

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TESTS

'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.'

ST PAUL.

Although to me the statements made by Mrs Clegg seemed very wonderful and although I believed her to be genuine, still I knew that I was very inexperienced in all such matters, and that a clever clairvoyant could have picked some of what was said out of my mind or subconscious self, and that from an evidential point of view that part of it was valueless. For instance, the description of the Lady Anne Boleyn and of Hever Castle could have been read from my mind, but on the other hand there was a good deal said that was not in my mind at all, and a certain amount which never had been in my mind and certainly had never been in Mrs Clegg's mind. The want of sympathy between the sisters, if I ever had read of it, had completely passed from my memory; the fact that the country all about Hever can be overlooked from a hill in the neighbourhood, I did not know, but verified it by an ordnance map; the summary of the characteristics of Queen Elizabeth's reign was so original that I did not even understand it without assistance, while the allusions to the play and the rose given as a symbol of her name, and the white rose as a sign by which I should recognise the speaker, were in addition to all that, the speaker had given me for test purposes, information absolutely unknown to me and which when I received it seemed quite impossible to verify. I shall include among these tests the names of her brothers, as I thought that the Lady Anne had only one brother George, and I had never heard of any others to my knowledge.

The tests were thus five in number.

First. That her brothers' names were William, Robert, Henry, Thomas and George.

Second. That she was closely connected with a man named Buckingham.

Third. That in her coronation procession, while she was carried under a canopy with something special on her head, her favourite white horse saddled with velvet was led in the procession, and that there since had been a picture of this white horse at Blickling Hall, but which she did not know if it existed now or not.

Fourth. That she possessed as an heirloom, a ring with an oval amethyst stone.

Fifth. That she possessed a small pet dog.

I confess that the task of tracing any one of these tests seemed to me hopeless.

To begin with the brothers' names:—I thought this was pure guesswork on the part of Mrs Clegg, and it had disappointed me, but when I began to study for the test, I found to my amazement that the Lady Anne Boleyn was one of a large family, and that it was not the little family of three children which I had always thought. Then I discovered that a brother Henry was interred in the family vault of Hever Church and that another brother Thomas was buried in Penshurst Chapel about seven miles away, while George was, as I knew, buried beside his sister in St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London.

Later on I found the name Robert on a small stone at the foot of the tomb of Sir Thomas Boleyn in Hever Church and he had evidently died as a child. William was almost certainly her eldest brother named after his grandfather Sir William Boleyn and so, the first test was practically completely verified.

The second test yielded excellent results. I found that Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham (1478-1521) was very closely connected indeed with the Lady Anne Boleyn.

- (1) He lived at Tonbridge, only about seven miles from Hever and had property also at Penshurst close by, and as he constantly resided in Kent, the two families must have been

thrown much together, tho' Buckingham was Lady Anne's senior by 23 years.

- (2) He married Elinor or Alianore, who was the eldest sister of the very Lord Percy to whom the Lady Anne herself was engaged.
- (3) His second daughter Elizabeth married the Lady Anne's uncle, the old Duke of Norfolk, three times her own age.
- (4) He must have been with the Lady Anne at the wedding of Mary Tudor to Louis XI and they probably travelled to France together.
- (5) He was also with her at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1521.
- (6) He was executed when the Lady Anne was just twenty years of age, and the death of her old friend must have made a great impression upon her, coming just as it did when she was as it were just entering upon her life. And this impression must have been deepened when her own sad death drew near, as the two tragedies closely resembled each other, for—
 - (a) They were both charged with attempts to kill the King.
 - (b) They were both tried in the month of May.
 - (c) They were both tried by a carefully selected body of peers, 24 in her case, 17 in his.
 - (d) They were both refused the right to cross examine or see their accusers.
 - (e) They were both sentenced by the same judge Lord Norfolk who was closely related to them both.
 - (f) They both maintained that they were innocent, but submitted to the King's pleasure in almost the same words.
- (7) His property at Tonbridge and Penshurst was confiscated and some of it was given to her father, which probably accounts for the fact that her brother Henry was buried in Penshurst Chapel and not in Hever Church.

