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THE  
JEWISH QUARTERLY  
REVIEW

OCTOBER, 1902

THE JEWISH MAY.

FROM THE YIDDISH OF MORRIS ROSENFELD<sup>1</sup>.

MAY has come from out the showers,  
Sun and splendour in her train.  
All the grasses and the flowers  
Waken up to life again.  
Once again the leaves do show,  
And the meadow-blossoms blow,  
Once again thro' hills and dales  
Ring the songs of nightingales.

Wheresoe'er on field or hill-side  
With her paint-brush Spring is seen,  
In the valley, by the rill-side,  
All the earth is decked with green.  
Once again the sun beguiles,  
Moves the drowsy world to smiles,  
See! the sun, with mother-kiss,  
Wakes her child to joy and bliss.

<sup>1</sup> By kind permission of Messrs. Small, Maynard & Co., Publishers of  
*Songs from the Ghetto.*

Now each human feeling presses,  
Flow'rlike, upward to the light,  
Softly, thro' the heart's recesses,  
Steal sweet fancies, pure and bright.  
Golden dreams, their wings out-shaking,  
Now are making  
Realms celestial,  
All of azure,  
New life waking,  
Bringing treasure  
Out of measure  
For the soul's delight and pleasure.

Who then, tell me, old and sad,  
Nears us with a heavy tread?  
On the sward in verdure clad,  
See, he looks, and shakes his head.  
Lonely is the strange new-comer,  
Wearily he walks and slow,—  
His sweet springtime and his summer  
Faded long and long ago!

Say, who is it yonder walks  
Past the hedge-rows decked anew,  
While a fearsome spectre stalks  
By his side, the woodland thro' ?  
'Tis our ancient friend the Jew!  
No sweet fancies hover round him,  
Nought but terror and distress.

While, revealed  
In wounds unhealed,  
Wither corpses—old affections,  
Ghosts of former recollections,  
Buried youth and happiness.

Briar and blossom bow to meet him  
In derision round his path ;  
Gloomily the hemlock greets him,  
And the crow screams out in wrath.

Strange the birds, and strange the flowers,  
 Strange the sunshine seems and dim,  
 Folk on earth and heav'nly powers,—  
 Lo, the May is strange to him!

Little flowers, it were meeter  
 If ye made not quite so bold:  
 Sweet are ye, but oh, far sweeter  
 Knew he in the days of old!  
 Oranges by thousands glowing  
 Filled the groves on either hand,—  
 All the plants were God's own sowing  
 In his happy, far-off land!

Ask the cedars on the mountain!  
 Ask them, for they knew him well!  
 Myrtles green by Sharon's fountain,  
 In whose shade he loved to dwell!  
 Ask the Mount of Olives beauteous,—  
 Ev'ry tree by ev'ry stream!—  
 One and all will answer duteous  
 For the fair and ancient dream . . .

O'er the desert and the pleasance  
 Gales of Eden softly blew,  
 And the Lord his loving Presence  
 Evermore declared anew.  
 Angel-children at their leisure  
 Played in thousands round his tent,  
 Countless thoughts of joy and pleasure  
 God to his beloved sent.  
 There, in bygone days and olden,  
 From a wondrous harp and golden  
 Charmed he songs of beauty rare,  
 Holy, chaste beyond compare.  
 Never with the ancient sweetness,  
 Never in their old completeness  
 Shall they sound: our dream is ended,  
 On a willow-bough suspended . . .

Gone that dream so fair and fleeting!  
Yet, behold: thou dream'st anew!  
Hark! a *new* May gives thee greeting  
From afar. Dost hear it, Jew?  
Weep no more, altho' with sorrows  
Wearied e'en to death: I see  
Happier years and brighter morrows  
Dawning, oh my Jew, for thee!  
Hear'st thou not the promise ring  
Where, like doves on silver wing,  
Thronging cherubs sweetly sing  
New-made songs of what shall be?  
Hark! your olives shall be shaken,  
And your citrons and your limes  
Filled with fragrance, God shall waken,  
Lead you, as in olden times.  
In the pastures by the river  
Ye once more your flocks shall tend,  
Ye shall live, and live for ever,  
Happy lives that know no end.  
No more wand'ring, no more sadness;  
Peace shall be your lot, and still  
Hero-hearts shall throb with gladness  
'Neath Moriah's silent hill.  
Nevermore of dread afflictions,  
Or oppressions need ye tell:  
Filled with joy and benedictions  
In the old home shall ye dwell.  
To the fatherland returning,  
Following the homeward path,  
Ye shall find the embers burning,  
Still, upon the ruined hearth!

HELENA FRANK.