 

**LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**UNIT 2: TROUBADORS**

**NAME: …………………………………………………**

**GRADE: VII SEC: ……………… DATE: 27 AUG 2014**

**A Ballad of Sir Pertab Singh**

In the first year of him that first

Was Emperor and King,

A rider came to the Rose-red House,

The House of Pertab Singh.

Young he was and an Englishman,

And a soldier, hilt and heel,

And he struck fire in Pertab’s heart

As the steel strikes on steel.

Beneath the morning stars they rode,

Beneath the evening sun,

And their blood sang to them as they rode

That all good wars are one.

They told their tales of the love of women.

Their tales of East and West,

But their blood sang that of all their loves

They loved a soldier best.

So ran their joy the allotted days.

Till at the last day’s end

The Shadow stilled the Rose-red House

And the heart of Pertab’s friend.

When morning came, in narrow chest

The soldier’s face tkcy lit.

And over his fast-dreaming eyes

Shut down the narrow lid.

Three were there of his race and creed.

Three only and no more:

They could not find to bear the dead

A fourth in all Jodhpore.

“O Maharaj, of your good grace

Send us a Sweeper here:

A Sweeper has no caste to lose

Even by an alien bier.”

“What need, what need ? ” said Pertab Singh,

And bowed his princely head.

“I have no caste, for I myself

Am bearing forth the dead.”

“Maharaj, O passionate heart,

Be wise, bethink you yet:

That which you lose to-day is lost

Till the last sun shall set.”

\*\* God only knows,” said Pertab Singh,

“That which I lose to-day:

And without me no hand of man

Shall bear my friend away.”

Stately and slow and shoulder-high

In the sight of all Jodhpore

The dead went down the rose-red steps

Upheld by bearers four.

When dawn relit the lamp of grief

Within the burning East

There came a word to Pertab Singh,

The soft word of a priest.

He woke, and even as he woke

He went forth all in white,

And saw the Brahmins bowing there

In the hard morning light.

“Alas! Maharaj, alas!

O noble Pertab Singh!

For here in Jodhpore yesterday

Befell a fearful thing.

\*’O here in Jodhpore yesterday

A fearful thing befell.”

“A fearful thing,” said Pertab Singh,

“God and my heart know well —

“I lost a friend.”

“More fearful yet I

Went down these steps you past

In sight of all Jodhpore you lost —

O Maharaj ! — your caste.”

Then leapt the light in Pertab’s eyes

As the flame leaps in smoke,

\*\* Thou priest! thy soul hath never known

The word thy lips have spoke.

\*\* My caste! Know thou there is a caste

Above my caste or thine,

Brahmin and Rajput are but dust

To that immortal line:

\*’ Wide as the world, free as the air,

Pure as the pool of death —

The caste of all Earth’s noble hearts

Is the right soldier’s faith.”

- Sir Henry Newbolt