BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL By Friedrich Nietzsche Translated by Helen Zimmern CHAPTER I. PREJUDICES OF PHILOSOPHERS 1. The Will to Truth, which is to tempt us to many a hazardous enterprise, the famous Truthfulness of which all philosophers have hitherto spoken with respect, what questions has this Will to Truth not laid before us! What strange, perplexing, questionable questions! It is already a long story; yet it seems as if it were hardly commenced. Is it any wonder if we at last grow distrustful, lose patience, and turn impatiently away? That this Sphinx teaches us at last to ask questions ourselves? WHO is it really that puts questions to us here? WHAT really is this "Will to Truth" in us? In fact we made a long halt at the question as to the origin of this Will--until at last we came to an absolute standstill before a yet more fundamental question. We inquired about the VALUE of this Will. Granted that we want the truth: WHY NOT RATHER untruth? And uncertainty? Even ignorance? The problem of the value of truth presented itself before us--or was it we who presented ourselves before the problem? Which of us is the Oedipus here? Which the Sphinx? It would seem to be a rendezvous of questions and notes of interrogation. And could it be believed that it at last seems to us as if the problem had never been propounded before, as if we were the first to discern it, get a sight of it, and RISK RAISING it? For there is risk in raising it, perhaps there is no greater risk. 2. "HOW COULD anything originate out of its opposite? For example, truth out of error? or the Will to Truth out of the will to deception? or the generous deed out of selfishness? or the pure sun-bright vision of the wise man out of covetousness? Such genesis is impossible; whoever dreams of it is a fool, nay, worse than a fool; things of the highest value must have a different origin, an origin of THEIR own--in this transitory, seductive, illusory, paltry world, in this turmoil of delusion and cupidity, they cannot have their source. But rather in the lap of Being, in the intransitory, in the concealed God, in the 'Thing-in-itself--THERE must be their source, and nowhere else!"--This mode of reasoning discloses the typical prejudice by which metaphysicians of all times can be recognized, this mode of valuation is at the back of all their logical procedure; through this "belief" of theirs, they exert themselves for their "knowledge," for something that is in the end solemnly christened "the Truth." The fundamental belief of metaphysicians is THE BELIEF IN ANTITHESES OF VALUES. It never occurred even to the wariest of them to doubt here on the very threshold (where doubt, however, was most necessary); though they had made a solemn vow, "DE OMNIBUS DUBITANDUM." For it may be doubted, firstly, whether antitheses exist at all; and secondly, whether the popular valuations and antitheses of value upon which metaphysicians have set their seal, are not perhaps merely superficial estimates, merely provisional perspectives, besides being perhaps from some corner, perhaps from below--"frog perspectives," as it were, to borrow an expression current among painters. In spite of all the value which may belong to the true, the positive, and the beneficent, it might be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life generally should be assigned to pretence, to the will to delusion, to selfishness, and cupidity. It might even be possible that the value of those good and respected things, consists precisely in their being insidiously related, knotted, and crocheted to these evil and apparently opposed things--perhaps even in being essentially identical with them. Perhaps! But who wishes to concern himself with such dangerous "Perhapses"! For that investigation one must await the coming of a new order of philosophers, such as will have other tastes and inclinations, the reverse of those hitherto prevalent--philosophers of the dangerous "Perhaps" in every sense of the term. And to speak in all seriousness, I see such new philosophers beginning to appear. 3. Having kept a sharp eye on the philosophers, and having read between their lines long enough, I now say to myself that the greater part of conscious thinking must be counted among the instinctive functions, and it is so even in the case of philosophical thinking; one has to learn anew, as one learned anew about heredity and "innateness." As little as the act of birth comes into consideration in the whole process and procedure of heredity, just as little is "being-conscious" OPPOSED to the instincts, any decisive sense; the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly influenced by his instincts, and forced into definite channels. And behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, there are valuations, or to speak more plainly, physiological demands, for the maintenance of a definite mode of life. For example, that the certain is worth more than the uncertain, that illusion is less valuable than "truth" such valuations, in spite of their regulative importance for US, might notwithstanding be only superficial valuations, special kinds of niaiserie, such as may be necessary for the maintenance of beings such as ourselves. Supposing, in effect, that man is not just the "measure of things." 