

familiar in British North America as Sir Guy Carleton and afterwards Lord Dorchester. Wolfe and Carleton were great friends, and when the former was sent in command of the expedition against Quebec, he (after not a little difficulty) got Carleton appointed as Quarter-Master General of the expedition. He was entrusted with the command of several important attacks during the campaign, and when Wolfe was writing from the St. Lawrence he says: "I have some colonels of reputation . . . Carleton for Quarter-Master General; upon him I chiefly rely for the engineering part."

Another great friend was Captain Rickson. He was stationed at Halifax with his regiment many years before Wolfe had any idea of the part he was to take in America. Writing to Rickson, Wolfe says: "I do not understand what is meant by wooden forts at Halifax. I have a poor conceit of wooden fortifications, and would wish to have them changed for ramparts of earth, the rest is time. I hope to hear in your next letter that our principal city, Halifax, is considerably improved in strength." Again he writes: "I understand by your account that the port you occupy is at a very small distance from the end of a bay, and should be glad to know how far that is from the nearest part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or from what in the map appears to be a lake, or harbour connected with that gulf." In another place he asks: "Is the island of St. John in the possession of the French or do we occupy it?"

In a letter to his father written before the two just quoted, Wolfe says: "Our army consists of fourteen regiments; our fleet of twenty sail of the line and as many frigates. The harbour of Halifax is an excellent port."

When Wolfe was twenty-five years of age he sent the following letter to his mother, which in itself indicates his true character. Many of his letters contain a very strong vein of sadness, if, indeed, it be not melancholy. His ill health had much to do with it, and his long stay in Scotland did not tend to make him more cheerful. This letter is dated Inverness. He invariably addresses his mother as "Dear Madam":—"The winter wears away; so do our years and so does life itself, and it matters little where a man passes his life or what station he fills, or whether he be great or considerable. This day I am five and twenty 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 the sudden, unguarded and unprepared, and the oftener these thoughts are entertained the less will be the dread of death. You will judge by this sort of discourse that it is in the dead of night, when all is quiet and in rest, and one of those intervals when men think of what they really are and what they really should be; how much is expected, how little really performed. Our short duration here and the doubts of hereafter should awe and deter the most flagitious if they reflect on them. The little time 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, and that compared with our course of conduct, who is there that won't immediately discover the inconsistencies of all his behaviour and the vanity of all his pursuits, and yet we are so mixed and compounded that, although I think seriously this 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."

For some time before coming to America, Wolfe was stationed with his regiment at Dover. In one letter to his mother he asks for some green tea! adding: "It will be an act of charity if you will send me a pound of the best."

He also writes the following amusing and satirical letter: "I always encourage our young people to frequent balls and assemblies. It softens their manners and makes them civil, and commonly I go along with them to see how they conduct themselves. I am only afraid they shall fall in love and marry. Whenever I perceive the symptoms or anybody else makes the discovery, we fall upon the delinquent without mercy till he grows out of conceit with his new passion. By this method we have broken many ties of eternal love and affection. My experience in these matters helps me to find out my neighbour's weakness and furnishes me with arms to oppose his folly. Two or three of the most simple and insensible in other respects have triumphed over my endeavours and are seated upon the stool of repentance for the rest of their days."

It was somewhere about this time, perhaps, that he penned the following lines to his father: "The love of a quiet life, I believe, is an inheritance which is likely to strengthen with my years. That, and the prospect your example gives me that a man may serve long and well to very little purpose and make a sacrifice of all his days to a shadow, seems to help my indifference and incline me to get off quietly and betimes. If a man tries on till forty and something more, I think he does very handsomely, and then, not finding it to answer, he may make his bow and retire."

He displayed a great interest in the temporal affairs of his parents, and it is rather amusing to find him advising his father "to engage in lotteries and all schemes for raising money, because I believe they are honestly intended."

In a letter to his mother at a later stage he advises her to be very careful with her investments and wait for "better times."

What a distinct purpose in life the man had; how thoroughly he sacrificed self to duty can readily be judged by the brief extracts from letters to his father.

In one written from the Isle of Wight, he says: "I have a dreary lodging in the Isle of Wight. However, it affects me as little as anybody whose great concern in this life is neither food nor raiment nor house to live in." What a striking contrast to the sentiments of many young officers of that day, whose whole life was bent on the pursuit of the most sensual and debasing pleasures? Of such he writes: "I dread their life and behaviour, and am forced to an eternal watch upon myself that I may avoid everything I most condemn in them. Young men should have some object in view, some shining character to protect them."

