

# A PLOT FOR EMPIRE.

A THRILLING STORY OF CONTINENTAL CONSPIRACY AGAINST BRITAIN.

Wolfenden assented in silence. For the first time, perhaps, he fully realized the eternal pity of seeing a man so distinguished the victim of a hope- less and incurable mania. He watched him sitting at the head of his table, courteous, gentle, dignified; noted too the air of intellectual abstraction which followed upon his last speech, and in which he seemed to dwell for the rest of the time during which they sat together. Instinctively he knew what disillusionment must mean for him. Sooner anything than that. It must never be. Never! He repeated firmly to himself, as he smoked a solitary cigar later on in the empty smoking-room. Whatever happens he must be saved from that. There was a knock at the door, and in response to his invitation to enter, Mr. Blatherwick came in, Wolfenden, who was in the humor to prefer anyone's society to his own, greeted him pleasantly, and wheeled up an easy chair opposite to his own.

"Come to have a smoke, Blatherwick," he said. "That's right. Try one of these cigars; the governor's are all right, but they are in such shocking condition."

Mr. Blatherwick accepted one with some hesitation, and puffed slowly at it with an air of great deliberation. He was a young man of mild demeanor and deportment, and clerical aspirations. He wore thick spectacles, and suffered from chronic biliousness.

"I am much obliged to you, Lord Wolfenden," he said. "I seldom smoke cigars—it is not good for my sight. An occasional cigarette is all I permit myself."

Wolfenden groaned inwardly, for his regalia were priceless, and not to be replaced, but he said nothing.

"I have taken the liberty, Lord Wolfenden," Mr. Blatherwick continued, "of bringing for your inspection a letter I received this morning. It is, I presume, intended for a practical joke, and I need not say that I intend to treat it as such. At the same time as you were in the house, I imagined that no harm would ensue if I ventured to ask for your opinion."

He handed an open letter to Wolfenden, who took it and read it through. It was dated "London," and bore the postmark of the previous day.

"Dear Sir,—The writer of this letter is prepared to offer you one thousand pounds in return for a certain service which you are in a position to perform. The details of that service can only be explained to you in a personal interview, but broadly speaking it is as follows:

"You are engaged as private secretary to the Earl of Deringham, lately an admiral in the British navy. Your duties, it is presumed, are to copy and revise papers and calculations having reference to the coast defences and navy of Great Britain. The writer is himself engaged upon a somewhat similar task, but not having had the facilities accorded to Lord Deringham, is without one or two important particulars. The service required of you is the supplying of these, and for this you are offered one thousand pounds."

"As a man of honor you may possibly hesitate to at once embrace this offer. You need not! Lord Deringham's work is practically useless, for it is the work of a lunatic. You yourself, from your intimate association with him, must know that this statement is true. He will never be able to give coherent form to the mass of statistics and information which he has collected. Therefore you do him no harm in supplying these few particulars to one who will be able to make use of them. The sum you are offered is out of all proportion to their value—a few months' delay and they could easily be acquired by the writer without the expenditure of a single halfpenny. That, however, is not the point.

"I am rich and I have no time to spare. Hence this offer. I take it that you are a man of common sense, and I take it that you are granted, therefore, that you will not hesitate to accept this offer. Your assent will be assumed if you lunch at the Grand Hotel, Cromer, between one and two, on Thursday following the receipt of this letter. You will then be put in full possession of all the information necessary to the carrying out of the proposals made to you. You are well known to the writer, who will take the liberty of joining you at your table."

The letter ended thus somewhat abruptly. Wolfenden, who had only glanced it through at first, now read it carefully. Then he handed it back to Blatherwick.

"It's a very curious communication," he said, thoughtfully. "A very curious communication indeed. I do not know what to think of it."

Mr. Blatherwick laid down his cigar with an air of great relief. He would have liked to have thrown it away, but dared not.

"It must surely be intended for a practical joke, Lord Wolfenden," he said. "Either that, or my correspondent has been ludicrously misinformed."

"You do not consider, then, that my father's work is of any value at all?" Wolfenden asked.

Mr. Blatherwick coughed apologetically, and watched the extinction of the cigar by his side with obvious satisfaction.

"You would, I am sure, prefer," he said, "that I give you a perfectly straightforward answer to this question. I cannot conceive that the works upon which his lordship is engaged can be of the slightest interest or use to anybody. I can assure you, Lord Wolfenden, that my brain at times reels—positively reels—from the extraordinary nature of the manuscripts which your father has passed on to me to copy. It is not that they

are merely technical, they are absolutely and entirely meaningless. You ask me for my opinion, Lord Wolfenden, and I conceive it to be my duty to answer you honestly. I am quite sure that his lordship is not in a fit state of mind to undertake any serious work."

