


wisest babbler that has ever lived, but was just as great in his silence. I would that he had also been silent in the last moment of his life,—perhaps he might then have belonged to a still higher order of intellects. Whether it was death, or the poison, or piety, or wickedness—something or other loosened his tongue at that moment, and he said: "O Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepios." For him who has ears, this ludicrous and terrible "last word" implies: "O Crito, *life is a long sickness!*" Is it possible! A man like him, who had lived cheerfully and to all appearance as a soldier,—was a pessimist! He had merely put on a good demeanour towards life, and had all along concealed his ultimate judgment, his profoundest sentiment! Socrates, Socrates *had suffered from life!* And he also took his revenge for it—with that veiled, fearful, pious, and blasphemous phrase! Had even a Socrates to revenge himself? Was there a grain too little of magnanimity in his superabundant virtue? Ah, my friends! We must surpass even the Greeks!

341.

 *The Heaviest Burden.*—What if a demon crept after thee into thy loneliest loneliness some day or night, and said to thee: "This life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence—and similarly



this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and similarly this moment, and I myself. The eternal sand-glass of existence will ever be turned once more, and thou with it, thou speck of dust!" —Wouldst thou not throw thyself down and gnash thy teeth, and curse the demon that so spake? Or hast thou once experienced a tremendous moment in which thou wouldst answer him: "Thou art a God, and never did I hear anything so divine!" If that thought acquired power over thee as thou art, it would transform thee, and perhaps crush thee; the question with regard to all and everything: "Dost thou want this once more, and also for innumerable times?" would lie as the heaviest burden upon thy activity! Or, how wouldst thou have to become favourably inclined to thyself and to life, so as *to long for nothing more ardently* than for this last eternal sanctioning and sealing?—

342.

*Incipit Tragædia.*—When Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and the Lake of Urmi, and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not weary of it. But at last his heart changed,—and rising one morning with the rosy dawn, he went before the sun and spake thus to it: "Thou great star! What would be thy happiness if thou hadst not those for whom thou shinest! For ten years hast thou climbed hither unto my cave: thou wouldst have wearied of thy light and of the journey, had it not been for me, mine eagle, and my serpent. But we awaited thee every morning, took