

It gives one no pleasure thus to draw out and dwell upon the incoherences and contradictions in the work of a man for whom we have the strongest possible reason to make sympathetic allowance. We cannot understand Nietzsche at all unless we bear in mind the circumstances which made the last twelve years of his life so unspeakably tragic. Of the disease which in the end claimed him and which held him in so mercilessly prolonged a grip he was giving, as anyone may see, no obscure or ambiguous tokens during a great part of his literary career. That he had a dash of wild genius and a brilliancy of style no one doubts; that he had at no time a cool and balanced mind I should think his most careful critics are now agreed. But it is just such a mind that is wanted for the scientific study of morals. We do well to be distrustful of "ethical seers." Like Coleridge and the ghosts we have seen too many. Let anyone turn over the pages of Nietzsche's autobiography—a book to which he gave the characteristic title "*Ecce Homo*,"—and judge for himself the state of megalomania which is there revealed. "Why I am so wise," "Why I am so clever," "Why I write such excellent books," "Why I am a fatality"—such are the headings of the chapters in which he discloses to us the secret of his own greatness. The man who wrote like that in 1888 was well on his way to the collapse of 1889.

But a criticism which would otherwise be disagreeable and ungenerous has been rendered necessary by the aggressiveness of the Nietzschean devotees. They are insisting that those who care for ethical and social problems should attend to the words of wisdom in "*Zarathustra*" and in "*Beyond Good and Evil*." And apparently there is a section of persons