"The person who wrote that letter," Wolfenden remarked, "thought otherwise."

"The person who wrote that letter," Mr. Blatherwick retorted quickly, "if indeed it was written in good faith, is scarcely likely to know so much about his lordship's condition of mind as I, who have spent the greater portion of every day for three months with him."

"Do you consider that my father is getting worse, Mr. Blatherwick?" Wolfenden asked.

"A week ago," Mr. Blatherwick said, "I should have replied that his lordship's state of mind was exactly the same as when I first came here. But there has been a change for the worse during the last week. It commenced with his sudden, and I am bound to say, unfounded suspicion of Miss Merton, whom I believe to be a most estimable and worthy young lady."

Mr. Blatherwick paused, and appeared to be troubled with a slight cough. The smile which Wolfenden was not altogether able to conceal seemed somewhat to increase his embarrassment.

"The extraordinary occurrence of last night, which her ladyship has probably detailed to you," Mr. Blatherwick continued, "was the next development of what, I fear, we can only regard as downright insanity. I regret having to speak so plainly, but I am afraid that any milder phrase would be inapplicable."

"I am very sorry to hear this," Wolfenden remarked gravely.

"Under the circumstances," Mr. Blatherwick said, picking up his cigar which was now extinct, and immediately laying it down again, "I trust that you and Lady Deringham will excuse my not giving the customary notice of my desire to leave. It is, of course, impossible for me to continue to draw a salary—still, as I am in receipt of for services so ludicrously inadequate."

"Lady Deringham will be sorry to have you go," Wolfenden said. "Couldn't you put up with it a little longer?"

"I would much prefer to leave," Mr. Blatherwick said decidedly. "I am not physically strong, and I must confess that His Lordship's attitude at times positively alarms me. I fear that there is no doubt that he committed an unprovoked assault last night upon that unfortunate keeper. There is—no telling whom he might select for his next victim. If quite convenient, Lord Wolfenden, I should like to leave to-morrow by an early train."

"Oh! you can't go so soon as that," Wolfenden said. "How about this letter?"

"You can take any steps you think proper with regard to it," Mr. Blatherwick answered nervously. "Personally I have nothing to do with it. I thought of going to spend a week with an aunt of mine at Cornwall, and I should like to leave by the early train to-morrow."

Wolfenden could scarcely keep from laughing, although he was a little annoyed.

"Look here, Blatherwick," he said, "you must help me a little before you go, there's a good fellow. I don't doubt for a moment what you say about the poor old governor's condition of mind; but at the same time it's rather an odd thing, isn't it, that his own sudden fear of having his work stolen is followed up by the receipt of this letter to you? There is some one, at any rate, who places a very high value upon his manuscripts. I must say that I should like to know whom that letter came from."

"I can assure you," Mr. Blatherwick said, "that I have not the faintest idea."

"Of course you haven't," Wolfenden assented, a little impatiently. "But don't you see how easy it will be for us to find out? You must go to the Grand Hotel on Thursday for lunch, and meet this mysterious person."

"I would very much rather not," Mr. Blatherwick declared promptly. "I should feel exceedingly uncomfortable; I should not like it at all."

"Look here," Wolfenden said persuasively. "I must find out who wrote that letter, and can only do so with your help. You need only be there. I will come up directly I have marked the man who comes to your table. Your presence is all that is required; and I shall take it as a favor if you will allow me to make you a present of a fifty-pound note."

Mr. Blatherwick flushed a little and hesitated. He had brothers and sisters, whose bringing up was a terrible strain upon the slim purse of his father, a country clergyman, and a great deal could be done with fifty pounds. It was against his conscience as well as his inclinations to remain in a post where his duties were a farce, but this was different.

He sighed.

"You are very generous, Lord Wolfenden," he said. "I will stay until after Thursday."

"There's a good fellow," Wolfenden said, much relieved. "Have another cigar?"

Mr. Blatherwick rose hastily, and shook his head. "You must excuse me, if you please," he said. "I will not smoke any more. I think if you will not mind."

Wolfenden turned to the window and held up his hand.

"Listen," he said. "Is that a carriage at this time of night?"

A carriage it certainly was, passing

by the window, at a moment they heard it draw up at the front door, and someone alighted.

"Odd time for callers," Wolfenden remarked.

