

shook the whole of Europe as violently as did the Reformation, for a second-hand copy of the glorious but almost conservative Revolution of 1688. Wordsworth saw indeed, as clearly as did Burke,¹ that the movement in France was the opening of a new era, and he, unlike Burke, welcomed it with enthusiasm. As a boy he had imbibed the republicanism of feeling natural to one nurtured among the statesmen or yeomen of Cumberland.² He had learned at college the republicanism of sentiment handed down by the classical writers; he had imbibed the wholesome belief that

Distinction open lay to all that came,
And wealth and titles were in less esteem
Than talents, worth, and prosperous industry.³

His life in France had attached him to the Girondins, and he for a time had adopted the unsound political philosophy of the Revolution. Nor is there any reason to believe that his sympathy with the Girondins ever died out. You will find nowhere in his works any expression of indignation at the death of Louis the Sixteenth.⁴ He probably believed, in common with the Girondins, that the king was prepared to use foreign help in effecting the restoration of the royal power.

¹ For Wordsworth's intellectual relation to Burke, see pp. 59-70, *post.*

² Hutchinson, pp. 712, 713.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 713.

⁴ 'You wish it to be supposed you are one of those who are unpersuaded of the guilt of Louis XVI. If you had attended to the history of the French Revolution as minutely as its importance demands, so far from stopping to bewail his death, you would rather have regretted that the blind fondness of his people had placed a human being in that monstrous situation which rendered him unaccountable before a human tribunal.'—*Apology for the French Revolution*, 1793, addressed by Wordsworth to Bishop Watson. Grosart, i. 4.