

the floating rumours that were in circulation among the people before the event of her trial was publicly known, was, that having a quick wit, and being a ready speaker, the queen did so answer all objections, that her acquittal was expected;¹ "And," says bishop Godwin, "had the peers given their verdict according to the expectation of the assembly, she had been acquitted; but through the duke of Suffolk, one wholly given to the king's humour, they did pronounce her guilty."² The decision of the peers is not required, like the verdict of a jury, to be unanimous, but is carried by a majority. If all had voted, no doubt but she would have been saved. After the verdict was declared, the queen was required to lay aside her crown and other insignia of royalty, which she did without offering an objection, save that she protested her innocence of having offended against the king.³

This ceremony was preparatory to her sentence, which was pronounced by her uncle, the duke of Norfolk, as lord high-steward of England, and president of the court commissioned for her trial. She was condemned to be burnt or beheaded, at the king's pleasure. Anne Boleyn heard this dreadful doom without changing colour or betraying the slightest symptom of terror; but when her stern kinsman and judge had ended, she clasped her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, made her appeal to a higher tribunal in these words:—"Oh, Father! oh, Creator! Thou, who art the way, the life, and the truth, knowest whether I have deserved this death." Then turning to her earthly judges, she said, "My lords, I will not say your sentence is unjust, nor presume that my reasons can prevail against your convictions. I am willing to believe that you have sufficient reasons for what you have done; but then they must be other than those which have been produced in court, for I am clear of all the offences which you then laid to my charge. I have ever been a faithful wife to the king, though I do not say I have always shown him that humility which his goodness to me and the honour to which he raised me merited. I confess I have had jealous fancies and sus-

¹ Harleian MS. Holinshed.

² Godwin's Henry VIII.

³ Burnet. Sharon Turner.