The next letter to his father is from Exeter, dated Feb. 19, 1755. He writes: "It will be sufficient comfort to you two, as far as my person is concerned—at least, it will be a reasonable consolation to reflect that the Power which has hitherto preserved me may, if it be His pleasure, continue to do so: if not, that it is but a few days or years more or less, and that those who perish in their duty and in the service of their country die honourably. I hope I shall have resolution and firmness enough to meet every appearance of danger without great concern, and without being very solicitous about the event."

For many years he had been anxious to travel and improve his mind, and at length a time comes when he is allowed leave of absence, and he makes use of the opportunity to visit Paris while there is peace. In the course of a letter to his mother, from the gay capital, he says: "A conscience at rest and free from guilt with a tolerable portion of health and moderate circumstances are the utmost bounds of our felicity. If we would be happy here below, these are the objects and no further. Refinements in general or any pursuit of exquisite pleasures throw us quite out of the way of peace. Lent, which succeeds the carnival, puts an end to all these pleasures, the delight and occupation of the younger people of Paris. Their thoughts are entirely employed upon the figure they are to make in public, their equippages and dress; within, their entertainments consist of luxurious suppers and deep play. Some of them are elegant enough to be pleased with music, and they all sing well. A few there are, a very small few, that read and think. I began to be tired of Paris. . . . The English are not favourites in Paris. They cannot help looking on us as enemies, and I believe they are right."

That Wolfe's health was seriously affected by his arduous duties can be judged from this letter written from Bristol on the 19th of Jan., 1754: "The campaigns of '43, '45, '46 and '47 stripped me of my bloom, and the winters in Scotland and at Dover have brought me almost to old age and infirmity, and this, without any great intemperance. A few years more or less are of very little consequence to the common run of man, and, therefore, I need not lament that I am perhaps somewhat nearer my end than others of my time. I think and write on these subjects without being moved at all. It is not the vapours, but a desire I have to be familiar with those ideas which frighten and terrify the half of mankind, which makes me speak upon the subject of my dissolution."

Everyone is well aware how, when William Pitt came into power, he cast his eyes upon him for an officer to whom he might commit the task upon which he had set his mind—the breaking of the French power in America by the capture of Quebec. Wolfe had distinguished himself at Louisburg, indeed in every campaign in which he had taken part, and the far-seeing Minister recognized in the young officer the man for whom he was in search. Wolfe is accordingly set to the task, and ordered to act in conjunction with General Amherst, and given the rank of Major-General. This rank is not to hold good anywhere but in America.

On the 19th of May, 1759, Wolfe writes to his uncle a letter, from which the following extract is taken: "Louisburg, 19th May, 1759. We are ordered to take Quebec—a very nice operation. The fleet consists of twenty-one sail of the line and as many frigates, the army of 9,000 men (in England it is called 12,000). We have ten battalions, three companies of Grenadiers, some marines (if the admiral can spare them), and six newly raised companies of North American rangers—the worst soldiers in the universe."

It will be seen that the General did not have very great faith in the New England troops of those days. American writers are considerably more pronounced in their praise. Some of them have even gone so far as to surmise that had Wolfe lived his sympathies would have been with the Americans in the war for Independence. It requires a good stretch of imagination to fancy such a thing (considering Wolfe's devotion to the monarch and his hatred of insubordination). Such writers come nearer the truth when they express doubts as to what would have been the outcome of the war had Wolfe not fallen at Quebec.

In another place he writes: "We all know how little the Americans are to be trusted. By this time, perhaps, our troops (referring to another expedition) are left to defend themselves after losing the best of their officers."

Respecting the use of stimulants in the army he writes to Lord Amherst, his commander-in-chief: "Excess of rum is bad, but that liquor delivered in small quantities, half a gill to a man, makes what is a most salutary drink, and the cheapest pay for work that can be given."

In a letter to Pitt, written on board the *Neptune* in the St. Lawrence, and dated 6th June, 1759, the General has another fling at his New England allies. He says: "I desired General Whitmore to complete our companies

of rangers from the Boston militia at Louisburg, and to give me 100 labourers simply as pioneers. The men were asked if they chose to go, and as it seldom happens that a New England man prefers service to a lazy life, none of them seemed to approve of the proposition; they did not ask it, and the General would not order them."

