

***ISRAEL  
ZANGWILL***



***WITHOUT  
PREJUDICE***

**Israel Zangwill**

# **Without Prejudice**

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**PART I**

**GOSSIPS AND FANTASIES**

**I**

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**A VISION OF THE BURDEN OF MAN**

And it came to pass that my soul was vexed with the problems of life, so that I could not sleep. So I opened a book by a lady novelist, and fell to reading therein. And of a sudden I looked up, and lo! a great host of women filled the chamber, which had become as the Albert Hall for magnitude—women of all complexions, countries, times, ages, and sexes. Some were bewitching and beautiful, some wan and flat-breasted, some elegant and stately, some ugly and squat, some plain and whitewashed, and some painted

and decorated; women in silk gowns, and women in divided skirts, and women in widows' weeds, and women in knickerbockers, and women in ulsters, and women in furs, and women in crinolines, and women in tights, and women in rags; but every woman of them all in tears. The great chamber was full of a mighty babel; shouts and ululations, groans and moans, weeping and wailing and gnashing of false and genuine teeth, and tearing of hair both artificial and natural; and therewith the flutter of a myriad fans, and the rustle of a million powder-puffs. And the air reeked with a thousand indescribable scents—patchouli and attar of roses and cherry blossom, and the heavy odours of hair-oil and dyes and cosmetics and patent medicines innumerable.

Now when the women perceived me on my reading-chair in their midst, the shrill babel swelled to a savage thunder of menace, so that I deemed they were wroth with me for intruding upon them in mine own house; but as mine ear grew accustomed to the babel of tongues, I became aware of the true import of their ejaculations.

"O son of man!" they cried, in various voices: "thy cruel reign is over, thy long tyranny is done; thou hast glutted thyself with victims, thou hast got drunken on our hearts' blood, we have made sport for thee in our blindness. But the Light is come at last, the slow night has budded into the rose of dawn, the masculine monster is in his death-throes, the kingdom of justice is at hand, the Doll's House has been condemned by the sanitary inspector."

I strove to deprecate their wrath, but my voice was as the twitter of a sparrow in a hurricane. At length I ruffled my long hair to a leonine mane, and seated myself at the piano.



And lo! straightway there fell a deep silence—you could have heard a hairpin drop.

"What would you have me do, O daughters of Eve?" I cried. "What is my sin? what my iniquity?" Then the clamour recommenced with tenfold violence, disappointment at the loss of a free performance augmenting their anger.

"Give me a husband," shrieked one.

"Give me a profession," shrieked another.

"Give me a divorce," shrieked a third.

"Give me free union," shrieked a fourth.

"Give me an income," shrieked a fifth.

"Give me my deceased sister's husband," shrieked a sixth.

"Give me my divorced husband's children," shrieked a seventh.

"Give me the right to paint from the nude in the Academy schools," shrieked an eighth.

"Give me an Oxford degree," shrieked a ninth.

"Give me a cigar," shrieked a tenth.

"Give me a vote," shrieked an eleventh.

"Give me a pair of trousers," shrieked a twelfth.

"Give me a seat in the House," shrieked a thirteenth.

"Daughters of the horse-leech," I made answer, taking advantage of a momentary lull, "I am not in a position to give away any of these things. You had better ask at the Stores." But the tempest out-thundered me.

"I want to ride bareback in the Row in tights and spangles at 1 p. m. on Sundays," shrieked a soberly clad suburban lady, who sported a wedding-ring. "I want to move the world with my pen or the point of my toe; I want to write, dance,

sing, act, paint, sculpt, fence, row, ride, swim, hunt, shoot, fish, love all men from young rustic farmers to old town *roués*, lead the Commons, keep a salon, a restaurant, and a zoological garden, row a boat in boy's costume, with a tenor by moonlight alone, and deluge Europe and Asia with blood shed for my intoxicating beauty. I am primeval, savage, unlicensed, unchartered, unfathomable, unpetticoated, tumultuous, inexpressible, irrepressible, overpowering, crude, mordant, pugnacious, polyandrous, sensual, fiery, chaste, modest, married, and misunderstood."

