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The Rose in Tudor England

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THE ROSE IN TUDOR ENGLAND.

A Thesis
presented to
The Faculty of the Dep't. of English
University of Omaha.

In partial fulfillment of the requisits for the degree of
Master of Arts.

by
Janet Dyer Andrews
June, 1948.

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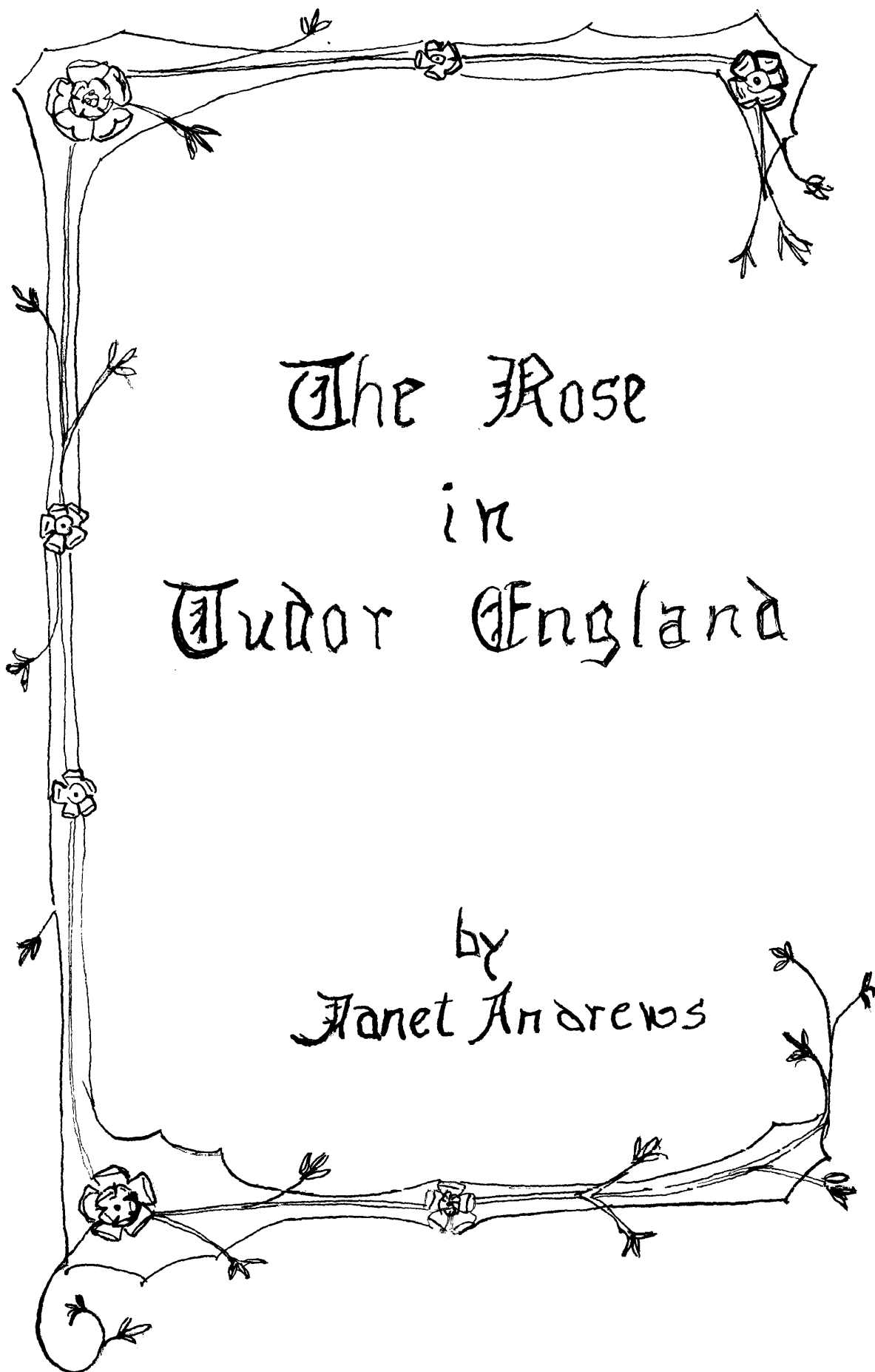
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The Rose
in
Tudor England

by
Janet Andrews

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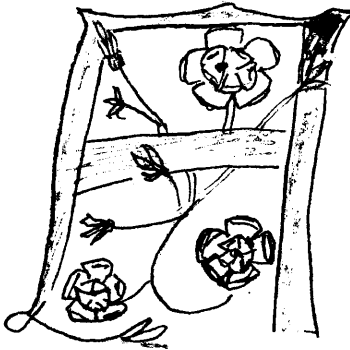
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Preface



great interest in the rose was the inspiration for this paper. Loved by poet and peasant, king and councillor, philosopher and historian, the rose is unquestionably man's favorite flower. Appearing in war and peace, at funerals and festivals, in religion, art, and literature, it is intimately linked with the lives and customs of many people and has woven a bright pattern through the whole fabric of civilization.

Although the rose figures prominently in the entire history of mankind, it is of particular significance during the reign of the English Tudors. This period began in 1485 when Henry VII ascended the throne, using a red and white rose as his emblem, and ended with the death of Elizabeth in 1603, when the rose had become England's royal and national flower. It was a time of great political, social, and literary advancement due, in part, to the introduction of printing, which made a great number of books available to the people. Many of these, though printed, were still mod-

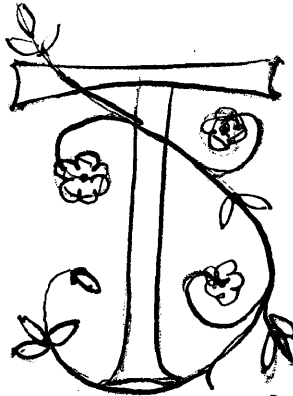
elled on the old manuscripts and illuminated by hand with elaborate initials and scrolls of appropriate designs. Such decoration, in modified form, has been used for this thesis. The title is printed in the still popular, black-letter Gothic, and bordered with a design based on a scroll from the Psalter of Branholm Priory. The initial letters are from facsimile copies of books or manuscripts printed in the Tudor period.

I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging my gratitude to Mrs. E. E. Averill, Head of the Art Reference Library of the Joslyn Memorial Art Museum, for suggesting pertinent books, and to Miss Ellen Lord, Librarian of the University of Omaha University, for securing rare volumes from the University of Colorado Library and the Library of Congress. I also wish to express my indebtedness to Mrs. Frederick L. Keays of Creek Side, Maryland, and to Mrs. Eleanour Sinclair Rohde of Reigate, Surrey, England, whose books and letters have given me much encouragement.



The Story of the Rose

"Oh! No man knows
Through what wild centuries
Revers back the rose."
—Walter de la Mare.



he rose is older than man, for fossils identify it with the Oligocene era, which was twenty million years before his arrival; so when he appeared on earth, he met the beauty and fragrance of this lovely flower.¹ Known to all nations, it is found in every quarter of the globe from Iceland to the Bay of Bengal, and the story of its origin and development leads along the hidden byways as well as the highways of history.

The real origin of the rose, as we know it, is lost in antiquity. It must have been grown in earliest times, for the most ancient writers whose works are extant have written of its cultivation, and old manuscripts show that long before the Christian era, it formed the theme of countless poems and legends of India, Persia, and Arabia. From Biblical references we know that it was grown in Egypt and Palestine a thousand years before Christ for Isaiah promises that the desert shall "blossom as the rose",² In the Apocrypha, Solomon says, "Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered", and the son of Sirack

likens wisdom to "a rose plant in Jericho", and holiness to "roses growing by the brook in the field".³ It is also reported by scholars that roses were growing in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's time.⁴

The Greeks and the Romans were both very fond of the rose and cultivated it extensively, bringing in wildings from the hills to decorate their gardens and the temple grounds. There were many legends of its origin. To the Greeks, it was love's own flower, having sprung from the ground to greet Aphrodite as she rose from the sea.⁵ The Romans thought it was created by Flora in memory of a favorite nymph. Various gods gave it form and fragrance, but she gave it color, with-holding only blue, reminiscent of death. To this day there have been no blue roses.⁶

The number of rose species known to the ancients was small. Theophrastus, a Greek naturalist, gives the first botanical account of various kinds, and mentions particularly the sweet-scented ones of Cyrene.⁷ Pliny, a Roman Historian, speaks of the twelve-petalled red rose of Miletus and the many-petalled one of Paestum.⁸

It is evident that the Romans acquired their love and knowledge of the rose from the Greeks, but they far surpassed them in its lavish and luxurious use. It was their favorite flower. From it they made wines, perfumes, fragrant oils, and conserves; and garlands for weddings, feasts, and funerals, all were wreathed from the rose. During the reign of Augustus, roses were an essential

part of every public and private festival. The well-to-do dined from couches of rose petals and drank from rose-decorated wine cups, and to honor distinguished guests, roses were strewn on floors and scattered on beds.⁹ Even Cleopatra, with all the wealth of the East at her disposal, could do no greater honor to Antony than to spread the banquet hall a foot deep with roses.¹⁰ They were also conspicuous in sacred ceremonies, and on fete days the statues of the gods were adorned with rose sprays, and the streets were covered with blossoms.¹¹ But the love of this flower was carried to excess by the Romans, and it became the accompaniment of Bacchanalian revels as well as religious celebrations.

With the advent of Christianity, however, the rose outlived its pagan association and entered into the symbolism of the church. To the early Christians, the red rose typified the five wounds of Christ and the blood of martyrs, and the white rose stood for the purity of the Virgin Mary.¹² The Catholic Church made the rose the subject of many miracles of love and faith, and its appearance on earth became connected with the Divine Mother and the birth of the infant Jesus. A rose blessed by the Virgin is the basis of many of the explanations regarding the custom of using a rosary, a string of prayer beads, which were first made of rose pods and later of dried rose petals rolled into balls.¹³ This flower was identified with acts of holiness, which like the rose, were pure and fair and wafted their own sweet perfume to heaven. Through its religious significance, the rose

became the symbol of the hope of everlasting life. St. Jerome said that while the ancients placed roses on graves as a token of sorrow, the Christians put them there as a reminder of their belief in life after death. A golden rose, the flower signifying the mortality of the body, and the metal the immortality of the soul, is used by His Holiness the Pope, as a mark of distinction, to confer special recognition on a sovereign, church, or country.

As the splendor of Roman civilization crumbled into dust, the rose faded from history, and little is known of it during the Dark Ages. It was not until the monasteries, with their accompanying herb gardens, were established that interest in the rose revived and its culture spread through western Europe. It was grown primarily for practical purposes, for health-giving medicines could be made from its petals and its bright red fruits. However, in his Hortulus, Walafred Strabo, a ninth century monk, reveals an appreciation of this beautiful flower, "The rose it should be crowned with the pearls of Arabia and Lydian gold. Better and sweeter is this flower than all other plants and rightly called the flower of flowers."

With the revival of civilization during the later Middle Ages, the rose again came into favor for its beauty and sweet odor. Returning Crusaders, having seen the magnificence of the gardens of the Orient, brought back rose plants for their own gardens, and once more the rose was extensively cultivated. Soon it was grown in large quantities in Europe, for perfume as well as decorative purposes.

Only the privileged few had the right to grow roses, however, and as the demand was great, they were equal in value to grain. In both England and France bushels of cut roses were paid to landlords for rent, a single one being presented yearly as a token of the debt.¹⁷

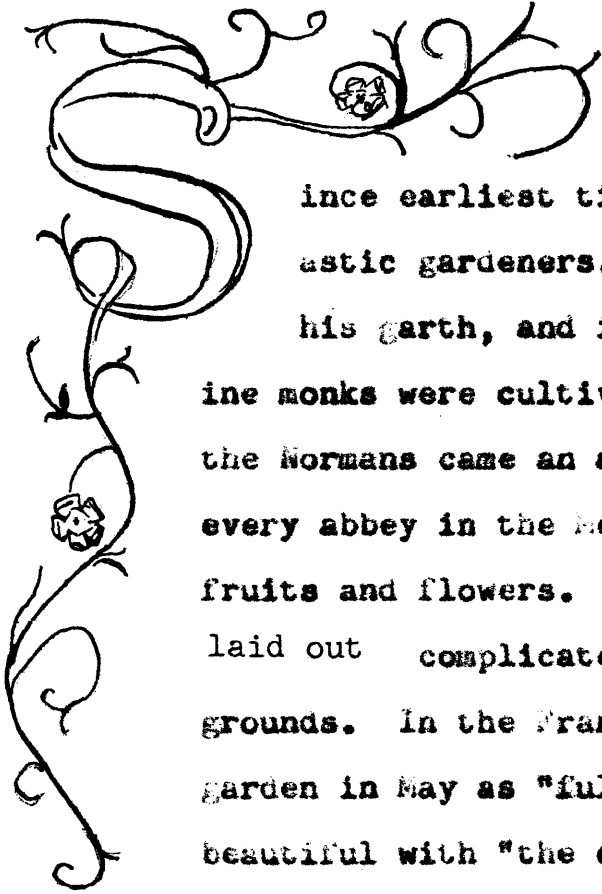
The rose then entered into the symbolism of the times as an emblem of beauty and nobility, and became the badge of royalty, the ornament of architecture, and the symbol of perfection in literature as well as religion.



The Rose as a Flower

"Among all the floures of the world the rose is chief and beryth ye pryse. She wrayeth her thorn with fayr colour and good smelle and wythstandeth and socouryth by vertue against many sicknesses and evylles."

—Bartholomaeus Anglicus, de Proprietatibus Rerum.



ince earliest times the English have been enthusiastic gardeners. Even the Anglo-Saxon thane had his garth, and in the sixth century, the Benedictine monks were cultivating many useful plants. With the Normans came an added interest in gardening, and every abbey in the medieval town had its enclosure for fruits and flowers. A few centuries later English kings laid out complicated mazes and bowers on their castle grounds. In the *Franklyn's tale*, Chaucer describes the garden in May as "full of leaves and of floures", and as beautiful with "the craft of mannes hands", as if it were "the verray paradys".

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, feudal strongholds offered little scope for gardens either within or without the walls, but as soon as wars became less frequent and military defenses were no longer necessary, there was a slight revival of interest in gardening. There was little progress during the

early sixteenth century, for Henry VII expended his energies upon strengthening the kingdom politically, and in the reign of Henry VIII, who was interested in sports, "all the gardens without Moorgate were destroyed and of them was made a plaine field for archers"². The dissolution of the monasteries also brought about a decline in all forms of horticulture, so only the plot for kitchen herbs and useful flowering plants survived. It was not until the middle of the century that the situation changed and the flower garden of pleasing perfume became important for itself. It was a new luxury made possible by new conditions of wealth. As riches poured in, the people assimilated the luxurious ideas of the Italian Renaissance, and extravagance permeated all phases of living. Gradually stately homes with elaborate gardens replaced the old fortified castles, and by Elizabeth's time, the kitchen garden had been relegated to the rear to make way for the flower garden. Prothero, in Shakespeare's England, contends that this promotion of the flower garden to a place of importance³ was one of the greatest gardening innovations of the time.

To understand Elizabethan London, it is necessary to forget today and with William Morris, "Dream of London small and white and clean", and see the "clear Thames bordered with its gardens green"⁴. The Thames was the center of the city, and westward from London Bridge were many princely palaces with gardens sloping to the river. Gardening had become the pursuit of many Englishmen, even statemen like Lord Burghley and philosophers like Bacon.

