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THE CONQUEROR OF QUEBEC.

BY PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH, D.C.L.

Wolfe would fain have gone abroad (England affording no schools) to complete his military and general education; but the Duke of Cumberland's only notion of military education was drill; so Wolfe had to remain with his regiment. It was quartered in Scotland, and besides the cankering inaction to which the gallant spirit was condemned, Scotch quarters were not pleasant in those days. The country was socially as far from London as Norway. The houses were small, dirty, unventilated, devoid of any kind of comfort; and habits and manners were not much better than the habitations. Perhaps Wolfe saw the Scotch society of those days through an unfavourable medium, at all events he did not find it charming. "The men here," he writes from Glasgow, "are civil, designing, and treacherous, with their immediate interest always in view; they pursue trade with warmth and a necessary mercantile spirit, arising from the baseness of their other qualifications. The women coarse, cold and cunning, for ever enquiring after men's circumstances; they make that the standing of their good breeding." Even the sermons failed to please. "I do several things in my character of commanding officer which I should never think of in any other; for instance, I'm every Sunday at the Kirk, an example justly to be admired. I would not lose two hours of a day if it would not answer some end. When I say 'lose two hours,' I must complain to you that the generality of Scotch preachers are excessive blockheads, so truly and obstinately dull, that they seem to shut out knowledge at every entrance." If Glasgow and Perth were bad, still worse were dreary, Banff and barbarous Inverness. The Scotch burghers, their ladies, and the preachers are entitled to the benefit of the remark that the Scotch climate greatly affected Wolfe's sensitive frame, and that he took a wrong though established method of keeping out the cold and damp. When there is nothing in the way of action to lift the soul above the clay, his spirits, as he admits, rise and fall with the weather and his impressions vary with them. "I'm sorry to say that my writings are greatly influenced by the state of my body or mind at the time of writing; and I'm either happy or ruined by

in last night's rest, or from sunshine, or light and sickly air: such infirmity is the mortal frame subject to."

Inverness was the climax of discomfort, coarseness and dullness, as well as a centre of disaffection. Quarters there in those days must have been something like quarters in an Indian village, with the Scotch climate superadded. The houses were hovels; worse and more fetid than those at Perth. Even when it was fine there was no amusement but shooting woodcocks at the risk of rheumatism. When the rain poured down and the roads were broken up, there was no society, not even a newspaper; nothing to be done but to eat coarse food and sleep in bad beds. If there was a laird in the neighbourhood, he was apt to be some "Bumper John" whose first act of hospitality was to make you drunk. "I wonder how long a man moderately inclined that way, would require, in a place like this, to wear out his love for arms, and soften his martial spirit. I believe the passion would be something diminished in less than ten years, and the gentleman be contented to be a little lower than Cæsar in the list to get rid of the encumbrance of greatness."

It is in his dreary quarters at Inverness, at the dead of night, perhaps with a Highland tempest howling outside, that the future conqueror of Quebec thus moralizes on his own condition and prospects in a letter to his mother:

"The winter wears away, so do our years, and so does life its life; and it matters little where a man passes his days and what station he fills, or whether he be great or considerable, but it imports him something to look to his manner of life. This day am I twenty five years of age, and all that time is as nothing. When I am fifty (if it so happens) and look back, it will be the same; and so on to the last hour. But it is worth a moment's consideration that one may be called away on a sudden, unprepared and unprepared; and the often these thoughts are entertained, the less will be the dread or fear of death. You will judge by this sort of discourse that it is the dead of night, when all is quiet and at rest, and one of those intervals wherein men think of what they really are, and what they really should be; how much is expected, and how little performed. Our short duration here, and the doubts of the hereafter should awe the most flagitious, if they reflected on them. The little taken in for meditation is the best employed in all their lives; for if the uncertainty of our state and being is then brought before us, who is there that will not immediately discover the inconsistency of all his behaviour and the vanity of all his pursuits? And yet, we are so mixed and compounded that, though I think seriously thus minute, and lie down with good intentions, it is likely I may rise with my old nature, or perhaps with the addition of some new impertinence, and be the same wandering lump of idle errors that I have ever been."

"You certainly advise me well. You have pointed out the only way where there can be no disappointment, and comfort that will never fail us, carrying men steadily and cheerfully in their journey, and a place of rest at the end. Nobody can be more persuaded of it than I am; but situation, example, the current of things, and our natural weakness, draw me away with the herd, and only leave me just strength enough to resist the worst degree of our iniquities. There are times when men fret at trifles and quarrel with their toothpicks. In one of these ill habits I exclaim against the present condition, and think it is the worst of all; but coolly and temperately it is plainly the best. Where there is most employment and least vice, there one should wish to be. There is a meaness and a baseness not to endure with patience the little inconveniences we are subject to, and to know no happiness but in one spot, and that in ease, in luxury, in idleness, seems to deserve our contempt."