

ENGRAVED BY RICHARD A. MULLER.

GAINSBOROUGH'S PORTRAIT OF GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

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PORTRAITS OF GENERAL WOLFE.

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

ON September 13, 1759, James Wolfe won a great victory, decided the fate of Canada, and, thrice wounded, died upon the battlefield. On October 17, a little over a month later, after a remarkably quick passage in the frigate *Alcide*, Colonel John Hale brought news of the «mourning triumph,» as Burke termed it, to London, and the English nation well-nigh went mad with joy. For a month before this, gloom had been felt over the American news. Wolfe had himself written most despondingly of his chances, and had confessed to having been twice defeated in his attempts on Quebec. One of his own generals had written home that Wolfe's «health is but very bad, [and] his Generalship, in my poor opinion, is not a bit better»; and another of his officers wrote: «His orders throughout the campaign show little stability, stratagem, or fixt resolution.» «In short,» wrote Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, on October 16: «You must not be surprised that we have failed at Quebec, as we certainly shall. You will say, if you please, in the style of modern politics, that your court never supposed it could be taken; the attempt was only made to draw off the Russians from the King of Prussia, and leave him at liberty to attack Daun. Two days ago came letters from Wolfe, despairing, as much as heroes can despair.» Feeling was rife that failure only would result from this campaign. From this mood,

without the faintest premonition, England was called upon to celebrate one of her greatest conquests, and mourn a general elevated at once in popular estimation to a rank surpassed only by Marlborough.

It is a question if there ever was a great general in history of whom less was known. A soldier at fourteen, he had till 1757 been actively engaged in service, but in such subordinate positions as to win little renown outside of army circles. Not till 1757 did he obtain a colonelcy, and then quite as much by «Sir Edward Hawke having spoken to Lord Anson, who took the trouble to repeat it to the King,» as by the reputation he had achieved. A year later, in January, 1758, a warrant as brigadier-general «for America» was issued to this almost unknown colonel. It was done, as the heading stated, by order of his «Gracious Majesty»; but at the end, in a clear, firm hand, was signed «W. Pitt,» and it typified a great change. A new power had appeared in England—one which nullified back-stair influence, and made it no longer necessary to pursue Tom Hood's proposed method of «asking your sister to ask your mother to ask your father to let you come.» Almost immediately upon this advancement, Wolfe sailed for Cape Breton, and was absent till late in the following autumn. His poor health compelled him to pass the winter at Bath, and early in the

spring he set sail with the fleet and army which were to return triumphant, but to bring home in his place only a box over which the line-of-battle ships and forts could fire minute-guns.

Popular enthusiasm, debarred from the usual popular demonstration on the return of the conqueror, and from conferring pensions and peerages, was compelled to spend itself in other directions. A vote of Parliament, a public funeral, and a memorial monument in Westminster Abbey, expressed the gratitude of the nation. But these did not satisfy public curiosity concerning this unknown general, and one phase this took was an extraordinary demand for pictures of the dead hero. Few had ever seen him, and all England wished, in the words of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to see if «he looked the hero.»

The London print-sellers of the day were confronted by a difficult problem. But a few months before, Wolfe was merely an unknown colonel. Before the 17th of October not an engraving of him existed, and the processes for producing such at the time were slow and expensive. Not more honest than their successors who to-day supply our daily press with lifelike portraits of our notorieties, the chance to make money out of this popular desire was taken advantage of without much regard to ethics. They went through their stock of engraved plates, and selecting such as seemed to them suitable, and old enough to be forgotten, they erased the former designations of the subject, and engraved Wolfe's name in place of them. Then they were sold as portraits of Wolfe to the delighted public, and it was a poor house or inn which did not have on its walls within three months what purported to be an «effigy» of «General James Wolfe, Commander-in-chief of his Majesty's Forces in the Expedition against Quebec.»