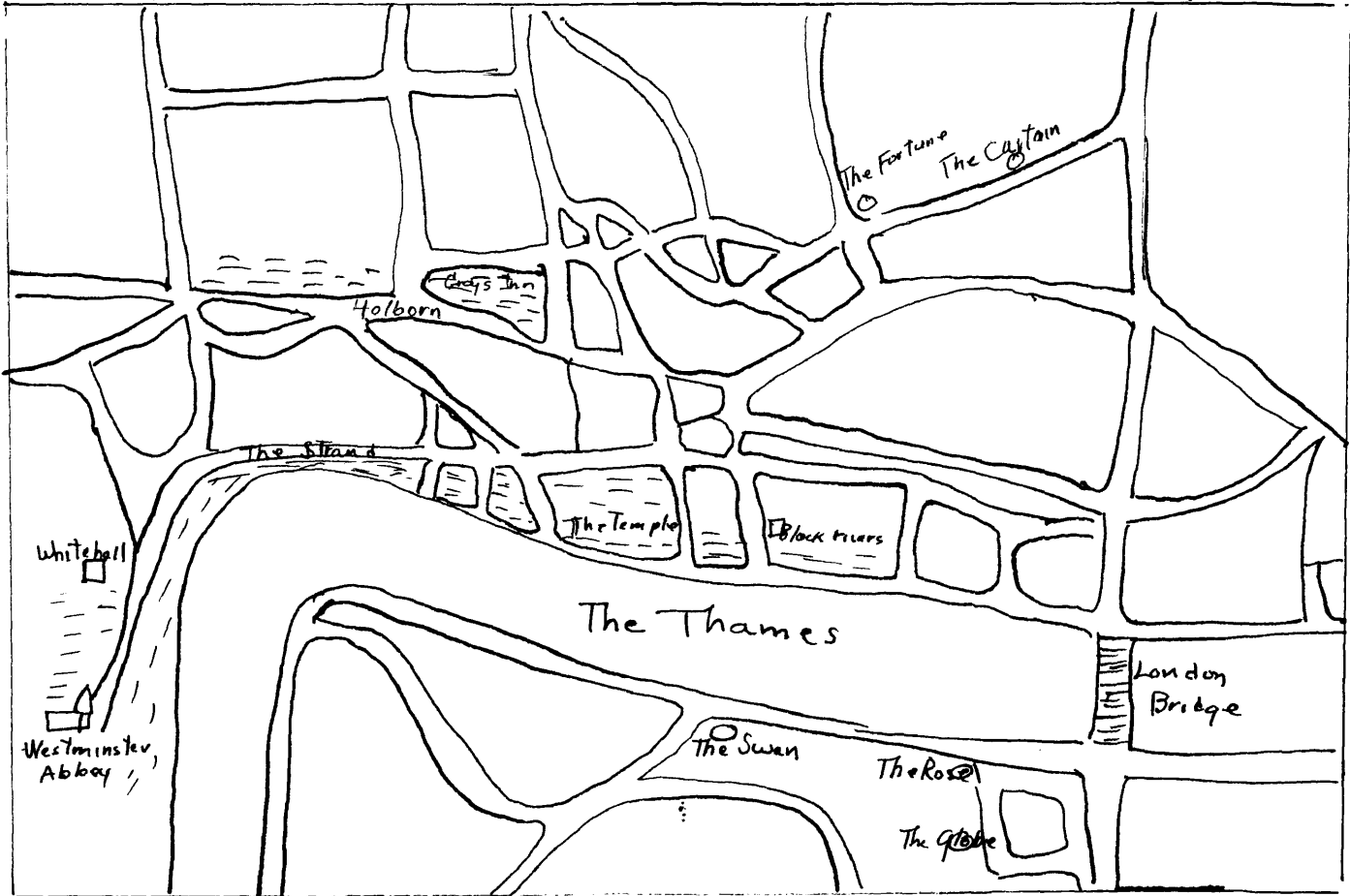


Fig.1 Sketch Map Showing Garden Areas of Elizabethan London.

Wherever there have been gardens, there have been roses. In Medieval times, when the rose garden was part of the "herber", mingling its fragrance with the breath of mint and the scent of lavender, roses were grown for their medicinal qualities. Every convent, monastery, and abbey had its rose garden. Romsey, the recent honeymoon retreat of the Princess Elizabeth and her husband, was well known even then⁵ for its roses, and was often visited by kings and noblemen. An old monkish puzzle illustrates the popularity of this flower during these times:

We are five brothers at the same time born
 Two of us have beards, by two no beards are worn.
 While one, lest he should give his brothers pain
 Has one side bearded and the other plain.

A close inspection of an unopened rose bud reveals that only two lobes or sepals can have both outside edges free to grow fringe or "beards", while one has but one side free, and the other two lobes are covered and therefore beardless.⁶

Even in 1563, when Thomas Hyll published the first garden book to be printed in English, "the proper herber was decked with roses,"⁷ and it was not until Elizabeth's reign brought about a quickening interest in gardening that appreciation of the rose increased. Adventurous mariners and merchants brought back new plants from distant lands, and many varieties of roses, hitherto unknown, were introduced into English gardens. Although these gardens, copied from the Italian, were stiff and formal with straight "pleached alleys" and curious knots, they were deliciously fragrant. The English were fond of heavy scent and hedged these walks with musk roses, sweetbrier, white-thorn and fragrant honeysuckle vines⁸



Fig.2 The Wild Dog Rose

laced together, and filled the intricate and geometrical knots with roses and other sweet-smelling flowers. Usually there were also one or two rose trees for accent, and an arbor covered with climbing roses. London abounded in rose gardens. Two of the more famous ones were those of Ely House and the Temple.

Although Gerarde in his Grete Herball, published in 1597, lists many roses as growing in the garden at Holborn, where he was head gardener, there were only about seven varieties which were common to English gardens at this time. These were: the canina, the wild rose of the hedge-row; the alba, the white rose of York; the gallica, thought to be the red rose of Lancaster; the centifolia, the hundred petalled rose known to the Romans; the damascena, trailing visions of Oriental gardens; the sweetbrier, so beloved of the poets; and the moschata, or musk rose, a favorite of Bacon and his contemporaries.

Only one of these, the canina, seems to have been indigenous to the country. This native rose grows all over England, and in the spring it spangles the country lanes with long, arching sprays of pink and red blossoms, being palest pink when half-nourished in a tangled hedge-row and deepest crimson when growing in a well fertilized farmyard. The ancients had a tale that the root of this rose would cure hydrophobia. Perhaps this idea, or the fact that the stout prickles which cover the canes are shaped like a dog's tooth,

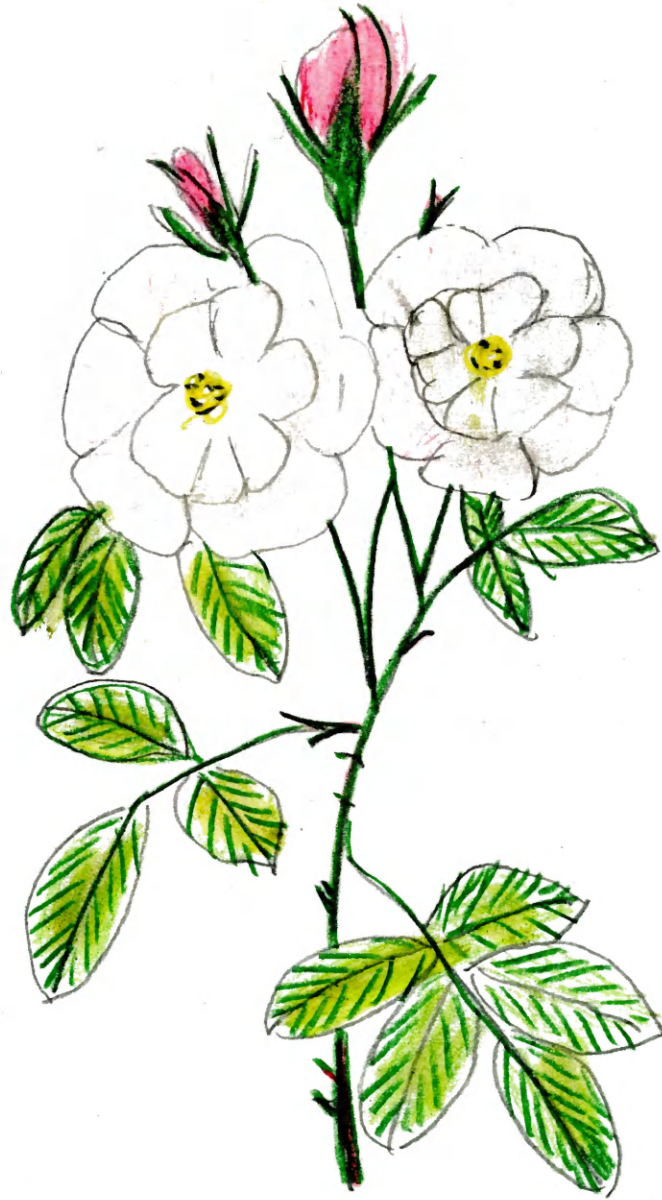


Fig.3 The White Rose of York

may account for the common name of dog rose.

The story of rosa alba begins with early Greek writings of a white garden rose known many years before Christ. The Romans loved its delicate fragrance, and it could have been brought to England by some rose-loving Roman engineer. The Elder Pliny explained the etymology of Albion by saying "it was called the Isle of Albion for the white roses with which it abounds as well as for the white cliffs washed by the sea."⁹ This rose, which figured so prominently in Renaissance art, was a favorite of English gardens, for its blooms, which range through shades of white, flesh, and pink, have a charming delicacy. Gerard lists it in his Herball as being "the white rose of the House of York" and having double flowers "of a white colour and a very sweete smelle".¹⁰ One variety of this rose is named for Mary Queen of Scots. After the death of the Dauphin, she wore white mourning from head to foot, and looked so lovely in her widow's weeds that she resembled a rose and one was named "La Reine Blanche" in her honor.

The origin of the gallica or French rose is uncertain. It was also known to the Greeks and Romans, and thought by most writers to be the twelve petalled rose of Miletus mentioned by Pliny.¹¹ It was cultivated in France for medicinal purposes as early as the eleventh century and was brought to England in 1277 by Edmund, the Earl of Lancaster, who had become enamored of it while on a mission to France. The flowers of this rose range from red to deep



Fig.4 The Red Rose of Lancaster

crimson. It is listed in Gerarde's catalog as "rosa rubra"¹² Commonly used as the basis of many medicinal preparations, it was called the "Apothecary's rose" by many people. To some it was known as the "rose of Provins"¹³ because it was grown so extensively in that French city. It is to this rose, which was the pattern for the conventional rosette, that Shakespeare refers when Hamlet says "with two provincial roses on my razed shoe."¹³ There are variegated varieties of this rose which are very attractive. They bear large flowers with petals of pale pink or white splashed with rosy or purplish tones or broadly striped with red. One of the gayest is known as Rosa Mundi in honor of Rosamund Clifford, the ill-fated mistress of Henry II, whom he called his "rose of the world".¹⁴

The centifolia, or hundred-petalled rose, is probably the many-petalled rose extolled by Pliny and Homer.¹⁵ According to a French authority, it came from Asia Minor with King Midas and was brought into France by Charlemagne. John Parkinson, writing in the seventeenth century, says that it was brought into England "by Nicolas Lute, a worthy merchant of London and a great lover of flowers".¹⁶ Known as the "red rose of Provence" because it was grown in that part of France

it is excellent for purposes of distillation, for it yields a much greater quantity of scented water than any other variety. Because of its sweet odor and the abundance of its bloom, it has always been a garden aristocrat. The flowers, whose incurving petals form a slightly globular

bloom, faintly resemble a cabbage, which accounts for the rather inappropriate name of "cabbage rose " sometimes applied to it.

The damascena, named from the garden city of Damascus, is one of the oldest in history. Originating in the Orient, probably India, it was brought to Italy by the Phoenicians, and its cultivation spread to Europe sometime during the Crusades.¹⁷ A French writer maintains that as it was brought to France in 1254 after the seventh Crusade, by Thibaut IV, Count of Champagne, and the Earl of Lancaster was his friend, this rose and not the gallica, is the red rose of the House of Lancaster.¹⁸ It is impossible to determine when this rose was introduced into England, although Hakluyt mentions that it was "brought in by Dr. Linaker,¹⁹ Henry seventh and king Henry eighths physician". With its large pink petals flung wide to the sun, disclosing pale yellow stamens, it is one of the loveliest of roses. Gerarde speaks of it as being "common to English gardens",²⁰ and Parkinson remarks about its flowers "of a fine deepe blush color and sweete scent."²¹ As with the gallica, there were versicolored varieties of the damascena known then. There is a tradition that about the time of the wars of the Roses, there appeared in English gardens a rose bush with striking peculiarities; it bore large, double, richly fragrant flowers, either wholly white or wholly red or a pleasing combination of both on one plant. Since the blossoms



Fig.5 The Rose of York and Lancaster

combined the colors of the rival houses of York and Lancaster, it was hailed as a token of peace between them. It was named "York and Lancaster" and cherished in Tudor gardens.

The *rubiginosa*, known as sweetbrier or eglantine, is the favorite rose of the poets, who love its evanescent odor. Of French descent, its name comes from "aig-lent", a prickle. It seems to antedate every other rose of European origin, for old writings indicate that it has grown along highways and byways, in monastery gardens and in those of cottage and palace, since history began. The flower of poetry and romance, it appears in the literature of all the world. It grows abundantly on the chalk cliffs of England, and though it bears only small, single blooms, it captivates everyone with the delicate, haunting fragrance of its leaves, which is especially noticeable in the damp English air.

The *moschata* or musk rose is a native of North Africa, where it has always been prized for its odor. It is named for its faint musky smell unlike that of any other plant. According to Hakluyt, it was "brought out of Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century by Henry eight's physician along with turkey cockes and hennes".²³ Flowering in July, it has delicate, single, white flowers slightly tinged with pink. During the blooming season, the long arching sprays create a cloud of misty white giving rise to the term "snowdrift rose". This was a favorite of the Elizabethans, for they liked this strange musky rose whose fragrance, like that of the sweetbrier, was stronger in damp weather.

All over London, in the rose season, a profusion of bloom confronted even the most casual observer. There were roses everywhere: white roses and yellow roses, roses scarlet, crimson, and vermillion, and roses of a delicate blush shade; large flowers on a single, long stalk, smaller ones in a cluster; bush roses, tree roses, creepers, and climbers; roses foaming over fences, trailing from trellises, and growing sedately along garden paths. London, at this time, was undoubtedly a rose lover's paradise.

In addition to its decorative value in the garden, the rose is the source of an exquisite perfume. Rose-water, the essence of the flower, has always been a valued commodity known in every country where culture is advanced. The process of securing this attar from the rose, the first flower from which perfume was ever made, is supposed to have originated in Persia or Arabia, although nearly every country in which this costly substance is made, claims its discovery.²⁴

A curious Indian legend tells of the lovely Noorjehan, who tossed some rose petals into a garden pool. The sun's rays drew out their essence, and the oily drops lay like froth on the water's surface. Thinking this unsightly, she called a slave who removed the drops and shook them to the ground. Enchanted by the delicate fragrance which filled the air, she quickly skimmed the remaining drops into a vial. The whole seraglio pronounced it delightful and

immediately began imitating the process.²⁵

The art of distillation became very popular and spread to all the neighboring countries. It was introduced into France sometime during the eleventh century, but did not reach England until two centuries later, when there are evidences of rose water being used for seasonings and for washing the hands before meals.²⁶ It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, that rose water was used to any great extent, and then it became a household necessity.

It is easy to see the importance of the rose as a decorative feature of the Elizabethan garden, and even as a source of rose water, but it is difficult to understand just how great a part the rose played in the daily domestic life of the people at this time, unless one realizes that rose petals, dried or distilled, were one of the essential ingredients of a majority of the perfumes, powders, seasonings, sweets, and household remedies of the day. None of these could be purchased, and so it was to the roses that the women of England turned, for these flowers had many cosmetic, culinary, and medicinal virtues. Accounts of expenditures at that time indicate that the purchase of roses, sometimes forty bushels at one time, formed a substantial part of the household expenses.

Cosmetics were not used to any great ex-

tent during the first part of the century, but by the time Mary came to the throne, they were coming into favor. It was customary to scent the bed linen and the outer garments.

