

[Page 25 - A Tourist in Louisbourg, 1858](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 36](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1984/6/1

of triumph, which oddly contrasted with the faces of the Louisburghers, who looked at him and at his game, with countenances of great gravity--either real or assumed. Presently, another boat ran bows on the beach beside our own, and from this jumped Bruce, our jolly first mate, who had come ashore to spend a few hours with an old friend, at one of the hutches. To this we were hospitably invited also, and were right glad to uncase our limbs of stiff oilskin and doff our sou'-westers, and sit down before the cheery fire, piled up with spruce logs and hackmatack; comfortable, indeed, was it to be thus snugly housed, while the weather outside was so lowering, and the schooner wet and cold with rain. To be sure, our gay and festive hall was not so brilliant as some, but it was none the less acceptable on that account; and, before long, a fragrant rasher of bacon, fresh eggs, white bread, and a strong cup of bitter tea made us feel entirely happy. Then these viands being removed, there came pipes and tobacco; and as something else was needed to crown the s3niiposium, Picton whispered a word in the ear of Bruce, who presently disappeared, to re? turn again after a brief absence, with some of our stores from the schooner. Then the table was decked again, with china mugs of dazzling whiteness, lemons, hot wa? ter, and a bottle of old Glenlivet; and from the centre of this gallant show, the one great lamp of the hutch cast its mel? low radiance around, and nursed in the midst of its flame a great ball of red coal that burned like a bonfire. Then, when our host, the old fisherman, brought out a bundle of warm furs, of moose and cariboo skins, and distributed them around on the settles and broad, high-backed benches, so that we could loll at our ease, we began to realize a sense of being quite snug and cozy, and, indeed, got used to it in a surprisingly short space of time. "Now, then," said Picton, "this is what I call serene," and the traveller relapsed into his usual activity; after a brief res- pite--"I say, give us a song, will you, now, some of you; something about this jol? ly old place, now--'Brave Wolfe,' or 'Bos? cawen,'" and he broke out-- "'My name d'ye see's Tom Tough, I've seen a little sarvice. Where mighty billows roll and loud tempests blow; I've sailed with noble Howe, and I've sailed with noble Jarvis, And in Admiral Duncan's fleet I've sung yeo, heave, yeo! And more ye must be knowin', I was cox'son to Boscawen When our fleet attacked Louisburgh, And laid her bulwarks low. But push about the grog, boys! Hang care, it killed a cat. Push about the grog, and sing • Yeo, heave, yeo!'" "Good Lord!" said the old fisherman, "I harn't heard that song for more'n thirty years. Sing us another bit of it, please." But Picton had not another bit of it; so he called lustily for some one else to sing. "Hang it, sing something," said the traveller. "'How stands the glass around;' that, you know, was written by Wolfe; at least, it was sung by him the night before the battle of Quebec, and they call it Wolfe's death song-- 'How stands the glass around? For shame, ye take no care, my boys! How stands the glass around?'" Here Picton forgot the next line, and substituted a drink for it, in correct time with the music: "'The trumpets sound; The colors flying are, my boys. To fight, kill, or wound'" • Another slip of the memory (drink): "'May we still be found,'" He has found it, and repeats emphatically:



"May we still be found! Content with our hard fare, On the cold ground!" my boys, (all drink) "Then there is another song," said Picton, lighting his pipe, with coal and tongs; "Wolfe and Montcalm"--you must know that," he continued, addressing the old fisherman. But the ancient trilobite did not know it; indeed, he was not a singer, so Picton trolled lustily forth-- "He lifted up his head. While the cannons did rattle. To his aid de camp he said, 'How goes the battail?' The aid de camp, he cried, 'Tis in our favor;' 'Oh! then,' brave Wolfe replied, 'I die with pleasure!'" "There," said Picton, throwing himself back upon the warm and cosy furs, "I am at the end of my rope, gentlemen. Sing away, some of you," and the traveller drew a long spiral of smoke through his tube, and ejected it in a succession of beautiful rings at the beams overhead. "Picton," said I, "what a strange, romantic interest attaches itself to the memory of Wolfe. The very song you have sung, 'How stands the glass around,' although not written by him, for it was composed before he was born, yet has a currency from the popular belief that he sang it on the evening preceding his last battle. And, indeed, it is by no means certain that Gray's Elegy does not derive additional interest from a kindred tradition." "What is that?" said the traveller. "Of course you will remember it. When Gray had completed the Elegy, he sent a copy of it to his friend. General Wolfe, in America; and the story goes, that as the great hero was sitting, wrapped in his military (25)