

**THE WONDERFUL FLOWER OF WOXINDON.**

An Historical Romance of the Times of Queen Elizabeth.

BY REV. JOSEPH SPILLMAN, S. J.

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**CHAPTER XXIV.—(Continued)**

In the afternoon I paid my promised visit to the good boatman's sick daughter. The poor child was in her lonely garret; the first glance was enough to tell me that the disease had entered upon a new stage, and that she could not live many weeks more. But she was in good spirits, and said that if only her cough and the fever would only let her rest at night, she should soon be better. Her appetite was not bad, and people told her she was getting quite a nice color. Alas! she knew not that it was something very different, and a Spanish spy to boot. His two companions were Pooley, an agent of Walsingham's, a cunning rogue; and Gifford, one of the most dissolute fellows imaginable, a regular galloswind, but who could cast up his eyes and quote texts from the Bible as well as any of the sour-visaged preachers who came over from Geneva.

"These are the people," old Clayton concluded, "whom Mr. Babington takes for his confidential companions, whose reckoning he pays, and by whom, I am sorely afraid, he has got entangled in some discreditable business. Pooley sticks to him like a pet dog; and, I have little doubt, carries everything to his master, Walsingham. Well, I must leave it to you, sir, whether after what I have told you, you will go up stairs or no. In your place I would break off at once with a friend who has such suspicious comrades, for in these dangerous times many a man has got in to sad trouble through his friend's friends, ay, and has in this way made unpleasant acquaintance with Topcliffe, Her Majesty's chief executioner."

I could not help seeing that Clayton meant what he said, and said it with the best of intentions. I shook hands with him, telling him I should always feel grateful to him for his kindness in thus warning me, but I did not think he need be uneasy about Babington, as he knew better than to do anything unworthy of a Christian or of an English gentleman. Certainly his associates were very undesirable companions, and I would take the first opportunity of speaking seriously to him about them. I did not, however, think there was sufficient reason for me to absent myself from the meeting of my comrades that evening, so he must not take it amiss if I joined them all the same.

The old man looked disappointed, as he answered: "Very well, you must do as you please. Only do me the justice to acknowledge that, if you get into trouble, as I fear you cannot fail to do, it has not been for lack of warning on my part." Then he bowed low, and opened the door for me.

Upstairs I found all my friends assembled, and there was an interchange of salutations and merry chatter, such as one cannot blame young people for indulging in, even in times of public calamity. We sat down to table, and thoroughly enjoyed our evening meal; not till the dishes had been removed and the wine placed before us, did Babington begin to speak of the project we all had at heart. He had been by no means inactive since we saw him last; he had purchased or hired a considerable number of riding horses, which he had placed in charge of trustworthy persons in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, and had obtained promises of assistance from a good many of the gentry resident in the neighborhood of his home. Of his own retainers at Dethick he could reckon upon a hundred men at least; this he thought would suffice for the liberation of the Queen. Of money and arms there was a plentiful supply. Then taking a map of the counties of Stafford and Derby, he showed us how he had distributed his men and

horses within a radius of 30 to 50 miles around Charley, and we all expressed our commendation of the arrangements he had made. Thus, whenever I should send a messenger to Lichfield, where he fixed his headquarters, on the following night the horsemen could all meet in Charley Wood.

After Babington had told us what he had done, Salisbury and Barnewell related there adventures in Lancashire. They could not say enough about the great number of Catholics in that country; and the detestation which the proceedings of the government had aroused. The little town of Prescott was entirely Catholic, and were Mary Stewart once in Lancashire, there would be little doubt of her rescue. In fact they thought very little would be needed to cause an insurrection of the people. For the present they had secured safe quarters as far as Formby, where Barnewell had engaged a trusty skipper, who from St. James' Day until the Feast of the Ascension, would be in readiness any night, if wind and tide allowed, to set sail for the French coast.