Women were partial to perfumed gloves, while the men preferred to scent their jackets and jerkins. Ascham's Herbal, dated 1550, gives a recipe for ²⁷well-smelling water in which the roses were boiled in water. This perfume was considered

fit for a queen, for six years later it is recorded that a bottle of rose water was among the gifts that Mary received for New Years. ²⁸

Later in the century, the making of rose water became so important that the well-to-do used an alembic or still of tinned copper instead of boiling the petals in water over an open fire. This utensil was expensive but considered a necessity for every family of any dignity. In Delights for Ladies, written by Sir Hugh Plat, "To adorne the Persons, Tables, Closets, and Distillatories, with Beauties, Banquets, Perfumes, and Waters", he makes the suggestion that thrifty house-wives "who desire to make rose water good cheap at Michaelmas", buy the roses when they find a glut of them in the market, and "keep them in stone

²⁹potts untill needed". Rose water was used to make ³⁰delicate washing balls and sope". Scented candles were also used to

"helpe against the plague and venom" and to burn "against the corruption of the aire"³¹. When smells became bad, rose petals were strewn on the floors or burned on hot embers. If the smell remained, the lady could hold a pomander or a rose-scented sweet ball to her nose. Rose petals were dried as

a basis for "sweet powders for the face". There were many and varied directions for this process. One recipe advised taking the roses "after they have layen for two or three days and put them in a dish and sett them on a chafering dish and keeping them stirred untill drie"³², but Sir Hugh Plat, with characteristic, masculine directness, suggested putting them "in a pott well leaded, by the chimney where they will dry exceeding faire", or if one would like to use them immediately, "lay them in the oven from which you have newly taken out the bread."³³



here are evidences of roses being used for cooking, in England, as early as the fourteenth century but then only by royalty and the upper classes. A Form of Curry, a vellum roll of cookery, compiled by the Master cooks of Richard II, was presented to Queen Elizabeth during her reign. Directions were very vague and exact amounts were seldom given. A sauce was to be seasoned with "rose water eynough", and the "messe seethed the space of a mile or more,"³⁴ which no doubt meant enlisting the aid of a scullery maid or a serving boy to run the mile while the cook stirred until his return.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, roses were used for culinary purposes to some extent by all classes. Secrets for seasoning, preserving, and candying were very valuable, however, and zealously guarded by the

housewife. It was not until the middle of the century that recipes were written down and published. In Bullein's Bulwarke and Plat's Delightes for Ladies, which contained all kinds of "rare and profitable experiments and inventions", there are many quaint old recipes for distillation, preserving, and seasoning.

The Elizabethans were very fond of sweets, and roses -- buds, petals, and hips -- were made into many kinds of confits and sweetmeats. Hips of the dog rose were mashed and made into a sweet conserve, and buds and petals of any variety were preserved in syrup or pickled in vinegar. Candied shoots of the sweetbrier were considered to be a very great delicacy. Pastes, to use in confections, were made by boiling the rose petals in sweetened rose water, or by bruising the petals in a mortar and adding sugar. To make Rose Plate, which could be cut into fancy shapes, gum arabic was added.³⁵ In Delightes for Ladies, there is an interesting recipe "to make marchpane, to cast off into molds of birds, beasts, or other fancies."³⁶ Tea cakes, called Jamellos, made of sugar, caraway seeds, and rose water, and macaroons of almond flour moistened with rose water were very popular; but if the hostess wished to impress her guests, she served them rose-flavored gingerbread, gilded.³⁷

Wine was also made in these still rooms. There are many literary references to red rose water wine, and the recipe for a special cordial prepared from sweetbrier roses, supposed to "revivify and strengthen the per-

son", is credited to Queen Elizabeth. It is said that, as a gesture of great friendliness, she gave the secret to Rudolphe II of Austria-Hungary.³⁸

The medicinal merits of the rose have been known for many years. Pliny recorded "thirty-two searching remedies",³⁹ and the virtues of rose hip syrup and powder were known to Europe as early as the ninth century, when the monks made many beneficial preparations from the rose. In fact it is only within the last few centuries that floriculture has been more than a branch of medicine. In olden days, the family doctor was a learned herbalist, and made his own remedies from plants growing in his garden.

It was not until the sixteenth century that there was any mention of the medical properties of the rose, in England. In 1550 Ascham in his Herbal says that "dry roses put to the nose do comforte the braine and the hearte and quencheth spirit",⁴⁰ and Beneche, in his Herbal published two years later, gives recipes for "sugar roses", "syrupe of roses"; and "oyl of roses", as aids to health.⁴¹ William Langham's Garden of Health, published in 1597, repeats that "roses do comforte the hearte";⁴² and Gerard's Creste Herbal, printed the same year, has three chapters on the medical uses of the rose. In a list of the Virtues of red roses,² he says "they strengthen the hearte and helpe the trembling thereof; they staunch the blood in any part of the

body; they strengthen the kidneys and other weak entrails.¹¹⁴³
 This book also has elaborate directions for making conserve of roses to cure catarrh, and for honey of roses to be used for a sore throat.. Gerard also advocated rose hip powder, in small doses as an aid to digestion and in large doses as a purgative.⁴⁴

These claims for the beneficial powers of the rose seem fantastic to the mid-twentieth century with its wealth of miracle-working drugs and its knowledge of the causes and the cures of so many of the ills which afflict mankind. Yet recently there has been positive proof of the medicinal value of the rose, for chemical analyses show that the petals contain beneficial salts and acids,⁴⁵ and during the last war Britain had good reason to be grateful for the roses in which the country abounds. In 1941, when fruit was almost impossible to obtain, it was suggested that rose syrup be substituted. Chemists discovered that the vitamin content of this syrup was much greater than that of orange juice, and so the women and the Boy Scouts picked thousands of tons of rose hips which were made into syrup to provide precious vitamins for the children of Britain.⁴⁶ It was probably this vitamin content which made the "syrups and oyls of roses" of Tudor times such a universal panacea.



SUMMARY

The inhabitants of Britain seem always to have been interested in gardening. From Anglo-Saxon times through the Norman Conquest and even during the feudal period, when fortified castles left little scope for gardens, the English have had at least a plot for kitchen herbs and a few flowering plants. In the early sixteenth century because of the influence of the Renaissance, the great increase in wealth, and the introduction of new plants from foreign lands, interest in gardening was stimulated. By Elizabeth's time, the flower garden had gained importance, and promoted to a place of distinction, it became the pursuit of even great men and sovereigns.

Flower gardens mean roses and though many were known only seven varieties were common to English gardens. The first, *rosa canina*, is indigenous to England and grows all over the country-side; the second, *rosa alba*, is the white rose of York; the third, *rosa gallica*, is the red Lancastrian rose; the last four, except the *eglantine*, which is a native of Europe, were imported from the East; the *centifolia* from Asia Minor, the *damascena* from the Orient, and the *moschata* from North Africa.

These roses, like all roses everywhere, had beauty and fragrance which everyone appreciates, but these in Tudor times had an additional qualification which we can scarcely realize; they played a useful part in the daily life of the people. In sixteenth century English life, roses were

a necessity as well as an ornament, for rose petals, dried or distilled, formed the basis of many of the cosmetic, culinary, and medicinal preparations of the times. Sweet powders for the face and washing balls were made with rose water, while the dried petals were used in most of the confits and confections. Sixteenth century books are full of quaint old recipes for various uses of the rose. There are even references to "old red rose water wine", which sounds rather innocuous for the robust men of that day.

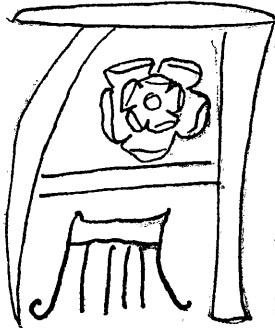
The use of the rose as a medicine is as old as history. Pliny records thirty-two remedies made from the flower, and rose hip powder and syrup were known in Europe as early as the ninth century. There is no mention of the medicinal powers of the rose in England until the middle of the sixteenth century, when Herbals began to print directions for using the rose "to comforte the braine and strengthen the heart", and as a cure for coughs, colds, and catarrh. One need not scoff at this belief in the curative power of the rose, for recent chemical experiments have revealed that roses, either in powder or syrup form, have beneficial vitamins and acids in the petals and the fruit.

Loved for its beauty and esteemed for its usefulness, the rose occupied a place of importance in Tudor England never equalled by any other flower, before or since. Thus it is easy to understand its extensive use as a royal emblem, as a decorative design, and as a symbol of perfection in literature.

The Rose as an Emblem

"They are the most ancient and knowne roses to our country whether natural or no, I know not but assumed by our precedent kings of all others to be the cogizance of their dignitie, the white rose and the red."

—John Parkinson, Paradisus Terrestris



As an emblem of royalty, the rose assumed a position of prominence under the Tudors. An emblem, in its classical sense, was an inserted ornament with some definite significance. The necessity of having a distinguishing sign in time of battle seems to have been behind the early emblematic devices, which were first used to indicate some desired quality such as strength or courage, as exemplified by the lion of Judah or the Roman eagle.¹

During the Crusades, when many knights, completely sheathed in armor, came together for battle or tournament, the closed helmet concealed the face. This situation, coupled with the fact that surnames were coming into use, made it necessary for the individual to adopt some distinctive badge as a means of identification.² Badges depicted on helmets became crests and served to distinguish the bearer in battle, while those on shields became arms, and were worn by the knight's retainers or supporters.³ The application of badges to armor gave rise to the term "armorial bearings", which, when dis-

played on the outer garment covering the armor, made this surcoat literally a "coat of arms."⁴ Heraldry, the science of blazoning coats of arms with charges or devices of animals, figures, or flowers to display the exploits of chivalry, became systematized in England about the twelfth century. By this time, the meaning of emblem having changed, as meanings often do, it could be a thought or even a sentiment, and by Tudor times, it could signify an actual event.⁵ But in any case the device was always intensely personal.

The rose was of great importance as a heraldic charge. Always the conventional one of five petals, displayed with no stalk, shown in full bloom in natural colors of red or white, with the bud in the center and five points to indicate thorns, it is an exact representation of the wild rose of the hedge row, in which the intervening spaces between the petals are clearly discernible.⁶ The rose was worn as an emblem of nobility acquired with difficulty, for it was given as a reward of valor, a reminder that gentleness and nobility of character are the true companions of courage.⁷

In glowing colors the rose of heraldry paints a picture of the feudal history of England, for although Henry VII was the first king to use the rose as a royal emblem, he was not the first to use it as a personal ensign. As early as 1277, Prince Edward, the Earl of Lancaster and later Edward I, whose mother came from the famous rose-growing country

of Provence, used a golden rose as his device.⁸ After he became king, he chose the red rose to distinguish his standard in battle. At his death his tomb was covered with red roses, and his chapter house at York Minster has this inscription over the doorway: "As the rose is the flower of flowers so is this the House of Houses."⁹ With this Edward, the red rose became hereditary.¹⁰ Known as the "red rose of Lancaster," it was used by all succeeding generations including John of Gaunt, who was the first Duke of Lancaster. John's brother, Edmund Langley, Duke of York, chose a white rose to distinguish his branch of the family.¹¹ This rose was worn in varying devices by all the members of his house. To it Richard I added the motto "dieu et mon droit", which had been a military password, and Richard II combined it with the falcon of York.¹² Edward IV, known as the "rose of Rouen", used it "en soleil", that is, displayed in the center of a sun's rays, to commemorate a Yorkist victory where he saw three suns rolled into one.¹³ He was very popular and at his coronation, the people sang this song:

Had not the rose of Rouen been
 All England had been dour
 Yblessed be the time God ever made that flower .¹⁴

In 1452 the red rose and the white came into tragic significance through the Wars of the Roses. Richard III, Duke of York, displaying a white rose on his shield, maintained that his house had a nearer title to the throne than the reigning monarch. Henry VI, a Lancastrian, with the red rose as his badge, challenged this claim.¹⁵ Flowers in full bloom

The Red Rose

Edward I

Edward II

Edward III

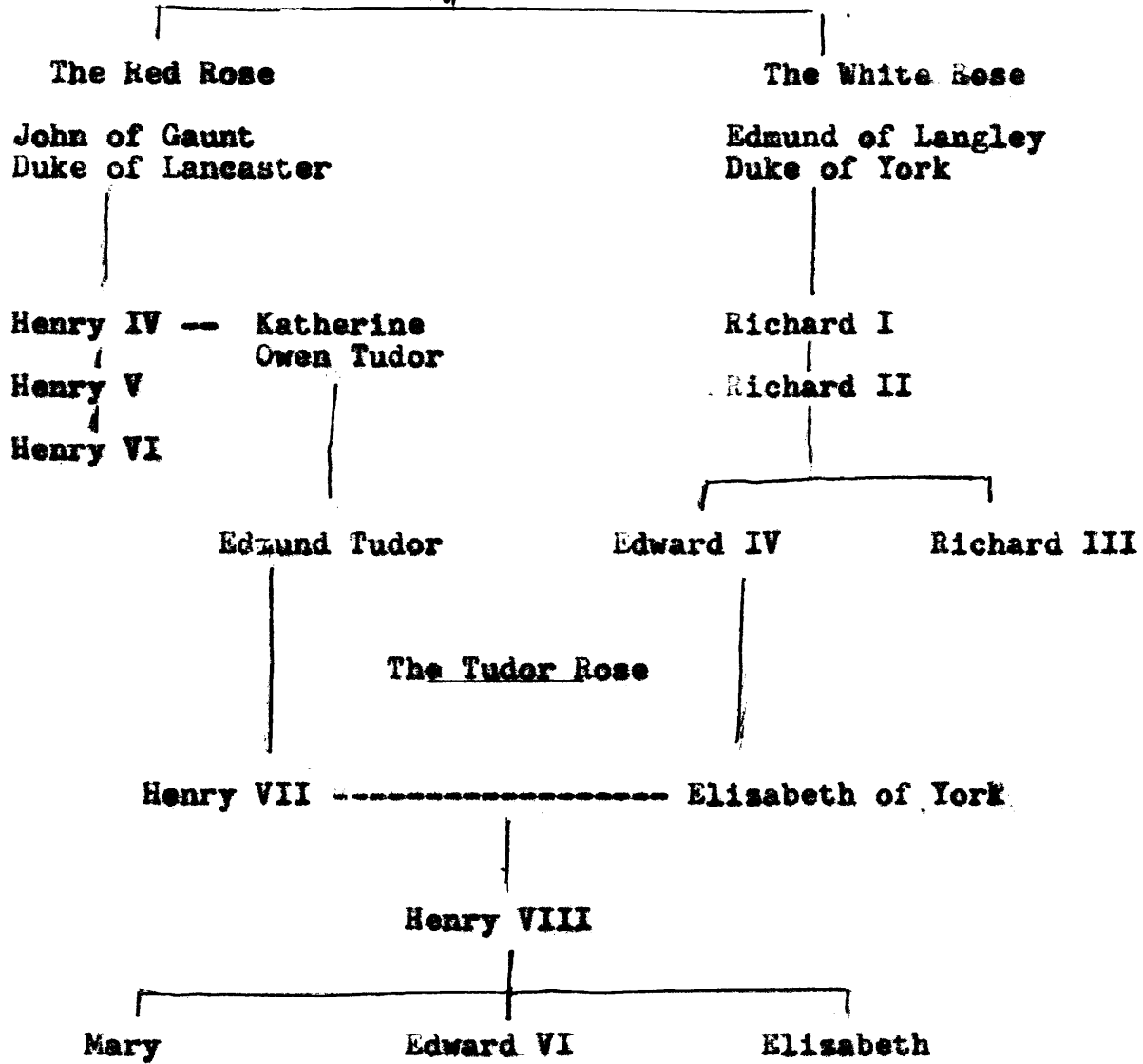


Fig. 6 The Rose and the Kings of England

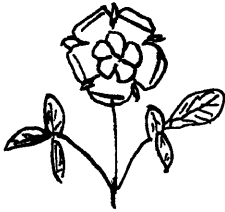
were plucked and worn as emblems of loyalty by the followers of each side, and thus were revived the red and white roses of heraldry.¹⁶

This war raged for thirty years until Richard III was defeated at Bosworth Field and his crown placed on the head of Henry Tudor, whose claim to the throne as the last remaining scion of the house of Lancaster was acknowledged by his supporters.¹⁷ As Henry VII, he gained the allegiance of the Yorkists by marrying Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, and the long period of bloody strife was ended.

