

There are young men amongst us that have great reverence and high military stations, that repine at three months' service with their regiments if they go fifty miles from home. Soup and venison are their supreme delight and joy,—an effeminate race of coxcombs, the future leaders of our armies, defenders and protectors of our great and free nation!

"You bid me avoid Fort William, because you believe it still worse than this place. That will not be my reason for wishing to avoid it, but the change of conversation; the fear of becoming a mere ruffian, and of imbibing the tyrannical principles of an absolute commander, or giving way insensibly to the temptations of power, till I become proud, insolent and intolerable,—these considerations will make me wish to leave the regiment before the next winter, and always if it could be so after eight months' duty: that by frequenting men above myself I may know my true condition, and by discoursing with the other sex may learn some civility and mildness of carriage, but never pay the price of the last improvement with the loss of reason. Better be a savage of some use than a gentle, amorous puppy, obnoxious to all the world. One of the wildest of the wild clans is a worthier being than a perfect Philander."

Wolfe, it must be owned, does not write well. He has reason to envy, as he does, the grace of the female style. He is not only ungrammatical, which, in a familiar letter, is a matter of very small consequence, but somewhat stilted. Perhaps it was like the *Madam*, the fashion of the Johnsonian era. Yet beneath the buckram you always feel that there is a heart. Persons even of the same profession are cast in very different moulds; and the mould of Wolfe was as different as possible from that of the Iron Duke.

Wolfe's dreary garrison leisure in Scotland, however, was not idle. His books go with him, and he is doing his best to cultivate himself, both professionally and generally. He afterwards recommends to a friend, evidently from his own experience, a long list of military histories and other works ancient and modern. *The ancients he read in translations. His range is wide, and he appreciates military genius in all its forms. "There is an abundance of military knowledge to be picked out of the lives of Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. King of Sweden, and of Zisca the Bohemian, and if a tolerable account could be got of the exploits of Scanderbeg, it would be inestimable, for he excels all the officers ancient and modern in the conduct of a small defensive army."* At Louisbourg, Wolfe put in practice, with good effect, a manœuvre which he had learned from the Carduchi in Xenophon, showing, perhaps, by this reproduction of the tactics employed two thousand years before by a barbarous tribe, that in the so-called art of war there is a large element which is not progressive. Books will never make a soldier, but Wolfe, as a military student, had the advantage of actual experience of war. Whenever he could find a teacher, he studied mathematics, zealously though apparently not with delight. "I have read the mathematics till I am grown perfectly stupid, and have algebraically worked away the little portion of understanding that was allowed to me. They have not even left me the qualities of a coxcomb; for I can neither laugh nor sing nor talk an hour upon anything. The latter of these is a sensible loss, for it excludes a gentleman from all good company and makes him entirely unfit for the conversation of the polite world." "I don't know how the mathematics may assist the judgment, but they have a great tendency to make men dull. I who am far from being sprightly even in my gaiety, am the very reverse of it at this time." Certainly to produce sprightliness is neither the aim nor the general effect of mathematics. That while military education was carried on, general culture was not wholly neglected, is proved by the famous exclamation about Gray's *Elegy*, the

most signal homage perhaps that a poet ever received.* At Glasgow, where there is a University, Wolfe studies mathematics in the morning, in the afternoon he endeavours to regain his lost Latin.

Nor in training himself did he neglect to train his soldiers. He had marked with bitterness of heart the murderous consequence to which neglect of training had led in the beginning of every war. Probably he had the army of Frederick before his eyes. His words on musketry practice may still have an interest. "Marksmen are nowhere so necessary as in a mountainous country; besides, firing at objects teaches the soldiers to level incomparably, makes the recruit steady, and removes the foolish apprehension that seizes young soldiers when they first load their arms with bullets. We fire, first singly, then by files, one, two, three, or more, then by ranks, and lastly by platoons; and the soldiers see the effects of their shots, especially at a mark or upon water. We shoot obliquely and in different situations of ground, from heights downwards and contrariwise."

Military education and attention to the details of the profession were not very common under the Duke of Wellington. They were still less common under the Duke of Cumberland. Before he was thirty, Wolfe was a great military authority; and what was required of Chatham, in his case, was not so much the eye to discern latent merit, as the boldness to promote merit over the head of rank.

In a passage just quoted Wolfe expresses his fear lest command should make him tyrannical. He was early tried by the temptation of power. He became Lieut.-Colonel at twenty-five; but in the absence of his Colonel he had already been in command at Stirling when he was only twenty-three. This was in quarters where he was practically despotic. He does not fail in his letters to pour out his heart on his situation. "Tomorrow Lord George Sackville goes away, and I take upon me the difficult and troublesome employment of a commander. You can't conceive how difficult a thing it is to keep the passions within bounds, when authority and immaturity go together to endeavour at a character which has every opposition from within and that the very condition of the blood is a sufficient obstacle to. Fancy you see me that must do justice to good and bad; reward and punish with an equal unbiassed hand; one that is to reconcile the severity of discipline with the dictates of humanity; one that must study the tempers and dispositions of many men, in order to make their situation easy and agreeable to them, and should endeavour to oblige all without partiality; a mark set up for everybody to observe and judge of; and last of all, suppose one employed in discouraging vice, and recommending the reverse, at the turbulent age of twenty-three, when it is possible I may have as great a propensity that way as any of the men that I converse with." He had difficulties of character to contend with, as well as difficulties of age. His temper was quick: he knew it. "My temper is much too warm, and sudden resentment forces out expressions and even actions that are neither justifiable nor excusable, and perhaps I do not conceal the natural heat so much as I ought to do." He even felt that he was apt to misconstrue the intentions of those around him, and to cherish groundless prejudices. "I have that wicked disposition of mind that

* "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."—Ed.