

Luxuriant like the flowing hair;
It shines in blooming splendor gay,
While zephyrs on its bosom play."

Its peerless beauty, sweet perfume and varied hue, from milk white to crimson blush, triumphantly proclaim it Queen of Flowers. Persia is its natal land. In the floral paradises of that enchanted land of flowers, myriads of roses gently unfold their bursting buds in response to the nightingale's passionate song of love, and all the air is dense with sweetest odors. There the rose and the nightingale are personified as the Gul and the Bulbul and Eastern poets delight in singing of the loves of this Venus of flowers with the Apollo of birds. Evidently Milton was of the opinion that roses were first cultivated in the Garden of Eden, by our great-grandmother, Eve, for he tells us how

"Veiled in a cloud of fragrance where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glowed; oft stooping to support
Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained; them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh."

The Greeks were ever enthusiastic in their admiration of this flower of the lyric muse, and Theocritus declares.

"This wild thyme and these roses moist with dews,
Are sacred to the Heliconian muse."

Throughout ancient literature, this floral gem is prominent. It is the subject of countless poems, symbol of various sentiments, and the favorite of all decorations. Nero spent fifty thousand dollars for roses at a single supper. That incomparably beautiful and voluptuously fascinating sorceress of the land of Isis and Osiris revelled in the "love-lorn odors born of roses" and covered her floors with purple carpets of velvet rose leaves.

Tradition tells us that in Paradise roses were first white, and that when Eve fell they blushed crimson for shame. The poet Carey in beautiful lines preserves another tradition more complimentary to our first mother:

When erst in Eden's blissful bowers,
Young Eve surveyed her countless flowers,
An opening rose of purest white,
She marked with eyes that beamed delight.
It's leaves she kissed, and straight it drew
From beauty's lips the vermeil's hue."

A more familiar mythical account represents the red rose as taking its color from the blood which flowed from the thorn pierced feet of Venus as she ran through the woods distracted with grief for the loss of Adonis.

"White as the native rose before the change,
Which Venus' blood did in her leaves impress."

Moore translates from a Latin epigram a slightly different version:

"While the enamored queen of joy
Flies to protect her lovely boy,
On whom the jealous war-god rushes;
She treads upon a thorned rose,
And while the wound with crimson flows,
The snowy flow'ret feels her blood and blushes."

Bion in his idyl on "The Death of Adonis" transmutes the blood of Adonis into the red rose and the tears of Venus into anemones:

"Both tears and drops of blood were turned to flowers;
From these in crimson beauty sprang the rose,
Cerulean bright anemones from those."

Two verses from Herrick's *Hesperides* record a pretty version of how roses became red:

"It don't hurt to be Sergeant-Major, does it?"

"Roses at first were white,
'Till they could not agree,
Whether my Sappho's breast,
Or they more white should be.

But being vanquished quite,
A blush their cheeks bespread;
Since which, believe the rest,
The roses first came red."

That mischief making elf, Dan Cupid, is responsible for the thorns that guard the rose. And since first his haste to taste the flower's dewy sweets was rewarded by stings and pains, full many an eager lover has felt the rose's thorn. The Rose herself relates the romantic episode,

"Young Love, rambling through the wood,
Found me in my solitude,
Bright with dew and freshly blown,
And trembling to the zephyr's sighs;
But as he stooped to gaze upon
The living gem with raptured eyes,
It chanced a bee was busy there,
Searching for its fragrant fare;
And Cupid, stooping too, to sip,
The angry insect stung his lip;
And gushing from the ambrosial cell,
One bright drop on my bosom fell.
Weeping to his mother he
Told the tale of treachery,
And she, her vengeful boy to please,
Strung his bow with cap'ive bees,
But placed upon my slender stem
The poisoned sting she plucked from them
And none since that eventful morn
Have found the flower without a thorn."

Alike beautiful is the legendary account of how the rose came by her mossy garments:

"The angel of the flowers one day
Beneath a Rose-tree sleeping lay;
That spirit to whose charge is given
To bathe young buds in dews from heaven;
Awaking from his light repose,
The angel whispered to the Rose:
O fondest object of my care,
Still fairest found where all are fair,
For the sweet shade thou'st given to me,
Ask what thou wilt, 'tis granted thee;
'Then,' said the Rose, with deepened glow,
'On me another grace bestow!
The spirit paused in silent thought;
What grace was there that flower had not!
'Twas but a moment;—o'er the Rose
A veil of moss the angel throws;
And, robed in nature's simplest weed,
Could there a flower that Rose exceed?"

Numerous and beautiful are the poetical and legendary allusions of the rose, indeed poetry is redolent of the rose. It forges them into love chains, crowns the flowing bowl, adorns the bosom of beauty, idolizes its every charm as soft as a rose-leaf, as sweet as a rose, rosy clouds, rosy cheeks, rosy lips, rosy blushes.

Homer speaks of the "rosy fingered dawn";
Anacreon calls painting the "rosy art";
Milton describes the waking morn.
"Now morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearls."

Aristophanes pronounced the perfection of eulogies when he said "you have spoken roses." It is sacred to the Goddess of Beauty, and symbol of "joy and love—young blushing love in its earliest dawn."

The passionate lover makes the rose breathe sentiments much too holy for verbal utterance, and pays to the object of