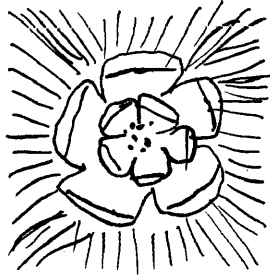


To celebrate this union of the two warring houses, Henry VII combined the white rose of York with the red rose of Lancaster, and a double rose, a white one charged on a red, "the rose of snow 'twined with her blushing foe," became the royal emblem. This blended Tudor rose appeared in many ways.¹⁹ Sometimes it was crowned, and sometimes it was "en soleil", reminiscent of the Yorkist badge of Edward IV. As a charge, it was worn singly covering the entire shield; per pale, down the center; or quarterly and counter-charged to display different coats of arms on one escutcheon. It could be a red rose within a white or a white within a red, but it was always double.²⁰ Henry added the Tudor rose to the Order of the Garter, and it became customary for members of this illustrious order to encircle their arms with the

THE ROSE OF HERALDRY



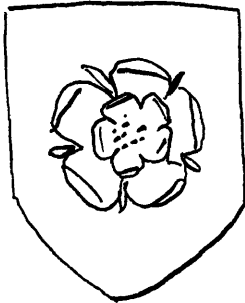
slipped and leaved



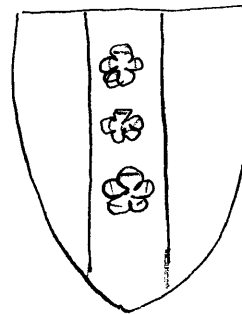
en soleil



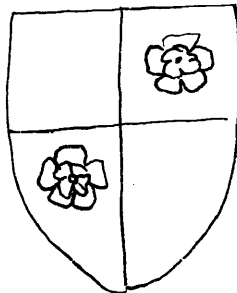
barbed and seeded



singly




per pale



quarterly and counter-charged

Fig. 7 The Rose as a Charge

garter.²¹ Gartered shields were common. One belonging to Henry VIII consists of twenty-six small garters of the sovereign and twenty-five knight companions, each enclosing a rose, a red within a white and then a white within a red, alternating with gold knots. This insignia of the garter appears on the walls of St. George's Chapel at Windsor.²² Combined with the portcullis, the badge of Henry's distinguished ancestors, the Beauforts, this Tudor rose also forms the main motif of his memorial chapel at Westminster..

enry VIII made little alteration in the royal badge. He used the Tudor rose crowned and combined with the portcullis. Being Welsh, he often added the cock of Wales, and as he considered himself king of France though England held only Calais, he sometimes quartered the fleur-de-lys with the rose on his royal shield. When he married Katherine of Aragon, he united the rose with her personal ensign of the pomegranate, which she continued to use open to disclose the Tudor rose.²³ The badges of three of Henry's other wives also included the Tudor rose: that of Anne Boleyn, a silver falcon standing on a tree trunk from which emerged a branch of red and white roses; that of Jane Seymour, a castle topped by a phoenix with red and white roses on each side; and that of Catherine Parr, his last wife, a segment of a triple-petalled rose surmounted by a maiden's head crowned.²⁴

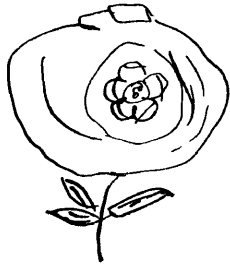
Henry VIII³⁵ aided in the growth of the middle classes by crushing the old baronage and creating a new peerage. Many of the new arms included the rose to indicate loyalty to the crown. Both he and his father considered the rose to be a reward of royal approval rather than of personal merit, so the privilege of incorporating it in a coat of arms was given to indicate industry, patriotism, or some special service to the king, and not as a testimony of nobility of character, as it had been in the days of Chivalry. William Cope, cofferer to Henry VII, was allowed to place a white rose on a blue chevron between three red roses, on his badge,²⁵ and the arms of Wolsey, who was Cardinal under Henry VIII,²⁶ display a Tudor rose.

It is said that whereas his father saved, Henry VIII spent. He was very fond of pomp and pageantry, and lived much like the romantic conception of a prince. To honor his first wife, Katherine, on the birth of a son, he staged a spectacular affair with much color and music, and devices of the king everywhere in evidence. He had built a "faire house covered with tapestrie and there was a curious fountain and over it a castell, all the embattling with roses and pomegranates gilded. Then followed a device like a turret wrought of gold and the top whereof was spread with roses and pomegranates".²⁷ In the seventh year of his reign, he held a "Royal Mayinge", a particularly costly pageant, in which his emblems as well as those of the queen, were prominently displayed.²⁸

Tilting on horse back and fighting afoot across a barrier were popular diversions. Henry himself owned a set of tilting armor presented to him as a wedding present by the Emperor Maximilian. It was elaborately engraved with his favorite devices, the portcullis and the pomegranate together with the Tudor rose.²⁹

Tournaments, which played so colorful a part in the splendor of the Middle Ages, flourished under the Yorkist and Lancastrian regimes, but under Henry VIII they reached the height of heraldic display. Many jousts were held at Westminster. Traill tells of one held in 1510: "Now after queene with her traine of ladies had taken their places, was conveyed a pageant of a great quantity made like a forest. In the midst of this forest was a castell standing made of gold and before the castell sat a gentleman freshlie apparelled making a garland of roses for the prize."³⁰

Knights came from far places to vie with one another in brilliance and bravery. No identification was possible save by color and design; so each knight was gaily caparisoned, displaying his distinguishing devices on helmet, shield, and surcoat, and the trappings of his gallant charger were no less colorful than his own. What a splendid array of ceremonial crests and armorial bearings these jousts must have been, as with trumpets blaring and banners waving, thousands of knights streamed across the field, presenting an unparalleled picture of medieval magnificence.



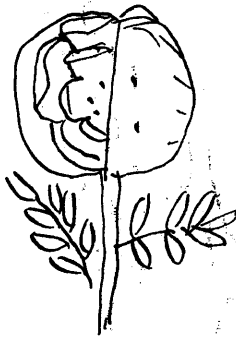
Katherine of Aragon



Anne Boleyn



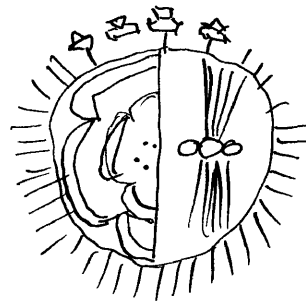
Jane Seymour



Henry VIII



Catherine Parr



Queen Mary

Fig. 8 Tudor Badges.



Henry's young son Edward also used the red and white double rose of the Tudors during his short reign, and at his death, a window, on which a wreath of roses surmounted a plume of ostrich feathers, was installed to his memory at St. Dunstan's church.³¹ Mary, who succeeded him, combined the Tudor rose with a sheaf of arrows as her device.³²



When Elizabeth came to the throne, she first used her mother's ensign and later a double rose crowned.³³ To this she sometimes added the thistle for Scotland and the harp for Ireland. In spite of the loss of Calais, she felt that England still had some claim to France and considered herself the "Sovereign Ladie Elizabeth by grace of God of England, France, and Ireland Queene Defender of the Faith", and indicated her belief by using as her royal badge the fleur-de-lys, the harp, and the rose crowned.³⁴ She paid great honor to the rose. Several coins of her reign show its imprint and the words "rosa sine spina", and the Great Seal, used from 1556 to the end of her rule, shows her seated with roses of York and Lancaster on either side.³⁵ Even in death she continued to pay homage to this flower, for Tudor roses are incised on the corners of her coffin in Westminster Abbey.³⁶

Thus, under the Tudors, the red and white heraldic roses of York and Lancaster were blended into one double rose, which became England's royal and national flower, and to this day, this red and white rose remains the emblem of English

royalty, and the symbol of the nobility and the courage of the English people.

Summary

The rose came into use during the Crusades as an emblem of nobility. It was given to a knight as a reward of valor, indicating that beauty of character was the concomitant of courage. Under the necessity of providing a distinguishing mark in time of battle, the kings of England, beginning with the three Edwards, chose this conventional rose of heraldry in natural color as their personal device. This red rose became an hereditary emblem and was used by all members of this Lancastrian house until Edmund, Duke of York, wishing to differentiate between himself and his brother, John of Gaunt, chose a white rose as his personal ensign. These two roses figured in the Wars of the Roses, the struggle between the descendants of these two brothers for the throne of England. Finally, after thirty years of bloodshed, Henry Tudor, the Lancastrian claimant, won the decisive victory and became Henry VII. He then strengthened his position by marrying Elizabeth of York. To celebrate this union and the cessation of hostilities, Henry combined the red rose of Lancaster with the white rose of York into a double red and white rose which became the Tudor emblem. Introduced by Henry VII and popularized by Henry VIII, it became a sign

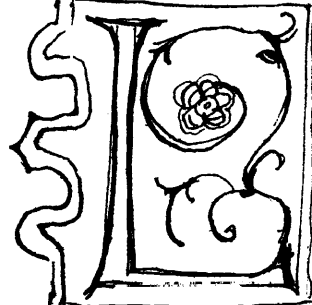
of royal favor rather than an indication of nobility of character. Used in various ways by all the Tudor Sovereigns, this rose remains to this day the emblem of English royalty and the symbol of the English people.



The Rose as an Ornament

"The rose doth deserve the chiefest and most principall place among all floures whatsoever; being not only esteemed for his beauties, virtues and his fragrant smelle but also because it is the honour and ornament of our English Sceptre.

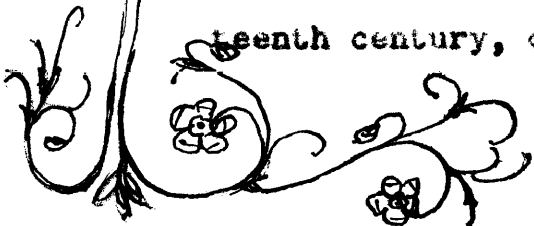
—John Gerarde, Greate Herball.



ong regarded as the most beautiful product of the plant world, the rose naturally became a popular motif in ornamental art.

because it bends and turns at the will of the designer, and the buds, leaves, and blossoms can be conveniently grouped, the wild rose - the dog-rose, the sweetbrier, the bright red gallica - has appeared in simple form in nearly every type of art.

In the Middle Ages this flower, though artificial and conventional, was important architecturally as the boss in the center of Gothic ribbed vaulting, as a running ornament around columns, and as a pattern for the celebrated stained glass rose windows of the Medieval churches. However, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, during the comparatively stable reign



of Henry VII, it was used in a more natural form to give new ideas of beauty to architectural details, for though this age was rugged and life "smelled of blood and roses",¹ man was coming nearer to an appreciation of real loveliness. The rose appeared on gates, railings, drains, and ceiling designs, and is still to be seen on the gates of the Bishop's Chapel at Ely,² in the ornate ceiling of the manor house at South Wraxall, Wiltshire,³ and on the lead sockets and drain pipes of Bramhall House, Cheshire.⁴ It was also sculptured over niches and on effigies.⁵

At this same time the rose achieved architectural significance as a central ceiling ornament. Because of the old legend that Harpocrates, the god of Silence, was bribed with a beautiful rose to reveal nothing of the amours of Venus, it was customary for the Greeks and Romans to hang a rose over the banquet table when secrecy was enjoined.⁶ In Tudor times it was often carved on the ceilings of council chambers, confessionals, and banquet halls to indicate that confidences expressed there must not be divulged. It still appears on the dining room ceilings of many old houses, and even today any design which forms the basis of the shaft of the chandelier is known to architects as the "rose".⁷

After the death of Henry VII, his son Henry VIII, gay and charming, came to the throne. He had caught the meaning of the new spirit of the times, so the old shackles of traditional thought were thrown off and a new order prevailed. The first indication of the change in architecture was the

addition of foliage to flower design and the appearance of vigorous ornament, especially heraldic devices, which not only were highly decorative and expressive but also satisfied a deep desire for meaning in decoration. They spoke to the imagination and revealed at a glance important events, historical situations, and family loyalties. By the first quarter of the sixteenth century, heraldic badges, particularly the Tudor rose, were apparent in many buildings. They were conspicuous in chapel decoration and may be seen in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, and in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, but the most outstanding example is Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster. It is here that one realizes the truth of the statements of Lewis Day, an authority on architectural design, that "as a model of conventional treatment the Tudor rose must always hold a very high place"; and that the treatment of it is "at once traditional and distinctly individual".

The chapel is filled with Tudor roses in a great variety of forms. Wherever one looks is a rose painted red or white, or wrought in wood, gold, silver or bronze. There are roses with angels and roses with arch-angels; there are roses on choir stalls and roses on columns; even the candle sconces are roses in a horizontal position. The doors, which are really iron gates, show the badges of falcon and portcullis combined with the roses of York and Lancaster.

Last July, King George VI dedicated the



Fig. 9 A Rose Plaque in Henry VII's Chapel

easternmost part of Henry VII's Chapel to the heroes of the Battle of Britain, which was as much a turning point in history as the defeat of the Spanish Armada in Elizabeth's time.¹⁵ Here, between side walls of canopied niches with half-angels supporting crowned Tudor badges, England pays tribute to her heroic dead. The window in the east wall, shattered by a German bomb, has been replaced by forty-eight stained and painted glass panels representing the armorials of all the squadrons which took part in the battle, together with figures of the airmen, the dead Christ, and the Sorrowing Virgin.¹⁶

Though each panel is distinct, the branches of a rose tree encircle each group, and this background of a rose tree on which red and white Tudor roses bloom, representing the country for which these men died and the hope of everlasting life, binds all the parts together in one glorious, unified design.

Heraldic devices also appeared in domestic architecture. The cold and cheerless castles of the Middle ages, devoted primarily to defense, were no longer needed in the peaceful sixteenth century, and as the new aristocracy could well afford to build magnificent mansions, the old feudal fortresses gave way to the pomp and grace of the Elizabethan manor houses. Extremely ornate and profusely decorated, they were often further embellished with the family arms or those of the reigning sovereign. Hope, in his book on heraldry, speaks about Gilling Castle, York, built in 1585, which has the armorials of Queen Elizabeth as well as those of the builder on a frieze of wall panelling.¹⁷ In this new type of architecture, people could indulge to the fullest extent their

love for spirited design so characteristic of the period. Gate-houses, towers, porches, windows, and doorways were extensively ornamented with heraldic devices and family arm-
 orials. The Tudor rose is still to be seen in many famous
 old buildings: in the windows of Broughton Castle, Axon; ¹⁸
 over ¹⁹
 the windows of Winchester School; in the stained glass windows
 of the Royal Gallery of the Houses of Parliament; ²⁰
 and in the ²¹
 royal arms of Henry VIII over the doorway of Norwich Cathedral.

By this time, sculpture, an important adjunct of architecture, was naturally also ornamental in the extreme; and the wild rose, which as a design, had been more or less conventional, was now reproduced with as much likeness to na-
 ture as possible. ²² This advance can be seen in the commemora-
 tive tablet to the brothers Dudley in Beauchamp Tower, in
 which the rose wreath to Ambrose Dudley is striking in its
 vigorous lines and accurate representation. ²³

With all this interest in form, color and design, it seems strange that the art of painting was so neglected. There were few English artists of any note, and even the court painters were nearly all Flemish, while the craftsmen, the gold and ivory carvers, and the makers of stained glass, were French and Italian. In the sixteenth cen-
 tury, when the English love of color and vigorous ornament should have expressed itself noticeably, it shows only in a few lesser media.

It appears in portraits, the chief product of the artist's brush, where we see the rose in connection with the Order of the Garter. Pictures of Lord Burghley and the Earl of Leicester distinctly show the rose with the Garter insignia.²⁴

It also appears in the rose design of the painted glass windows of this period. On increasingly larger sheets of glass, the artist applied his paints as if using canvas. Although the results did not equal the jewel-like patterns and rich glowing colors of the earlier, translucent, mosaic rose windows,²⁵ there are two outstanding examples of this art in the windows of Salisbury and Canterbury Cathedrals.²⁶ Here, the rose, painted directly on glass, presents all the beauty of the real flower, when viewed from inside the church in the bright light of the sun.

