

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE  
—OF THE—  
Times of  
Queen Elizabeth.

# The Wonderful Flower of Woxindon,

By Rev. Joseph Spillman, S. J.

PUBLISHED  
—BY—  
Permission  
of  
B. HERDER,  
St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Babington concluded his introductions of his companions by speaking a kind reception for them on the ground that they were all friends of his, scions of the highest families in the land, members of the Association for the Succour of Priests, and staunch Catholics that they were more welcome as being faithful sons of the Holy Church, than as the descendants of noble ancestors, since she held the heritage of the Children of God to be far more honorable than any earthly pedigree.

Then the gentlemen kissed our hands, and we all walked together down the broad path between hedges of yew towards the castle. At last we were at liberty to ask after Uncle Robert and Father Thompson. "My Brother is quite well," Uncle Remy said in answer to our inquiries; "he is a prisoner in the 'Clink' at present, and his jailer seems disposed to take a bribe, so it is to be hoped that we may be able to make his lot bearable, and perhaps even help him to escape. William Thompson, however, has received the martyr's crown."

"Then the Queen has not pardoned him!" Anne exclaimed in her impulsive manner. "Ah, if I were a man, that bloodthirsty—"

"You forget yourself sadly, child," said grandmother, not allowing her to finish the sentence. "What will our noble guests think of you!"

But Babington instantly came to the rescue. "We think, Madam," he said, "that your fair granddaughter's just indignation does her great credit, and shows the generous disposition of her heart. Hearing such sentiments expressed ought to incite us men to form heroic enterprises."

The look wherewith Anne repaid her champion was not lost on me. Uncle Remy also interposed: "You must not be too hard on our little madcap, mother," he said in a conciliatory tone.

But grandmother went on: "These gentlemen are very polite, and you are very kind, my son, to make excuses for my granddaughter. However, I never will have a word uttered in my presence offensive to Her Majesty. The enterprises to which Mr. Babington alludes, will certainly not be directed against the Queen, otherwise they would not deserve to be called heroic, but rash and foolhardy. Instead of the blessing of God they would draw down on us His chastisements, and might perhaps be the means of costing many innocent persons their life."

How often at a later period these words, inspired apparently by a spirit of prophecy, recurred to my mind! They evidently made an impression on our guests at the time; I noticed Windsor looked very grave. But Mr. Tichborne thanked grandmother effusively for her judicious admonitions, which he said were most well-timed; yet he assured her that his friend Babington would not undertake anything unworthy of an English nobleman and a firm Catholic. The example of the two martyrs, who had that day shed their blood should teach us to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

We were surprised to hear that two priests had been executed, and in answer to our inquiries Tichborne went on to tell us that Richard Sergeant, the scion of an ancient Gloucestershire family had suffered at the same time as Thompson. The sole offence for which he had been condemned, was having remained in England in spite of the statute passed in Parliament, declaring every priest who did not quit the country within a fixed time guilty of high treason.

"It is clear," Babington answered, "that Burghley and Walsingham act thus in order to strike alarm into the priests who are in concealment here, or into those who are expected to arrive from Rheims or from Rome. From what I hear the members of the Privy Council have learnt through their spies that a fresh band of heroic missionaries are preparing to come to England. Walsingham alone is said to have some fifty traders in his pay, mostly apostates, some of them being priests, who keep him informed of all that goes on in the seminaries and Jesuit colleges."

"Perils from false brethren! Just the same as in the Apostles' time," remarked grandmother. "But the disgrace which a few renegades bring upon Holy Church is more than wiped out by the blood of her Priests. Lord Burghley is greatly mistaken, if he thinks to terrify them by executions. It is the hope of obtaining a martyr's crown which allures them to these shores. But here we are at the house door. I pray God that the coming of these dear and welcome guests under our roof may be blessed to them and to us. All in Woxindon will be deeply interested and edified by hearing how the two martyrs won their palm. I shall therefore ask you, when you have partaken of some refreshment, to give us an account of the manner in which they passed through their last conflict."

So saying, grandmother conducted the six gentlemen into the castle.

CHAPTER IV.—As I have already remarked, my father was far from well, yet he would not allow his indisposition to prevent him from doing the honors of his table to his guests, and setting before them a roast joint and a brace or two of snipe. Although it was already three weeks after Easter, there were still some birds about the outskirts of the wood, and Uncle Barty had managed to bring down a few, not with his gun, but with the old-fashioned English bow and arrow. When the dishes had been removed, and father said grace, we gathered round the chimney place. The atmosphere of the high vaulted hall was rather chilly, though the day had been sunny, and father could not do without a fire. The dancing flames cast a ruddy glow on the circle of guests and members of the family, while in the half light beyond the servants and retainers stood, who had come to hear about Father Thompson's death.

