

man of three-and-twenty, without social claims or interest at a time when both were of such vital consequence, stamps Colonel Wolfe as a soldier of much more than average merit. The Treaty of Utrecht, however, and the piping times of peace which for so long followed it, cut off all further opportunity for the purely professional soldier; and the elder Wolfe, after a brief period of activity in 1715 with Wade in the Highlands, retired into the ordinary routine work of a regimental officer in time of peace.

The long pacific administration of Walpole was one of unprecedented prosperity. It was also an age of rampant profligacy among the upper classes of society and gross coarseness among the lower. In quiet, well-bred country circles, such as Mrs. Wolfe moved in at Westerham, the evil tone of the times was probably little felt. That this lady was in every sense a most excellent mother is clear from the affection in which she was held by her sons, and the kind of men they grew to be under her influence. The high principle, the unaffected reverence for religion, the almost restless sense of duty, which made James Wolfe such a contrast to most soldiers of his day, owed much, no doubt, to the training of the gentle, dark-haired lady whose portrait now hangs in the gallery at Squerryes Court. Both boys were delicate and of a sensitive disposition, and on this account, perhaps, more keenly alive to lasting influences of such a kind than the sturdy pickles who from infancy break windows and rob orchards. James, however, had plenty of spirit, and the same sensitive and impressionable nature that absorbed so much that was good from his mother caught fire, at the same time, from the warlike reminiscences of