

independence of spirit.¹ He never knew the curse either of the patron or of the jail. At an excellent grammar school, and next at the University of Cambridge, he obtained as good and as liberal an education as was open to the children of any squire or nobleman. But he never at any period of his life was rich; he knew what it was to have an empty purse as well as ever did Cobbett or Burns. Hence he understood and sympathized with the wants of the poor. He looked at life as a whole, and especially at the French Revolution, at once from the point of view of an educated and thoughtful English gentleman, and also from the side of an independent yeoman who had earned by hard work every penny which he had gained, and with whom shillings and pounds were at no time too plentiful.

Wordsworth, further, from his intellectual and moral endowments, as well as from the circumstances of his time, of his upbringing, and of his career, entertained, at any rate up to 1815, a passionate interest in the conduct of public affairs, and a keen sympathy with vigorous action even at times when it approached to lawlessness.² But his faith in noble causes which

¹ 'The thoughts, feelings, language, and manners of the shepherd-farmers in the vales of Cumberland and Westmorland', writes Coleridge, 'may be accounted for from causes, which will and do produce the same results in every state of life, whether in town or country. As the two principal I rank that independence, which raises a man above servitude, or daily toil for the profit of others, yet not above the necessity of industry and a frugal simplicity of domestic life; and the accompanying unambitious, but solid and religious, education, which has rendered few books familiar, but the Bible, and the Liturgy or Hymn-book.'—*Biographia Literaria*, ii. 45.

² See his verses on Rob Roy, written, be it noted, before Scott had introduced that vigorous and crafty chief of the outlawed