Mr. Blatherwick did not reply. He, too, was listening. In a moment they heard the rustling of a woman's skirts outside, and the smoking-room door opened.

## CHAPTER XV.

The Coming and Going of Mr. Franklin Wilmot.

Both men looked up as Lady Deringham entered the room, carefully closing the door behind her. She had a card in her hand, and an open letter.

"Wolfenden," she said, "I am so glad that you are here. It is most fortunate; something very singular has happened. You will be able to tell me what to do."

Mr. Blatherwick rose quietly and left the room.

"Wolfenden was all attention. 'Someone has just arrived,' he remarked."

"A gentleman, a complete stranger," she assented. "This is his card. He seemed surprised that his name was not familiar to me. He was quite sure that you would know it."

Wolfenden took the card between his fingers and read it out.

"Mr. Franklin Wilmot."

He was thoughtful for a moment. The name was familiar enough, but he could not immediately remember in what connection. Suddenly it flashed into his mind.

"Of course!" he exclaimed. He is a famous physician—a very great swell, goes to court and all that."

Lady Deringham nodded.

"He has introduced himself as a physician."

He has brought this letter from Dr. Whitsett."

Wolfenden took the note from her hand. It was written on half a sheet of paper, and apparently in great haste.

"Dear Lady Deringham,—My old friend, Franklin Wilmot, who has been staying at Cromer, has just called upon me. We have been having a chat, and he is extremely interested in Lord Deringham's case, so much so that I had arranged to come over with him this evening to see if you would care to have his opinion. Unfortunately, however, I have been summoned to attend a patient nearly ten miles away—a bad accident, I fear—and Wilmot is leaving for town to-morrow morning. I suggested, however, that he might call on his way back to Cromer, and if you would kindly let him see Lord Deringham I should be glad, as his opinion would be of material assistance to me. Wilmot's reputation as the greatest living authority on cases of partial mania is doubtless known to you, and as he never, under any circumstances, visits patients outside London, it would be a great pity to lose this opportunity."

"In great haste, and begging you to excuse this scrawl, I am, dear Lady Deringham, yours sincerely, 'John Whitsett.'"

"P. S.—You will please not offer him any fee."

Wolfenden folded up the letter and returned it.

"Well, I suppose it's all right," he said. "It's an odd time, though, to call on an errand of this sort."

"So I thought," Lady Deringham agreed; "but Dr. Whitsett's explanation seems perfectly feasible, does it not? I said that I would consult you. You will come in and see him?"

Wolfenden followed his mother into the drawing-room. A tall dark man was sitting in a corner, under a palm tree. In one hand he held a magazine, the pictures of which he appeared to be studying with the aid of an eye-glass, the other was raised to his mouth. He was in the act of indulging in a yawn when Wolfenden and his mother entered the room.

"This is my son, Lord Wolfenden," she said. "Dr. Franklin Wilmot."

The two men bowed.

Lady Deringham has explained to you the reason of my untimely visit, I presume?" the latter remarked at once.

Wolfenden assented.

"Yes! I am afraid that it will be a little difficult to get my father to see you on such short notice."

"I was about to explain to Lady Deringham, before I understood that you were in the house," Dr. Wilmot said, "that although that would be an advantage, it is not absolutely necessary at present. I should of course have to examine your father before giving a definite opinion as to his case, but I can give you a very fair idea as to his condition without seeing him at all."

Wolfenden and his mother exchanged glances.

"You must forgive us," Wolfenden commenced hesitatingly, "but really I can scarcely understand."

"Of course not," their visitor interrupted brusquely. "My method is one which is doubtless altogether strange to you, but if you read the Lancet or the Medical Journal, you would have heard a good deal about it lately. I form my conclusions as to the mental condition of a patient almost altogether from a close inspection of their letters, or any work upon which they are, or have been, recently engaged. I do not say that it is possible to do this from a single letter, but when a man has a hobby, such as I understand Lord Deringham indulges in, and has devoted a great deal of time to real or imaginary work in connection with it, I am generally able, from a study of that work to tell how far the brain is weakened if at all, and in what manner it can be strengthened. This is only the roughest outline of my theory, but to be brief, I can give you my opinion as to Lord Deringham's mental condition, and my advice as to its maintenance, if you will place before me the latest work upon which he has been engaged. I hope I have made myself clear."

"Perfectly," Wolfenden answered.

"It sounds very reasonable and very interesting, but I am afraid that there are a few practical difficulties in the way. In the first place, my father does not show his work or any portion of it to anyone. On

the other hand, he takes the most extraordinary precautions to maintain absolute secrecy with regard to it."

