

6 HOW WE OUGHT TO FEEL ABOUT THE WAR

more, in which the German Emperor is first sent to hell, and then is elaborately cursed in lines of this quality :

Fashion his bed
Deep, deep :
Earth o'er his head
Heap, heap.
Load upon load
Let him not lack,
Lest his abode
Vomit him back.

Doggerel like this falls far below the rank of effective satire, but in truth a satirist is not the man we need to denounce the pedantic barbarism of Germany. What we lack is a poet who, like Wordsworth, could, with prophetic power, give full expression to English hatred of lawless despotism without by a single word compromising the dignity and the sternness of England's resistance. Our future historian, at any rate, will assuredly occupy himself mainly with the true causes of the determination not only of the Kaiser but of the German people to establish the supremacy of Germany throughout the civilized world. He will say something, no doubt, of the Kaiser's character, and possibly point out how often it has happened that a man who combines some talent with a singular want of sound judgement has lacked both the moral and the intellectual strength needed to support the infinite burden of absolute power. Wilhelm II is not the first ruler for whom a suspicion of madness may be hesitatingly pleaded against the charge of outrageous wickedness. It is, too, even now uncertain whether the Kaiser himself was not at one time inclined to check the desire for war entertained by his military advisers. An historian will certainly dwell on a cir-