

T H E

Oxfordshire Tragedy;

O R

The Virgin's Advice!

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. How fair Rosanna of the city of Oxford was betrayed by a young Gentleman of her Virginitiy.

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PART II. His cruelty in murdering her, and how a Rose Bush sprung upon the grave, which blossomed all the year through, and how the murder came to be found out by his cropping the Roses.



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The OXFORDSHIRE TRAGEDY.

YOUNG virgins fair of beauty bright,
 and you that are of Cupids fold,
 Unto my tragedy draw near,
 for it is true as e'er was told.
 In Oxford liv'd a lady fair,
 the daughter of a worthy Knight,
 A gentlewoman that lived near,
 was enamour'd with her beauty bright.

Rosanna was this maiden's name,
 the flower of fair Oxfordshire;
 This gentleman a courting came,
 begging her to be his dear,
 Her youthful heart to love inclin'd,
 young Cupid bent his golden bow,
 And left his fatal dart behind,
 that prov'd Rosanna's overthrow,

Within the pleasant groves they'd walk,
 and vallies where the lambs do play
 Sweet pleasant tales of love they talk,
 for to pass away the summer day.
 My charming lovely rose said he,
 see how the pleasant flowers spring.
 The pretty birds on every tree,
 with melody the groves do ring.

I nothing want for to delight,
 my soul, but those sweet charms of thine,
 Our hearts are fix'd therefore my dear,
 like the turtel-dove let us combine.

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Let me embrace my hearts delight,
 within this pleasant bower here,
 This bank of violets for our bed,
 shaded with these sweet roses fair.

She said what can you mean I pray,
 I am a noble lady born,
 What signifies my beauty bright,
 that's a trifle when my honour's gone,
 My parents they will me disdain,
 young virgin's they will me deride ;
 Oh ! do not prove my overthrow,
 if you love me stay till I am your bride.

Sweet angel bright, I here do vow,
 by all the powers that are divine,
 I'll ne'er forsake my dearest dear,
 you're the girl that does my soul confine,
 And if you will me still deny,
 this sword shall quickly end my woe ;
 Then from her arms he straightway,
 in fury then his sword he drew,

Her hands as white as lillies fair,
 most dreadfully she there did wring,
 She said my death's approaching near,
 would I pity take and comfort him,
 It only brings my fatal fall,
 'tis I that most receive the wound :
 The crimson dye forsook her cheeks,
 at his feet she dropp'd upon the ground

This innocence he did betray,
 full sore against her chaste desire,

True love is a celestial charm,
 but the flame of lust a raging fire,
 But when her senses did revive,
 he many vows and oaths did make,
 That he'd for ever true remain,
 and her company would not forsake.

P A R T. II.

NOW virgins, in the second part,
 observe this lady's fatal end,
 When once your virtue is betrayed,
 • you've nothing young men will commend.
 After the traitor had his will,
 he never did come near her more.
 And from her eyes both day and night,
 for his sake the crystal tears did pour,
 Into the mourning valley she,
 would often wander all alone,
 And for the jewel she had lost,
 in the bower thus would often mourn.
 Oh! that I was some pretty bird,
 that I might fly to hide my shame;
 Oh! silly maid for to believe,
 all the fair delusions of man.

The harmless lamb sports and plays,
 the turtle constant to his mate;
 Nothing so wretched is as I,
 to love a man that does me hate,
 I will to him a letter send,
 remembering him of the oaths he made,

Within that shadow bower where,
my tender heart he first betray'd.

Her trembling hand a letter wrote,
my dearest dear what must I do ?

Alas ! what have I done, that I
am forsaken and forgot by you ?

I could have many a Lord of fame,
who little knows my misery :

I did forsake a worthy Knight,
and it is all for love of thee.

And now my little infant dear
will quickly spread abroad my shame,

One line of comfort to me send,
e'er I am by your cruelty slain.

This answer he to her did send,
your insolence amazes me,

To think that I should marry one,
with whom before-hand I've been free.

Indeed I'll not a father be,
unto a bastard you shall bear.

So take no farther thought of me,
no more from you pray let me hear.

When she this letter did receive,
she wrung her hands and wept full sore ;

And every day she still would range
to lament within that pleatant bower.

The faithless wretch began to think,
how noble was her parents dear ;

He said, I sure shall punish'd be,
soon as the story they come to hear.

So then the devil did begin,
 to enter in his wretched mind ;
 Her precious life he then must have,
 thus he to act the thing did find.

He many times did watch her out,
 into the pleasant valley, where
 One day he privately did go,
 when he knew the lady was not there,
 And privately he dug a grave
 underneath an oaken tree ;
 Then in the branches he did hide,
 for to act this piece of cruelty.

Poor harmless soul she nothing knew,
 as usual she went there alone,
 And on a bank of violets she,
 in a mournful manner sat her down,
 Of his unkindness did complain,
 at length the grave she did espy,
 She rose indeed to view the same,
 little thinking that he was so nigh.

You gentle gods so kind said she,
 did you this grave for me prepare ?
 He then descended from the tree,
 saying, strumpet now thy death is near.
 O welcome, welcome, she reply'd,
 as long as by your hand I die,
 This is a pleasant marriage-bed,
 I'm ready, use your cruelty.

But may the heavens bring to light,
 thy crime and thus let it appear,

Winter and summer on this grave,
 may the damask rose in bloom spring here,
 Never to wither though 'tis cropp'd,
 but when thy hand doth touch the same,
 Then may the bloom that minute blast,
 to bring to light my bitter shame.

More she'd have said but with his sword,
 he pierc'd he tender body through,
 Then threw her in her silent grave,
 saying, now there's an end of you,
 He fill'd the grave up close again,
 with weeds the same did overspread ;
 Then unconcern'd he straight went home,
 immediately went to his bed.

Her parent's dear did grieve full sore,
 - the loss of their young daughter fair,
 Thinking that she was stole away,
 unto all their riches she was heir.

Twelve months ago this thing was done,
 there's thousands for a truth to know ;
 According as she did desire,
 on her grave a damask rose did grow.

And many wonder'd at the same,
 for in the winter it did spring,
 If any one would crop the rose,
 in a moment it would grow again.
 The thing blaz'd the country round,
 and thousands went the same to see,
 This miracle from heaven shew,
 he among'tt the rest must curious be,

To go to see, if this was true,
 and when into the plant he came,
 The beauteous rose he saw in bloom,
 and eagerly he cropt the same,
 The leaves did fall from off the bush;
 the rose within his hands did die :
 He cry'd 'tis fair Rosanna's blood,
 that did spring up from her fair body.

Many people that were there,
 took notice of what he did say :
 They told him he'd for e murder done,
 he the truth confes'd without delay,
 They dug and found the body there,
 the first of April it was known,
 Before a Magistrate he went,
 and now in prison lies forlorn.

Till he his punishment receives,
 no doubt but he will have his due ;
 Young men by this a warning take,
 rperform your vows whate'er you do,
 God does find out man's ways
 such heinous things to bring to light,
 For murder is a crying sin,
 and hateful in his blessed sight.

F I N I S.