Then Uncle Remy began to relate how with Babington's assistance he had succeeded in conveying a note through the hands of one of the jailers to the prisoner, bidding him when on the way to the place of execution, look up at the window over the door of "The Three Tuns," a hostelry not twenty yards from the gate through which they would pass to go to Tyburn. He would see a good friend, standing there, who would wave him a last farewell with his handkerchief: that was to signify a priest, who would give him the last absolution. Thompson himself had done the same: when the Reverend Thomas Alfeld was dragged to Tyburn. But when Uncle Remy and his friends learnt on the morrow that another priest would be led to execution with Thompson, they tried to persuade Father Weston not to go to the Three Tuns, on the ground that he would be exposing himself unnecessarily to danger, since the two priests could mutually give each other absolution. "However the good Father would arrive them of the consolation," continued my uncle, "so he and I took our stand at the window for the procession to pass by. We already heard cries of 'No Popery!' sounding in the distance. First came an interminable stream of the lowest of the people; then a band of armed men, and with them the sheriff for the county, on horseback, with several magistrates and members of the council. After them followed the horse to whose tail the hurdle was fastened, on which the two priests lay bound. By their side ran some Puritan preachers, exhorting them even in this their last hour, to abjure the Babylonian beast and accept the pure Gospel. You may fancy how my fingers twisted at the sight of them. At last we were able to see the two victims. I am not ashamed to confess that my eyes filled with tears when I beheld them, patient and resigned, stretched on the hurdle, covered with the mire of the streets. Their faces were turned towards one another, and they appeared to be engaged in prayer. As they passed through the gateway of the prison, I noticed that Thompson whispered something to his companion, and they both raised their eyes inquiringly to the window. As soon as they descried Father Weston holding a white handkerchief to his face,

they raised their heads as much as they could from the hurdle, in token of greeting and of gratitude. This action did not escape the notice of the accursed preachers; one of them, suspecting the cause, instantly shouted "A Priest, a Mass Priest!" But I thrust Father Weston aside, and interposed my broad shoulders between him and the spectators; besides, before the sheriff's officers could catch the words above the uproar and tumult of the rabble in that narrow street, the danger was over. Our good old John hurried Father Weston out by a back door, and conducted him through a labyrinth of narrow alleys to the residence of Lady Paulet, where he is in security for the present. Nevertheless he is coming back to us after nightfall. I went down and mixed in the crowd, and by good use of my elbows contrived to get pretty close to the hurdle. But when we got to the vicinity of Tyburn, the throng of people was so dense, that I was unable to get near to the condemned. My friends here were more fortunate, so let them tell you about the execution of the sentence."

Babington then took up the narrative. "My companions and I," he said, "were so near, that we not only saw every gesture, but heard every word of the two priests. We had ridden out early, and taken our stand not as much as ten paces from the gallows. Thus we had a full view of the horrible preparations for the cruel tragedy. I could not help thinking that very likely my own life might be ended in that way, considering that in the present day no Catholic can feel sure that he will not under some pretext or other be arraigned for high treason, and delivered over to the hangman. The servants had already lighted a huge fire underneath the vast cauldron into which the head and quarters of the martyrs were to be thrown, and the bystanders began to indulge in coarse jokes about the kind foresight of the Queen, who had the ravens' food cooked for them. Thereupon our friend Windsor here, who has all the Latin poets at his fingers' ends, observed to me in an ironical tone:

Princeps nil ista mitius orbis habet!  
(Never did a more gracious Princess walk this earth!)

I for my part stooped over my horse's neck and dealt the principal speaker a blow on the mouth, that would have felled him to the ground, had not the crowd been so thickly packed together. At the same time I told him beware how he let his tongue wag about the Queen's Majesty."