Had these fictitious portraits not survived this temporary enthusiasm, no particular harm would have resulted; but, unfortunately, these prints have remained, and have passed into history as true likenesses of Wolfe. Within the last ten years old engravings have been at least twice reproduced in works pretending to be accurate histories, and they have acquired such prestige that unless they are cited in print to show cause for their not being held spurious, it is probable that their true character will remain undiscovered. Wolfe has enough plain portraits to answer for, without having any fraudulent portraits in addition; and so it seems time to

test the truth of these various likenesses and sift the true from the false.

The earliest portrait of Wolfe naturally first claims our attention. Painted by an unknown artist, it represents so youthful a face that it is hard to believe it possible that he was already a soldier. But the undress uniform proves Wolfe to have already entered the army, and this makes the probable date of painting 1740, when, being only what was then termed «a gentleman volunteer,» such as Thackeray makes Harry Warrington in the «Virginians,» he was not entitled to the regulation uniform. He hoped to serve in the campaign against Carthage in this year, of which Smollett has left us such vivid pictures in his «Roderick Random»; and it is hard to realize that the volunteer who was willing to face the horrors of impure water, moldy food, unhealthy climate, epidemic disease, and neglect of wounded which that expedition endured, was only a boy who was writing to his mother thus:

NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT, August 6th, 1740.

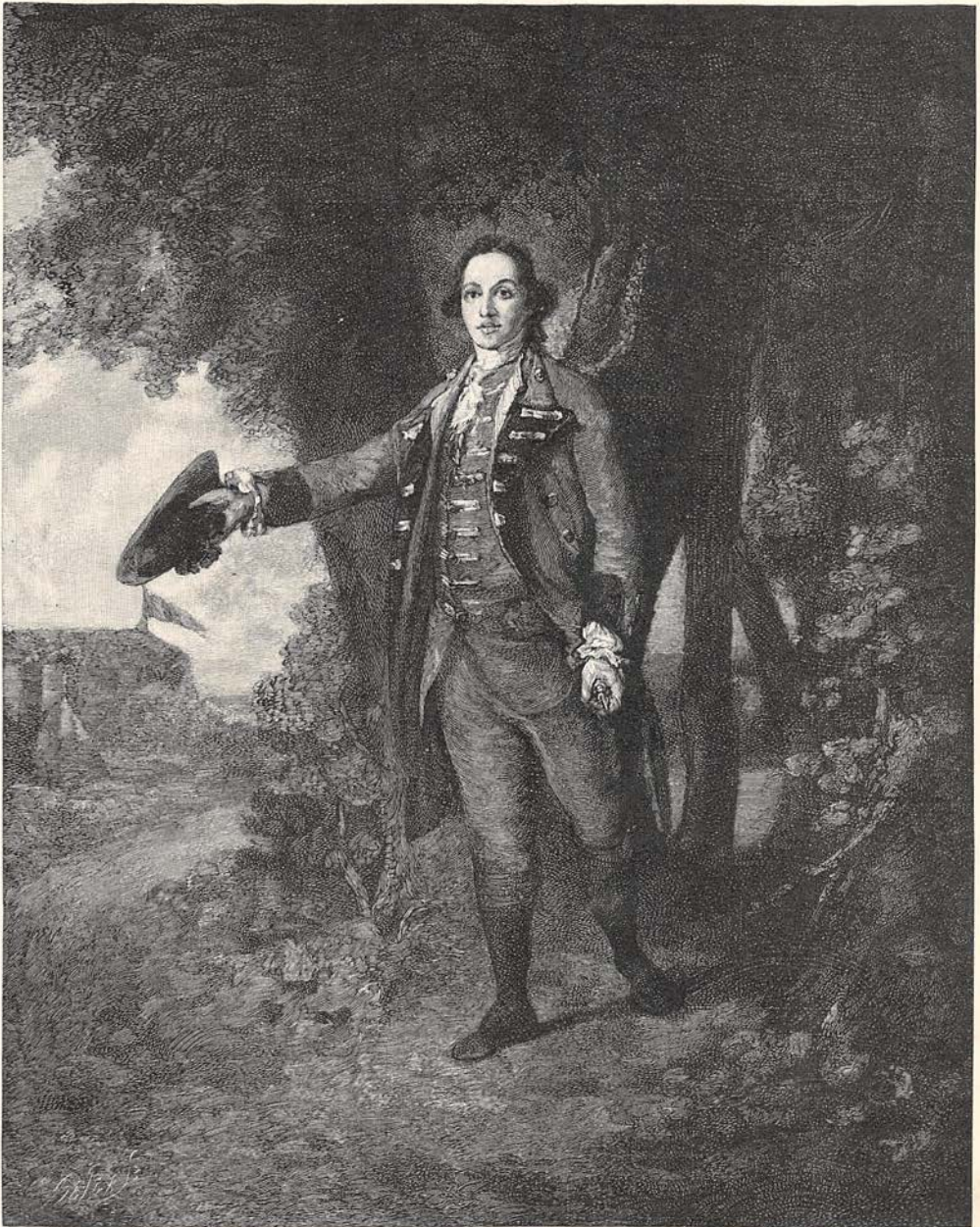
DEAR MADAM: I received my dearest Mamma's letter on Monday last, but could not answer it then, by reason I was at camp to see the regiments off to go on board, and was too late for the post; but am very sorry, dear Mamma, that you doubt my love, which I'm sure is as sincere as ever any son's was to his mother.