"But, madam," I remarked—for in her excitement she approached within earshot of me—"I understand thee quite well, and I really am not responsible for thy emotions." Her literary style beguiled me into the responsive archaicism of the second person singular.

"Coward!" she snapped. "Coward and satyr! For centuries thou hast trampled upon my sisters, and desecrated womanhood."

"I beg thy pardon," I rejoined mildly.

"Thou dost not deserve it," she interrupted.

"Thou art substituting hysteria for history," I went on. "I was not born yesterday, but I have only scored a few years more than a quarter of one century, and seeing that my own mother was a woman, I must refuse to be held accountable for the position of the sex."

"Sophist!" she shrieked. "It is thy apathy and selfishness that perpetuate the evil."

Then I bethought me of my long vigils of work and thought, the slow, bitter years in which I "ate my bread with tears, and sat weeping on my bed," and I remembered that

some of those tears were for the sorrows of that very sex which was now accusing me of organised injustice. But I replied gently: "I am no tyrant; I am a simple, peaceful citizen, and it is as much as I can do to earn my bread and the bread of some of thy sex. Life is hard enough for both sexes, without setting one against the other. We are both the outcome of the same great forces, and both of us have our special selfishnesses, advantages, and drawbacks. If there is any cruelty, it is Nature's handiwork, not man's. So far from trampling on womanhood, we have let a woman reign over us for more than half a century. We worship womanhood, we have celebrated woman in song, picture, and poem, and half civilisation has adored the Madonna. Let us have woman's point of view and the truth about her psychology, by all means. But beware lest she provoke us too far. The *Ewigweibliche* has become too literal a fact, and in our reaction against this everlasting woman question we shall develop in unexpected directions. Her cry for equal purity will but end in the formal institution of the polygamy of the Orient—"

As I spoke the figure before me appeared to be undergoing a transformation, and, ere I had finished, I perceived I was talking to an angry, seedy man in a red muffler.

"Thee keeps down the proletariat," he interrupted venomously. "Thee lives on the sweat of his brow, while thee fattens at ease. Thee plants thy foot on his neck."

"Do I?" I exclaimed, lifting up my foot involuntarily.

Mistaking the motion, he disappeared, and in his stead I saw a withered old pauper with the Victoria Cross on his

breast. "I went to the mouth of hell for thee," he said, with large reproachful eyes; "and thou leavest me to rot in the workhouse."

"I am awfully sorry!" I said. "I never heard of thee. It is the nation—"

"The nation!" he cried scornfully. "*Thou* art the nation; the nation is only a collection of individuals. Thou art responsible. Thou art the man."

"Thou art the man," echoed a thousand voices: "Society is only an abstraction." And, looking round, I saw, to my horror, that the women had quite disappeared, and their places were filled by men of all complexions, countries, times, ages, and sexes.

"I died in the streets," shouted an old cripple in the background—"round the corner from thy house, in thy wealthy parish—I died of starvation in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, and a generation after Dickens's 'Christmas Carol.'"

"If I had only known!" I murmured, while my eyes grew moist. "Why didst thou not come to me?"

"I was too proud to beg," he answered. "The really poor never beg."

"Then how am I responsible?" I retorted.

"How art thou responsible?" cried the voices indignantly; and one dominating the rest added: "I want work and can't get it. Dost thou call thyself civilised?"

"Civilised?" echoed a weedy young man scornfully. "I am a genius, yet I have had nothing to eat all day. Thy congeners killed Keats and Chatterton, and when I am dead thou wilt be sorry for what thou hast not done."

"But hast thou published anything?" I asked.

"How could I publish?" he replied, indignantly.

"Then how could I be aware of thee?" I inquired.

"But my great-grandfather *did* publish," said another. "Thou goest into ecstasies over him, and his books have sold by tens of thousands; but me thou leavest pensionless, to earn my living as a cooper. Bah!"

"And thou didst put *my* father in prison," said another, "for publishing the works of a Continental novelist; but when the novelist himself comes here, thou puttest him in the place of honour."

I was fast growing overwhelmed with shame.