But my zeal nearly got me into trouble, for the mob raised the cry that I and my friends, who stood by me bravely, were papists, and called upon the Captain of the Guard to arrest us as traitors. God knows what would have come of it had not at that moment a murmur run through the multitude behind us: Here they come, here they come. Sure enough, the mournful procession was close at hand. It was a touching sight to behold the rage of the populace on the one side, the peaceful serenity of the victims on the other. The hurdle stopped just in front of us, so that I had the privilege of throwing my handkerchief to the priests, in order that they might wipe the mud off their faces. Father Thompson recognized me, and smiled his thanks; he endeavored to say something to me, but the hubbub was so great that I could not catch a word. Most probably he wished to reiterate the warning which he gave me shortly before this arrest, not to mix myself up in any dangerous plots. He wanted to give me back the handkerchief, but the sheriff would not allow of it. "Nothing of the sort!" he exclaimed. "We shall have a fresh St. Veronica perhaps, and more popish idolatries carried on with the dirty rag. Do you take care! The rope is not far from the neck of every Papist." One of the soldiers, who were loosing the ropes that bound the condemned to the hurdle, thrust the handkerchief into his pocket, and looked at me with a knowing wink, which I was not at a loss to interpret. A few hours later he turned up at the Red Lion,

a well known popish hostelry, and gave me the handkerchief for a crown piece. Here it is."

With these words Babington took from the breast pocket of his doublet the handkerchief in question, and we pressed around him to touch the venerated relic. "It is covered with spots of blood," he said. "The scoundrel acknowledged that he wiped his hands on it, after the butchery was over. Will Mrs. Bellamy accept it as a memorial of the saintly priest, whose last Mass was said in her house?"

"I shall value it more than gold and precious stones," answered the dear old lady, as she pressed the handkerchief to her lips, and passed it round for all the others to kiss. "We will divide it presently, for doubtless you and your friends would like to keep a portion. Then both the priests met death with fortitude and resignation?"

"They died like true saints and martyrs for God. It was said openly that the fact of being Priests was their only crime. They prayed on the scaffold and pardoned all their enemies. 'Jesus, be thou a Jesus to me,' were Sergeant's last words. Thompson's were: 'Into thy hands I commend my spirit.' His last act was to make the sign of the cross."

"Spare me the description of the horrible butchery that followed. My tears blinded me, when I saw the executioner tear the heart out of the martyr's breast, and hold it up, still palpitating, to the gaze of the multitude, with the words: 'This is the heart of a traitor!'"

And then as he drew it in the face of the dead man, I could not help thinking with what love for friend and foe that noble heart had been animated! Well, their heads are now fixed on London Bridge, where half a century ago Henry VIII. impaled the heads of the blessed Bishop of Rochester and the great Sir Thomas More; where from that time until now, more relics have been exposed than Westminster Abbey could boast of possessing in the good old days. Their quarters are set over the city gates."

"And I hope to see the heads and quarters of all of you in the very same place before long!" These words, uttered in a harsh voice which came out of the deep shadows that lay across the hall, just as Babington finished speaking, caused us all to spring from our seats startled and terrified. "It is Topcliffe!" Anne exclaimed.

"None other than he, my fair young lady," said the pursuivant, advancing out of the gloom with a chuckle. "We are old acquaintances, eh, sweetheart?" And the brute actually tried to pinch my sister's cheek familiarly. But quick as thought the girl snatched the dagger which Uncle Bartho, who was standing by, wore in his belt, and brandished it in the face of the insolent fellow, shrieking with pale lips, but flashing eyes: "If you dare to touch me with one of your bloodstained fingers I will strike you to the heart!"

At this unexpected sally Topcliffe fell back two or three paces. Meanwhile my father and all the other gentlemen had drawn their swords, and the hall was in an uproar with the clatter of arms. The intruder retreated to the door, and shouted to his retainers who entered at his call. "Lay down your swords," he then said, "or I will bring you all to the gallows, or else shoot you down on this very spot like a herd of swine!" To give more effect to his words, he discharged his pistol over our heads, so that the bullets struck our ancestor Godeiac, whose portrait hung over the chimney piece, full in the face. I thought at the first moment that my father had been struck, for he grasped at a chair for support, and he sank into it, every vestige of color leaving his face. I flew to his side and asked if he were hurt! He said no, but whispered, pressing his hand to his heart: "The cramp again!" I was going to run up stairs to fetch the drops he was in the habit of taking, but to my astonishment I was not allowed to leave the hall; that wretch Topcliffe coolly stepped in front of me. "Not a soul shall leave this hall," he said, "until I have minutely examined every one present, for it is my belief that this time that accursed Jesuit Edmund will not escape me."

