

## HOW WOLFE TOOK QUEBEC.

The mightiest fleet that ever ploughed the North American seas was ready to sail out of the harbor of Louisburg on June the 1st, 1759. Twenty-two great line-of-battle ships and as many frigates and transports, crowded with 9,000 soldiers and sailors, composed the colossal armament. Pitt meant to strike a deadly blow at French power in North America, by besieging the fortress of Quebec. The men chosen to direct the attack were worthy of the vast responsibility. The senior naval officer was Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, one of the bravest and most skilful commanders in the King's service. Under Saunders were Holmes and Durrell. But the hopes of Pitt and of all England were centred on the courage and talents of a young man of thirty-three, to whom the success of the bold enterprise had been entrusted.

Young as he was, James Wolfe had already seen eighteen years of the most arduous military service, and had acquitted himself with distinction on some of the hardest fought fields of Europe. He was at Dettingen, Fontenoy, Culloden and Rochefort. The military genius and valor he displayed at Louisburg had made his name a household word throughout all England, whilst his exploits were the subject of song in every barrack room of the vast British Empire. Wolfe was endowed with many high qualities. Though somewhat petulant and impatient of delay, his good judgment, prompt decision and dashing fearlessness won for him the confidence and admiration of his soldiers. He was the strictest of disciplinarians and forgave no negligence in officers or men—yet this only heightened his popularity amongst those who knew that he disregarded comfort and even health in his zeal for the service and his enthusiastic devotion to its interests. From childhood he had been a confirmed invalid. His was, as Burke said, "an enterprising soul lodged in a delicate constitution." He seldom had an hour free from pain, yet when his presence was necessary, in the camp or on the field, he never betrayed the severity of his sufferings. Well hath it been said by one of old, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity." Though his inclinations were social and his feelings generally tender, he was at times capable of exercising that severity which is a prominent characteristic of every great general. Wolfe's brigadiers-general were Moncton, Murray and Townshend, all men of commanding talents, all zealous for the service. In one vessel was Adjutant-General Barre, a brilliant and courageous young Irishman, one of the most popular officers of the fleet. He too wrote the "Letters of Junius." He was destined to a strange and adventurous career, and lived to serve the King under the burning East Indian sun. In the Porcupine was a young officer, John Jervis, whose after achievements named him "Father of the British Navy," and raised him to the peerage as Earl St. Vincent. In another vessel, was Navigator Cook, acting as sailing-master. He had yet three times to circumnavigate the globe—to discover far-off islands, and like a mighty necromancer to exhibit to a wondering world the thousands of coral reefs and other strange formations on which myriads of insects had been laboring for untold centuries.

The great fleet began to weigh anchor, and set sail on the 1st of June, but it was the evening of the 6th before the last vessel had cleared the harbor of Louisburg. Dur-

rell, who had intercepted a French frigate sailing to the relief of Quebec, had only succeeded in capturing two vessels. The craft were of little value, but on board were found several well executed maps of the St. Lawrence, which were of great use to the British in overcoming the difficulties of the river navigation. By showing false colors the British inveigled some French pilots into their hands, but the bearing of these captives was so offensive that the insulted Englishmen dispensed with their services, and sailed without accident, even through the Traverse Channel between Orleans Island and the north shore. The fleet anchored off Orleans Island, and Wolfe, with a small body of troops, disembarked, and took station on its western point. He had much to contemplate. The scene was one of entrancing beauty. The great river dividing itself into two channels, the well cultivated shore country dotted with pretty farm houses—above all and scarcely four miles distant, the mighty rock of Quebec, surmounted with ramparts, standing sentinel over the town on the strand at its base. All this was calculated to affect the sensitive mind of the young general. Not Balboa, "gazing from a peak of Darien" on the noble expanse of the newly discovered Pacific, could have been more entranced. As Wolfe keenly examined the north shore and saw how strongly fortified and how seemingly inaccessible it was, the greatness of his undertaking and the uncertainty of its accomplishment, impressed him strongly. He could not clearly discern the shore line beyond the citadel, but the suspicion raised by Navigator Cook, who had examined the river charts, that encamping on the Plains of Abraham was impossible, was strengthened in the mind of Wolfe. This was part of the plan he had communicated to Pitt.