"Where is thy patriotism! Thou art letting some of the most unique British birds become extinct!" "Yes, and thou lettest Christmas cards be made in Germany, and thou deridest Whistler, and refusest to read Dod Grile, and thou lettest books be published with the sheets pinned instead of sewn. And the way thou neglectest Coleridge's grave——"

"Coleridge's grave?" interrupted a sad-eyed enthusiast. "Why, thou hast put no stone at all to mark where James Thomson lies!"

"Thou Hun, thou Vandal!" shrieked a fresh contingent of voices in defiance of the late Professor Freeman. "Thou hast allowed the Emanuel Hospital to be knocked down, thou hast whitewashed the oaken ceiling of King Charles's room at Dartmouth, and threatened to destroy the view from Richmond Hill. Thou hast smashed cathedral windows, or scratched thy name on them, hast pulled down Roman walls, and allowed commons to be inclosed. Thou coverest the Lake District with advertisements of pills, and the blue

heaven itself with sky-signs; and in thy passion for cheap and nasty pictorial journalism thou art allowing the art of wood-engraving to die out, even as thou acceptest photogravures instead of etchings."

I cowered before their wrath, while renewed cries of "Thou art responsible! Thou! Thou!" resounded from all sides.

"A pretty Christian *thou* art!" exclaimed another voice in unthinking vituperation. "Thou decimatest savage tribes with rum and Maxim guns, thou makest money by corrupting the East with opium. Thou allowest the Armenians to be done to death, and thou wilt not put a stop to child-marriages in India."

"But for thee I should have been alive to-day," broke in a venerable spirit hovering near the ceiling. "If thou hadst refused to sell poison except in specially shaped bottles——"

"What canst thou expect of a man who allows anybody to carry firearms?" interrupted another voice.

"Or who fills his newspaper with divorce cases?"

"Is it any wonder the rising generation is cynical, and the young maiden of fifteen has ceased to be bashful?"

"Shame on thee!" hissed the chorus, and advanced upon me so threateningly that I seized my hat and rushed from the room. But a burly being with a Blue Book blocked my way.

"Where didst thou get that hat?" he cried. "Doubtless from some sweating establishment. And those clothes; didst thou investigate where they were made? didst thou inquire how much thy tailor paid his hands? didst thou engage an accountant to examine his books?"

"I—I am so busy," I stammered feebly.

"Shuffler! How knowest thou thou art not spreading to the world the germs of scarlet fever and typhoid picked up in the sweaters' dens?"

"What cares *he*?" cried a tall, thin man, with a slight stoop and gold spectacles. "Does he not poison the air every day with the smoke of his coal fires?"

"Pison the air!" repeated a battered, blear-eyed reprobate. "He pisoned my soul. He ruined me with promiskus charity. Whenever I was stoney-broke 'e give me doles in aid, 'e did. 'E wos werry bad to me, 'e wos. 'E destroyed my self-respeck, druv me to drink, broke up my home, and druv my darters on the streets."

"This is what comes of undisciplined compassion," observed the gold-spectacled gentleman, glowering at me. "The integrity and virtue of a whole family sacrificed to the gratification of thy altruistic emotions!"

"Stand out of the way!" I cried to the burly man; "I wish to leave my own house."

"And carry thy rudeness abroad?" he retorted indignantly. "Perchance thou wouldst like to go to the Continent, and swagger through Europe clad in thy loud-patterned checks and thine insular self-sufficiency."

I tried to move him out of the way by brute force, and we wrestled, and he threw me. I heard myself strike the floor with a thud.

Rubbing my eyes, instead of my back, I discovered that I was safe in my reading-chair, and that it was the lady novelist's novel that had made the noise. I picked it up, but I still seemed to see the reproachful eyes of a thousand

tormentors, and hear their objurgations. Yet I had none of the emotions of Scrooge, no prickings of conscience, no ferment of good resolutions. Instead, I felt a wave of bitterness and indignation flooding my soul.