Papa and I are just now going on board, but I believe shall not sail this fortnight; in which time, if I can get ashore at Portsmouth or any other town, I will certainly write to you, and when we are gone, by every ship I meet, because I know it is my duty. Besides, if it was not, I would do it out of love, with pleasure.

I am sorry to hear that your head is so bad, which I fear is caused by your being so melancholy; but pray, dear Mamma, if you love me, don't give yourself up to fears for us. I hope, if it please God, we shall soon see one another, which will be the happiest day that ever I shall see. I will, as sure as I live, if it is possible for me, let you know everything that has happened, by every ship; therefore pray, dearest Mamma, don't doubt about it. I am in a very good state of health, and am likely to continue so. Pray my love to my brother, and accept of my duty. Papa desires his love to you, and blessing to my brother. Pray my services to Mr. Streton and his family, to Mr. and Mrs. Weston, and to George Warde when you see him; and pray believe me to be, my dearest Mamma, your most dutiful, loving, and affectionate son,
J. WOLFE.

P. S.—Harry gives his love to Margaret, and is very careful of me. Pray my services to Will and the rest.

This picture became the property of the George Warde referred to in this letter,



ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE.

FROM ORIGINAL IN POSSESSION OF CLIFFORD CHAPLIN, ESQ.

GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

Wolfe's «companion in boyhood, lifelong friend, and executor»; and is still the property of his descendants, who now live at «Squerries Court,» Westerham, Kent, by whom the permission to copy it was courteously given.

The next portrait of Wolfe to be considered is the property of Mr. Clifford Chaplin of Burrough Hill, Melton Mowbray, Leices-

tershire. Like the first, the name of the artist is unknown. It is a full-length, in the uniform of a line officer, which makes the painting of it between the years 1748-58. The face has gained in strength, but is heavy and lacks spirit. It was purchased by its present owner from Mr. F. Sutton, son of Sir Richard Sutton, who probably derived it from his father, of the same name. The

latter was a contemporary of Wolfe, and a prominent figure in the public affairs of his time; and it is quite conceivable that he should have obtained this picture while all was enthusiasm for Wolfe. But an even stronger proof of its authenticity is furnished by a print in the «Royal Magazine» for December, 1759, which so closely resembles the picture as evidently to be copied from it, and therefore gives it a contemporary record of no mean value.

