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The intellectual attitude that aims at rendering oneself capable of love on reasoned grounds is often enough to be found here, especially in the exhortations to love of the neighbour and love of the enemy; ²² there are a few regularly repeated reflections of Socratic and Stoic character: an evildoer can do no injury to your soul, and therefore you must not spurn him; he does wrong only by mistake, and with his views he can do no other, as the sufferer from jaundice cannot taste the sweetness of honey; thus you must have compassion on him and forgive him: he is your relative in God's State, a being akin to God, only without knowledge of what is in accordance with Nature; thus you must love him; evil, as Theodicea shows, is necessary in the organism of the world, and so you must accept it without ill-will; only a tyrant can demand of the bad that they shall not act against him as they do against others.

The fundamental form of his thought is in those reflections: so soon as I realize the essential truth that I live in the whole and through the whole, it becomes my duty to free myself from petty passions and to live for the whole. That is the conviction to which modern naturalism came back, especially in Auguste Comte, in order to derive a social ethic from the deterministic view of the world—a derivation which, however, is not the logical result of the natural system of thought itself, but is founded on a moral belief rooted in the person. Thus the naturalistic element, too, in Marcus Aurelius' pantheism leads to another attitude. The individual a tiny section of the endlessness of the eternities that stretch before and after the individual life, the earth a corner, Europe a point, the sea a drop in the universe—with such phrases he expresses often enough the basic naturalistic feeling.* Depend on no single thing in fear or hope, as though it could last for ever; "All that comes to pass is as familiar and well known as the rose in spring and the grape in summer."† But this sort of elevation to the whole, to repose in the eternal uniform being of the universe, once more ends for him in an extension of the moral sense; the opposing of man to man disappears in this consciousness: soon you and he will be gone, and soon not even the name of either of you will remain any longer.‡

In the thought of the mortality which we all share, the divisions between men seem to be removed, it is true, only to the

* XII, 7, 32; V, 2, 4, 13; VI, 36; VIII, 21.

† IV, 44. ‡ IV, 6; XI, 18, 6, etc.

intellect and not to be resolved from within into the whole of the great community, as in those direct expressions of his religious feelings; but the thing that led him to such considerations was just that personal morality, which was only too modest to be always disclosing itself to him,—when he expressed it, then he found his own simple language, and that a man could be so unassuming in that age is something astonishing; in spite of the support of the Gospels the fathers of the Church tried in vain to speak that language.

And just as in his consciousness of the world in which we all live, so in his consciousness of personality there is an inner movement. We saw how often his Meditations took the traditional Stoic course, leading from the destruction of the ordinary security of men's empirical life, which they take for granted, to the building up of the universal truth of reason and virtue. We saw also that he had gone beyond that regular path. But there always remained in his pantheism a limit, the same one that showed itself in his immersion in the life of the soul; mystery, change, multiformity of life, individuality, had for him no vital worth. There was in him a final demand, to live in clarity and moderation, so that in the soul everything should be so simple and clear that if suddenly asked, "What are you thinking about?" one could always answer unreservedly this or that. We should always be prepared to let our fellow-men "look into our governing self".* He admits, it is true, that "realities are so veiled, one might say, from our eyes that not a few thinkers, and those not insignificant, thought them to be incomprehensible, while even the Stoics think them difficult of comprehension" (V, 10), but that is one more reason for "contempt of all that is mortal" (V, 10).

In the midst of the changes that took place at that time in men's sense of life and produced the search for the obscure and mysterious powers, he tries to "contemplate" this obscurity which he finds in all that is manifold and changing, "from a height", where it dissolves into insubstantial illusion.†

If you could be suddenly caught up into the air and could look down upon human life and see all its variety, you would disdain it, seeing at the same time how great a company of beings, in the air and in the æther, encompasses you, and that however often you were caught up, you would see the same things—uniformity, transience: these are the objects of your pride (XII, 24).

* III, 4; VIII, 61; cf. X, 26.

† IX, 30. "Look from above" at the spectacle of myriad herds, myriad flocks . . .