"I will *not* be responsible for the universe!" I cried to the ceiling. "I am sick of the woman question, and the problem of man makes my gorge rise. Is there one question in the world that can really be settled? No, not one, except by superficial thinkers. Just as the comprehensive explanation of 'the flower in the crannied wall' is the explanation of the whole universe, so every question is but a thin layer of ice over infinite depths. You may touch it lightly, you may skate over it; but press it at all, and you sink into bottomless abysses. The simplest interrogation is a doorway to chaos, to endless perspectives of winding paths perpetually turning upon themselves in a blind maze. Suppose one is besought to sign a petition against capital punishment. A really conscientious and logical person, pursuing truth after the manner recommended by Descartes, and professed by Huxley, could not settle this question for himself without going into the endless question of Free-will *versus* Necessity, and studying the various systems of philosophy and ethics. Murder may be due to insane impulse: Insanity must therefore be studied. Moreover, ought not hanging to be abolished in cases of murder and reserved for more noxious crimes, such as those of fraudulent directors? This opens up new perspectives and new lines of study. The whole theory of Punishment would also have to be gone into: should it be restrictive, or revengeful, or reformative? (See Aristotle, Bentham, Owen, etc.) Incidentally great



tracts of the science of Psychology are involved. And what right have we to interfere with our fellow-creatures at all? This opens up the vast domains of Law and Government, and requires the perusal of Montesquieu, Bodin, Rousseau, Mill, etc., etc. Sociology would also be called in to determine the beneficent or maleficent influence of the death-punishment upon the popular mind; and statistics would be required to trace the operation of the systems of punishment in various countries. History would be consulted to the same effect. The sanctity of human life being a religious dogma, the religions of the world would have to be studied, to see under what conditions it has been thought permissible to destroy life. One ought not to rely on translations: Confucius should be read in Chinese, the Koran in Arabic, and the few years spent in the acquisition of Persian would be rewarded by a first-hand familiarity with the Zend Avesta. The Old Testament enjoins capital punishment. On what grounds, then, if one is leaning the other way, may a text be set aside that seems to settle the matter positively? Here comes in the vast army of Bible commentators and theologians. But perhaps the text is of late origin, interpolated. The Dutch and German savants rise in their might, with their ingenious theories and microscopic scholarship. But there are other scientists who bid us not heed the Bible at all, because it contradicts the latest editions of their primers. Is, then, science strictly accurate? To answer this you must have a thorough acquaintance with biology, geology, astronomy, besides deciding for yourself between the conflicting views at nearly every point. By the time you have made up your mind as to whether capital

punishment should be abolished, it has passed out of the statute-book, and you are dead, or mad, or murdered.

"But were this the only question a man has to settle in his short span of years, he might cheerfully engage in its solution. But life bristles with a hundred questions equally capital, and with a thousand-and-one minor problems on which he is expected to have an opinion, and about which he is asked at one time or other, if only at dinner."

At this moment the Poet who shares my chambers came in—later than he should have done—and interrupted my soliloquy. But I was still hot, and enlisted his interest in my vision and my apologia, and began drawing up a list of the questions, in which after a while he became so interested that he started adding to it. Hours flew like minutes, and only the splitting headache we both brought upon ourselves drove us to desist. Here is our first rough list of the questions that confront the modern man—a disorderly, deficient, and tautological list, no doubt, to which any reader can add many hundred more.

## **VEXED QUESTIONS**

Queen Mary and Bothwell. Shakespeare and Bacon. Correct transliteration of Greek; pronunciation of Latin. Sunday opening of museums; of theatres. The English Sunday; Bank Holiday. Darwinism. Is there spontaneous creation? or spontaneous combustion? The germ theory; Pasteur's cures; Mattei's cures; Virchow's cell theory. Unity of Homer; of the Bible. Dickens v. Thackeray. Shall we ever fly? or steer

