

were carried on throughout the spring and summer for an attack on the Spanish power in America ; and a large fleet assembled at Spithead for the support of the one already on the Spanish Main under Vernon.

Ten thousand troops were gathered in the Isle of Wight under Lord Cathcart in readiness for embarkation, and to this force, which was destined for the ill-starred expedition to Cartagena, Colonel Wolfe was appointed adjutant-general. James Wolfe had been no idler at school. His earliest letters show the good use he had made of his curtailed education, and the affection with which his master both then and always regarded him points to the same conclusion. But Latin grammar and vulgar fractions were no longer possible for such a boy, with the roll of drums and the blare of trumpets daily in his ears. He was just thirteen and a half, about the age when the fond mother of to-day would be debating whether her hopeful might be safely committed to the mild adventures of a public school. But James Wolfe had made up his mind that the time had come for him to be up and doing, and that his country had need of his services on the Spanish Main. It is impossible not to smile at the situation, but nothing could have been more serious than the attitude of Dr. Swinden's young scholar. Of course at such a tender age he could only go as a volunteer, and even then only as a member of his father's household. One can imagine his mother's horror and her protests. Indeed, we have evidence of them in the charming answer he wrote to her after his departure. That the lad should have succeeded in persuading his father to take him, we may accept as a tribute to the energy and force of will that distinguished