The two portraits already discussed both need an artist's name, but the third was for many years a name without a portrait. Yet it is unquestionably the portrait of Wolfe. In Fulcher's «Life of Gainsborough,» printed in 1856, he stated that Gainsborough painted him, and even described the treatment of the subject. But this did not, for some reason, seem to please the biographers of Wolfe. Without taking the pains to look into this statement, they decided *a priori* that the famous painter never could have painted the famous general. One states that it is «entirely improbable» that this picture ever existed, which is as near saying «impossible» as other words can come. Wright, in his «Life of Wolfe,» qualified this a little

by changing «entirely» into «highly improbable.» But, nevertheless, Gainsborough did paint Wolfe; and painted, too, a most interesting picture. When it was painted is not a decided question, but from all the evidence procurable it seems probable that it was done at Bath, in the winter of 1758-1759, when Gainsborough was first winning reputation, and Wolfe was laying up the little health which was likewise to bring him fame in his last

campaign. And what renders this the more probable is that Wolfe never owned the picture. Perhaps he sailed for America before it was completed. At all events, it remained the property of the young artist, and from him became the property of his sister, Mrs. Gibbons. From her it passed through a series of owners, becoming eventually the property of the poet-sculptor, the late Thomas Woolner, R.A., who gave me permission to engrave the

frontispiece of this article. Seen almost in full face, it indicates far more spirit, refinement, and intellectuality than the other portraits of Wolfe. The eye is bright, the cheek and lips have color, and the whole contour is regular. A special interest is given to the picture, too, by the fact that it is one of the earliest portraits by Gainsborough, if not the earliest, which is still preserved.

The fourth portrait of Wolfe, and the only one that is at all well known which has claims to genuineness, offers more puzzling questions. Once a part of the royal collection, and then the property of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, its claims to authenticity cannot be disputed. From the latter it passed to the King of the Belgians, who in 1848 presented it to the Na-



IN NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON.

GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

1726 - 1759.

Killed during the famous expedition against Quebec, then the capital of the French in Canada.

Drawn by William Duke of Devonshire K.G. and formerly in the possession of Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire.

Presented, November 1865, by the LORD RONALD GOWER, F.S.A.

tional Portrait Gallery of England. Here it was catalogued as painted by Joseph Highmore, a portrait-painter of some note in the last century, but without any authority for so doing. A few years later an old print of Wolfe somewhat resembling this picture, but purporting to have been engraved from an original portrait by J. S. C. Schaalk, was brought to the attention of the gallery officials; and on this most insufficient proof the name of the



ENGRAVED BY R. A. MULLER.

IN POSSESSION OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WARDE.

THE EARLIEST PORTRAIT OF WOLFE.

painter was changed in their catalogue to the latter. The engraving of Schaalk's portrait differs so materially in detail, however, that only two conclusions can be drawn: either Schaalk painted a portrait of Wolfe which is now unknown, or else the engraver has taken his model from this picture, and altered it to please his fancy in the engraving. But these results still leave the painter in doubt. As already stated, the original ascription to Highmore lacks evidence, and an investigation of the matter must settle, if anything short of direct evidence can settle such a matter, that the portrait is not the work of Highmore, but of Captain Har-

vey Smith, an aide-de-camp of Wolfe's in his last campaign. He was an amateur painter in colors of fair merit, to whom we owe good pictures of the towns of Quebec and Montreal as they were in 1759; and he is known, by his own statement, to have painted a portrait of Wolfe during his last campaign. This picture was engraved, if the old lettering can be relied upon, by Houston, in 1760, and is practically identical with the so-called Highmore-Schaalk «Wolfe.» But the strongest proof for this conclusion is given by the picture itself. On Wolfe's left arm is a mourning-scarf such as is worn in England on the death of relatives. It was not till



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IN NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

GENERAL JAMES WOLFE.

after Wolfe had sailed for America that he heard of the death of his father, for whom this was worn; and thus it is well-nigh certain that this portrait was painted while the army was before Quebec; and such being the case, the contemporary evidence in favor of Smith is almost overwhelming. The picture, too, further confirms this by the little merit it has as to technic. That the prominent traits of Wolfe's face are reproduced there seems little reason to doubt—the pointed features, the reddish-yellow hair, the small blue eyes, and the sallow skin are marked here as in the other portraits; but the treatment is bad, the picture lacks spirit, and is not merely heavy itself, but is well-nigh killed by a bad background. In every part the amateur's touch is shown. The face is a strange one, and has all the weakness that is found in

every authentic portrait of Wolfe. Seen in profile, the retreating forehead and chin seem to indicate that the complaint of his indecision and want of stability by one of his generals, already quoted, had a true basis. In fact, the only saving point in the face is the spring of the nose, which, if physiognomy has a meaning, indicates the qualities of tireless energy and quickness of thought, to which, indeed, Wolfe owed his success.

