

THE EARLHAMITE.

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A BALLAD.

Afar on rolling western lands
There cluster cone-like cabins white,
There roam the brave, the noble bands,
A race content with each day's light.

Say not, "This nation has no heart
In which strong passions may vibrate;"
Say not, "Deep grief can play no part,"
For mute long suffering is innate.

Above the village on the plain
Dark, threatening clouds of brooding woe
Hang like some hovering monster Pain
With wicked eye on Peace, its foe.

Once e'er Aurora had proclaimed
Approaching charioteer of Day,
Distress, with frozen heart, controlled
This village with unbounded sway.

What means this rushing to and fro?
Sad, anxious faces? Grieving eyes?
Now surging tears brave hearts o'erflow
In sobs that melt the sterner sighs.

What means the neighing steeds arrayed
With boughs cut fresh from living green?
A dark foreboding they betrayed
In pawings fierce and sniffings keen.

Apart from this confusion strayed
Winona to the watering place,
A spring with mighty rocks part stayed
Like sacred water in rude vase.

'Tis here her nag with glossy coat,
The brisk young Wala, loves to graze.
Alert, she hears a low, clear note,
The call Winona gave always.

Nor long was Wala innocent
That ill now bowed Winona low.
But see, perchance by fates well sent,
Comes tall and proud Osseolo.

By grief made bold, Winona shy,
Half chiding, questioned her heart's king;
Yet even reproach was lost well nigh
In mingling with the murmur spring.

"But stay, Osseolo," she prayed;
"Did you not hear the angry cry
Of howling wolves that last night stayed
Within the deep ravines near by?"

"Did you not hear the moody owl
In mournful hoots foreboding ill,
With warnings of the Fate's dark scowl
That all of yesterday did fill?"

"To-day as I my Wala called,
I roused the sullen, sacred bird,
Which merely sight of me appalled,
Nor ceased to shriek, in flight e'en heard.

"Osseolo, you dare not go,
Ambitious though perchance for fame.
Our gods, 'tis clear, are with the foe,
And wars without our gods bring shame."

In deep, sad tones, like muffled bell,
The curfew of their love on earth
It seemed, and bitter tears did well
Within her heart foredoomed to death.

Winona's fear was dreaded fact.
"My chieftain father," he replied,
"Did ask me as a leader act,
And I, a loyal son, complied.

"'Tis thoughts of you shall make me strong,
Though hard and cruel 'tis to part:
But hark! I hear the farewell song
Begun, the signal for our start."

Soon Wala bore Osseolo
Fast o'er receding hill and vale,
Like breathing arrow from the bow
She urged the space from village wail.

For on that day of rounded moon
There would be heard a festive strain
Of hostile bands they planned at noon
To pounce upon and glory gain.

Here too was Judas of this tribe,
A silent, plotting traitor base,
Whom Jealousy and Hate did bribe
In hands of foe this plan to place.

Osseolo, though brave and bold,
Was not prepared to meet his foe
Forearmed with his own plottings sold
Together with the cruel bow.

Like jungle fight was battle din,
When elephant and tiger groan.
In bloody conflict one must win,
'Mid thundering roar and dying moan.

The hoarse uproar of fallen ones
Was pierced by pain and death-fraught cry
Of wounded horse. The life blood runs
In streams too strong to ever dry.

Winona is of friend bereaved !
A crouching, wounded form passed on
To death. But Wala's heart now sheathed
His cruel sword. The traitor's gone.

Osseolo unconscious lay
Amid the mass in deeper sleep
Till cooling breath of waning day
Aroused his senses Death would keep.

Although secure in hands of foe,
Recovered life brought with it hope
To one whose needed strength did flow
From thoughts of home with fate to cope.

But clings like poisoned dart, his lot.
In three days hence a sacrifice
To gods of war he would be brought
A future favor to entice.

With gnawing hunger, burning throat,
And eyes that ached for want of sleep,
O'er him one day and night did float
Like lingering flights from Fiery Deep.

An eagle from his lofty nest,
With greedy eye fast on his prey,
Were not more sure his aim to test
Than that ill-fated, dreaded day.

As now it poises overhead
The narrow space of two brief nights,
The hope of all escape lies dead,
Too vivid are funereal rites.

Defeat held every plan for flight,
Which maddened him with wild despair.
The torture did surpass his might.
His cup o'erflowed with pain, its care.

The second night dispelled the light,
With it the captive's reason fled,
Or seemed to flee from frenzied might.
Osseolo seemed madness-led.

That harsh and empty laugh is his,
That makes your heart so numb and cold,
Once proud — now reeling judgment's his
That blinds your eyes with pain untold.

And Rumor soon the story spread.
Men did, with knowing faces, nod
In movement slow that plainly said,
"Our captive's doomed e'en by a god."

The third and final day was spent
In singing loud resounding praise
Of all the gods appeased who sent
The sacrifice they soon would raise.

That night, though heaven darkly frowned,
And great black clouds did veil her face
They, reason in their vict'ry drowned,
Did boisterous revelry embrace.

And even faithful guards did dare
To join the band of braves renowned,
And thus they threw aside all care
Of him whom fates, they said, had bound.

But with the rushing, rising tide
Of thousand laughing voices rose
The captive's trampled, swollen pride,
And bound'ries of his heart o'erflows.

Then passed from out the prison gate
A figure proudly straight and tall,
Like spirit for its wand'rings late,
It glided past the prison wall.

The evening twilight of next day
Found by the spring Winona lone
To bathe with tears the sad moon's ray,
To add heart-groans to spring's low moan.

Was it a voice from spirit land
That called in accents so well known ?
Or was it only memory's band
That led from worded keys the tone ?

No more the moonbeams seemed to pine,
But fell like tiny, downy flakes,
Amid the heart's deep sea of brine,
And sweetened it e'en as the lakes.

No more is heard the spring's low moan,
It fell like spray of tinkling bells,
Winona is no more alone,
And now a joy all grief dispels.

New life for her begins to flow,
Her heart grows warm and eyes grow bright.
A wilted flower revived can grow !
Osseolo is back this night.

GERTRUDE SIMMONS, '99.