

as he was at Louisbourg. Amherst had not the genius for sweeping difficulties aside; he proceeded to remove them. The historian of Canada blames him for the slow progress which enabled Montcalm so long to keep the bulk of his forces intact. Possibly he believed Wolfe must fail.¹

Wolfe as
general.

When it became necessary to despatch de Lévis to Montreal as a precaution in case Bourlamaque was driven from Isle aux Noix, and to give Bougainville a substantial force about Cap Rouge in order to prevent any landing there, Wolfe saw how to use both his own and Saunders' resources to the fullest advantage. It is a favourite view with those who know their Wolfe superficially or their Thackeray thoroughly that Wolfe took the gambler's chance. "Is merit or madness the patron of greatness?" asks Thackeray. "Is it Frolic or Fortune?" Thackeray vows that he scarce knows whether in the last act of the hero's life to admire the result of genius, invention, and daring or the boldness of a gambler winning surprising odds. "Suppose his ascent discovered a half-hour sooner, and his people, as they would have been assuredly, beaten back? Suppose the Marquis de Montcalm not to quit his entrenched lines to accept that strange challenge? Suppose these points—and none of them depend upon Mr. Wolfe at all—and what becomes of the glory of the young hero, of the great minister who discovered him, of the intoxicated nation which rose up frantic with self-congratulation at the victory?"² Except in so far as the element which some men call Luck, which Wolfe regarded as the intervention of an Inscrutable Power, enters into all human affairs,

¹ Kingsford: vol. iv, p. 269.

² *The Virginians*, chap. lxxiv.