In connection with this picture, it is important to call attention to a pencil outline, in profile, of Wolfe, now in the United Service Institution in London. Too crude and hurried to be of any real value as a portrait itself, it is nevertheless worth mentioning as confirmatory evidence of the preceding one. On the back of it is written: "This sketch belonged to Lieut.-Col. Gwillim, A. D. Camp

to Genl. Wolfe when he was killed. It is supposed to have been sketched by Harvey Smith.» And a further record states: «This portrait of General Wolfe, from which his bust was principally taken, was hastily sketched by Harvey Smith, one of his aid-de-camps, a very short time before that distinguished officer was killed on the Plains of Abraham. It then came into the possession of Colonel Gwillim, another of the general's aid-de-camps, who died afterwards at Gibraltar; and from him to Mrs. Simcoe, the Colonel's only daughter and heiress; then to Major-General Darling (who was on General Simcoe's staff); and now is presented by him to his Grace the Duke of Northumberland. Alnwick, Jan. 23, 1832.» From the hands of the latter it passed to its present resting-place.

Another picture of Wolfe, much resembling the one by Harvey Smith, is in the National Portrait Gallery. The indorsement upon it reads: «Drawn by William, Duke of Devonshire, K. G., and formerly in the possession of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and Lady Elizabeth Foster, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire. Presented November, 1883, by the Lord Ronald Gower, F. S. A.» It is merely a pencil sketch partly filled in with water-colors. That it was taken from Wolfe is highly improbable, and the most satisfactory hypothesis is that it was a sketch from the Smith portrait made by the duke in 1760. Parliament had voted a memorial monument to Wolfe, which was placed in Westminster Abbey, and is even now noticeable to visitors for its ugliness. One of the committee appointed to select a design was

this Duke of Devonshire, and if the record above quoted is accurate, it was undoubtedly in this connection that the picture was drawn.

After studying these five portraits, it is interesting to turn to the descriptive sketch of Wolfe in Thackeray's «Virginians,» and contrast the pen sketch with the canvases:

There was little of the beautiful in his face. He was very lean and very pale; his hair was red, his nose and cheek-bones were high; but he had a fine courtesy towards his elders, a cordial greeting towards his friends, and an animation in conversation which caused those who heard him to forget, even to admire, his homely looks. . . .

«Who is that tallow-faced Put with the carroty hair?» says Jack Morris, on whom the Burgundy had had its due effect.

Mr. Warrington explained that this was Lieutenant-Colonel Wolfe of the 20th Regiment. . . .

«Never saw such a figure in my life!» cries Jack Morris. «Did you—March?»

Other portraits of Wolfe probably exist, and it is hoped this essay may lead to their becoming known. Traces of portraits of him, said to have been painted by J. S. Copley, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Thomas Hudson, have been met with in this investigation; but the first is certainly fabulous, and it is probable that the other two are also. But it is believed that what is here given will serve at least to eliminate from our histories the utterly unauthentic pictures of Wolfe which have so largely done service in the past, and replace them by others which, if having less of the noble and martial in them, nevertheless have the advantage of being portraits of the great general.

«A LASS AM I.»

BY JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

A LASS am I, and I wait my day;
To some 't will be nay, but to one 't will be yea;
When the time comes, I shall know what to say.
The winter goes, and the warm wind blows,
And who shall keep the color from the red, red rose?

A lass am I, neither high nor low;
My heart is mine now, but I 'd have the world know,
When the wind 's right, away it will go.
The brook sings below, and the bird sings above,
And sweeter in between sings the lover to his love.