

THE WONDERFUL FLOWER OF WOXTON.

An Historical Romance of the Times of Queen Elizabeth.

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CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

But father said we must be prepared to make the sacrifice not only in word but in deed; meanwhile we must retrench as much as possible, and reduce our establishment. He and his brothers would help in the field work and in the stables, and we, that is his two daughters, must occupy ourselves in the kitchen and in the garden; but as far as the hospitality offered to strangers, especially to our persecuted fellow-Catholics were concerned, no alteration should be made, as long as he could call an acre of land and a stone of the manor-house his own.

Such was the unanimous resolution solemnly made before Almighty God in the upper room of Woxton on one of the first days of April, in the year of Grace 1588, and singularly enough, on the very next morning, as I was sweeping out that same chamber, I perceived for the first time the fragile plant, at which the more it grew, the more we wondered. It sprang up and grew in the ceiling between the principal rafter and the mortar, both of which are covered with a smooth layer of cement or gypsum, so that we could not conceive how any seed could possibly have lodged there; nor low, without any earth or moisture, the plant could strike root and flourish as it did. When I first espied it, it could scarcely be seen, and I very nearly pelted it up, but on second thought, I left it there, to see if it would grow in such a place. It soon shot up, and put out branches and leaves, and amongst the beautiful green leaves, which were heart-shaped and serrated at the edge, five stalks appeared, each about the length of two fingers, with a little bud at the end. In the course of time these buds blossomed into a delicate flower, orcaiform with four slender red petals. And after the flowers had faded, it put forth its fruit, without rain, or dew or sun; they had the appearance of fine, blood-red berries. Never at any time had we had or seen any like plant, and we called it nothing but the beautiful flower. We all went every day to look at it; grandmother above all took the greatest delight in it, for she regarded it as a pledge of divine favors. Many were the different significations given to it; Father Weston, who often stayed in our house at that time, before the commencement of his long incarceration of seventeen years, looked upon it symbolical of the five Sacred Wounds, although he declared it to be his opinion that there was nothing extraordinary in the flower itself, only the way in which it had sprang up, and its manner of growth, might certainly be called very marvellous. But that I leave to be taken for what it is worth, everyone is at liberty to form his own conclusions about the flower. Later events will perhaps show that it was not without its own significance.

If I remember aright, it was on the very same day when we first saw the marvellous plant, that Anthony Babington rode over from London to us with my Uncle Remy for the first time. I can well recall his presence, so comely countenance, just the one to take the fancy of young girls such as Anne and myself. He had merry, blue eyes, brown only hair, on account of which we used to speak of him among ourselves as "Curly head," and above his well-cut lips, about which a good-humored smile almost continually played, a slight down made itself seen. He was always carefully, even foppishly dressed, and because of this my grandmother, who loved the old-fashioned simplicity, took a dislike to him from the outset. When I saw him for the first time, he was wearing one of the new-fashioned high hats, with a narrow brim and an ostrich feather. Over his silk doublet, which was trimmed with bows and ribbands, a collar edged with lace, but not too large and full, was turned back. A blue velvet mantle adorned with silver hung round his shoulder, and beneath that a broad band supported a long slender rapier of the sort called Alexander Farnese, in the place of the good old English sword and leather belt. Such was the young fellow who at the side of our broad-shouldered, somewhat unwidely Uncle Remy, came up to us girls, as we were weeding the flower bed one fine sunny afternoon in spring. He bowed most politely when uncle introduced him, and Anne, who contrary to her wont, appeared slightly embarrassed, did not answer the jest which accompanied his words. The visitor admired our flowers, and said he had not seen even in the royal gardens in Paris, anything to equal the tulips and hyacinths that we had then in full blossom. We told him that the Rev. Mr. Barton, who had come over from the seminary at

Dunay disguised as a gardener, brought us the bulbs of these flowers. "He died, did he not, under your roof, which is renowned for its hospitality among all the Catholics of England?" he inquired.

"That is quite true, Mr. Babington," I answered. "We buried the worthy man out yonder, under that oak, by the side of our dear mother. This wreath which we have been making out of the flowers he gave us, is to be laid on the spot where they both rest."

Then for the first time I saw an expression come into the young man's eyes that made me think he was not so superficial a character as his slight manner might lead one to imagine. "Most men would risk a battle to gain such a crown," he rejoined. "I did not quite catch his meaning, and I said that our simple wreath was but a poor emblem of the crown of justice laid up for all those who, especially in times like ours, preserve the faith. Thereupon Uncle Remy observed in his joking way that there was a fine preacher lost in me, and went his way with the young nobleman into the house."

This Babington of whom I speak belonged to an old Derbyshire family—he was the eldest son of Sir Henry Babington, a confessor for the faith, whose long term of imprisonment had resulted in his death. Anthony was still a student at Oxford when his father died; after that he travelled in France and the Netherlands until he maintained his majority, when he returned to England to take possession of his large estates at Dethick, near Sheffield. It will readily be understood that this young noble, who was as handsome as he was wealthy appeared to us the hero of a fairy tale. As for me, my affections were fixed upon the cloister; but my sister who was a few years my junior, and only eighteen at that time, fell in love with him at once. She tried to hide this from me by calling him a vain coxcomb, and ridiculing his foreign manners, and accusing me of being too fond of talking to him. But I was not so easily deceived. I saw very plainly that she was deeply smitten.

