

**A PILGRIM JEW;
A ROMANCE**

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A pilgrim Jew; a romance by Charles Coke Woods

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CHARLES COKE WOODS

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A Pilgrim Jew

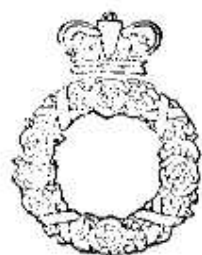
A Romance by Charles Coke Woods



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Class of 1906

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THE MASSACHUSETTS
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A Pilgrim Jew

I

Athwart a mystic, many-stringed harp
A spirit sweeps his magic hand, and sounds
Escape as wild and weird as any song
That pagan priest or sibyl ever sang ;
That harp so strange and many cycles old,
Doth yield sweet strains of joy and sobs of woe ;
From year to year the spirit thrums the chords
All palpitant with life, nor ever sleeps,
Nor does he weary grow with ceaseless toil ;
High souls athrob with holy life do hear
The notes from far away, and clearly see
That He who smites the harp God's angel is,
And that the instrument is human life.

II

I stood once in the far-off Orient,
At close of garish day and bowed my soul
Before the God of life to think and pray ;
The sky broke into astral bloom, and winds
Played " Hide and Seek " among the dewy leaves,
Disporting gaily with the grass and flowers,
And fondly toying ebon locks that wreathed
An infant sleeper's face, aglow with smiles ;
And thus I came upon the sleeping child
Who woke and grew puissant with the years.

III

When, swifter than the shuttles fly, time brought
To man's estate, this child of destiny,
I saw him boldly stride away with staff
In hand for distant lands across the sea ;
The gladd'ning glow of Oriental skies
Flings crimson on his smooth and swarthy cheek,
And, as the withered fields drink rain, his eyes
Drink splendor in ; — such is the Pilgrim Jew.
His quest is for the things that others seek, —
The things for which most men do live and die ;
He seeks to find the Holy Grail of joy,
And drink from fountains that will satisfy
The body's thirst, and slake the thirst of soul.
The genius of his race flows in his veins
Today. Like eagles lithe and strong of wing,
God made the Jewish race to front the storm.