When I heard this speech, knowing as I did that it was directed against Father Weston, whose return we were expecting every moment, I touched my little brother on the shoulder, and under cover of Uncle Remy's portly form, whispered in his ear: "Now, Frith, let us all see what a clever little fellow you are. Skip out unperceived behind these men, and run to meet old John and the good priest, whom this wicked man wants to catch, and tell them he is here. Your guardian angel will take care of you!"

"I would rather get out of the window," the boy replied, "if you can open it for me." That was a good idea, for the casement was not very high, and there was no danger in jumping onto the soft mould of the flower beds below. Fortunately, for us we were standing close to a recess in which there was a window, so while Topcliffe was looking at my father, I unfastened the casement, the boy clambered out, let himself fall to the ground, and I heard his retreating steps, as he ran down the gravel walk.

Meanwhile my father with a great effort and in a faint voice, asked Topcliffe by what right he had dared, unannounced and without the pretext of a warrant, in defiance of Magna Charta, to invade the house of an English citizen with an armed force. A contemptuous grin passed over the ugly features of the intruder. He replied that those privileges applied only to honest Englishmen, not to accused Papists. But as his conscience was tender, he had provided himself with a bit of paper from the sheriff. Thereupon he drew a document out of his leather jerkin, adding: "You must be good enough to excuse my sudden appearance in your midst, my kind sirs, for we know by experience, that the mice have a trick of slipping into their holes if they know the cat is coming. Besides I have had the edification of hearing the conclusion of the interesting narrative of the events of this morning, which one of these young gentlemen was relating so graphically. Ha, ha, ha! We will take care that a good many more precious relics are exposed on London Bridge and the city gates."

After uttering these mocking words, Topcliffe proceeded to interrogate, in a summary way at first, each of the guests singly, inquiring who he was and for what purpose he was here. Each one told his name and standing saying that he was on a visit of friendship to the family of the Bellams. "Is that all?" he asked, Salisbury and Babington rejoined that it was quite enough for him to know, and that they could not be required to answer any more questions without a warrant of arrest from the Lord Chief Justice or the Privy Council.—Softly, softly, the young gentlemen must not answer the Queen's Commissioner so peremptorily, or he would have to teach them manners. He could tell them what they were there for; they were going to make their Easter confession to the priest, and get absolution for their evil lives. No doubt it was highly necessary, all the town knew how it was the fashion for the Popish gentry to waste their time in gambling and carousing, at river parties and the tennis-court. They would do well to take a pious book in their hand or better still, the Bible, and purge the old corrupt leaven of Rome out of their hearts.

Topcliffe kept up a running fire of these caustic remarks whilst he was examining the young noblemen in turn. When he got to the last, who happened to be my future husband, and heard that he was Lord Windsor's brother, his rage got the better of him, and he roared out: "Say at once that you are Beelzebub's brother! You shall repent playing off your jokes on me! You are none other than the execrable Jesuit Edmund!" So saying he caught hold of the astonished young man by the arm. Everybody who was present burst out laughing; and the man, seeing he had made himself foolish, turned Windsor's head round sharply, so that the firelight fell on his face. When he perceived his youthful and blooming appearance, he swore a sound oath, and said: "The fellow is of middle height, and wears a green doublet of Dutch cloth—but his complexion is not pale. He may be painted though, for these priests know all the devilish arts of the Scarlet Lady. Bring me some water, and we will see if his color comes off."

Thereupon our old Bosgrave, escorted by one of the bailiffs, was obliged to fetch a handbasin and towel, and Windsor must submit to having his face well scrubbed, the only result being that his color was heightened by the process. Shouts of laughter rang through the hall; even our old grandmother's features relaxed into a smile. Anne could hardly control herself, while Uncle Remy held his sides and laughed till he cried. One of Windsor's favorite classical quotations would have been appropriate at that moment: Rismus tenentis, amici. Restrain your laughter, my friends; for no one knew how to stop this chorus of merriment, led by Anne's shrill treble, accompanied by Uncle Remy's deep bass.

(To be continued.)

What we like determines what we are, and is the sign of what we are.—Buskin.

**DISCUSSED IN THE CATHOLIC PRESS**

**A BAD BILL.**—Representative Comings is to introduce in the Ohio Legislature, now in session in this city, a bill, gotten up by the bogus "patriotic" societies to forbid the commitment of a child to any private orphanage or reformatory. The object of the measure is to have all children brought before courts for disposition, sent to public institutions, like the industrial schools at Delaware and Lancaster, the House of Refuge in Cincinnati, and county orphanage asylums, where they can be Protestantized under the swindle of "non-sectarianism."—Catholic Columbian.