Then my turn came to speak, and I described minutely the plan of the castle and its situation. If a coup-d-main was to be attempted, I said it would be necessary first of all to overpower Sir Amias Paulet, either by force or fraud, otherwise he would certainly not hesitate to lay hands on his prisoner, before we could reach her apartments. But if once we had the crabbled old knight in our custody, all the carefully closed bars and bolts, the keys of which were always in his possession, carried at his belt, would serve to keep the other warders of the castle at bay, until such time as the men-at-arms could come up from the adjoining wood. What I proposed then was this: On one of the days on which I paid my customary visits to the Queen, I would take with me one of my comrades, Donne for instance, who had a strong and ready arm, under the guise of an assistant surgeon. The porter would admit us without any difficulty, for I should say that my patient required cupping. We would arrange so as to go in just before the brewer's dray from Burton, which we could see coming in the distance, should drive up, when the great gates would be thrown open. At that moment two others, says Salisbury and Barnewell, must gallop up, and just as the cart had passed through the gateway, cut the traces, so that the gates could not be closed again. In the meantime my companion and I would have reached the apartment where Sir Amias would be awaiting my arrival at the appointed hour. He would be sure to make objections to my taking a surgeon in with me. But before he could look around, we would have overpowered him, bound and gagged him, and taken his bunch of keys from his side. Our friends in the courtyard would, it is true, be left to grapple with the men on guard, but there were not many, and they would be taken by surprise. Besides a pistol shot would summon Babington and his followers from the wood, where they lay in ambush; the guard would be outnumbered, and it would be easy to carry off the Queen to the secluded cottage of a forester, on whom I could perfectly rely, where she could remain provisionally.

My friends were all delighted with my plan. Only Babington protested against the part I had assigned to him, saying that to him as leader of the enterprise the post of danger by right belonged, and he must either accompany me to Sir Amias' presence, or be one of the party of attack at the gateway, where there would be a risk of his life. After a good deal of discussion, it was settled that he and Salisbury should undertake to arrest the progress of the dray. We arranged also that the honest brewer should be included on the strength of a gold noble, not to drive off from the "Mayflower" until he saw Donne and myself going into the castle, so as to leave time for us to make our way to the room where the old knight was, and possess ourselves of his person.

Thus the whole plot was finally determined upon in every detail. One point I urged very strongly that it should be carried out in the course of the next week, or at any rate, in the one following, since delay in the execution of a project which so many persons knew of must needs be dangerous. But I was overruled by Babington, who insisted on writing first to the Queen; and expounding the plan of rescue for her approval; he told us, his confessor, Father John Ballard, an excellent and zealous man, had enjoined upon him to do so. None of us thought this advisable; Babington however was not to be deterred from his purpose; the letter, he said, should be in cipher, and worded so cautiously that no harm could possibly come out of it. Nor was there any fear that the plot would get about, for beside our six selves, not a soul knew anything about the time and manner of its execution, except Gilbert Gifford, who had been most highly spoken of by Morgan and other friends in Paris. And thus ended our last symposium at St. Giles.

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The kindly word unspoken is a sin— A sin that wraps itself in purest guise,  
And tells the heart that, doubting, looks within,  
That not in speech, but thought, the virtue lies.

But 'tis not so; another heart may thirst  
For that kind word, as Hagar in the wild—  
Poor banished Hagar!—prayed a well might burst  
From out the sand to save her parching child.  
And loving eyes that cannot see the mind  
Will watch the expected movement of the lip;  
Ah! can ye let its cutting silence wind  
Around the heart and scathe it like a whip?

Then hide it not, the music of the soul,  
Dear sympathy, expressed with kindly voice;  
But let it, like a shining river, roll  
To deserts dry—to hearts that  
Will strike another when in turn you seek.  
—John Boyle O'Reilly.

**The Royal Month and the Royal Disease.**

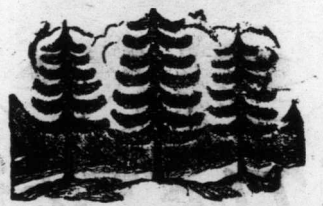
Sudden changes of the weather are especially trying, and probably to none more so than to the scrofulous and consumptive. The progress of scrofula during a normal October is commonly great. We never think of scrofula—its bunches, cutaneous eruptions, and wasting of the bodily substance—without thinking of the great good many sufferers from it have derived from Hood's Sarsaparilla, whose radical and permanent cures of this one disease are enough to make it the most famous medicine in the world. There is probably not a city or town where Hood's Sarsaparilla has not proved its merit in more homes than one, in arresting and completely eradicating scrofula as much to be feared as its near relative,—consumption.

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Minard's Liniment relieves neuralgia.

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will do it for you.  
It regulates the stomach, liver and bowels, purifies the blood and tones up the whole system to full health and vigor.

He bids fair to grow wise who has discovered that he is not so.  
Milburn's Lax-Liver Pills regulate the bowels, cure constipation, dyspepsia, biliousness, sick headache and all affections of the organs of digestion.  
The universe is change; our life is what our thoughts make it.

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During the hot season the blood gets over heated, the drain on the system is severe and the appetite is often lost. Burdock Blood Bitters purifies and invigorates the blood, tones up the system and restores the lost appetite.  
When stock is watered too much it becomes water-logged and won't float.

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Yours truly,  
A. B. ROY.

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