Mr. Babington stayed for a whole week with us at Woxton, on the pretext of wanting to confer about important matters with Father Weston, whom we were expecting to return from a missionary expedition to Berkshire. He generally went about, like the blessed martyr, Jewel, in the character of a Jewish merchant from one nobleman's seat to another; and verily he carried with him a treasure to offer for purchase, none other than the pearl of great price whereof the Gospel speaks. When the priests went on these missionary journeys they were not unfrequently accompanied by young noblemen, who introduced them to the families who were either open or covert adherents of the Catholic Church. In fact some years before, several Catholic young men of position had formed an association

with the object of affording assistance to the secular priests and the Jesuit Fathers, whom the Pope sent from time to time to succor his afflicted children in England. They used every endeavor to keep them from falling into the clutches of the persecutors; and when this happened, they exerted themselves actively in behalf of the unhappy prisoners. On this Christian Guild the Holy Father bestowed a special benediction, and attached to it privileges and indulgences. Mr. Babington was a member of this association; it was while visiting my Uncle Robert in Newgate that he made the acquaintance of Uncle Remy. No wonder then that we regarded him as a dear and welcome guest.

No one was fonder of him than my little brother Frith. From the very first he laid himself out to amuse the boy. When the sun shone, he took him out riding on his grey pony in the meadow, and when April showers blew up, and heavy rain drops pattered sharply against the half windows, he would take a sheet of cardboard, and with a few swift strokes of the pencil, for he was an accomplished draughtsman, produce before the delighted child groups of soldiers; the Dutch or German Landknecht, the Spanish arquebuser, the Swiss helvander, nay even the Prince of Parma himself on horseback. Again he would cover the paper with objects of the chase, huntsman and bound, hare and fox, roebuck and deer and wild bear. Then Anne would fetch her collar box and attire the soldiers in green and gold, in red and blue, giving them a black moustache and ruddy nose, while peals of laughter sounded from all the throats. For my sister had soon dropped her shy manner towards our merry guest. On the contrary, she was not a little saucy in her behavior, so that my grandmother had occasion to reprove her with word or sign. It was all no use, and if I ventured so much as to say a word to her she pulled a wry face, and asked if I was jealous of her, and if I thought she did not see that. I was setting my cap at the young Lord Dethick.

I need hardly say that I felt hurt at this unseemly speech, which certainly was quite undeserved; I made a resolution for the future to keep my admonitions to myself. Besides, my father had witnessed this little passage at arms, and he only smiled, letting us see very plainly that he would have no objection to Mr. Babington as a son-in-law. One really cannot blame him for this, since in times such as those in which we lived, parents were naturally anxious to see their daughters provided for. I never thoroughly liked the young man; he was too frivolous and too fond of suit my taste. I should have preferred a graver man as a husband, for my sister I mean; still it must be acknowledged that her sprightly disposition was very well in keeping with his vivacious manner.

Yet there was that in him, as my father said, which would make him a fine character, when his youthful follies were got rid of. He was a staunch, true-hearted Catholic, always ready to make sacrifices for his religion. It was a pleasure to hear him talk about the captive Queen, Mary Stewart. His eyes sparkled, and he grew quite eloquent in her praise. When twelve years old he had gone to Sheffield Castle as page to the Earl of Shrewsbury, in whose custody the unhappy Queen of Scots then was, and thus he had become acquainted with that beautiful and virtuous, but no less unfortunate Princess. Our eyes used to fill with tears while he related how at her command he had often carried the dishes from her own table to the poor at the castle gate, and how she used continually to pray for her enemies and calumniators, above all for her cousin Elizabeth. We could fancy how many a time he fell on his knees at the captive Queen's feet, and kissed her hand, pledging himself to be her faithful servant. Then she would stroke his rosy cheek with a smile, and say with motherly tenderness: "What would you do for me, my child?" and he would reply enthusiastically: "I will set your Majesty free, as George Douglas did from Lochleven Castle." Upon that, the smile would fade from her countenance, as she answered: "That is all nonsense, Anthony! Douglas and other brave men shed their blood for me, it is true, but they made my lot none the lighter, rather the reverse. My future is in God's hand; Beware, when you are grown to man's estate, how you stir a finger in my defence, it might cost you your blood and even your life."

"Thereupon," Babington added, when relating these reminiscences, "I used to assure her that I could have no greater happiness than to shed my blood for her sake. And what I felt as a boy, I now feel as a man. Who knows whether I may not yet meet with an opportunity to redeem my word?" The manner in which he uttered these words gave us to understand that he had formed some design in connection with the Queen of Scots. I saw from my sister Anne's face that she noticed this, too, for she turned pale, and fixed her large dark eyes on the young man with a peculiar expression.