balloons? The credit system; the discount system. Impressionism, decadence, Japanese art, the *plein air* school. Realism v. romance; Gothic v. Greek art. Russian fiction, Dutch, Bulgarian, Norwegian, American, etc., etc.: opinion of every novel ever written, of every school, in every language (you must read them in the original); ditto of every opera and piece of music, with supplementary opinions about every vocalist and performer; ditto of every play, with supplementary opinions about every actor, dancer, etc.; ditto of every poem; ditto of every picture ever painted, with estimates of every artist in every one of his manners at every stage of his development and decisions as to which pictures are not genuine; also of every critic of literature, drama, art, and music (in all of which departments certain names are equal to an appalling plexus of questions—Wagner, Ibsen, Meredith, Browning, Comte, Goethe, Shakespeare, Dante, Degas, Rousseau, Tolstoi, Maeterlinck, Strindberg, Zola, Whistler, Leopardi, Emerson, Carlyle, Swedenborg, Rabelais). Socialism, its various schools, its past and its future; Anarchism: bombs. Labour questions: the Eight Hours' Day, the Unemployed, the Living Wage, etc., etc. Mr. Gladstone's career. Shall members of Parliament be paid? Chamberlain's position; ditto for every statesman in every country, to-day and in all past ages. South Africa, Rhodes, Captain Jim. The English girl v. the French or the American. Invidious comparisons of every people from every point of view, physical, moral, intellectual, and

aesthetic. Vizetelly. Vivisection. First love v. later love; French marriage system v. the English. The corrupt choruses in the Greek dramas (also in modern burlesque—with the question of the Church and Stage Guild, Zaeo's back, the County Council, etc.). How to make London beautiful. Fogs. Bi-metallism. Secondary Education. Volunteer or conscript? Anonymity in journalism. Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism: their mutual superiorities, their past and their future. Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and all philosophers and philosophies. The Independent Theatre. The origin of language, Where do the Aryans come from? Was Mrs. Maybrick guilty? Same question for every great murderer. The Tichborne case, and every other *cause célèbre*, including divorce cases. Crime and punishment. Music-hall songs. Heredity: are acquired qualities inherited? Is tobacco a mistake? Is drink? Is marriage? Is the high hat? Polygamy; the social evil. Are the planets inhabited? Is the English concert pitch too high? The divided skirt. The antiquity of man. Geology: is the story of the rocks short, or long, or true? Geology v. Genesis; Genesis v. Kuenen. Was Pope a poet? Was Whitman? Was Poe a drunkard, or Griswold a liar? Was Hamlet mad? Was Blake? Is waltzing immoral? Is humour declining? Is there a modern British drama? Corporal punishment in schools. Compulsory vaccination. What shall we do with our daughters? or our sons? or our criminals? or our paupers? or ourselves? Female franchise. Republicanism. Which is the best soap? or tooth-

powder? Is Morris's printing really good? Is the race progressing? Is our navy fit? Should dynamite be used in war? or in peace? What persons should be buried in Westminster Abbey? Origin of every fairy-tale. Who made our proverbs and ballads? Cold baths v. hot or Turkish. Home Rule. Should the Royal Academy be abolished? and who should be the next R.A.? Should there be an Academy of Literature? or a Channel Tunnel? Was De Lesseps to blame? Should we not patronise English watering-places? Should there be pianos in board schools? or theology? Authors and publishers; artists and authors. Is literature a trade? Should pauper aliens be admitted? or pauper couples separated? Bank Holiday. Irving v. Tree. The world's politics, present, future, and even past—retrospective questions being constantly re-agitated: as, Should the American slaves have been emancipated? or Was the French Revolution a Folly? *Apropos*, which is the best history of it? Who is the rightful Queen of England? Is cycling injurious to the cyclist? or the public? Who was the Man in the Iron Mask? Is the Stock Exchange immoral? What is influenza? Ought we to give cabmen more than their fare? Tips generally. Should dogs be muzzled? Have we a right to extend our empire? or to keep it? Should we federate it? Are there ghosts? Is spiritualism a fraud? Is theosophy? Was Madame Blavatsky? Was Jezebel a wretch, or a Hellenist? The abuse of the quarantine. Should ladies ride astride? Amateurs v. professionals in sports. Is prize-fighting beneficial? Is trial by jury played out? The cost of law:

