

CHAPTER I.

THE PUBLIC DUTY, UNDER STILL EXISTING GROUNDS
OF HOPE, CONCERNING OUR GALLANT COUNTRY-
MEN.

THE general solicitude and anxiety with ourselves, it may be remarked, is but a just tribute of feeling and duty from the British nation. The honour of success, if the great question were answered, would be *our* honour; the glory of the enterprise, were the north-west passage fairly made by our voyagers, would be ours. We have yielded our sympathy, and that freely and generously as a people. It had been *due* from us on the claims of *right* and *justice*, had not a generous impulse of heart, anticipated reflection. It is a simple principle of human and relative obligations,—if we have shared in the honour of an enterprise, there is claim on us as to responsibilities; if we were ready to appropriate to ourselves, as a people, the glory, as it is deemed, of an adventure successfully pursued, we are bound to adopt its reverses, and to help, to the uttermost, the adventurers in their difficulties—to succour them, if it be possible, in their mortal perils!

Hence, in addition to the general claims of the absent ones on our common humanity—claims which we believe to be almost universally recognised; we have the additional demands of plain and obvious duty. The claim of humanity might have called