The reign of Elizabeth, which was luxurious and vain, did produce the miniaturists. . . Chief of these was Nicolas Hilliard, who, in a very small compass, managed to capture the sensuous exuberance of the period. Some of his pictures indicate the common association of the rose with love and portray the love-sick gallant leaning against a tree entangled in a red rose vine. In his portrait of Queen Elizabeth, which is bright with jewels, the rose shows prominently on the bodice of her gown.²⁷

From these few examples, it is evident that the rose was so universally loved and admired that it appears often even in painting, the art least popular in England at this time.

In such an ornament-loving age, embroideries were bound to be popular, and English women adorned their household linens with crests and emblems. Coverlets, tapestries, and wall hangings were also decorated with fanciful heraldic designs.²⁸ Wall hangings evolved from the old custom of shield-stacking. Wherever knights congregated, for battle or for tournament, they always stacked their shields against the wall of the banquet hall while they dined, and hung them, together with their banners, from the windows of their lodgings.²⁹ Accustomed to seeing these colorful ensigns on display, the women naturally copied them in their handiwork. Occasionally a trellis, on which roses twined and butterflies hovered, formed the background for a scene or for a family event,³⁰ but for the most part, heraldic devices, particularly the Tudor rose, predominated in the patterns on these heavy draperies which hung on the drafty castle walls. A tapestry at St. Mary's Hall in Coventry showing Henry VII and his wife Elizabeth has the Tudor rose design in the border.³¹

This love for the beautiful and the ornate, which was given an impetus by the very popular emblem books, such as Geoffrey Whitney's, A Choice of Emblems, and Allciat's, Emblems, is even more apparent in the interiors of the manor house. The Tudor rose was carved over doors and windows, it appeared on ceiling decorations and in panellings which had replaced the embroidered hangings on the old castle walls.

The royal arms of Henry VIII with the Tudor rose and his motto, "dieu et mon droit," decorate a large panel in the drawing room of New hall in Essex.³² Mantles were always decorated with ornate patterns, for the fireplace was the main feature of the sixteenth century mansion. Here again the rose, either alone or combined with fruit, figures, or armorial bearings, was a favorite design. The Tudor rose is the main theme of the mantle decoration of the impressive fireplace in Tattersall Castle, Lincolnshire.³³ Firebacks to use with these fireplaces were another means of displaying the family arms. One made for Queen Elizabeth has "E.R." on either side of the motto, "honi soit qui mal y pense", and shows the cock for Wales, the fleur-de-lys for France, the harp for Ireland, and the rose for England quartered on a shield with greyhound supporters.³⁴ The Tudor rose was also used to decorate the heavy, beautifully carved furniture. It appeared on chests, cupboards, chairs, and four-poster beds.³⁵ Carpets instead of rushes now covered the floors of the houses, and painted glass had replaced the erst-while latticed windows. The rose pattern was common for adorning both carpets and windows, and it was also extensively used on china and silver. In many museums today are examples of this design on weights, measures, keys, sword handles, tankards and salt dishes. In fact, so widespread and various were the uses of this flower as a decorative design, that it is no exaggeration to say that it appeared wherever it was possible to place any kind of ornamentation.

Although ornamental heraldic devices, which originated in the Crusades, had an immediate relation to war, in the reign of Henry VII, they began to adorn the garments of peace. With the increase in national wealth and the sense of security which accompanies peace, men and women became more interested in dress, and found bright costume a means of self-expression. Coats of arms had great decorative value, and so heraldic devices, in bright colors and fanciful designs, decorated the clothing of all classes. The red and white Tudor rose was very popular, especially among the nobility who were loyal supporters of the king. In contrast to the latter part of the century, clothes were comparatively simple. The women wore the arms of their own house embroidered on their gowns, which were girdled with a chain from which hung a rosary or a pomander.³⁶ It was also customary for a wife to wear her husband's armorials on her cloak, covering those on her dress. Head coverings consisted of a hood, ribbon, or flower fillet.³⁷

As wealth increased, clothes became more extravagant, and the rose motif appeared in jewels and gold thread. Henry VIII delighted in a brocaded doublet covered with roses appliqued with fine gold bullion, and on a waistcoat of purple satin, he had his initials and Tudor roses embroidered in gold thread.³⁸ This rose pattern appeared again and again in the costume of both men and women. It adorned gowns, canes, jackets, caps and gloves. A cap in the Victor-



Fig. 10 Costume of the Time of Henry VIII Showing Rose Design.

ia and Albert Museum has the Tudor rose as the principal design.³⁹ In Mary's time, the women delighted in carrying small bunches of fragrant roses and violets. Traill speaks of them "carrying in their hands nosegays and posies to smell at and to stick in their breasts before."⁴⁰ In Elizabeth's reign, clothes were fantastic. A woman was not fashionably dressed unless her gown had bulky sleeves and the skirts bellied out over an enormous farthingale, opening to show an embroidered under dress heavy with a floral pattern in gold or colored threads. In addition to gigantic ruffs, they were fond of wigs topped by wreaths of roses set in gold or silver,⁴¹ and with this elaborate toilette, they used elaborate toilet articles. These were often of gold or ivory and were adorned with fanciful pictures of knights and ladies holding roses or sitting in a rose garden.⁴²

Queen Elizabeth was very fond of clothes and had a varied and extensive wardrobe. At that time embroidered gloves were considered a necessary part of the costume and it is recorded that she was presented with a pair heavily embroidered with the Tudor rose, when she made a trip to Oxford in 1566.⁴³ Among her three thousand gowns was one of particular interest. It was decorated with birds, beasts, species of marine life, and roses to indicate the far-flung horizons of her empire.⁴⁴ Recently another Elizabeth wore a gown every bit as gorgeous, if not so fantastic; for when Princess Elizabeth became the bride of Phillip of Greece, her satin wedding gown was "set with pearl and crystal designs



Fig. 11 Costume of the Time of Elizabeth Showing Rose Design.

and just below the waist it was entwined with garlands of York roses, symbolic of the House of York, over which her father presided before he became king.⁴⁵"

Queen Elizabeth's fabulous gowns were rivalled only by the dazzling costumes of her courtiers, which were the most colorful and spectacular in all English history. The men were resplendent in silks, velvets, and cloth of gold. Breeches and doublets were slashed and decorated with amazing richness. Often the rose pattern, which was still a favorite, was applied in pure gold. The gallant of Elizabeth's time went swaggering about in bombasted breeches and embroidered doublet, with great slashed roses on his shoes and a rose stuck jauntily behind his ear.⁴⁶

There was also a secondary system of heraldry used by dependents and followers. They wore the badges of their king, liege lord, or kinsman embroidered on their jackets or doublet. Servants wore the badge on the left sleeve.⁴⁷ At this time a yeoman in the king's service would wear, under his red York coat, a tight fitting doublet with a Tudor rose embroidered front and back, or pinned on his coat.⁴⁸ This mark of identification is still worn by the Yeomen of the Guards and the Beefeaters of the Tower.⁴⁹

Even in the quiet of the cloister, the classical scholars, who were usually monks, could not escape the charm and lure of the rose, and they studied and made pictures of



Fig. 12 Costume of a Tudor Yeoman Showing the Rose as a Badge.

many plants and illuminated their vellums with ornamental borders of the branches and blossoms of the sweetbrier and other wild roses. Miniatures and capital letters in red, blue, and green were often added to mark the chapter headings. These books, patiently inscribed by hand, were scarce and expensive. In the late fifteenth century, books printed by means of movable type, became available to many people. Custom, once established, gives way slowly and even after practical printing was introduced, the early printers continued to make the new books much like the old illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages. The text was printed from type, but the headings, initial letters, and decorative borders continued to be inserted by hand.⁵⁰ Printing opened up a new field for heraldic devices, for the arms of the king and his courtiers, who were the patrons of the literary arts, appeared on the title page, in the decorative lettering and in the border designs.⁵¹ The rose, especially the double one of the Tudors, was a favorite and was used in the decoration of many books and documents of the period. Traill and Mann show an illustration of a border made with Henry VII's badge of a white rose with a red center.⁵² A fine example of heraldry in the printed page is found in the frontispiece of the England and Wales Parliament.⁵³ The Tudor rose is conspicuously placed and dominates the page. Printed during the reign of Henry VIII, this same volume includes many initial letters in which the portcullis and the Tudor rose are combined.⁵⁴ (See section on the Rose as an Emblem)

Gradually the printed book worked itself away from imitation of the old manuscripts and developed a form of its own. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the features of the previous century, the initial letters, the decorated borders, and the illustrations were transferred to the title page.⁵⁵ Wood cuts for borders and initials

were used instead of the elaborately hand printed ones.

These designs, cut in wood and printed with the type were called "printer's flowers", and could be built together to form various borders as well as ornamental panels. Here again the rose was the favorite and was twined within initial letters, curved around borders, and added to illustrations.⁵⁶



Summary

As a decorative design, the rose has been used since earliest times in many forms of art, and every age and nation has contributed its share of beauty. To the English Tudor period we owe two of the most important changes in rose presentation: first, foliage was added, allowing a system of flowing tracery, which provided inexhaustible interest

without monotony; second, the artificial, conventional rose pattern of the Middle Ages was changed to a semblance of the natural flower.

These advancements show chiefly in the arts in which the English were most interested: in architecture, domestic and religious; in textiles and costuming; in the decoration of houses, both inside and out; and in printed books and documents. In all these the English, though receiving their inspiration from the Italian, always added their own vigorous and forceful interpretation. Their art, though Gothic in feeling, was realistic in treatment. The double Tudor rose was a particularly happy inspiration, for it proved to be very adaptable looking equally well whether stiffly carved in a stone border or gracefully decorating a printed page. In using this rose as a design the English showed a subtle feeling for natural symmetry which, though regular, was never absolute.

Of all the buildings still extant, the chapel of Henry VII at Westminster stands pre-eminent as a historic example of the use of the Tudor rose as a basis for ornament, and the stained glass window, recently installed in this chapel in memory of the heroes of the Battle of Britain, illustrates not only the persistence but also the vitality of this motif. Here, the Tudor rose, with foliage adding grace to the design, forms an effective background, binding all the separate parts into

one satisfying, completely unified composition.

In the art of sculpture too, though stone is a more difficult medium than wood, the rose was carved with a great likeness to nature .

As far as domestic architecture is concerned, nearly every shire in England can point to instances of rose decoration on castles, guild halls, and manor houses. Richly ornamented, these buildings show the rose crowned, as part of heraldic devices, combined with fruit or used alone. It can be seen on gates and gate-houses, on chimneys and drain pipes. It also forms an integral part of interior design and appears on ceilings, mantles and panels.

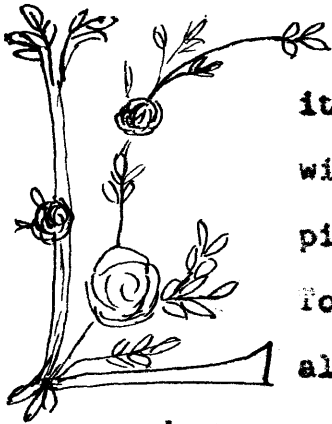
Dress under the Tudors, who maintained a very magnificent style of living , was rich and elegant. Here again the rose was a favorite design. It decorated the silks and brocades of the upper classes, it was embroidered on the garments of the middle classes, and it served as a badge and distinguishing mark on the clothes of servants and retainers.

Even the printers in the exclusively masculine field of book making, could not escape the lure of the rose as an ornamental pattern, and it appeared in books and documents in initial letters, border designs, and on title pages. And the Tudor rose became a typical English design. Whether carved in wood, sculptured in stone, painted on glass, or printed on paper it always had great vitality and displayed a distinctly national character peculiar to England.

The Rose in Literature

"Symbols are the chief means by which the mind expresses ideas, emotions and sensations — and the rose is the natural and appropriate expression of deepest feeling."

—H. F. Dunbar, Symbolism of the Medieval World



literature, unlike art, can not attract the eye with form and color, but must create a mental picture by references to things already known. To do this, the writer, especially the poet, has always sought comparisons in nature. Here the rose reigns supreme. As a symbol, it occupies a unique position in the literary world, for it appears in the writings of all countries, and the word itself, which is practically the same in all languages, possesses a significance which the name of no other flower even remotely approaches. Because of its perfection of form and color, combined with a delightful fragrance, the rose has almost universal meaning. It is the expression of love, beauty, and romance; a symbol of purity and nobility; and everywhere a token of sympathy and devotion.

To understand the various meanings of the rose as a symbol in the literature of sixteenth century England, it is necessary to examine the three streams of influence which breathed new life into this literature, dormant since the time of Chaucer; and uniting with a strong national feeling, resulted in the important literary achievements of the

Elizabethan era. These influences were: the allegory and mysticism of the Middle Ages, the Medieval conception of romantic love, and the flowering of the Renaissance in England.

The first influence, the allegory and mysticism of the Middle Ages, goes back to the beginning of human effort to express ideas pictorially. Symbols, which had allegorical meaning and challenged the imagination, were essential to portray ideas to the people who could not read. In this period of great faith, religion dominated all thinking and the Christian symbols of the fish, the lamb and the rose were the recognized language of Medieval thought. The rose was the chief flower that bloomed in paradise, and to the early Christians it signified heaven and everlasting life.² The red rose spoke of the blood of Christ and of the martyrs;³ the white rose of innocence and purity.⁴ The rose became the emblem of Mary, the rose mystica, or womanhood deified, an accepted simile for the Divine Mother. Many Medieval paintings of the Virgin depict her with roses in her hand or by her side.. St. Dorothea carries roses in a basket and St. Elizabeth, St. Victoria, and St. Rose of Lima wear crowns of roses.⁵

The origin of the rose became associated with miracles connected with saints and the Virgin Mary. As the women worked at their weaving and embroidery, they re-told many of these chronicles of the early Catholic church: how the blood of St. Francis changed prickly briars into rose trees,⁶ and how the Virgin, to save an innocent maid from death, transformed burning branches into red roses and unlighted fagots into white roses.⁷

The old legend, common in many lands, that the red rose was dyed from the blood or tears of a god, also acquired a Christian setting, for it was said that the blood of Christ re-dyed the red rose.⁸

In addition to these stories and legends, religious emotion also found expression in verse. The poets sang of the true and beautiful gifts of nature. They carolled of piety and flowers, "which sprang up naturally" in honor of "the blessed fruit that rain fro the Ros Mary".⁹ In many of the sacred lullabies Mary was the "Virgin fresche as Ros in May", and the "Flower of Pryse",¹⁰ and there was no one¹¹ of such vertue as is the Rose that bare Jesu".

Gradually the idea of a religious coloring for man's life began to fade, and as time went on, these carols became more and more secular until by the end of the fifteenth century there were carols not only for Christmas, but carols for fete days, carols for battles and carols for roses.¹²

The second influence, the Medieval conception of love, had its origin in the twelfth century, when Nicolette watched rose buds opening in a garden. It can be traced through the love cult of the thirteenth century Provencal troubadours, to Chaucer's translation of the Roman de la Rose in the latter part of the fourteenth century. These love songs, based on an encounter of a knight and a lady in a garden, the favorite trysting place of the Medieval romance, followed a rhetorical pattern of conventional symbolism in which the rose was the unattainable lady or the emblem of un-dying affection.

In the Roman de la Rose, the poet is transported

in a dream to a garden. The first fragment, which all scholars agree was written by Chaucer, includes every detail of the exquisite Medieval "rosier", by which the poet would like "to dwellenay." It also mentions "roses rede," "roses brode", and "savour of the roses swote".¹³ Though Chaucer translated the poem from the French of Guillaume de Lorris, the following lines: "Of roses there wer grete wone / So faire waxe never in Rone"¹⁴, do not appear in the original text. Thus it would seem that Chaucer is giving his opinion of the roses of England, whose loveliness is not surpassed even by those of Provence in the Rhone valley, where he had once sojourned when he was with the army of Edward III. This translation helped to popularize the rose in English literature. After its publication, roses bloomed in every love song and scenes from the story were used as decoration on many items, from toilet articles to tapestries.