(To be continued.)

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KINDNESS TO THE ERRING.

BY ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

Has your life a bitter sorrow— Live it down. Think about a bright to-morrow— Live it down. You will find it never pays Just to sit, wet-eyed and gaze: On the grave of vanished days— Live it down. Is disgrace your galling burden?— Live it down. You can win a brave heart's guard— Live it down. Make your life so free from blame That the lustre of your name Shall hide all the olden shame— Live it down. Has your heart a secret trouble?— Live it down. Do not grieve and make it double— Live it down. Do not water it with tears, Do not feed it with your fears, Do not nurse it through long years— Live it down. Have you made some sinful error?— Live it down. Do not hide your face in terror— Live it down. Look the world square in the eyes; Go ahead, as one who tries To be honored ere he dies— Live it down.

F. E. B.

We heard a man say the other morning that the abbreviation for February—Feb.—means Freeze every body, and the man looked frozen in his ulster. It was apparent that he needed the kind of warmth that stays, the warmth that reaches from head to foot, all over the body. We could have told him from personal knowledge that Hood's Sarsaparilla gives permanent warmth, it invigorates the blood and speeds it along through artery and vein, and really fits men and women, boys and girls, to enjoy cold weather and resist the attacks of disease. It gives the right kind of warmth, stimulates and strengthens at the same time, and all its benefits are lasting. There may be a suggestion in this for you.

"How much will it cost to get that watch repaired?" asked a sailor as he handed his time piece to a watchmaker, who, after examining it, said "The expense of repairing that watch will be more than the original cost." "I don't care for that," said the sailor, "I will give you double the original cost, for I gave a fellow a blow on the head for the watch, and I will give you two for repairing it."

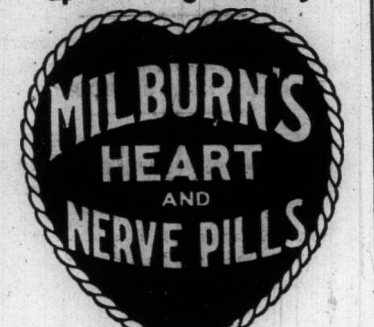
The Publisher of the Best Farmer's paper in the Maritime Provinces in writing to us states: "I would say that I do not know of a medicine that has stood the test of time like MINARD'S LINIMENT. It has been an unfailing remedy in our household ever since I can remember, and has outlived dozens of would-be competitors and imitations."

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MISCELLANEOUS.

"Bridget, did you get the flowers that I am to wear in my hair tonight?" "Yes, mam, but—" "But what?" "I have mislaid the hair, mam." For Cuts, Wounds, Chilblains, Chapped Hands Rheumatism, Stiff Joints, Burns, Scalds, Bites of Insects, Croup, Coughs, Colds, Haggard's Yellow Oil will be found an excellent remedy. Price 25 cents. All dealers.

"But why," asked the sub chief of the Cannibal Isles, "do you insist upon having the man who fell while leading the charge against us served up at the banquet this evening?" "He seems to be hard as nails.

"Hub?" answered the chief of the Canibal Isles, "I read in a book of poetry left by our last meal that 'the bravest are the tenderest.'"

Dentist.—When did your teeth first begin to trouble you, sir? The Victim.—When I was about one year old.

If a child eats ravenously, grinds the teeth at night and picks its nose, you may almost be certain it has worms and should administer without delay Dr. Low's Pleasant Worm Syrup, this remedy contains its own cathartic.

A clergyman announced from his pulpit one evening that there would be "a collection for the dumb and duff—er, er—I mean the duff and dumb—er, er—you know what I mean."

The essential lung-healing principle of the pine tree has finally been successfully separated and refined into a perfect cough medicine. Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup. Sold by all dealers on a guarantee of satisfaction. Price 25 cents.

"Why, Flitters, how thin you are. Been sick?" "No; but I paid a week's board in advance at a place where they don't give us anything but health food."

British Troop Oil Liniment is unsurpassed by any liniment on the market to day. It is composed of healing, soothing and cleansing vegetable oils and extracts. It is put up in large bottles for the small price of 25 cents.

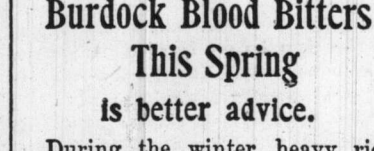
Minard's Liniment cures Dandruff.

Longbow—"I was out gunning yesterday. How many birds do you think I got?" Newitt—"About one-quarter."

Longbow—"One-quarter of what?" Newitt—"Of what you were going to say you got."

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Take Burdock Blood Bitters This Spring is better advice.

During the winter, heavy rich foods are necessary to keep the body warm. When the spring comes, the system is clogged up with heavy sluggish blood; you feel tired, weary and listless and that all-gone, no-ambition feeling takes possession of you. If you take Burdock Blood Bitters it will regulate your system, put you into condition and make you feel bright, happy and vigorous.

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