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of philosophy, whose society and advice he still sought in mature manhood. Their portraits do not follow each other in strictly chronological order, but in an order that reflects the pre-eminence which he accorded to philosophy over rhetoric, and in correspondingly full or less full detail. The series culminates in the picture of his adoptive father, the emperor Antoninus Pius, which is also more extensive than the others, being five times as long as the next longest sketch. Finally he sums up as coming "from the gods" what he feels to have been good fortune in personal relationships, which he regards, together with the shaping of the personality, as the main thing in human life. He does not write a word about his military and political achievements. All that interests him is his spiritual state and development. This, however, he regards with wonderful humanity. The abstract Stoic distinction between what lies within our power and what does not, fades here into the religious feeling that even in the moral actions that depend on ourselves, on our free position, there is some such thing as divine grace. As he says to himself in a Meditation on prayer already quoted, "Who told you that the gods do not co-operate even in respect to what is in our power?" *

From the outward form, it might appear in this complete section, as well as in the whole work, that nothing but the intellect is at work here: Marcus Aurelius, who has been reproached for "moralizing, self-portrayal", seems to proceed further in this direction to a rational "analysis of his mentality". The form consists in the cataloguing of various virtues, morally effective didactic sayings, and traits of character, of varying importance, in regard to each person; these character-complexes are set down in neutral adjectival terms; the nearer each person is to the author, the more the description is expanded, until it passes into portrait form. An example of this method, which is repeated several times, comes at the very outset: "From my grandfather Verus: the lessons of noble character and even temper. From my father's reputation and my memory of him: modesty and manliness. From my mother: piety and bountifulness; to keep myself not only from doing evil but even from dwelling on evil thoughts; simplicity, too, in diet, and to be far removed from the ways of the rich." But the essential thing, wonderfully human, is the selection: it is not dictated by rules of logic.

The emperor Marcus has something good to say of each

* IX, 40. Cf. Seneca: "No man can be good without the help of God", above, p. 432.

person whom he recalls. The spiritual and moral world that spread its gentle radiance over the age of the Antonines is shown here embodied in a group of his associates, and in picturing them he reinforces what he expresses as one of his most personal experiences: "Whenever you desire to cheer yourself, think of the merits of your contemporaries; the energy of one, for instance, the modesty of another, the generosity of a third. . . ." (VI, 48). He uses the phrase "to see clearly in a living example"—that, for instance, a man can be in earnest and yet able to relax (I, 8). In the picture thus produced of those around him—the first character-study of an intellectual group—the pantheistic feeling appears, as it were, in the concrete. He produces moral beauty from the gloomiest conditions, skipping historic reality. In its midst he goes to work with Goethe's method of summing up character in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, or that of Schleiermacher in his letters. As these unsullied figures follow one another in the mirror of his mind, we feel ourselves transferred to another world in which all conflicts are smoothed away.

Thus, in regard to his relations with Fronto he does not think, or at all events not exclusively, of the opposition his rhetoric-master offered, as their correspondence shows, to his inclinations to philosophy; he omits all reference to the literary education he received from him but no longer valued; what he recalls of him and sets down is something different, something conserving his character and in his honour: "From Fronto: to observe how vile a thing is the malice and caprice and hypocrisy of absolutism; and, generally speaking, that those whom we entitle 'Patricians' are somehow rather wanting in the natural affections" (I, 11). Equally characteristic is the way he treats his relations with his adoptive brother Lucius Aurelius. On ascending the throne he had made him joint emperor and had given him his eldest daughter in marriage. He must have been deeply disappointed, even if there is only a measure of truth in the reports that have come down to us about his brother's excesses in private life and his political irresponsibility. In the final passage in which Marcus sums up the gifts of good fortune for which he has to thank the gods, he mentions his brother: he thanks the gods that "I came to have such a brother, one capable of rousing me by his character to care of myself, and also rejoicing my heart by respect and natural affection" (I, 17, 4).

The increased importance humanity gains in the emperor's elevated sphere is impressively revealed in this biographical

