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[The greco-roman world - suite]

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Everything is fitting for me, my Universe, which fits thy purpose. Nothing in thy good time is too early or too late for me; everything is fruit for me which thy seasons, Nature, bear; from thee, in thee, to thee are all things. The poet sings: "Dear city of Cecrops", and will you not say "Dear city of God"? (IV, 23).

The Universe loves to create what is to be. Therefore I say to the Universe: "Your love is mine" (X, 21).

To Nature, who bestows all things and takes them away, the man who has learnt his lesson and respects himself says: "Give what is thy good pleasure, take back what is thy good pleasure"; and this he says not boasting himself but only listening to her voice and being of one mind with her (X, 14).

Who told you that the gods do not co-operate even in respect to what is in our power? Begin at least to pray about these things and you will see (IX, 40).

The security of life is to see each object in itself, in its entirety, its material, its cause; with the whole heart to do just acts and to speak the truth. What remains except to enjoy life, joining one good thing to another, so as to leave not even the smallest interval unfilled? (XII, 29).

Reasonable beings, constituted for one fellowship of co-operation, are in their separated bodies analogous to the several members of the body in individual organisms. The idea of this will come home to you if you say to yourself: "I am a member of the system made up of reasonable beings." If, however, you but call yourself a part, you do not love men from your heart; well-doing is not yet a joy to you for its own sake; you are still doing it as a bare duty, not yet as though doing good to yourself (VII, 13).

I do not deserve to give myself pain, for I never deliberately gave another pain (VIII, 42).

If he did wrong, the harm is with him. But perhaps he did not (IX, 38).

Habituate yourself not to be inattentive to what another has to say, and, as far as possible, put yourself in the mind of the speaker (VI, 53).

Gentleness is invincible, if it be genuine. For what can the most insolent do to you, if you continue gentle to him, and, if opportunity allows, mildly admonish him and quietly show him a better way at the very moment when he attempts to do you injury: "No, no, my child; we came into the world for other ends. It is not I that am harmed, but you are harmed, my child." And point out with tact and on general grounds that this is so, that not even bees act like that, not the many creatures that are by nature gregarious. But you must not do it ironically or as if finding fault, but affectionately and not feeling the sting in your soul, nor as if you were lecturing him or desired some bystander to admire you, but even if others are present, just in the way you would address him if you were alone (XI, 18, 9).

One kind of man . . . is in a sense not even conscious of what he has done, but he is like a vine which had borne grapes and asks

nothing more when once it has borne its appropriate fruit. A horse runs, a hound tracks, bees make honey, and a man does good but doesn't know that he has done it and passes on to a second act, like a vine to bear once more its grapes in due season. "You ought then to be one of these who in a way are not aware of what they do?" Yes. "But one ought to be aware precisely of this; for," he argues, "it is a mark of the social being to perceive that he is acting socially, and to want his neighbour to perceive it too." What you are saying is true, but you take what is now meant in the wrong way; because of this you will be one of those whom I mentioned above, for they, too, are led astray by a kind of plausible reasoning. But if you make up your mind to understand what is meant, do not be afraid of omitting thereby any social act (V, 6).*

He who listens to that as a whole will not be ready to say that this moral system is divided by a gulf from Christian charity, that only the teachings of the two come into contact while their ways of feeling are diametrically opposed.† It is true that the path along which Marcus Aurelius arrived at his personal religious attitude was an entirely different one: the new was not standing ready with primitive force, but rose quietly from the Stoic soul. Thus it is possible to observe the contrast of methods of feeling in the man himself.‡ We have sought to comprehend their various strata, superposed on each other in the journal entries, from the context of their development; there remains the question how far the supremely fine, which sparkles in the book only here and there, can objectively be proved to be also the essence of the author's personality. Let us, then, delve once more resolutely through those strata, in order to arrive at the surest evidence of Marcus Aurelius' originality.

* III, 2, also speaks clearly. The beauty of the natural world, which to the Stoic in his ethical labours was something to be got rid of as deception and magic, existed as reality for the thoughtful observation of the pantheist, so that he found a personal method of expression for it. He spoke of "the sense of the great whole" and of the "meditative eyes" of one "on friendly terms with Nature and her works", one who could discover beauties and find joy in phenomena which, considered separately, were destitute of all attractiveness. A parting fig, hanging ears of corn, the crease on the brow of the lion, the lovable charm of children, the "mature blossoming" of old age in men and women, are examples of the incidental effects, "not obvious to everyone", of the harmony of the universe.

† Thus, lately, once more, William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 41.
‡ These observations run counter to those on the style of Marcus Aurelius recently made by the eminent Oxford scholar to whom we owe the best English version of the *Meditations*. Farquharson writes on the style of the book: "It is always notably parsimonious, free from rhetorical artifice and, except for an occasional alliteration, brief, succinct, and severe." But he finds in the book "two distinct kinds of material", corresponding "broadly" to "a contrast of style". One part consists of "unstudied notes, the *aide-memoire*, or brief hints, which Marcus himself compares to a surgeon's 'first aid' equipment; aphorisms resembling the well-known Prescriptions of Hippocrates. They are often bald and simple in shape. Much the longer part is elaborated with care, worked up into something approaching artistic finish." Farquharson, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvi.

