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In the workman's narrow dwelling,
 In the spacious, gilded hall,
 See the limpid waters welling!
 "Bible" we this wonder call.

Fear and grief and desolation
 Washed away on sunlit waves—
 Go, my child, thy consolation
 Flows from out our fathers' graves. . . .

A LEAFLET OF CONFESSIONS.

How slowly, how lazily passes each day,
 And the years, oh how swift are the years!
 Far, far is it yet to the end of my way,
 And yet, brothers, see, I am bent, I am grey,
 My cheeks they are sunken, my hands are a-cold,
 My forehead is wrinkled with many a fold—
 O brothers, I am not yet thirty years old!

"At thirty years: strength," runs the saying—What then?
 The words in the Talmud you see.
 O take, I beseech you, take paper and pen,
 And reckon how many must be
 The strong ones in Israel . . . with joy and with trembling
 I picture their host in its might,
 In Luzin, in Pinsk, in Berdichef assembling,
 A nation of strong ones, a shield, a delight!

A nation of strong ones, and then, Jew by Jew,
 Goliath the Philistine, Samson in pride.
 The kettle o'er-boils with the powerful brew,
 The earth, as tho' feverstruck, quakes at their stride.
 We labour, we eat and we drink of the best,
 We revel in riches—each alley, each house,
 Each place where is food for ten men and one mouse,
 A lair is of lions, of eagles a nest!

O lions and eagles! time was, when I too,
 I too was an eagle with eyes wildly gleaming,
 High, high o'er the hills and the valleys I flew,
 And high o'er the lakes and the rivers far-streaming.
 The clouds were below me, the stars gave me greeting,
 The woods and the forests beneath me that lay,
 They rustled and sang, and the streams in their fleeting,
 They sang too, and shone, and rejoiced on their way.

The vales and the dales, and the wide-stretching plain,
 The clouds and the stars, and the wind and the river,
 The green little leaflets that glisten and shiver,
 That glance in the sun, and are wet with the rain,
 The snow-wreath of silver, the gold of the fall,
 The heaven above, and the earth at my feet,
 Of hope and of gladness they sang, one and all,
 And oh, but their singing, their singing was sweet!

My Rabbi was Nature—she set me to learn,
 She taught me to sing, and she taught me to play,
 And all that is beautiful swift to discern.
 "The heart must be fresh, and the brain clear and steady,
 The measure and scales still be waiting and ready"—
 And I, after all, have become—why, you know it!
 A poet, my brothers, a poor Jewish poet!

You know what that means, have considered it well,
 And this which I tell you, O friends, is no news:
 Unhappy the man to whose portion it fell
 A poet to be among Jews!
 A jester, a fiddler at feast and at fair,
 A creature of jingle and jangle and verse,
 He leaps, and turns head over heels in the air—
 The crowd stand round laughing, and laughing disperse.

And woe to him, woe! if there beat in his breast
 A heart full of love and of passion unsleeping,
 That will not allow him to turn into jest
 The harp that was given awhile to his keeping.

His task is to play on it, firm and unshaken,
 Of love, hope, and gladness, the thrice holy song,
 The feelings the purest and best to awaken
 Of truth and of friendship, the faithful and strong.

And who takes his part? in the wind and the sun,
 A voice unto bones in the wilderness crying
 Is he, to the rocks and the hills round him lying.
 They list, but alas! of his brothers, not one.

A Jew with one hand strokes his grey little beard,
 He bends down his head, to one side lets it fall.
 You think he has seen, and you think he has heard . . .
 Well, yes, he *has* heard you—and so has the wall!

I can't understand it—I try all in vain!
 Are Jews then bewitched? oh, in pity explain!
 Such anguish and terror endured in past years,
 Such woe, such outpouring of blood and of tears,
 And a Jew—requires a jester with horns and with claws!

The jesters with jingles and verses, of these
 A critic is he, and as wise as you please.
 His heart, when he sees one, is widened with pleasure,
 Supreme his delight, and his joy without measure.
 A catchword, a proverb, a squib somewhat caustic,
 A legend, a riddle, a rhyme, an acrostic . . .

The daughter of Zion in misery lay,
 Long since, where the waters of Babylon flow,
 In fetters of iron:
 Now sing to us, lo,
 A song of your Zion!
 Thus cried in that day,
 Triumphant and laughing, the foe.

I see them in Rome, they are rent there and torn
 By tiger and bear, they're a byword of scorn.
 In Spain too I see them, thrown over to shame,
 Bereft of their riches, their honour, their name.

I see how they wander alone in the woods,
 I see how they toss on the desolate floods,
 And still, oh how clearly, I hear thro' it all
 The voice of my nation, her watchword, her call :
 My children, my children, whose love I rely on,
 Oh remember the name that thro' ages untold,
 Before angels and men you were wont to uphold,
 Defend still the treasured, the dear name of Zion !
 And this, do you see,
 Mr. Jew, is for me
 The one only song, which from life's early dawn
 My heart to itself, by my heart's love, has drawn.

ONE OF THE BEST.

I.

(On the grave of Michel Gordon.)

ONE more gravestone! one more heart,
 Cold and still, has found relief
 From the joy as from the smart,
 From the wrath for other's grief.

Where the ash is strewn about,
 Lies the dear old fiddle, lone ;
 And the crazy song rang out
 With a sudden sound of moan.

Strong and earnest, unafraid,
 Rose the song, and clear and high.
 Ring the bell—the piece is played !
 Hushed the laughter, hushed the cry !

In the land where, free from pain,
 Thou, dear soul, art gone to live,
 One assurance still retain,
 All the comfort we can give.