It was Chaucer who presaged the great upsurge of literary achievement in the sixteenth century for his works show the first sign of a change from Medieval to modern thinking, and like those of the great Elizabethan writers two centuries later,¹⁵ were affected by both French and Italian influences.

The third influence, the flowering of the Renaissance in England, began under the reign of Henry VIII, whose patronage enabled scholars to travel to France and Italy and study the writings of the antique world. These scholars translated Greek and Latin verse and became acquainted with the many allusions to the rose which occur in classical literature. Homer uses the rose to paint the colors of the rising sun and to describe the beauty of youth. To him the morn has "rosy fingers"

and Helen a complexion like a rose. Nearly every Greek poet wrote of the rose. Sappho named it "the queen of flowers",¹⁷ and to Anacreon it was "the sweetest fairest flower of spring". He showed a pagan delight in its color and fragrance. It was the emblem of Venus and the companion of Bacchus. He said of it "It is lovely in its old age as it keeps its first perfume forever. In spite of its many thorns we gather it with delight".¹⁸ Horace and Virgil also placed the "blushing rose" above all other flowers lamenting its fleeting bloom and comparing it, as the Greeks had done, to youthful beauty. Virgil writes that a maiden's coloring "is mixed with roses and lilies."¹⁹ Ovid noted the thorns which accompany the rose and said, that "Prickly thorn oft bears soft roses", and that "when the rose perished, only the thorn remained".²⁰ To the ancients, the rose embodied the deep mystery of life: its thorns and brevity of bloom contrasting with its glowing perfection of form and color, as the bitter sorrows of a transient life contrast with its joys.

These three influences strongly affected the literature of Tudor England. In 1485, when Henry VII came to the throne, English literature had reached its lowest ebb. The Middle Ages were over and the disorders of the fifteenth century were ended, but in spite of the fact that Henry enabled England to achieve a modern outlook politically, the literary trends were still Medieval, for he did nothing

to further the cause of learning. The early Tudor press gave its readers English versions of French romances and re-printed many ballades and rondeaux based on the conceits of the Roman de la Rose, but the English writers themselves made no advances. They continued to use the conventional patterns and allegorical themes of the Middle Ages. They still worshipped the rose, however, and Dunbar, one of the Scottish writers, who at this time eclipsed the English, writes, "Nor hold none other flower in sic dainty as the fresh rose of colour red and white"²¹ His poems show some of the color and vivacity of Chaucer. In To a Lady, he glorifies her as a "Rois of vertue and of gentleness"²². His political allegory, The Thrissel and the Rois, written about the marriage of Margaret Tudor, the "fresche rois" and James IV of Scotland as "the awful thrissel" recognizes the allegorical and emblematic significance of the rose. In the Hymn to the Nativity, he recalls the sacred lullabies of the previous centuries. Jesus is the "bright day ster fro the Rose Mary."²³

At this time there were many anonymous songs and stories of the rose as an emblem of England and as a symbol of virtue. One curious allegory called The Rose of England tells of an eagle saving a rose from an up-rooted garden so that it can be re-planted and bloom again. The Carol of the Seven Virgins mentions "the rose, the gentle rose, and the fennel that grows so green"²⁴. A poem beginning, "Of a rose, a lovely rose, of a rose is all myn song", counsels all the lordynges, both elde and yunge", to listen to a tale of a beautiful rose which is above all other flowers, "Swych a rose

to myn lykyng", which is "Mary hevyn quyn"; and out of "her bosum the blosine sprong"²⁵. This theme has not yet lost its popularity, and is the basis of several Christmas carols which appear in modern hymn books. A traditional melody called "rosa mystica", which was harmonized by Michael Praetorius in 1609, is frequently sung at Christmas time by choirs and choral groups. Its beginning lines are, "I know a rose tree springing, from Jesse comes the root", and it goes on to say that "this rose tree, blossom laden, is Mary spotless maiden, / O flower whose fragrance tender, with sweetness fills the air."²⁶

All these stories and lyrics emanated from the court and the church, and were an expression of the ideas of the upper classes. The folk ballads, so popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were the expression of the feelings of the humble people. These songs were not written down, but survived by repetitional singing. The people had absorbed some of the French feeling of the tragedy and brevity of life, and so these ballads reflected this influence. They were simple, direct, impersonal, very objective, and usually tragic. Through the love songs runs a theme of devotion, which is indicated by a rose bush, the symbol of true love. In the Douglas Tragedy the lovers die but "out of the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose, and out of the knight's a brier"²⁷. Lord Thomas and Fair Annet is a triple tragedy. Lord Thomas shows his preference for Annet "fair with rose water", by laying a rose on her knee. The jealous bride then slays the maiden and is killed by her husband, who ^{later} takes his own life. No more mention is made of the bride, but out of the

graves of Lord Thomas and the fair Annet, grows "a bonny brier".
 In the ballads of Sweet William and Fair Margret's Misfortune,
 rose trees grow out of the lovers' hearts. ²⁹ Barbara Allen,
 which is still being sung, is a story of unrequited love, but
 the spurned lad is with his beloved after death. She pines away
 and is buried beside him. In death they are united, for rose
 trees grew from their hearts up "the church wall till they
 could go no higher"; and then they "tied a true lover's knot,
 the red rose round the brier".³⁰

Henry VIII was a lover of luxury and a patron of learning, and though his reign was no more productive of great literature than that of Henry VII, it marked a period of great expansion in the mind of man. From the very beginning of his rule there was a growing enthusiasm for Greek and Latin culture. Scholars studied and translated Horace, Virgil, and Ovid. The printing presses, instead of turning out French romances of chivalry and Medieval allegories, poured out an avalanche of classical literature. This spread of learning brought about a realization of the importance of man's "humanity", stressed by the ancients, rather than his "divinity", accepted by the Medieval mind. The idea of man's life in the hereafter was transferred to an interest in man's life now, and so thinking, enriched by the influence of the Renaissance, ceased to be Medieval and began to be modern.

At this time it was a sign of great accomplishment to write songs and nearly everyone at court could produce verses on occasion. The lyrists of Henry's court, however, created no school of poetry and the first indication of the approach of literary progress was the appearance of the lyrics of two courtly poets, Sir Thomas Wyatt and his friend Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Although they were both influenced by the Renaissance to the extent of producing various metrical innovations, particularly the English form of the sonnet, their verses showed no originality in content. They translated and imitated Horace and Virgil and in love themes both empty and artificial, they employed the rose as a symbol of a lady's complexion. Upon the white, "The ruddy rose increased with clearer hew, In lips and cheeks right orient to behold."³¹

In the reign of Elizabeth, English literature came into its own. One of the most scholarly women of Europe, she encouraged all forms of literary art, but she had been on the throne for twenty years before the ideas of the Renaissance found expression in the great works of Edmund Spenser. His poems combined Renaissance ideas with the accepted Medieval forms. His Fairie Queene, an allegory with many classical allusions, presents rose imagery in the conventional manner. He paraphrases Virgil in his description of the noble lady's "faire blushing face, as roses did with lilies interlace."

He repeats the pagan idea of the rose's fleeting bloom and the necessity for grasping happiness at the moment in "gather the rose of love whilst yet is time". A Medieval significance of the rose as the emblem of innocence appears in "see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly she doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee." He imitates Anacreon in using the rose to signify luxury, "upon a bed of roses she was laid".³² This same idea is repeated in the Hymn to Love, in which the characters "lie like gods in ivory beds arrayed with roses and lilies over them displayed."³³ In sonnet LXXXI he uses the rose to indicate beauty, "Fair is my love, fair when the rose in her red cheeks appears." In the Epithalamion he describes the bride's complexion by saying, "How the red roses flush up in her cheeks." In the same poem he repeats Homer's "rosy morn", and recalls the Roman use of the "corona nuptialis", when he says, "make garlands for my fayre love of roses and of lilies."³⁴ In two other poems the images are strengthened by the use of subtly suggestive words. Nymphs gather flowers "With store of vermeil roses", and among all the flowers grows "The Rose engrained in pure scarlet dye."³⁵

Another idea in his poetry, which echoes all the classical as well as the contemporary poets, is that roses have thorns. In fact the sixteenth century proverb, "never the rose without the thorn", has its counterpart in every language.³⁶ In sonnet XXVI Spenser says, Sweet is the Rose, but growes upon a brere....Sweet is the Eglantine but pricketh nere".

In the Shepherd's Calendar, Spenser shows the first sign of constructive achievement. A mixture of love,

morality and religion, this poem follows the patterns of the pastoral poets, but it breathes a flavor of England. The shepherds and shepherdesses portray contemporary manners and customs, and the rose images have increased vitality and meaning. Written for Queen Elizabeth, the poem is an apostrophe to her beauty and greatness. Spenser sets upon her head a "Cremoisin coronet". Made of damask roses, which, combined with other flowers as well, are more fitting for an English queen than jewels, it makes an appropriate crown. When he speaks of her angelic face in which "The Redde rose medled (mingled) with the White yfere (together)", the phrase has a two-fold meaning; for besides her complexion, it refers to the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, which resulted in the Tudor line. The line in which the Brere brags of his "flowers....dyed in Lily white and Cremsin redde", presents, "colours meet to clothe a maiden queen".³⁷

In addition to the songs and sonnets of Spenser, a great amount of lyric verse was produced at this time. Lyric poetry, which at the beginning of the century had been sluggish and fitful, was now marked by proficiency and force. Some of the verses, to be sure, were only clever imitations of Greek and Latin epigrams with classical rose imagery, but others, colored by the ideals and sentiments of both the French and Italian interpretations of classical culture, presented new metre forms, varied phraseology, and artistic imagery.

The songs of Anacreon, the Idylls of Bion and Theocritus, the Eclogues of Virgil, and the sonnets of Petrarch, all these had an effect upon the song writers of Elizabeth's time. But since only the scholars knew Greek and Latin,

whereas nearly every English gentleman knew French, most of these ideas came in French dress. In fact, according to Sidney Lee, the French Pleiade, consisting of Ronsard and his followers, taught the English lyricists their trade; for in their poems these French writers had already reproduced Anacreon's pagan delight in life's fleeting joys, and they all paid tribute to the rose.

This French influence on the English song writers was present even as early as Spenser. It appears particularly in his choice of words and phrases, in his poetic images, and in the melodic quality of his verses. It is also apparent in the works of Sir Phillip Sidney who embodied the ideals of the Renaissance in himself as well as in his poetry. He succeeded in combining the older learning with new ideas, so although his writings are marked by the extravagance, the affectation, and the false sentiment characteristic of the times, there is some evidence of real feeling. An eloquent passage in his prose essay, A Defense of Poesy, suggests that he and his fellow poets "bend to the right use of both matter and manner whereto our language giveth us great occasion"; and in the sonnet sequence Astrophel and Stella there are indications of sincerity and true passion. In his rose imagery, he tends to follow traditional patterns. A maid has "rosy moistened lips" and "rose cheekes" and Stella comes like Aurora "with such a rosy morn". In some of the sonnets however, his images show a vividness and originality which make him seem more akin to Shakespeare than any other of the Elizabethan poets. To indicate the pallor of a maiden's complexion he suggests a lack of

roses. In Sonnet CII he asks "where be those roses...how doth the coullor fade?" an idea later used so effectively by Shakespeare. In Sonnet XIII Sidney utilizes heraldic significance to describe Stella's face where "Roses gules are borne in silver fieldes" another idea which also appealed to Shakespeare. In Sonnet C Sidney presents a new idea of tears "making those Lilies and those Roses grow!" He makes use of a contemporary reference to the restorative powers of the rose in Sonnet XXXIX in which sleep can be wooed in "a chamber deafe of noyse" and with "a rosie garland and a wearie head". His reference to the nightingale who "sings out her woes, a thorn her song-booke making"³⁹ indicates that he was conversant with the Eastern legend that this bird sings her sweetest song when her breast is pressed against a rose thorn.

By this time the other-worldliness, which had characterized the Middle Ages, had given way and had been replaced by a modern outlook upon life. Man now was concerned with the actual world of sense and experience. The Elizabethan lyrists particularly, seemed to feel a sensuous delight in color, form, and delicacy of phrase, and their songs displayed an increasing fluency and cadence reminiscent of the lilt and swing of the Italian madrigal. In none, however, was there genuine originality of diction or sentiment. They all either translated literally or paraphrased imitatively, and used conventional rose imagery. Thomas Howell, a minor lyricist, agrees with the ancients that, "Of all the pleasant flowers of spring, / the red rose has no peer"⁴⁰, while John Harington, another, speaks of his mistress' "sweet blushing cheeks", and "cheeks that shame the

rose".⁴¹ Paraphrased from the Italian madrigal, Celiana, comes John Wilbeye's reference to a girl's complexion, "Lady when I beheld the roses sprouting"⁴², and in Praises of this Daphnis, Sir J. Wotton goes back to Virgil with "amidst her cheeks the rose and lily strive".⁴³ This idea is repeated by William Byrd, who says his lady's complexion is "wanting rose nor lily white to paint it"⁴⁴. The damask rose, whose fair blush shade was so well known to the Elizabethans, also forms a favorite comparison for a maiden's beauty. Richard Tofte writes "Rich damask roses in her fair cheeks do bide"⁴⁵, and Barnaby Barnes feels that Parthenope is so beautiful that "in her clear cheek she closes sweet damask roses".⁴⁶ In Hark all you Ladies, Thomas Campion maintains that love will make roses in a lady's cheek and provide that desired "clear damask hue";⁴⁷ while Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, stresses the fact that his beloved has "a red in her cheeks that exceeds the damask rose".⁴⁸

Roses were also used to signify red lips. Thomas Lodge, in his sonnet to Phillis, says "Love guards the roses of thy lips"⁴⁹, and Thomas Campion, in his Book of Airs, speaks of "rosy lips with a kiss still entertaining"⁵⁰. Henry Constable insists that "My lady's presence makes the roses red,⁵¹ because to see her lips they blush for shame".

Other classic connotations of the rose were love and luxury. Thomas Campion, in his Conceits of Lovers, repeats the pagan idea that "Roses are the flowers of love", and the Roman custom of reclining luxuriously on beds of roses is echoed in the Shepherd's Song of Christopher Marlowe, who will make his love "beds of roses", and repeated again in Sir

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Walter Raleigh's reply. There is also a similar inference in Thomas Campion's lyrical apostrophe "Come forth bright day,
Thine hours with roses strew they way".⁵³ In his sonnet to Fidesa Bartholomew Griffen says, "Love sits in a bid of spices,
beset all round with camphor, myrrh, and roses".⁵⁴

Noting the beauty of the rose before it is fully opened Samuel Daniels says, "Look, Delia, how we esteem the half blown rose" and in the lines "Short is the glory of the blushing rose" he recalls the brevity of youth and beauty.

This period, in which the love of beauty was expressed in verse was, of course, predominantly lyric, but it was also characterized by a vigorous spirit of action which was expressed in drama. The first dramatic efforts took the form of religious masques and pastoral pageants in which the rose was often used to indicate perfection of coloring. In Lewis Wager's Mary Magdalene "lips are ruddy as the redde rose",⁵⁶ and in John Phillip's Meek and Patient Grissel, it is the babe "whose feature fayre surmountes the ruddie rose".⁵⁷ Some contemporary references occur in the plays written at this time. In Promos and Cassandra, by George Whetstone one character mentions "water sweet as a rose",⁵⁸ and in Cambises, A Classical Interlude, by Thomas Preston, "the sweet smell of musk white rose to please the appetite", reveals the current interest in this rose with its strange exotic fragrance so appealing to the Elizabethans. The line in which a lord tells the king that "The queen's goodly hue excells the royal rose"⁵⁹ is still classical in sentiment, but it has a contemporary flavor in its comparison to the Tudor rose.

