

had, in those old days, before Woolwich Boards or Civil Service Examinations were dreamt of, was obtained in his native Westerham, a pretty little Kentish Town, on the river Dart. But he left school to join his father's regiment, at the age of fifteen; and in writing to his friend he deploras his deficient education, with later years running to waste in a Scottish barrack, "where," he says, "your barren battalion conversation rather blunts the faculty than improves." But his was not the mind to rest contented with mere grumbling over opportunities lost. Already he had attracted notice by his aptitude for command; introducing the greatest regularity and exactness of discipline, and yet retaining the affection of his men. He was applying himself with unwearied assiduity to the mastery of his profession; and, amid the distractions and impediments of barrack life, was silently preparing himself in all ways for his great life-work. "You know," he writes, "I am but a very indifferent scholar. When a man leaves school at fifteen, he will never be justly called a man of letters. I am endeavouring to repair the damage of my education; and have a person to teach me Latin and the mathematics, two hours each day, for four or five months. This may help me a little." Thus modestly does the young soldier tell of time redeemed from the idleness of barrack life, to recover lost opportunities of earlier years.

But the glimpses thus caught of Wolfe, as a lover and a student, are episodes of a quiet interval between his earlier and later campaigns. Walpole, the sagacious minister of the first two Georges, to whose pacific policy the stability of their throne was mainly due, had been driven from power just as Wolfe entered the army. King George, with obstinate Hanoverian policies of his own, had no difficulty in enlisting England in a quarrel about the pragmatic sanction, and the Queen of Hungary's right to the Austrian Throne. There were then, as there ever have been, short-sighted Eng-

lishmen who thought it high-spirited and heroic to bear the brunt of every dynastic squabble; and were of the same opinion as has been so recently set forth anew, that it is a cowardly thing, if bloody noses are going in any corner of "Dame Europa's School," that we should not thrust our own into the strife. So there were fine chances for those who chose the profession of arms.

Young Wolfe had no sooner done so, than he embarked with his father for Flanders, and began the practical study of war; the same year in which Frederick the Great made that world-famous seizure of Silesia: the first of Prussia's German acquisitions, on which she has since kept tenacious hold.

England now became the fast ally of Austria, subsidised Denmark and Sweden; and, indeed, squandered money so lavishly in a quarrel with which she had absolutely nothing to do, that her national debt has kept up a very practical remembrance of it ever since. Still more to give hostages to fortune, her King served as actual soldier in the same ranks in which Wolfe did duty as subaltern. Nor was it any royal holiday work, or theatrical "baptism of fire." At the bloody battle of Dettingen, King George, with stolid coolness, led the cavalry to the onset; and when dismounted, put himself at the head of his own British and Hanoverian infantry, which broke and scattered the Duke de Grammont's ranks, and won the day. In this fierce struggle, Ensign Wolfe carried the colours of his regiment, and shared in the dangers and honour of the victory—the last in which a King of England bore part. Ere long, on the disastrous field of Fontenoy, Wolfe distinguished himself when others failed, and received the special thanks of the Commander-in-Chief.

One hundred and thirty years ago that war of the Austrian succession occupied all minds as eagerly as the late Franco-German struggle did our own. To our great grandfathers it seemed world-famous and unforgettable. To the very historian now it has