Of all this I was in complete ignorance when the test was given, but it proved indeed true that she was closely connected with the man named Buckingham.

The third test was much more difficult and at one time I despaired of working it out. I found that 'her own palfry' saddled with velvet had indeed been led in the procession to Westminster, and then in an old book in the home of Sir Robert Williams, in Dorset, I found a full account of the procession. The book was in my bedroom there and was a collection of Archbishop Cranmer's letters, in one of which he thus describes the procession.

We received the Queen appparelled, in a robe of purple velvet . . . she sitting in her chair upon a horse litter richly appparelled and four knights of the five ports bearing a canopy over her head . . . and on her head she had a coif with a circlet about it full of rich stones.

I found this corroborated in Stow's *Annals* in the British Museum.

I had everything now correctly except the colour of the horse. Stow's *Annals* gave the name of the man who led the horse (Coffin). Strickland said it was 'Her own palfry', but neither high nor low could I find out the colour. Then I suddenly came upon it.

When Sir Montague Brown so kindly asked me to Windsor Castle, I drew a bow at a venture and asked him by letter whether he had ever heard the colour of Queen Anne Boleyn's favourite horse, and he wrote back, 'I have always understood that the unhappy Lady rode a *white palfry* and in the picture of her entering Henry VIII's gateway—where His Majesty received her—which I have seen she was thus mounted'.

Thus this most difficult and complicated test proved absolutely correct in every detail, and probably the picture itself was once at Blickling as the speaker had said.

But if the white horse test was difficult, the oval amethyst ring seemed absolutely impossible. The ring, probably does not exist now, at least I don't suppose so and I could find no mention of a ring in any book, while no picture that I know of shows the Lady Anne's hands, and so I gave it up.

Then suddenly to my astonishment and delight I found it in Windsor. I was one of a large party being shown through the state apartments, when in one of the rooms I saw a picture of the Princess Elizabeth aged about 13. The picture was beyond the ropes and too far for me to see clearly, but the hands were

visible, and as I had already spoken to the guide of my interest in the Tudor pictures, I now asked him would he mind going over to the picture and telling me what rings were on the fingers. He very kindly stepped over the ropes and I waited anxiously.

‘There is a ring with a square green stone on the first finger.’

‘Thank you, what is on the next finger?’

‘A similar ring with a smaller green square stone.’

My hopes sank. ‘Is there a ring on the little finger?’

‘Yes, on the little finger there is a ring with an oval amethyst.’ I nearly said ‘Got it’, aloud.

Undoubtedly it was her mother’s ring, the heirloom I had been given as a test, and I ask in this case where the subconscious self theory could possibly have come in?

In September 1923, I heard the Lady Carrick a descendant of the Boleyns was reading this MSS. and pointing to a gold ring with an oval amethyst on her finger, said that it might be the very ring, as it had been handed down for generations in the family and most probably came from the Boleyns.

The fifth test, the small pet dog defeated me altogether. Had it been the big greyhound Urian, it would have been easy enough, as this dog is mentioned in Agnes Strickland’s lives of the Queens of England, but then it would have been no real test as it was already in my mind. I had never heard that the Lady Anne was fond of or possessed small dogs and I could find nothing to help me either in book or picture.

About seven years later, when I had given up all hope of finding the small pet dog the fifth test, I came across an article by Miss Olga Linds in the *Tail Wagglers* of April 1930, in which she said that the Lady Anne possessed a small dog called Pompadour, or Pompey as a pet name. The article went on to say that the Queen took this pet dog with her to the Tower, where it sickened and died on the eve of the execution of its mistress, and that she was so concerned about her pet that it must have helped her to forget her own sorrow.

Almost immediately after reading the article I had the story confirmed by the Vicar of Altborough, Nuneaton (Mr Rogers) with whom I was staying, he told me that this was one of the

best known stories of the Tower and had been told to him forty years ago by an uncle of his who had been the Governor.

There may be some other explanation as to how these five difficult tests were given and proved to be historically verified, but to most students the simplest explanation will probably prove to be the most reasonable.

SAMPLE