

**THE JEWS OF BARNOW:
STORIES. TRANSLATED
FROM THE GERMAN BY M.
W. MACDOWALL**

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KARL EMIL FRANZOS & M. W. MACDOWALL

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THE JEWS OF BARNOW.

"The scoff, the curse—his people's heritage—
Have left upon his shrunken face their sting;
His eyes gleam like those of some hunted thing,
Against whose life implacable war men wage.
We read the Jew's face as one reads a page
Of his own nation's history, for there cling
About its lines, deep-worn with suffering,
The traces still of Israel's lordly age."

F. F. M.

THE
JEWS OF BARNOW

STORIES
BY
KARL EMIL FRANZOS

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
M. W. MACDOWALL

NEW YORK
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1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET
1883



P R E F A C E

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

ALTHOUGH the high literary art which Franzos possesses (the finer quality of which has been preserved in this translation) is fully admitted by intelligent Jews, the subject-matter of his book itself, its *raison d'être*, they have by no means relished. In a review of "The Jews of Barnow," published some months ago in a leading New York journal, it was asserted by the writer that, from internal evidence, Franzos must be a Jew. This statement was directly controverted by a Jewish weekly of the highest standing. Still, we must believe that the acumen of the New York reviewer was not at fault, because in a late number of "Blackwood's Magazine," which contained an interesting criticism of Franzos and his book, it was asserted that the author is or was a Jew. No man not born a Jew, perfectly familiar with all the phases of Jewish life in Eastern Galicia, and in sympathy with them, could have created this book.

Franzos may have clothed Jews and Jewesses with poetical raiment, given them melodramatic phrasings, but the gabardine, caftan, love-locks, are visible—the whine, the nasal twang audible.

This denial that Franzos was a Jew, though apparently insignificant in itself, and due, perhaps, to a want of acquaintance with the facts, is still peculiarly indicative of a natural *travers* of the Jewish mind. Any description of the inner life of Jews, when written by a Jew, unless it be laudatory, is particularly distasteful to Jews. No race cares to have its failings exposed. From one of another creed such strictures may be passed over with stolid indifference, but, from one of their own blood, any censure, direct or applied, is considered by Jews in the light of a sacrilege. With Jews it is ever a cry, "It is a dirty bird that fouls its own nest." Such acridity as a Goldwin Smith distills, Jews laugh at; but when one of their kinsmen, a Mr. Montefiore, finds fault with them, bidding them look for grace in another direction, then at once a holy horror pervades them.

What Franzos describes is Jewish life pent up within the narrow limits of some Galician town. Religious dislikes, racial hatreds kindled a thousand years ago, have never been quenched. Though to-day in that town a Jew could not be murdered, because it would be against the law, the inclination to kill him, because he is a Jew, still exists. The simple fact, that every Jew had been taught to read and write, had quickened

his brains. Through heredity he became, intellectually, superior to the illiterate peasant, or townsfolk, who hemmed him in. The mental phenomenon the Jew would present, under such conditions, would not be, after all, so peculiar. He had but two ends in life, to work and pray. Even his toil was restricted, for he could only engage in certain callings. His solace was his religion. He might pray to his Maker, but only in such set phrases as had been chosen for him. His God was by far too sublime for him, poor worm, to address in such homely words as might well up spontaneously from his own heart. A slave to tradition, bound down by rote, the Jew had been taught that the least divergence from a cut-and-dried ritual was heresy. Mental and physical isolation brought about arrested development. The only wonder about this all is, that the Jew in Eastern Europe, seeing a better chance for life beyond the pale of his religion, had not broken bounds, and, abjuring his creed, found outside of it an easier existence. Brushing aside that sentimentalism which so often obscures considerations of this character, the chances of security for an apostate Jew were not very certain. Travestied in the guise of a Christian, he never could have looked like one. Stamped on his features were all the marked characteristics of his Orientalism. Even his tongue would have played him false, for the rabbi had forbidden him the use of that language common to the state in which he lived. By some complica-

tions brought about by the Jews themselves in Eastern Europe, they are not always subjected to the same regulations as Christians. Religious laws made for their own government, which underpinned their social life, were rarely meddled with. In a primitive society, necessarily ignorant, any accredited head, according to the laws of sociology, must be a despotic one. A rabbi, then, in these unknown towns, wielded almost the power of life and death. That modern infliction of Boycotting has been borrowed directly from the Jews. For a trivial divergence from common custom the punishment was severe. In these Polish or Russian districts, thirty years ago, a Jew did not dare read a Christian book.

What Franzos shows markedly in his "Jews of Bar-now" is that barrier which Jews throw around their household. The seclusion of the family, so purely Oriental in its character, is something which the Polish rabbi takes particular pains to teach. This hiding, of what is the finest trait the Jew possesses, that love and peace which dwell in his home, that reverence which children have for their parents, that sacrifice of everything to his affections, because it never is known, has tended more than anything else to alienate the Jew from his neighbor. Among the ultra-orthodox Jews, whether they live in Odessa, Cracow, Frankfort, London, or New York, their doors are inhospitably closed to those of another belief. Has there been transmitted some instinct engendered by mistrust?