

THE WONDERFUL FLOWER OF WOXINDON.

An Historical Romance of the Times of Queen Elizabeth.

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

These two gentlemen are both inspired by Appollo; but the one imitates his verse in his own tongue, the other adopts the classic language of Virgil. On hearing this, I looked from one to the other of the two young men in question, for although I had read poetry, I had never yet seen a living poet. To my surprise they seemed quite ashamed of what was said of them, for they both blushed like a silly girl, whereas the other gentleman, Thomas Salisbury, Robert Barnwell and Henry Donne, looked up bold and unabashed when they were presented to us, the first as a Son of Mars, on the eve of going to serve under Parma's standard, the other as friends of Diana, skilled in her bow-hawking and fox-hunting. Mr. Tichborne was a handsome man; his aristocratic bearing and pale countenance, his brown hair, which he wore rather longer than was customary, his thick, close clipped beard, and the somewhat melancholy expressions of his large dark eyes, rendered him to my eyes the very ideal of a poet. My future husband, on the contrary, looked more like an ordinary country gentleman than one learned in the medical art and a tamer of Pegasi. He was rather below the average in height, and I could scarcely help laughing when I first saw his ruddy face and merry round eyes. He is much the same now as he was then, only his beard has grown grey, his head is bald, and time has deepened the color of his cheeks. In one thing age has made no difference, a thing which I did not discern at my first interview with him, but which has rendered, and does render him dearer to me than the fairest Adonis could have been; I mean his heart of gold.

(N. B. of the writer.—For the sake of the last words I must forgive my wife's strictness on my appearance. The fact that I have written down verbatim her not too complimentary description of my person, will convince the reader that it is correct. Meanwhile I will revenge myself on her in a truly Christian manner, by depicting her in my memory recalls her on that day in question. Her deportment was sweet and winning, her complexion resembled the lily and the rose; long silken lashes shaded her lovely blue eyes, which were usually cast down. Her golden hair was neatly arched and carefully arranged, round her neck she wore a lace collar of moderate height, nothing to compare with the enormous erections the Queen had brought into fashion. Her light blue frock was made of an unpretending style, without great puffs at the shoulders. Her slender figure and gentle, modest demeanor formed a contrast to her younger sister Anne, who was remarkably vivacious and forward. Indeed one would hardly have taken them for sisters, for the one was tall and fair, the other short and dark. There is no need to speak of the changes thirty years have wrought in my wife. Eternal changes there necessarily must be, though the sterling qualities of her true and loving heart have—as she is pleased to say of me—remained the same; I will only quote the counsel of the poet (changing the gender) when he says: O formose puer, nimium ne crederis colori! O lovely child, trust not too much to thy beauty! I will now allow my wife to resume her narrative.)

Mr. Babington concluded his introductions of his companions by bespeaking a kind reception for them on the ground that they were all friends of his, sons of the highest families in the land, members of the Association for the Sacchar of Priests, and staunch Catholics to boot. Grandmother replied 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 G. d. 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-in-law 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 jailer hearable, 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—"

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 refreshments, 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 guest, 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 Remy 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 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 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 Alfield 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 the Three Tuns, on the ground that he would be exposing himself unnecessarily to danger, since the two priests could mutually give each other the absolution. "However the good Father would not deprive 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 burdle 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 burdle, 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 described Father Weston holding a white handkerchief to his face, they raised their heads as much as they could from the burdle, in token of greeting and of gratitude. This action did not escape the notice of the accused 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 backdoor, 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.

(To be continued.)

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MISCELLANEOUS.

AUBREY DE VERE. BORN JAN. 10, 1814; DIED JAN. 20, 1902.

In the far morning morning where the giant birds together, Ringed with dew and light and music, struck their lyres in golden weather.

Came a child and stood beside them, gazed adoring to their eyes, Hushed his little heart in worship of a race so bland and wise. They are gone, these gods and giants, caught Elijah-like to glory, And their triumphs and their sorrows are a part of England's story; Years and years ago they vanished; but the child, who loved them well, Still has wandered among mortals with a tale of them to tell.

Theirs were voices heard like harps above the congregated thunder; His, a trembling hymn to beauty, or a breath of whispered wonder; When the world's tongue spoke his vanished; but below the turmoil rolled Echoes of the age of gold. Others stun the age to homage with their novelty and splendour; He was shy and backward-gazing, but his noiseless soul was tender. When he sang, the birds sang louder, for his accent, low and clear, Never hushed a mourning cushat never scared a sunning deer.

Now the last of all whom communed with the mighty men has perished; He is part of that eternity he prophesied and cherished; Now the child, the whisperer passes; now extremity of age Shuts the pure memorial volume, shuts the long and stainless page.

Where some westward-hurrying river to the bright Atlantic dashes, In some faint enchanted Celtic woodland lay this poet's ashes, That the souls of those old masters whom the clans of song hold dear, May return to hover nightly o'er the grave of their De Vere. —EDMUND GOSS in the Fortnightly Review.

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The Life Guards are two regiments of cavalry forming part of the British household troops. They are gallant soldiers and every loyal British heart is proud of them. Not only the King's household, but yours, ours, everybody's should have its life guards. The need of them is especially great when the greatest foes of life, diseases, find allies in the very elements, as colds, influenza, catarrh, the grip and pneumonia do in the stormy month of March. The best way that we know of to guard against these diseases is to strengthen the system with Hood's Sarsaparilla—the greatest of all life guards. It removes the conditions in which these diseases make their most successful attack, gives vigor and tone to all the vital organs and functions, and imparts a genial warmth to the blood. Remember the weaker the system the greater the exposure to disease. Hood's Sarsaparilla makes the system strong.

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