Chancery. Abuses of the Universities. The Cambridge Spinning House. Compulsory Greek. The endowment of research. A teaching university in London. Is there a sea-serpent? Servants v. mistresses. Shall the Jews have Palestine? Classical v. modern side in schools. Should we abolish the censorship of plays? or fees? or found a dramatic academy? or a State theatre? Should gambling be legal? Should potatoes be boiled in their skins? should dynamiters? Should newspapers publish racing tips? or divorce cases? or comment? The New Journalism. What is the best ninth move in the Evans gambit? Would Morphy have been a first-class chess-player to-day? Is the Steinitz gambit sound? Do plants dream? Ought we to fill up income-tax papers accurately? Shelley and Harriet and Mary. Swift and Vanessa and Stella. Lord and Lady Byron. Did Mrs. Carlyle deserve it? The limits of biography; of photography in painting; of the spot-stroke in billiards. Did Shakespeare hold horses? Should girls be brought up like boys, or boys like girls, or both like one another? Are animals automata? Have they reason? or do they live without reason? Will Brighton A's fall? or Peruvians rise? Is it cruel to cage birds and animals? What is the best breed of horses? Did Wellington say "Up, Guards, and at 'em"? Cremation v. Burial. Should immoral men be allowed to retain office? Is suicide immoral? Opinion of the character of Elizabeth, Parnell, Catherine, Cleopatra, Rousseau, Jack the Ripper, Semiramis, Lucrezia Borgia, etc., etc. The present state of the Libel Law; and of the Game Laws.

Is vegetarianism higher? or healthier? Do actors feel their parts? Should German type be abolished? or book-edges cut? or editions artificially limited? or organ-grinders? How about church-and-muffin-bells? Peasant proprietorship. Deer or Highlanders? Were our ancestors taller than we? Is fruit or market-gardening or cattle-farming more profitable? Dutch v. Italian gardening. What is an etching? Do dreams come true? Is freemasonry a fraud? or champagne? are Havanas? Best brand of whiskey? Ought Building and Friendly Societies to be supervised? Smoking in theatres. Should gentlemen pay ladies' cab-fares? Genius and insanity. Are cigarettes poisonous? Is luxury a boon? Thirteen at table, and all other superstitions—are they foolish? Why young men don't marry. Shall we ever reach the Pole? How soon will England and the States be at war? The real sites and people in Thackeray's novels. A universal penny post? Cheap telegrams and telephones? Is the Bank of England safe? Are the planets inhabited? Should girls have more liberty? Should they propose? or wear crinolines? Why not have an unlimited paper currency? or a decimal system and coinage? or a one-pound note? Should we abolish the Lords? or preserve the Commons? Why not euthanasia? Should dramatic critics write plays? Who built the Pyramids? Are the English the Lost Ten Tribes? Should we send missions to the heathen? How long will our coal hold out? Who executed Charles I.? Are the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna trustworthy? are hieroglyphic readers? Will war ever die? or people live

to a hundred? The best moustache-forcer, bicycle, typewriter, and system of shorthand or of teaching the blind? Was Sam Weller possible? Who was the original of Becky Sharp? Of Dodo? Does tea hurt? Do gutta-percha shoes? or cork soles? Shall we disestablish the church? or tolerate a reredos in St. Paul's? Is Euclid played out? Is there a fourth dimension of space? Which is the real old Curiosity Shop? Is the Continental man better educated than the Briton? Why can't we square the circle? or solve equations to the n<sup>th</sup> degree? or colour-print in England? What is the use of South Kensington? Is paraffin good for baldness? or eucalyptus for influenza? How many elements are there? Should cousins marry? or the House be adjourned on Derby Day? Do water-colours fade? Will the ether theory live? or Stanley's reputation? Is Free Trade fair? Is a Free Press? Is fox-hunting cruel? or pigeon-shooting? How about the Queen's staghounds? Should not each railway station bear its name in big letters? and have better refreshments? Should we permit sky-signs? Limits of advertisement. Preservation of historic buildings and beautiful views v. utilitarianism. Is the coinage ugly? Should we not get letters on Sunday? Who really wrote the "Marseillaise"? Are examinations any real test? Promotion in the Army or the Civil Service. Is logic or mathematics the primal science? and what is the best system of symbolic logic? Should curates be paid more and archbishops less? Should postmen knock? or combine? Are they under military