"That," Dr. Wilmot remarked, "is rather a bad feature of the case. It is a difficulty which I should imagine you could get over, though. You could easily frame some excuse to get him away from his study for a short time, and leave me there. Of course, the affair is in your hands altogether, and I am presuming that you are anxious to have an opinion as to your father's state of health. I am not in the habit of seeking patients," he added, a little stiffly. "I was interested in my friend Whitsett's description of the case, and anxious to apply my theories to it, as it happens to differ in some respects from anything I have met with lately. Further, I may add," he continued, glancing at the clock, "if anything is to be done, it must be done quickly. I have no time to spare."

"You had better," Wolfenden suggested, "stay here for the night in any case. We will send you to the station, or into Cromer, as early as you like to-morrow morning."

"Absolutely impossible," Dr. Wilmot replied briefly. "I am staying with friends in Cromer, and I have a consultation to-morrow morning. You must really make up your mind at once whether you wish for my opinion or not."

Wolfenden looked at him doubtfully. There seemed to be no possibility of anything but advantage in accepting this offer, and yet in a sense he was sorry that it had been made.

"One case you should attach any special importance to your father's manuscripts," Dr. Wilmot remarked, with a note of sarcasm in his tone. "I might add that it is not at all necessary for me to be alone in the study."

"I do not think," Lady Deringham said, "that we need hesitate for a moment about that."

Wolfenden felt a little uncomfortable under the older man's keen gaze. Neither did he altogether like having his thoughts read so accurately.

"I suppose," he said, turning to his mother, "you could manage to get him away from the library for a short time?"

"I could at least try," she answered. "Shall I?"

"I think," he said, "that as Dr. Wilmot has been good enough to go out of his way to call here, we must make an effort."

Lady Deringham left the room.

Dr. Wilmot, whose expression of absolute impassiveness had not altered in the least during their discussion, turned towards Wolfenden.

"Have you yourself," he said, "never seen any of your father's manuscripts? Has he never explained the scheme of his work to you?"

Wolfenden shook his head.

"I know the central idea," he answered—"the weakness of our navy and coast defences, and that is about all I know. My father, even when he was an admiral on active service, took an absolutely pessimistic view of both. You may perhaps remember this. The Lords of the Admiralty used to consider him, I believe, the one great thorn in their sides."

Dr. Wilmot shook his head.

"I have never taken any interest in such matters," he said. "My profession has been completely absorbing during the last ten years."

Wolfenden nodded.

"I know," he remarked, "that I used to read the newspapers and wonder why on earth my father took such pains to try and frighten everybody. But he is altogether changed now. He even avoids the subject, although I am quite sure that it is his one engrossing thought. It is certain that no one has ever given such time and concentrated energy to it before. If only his work was the work of a sane man I could understand it being very valuable."

(To be Continued.)

## Praise for Grand Trunk.

Among the many complimentary letters received by the passenger department of the Grand Trunk Railway system on its service on the through trains between Boston and Chicago and Montreal, is one from a prominent business man at the Hub, who writes to Mr. G. T. Bell, general passenger and ticket agent, in part, as follows:

"When I visited Denver I travelled in both directions between Boston and Chicago, via the Grand Trunk Railway, and nothing could have been better, especially the sleeping car service, without change, on the 3 o'clock train from Chicago, eastbound, and on the 11:30 a.m. train from Boston, westbound. The dining-car service on the Grand Trunk is unsurpassed by any in the country, and has very few equals; and, in fact, it might be said that there are perhaps two or three roads that have reached practical perfection in dining-car service, and the Grand Trunk is one of them. The cafe-car system (not a buffet, but where you can get things that are eatable and desirable, perfectly served) on your through day trains, especially on the run between Montreal and Toronto, is unsurpassed, both as to accommodation and cuisine."

"In addition, I believe that there is no traveller who may select this route between the East and the West, but will, like myself, have nothing but words of praise. At all times it is interesting travelling through Canada, and the road between Montreal and Toronto is especially beautiful along the St. Lawrence River."

## What We Do in Life.

A statistician has estimated that a man fifty years old has worked 6,500 days, has slept 8,000, has amused himself 4,000, has walked 12,000 miles, has been ill 500 days, has partaken of 36,000 meals, eaten 15,000 pounds of meat and 4,000 of fish, eggs, and vegetables, and drunk 7,000 gallons of fluids.

The woman who wishes to read her heavenly title clear should be grateful for the aid of a homely face.