In one of his plays, Robert Greene compares Queen Elizabeth to a rose. "Whose brightness shall deface proud Phoebus flowre, / And over-shadow Albion with her leaues." Before "this matchless flower" all the others "shall stoope and wonder at Diana's rose. (Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay, V,iii,46,52,58).

The prose romances, pastoral in form and artificial in style, which were written at this time, had a great influence on the ensuing romantic comedies. Like the plays of the time, they were spangled with lyrics, but though full of figures and conceits, these romances contained the same conventional rose images. In Robert Greene's "Song to Samela", from Menaphon, "her cheeks like rose and lily, yield forth gleams", and in his "Song to Fawna" in Pandosto, "she seems like the budding rose"⁶⁰. Thomas Lodge in describing the heroine of Rosalynnda says, "her lips are like two budded roses"⁶¹ and William Warner, in a song to his mistress in Albion's England, sings of "Her colour fresh as damask rose"⁶². John Lyly in his Euphues mentions two conceptions of the rose, popular since ancient times, that "every rose has its prickle" and that "the rose is sweeter in the bud than full blown".

Lyly uses his prose style in his dramas which he divides into acts and scenes. Campaspe, probably his first play, is based on a story from Pliny and contains conventional pagan philosophy and rose imagery. "Roses and kisses", are bribes for love, and in Apelles's song of Cupid, "the rose growing on's cheek", indicates his beauty. In Midas, he says, "On Daphne's cheek grow rose and cherry".

Thomas Dekker, in his Shoemaker's Holiday,

introduces an Oriental note into the song about the nightingale. "Lo, yonder she sitteth, her breast against a brier" refers to the Persian legend that the nightingale, caught on a white rose thorn, sang her sweetest love song as her life-blood ebbed away, dyeing the white rose red. Later in the play he calls the heroine "fair-cheeked rose" and speaks of her sitting on a flowery bank making a garland of "These pinks, these roses, and these violets".⁶⁵

Combining the outstanding characteristics of these play-wrights, the literature of Elizabethan England reached its ultimate triumph in the works of Shakespeare. This great poet saw with his soul. To the pagan philosophy of the ancients, he added the highly wrought allegory and mysticism of the Middle Ages combined with the ideas of the Renaissance, and blended them all with the growing sense of nationalism prevalent at the time to produce his superb poems and plays. His plays, particularly, exhibit a spirit of progress which is completely English. Regardless of the setting, the characters in his plays are essentially English; they wear English clothes, display English manners, and even pick English flowers in English gardens. So though his works have a connection with the past, they express all the richness, color, and variety of contemporary Elizabethan life.

Like nearly all poets, he was a lover of nature. He knew not only the copses and hedge-rows of his native Warwickshire, but the gardens of the well-to-do in London as well, for his works are full of garden references and images of country life. His characters speak of gardens "circummured with brick"

with "pleached alleys" and "curious knots". Many scenes in the plays have garden settings.

He loved the flowers which "paint the meadows with delight",⁶⁷ for his works are full of flower images; but he mentions most often the violet, the lily, and the rose, which were also the favorites of his contemporaries. His references to the violet include the flower itself, its fragrance, its delicate bluish shade, and its association with early death. This last connection is explained by Ellacombe as resulting from the fact that the violet blooms before the beauty of the year develops,⁶⁸ and is therefore the symbol of death in the springtime of life. Ophelia would give violets to the court, but "they all withered when my father died" (Hamlet, IV, v, 184); and Marina desired "purple violets and marigolds" to use as a carpet for the grave (Pericles, IV, i, 16).

In spite of all the legends regarding the lily, Shakespeare uses it little more than he does the violet, and with no greater imagination. Dyer, in his book on the Folk Lore of Shakespeare, says that the lily seems to have escaped Shakespeare's notice entirely beyond a few elementary comparisons to purity and whiteness.⁶⁹ Like the violet, this flower has an association with death and with un-consciousness. Thisbe, noticing Pyramus lying dead, speaks of his "lily lips" (Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 337), and Imogen in her swoon is called "fairest, sweetest lily" (Loves Labor Lost, V, ii, 352). It is twice used with the unpleasant inference of cowardice. Kent calls Oswald "lily-livered" (Lear, II, ii, 19), and Macbeth, in reprimanding the servant boy, uses the same expression (Macbeth, V, iii, 17).

The Violet

Flower

Cymbeline, I, v, 83. -- IV, ii, 172.
 Midsummer Night's Dream, II, i, 50.
 Measure for Measure, II, ii, 166.
 Winter's Tale, IV, iii, 120.
 Richard II, V, ii, 246.
 Twelfth Night, I, i, 6.
 Hamlet, V, i, 263.
 Sonnet XII

Death

Pericles, IV, i, 16.
 Hamlet, IV, v, 184.

Fragrance

Venus and Adonis, 936.
 King John, IV, ii, 12.
 Henry V, IV, i, 106.

Fading Love

Hamlet, I, iii, 7.

Color

Sonnet XCVIX
 Venus and Adonis, 125.
 Love's Labor Lost, V, ii, 904.

The Lily

Roses and Lilies

Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, iv, 160
 Rape of Lucrece, 71.
 Rape of Lucrece, 386.
 Rape of Lucrece, 478.
 King John, III, i, 53.
 Passionate Pilgrim, VII, 5.
 Sonnet XCVIII
 Sonnet XCIX

Flower

King John, IV, ii, 11
 Troilus and Cressida, III, ii, 13
 Winter's Tale, IV, iv, 127
 Titus Andronicus, III, i, 113
 Henry VIII, III, i, 151

Purity

Love's Labor Lost, V, ii, 352
 Henry VIII, V, v, 67

Whiteness

Midsummer Night's Dream, III, i, 95
 Titus Andronicus, II, iv, 44
 Venus and Adonis, 228
 Venus and Adonis, 363
 Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, iii, 22
 Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, iv, 162
 Cymbeline, II, ii, 15.
 Venus and Adonis, 1053

Cowardice

Macbeth, V, iii, 17
 Lear, II, ii, 19

Death

Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 337
 Cymbeline, IV, ii, 201

Odor

Sonnet XCIV

Shakespeare introduces an additional unpleasant idea when he observes that "lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds" (Sonnet XCIV). The lily is used sixteen times as a symbol of whiteness but half of all these images are in conjunction with roses. From time immemorial, from Virgil's "mixta rubent iubi lilia rosa alba" to Spenser's "as roses did with lilies interlace", red and white, the rose and the lily, have been used to describe the beauty of a woman's complexion, and Shakespeare continues to use these flowers in this conventional manner. Although there are eighteen references to the violet and twenty-eight to the lily in Shakespeare's works, there is nothing original or arresting in any of the comparisons. They are all conventional and uninspired. The rose, however, is mentioned more than one hundred times, and in addition to using it in traditional figures of speech, Shakespeare presents new and vivid images with contemporary meanings as well as with heraldic, symbolic, and philosophical significance.

In his early poems and plays Shakespeare's rose imagery follows the pattern of his contemporaries. To the Elizabethan lyrists, lips were cherries and cheeks were roses. Like Campion's "rose-cheeked Laura" Shakespeare has "rose cheeked Adonis" (Venus and Adonis, 3) whose beauty, according to Venus, "sets gloss on the rose" (Venus and Adonis, 935). In Sonnet LXVI love has "rosy lips and cheeks", and Othello speaks of Desdemona as "thou young and rose lipped cherubin" (Othello, IV, ii, 62). Mistress Quickly consoles Doll Tearsheet by telling her "your

The Rose

<u>Comedies</u>		<u>Chronicle Plays</u>	
All's Well that Ends Well	1	King John	2
The Taming of the Shrew	1	Richard II	1
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1	Henry IV, part I	2
Much Ado about Nothing	2	Henry IV, part II	1
Measure for Measure	2	Henry V	1
Twelfth Night	3	Henry VI, part I	17
As You Like It	3	Henry VI, part II	2
Love's Labor Lost	5	Henry VI, part III	4
A Midsummer Night's Dream	6	Richard III	2
The Tempest	1		---
Pericles	2		32
Winter's Tale	2	<u>Tragedies</u>	
Cymbeline	5	Othello	3
	---	Hamlet	5
	34	Coriolanus	1
<u>Sonnets</u>		Antony and Cleopatra	2
I	1	Titus Andronicus	3
XXXV	2	Romeo and Juliet	5
LIV	1		---
LXVII	1		19
XCIV	1	<u>Poems</u>	
XLVIII	1	Lover's Complaint	1
XCIX	2	The Passionate Pilgrim	2
CIX	1	Venus and Adonis	5
CLVI	1	The Rape of Lucrece	4
CLXX	1		---
	---		12
	12		

Total Number of Images 109

Fig. 14 Rose Imagery in Shakespeare

colour, I warrant, is as red as any rose" (Henry IV, part II, II, iv, 27), and of Katherine, Petruchio says "she looks as fair as morning roses newly washed with dew" (Taming of the Shrew, II, i, 173). Cheeks that shine through tears are "glowing roses/ That flame through the water which their hue encloses" (Lover's Complaint, 286).

Fond of the contrast between red and white, Shakespeare uses this combination of colors many times. Boult describes Marina as "flesh and blood, sir, white and red you shall see a rose" (Pericles, IV, vi, 37), and even her art "sisters the natural rose" (Pericles, V, chorus, 7). Lucrece's "lily hand her rosy cheek lies under" (Rape of Lucrece, 386), and Arthur is so fair that he may "with lilies boast, and with the half-blown rose" (King John, III, i, 53). The colors in Lucrece's face make "the lily pale/ And the red rose blush at her own disgrace" (Rape of Lucrece, 478); and in The Passionate Pilgrim, XII, 69, Shakespeare says, "Fair is my love... A lily pale, with damask dye to grace her." In two sonnets the situation is reversed and the colors of the rose and the lily are patterned on the complexion of the loved one, and "the lily's white" and "the deep vermilion of the rose" are drawn from her beauty (Sonnet XCVIII), or the whiteness of the lily and the fragrance and color of the rose are stolen from her hands and face (Sonnet XCIX). To Venus, Adonis is "the field's chief flower ... more white and red than doves and roses are" (Venus and Adonis, 10). It would seem that the single-syllabled word dove, was used in preference to the usual lily in order to preserve the rhythm of the line. An heraldic significance is added to the combination of the two

colors when "beauty's red and virtue's white" argue "this silent war of lilies and of roses" (Rape of Lucrece, 71), and when from excitement the ladies' coloring "commits the war of white and damask in their nicely gauded cheeks" (Coriolanus, II, i, 235). Shakespeare adds force to his color images by employing emotional interpretations. Through fear, Venus' face pales "like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose" (Venus and Adonis, 590), while Lucrece, anticipating bad news, changes color, "First red as roses that on lawn we lay/ Then white as lawn, the roses took away" (Rape of Lucrece, 259)

Pallor is denoted by a lack of roses. In Sonnet CXXX, Shakespeare says that he has noticed "roses red and white" but "no such roses see I in her cheeks". Julia, forsaken, says, "The air hath starved the roses in her cheeks" (Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, iv, 159); and the Friar warns Juliet that when she drinks the potion, "The roses in thy cheeks shall turn to paly ashes" (Romeo and Juliet, IV, i, 99).

The Medieval idea of the Virgin rose he uses only three times. A maiden is "As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown" (Much Ado about Nothing, IV, i, 58); and in Henry V, II, ii, 323, Burgundy tells the King that Kate is "rosed over with the Virgin crimson of modesty"⁷⁰. The awakening love of Juliet is compared to a rose bud unfolding; she says "This bud of love.. may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet" (Romeo and Juliet, II, ii, 120). He goes back to the ancients for his use of the rose as the symbol of youthful beauty. Timon admonishes Timandra to "bring down rose-cheeked youth" (Timon of Athens, IV, iii, 86) and Averigus speaks of a boy as a "sweet rosy lad" (Cymbeline, V,

v,122). Antony suggests that the messenger go to Caesar and "Tell him he wears the rose of youth upon him" (Antony and Cleopatra, III,ii,20). The Countess, reflecting on Helena's unhappiness, says "This thorn doth to our rose of youth rightly belong" (All's Well that Ends Well, I,iii,135); and when Laertes speaks of Ophelia as "Rose of May" (Hamlet, IV,iii,157), he is referring, not to a rose which blooms in May, but to the spring of a woman's life when her hopes and cheeks are rose. Shakespeare expresses the same idea in Rosalind's speech, "Maids are May when they are maids" (As You Like It, IV,i,53), for a rose buds in May.

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As his dramatic skill increased, Shakespeare's power of imagery strengthened. He took his comparisons from life rather than from literature, and so the figures which flowered through his imaginative genius are rooted in knowledge. He looked at the world with a gardener's eye and noted plants, their growth, their cultivation, and their ultimate decay. He loved a well kept garden "manured with industry" and without weeds. To him it was a symbol of a good life, and England itself was a "sea-walled garden...a demi-paradise", in which trees and plants grew and flowers flourished. Wrong deeds were "noisome weeds", signs of evil and decay. When things go wrong, "the land is full of weeds...her fairest flowers choked up...her knots disordered". To Hamlet, Denmark is an "unweeded garden", and when Othello distrusts Desdemona, he thinks of her as a weed.

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Shakespeare must have loved an early morning stroll in the garden while the dew was yet glistening on every plant, for he compares the glance of one beloved to that "sweet kiss of the sun on those fresh morn'g drops upon the rose" (Love's Labor Lost, VI,iv,36). He notes the changes in the seasons and sees the "hoary-headed frosts fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose" (Midsummer Night's Dream, II,1,108). He notices the destruction among the flowers. He sees the canker worm destroying the fragile buds: "And leathsome canker lives in sweetest bud" (Sonnet IXIV. He resents the destruction of beauty and wishes that "good blossoms could be kept from cankers" (Henry IV, part II, II,11,104). As the canker eats the buds and diseases ravage the plants, so do emotions eat into the soul of man and destroy him. Jealousy is the canker "that eats up love's tender spring" (Venus and Adonis, 656). Shame can spot beauty "like a canker in the fragrant rose" (Sonnet ICV); or concealment of grief can, "Like the worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek" and destroy her beauty. (Twelfth Night, II,iv,113). One can be marked with grief which is "beauty's canker" (Twelfth Night, I,ii,412). It is necessary to root out evil, and Gloucester bids his Duchess "Banish the canker of ambitious thought" (Henry VI, part II, I,ii,18). Shakespeare also uses this figure to express the lost hopes of the Duke of York: "Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud" (Ibid., III,1,89), and he makes a very pointed comparison between the wild hedge rose eaten by cankers, and the pampered aristocrat of the garden when Don John indicates that he had rather be "a canker in the hedge than a rose in

his grace" (Much Ado about Nothing, I,iii,27).

Unlike his contemporaries, to whom a rose was a rose, Shakespeare saw and distinguished between the wild and the cultivated varieties which grew in and around London. He has several references to a form of variegated damask, common at that time, which could bear flowers with petals all white, all red, or a pleasing combination of both. This plant was called York and Lancaster, because it combined the colors of the two erstwhile warring houses and thus signified the union of these two factions. He saw roses "damasked red and white" (Sonnet CXXX), and some "nor red nor white but stol'n of both" (Sonnet CIX). He particularly noticed the redness of a lip, which is a lustier red than that mixed in a person's cheek "just the difference/ Between the constant red and mingled damask" (As You Like It, III,v,120). The crimson rose of Midsummer Night's Dream, II,1,108, and the deep vermillion of the rose of sonnet LCVIII are references to a gallica, whose color range, darker than that of the damask, is from red to deep crimson. The eglantine and the musk rose, whose fragrance was so pleasing to the Elizabethans, aided to the enchantment of Titania's tower, which was "over-canopied with sweet musk roses and with eglantine" (Midsummer Night's Dream, II,1,252). When Shakespeare wished to indicate the delicate fragrance emanating from Imogen's lips, he compared it to "the leaf of eglantine, which outsweetened not your breath" (Cymbeline, IV,11,223). The bush with "canker blooms" with "full as deep a dye as the perfumed tincture of the roses" of sonnet LIV is the wild rose of the hedge rows, commonly called "dog rose".

