

the whole winter. The inhabitants had no particular love for their Austrian rulers, and still less for their English allies. The turbulent spirit of the Flemish burghers, so long slumbering, was stirred into something like life again by the presence of a large body of alien troops. Tumults between the soldiers and the populace at length became so frequent, that the magistrates issued an order to the effect that whoever should offer an affront to the subjects of the King of England should be burned in the back, whipped, and turned out of the town.

Young Wolfe remained at Ghent with his regiment, impatient for an advance, but making the most of his time by acquiring the routine work of his profession. He made friends rapidly, both in the regiment and outside it, and had, moreover, in quarters with him his old comrade, George Ward of Squerryes, now a cornet in a regiment of dragoons. The Flemish aristocracy, as is their custom to this day, flocked during the winter from their castles and country seats to their sombre mansions in the provincial towns, and Ghent, we may be sure, was no emptier that season for the presence of the British and Austrian officers. The prejudice against foreigners, evinced so roughly by the proletariat, was certainly not shared by the higher classes. At any rate it was not shared by the ladies; for Wolfe, ever and always in the better sense of the word a ladies' man, found the latter "immensely civil," though his crude French, according to his own account, must have taxed both their understanding and their good nature. There was the play, too, which the young ensign attended frequently for the benefit of his French; and when he could snatch a quiet