



The Joyful Wisdom: or The Gay Science

Friedrich Nietzsche, Hard Head Publications

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The Joyful Wisdom: or The Gay Science Friedrich Nietzsche, Hard Head Publications "The Joyful Wisdom," written in 1882, just before "Zarathustra," is rightly judged to be one of Nietzsche's best books. Here the essentially grave and masculine face of the poet-philosopher is seen to light up and suddenly break into a delightful smile. The warmth and kindness that beam from his features will astonish those hasty psychologists who have never divined that behind the destroyer is the creator, and behind the blasphemer the lover of life. In the retrospective valuation of his work which appears in "Ecce Homo" the author him self observes with truth that the fourth book, "Sanctus Januarius," deserves especial attention: "The whole book is a gift from the Saint, and the introductory verses express my gratitude for the most wonderful month of January that I have ever spent." Book fifth "We Fearless Ones," the Appendix "Songs of Prince Free-as-a-Bird," and the Preface, were added to the second edition in 1887. The translation of Nietzsche's poetry has proved to be a more embarrassing problem than that of his prose. Not only has there been a difficulty in finding adequate translators — a difficulty overcome, it is hoped, by the choice of Miss Petre and Mr Cohn, but it cannot be denied that even in the original the poems are of unequal merit. By the side of such masterpieces as "To the Mistral" are several verses of comparatively little value. The Editor, however, did not feel justified in making a selection, as it was intended that the edition should be complete. The heading, "Jest, Ruse and Revenge," of the "Prelude in Rhyme" is borrowed from Goethe.

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