

THE
LIFE AND DEATH
OF
FAIR ROSAMOND,
CONCUBINE TO
KING HENRY II.



GLASGOW:
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FAIR ROSAMOND.

When as King Henry rul'd this land,
The second of that name;
Besides the queen, he loved dear
A fair and courtly dame.
Most peerless was her beauty found,
Her favour and her face;
A sweeter creature in the world,
Could never prince embrace.

Her crisped locks, like threads of gold
Appear'd to each man's sight;
Her comely eyes, like orient pear
Did cast a heavenly light.
The blood within her crystal cheeks,
Did such a colour drive,
As though the lily and the rose
For mastership did strive

Fair Rosamond, fair Rosamond,
Her name was called so,
To whom dame Eleanor our queen,
Was known a deadly foe.
The king therefore, for her defence
Against the furious queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
The like was never seen.

Most curiously the tower was built,
 Of stone and timber strong,
 One hundred and fifty doors
 Did to this tower belong.
 And they so cunningly contrived,
 With turnings round about,
 That none without a clue of thread
 Could enter in or out.

Now, for his love and lady's sake,
 Who was both fair and bright,
 The keeping of the tower he gave
 Unto a valiant knight.
 But fortune that doth often frown,
 Where it before did smile,
 The king's delight, the lady's joy,
 Full soon she did beguile.

For why, the king's ungracious son
 Whom he did high advance,
 Against his father raised wars,
 Within the realms of France.
 But yet before our gracious king
 The English land forsook,
 Of Rosamond, his lady fair,
 His farewell thus he took.

My Rosamond, my lovely Rose,
 Who pleaseth best mine eye,
 The fairest flower in all the world
 To feed my phantasy.

The flower of my affected heart,
 Whose sweetness doth excel,
 My Royal Rose, an hundred times
 I bid you now farewell.

For I must leave my fairest Rose,
 My sweetest Rose apace,
 And cross the ocean into France,
 Proud rebels to debase.
 But still my Rose, be sure thou shalt
 My coming shortly see,
 And in my heart, when hence I am,
 I'll bear my Rose with me.

When Rosamond, the lady bright,
 Did hear the king say so,
 The sorrows of it grieved her so,
 Her outward looks did show.
 And from her clear and crystal eyes,
 The tears gush'd out apace,
 And like the silver pearl dew
 Ran down her comely face.

And falling down into a swoon,
 Before King Henry's face,
 Full oft within his princely arms
 Her body did embrace.
 And twenty times with wat'ry eyes,
 He kiss'd her tender cheek,
 Until he had revived again
 Her spirit mild and meek.

Why grieves my Rose? my sweetest Rose,
 The king did often say;
 Because, said she, to bloody wars
 My lord must pass away.
 But since your grace in foreign parts,
 Amongst your foes unkind,
 Must go to hazard life and limb,
 Why must I stay behind?

Nay, rather let me like a page
 Thy sword and target bear,
 That on my breast the blow may light
 That would offend my dear.
 O, let me in your royal tent
 Prepare your bed at night,
 And with sweet baths refresh you there,
 As you return from fight.

So I your presence will enjoy,
 No toil I will refuse;
 But wanting you my life is death,
 Which doth true love abuse.
 Content thyself, my dearest love
 Thy rest at home shall be,
 In England's sweet and pleasing court,
 For travels fit not thee.

Fair ladies brook not bloody wars,
 Sweet peace their pleasure breed,
 The nourisher of heart's content,
 Whose fancy first doth feed.

My Rose shall rest in Woodstock bower
 With music's sweet delight,
 While I among the piercing pikes
 Against the foes do fight.
 My Rose in robes of pearl and gold,
 With diamonds rich and bright,
 Shall dance the galliards of my love,
 While I my foes do smite.

And you, Sir Thomas, whom I trust,
 To be my love's defence
 Be careful of my gallant Rose,
 When I am parted hence.
 And here withal he fetch'd a sigh,
 As though his heart would break;
 And Rosamond, for very grief,
 Not one plain word could speak.

And at their parting, well they might
 In heart be grieved sore,
 After that day fair Rosamond
 The king did ne'er see more
 For when his grace had passed the seas,
 And into France was gone,
 Queen Eleanor with envious heart,
 To Woodstock came anon.

And forth she calls the trusty knight
 Who kept this curious bower,
 And with a clne of twisted thread,
 Come from this famous flower.

But when they had wounded him,
 The queen his thread did get.
 She went where Lady Rosamond
 Like a young queen was set.

But when the queen with stedfast eyes,
 Beheld her lovely face,
 She was amazed in her mind,
 With such exceeding grace.
 Cast off, said she, these fine wrought robes,
 That rich and costly be,
 And drink you up this deadly draught
 Which I have brought to thee.

But presently upon her knees,
 Fair Rosamond did fall,
 And pardon of the queen she craved,
 For her offences all.
 Take pity on my youthful years,
 Fair Rosamond did say ;
 And let me not with poison strong
 Be forced for to die.

I will renounce my sinful life,
 And in some cloister hide :
 Or else be banished if you please,
 To range the world so wide.
 For sure the fault which I have done
 I was forced thereunto,
 Preserve my life and punish me,
 As you think fit to do.

And with these words, her lily hands,
 She wrung full often there,
 And down her comely face
 Proceeded many a tear.
 But nothing could this furious queen
 Herewith appeased be,
 Except the cup of deadly poison,
 Which she held on her knee.

She gave this comely dame to drink,
 Who took it from her hand,
 And from her bended knees arose,
 And on her feet did stand:
 When, casting up her eyes to heaven,
 She did for mercy call,
 And drinking up the poison strong,
 She lost her life withal.

And when that death thro' every limb
 Had done its greatest spite,
 Her chief foes could but confess,
 She was a glorious sight.
 Her body then they did entomb,
 When life was fled away,
 At Woodstock near to Oxford town,
 As may be seen this day.