

My hand pulled at the serpent, and pulled:--in vain! I failed to pull the serpent out of his throat. Then there cried out of me: "Bite! Bite!

Its head off! Bite!"--so cried it out of me; my horror, my hatred, my loathing, my pity, all my good and my bad cried with one voice out of me.--

Ye daring ones around me! Ye venturers and adventurers, and whoever of you have embarked with cunning sails on unexplored seas! Ye enigma-enjoyers!

Solve unto me the enigma that I then beheld, interpret unto me the vision of the lonest one!

For it was a vision and a foresight:--WHAT did I then behold in parable? And WHO is it that must come some day?

WHO is the shepherd into whose throat the serpent thus crawled? WHO is the man into whose throat all the heaviest and blackest will thus crawl?

--The shepherd however bit as my cry had admonished him; he bit with a strong bite! Far away did he spit the head of the serpent--: and sprang up.--

No longer shepherd, no longer man--a transfigured being, a light-surrounded being, that LAUGHED! Never on earth laughed a man as HE laughed!

O my brethren, I heard a laughter which was no human laughter,--and now gnaweth a thirst at me, a longing that is never allayed.

My longing for that laughter gnaweth at me: oh, how can I still endure to live! And how could I endure to die at present!--

Thus spake Zarathustra.

#### XLVII. INVOLUNTARY BLISS.

With such enigmas and bitterness in his heart did Zarathustra sail o'er the sea. When, however, he was four day-journeys from the Happy Isles and from his friends, then had he surmounted all his pain--: triumphantly and with firm foot did he again accept his fate. And then talked Zarathustra in this wise to his exulting conscience:

Alone am I again, and like to be so, alone with the pure heaven, and the open sea; and again is the afternoon around me.

On an afternoon did I find my friends for the first time; on an afternoon, also, did I find them a second time:--at the hour when all light becometh stiller.

For whatever happiness is still on its way 'twixt heaven and earth, now seeketh for lodging a luminous soul: WITH HAPPINESS hath all light now become stiller.

O afternoon of my life! Once did my happiness also descend to the valley that it might seek a lodging: then did it find those open hospitable souls.

O afternoon of my life! What did I not surrender that I might have one thing: this living plantation of my thoughts, and this dawn of my highest hope!

Companions did the creating one once seek, and children of HIS hope: and lo, it turned out that he could not find them, except he himself should first create them.

Thus am I in the midst of my work, to my children going, and from them returning: for the sake of his children must Zarathustra perfect himself.

For in one's heart one loveth only one's child and one's work; and where there is great love to oneself, then is it the sign of pregnancy: so have I found it.

Still are my children verdant in their first spring, standing nigh one another, and shaken in common by the winds, the trees of my garden and of my best soil.

And verily, where such trees stand beside one another, there ARE Happy Isles!

But one day will I take them up, and put each by itself alone: that it may learn lonesomeness and defiance and prudence.

Gnarled and crooked and with flexible hardness shall it then stand by the sea, a living lighthouse of unconquerable life.

Yonder where the storms rush down into the sea, and the snout of the mountain drinketh water, shall each on a time have his day and night watches, for HIS testing and recognition.

Recognised and tested shall each be, to see if he be of my type and lineage:--if he be master of a long will, silent even when he speaketh, and giving in such wise that he TAKETH in giving:--

--So that he may one day become my companion, a fellow-creator and fellow-enjoyer with Zarathustra:--such a one as writeth my will on my tables, for the fuller perfection of all things.

And for his sake and for those like him, must I perfect MYSELF: therefore do I now avoid my happiness, and present myself to every misfortune--for MY final testing and recognition.

And verily, it were time that I went away; and the wanderer's shadow and the longest tedium and the stillest hour--have all said unto me: "It is the highest time!"

The word blew to me through the keyhole and said "Come!" The door sprang subtly open unto me, and said "Go!"

But I lay enchained to my love for my children: desire spread this snare for me--the desire for love--that I should become the prey of my children, and lose myself in them.

Desiring--that is now for me to have lost myself. I POSSESS YOU, MY CHILDREN! In this possessing shall everything be assurance and nothing desire.

But brooding lay the sun of my love upon me, in his own juice stewed Zarathustra,--then did shadows and doubts fly past me.

For frost and winter I now longed: "Oh, that frost and winter would again make me crack and crunch!" sighed I:--then arose icy mist out of me.

My past burst its tomb, many pains buried alive woke up--: fully slept had they merely, concealed in corpse-clothes.