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Historica.

for me." She then, with her own hands, removed her hat and collar, which might impede the action of the sword, and taking the coifs from her head, delivered them to one of her ladies. Then covering her hair with a little linen cap, (for it seems as if her ladies were too much overpowered with grief and terror to assist her, and that she was the only person who retained her composure,) she said, "Alas, poor head! in a very brief space thou wilt roll in the dust on the scaffold; and as in life thou didst not merit to wear the crown of a queen, so in death thou deservest not better doom than this."²

All present were then in tears, save the base court sycophants who came to flatter the evil passions of the sovereign. Anne took leave of her weeping ladies in these pathetic words:—"And ye, my damsels, who, whilst I lived, ever showed yourselves so diligent in my service, and who are now to be present at my last hour and mortal agony, as in good fortune ye were faithful to me, so even at this my miserable death ye do not forsake me. And as I cannot reward you for your true service to me, I pray you take comfort for my loss; howbeit, forget me not, and be always faithful to the king's grace, and to her whom, with happier fortune, ye may have as your queen and mistress. And esteem your honour far beyond your life; and, in your prayers to the Lord Jesu, forget not to pray for my soul."³ Among these true-hearted

¹ Her speech as related in the account of her execution in Nichols, differs in some respects from this, and is much shorter and more naturally expressed; it is as follows:—"Masters, I here humbly submit me to the law, as the law hath judged me; and as for my offences, (I here accuse no man,) God knoweth them. I remit them to God, beseeching him to have mercy on my soul, and I beseech Jesu save my sovereign and master the king, the most godliest, noblest, and gentlest prince that is, and make him long to reign over us." These words she spake with a smiling countenance. That Anne as a Christian could forgive and pray for her husband we can readily believe, but that she praised him for qualities so entirely contradicted by his conduct, is scarcely credible. Struggling as the unfortunate queen was with hysterical emotion, and the conflicts of suppressed feelings, her utterance must have been choked and imperfect, and the probabilities are that her speech was reported by her friend, Mr. secretary Cromwell, or some other person equally interested in the cause of truth and justice, in such terms as would not only be most agreeable to the king, but best suited to calm the public mind; for if the simple and honest class, who seldom look below the outward semblance of things, could be persuaded that the queen herself was satisfied with her sentence, they would see no reason why they should be otherwise.

² From the letter of a Portuguese gentleman, who was an eye-witness of the execution.—Excerpta Hist.

³ Excerpta Historica.