4. The falseness of an opinion is not for us any objection to it: it is here, perhaps, that our new language sounds most strangely. The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing, and we are fundamentally inclined to maintain that the falsest opinions (to which the synthetic judgments a priori belong), are the most indispensable to us, that without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely IMAGINED world of the absolute and immutable, with a constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, man could not live--that the renunciation of false opinions would be a renunciation of life, a negation of life. THE RECOGNISE UNTRUTH AS A CONDITION OF LIFE; that is certainly to impugn the traditional ideas of value in a dangerous manner, and a philosophy which ventures to do so, has thereby alone placed itself beyond good and evil. 5. That half-distrustfully and half-mockingly, is not the oft-repeated discovery how innocent they are--how often and easily they make mistakes and wandering astray, in short, how childish and childlike they are,--but that there is not enough honest dealing with them, whereas they all raise a loud and virtuous outcry when the probity of truth is even hinted at in the remotest manner. They all pose as though their real opinions had been discovered and attained through the self-evolving of a cold, pure, different dialectic (in contrast to all sorts of mystics, who, fairer and foolisher, talk of "inspiration"), whereas, in fact, a prejudiced proposition, idea, or "suggestion," which their heart's desire abstracted and refined, is defended by them with arguments sought out after the event. They are all advocates who do not wish to be regarded as generally astute defenders, also, of their prejudices, which they dub "truths,"--and VERY far from having the conscience which bravely admits this to itself, very far from having the good taste of the courage which admits this to itself, the conscience which goes so far as to let this be understood, perhaps to warn friend or foe, or in cheerful confidence and of the Tartuffery of old Kant, equally stiff and decent, with which he entices us into the dialectic by-ways that lead (more correctly mislead) to his "categorical imperative"--made easy for us the retirement in spying out the subtle tricks of old moralists and ethical preachers. Or, still more so, the hocus-pocus in mathematical form, by means of which Spinoza has armed and masked--in fact, as it were, to translate the term fairly and squarely--in order thereby to strike terror at once into the heart of the assailant who should dare to cast a glance on the invincible maiden, that Pallas Athene:--how much of personal timidity and vulnerability does this masquerade of a sickly recluse betray! 6. It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy up till now has been, namely, the confession of its originator, and a species of involuntary and unconscious auto-biography; and moreover that the moral (or immoral) purpose in every philosophy has constituted the true vital germ out of which the entire plant has always grown. Indeed, when one's most serious trusest metaphysical assertions of a philosopher have been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to first ask oneself: "What morality do they (or does he) aim at?" Accordingly, I do not believe that an impulse to knowledge is the father of philosophy; but that another impulse, here as elsewhere, has only made use of knowledge (and mistaken knowledge!) as an instrument. But whoever considers the fundamental impulses of man how far they may have here acted as INSPIRING GENII (or as demons and cobolds), will find that they have all practiced philosophy, and that each one of them would look upon itself as the ultimate end of existence and the legitimate LORD over all the other impulses. For every impulse is imperious, and as such, it would look upon itself as the ultimate end of existence and the legitimate LORD over all the other impulses. For every impulse is imperious, and as such, it would attempt to philosophize. To be sure, in the case of really scientific men, it may be otherwise--"better," if you will; there may really be such a thing as a good conscience in scientific men, or at least, such that, if not the actual "interests" of the other impulses taking any part in the business, yet the best of them, the "interests" of the scientific impulse, may be the right one to point out as the best of the other impulses, when well wound up, works away industriously to that end, WITHOUT the rest of the scholarly impulses taking any share in it, as it were, as the leading political party, when there is a parliament to be reckoned with, it is, in fact, almost indifferent, generally in quite another direction--in the family, perhaps, or in money-making, or in politics; it is, in fact, almost indifferent what point of view a young worker becomes a good philologist, a mushroom specialist, or a chemist; he is not CHARACTERISED by becoming this or that. A man who is a philologist, a mushroom specialist, or a chemist, has been made so by his work, or by his business, or by his parents, he has been made so by his work, or by his business, or by his parents, he has been made so by his work, or by his business, or by his parents, he