# A GREAT BOOK.

From the Guelph Herald, Jan. 25th, 1904.

The death of our illustrious Sovereign will naturally be followed by the publication of many "Lives of the Queen." A well written and artistically produced book on Her Majesty's life and reign will unquestionably command an immense sale. An old book with a few pages added, a rehash of newspaper articles thrown together in a day, or American books by American authors, will not fill the bill. The Herald is glad to announce that THE WORLD PUBLISHING COMPANY, OF GUELPH, who have been foremost in the past in the production of high class literature, have had for some time in preparation THE LIFE AND REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA, which will be a standard work of great excellence, and is being prepared with great care. It is written by John Coulter, the celebrated Historian and Journalist from London, England, assisted by John A. Cooper, editor of the Canadian Magazine, Toronto. Mr. Cooper will give special attention to Canada under the Queen's Reign, including the visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada, and the Regal and Vice-Regal connection of Her Majesty with the country.

From advanced sheets and prospectuses that have been examined, the Herald takes pleasure in stating that the workmanship will be most excellent. There will be a great number of portraits and engravings, all of which are genuine works of art, and equal to the best work to be found in any magazine of the day. The paper and manufacture will be in keeping with the high character of the publication, and the whole is in very great contrast to an opposition work which has been submitted to us for inspection.

The Herald predicts a sale of this LIFE OF THE QUEEN greater than has ever been reached by any other book in Canada, as it seems to us, every loyal subject will desire a copy. The work is to be sold at a low price to bring it within the reach of all.

The advertisement of "THE WORLD PUBLISHING COMPANY," calling for agents, will be found in another column of our issue of to-day.

## JOURNALISTIC AMENITIES.

A Little Personal Mention by a Fighting Editor.

"Yesterday afternoon," ran the editorial, "the editor of this paper was assaulted in a most gross and indecent fashion by the cowardly dog who disgraces the profession of journalism in the Record. This man who asks the suffrage of the people in the coming city election for the office of mayor is a thief, a blackmailer, a traitor, and a liar, and we can prove it. We have taken numerous occasions in these columns to expose him, his weakness and his unfitness for the office to which he aspires. For months past we have had his full record in our possession, but have spared him, holding our information for extreme occasion. He tries to dignify himself with a title to which he has no right. He has never served his country in any military capacity; the nearest he ever came to it was being a clerk to an army sutler. But this is not to the point.

"The Bulletin has in its possession proof that J. V. Scarles, the editor of the Record, at one time in his criminal career was the guardian of three orphaned children and the executor of their estate. This estate he converted to his own use, impoverishing the orphans, driving two young girls out into the sin of the world, and causing the boy to become a convict, and that was the foundation of J. V. Scarles' fortune."

"Later, in his capacity as editor, he became the custodian of a relief fund for the miserable people rendered homeless and destitute by the Central City holocaust. The Bulletin can prove that more than half of this fund passed into his private purse."

"Again, while serving as Warden of the penitentiary in his native State, J. V. Scarles, now editor of the Record, accepted a bribe to facilitate the escape of a notorious murderer."

"Once more, the Bulletin has proof positive that J. V. Scarles has persistently blackmailed certain married men of this city for large amounts of money, as the price of his silence in certain acts of folly that have long been known to the editor of this paper, but which were not strictly news, or matters of public interest. We repeat that J. V. Scarles is a thief, a blackmailer, a traitor and a liar, and on top of it all he is a coward. Will the people of Coalville vote for such a moral leper? We think not."—Grant Richardson, in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly for February.

## Catarrh Cures Child of Catarrh.

"Perth, Ont.,—I cannot withhold my testimony as to the great value of Catarrh as a remedy for Catarrh, one bottle having cured my daughter of that trouble. I heartily recommend it to all who are suffering with Catarrh. No house should be without it. Mrs. J. A. Morris."

"So pleasant, babies use it; so safe, grandmothers employ it; so certain to quickly relieve and cure that doctors, lawyers, merchants and public speakers rely upon Catarrh as their standby for Catarrh, Bronchitis, Asthma and Hay Fever. It is cheap because it lasts so long, and because it is so sure to cure even the poorest can afford to buy it. Every dollar outfit is guaranteed to cure, or your money back. Small size, 25c, druggists or by mail. A trial sent for 10c by N. C. Polson & Co., Kingston, Canada, or Hartford, Conn., U. S."

She—It's a libel to say we women can't keep a secret. He—So it is. Most of you keep your age very well.