régime? or underpaid? Should Board School children be taught religion? The future of China and Japan. Is Anglo-Indian society immoral? Style or matter? Have we one personality or many?—with a hundred other questions of psychology and ethics. A graduated income tax—with a hundred other questions of political economy. Asphalt for horses. Will the French republic endure? Will America have an aristocracy? Shall Welsh perish? Is Platonic love possible? Did Shakespeare write "Coriolanus"? Is there a skull in Holbein's "Ambassadors"? What is the meaning of Dryden's line, "He was and is the Captain of the Test"? or of the horny projection under the left wing of the sub-parasite of the third leg of a black-beetle? Was Orme poisoned? Are there fresh-water jelly-fishes? Is physiognomy true? or phrenology? or graphology? or cheiromancy? If so, what are their laws? Opinions on Guelphs and Ghibellines, fasting displays, infanticide, the genealogy of the peerage, the origin of public-house signs, Siberia, the author of Junius, of the Sibylline Books, werewolves, dyeing one's hair, coffinships, standing armies, the mediaeval monasteries, Church Brotherhoods, state insurance of the poor, promiscuous almsgiving, the rights of animals, the C. D. Acts, the Kernoozer Club, emigration, book-plates, the Psychological Society, Kindergarten, Henry George, Positivism, Chevalier's Coster, colour-blindness, Total Abstinence, Arbitration, the best hundred books, Local Option, Women's Rights, the Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman, the Neanderthal skull, the Early

Closing movement, the Prince of Wales, and the Tonic Sol-fa notation. Is there an English hexameter? Is a perfect translation impossible? Will the coloured races conquer? Is consumption curable? Is celibacy possible? Can novels be really dramatised? Is the French school of acting superior to ours? Should literary men be offered peerages? or refuse them? Should quack-doctors be prosecuted? Should critics practise without a license? Are the poor happier or unhappier than the rich? or is Paley right? Did Paley steal his celebrated watch? Did Milton steal from Vondel? Is the Salon dead in England? Should duelling be revived? What is the right thing in dados, hall-lamps, dressing-gowns, etc.? Should ladies smoke? Is there a Ghetto in England? Anti-Semitism. Why should London wait? or German waiters? Mr. Stead's revival of pilgrimages. Is Grimm's Law universal? The abuses of the Civil Service; of the Pension List. Dr. Barnardo. Grievances of match-girls; of elementary teachers. Are our police reliable? Is Stevenson's Scotch accurate? Is our lifeboat service efficient? The Eastern Question. What is an English fairy-tale? What are the spots on the sun? Have they anything to do with commercial crises? Should we spoil the Court if we spared the Black Rod? or the City if we spared the Lord Mayor? Is chloroforming dangerous? Should armorial bearings be taxed? or a tradesman's holiday use of his cart? Should classical texts be Bowdlerised for school-boys? Is the confessional of value? Is red the best colour for a soldier's uniform or for a target?

Will it rain to-morrow? Ought any one to carry firearms? Do we permit the cancan on the English stage? or aërial flights without nets? Where are the lost Tales of Miletus? Should lawyers wear their own hair? Was the Silent System so bad? Should a novel have a purpose? Was the *Victoria* Fund rightly distributed? What is the origin of Egyptian civilisation? Is it allowable to say, "It's me"? Every other doubtful point of grammar and—worse still—of pronunciation; also of etymology. May we say "Give an ovation"? Is the German Emperor a genius, or a fool? Should bachelors be taxed? Will the family be abolished? Ensilage. Why was Ovid banished from Rome? Is the soul immortal? Is our art-pottery bad? Is the Revised Version of the Bible superior to the Old? Who stole Gainsborough's picture? Which are the rarest coins and stamps? Is there any sugar in the blood? Blondes or brunettes? Do monkeys talk? What should you lead at whist? Should directors of insolvent companies be prosecuted? Or classics be annotated? Was Boswell a fool? Do I exist? Does anybody else exist? Is England declining? Shall the costers stand in Farringdon Street? Do green wall-papers contain arsenic? Shall we adopt phonetic spelling? Is life worth living?

