

different divisions. On the other hand, experience shows me that, in an affair depending upon vigour and despatch, the generals should settle their plan of operations, so that no time may be lost in idle debate and consultations, when the sword should be drawn; that pushing on smartly is the road to success, and more particularly so in an affair of this nature—[a surprise]—that nothing is to be reckoned an obstacle to your undertaking, which is not found really so upon *trial*; that in war something must be allowed to chance and fortune, seeing it is in its nature hazardous, and an option of difficulties; that the greatness of an object should come under consideration, opposed to the impediments that lie in the way; that the honour of one's country is to have some weight, and that, IN PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES AND TIMES, THE LOSS OF 1000 MEN IS RATHER AN ADVANTAGE TO A NATION THAN OTHERWISE,* seeing that gallant attempts raise its reputation, and make it respectable; whereas the contrary appearances sink the credit of a country, ruin the troops, and create infinite uneasiness and discontent at home. I know not what to say, my dear Rickson, or how to account for our proceedings, unless I own to you that there never was people collected together so unfit for the business they were sent upon—dilatatory, ignorant, irresolute, and some grains of a very unmanly quality, and very unsoldier-like or unsailorly like. I have already been too imprudent: I have said too much, and people make me say ten times more than I ever uttered; therefore, repeat nothing out of my letter, nor name my name as the author of any one thing. The whole affair turned upon the impracticability of escalating Rochefort; and the two evidences brought to prove that the ditch was wet (in opposition to the assertions of the chief engineer, who had been in the place), are persons to whom, in my mind, very little credit should be given: without these evidences we must have landed, and must have marched to Rochefort; and it is my opinion that the place would have surrendered, or have been taken in 48 hours. It is certain that there was nothing in all that country to oppose 9000 good Foot—a million of Protestants, upon whom it is necessary to keep a strict eye, so that the garrison could not venture to assemble against us, and no troops except the Militia within any moderate distance of these parts.

Little practice in war, ease and convenience at home, great incomes, and no wants, with no ambition to stir to action, are not the instruments to work a successful war withal; I see no prospect of better deeds; I know not where to look for them, or from whom we may expect them.

* I have heard that this sentiment, which I have emphasized typographically having been expressed in conversation almost verbatim as above, and reported to Mr. Pitt, caused that great minister to keep Wolfe in view for some daring enterprise, as soon as opportunity served.