The "red rose on triumphant brier" (Midsummer Night's Dream, III,i,95) is this same wild rose; for what could be more triumphant than a rose bush half-nourished in a tangled thicket producing a blossom as red as one on a bush growing in a cultivated garden spot.

Shakespeare has several references to the many uses of the rose in his time. Sixteenth century manners were not delicate; food was taken with the fingers, for even at this time it was thought foppish to use forks. Therefore rose water was used to cleanse the hands both before and after eating. A guest was greeted with a "silver basin full of rose water" (Timon of Athens, Induction, 55), and Chiron bade Lavinia "go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands" (Titus Andronicus, II,iv,6). Shakespeare calls attention to the custom of scenting clothing when he mentions perfumed gloves "sweet as damask roses" (Winter's Tale, IV,iii,222), and to the use of sweetballs to scent the air when Autolycus boasts that he has sold all his wares including "riband, glass, pomander" (Ibid, IV,iii, 609). The culinary uses of the rose are stressed in Cymbeline. The Queen requests her servants to bear the "violets, cowslips, and prime-roses" which they have gathered to the house, and from these she will make confections, for which her husband holds her in such esteem and "doth woo me oft" (I,v,83--13). The medical uses of the rose are indicated in Romeo's description of the Apothecary's shop, with its "cakes of roses" (Romeo and Juliet, V,1.47).

Many coins of that era bore a likeness of the Queen. The three-farthing piece was distinguished from the three-pence

by the addition of a rose behind her head. It is to this coin and to the court custom of wearing a rose stuck behind the ear that Shakespeare refers when Phillip jestingly remarks: "My face so thin, that in my ear I durst not stick a rose lest men should say "Look where three farthings goes' " (Ming John, I, I, 141). Great shoe roses were affected by dandies and strolling actors at this time, and so Hamlet feels that "with two Provincial roses on my razed shoe" he could be a player. (Hamlet, III, II, 287)

Shakespeare, like others of his time, was much interested in the science of heraldry. Although in the sixteenth century, the actual need for distinguishing devices on battle garments had passed away, these colorful designs were still used in the mimic warfare of the tournament. Wealth without arms was of no social advantage, and Shakespeare himself bought a coat of arms for his father so that he could inherit it, for of course this was much the better way to acquire one. A knowledge of heraldry was as much a part of a gentleman's education as a knowledge of Latin, and so the language of armory was familiar not only to Shakespeare, but to his public as well.

At this time a new spirit of nationalism and a patriotic interest in English history fostered the historical play. In his chronicle plays which deal with the Wars of the Roses, Shakespeare portrays a struggle and an ultimate peace of great interest to every Englishman, for the cessation of these wars established the Tudor line and brought peace to the country. He gives dramatic appeal to the story of civil strife

in which the red and white roses of York and Lancaster are plucked and worn as emblems of loyalty. These roses, the distinguishing devices of the descendants of Edward III, appear again and again throughout the plays with both heraldic and symbolic significance.

In the second act of Henry VI, part I, the opposing nobles, after deciding upon war, line up in the Temple Gardens as Yorkists and Lancastrians. Plantagenet of York speaks first, saying, "Let him who is a true born gentleman... from off this brier pluck a white rose with me" (II,iv,27). Somerset, a Lancastrian, replies savagely, "Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer... pluck a red rose with me" (II,iv,33). Warwick sides with the Yorkists: "I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet" (II,iv,36), and Suffolk with the Lancastrians; "I pluck this red rose with young Somerset" (II,iv,37). Young Vernon tries to stop them by saying, "Upon whose side/the fewest roses are cropped from the tree/ shall yield the other in the right opinion" (II,iv,42). After being derided by Somerset, he decides to join the Yorkists, saying, "I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here,/ giving my verdict on the white rose side" (II,iv,48). Somerset taunts him, saying, "Prick not your finger as you pluck it off,/ Lest bleeding you do paint the white rose red,/ And fall on my side" (II,iv,51), and then asks "who else?" to which the Lawyer replies that since he feels the argument of Lancaster is wrong "In sign whereof I pluck a white rose too" (II,iv,58). When asked his argument, Somerset replies that it is his sword which "shall dye your white rose a bloody red" (II,iv,61). Plantagenet accuses Somerset of cowardice: "Your cheeks do counterfeit our roses, for pale they look with fear"


To this Somerset replies, "T'is not for fear but anger that thy cheeks/ Blush for pure shame to counterfeit our roses" (II,iv,68). Plantagenet tries to irritate Somerset further by comparing his rose to a wild rose eaten by cankers: "Hath not thy rose a canker?". (II,iv,68). The quarrel continues. Somerset maintains that he will find "friends to wear his bleeding roses" (II,iv,72), and Plantagenet swears by his "maiden blossom" to scorn his foes and says that he will continue to wear "this pale and angry rose? As cognizance of my blood-drinking hate" (II,iv,108). Warwick concludes the scene with the dire prophecy that "This brawl today...shall send between the red rose and the white? A thousand souls to death" (II,iv,127). Further allusions to the red and the white rose appear later in the play. Basset tells the King "This fellow here...upbraided me about the rose I wear" (IV,i,91), and the King replies "I see no reason if I wear this rose/ That anyone should be suspicious/ I more incline to Somerset than York/ Both are my kinsmen" (IV,i,154).

In Henry VI, part II, the only reference to the rose is made by the Duke of York, who says "Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,/ With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfum'd/ And in my standard bear the arms of York" (I,i,256)

In the opening scene of Henry VI, part III, the Duke of York enters followed by Edward, Montague, and Warwick, all wearing white roses in their hats. They are met by King Henry, Exeter, and others, all wearing red roses. During a conference in the castle, Richard says, "I cannot rest/ until the

white rose that I wear he dy'd / Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart" (I,ii,34). The slaughter goes on, but when the King sees a young boy dying and on his face "The fatal colors of our striving houses" (II,v,98), he feels it would be better to "Wither one rose, and let the other flourish." (II,v, 101).

heraldic rose imagery does not appear again in the chronicle plays until the first act of Richard III. This play begins with a reference to the Yorkist badge of a white rose surrounded by sun's rays. The opening sentence, "Now is the winter of our discontent / Made glorious by this sun of York," is a very clever play on words which always delighted Elizabethan audiences. In the course of the action Richard is defeated and Richmond, later Henry VII, who is betrothed to Elizabeth of York, says "We will unite the white rose and the red: / Smile, heaven upon this fair conjunction" (V,iv,32). He prays that peace will reign and asks that he and Elizabeth, "The true succeeders of each royal house / By God's fair ordinance conjoin together" (V, iv,42). Thus the houses of York and Lancaster are joined together and peace is restored to England.

 Whereas other writers fall back on traditional figures of speech, Shakespeare forges new and living images and uses the rose with a depth of symbolic meaning hitherto unknown. Passing through the alembic of his personality, it emerges as the symbol of perfection of character. It becomes the symbol of true love, of the beauty of a spiritual union rather than mere physical attraction, "For nothing this wide universe I call, /

Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all" (Sonnet CIX). It becomes the symbol of deep affection. As Richard goes to the Tower, his Duchess says proudly to her ladies, "But soft, but see, or rather do not see,/ My fair rose wither" (Richard II, V, i, 8). Hotspur, because of his admiration for his king, is outraged that anyone could think "To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,/ And plant this thorn, this Bolingbroke" (Henry IV, part I, I, iii, 175). It becomes the symbol of truth. In Sonnet LIV, Shakespeare expresses the opinion that beauty alone is not sufficient, "Oh how much more doth beauty beauteous seem/ By that sweet ornament which truth doth give". A woman, therefore is fair only if she be true; and Hamlet tells his mother that her love for the usurping king "Takes off the rose/ From the fair forehead of an innocent love/ And sets a blister there" (Hamlet, IV, iv, 42). It becomes the symbol of nobility. Hamlet is "the expectancy and rose of the fair state" (Hamlet, III, i, 161), and would adorn Denmark as a rose does a garden.

But of all Shakespeare's rose images the most inspiring are those which express his philosophy of life. He knows life in all its aspects; its delights and its dilemmas, its sorrows as well as its joys. He knows "What thorns the growing rose defends" (Rape of Lucrece, 492). He knows that hopes, like roses, can wither and die, but life still has its responsibilities. Like roses of whose "sweet deaths are sweetest odours made" (Sonnet LIV), our hopes, though blasted, can strengthen our spirit and enrich our lives. He knows that life is short. Individuals, as well as plants, must wither and die, "For women are as roses, whose

fair flower/ Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour"
 (Twelfth Night, II, iv, 36).

Shakespeare believes in the intrinsic worth of the individual and puts his idea in Juliet's question, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet, II, ii, 43). He sees the futility of wishful thinking and in Berowne's speech to the King, he urges the advisability of accepting life's limitations, "At Christmas I no more desire a rose / Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth" (Love's Labor Lost, I, i, 105). Even Othello, to whom Desdemona seems a flower, realizes that "When I have plucked the rose/ I can not give it vital growth again" (Othello, V, ii, 14).

Life can be disappointing. It is true that "Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud" (Sonnet XXXIV), but one must learn to take life as it is, the bitter with the sweet: "What though the rose has prickles, yet t'is plucked (Venus and Adonis, 574). In spite of its difficulties, however, life has its compensations. Shakespeare knows that "Sweetest nut hath sourest rind?.. and he that sweetest rose will find/ Must find love's prick and Rosalind (As You Like It, III, ii, 119).

Thus Shakespeare presents his philosophy of life through his rose imagery. He shows his appreciation of life with all its beauty and its ugliness and accepts the pricks of misfortune as he accepts the thorns on the rose. The ideas which affected sixteenth century thinking were absorbed by him and fired his imagination to such heights that he passed beyond the conventional imagery used by his contemporaries, and endowed the rose with profound and original connotations. The mystical

rose of the Middle Ages, which glorified womanhood; the conventional rose of the Medieval romance, which was "l'amour le guerdon gracieux"; and the rose of pagan antiquity, indicative of love and life's fleeting joys, were, by his magic art, transformed into a symbol of life's primal aspects, its growth, its dignity, and its grandeur.

Summary

The great literature of the sixteenth century, which made such a phenomenal leap into pre-eminence during the reign of Elizabeth, was due to a combination of three influences; the allegory and mysticism of the Middle ages, in which the rose was the emblem of the Virgin, the symbol of womanhood deified; the Medieval romance, in which the rose was the symbol of conventionalized love; and the ideas of the Renaissance, which marked a return to classical concepts of the rose as the emblem of youth and beauty, the flower of love and life's fleeting joys. All of these affected the writings of this period. The first two influences formed the theme of much of the literature of the first part of the century. Later, under Henry VIII's reign, the publication of Toel's Miscellany, a collection of poems by Wyatt and Surrey marked the beginning of a return to classical culture and its accompanying rose imagery. This third influence, the re-discovery of the ancient world, contributed much of the literature of the second half of the century. The study of Greek and Latin enriched and humanized man's thinking, and this new learning which penetrated to all classes, brought

about an impulse toward self-expression. The world threw off the discipline of the church, and man became aware of the now, rather than the hereafter.

Renaissance thinking was accompanied by a delight in the physical world of sense. Poets took pleasure in delicacy of phrase and beauty of expression. The Elizabethan lyricists composed lighthearted songs to love and nature; but they continued to use the classical figures of the rose as the symbol of youth and beauty, and the Anacreontic conception of the rose as the accompaniment of love and luxury, which they imbibed from the French school, the Pleiade.

It was Edmund Spenser, with his Shepherd's Calendar, and Sir Phillip Sidney in his sonnet sequence Astrophel and Stella who first made use of rose imagery with contemporary meanings.

In the field of the drama, which had grown from the early masques and interludes of Henry VII's time into a national theatre under Elizabeth, Lyly contributed the classic touch of division into acts and scenes, but it was not until Shakespeare that there was an attempt to use contemporary rose references.

With his great genius, Shakespeare combined the three influences and their characteristic rose imagery and forged new and vital figures of speech. Prosperity and the spirit of nationalism, which were the dominant notes of Elizabeth's time, show in his comparisons. He illustrates his meanings by references to coins of the time, imprinted with a rose, to many well-known rose varieties, and to the custom of using rose water and rose petals for culinary and cosmetic purposes. In several of

his Chronicle plays he calls up associations of heraldic significance, and uses the red and white roses of the houses of York and Lancaster with both emblematic and symbolic connotations. He goes beyond the conventional images of mere color and fragrance and uses the rose to indicate all that is good and pure in life. Through his efforts it becomes the symbol of perfection not of mere physical attraction but of beauty of soul. The rose appears in his philosophical images as the expression of the meaning of life with its trials and tribulations as well as its nobler aspects.



Significance of the Rose in Tudor England



he rose is indeed the flower of Tudor England. In no other country and at no other time in history did any flower ever have so many and so varied connotations as did the rose to the Englishman of the sixteenth century.

As a garden flower, the popularity of the rose at this time was due to the peace and the prosperity of the period, for only when wars cease and wealth increases does man have the necessary leisure time as well as the means to indulge in any form of horticulture, especially flower-gardening. Then too, the spirit of exploration which actuated much of the expansion of the period, was responsible for the introduction of many new varieties of roses. The increase in wealth, which enabled people to build splendid mansions, made it possible for them to encircle these dwellings with equally magnificent settings. Rose gardens became important, an indication of wealth and position. But these rose gardens were more than a social asset; for from them were obtained some of the necessities and many of the niceties of everyday living. Rose water, in which to cleanse the face and hands, rose petals for preserves and sweetmeats, and powdered roses for medical uses, all these came from the rose garden.

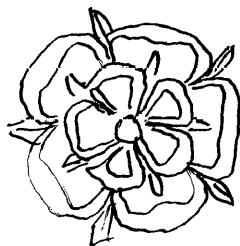
The use of the rose as a royal emblem dates from the beginning of the century, when the red and white roses of York and Lancaster were combined into the double rose of the Tudors by Henry VII. Allegiances, which had hitherto wavered between these two rival houses, were then transferred to him and continued to center upon this reigning line. This sense of loyalty to the Tudors brought their emblem of the rose into great prominence and added to its prestige. As the constantly developing patriotic spirit made the people more and more aware of their national unity, the rose became an object of love and admiration, until by the end of the century it had become not only the emblem of royalty but also the symbol of the British nation.

Among all classes of people, from the highest to the lowest, the Tudor rose had a universal appeal. The meanest churl in the King's household was as proudly conscious of the metal rose pinned on his sleeve as was the Queen of the silk emblem embroidered on her jeweled bodice. It became a typical English design used by artists and artisans. It was worked on hangings and embroidered on clothing. It was carved on furniture and engraved on silverware. Even the makers of books could not resist its beauty. Architects could find no ornament so attractive or so appropriate as the rose with which to decorate their creations. It was carved in wood, chiselled in stone, cast in bronze, and wrought in gold and silver. This extensive use of the rose as a decoration is, in itself, an indication of a progressing civilization, for it is only when a country achieves a cultural advance that floral forms in art are used and appreciated. The rose became familiar and dear to the heart of every Englishman. It added much to his life for it enhanced his art,

it beautified his garden, it decorated his home and his church, it ornamented his furniture and his intimate belongings, and it made more comfortable and so more enjoyable, his daily living. Without it the degree of cultural civilization to which he attained would have been far less and he himself a poorer man.

With all this wealth of use and meaning, it follows naturally that the literary connotations of the rose were many and varied. Yet references to it, however extensive, were easily understood even by the common people; for Shakespeare's rose images, which so vividly expressed the color and richness of Elizabethan life, would not have been written could they not have been understood by all of his public.

Thus it is to the literature of the golden age of Elizabeth, and especially to the master mind of Shakespeare, that we owe our knowledge of the innumerable overtones of rose imagery which were a part of the every day life of the average Elizabethan. To us the rose connotes only youth, beauty, and fragrance, but to the Englishman of Tudor times, it suggested savory food, scented linen and clothing, healthful remedies, and deeper and more significant than these it was the emblem of the crown and it signified the virtues of honor, loyalty, and nobility of character, ideas which today only the scholar recaptures.



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