The last question at least I thought I could answer, as I bore to bed with me that headache which you have doubtless acquired if you have been foolish enough to read the list. If only one were a journalist, one would have definite opinions on all these points.

And to these questions every day brings a fresh quota. You are expected to have read the latest paragraph in the latest paper, and the newest novel, and not to have missed such and such an article in such and such a quarterly. And all the while you are fulfilling the duties of, and solving the problems of, son, brother, cousin, husband, father, friend, parishioner, citizen, patriot, all complicated by specific religious and social relations, and earning your living by some business that has its own hosts of special problems, and you are answering letters from everybody about everything, and deciding as to the genuineness of begging appeals, and wrestling with some form or forms of disease, pain, and sorrow.

"Truly, we are imperfect instruments for determining truth," I said to the Poet. "The sane person acts from impulse, and only pretends to give a reason. Reason is only called in to justify the verdict of prejudice. Sometimes the impulse is sentiment—which is prejudice touched with emotion. We cannot judge anything on pure, abstract grounds, because the balance is biased. A human being is born a bundle of prejudices, a group of instincts and intuitions and emotions that precede judgment. Patriotism is prejudice touched with pride, and politics is prejudice touched with spite. Philosophy is prejudice put into propositions, and art is prejudice put into paint or sound, and religion is a pious opinion. Every man is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian, a Romanticist, or a Realist, or an Impressionist, and usually erects his own limitations into a creed. Every country, town, district, family, individual, has a special set of prejudices along the lines of which it moves,

and which it mistakes for exclusive truths or reasoned conclusions. Touch human society anywhere, it is rotten, it crumbles into a myriad notes of interrogation; the acid of analysis dissolves every ideal. Humanity only keeps alive and sound by going on in faith and hope,—*solvitur ambulando*,—if it sat down to ask questions, it would freeze like the traveller in the Polar regions. The world is saved by bad logic."

"And by good feeling," added my friend the Poet.

"And in the face of all these questions," I cried, surveying the list ruefully again, "we go on accumulating researches and multiplying books without end, vituperating the benefactors who destroyed the library of Alexandria, and exhuming the civilisations that the earthquakes of Time have swallowed under. The Hamlet of centuries, 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' the nineteenth of that ilk mouches along, soliloquising about more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in any of its predecessors' philosophies. Ah me! Analysis is paralysis and introspection is vivisection and culture drives one mad. What will be the end of it all?"

"The end will be," answered the Poet, "that the overstrung nerves of the century will give way, and that we shall fall into the simple old faith of Omar Khayyám:

"A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread, and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
O Wilderness were Paradise enow."

"Yes," said I, "the only wisdom is to live. Action is substance and thought shadow." And so—paradoxically

enough—I began to think out

### **A WORKING PHILOSOPHY**

The solar system turns without thine aid.  
Live, die! The universe is not afraid.  
What is is right! If aught seems wrong below,  
Then wrong it is—of thee to leave it so.  
Then wrong it first becomes for human thought,  
Which else would die of dieting on naught.  
Tied down by race and sex and creed and station,  
Go, learn to find thy strength in limitation,  
To do the little good that comes to hand,  
Content to love and not to understand;  
Faithful to friends and country, work and dreams,  
Knowing the Real is the thing that seems.  
While reverencing every nobleness,  
In whatsoever tongue or shape or dress,  
Speak out the word that to *thy* soul seems right,  
Strike out thy path by individual light:  
'Tis contradictory rays that give the White.

"The ideas are good. But what a pity you are not a poet!"  
said my friend the Poet.

But, though I recognise that prejudice in the deepest sense supplies the matter of judgment, while logic is only regulative of the form, yet in the more work-a-day sense of the word in which prejudice is taken to mean an opinion formed without reasoning and maintained in despite of it, I claim to write absolutely without prejudice. The syllogism is my lord and king. A kind-hearted lady said I had a cruel face. It is true. I am absolutely remorseless in tracking down