[The greco-roman world - suite]

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section of the work; for Marcus Aurelius not only credits his teachers and exemplars with having trained him in the philosophic conduct of life and with impressing the Stoic principle on him (relating how he learned from one "the notion of life according to Nature", from another "to look to nothing else, even for a little while, except to reason" (*logos*), or "to be always the same, in sharp attacks of pain, in the loss of a child, in long illness"), but also attributes to them the political views which guided him in his rule and in court life. One gets the impression that here he adopted the good qualities of men of different rank and different mental outlook. Just as he gave credit to Fronto for pointing out to him the absolutism of earlier emperors and the egoism of the old Roman aristocracy, so in his reminiscence of Junius Rusticus, a Roman statesman and adherent of the Stoics, he credits him with similar influence over his political activity. Rusticus was probably the contemporary who exercised the greatest influence over him; among the teachings he ascribes to him he puts first "to avoid oratory, poetry, and preciosity; not to parade at home in ceremonial costume or to do things of that kind" (I, 7, 2). He thanks another politician and philosopher * because it was from him that he had learnt the political ideas of such men of the Roman Republic as Cato and Brutus, and "had got by his help to conceive the idea of a commonwealth based on equity and freedom of speech, and of a monarchy cherishing above all the liberty of the subject" (I, 14). In the same spirit he thinks of the time he spent, after his adoption by Antoninus Pius, in the actual company of that emperor; he includes that among the gods' gifts of good fortune:

> That my station in life was under a ruler and a father who was to strip off all my pride and to lead me to see that it is possible to live in a palace and yet not to need a bodyguard or embroidered uniforms or candelabra and statues bearing lamps and the like accompaniments of pomp, but that one is able to contract very nearly to a private station and not on that account to lose dignity or to be more remiss in the duties which a prince must perform on behalf of the public.

These notes show at once that the manner of judging men that distinguishes him, the mention only of their good qualities, does not lead, as might be supposed, to an empty idealization. He notes only what has really moved him, and accordingly does not merely give general indications of virtues such as love of truth and of justice, self-control, generosity, freedom from deceit, and so on, nor does he merely give examples of the display of these moral qualities by this or the other man in his circle, but he adds the observations he has made of their exemplary behaviour, especially to other persons. Characteristic, for instance, is his note on a representative of Greek philosophy, a relative of Plutarch, whom he counted among his teachers although he did not come into touch with him till after he had ascended the throne. This is the man to whom he was indebted for "the notion of life according to Nature". From him he recalled, in addition to such Stoic principles or, as he calls them, "doctrines necessary to human life", the example of "a household governed by its head", and also the style of his conversation: it was "more agreeable than any flattery", because he was ready to adapt himself to anyone, while he "excited the greatest reverence at that very time in the persons about him"; and once more in general what there was to learn from him: "never to give the impression of anger or of any other passion, but to be at once entirely passionless and yet full of natural affection" (I, 9). We gain a picture of the breadth of the Stoic education enjoyed by the emperor's intended successor when we collect the details of this sort which Marcus mentions in his reminiscences of his various masters and tutors—for instance, "not to cock-fight or to be excited about such sports; . . . to aspire to the camp-bed and skin coverlet and the other things which are part of the Greek training"; or "to bear pain and to be content with little; to mind my own business, and to be slow to listen to slander"; or, again, "to read books accurately and not to agree hastily with those who talk round a subject"; or "seldom, and only when absolutely necessary, to say to anyone or to write in a letter: 'I am too busy'; . . . to believe in the affection of friends and to use no concealment toward those who have incurred our censure"; and once more, in general, "nowhere to be in a hurry or to procrastinate; not to lack resource or to be depressed or cringing or, on the other hand, angered or suspicious; not to be surprised or alarmed, and to be ready to do without complaining what is given to be done".*

Regarded as a sort of record of education, these sketches are comparable with the story of a man's own studies exemplified by the autobiographical writings of Galen, who was physician in ordinary to the emperor Marcus. But in this comparison we

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* Severus. He cannot be identified with certainty.

* I, 5; 6; 7, 3; 12; 14, 2; 15, 2.