

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

HOUSES and localities whence great men have sprung are not usually backward in asserting their claims upon the notice of the world. Nor is the world, the educated portion of it at any rate, slow to recognise the additional interest such associations give to its wanderings, and the additional charm they lend to scenes or buildings that may even be otherwise good and pleasant to look upon.

And yet the quiet little Kentish town of Westerham has certainly succeeded in keeping almost entirely to itself the notable honour which unquestionably belongs to it,—namely, that of having produced the conqueror of Canada. It must not be assumed that Westerham itself has failed, within its own quiet and peaceful limits, to cherish the memory of its hero. But the British public in general, to whom Wolfe's immortal name and fame are so familiar, have most certainly never grasped the fact that he is so closely identified with this beautiful bit of the borderland of Kent and Surrey.

The reticence with which Westerham has worn its honours is the more curious, as the hand of time has dealt most tenderly with everything in the place that can