

ROSANNA;

THE OXFORD TRAGEDY.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.—How Fair Rosanna, of the City of Oxford, was by a young Gentleman betrayed of her virginity.

PART II.—His cruelty in murdering her, and how a rose-bush sprung upon her grave, which blossoms all the year through; and how the murder came to be found out, by his cropping the rose, &c.



GLASGOW:
PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.
20.

THE
OXFORDSHIRE TRAGEDY.

PART I.

Young virgins fair, of beauty bright,
And you that are of Cupid's fold,
Unto my tragedy draw near,
For it's as true as ever was told.

In Oxford liv'd a lady fair,
The daughter of a worthy knight,
A gentleman that lived near,
Was enamoured 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 golden dart behind,
Which proved Rosanna's overthrow.

Within the private groves they'd walk,
And valleys where the lambs do play,
Sweet pleasant tales of love they'd talk,
For to pass away the summer's 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 charms of thine ;
 Our hearts are fix'd, therefore my dear .
 Like turtle-doves let us combine.

Let me embrace my heart's 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 virgins 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 doth my heart confine.

But if you will me still deny,
 This sword shall quickly end the woe ;
 Then from her arms he flew straightway,
 In fury out his sword he drew.

Her hands as white as lilies fair,
 Most dreadfully she then did wring,
 And for the jewel she had lost,
 She said, my death's approaching.

It only brings my fatal fall,
 It's I that must receive the wound ;
 The crimson dye forsook his cheek,
 At his feet she dropp'd upon the ground.

Thus innocence he did betray,
 Full sore against her chaste desire,
 True love is a celestial charm,
 But the flame of love is a raging fire.

But when her senses did revive,
 He many vows and oaths did make,
 That he'd for ever true remain,
 Her company would not forsake.

PART II.

Into the lonely valley she
 Would often wander all alone ;
 Sighing sadly to assuage her grief,
 Thus in the bower would often mourn.

Oh that I was some pretty bird,
 That I might fly and hide my shame,
 Oh silly maid, for to believe
 All the fair delusions of a man.

The harmless lamb can sport and pray,
 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 of the oath he made,
 Within the tender bower where
 My tender heart he first betrayed.

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,
 'Tis for the love I bear to thee.

And now my little infant dear
 Will quickly spread abroad my shame,
 One line of comfort to me send,
 Ere by your cruelty I am slain.

This answer he to her did send,
 Your insolence amazeth me,
 To think that I should marry one
 With whom before I have been free.

Indeed I will no father be
 Unto any bastard you may bear,
 So take no further 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 pleasant bower

The faithless wretch began to think
 How noble were her parents dear.
 He said, I sure will punished be,
 Soon as the story they shall hear.

So then the devil he did begin
 To enter in his wretched mind,
 Her precious life he then must have,
 An opportunity thus he did find.

He many times had watch'd 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 mournful silence sat her down.

Of his unkindness did complain,
 At length she did the grave espy,
 She rose indeed to view the same,
 Little thinking 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, thy death is near.

Oh, welcome, welcome, she replied,
 As long as by your hands 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 wither though 'tis cropp'd,
 But when thy hand doth touch the same,
 Then may the bloom that minute blast,
 To bring to light thy bitter shame.

More she'd have said, but with his sword
 He pierced her tender body through,
 Then threw her in the silent grave,
 And filled the grave close up again.

With weeds the same did overspread,
 Then unconcerned straight went home,
 Immediately went he to his bed,
 And thought no more of what he'd done.

The loss of their young daughter dear,
 Her parents much did grieve,
 She was sought after far and near,
 For to all the riches she was heir.

'Tis twelve months since that this was done,
 There's thousands for a truth doth know't
 And many wonder'd at the same,
 For all the winter it did spring.

If any one did crop that rose,
In a moment it would grow again ;
This thing was blaz'd the country round,
And thousands went the same to see.

He amongst the rest must curious be,
To go and see if it was true,
And when unto the place he came,
The beauteous rose he saw in bloom.

The leaves did fall from off the bush,
The rose within his hand did die ;
He cried, 'tis fair Rosanna's blood,
That did spring from her fair body.

Many people that were there,
Took notice of what he did say,
They told he had some murder done,
He the truth confess'd without delay.

They dug and found the body there,
The first of April it was known,
He was seiz'd and carried off to jail,
And shortly after suffer'd his doom.