It is in a subsequent letter to the Prime Minister that he makes use of the celebrated expression "choice of difficulties." He says: "In this situation there is such a choice of difficulties that I own myself at loss to determine."

From the time that Wolfe first left his home, as has been shown, he wrote constantly to his mother. She was now a widow, and was destined soon to suffer a further bereavement in the death of her illustrious son. In "The Virginians" General Lambert is made to say to his wife who laments Wolfe's death: "Don't talk to me, madam, about grief, if our boys could come by such deaths as James' you know you wouldn't prevent them from being shot, but would scale the Abraham heights to see the thing done!" But even the glory attending the death of a hero does not detract from the natural grief of a bereaved widow for her only son.

His last letter to his mother is dated: "Bank of the St. Lawrence, August 31, 1759," and is as follows: "Dear Madam,—My writing to you will convince you that no present evils worse than defeats and disappointments have fallen upon me. The enemy puts nothing to risk and I cannot in conscience put the whole army to risk. My antagonist has wisely shut himself up in inaccessible intrenchments so that I cannot get at him without spilling a torrent of blood and that heads to little purpose. Monsieur de Montcalm is at the head of a great number of bad soldiers, and I am at the head of a small number of good ones. We wish for nothing so much as to fight him; but the wary old fellow avoids an action doubtful of the behaviour of his army. People must be of the profession to understand the disadvantages and difficulties we labour under, irrespective of the very great natural strength of the country. I approve entirely of my father's disposition of his affairs, though perhaps it may interfere a little with a plan of mine for quitting the service, which I am determined to do at the first opportunity; I mean so as not to be absolutely distressed in circumstances nor burdensome to you or anybody else." The last letter ever penned by General Wolfe was written to one of the Secretaries of State. He relates the result of a conference of his chief officers, which led to a determination to make a bold stroke. Concluding he says: "My constitution is entirely ruined without the consolation of having done any considerable service to the State, or without the prospect of it."

There are many anecdotes told of Wolfe, some of them no doubt genuine, many of them fictitious. One is vouched for anyway. Wm. Henry Fairfax, of Bragg's regiment, was espied by Wolfe sitting on the bank of the river. The General placed his hand on his shoulder, saying, "Young man when you come into action remember your name." Fairfax fell close to his chief on the 13th of September. After passing down the river in the boat, during which he recited those well-known words from Gray's elegy, and having got a footing on the narrow landing-place at the beginning of that precipitous path which was to lead him to victory and to death, Wolfe is said to have looked up the rocky ascent and to have remarked to one of Frazer's Highlanders: "I fear it is impossible, but you must do your endeavour." Every man did his endeavour on that day. To Canadians the old city of Quebec must be ever a proud spot. There are few battlefields in the world as famous as the Plains of Abraham. Quietness and peace have reigned around them these many years, but who that has a spark of manly sentiment in him will not, as he wanders around the streets of the old historic town, go back in memory to the time when the armies of two great nations met in mortal conflict just without its gates, and linger in the vicinity of Wolfe's cove, eagerly scanning the pathway the British soldiers climbed, and dwell for a minute or two at least upon the sacred spot where Wolfe fell victorious.

Some years ago the Massachusetts Historical Society had a discussion whether it would be consistent in them to commemorate the taking of Quebec. They decided in the affirmative on the ground that the victory of Wolfe was fraught with good to the United States. The historian, Mr. Lorenzo Sabine, read an interesting paper. He dwelt upon the event which the day commemorated, and its results, and concluded with the following noble tribute: "We commemorate, too, the principal actor in the conflict; and we have rapidly noticed the use he made of the means placed at his disposal in war, and incidentally the use he made of life itself. And now at parting may we not ask whether we are to go away with no lesson for ourselves, with nothing for our daily life? Is there not something in the career of James Wolfe that we can recollect with profit? He sacrificed self for duty. He was simply one of us, and in this we can, if we will, imitate him. And have we no difficulties to encounter, no 'choice of difficulties' to make? Do the sky-coloured imps ever possess us? And at times are we without one cheerful thought, one ray of hope? In youth did poverty, or chance, or parental preference deem us to irksome employments? Have we sorrows which are pent up in aching, almost in breaking, hearts? We can master all, if we will but have it so. There is

Joy to be found in every state,
Something still to do and bear.

Ours the lowly part to subdue self and destiny; and is the foe of our peace, or of our virtue wary and skilful, and