

14 HOW WE OUGHT TO FEEL ABOUT THE WAR

illustrate rather than prove my position, as the very inadequate but perfectly sincere preacher of hope, by a comparison between the state of England and of English opinion during 'the great war' (as we used to call it) against the tyranny of the French Empire, and the state of England and of English opinion during this far greater war against the despotism of the German Empire.

The condition and feeling in England is best and most accurately recorded in this sonnet of Wordsworth, written in 1806 :

Another year !—another deadly blow !
Another mighty Empire overthrown !
And we are left, or shall be left, alone ;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well ! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought ;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought,
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O Dastard whom such foretaste does not cheer !
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant.

You will never read a more important and more accurate historical document. England, though still full of latent energy, was also nearly driven to despair. Nor was this lack of hope at all unnatural. The United Kingdom contained then a population of from 18,000,000 to 20,000,000. An insurrection was at any moment possible in Ireland. The bloody insurrection of 1798 was well within the memory of all men. As to the war, the sympathies of Englishmen were divided. The vast majority of the electors who took any real share in political life supported the war with varying degrees of enthusiasm. But the Whigs as a party were, with