

**THE LEGEND OF THE
ROSES: A POEM;
RAVLAN: A DRAMA**

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The legend of the roses: a poem; Ravlan: a drama by Samuel James Watson

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SAMUEL JAMES WATSON

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ROSES: A POEM;
RAVLAN: A DRAMA**

THE LEGEND OF THE ROSES:

A Poem.

RAVLAN:

A Drama.

BY

SAMUEL JAMES WATSON.



Toronto:
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1876.

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THE ARGUMENT.

“Bethlehem is a litylle Cytee And toward the Est ende of the Cytee is a fulle fair Chirche and a graciouslye And betwene the Cytee and the Chirche is the Felde Floridus; that is to seyne, the Feld florished. For als moche as a fayre Mayden was blamed with wrong, and sclaudred for whiche cause sche was demed to the Dethe, and to be brent in that place, to the whiche she was ladd. And as the Fyre began to brenne aboute hire, sche made hire Preyeres to oure Lord, that als wissely as sche was not gylty of that Synne, that He wold helpe hire, and make it to be knowen to alle men of his mercyfulle grace. And whan sche hadde thus seyde, sche entered into the Fuyre: and anon was the Fyer quenched and oute: and the Brondes that weren brannyng, becomen rede Roseres; and the Brondes that weren not kyndled, becomen white Roseres, fulle of Roses. And theise weren the first Roseres and Roses both white and rede, that evere ony Man saughe. And thus was this Mayden saved be the grace of God. And therefore is that Feld clept the Feld of God florysscht; for it was fulle of Roses.”

The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville, Kt.
Which treateth of the way to Hierusalem; and
of Marvayles of Inde. A. D. 1327-1360.





THE LEGEND OF THE ROSES.

Part one.

THE TIME.



HE thirsty sands of the Syrian plain
Had quaffed of the blessed Autumn rain,
And earth thanked Heaven with a harvest smile,
Which rippled o'er vineyard and valley of grain
From the Jordan's bank to the marge of Nile.

Like bridegrooms, the streams from the mountain sides
To the orchards flew, as to sweet-breathed brides,
Who awaited their coming in fruit festoons :
Fruit tinged with ripe amber by mellowing moons,
And red with the gold of the midsummer noons.

The air, filled with banquet-hymns of bees,
Swayed with sweet sounds like the Southern seas,
In the blue June midnights ; when the strand,
Like a waiting harp, with song-charged strings
Of shining shells, kisses Ocean's hand,
Who soothes them with slumberous whisperings.

THE PARTING.

It was in the hush of the Autumn night,
The o'erhanging moon was shining,
And, singing beneath the arch of light,
Were two Hebrew maidens : reclining
On a brooklet's bank, where the lilies bent,
As the low-voiced breezes above them went
To respond to the stream's repining.

In their hearts was Joy, like a bridegroom crowned,
His golden empire keeping ;
And their sun-lit future's furthest bound
On Pleasure's bosom lay sleeping ;
And the shadow of sorrow stood off as far
As a cypress leaf from the brightest star
Whose light to the earth was leaping.

From the West a cloud, on wings of dross,
Came swooping in spectral flight across
The blue, to the place where the Night-Queen shone,
And it blotted her out on her rolling throne.

The maidens had seen, with a sad amaze,
The lilies' lustre of pearl grow dim ;
As the sheen of the heavens passed into haze,
Like a winter's mist on the Jordan's brim.
The maidens had seen, with a glance of dread,
The cloud o'ertake the moon as she fled ;
And, when she was swathed in her shadowy shroud,
They watched her eclipse with mute dismay ;
For a shaft from the quiver of the cloud
To their hearts, from the bow of the gloom, clove way.

List ! there are footsteps stealing near !
The maidens start : but, quick as glance,
Like phantom-fiends, in nightmare trance,
Men rush on them, with sword and spear.

The clinging friends are wrenched apart :
One is borne off ; the other left :
While the untouched one, mate-bereft,
Frights night with shriek of bleeding heart.
Again there was calm on that autumn night,
No sound through the air was flowing ;
Save when the breeze, in its sweet-winged flight,
Through the sleeping gardens going ;
Was whispering the flowers to wake, and see
How aloft in the heavens, all gloriously,
The lamps of the night were glowing.