**CIVIC AFFAIRS.**—Just at present we are hearing a great deal about corruption in our city government. In St. Louis they have actually indicted a gang of wealthy corruptionists, who put up \$170,000 to buy the aldermen; in Milwaukee a grand jury lacked but one vote to bring in an indictment against a number of city officials; in Chicago a mayor and chief of police, who are above the average of their kind in official integrity, have been endeavoring to clear the Augean stables of corrupt politics. A short time ago, Minneapolis had a grand jury for the same purpose. The people of New York in the throes of a popular election last November threw off the yoke of Tammany on account of corruption and there was a similar effort in Philadelphia to down the Republican Tammany, but the effort was not successful.—Milwaukee Catholic Citizen.

**A WORD TO THE GIRLS.**—There used to be a time when a girl was not ashamed to be seen in house dress and apron helping her mother in the doing of the household duties that have made our mothers tired and old long before their hair was touched with gray. The hands of girls in those days were not as white and soft as they are now, but somehow the long winter evenings were not as wearisome for the old folks, nor were they so completely tired as to leave the little lamp-lit parlor entirely to the visitors of their children. But how many girls do not care to have any one think they have to help to do the work at home. All this is false refinement, mixing up the facts of life with the opinions of foolish friends. Every one really respects the girl who is not afraid to do the work her mother does. Every good girl believes that the work of her mother should be made less heavy as the years go by. To go on dress parade in the morning is bad taste; to go on dress parade through life while somebody is working hard at home is worse. There is need of more strength of character, more independence and less regard for what others think. Nobody needs to be afraid of being considered eccentric or odd so long as he or she does what is right. And, after all, that is what avoiding shams means. It is simply doing what is right in our own position of life. Fine dresses, fine talk, fine feathers will never make a girl happy when she knows that there is some one at home who needs kind words and cheerful assistance. Shams can never bring the sunshine into life.—New World.

**A QUEER TRIAL** for breach of promise was decided at Onawa, Iowa, last week, the plaintiff claiming \$7,000 damages because the defendant had broken his promise of marriage by dying! The jury awarded her \$6,000 against the estate of the deceased defendant; the impossibility of his keeping the engagement having no weight with their alleged minds.—Boston Pilot.

**Make life a ministry of love** and it will always be worth living.

A word and a note of song are often crystallized tears set to music. A word lightly spoken may fall heavily upon an already overburdened heart.

Make but few explanations. The character that cannot defend itself is not worth vindication.

Our devout beliefs are not built, as we suppose, upon the dry strand of reason, but rest upon the floods of our affection.

If we are well with God all is well with us, though the thickest darkness of adversity be round about. If we are not well with Him nothing is well with us, though the best and brightest be at our feet.

**Man Who Fails.**

... a snob, and the man

... for its money's worth;

... for success causes half

... cursing this brave old

... to go up, and the

... the mortal ear;

... who fails in a noble

... at's no less dear.

... though that the laurel

... or the victor's brow;

... hero has lain him down

... but the cypress bough,

... illaunt men in the losing

... ant deeds are done

... ed the captured height,

... a grandly won.

... le's board with our

... gh strung

... for the stake of fame,

... s are sung and our ban-

... who wins the game,

... song of another kind

... the in these fame-

... gales—

... e noble heart and mind

... at man who fails!

... o is strong to fight his

... will no front can daunt,

... be truth and the right

... hat the ages want,

... and die in grim defeat,

... od fled the strife,

... e of Earth will seem

... me of his life.

... ce of Lowly Life by

... rence Dunbar.

**MS TO LOURDES.**

... of the throngs that

... s, especially in the sum-

... may be gathered from

... at in a Belgian contem-

... m August 20 to Sep-

... 1901, one hundred and

... trains carried to Lour-

... of eighty thousand pil-

... the numbers arriving on

... s and otherwise it is

... sible to make any pre-

... tion.—Ave Maria.

**ND OLD YEARS.**

... ward into an empty

... one with a certain awe,

... finds therein no recogni-

... rears behind have a

... t, and they are warm-

... s we have kindled, and

... s are the echoes of our

... "Dreamthorp."

**TS NIGHT REFUGE.**

... week ending Sunday,

... 1902.—Males 288, fe-

... rish 183, French 135,

... Scotch and other na-

... Total 842. All had

... and breakfast.