me talked to the queen, and not to me; for they would have said just the same things to a dressed-up puppet, if the king had taken a fancy to call it his wife. And as I knew every woman in the court was my enemy, from thinking she had much more right than I had to the place I filled, I thought myself as unhappy as if I had been placed in a wild wood, where there was no human creature for me to speak to, in a continual fear of leaving any traces of my footsteps, lest I should be found by some dreadful monster, or stung by snakes and adders; for such are spiteful women to the objects of their envy. In this worst of all situations I was obliged to hide my melancholy and appear cheerful. This threw me into an error the other way, and I sometimes fell into a levity in my behaviour that was afterwards made use of to my disadvantage. I had a son deadborn, which I perceived abated something of the king's ardour; for his temper could not brook the least disappointment. This gave me no uneasiness; for, not considering the consequences, I could not help being best pleased when I had least of his company. Afterwards I found he had cast his eyes on one of my maids of honour; and, whether it was owing to any art of hers, or only to the king's violent passions, I was in the end used even worse than my former mistress had been by my means. The decay of the king's affection was presently seen by all those court sycophants who continually watch the motions of royal eyes; and the moment they found they could be heard against me they turned my most innocent actions and words, nay, even my very looks, into proofs of the blackest crimes. The king, who was impatient to enjoy his new love, lent a willing ear to all my accusers, who found ways of making him jealous that I was false to his bed. He would not so easily have believed anything against me before, but he was now glad to flatter himself that he had found a reason to do just what he had resolved upon without a reason; and on some slight pretences and hearsay evidence I was sent to the Tower, where the lady who was my greatest enemy

was appointed to watch me and lie in the same chamber with me. This was really as bad a punishment as my death, for she insulted me with those keen reproaches and spiteful witticisms, which threw me into such vapours and violent fits that I knew not what I uttered in this condition. She pretended I had confessed talking ridiculous stuff with a set of low fellows whom I had hardly ever taken notice of, as could have imposed on none but such as were resolved to believe. I was brought to my trial, and, to blacken me the more, accused of conversing criminally with my own brother, whom indeed I loved extremely well, but never looked on him in any other light than as my friend. However, I was condemned to be beheaded, or burnt, as the king pleased; and he was graciously pleased, from the great remains of his love, to choose the mildest sentence. I was much less shocked at this manner of ending my life than I should have been in any other station: but I had had so little enjoyment from the time I had been a queen, that death was the less dreadful to me. The chief things that lay on my conscience were the arts I made use of to induce the king to part with the queen, my ill usage of lady Mary, and my jilting lord Percy. However, I endeavoured to calm my mind as well as I could, and hoped these crimes would be forgiven me; for in other respects I had led a very innocent life, and always did all the good natured actions I found any opportunity of doing. From the time I had it in my power, I gave a great deal of money amongst the poor; I prayed very devoutly, and went to my execution very composedly. Thus I lost my life at the age of twenty nine, in which short time I believe I went through more variety of scenes than many people who live to be very old. I had lived in a court, where I spent my time in coquetry and gayety; I had experienced what it was to have one of those violent passions which makes the mind all turbulence and anxiety; I had had a lover whom I esteemed and valued, and at the latter part of my life I was raised to a station as high as the vainest woman could wish. But in all these various changes I never enjoyed any real satisfaction, unless in the little time I lived retired in the country free from all noise and hurry, and while I was conscious I was the object of the love and esteem of a man of sense and honour.”

On the conclusion of this history Minos paused for a small time, and then ordered the gate to be thrown open for Anne Boleyn’s admittance on the consideration that whoever had suffered being the queen for four years, and been sensible during all that time of the real misery which attends that exalted station, ought to be forgiven whatever she had done to obtain it.¹¹

¹¹ Here ends this curious manuscript; the rest being destroyed in rolling up pens, tobacco, &c. It is to be hoped heedless people will henceforth be more cautious what they burn, or use to other vile purposes; especially when they consider the fate which had likely to have befallen the divine Milton, and that the works of Homer were probably discovered in some chandlers shop in Greece.