

THE GOLDEN JOY

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The Golden Joy by Thomas MacDonagh

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THOMAS MACDONAGH

**THE
GOLDEN JOY**

THE GOLDEN JOY
By THOMAS McDONAGH

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1906.

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When my first book appeared some friends of mine and some reviewers said that for all its ending of Trust and Faith the shadow of the middle gloom remained. I was then working on "The Praises of Beauty," and thought for a time to publish it at once—a sequel of Joy, as it were, to "Dream Tower." However, when already I had prepared the book for publication, I considered that it would be wise to wait a little. I have waited through three years of other work, and am now able to join to my book of Beauty another choice of poems which are, most of them, Praises of Joy. The common title my Proem explains.

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THE GOLDEN JOY.

What hath the Poet but a glorious phrase
And the heart's wisdom?

Oh, a Joy of gold!

A Joy to mint and squander on the Kind,—
Pure gold coined current for eternity,
Giving dear wealth to men for a long age,
And after, lost to sight and touch of hands,
Leaving a memory that will bud and bloom
And blossom all into a lyric phrase—
The glorious phrase again on other lips,
The heritage of Joy, the heart again,
Wisdom anew that ages not but lives
To Sappho-sing the Poet else forgot,

O Joy, O sweet, sweet Joy of poet dream!
Who holdest the keys of Horn and Ivory,
Who joinest the hands of Earth and Faërie,
Thou art the inmate of the shrinking soul
That shuns the touch of every street-worn wind,
Sweet to all else,—that shuns the paltry jars
Of little, little earthly accidents;—
Thou art the spouse of the busy human mind
Which bravely, sanely, bears its worldly part
And apes not Folly strange or stranger Wit,
But, Nature's child, lives sweetly natural,

THE GOLDEN JOY.

Filling the duties of the tribe of Man,
Keeping the heart, O Joy! untarnished still
And pinion-strong to soar the exalted way.

The Poet guards the philosophic soul,
That ne'er the poet-mind austere may mar
The rhythmic fall of sweetly tuned words
By aught of vain or vicious, cruel, proud—
Save proud with trust that's born of the heart's
truth—

By aught that lacks that perfect trust in man
And in High God. What though he sing of gloom
He is the world's best optimist at last:
His songs are Joy—the picture that needs gloom
To fill the light spaces, as Life fills Time
And Death fills Life and as just Hell fills Death—
Joy that sees Hell, yet in Death sees not woe.

O Joy! the Spring is green—on many a wall
The roses straggle, on many a tree dew-laden;
And now the waters murmur 'neath their banks,
And all the flocks are loud with firstling cries,
And in the heart of things Joy wakes anew
To live a long day ere the Winter falls;
And now the thrush's note, and now the lark's,
And now a child's voice makes the morning glad;
The kindling sky and the mist-wreathed earth
Have broken from the drowsihood of Night,—
Dawn widened grey, and now the orient blush