

The ministry, inspired chiefly by Lord Carteret, was as aggressive in design as it was weak in action ; and the King, of course, was more than sympathetic with its warlike aspirations. Whatever may have been the defects of George the Second, physical timidity was not one of them. He was only too eager, like another Edward with another Black Prince, to march at his son's side and at the head of his army to any part of Europe that gave him the chance.

But the game of war was a leisurely business in those days, and for the whole of that year young Wolfe's regiment with the rest of the English forces lay in Flanders. Their first march on foreign soil had been from Ostend to Bruges. No part of Europe, probably, has altered less than that fat plain of fenceless fields, with its long avenues of poplars, its wind-swept waterways, its gray church-towers and red-roofed cottages, lying behind the long, low ramparts of gleaming sand which for mile after mile defend the shores of Flanders from the surf of the North Sea. And on that first night of the campaign the chimes of the famous belfry rang their tireless changes over the raw brigades that were destined to leave such heaps of bones at Dettingen and Fontenoy, and to write those immortal names upon their banners. Ghent was the point upon which the English regiments were concentrating ; and Ghent at that time was neither the busy, bustling place it now is, nor the splendid city it had been in medieval days. It was a station eminently calculated to try the patience of the British army, who, instead of marching almost immediately to the Rhine, as had been anticipated, was detained in the dull Flemish town for nearly