

regiment held the post of honour in the centre of the first line. The French had now thrown upwards of thirty thousand men across the river, while the Allies had somewhat more. Gramont, however, who commanded the former, made the fatal mistake of leaving a strong position at the village of Dettingen, and marching out from sheer bravado to meet his enemy in the open. James Wolfe does not allude to this blunder, but he says that at twelve the two armies moved towards one another, though the fighting did not actually commence till one. The cavalry of the French household, the famous Grey Musketeers, opened the ball by a charge on the British infantry. They rode up at full trot, with broadswords slung on their right wrists and a pistol in each hand. Firing these latter at the enemy, they then flung them at their heads, and fell on sword in hand. They broke through the Scotch Fusiliers, the regiment first attacked, but with such a loss of life that scarcely twenty, Wolfe thinks, escaped. Four or five of them, says he, actually broke through the second line, but were at once captured. "These unhappy men," the letter continues, "were of the first families of France. Nothing, I believe, could be more rash than their undertaking."

Then from his central position Wolfe saw the cavalry from both sides advance upon one another in full strength. He blames the Blues for firing their pistols instead of falling on with their swords, by which the young critic declares that with their heavier weight they would have beaten back the French. As it was, the conduct of the English cavalry, and of the Blues in particular, was in anything but keeping with the renown acquired by the