

and the undisputed tyrant of Europe might still have insulted and threatened us on our own shores." The Richard Colley thus favoured was created Baron Mornington, of the Irish peerage, in 1746, a title which was exchanged for an earldom, 14 years later, in favour of his son. This second Lord Mornington, of musical celebrity, left by his wife, Anne, daughter of Arthur Hill, Viscount Dungannon, nine children surviving, of whom one became Marquis Wellesley, one Baron Cowley, and one, christened we presume after his maternal grandfather, Duke of Wellington.

Arthur Wellesley, by the death of his father in 1781, became dependent at an early age upon the care and prudence of his mother, a lady, as it fortunately happened, of talents not unequal to the task. Under this direction of his studies he was sent to Eton, from which college he was transferred, first, to private tuition at Brighton, and subsequently to the military seminary of Angers, in France. For the deficiency of any early promise in the future here we are not confined to negative evidence alone. His relative inferiority was the subject of some concern to his vigilant mother, and had its influence, as we are led to conclude, in the selection of the military profession for one who displayed so little of the family aptitude for elegant scholarship. At Angers, though the young student left no signal reputation behind him, it is clear that his time must have been productively employed. Pignèrol, the director of the seminary, was an engineer of high repute, and the opportunities of acquiring, not only professional knowledge, but a serviceable mastery of the French tongue, were not likely to have been lost on such a mind as that of his pupil. Altogether, six years were consumed in this course of education, which, though partial enough in itself, was so far in advance of the age that we may conceive the young cadet to have carried with him to his corps a more than average store of professional acquirements. On the 7th of March, 1787, the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, being then in his 18th year, received his first commission as an ensign in the 73rd Regiment of Foot. The only point of interest in his position at this minute is the degree of advantage over his contemporaries which might be derived from the family connexions above described; and a review of the facts will lead, we think, to the conclusion that, though the young officer commanded sufficient interest to bring his deserts into immediate and favourable notice, he was not so circumstanced as to rely exclusively on such considerations for advancement. A French historian, indeed, has indulged in a sneer at the readiness with which the haughty aristocracy of Britain submitted themselves in after times to the ascendancy of an Irish *parvenu*, but this assumption is as little warrantable as that by which the distinctions of the young cadet are attributed to the nobility of his extraction. The pretensions of Arthur Wellesley were insufficient, even at a somewhat later period, to secure him from failure in that test of social position—the choice of a wife; nor

could his opportunities have produced more than commonplace success to a man of ordinary capacity. On the other hand, they relieved him from those risks of neglect and injustice which must occasionally be fatal even to eminent worth, and they carried him rapidly over those early stages in which, under other circumstances, the fortunes of a life might have been perhaps consumed. He possessed interest enough to make merit available, but not enough to dispense with it.

His promotion was accordingly rapid, but not more so in its first steps than in examples visible at the present day, and much less so than in the case of some of his contemporaries. He remained a subaltern four years and three months, at the expiration of which period of service he received his captaincy. The honour of having trained the Duke of Wellington would be highly regarded in the traditions of any particular corps, but so numerous and rapid were his exchanges at this period that the distinction can hardly be claimed by any of the regiments on the rolls of which he was temporarily borne. He entered the army, as we have said, in the 73d, but in the same year he moved, as lieutenant, to the 76th, and within the next eighteen months was transferred, still in a subaltern's capacity, to the 41st foot and the 12th Light Dragoons, successively. On the 30th of June 1791, he was promoted to a captaincy in the 58th, from which corps he exchanged into the 18th Light Dragoons in the October of the following year. At length, on the 30th of April 1793, he obtained his majority in the 33d, a regiment which may boast of considerable identification with his renown, for he proceeded in it to his lieutenant-colonelcy and colonelcy, and commanded it personally throughout the early stages of his active career. These rapid exchanges bespeak the operation of somewhat unusual interest in pushing the young officer forward; for in those days a soldier ordinarily continued in the corps to which he was first gazetted, and to which his hopes, prospects, and connections were mainly confined. So close, indeed, and permanent were the ties thus formed, that when Colonel Wellesley's own comrade and commander, General Harris, was asked to name the title by which he would desire to enter the peerage, he could only refer to the 5th Fusiliers as having been for nearly six-and-twenty years his constant home. The brother of Lord Mornington was raised above these necessities of routine; but what is chiefly noticeable in the incidents described is that the period of his probationary service was divided between cavalry and infantry alike—a circumstance of some advantage to so observant a mind.

Before the active career of the young officer commenced he was attached as aide-de-camp to the staff of the Earl of Westmoreland, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and in 1790, having just come of age, he was returned to the Irish Parliament for the family borough of Trim. The most eager researches into this period of his career, have not elicited anything to prove that he was distinguished from those around