While Wolfe is keenly scrutinizing the line of French defences, it will not be inopportune briefly to review a few pages of history, the better to understand how France came into collision with England in the New World, and to see the importance of the critical move in the game of North American supremacy which brought the English fleet within cannon-shot of Quebec.

Conflict between the English and French in North America was unavoidable. The immediate causes of contention were rivalry in the Indian trade and territorial claims over the rich valley of the Ohio. Beneath these causes, and aggravating them, was the deep-rooted conviction of the colonists of both nations that the continent was not broad enough for the two races. The coast settlements of the English had expanded and become populous. The colony of Jamestown sent forth adventurous spirits who drove away or bought off the native tribes and established themselves—a proud and enterprising people—in the Virginian mountains.

Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut were now old colonies, whose sons, not content with their patrimony, saw a boundless field for enterprise in the untilled regions of the "Great West." The Pennsylvanians were advancing their frontiers up the eastern slope of the Alleghanies, whilst missionaries and traders, boldly crossing the mighty ridge, by their very daring disarmed the jealousy of the redmen and became popular in their councils. The Dutch settlers of New York were encroaching on Indian territory towards Lake Huron (Lake George), which was utilized as a baptismal

font by the Jesuit missionaries. Thus the French named this beautiful sheet "The Lake of the Sacrament."

Nor was New France less aggressive. But her line of action was different, the chief aim of its governors being to possess and fortify strategic points. Farming operations were confined to narrow strips on either bank of the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu, and they were conducted in the half-hearted manner that characterized the days of the Seigniorial Tenure. Seigniorial rents were not oppressive nor were the other duties of this western feudalism, as far as the relations of the tenant and his lord were concerned. Considering the circumstances of a people who were not eager to battle with the wilderness and had little of the self-reliance and sturdy independence of the New Englander, the system was calculated not greatly to develop the country, but to prevent the small farming population from running wild in the woods. Whilst the Seigniors were not receiving large revenues from their estates, the exactions of the central authorities at Quebec and Montreal were most oppressive. Governors, intendants, commandants of forts, contractors and monopolists of every stripe combined to rob the poor habitant by forcing him to sell his produce at ruinously low prices and in times of scarcity selling him back the same at exorbitant rates. From these and other tyrannical measures the only avenue of escape for the French colonist was to turn bushranger—a life varied by fighting fierce beasts, shooting dangerous rapids, or making an occasional foray on the frontier villages of the Dutch and English. Though husbandry languished, military operations were conducted with great energy and patriotic spirit.

New France was essentially a military colony. Her very existence was threatened by a rival of nearly twenty times her population. The French policy was to construct and maintain a chain of forts from Quebec to the mouth of the Mississippi. Of these some were substantially built of solid masonry and were considered impregnable to the attacks of light-armed civilized troops or bands of hostile Indians. Others were mainly wooden structures with stone bastions, while many were wooden blockhouses surrounded by palisades. Some of these forts were quite inaccessible to artillery, except of the very lightest, and so considered safe enough in case of attack.

Wedged in between the British and French colonies were the forests of New York, inhabited by the "Six Nations" of Iroquois. Both British and French assiduously bribed and courted these tribes, as their warriors were so skilled in forest fighting that their services were invaluable. The Iroquois were the fiercest and craftiest of the North American Indians, not like the few survivors of the old races yet remaining in the north, their energies paralyzed by civilizing influences, but such fiery spirits as in the far south-west scourge the frontier settlements of Arizona and New Mexico. These confederated redmen had a policy which was a wise one for a people situated as they were. They would not ally themselves too closely with either English or French, but would balance one against the other and await developments, for they knew that with either English or French successful their own lease of occupation would expire.

In 1753 the Marquis Du Quesne came to Canada, having, along with his commission as governor, instructions which accord-