

CHAPTER II

THE CAMPAIGN IN FLANDERS, 1742-45 (DETTINGEN)

WALPOLE had at last been driven by the disappearance of his majority to resign, and as Earl of Orford to take his seat among the peers. England stood alone in supporting the claims of Maria Theresa to the throne of Austria, and the corps of which Wolfe's regiment formed a part was the first demonstration by land in her favour, being intended for the occupation of her Flemish dominions. Nearly all Europe was ranged upon the other side. For once Frederick of Prussia and France were allies, while joined in arms with them were Spain and the Elector of Bavaria, whose claim to the duchy of Austria and the dominions attached to it was the ostensible cause of strife. England persuaded Maria Theresa to purchase peace with Frederick by the cession of Silesia to Prussia. Thus lightened by so much of the weight of opposition she had to meet, Austria was enabled to drive the French out of Bohemia before the end of 1742. In the meantime, one English fleet blockaded Cadiz, while another lay in the Bay of Naples, and forced Don Carlos by threats of bombarding his capital to a treaty of neutrality.

Walpole's restraining hand was no longer at the helm.