

The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus



1944

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ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ
ΤΑ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

THE MEDITATIONS OF THE
EMPEROR MARCUS ANTONINUS



MARCUS RECEIVES THE SUBMISSION OF GERMANS AND
SARMATIANS

Panel from the Emperor's Triumphal Arch

ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ
ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ
ΤΑ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ
THE MEDITATIONS OF THE
EMPEROR MARCUS
ANTONINUS

EDITED

WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY

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(1871–1942)

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

VOLUME I

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

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PREFACE

THIS edition of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius was the product of years of unremitting and almost secret labour. Few even of his friends were allowed to know how closely and continuously Farquharson lived with the subject of his studies. Only the evidence of his library—the hundreds of volumes bearing in their margins 'copious notes' and forests of cross-references, written in his delicate, even, hand and dating, some of them, from his undergraduate days—has revealed the range and the detail of his inquisition into the form and matter of the *Meditations*, how early he began it and how deeply it absorbed him.

Many drafts of passages of exegesis and annotation—discarded, resumed, altered, discarded, and again adopted, and all in that same faultless script—attest the diffidence with which he undertook the work and make it difficult to trace the stages of its composition.

Records, however, show that it was in March 1936 that he first discussed with the Clarendon Press the plan of his book and that the Delegates accepted it in February 1938. In June 1939 the MS., excluding the Notes, was sent to the Printer. When Farquharson died in August 1942 Volume I was printed off (save for the Introduction, which he had seen in proof), and of Volume II he had seen rather more than half (pp. 433–717) in proof, and passed for press pp.

433–608. The remainder of the Notes in Vol. II was in MS., perfectly ready for the press. How many alterations he might yet have made in this portion of the Notes it is impossible to say, for he was always ready to abandon or rewrite the fairest of fair copies if he thought improvement possible.

In a series of letters which he wrote to me weekly from the outbreak of war in September 1939 Farquharson often referred to the progress he was making with the work. The 'mechanic exercise', the application it demanded, and the precepts and spirit of the text (with which he was deeply imbued, though I do not think that he was altogether a Stoic), evidently helped him to go through difficult times with equanimity. But his letters revealed also two sources of anxiety: a sense that he had performed his task inadequately, and a gradually increasing fear that he would not live to see it finished. I tried to persuade him that his dissatisfaction with his work was due rather to a habit of self-depreciation, which indeed with him had become a second nature, than to a perception of actual shortcomings in it; and when he spoke of his death I could only assure him that if the need arose I would see his book through the press, as he had entreated me to do.

That promise is now fulfilled, though circumstances have allowed me to perform myself only a very little of the labour involved. Mr. David Rees, Postmaster of Merton College, sitting in Farquharson's study and working with his

papers and his books with only slight collaboration on my part, attended, with infinite patience and the most scrupulous care, to the passing for press of the first proofs of pp. 718–902 and the revises of pp. 609–902, and of the first proofs and revises of the Introduction. The Indexes are entirely his work.

The rule observed in carrying out our task was to leave unaltered everything except false references and slips which were manifestly due to an oversight. Disagreement with a comment or preference for another mode of expression, even if there seemed a valid reason for it, was never treated as justifying an alteration. Our aim has been to give what Farquharson really meant to print at the time when he completed his MS. The perfect clarity and finish of that MS. lightened a laborious, if fascinating, task.

What the book owed in its final stages to Mr. Rees will be plain from what is said above. I must also make acknowledgement, which Farquharson himself would have made more fittingly, to Mr. E. C. Marchant, Fellow of Lincoln College, to whose judgement he referred almost every part of his work from its earliest to its latest stages, and whose scholarship Mr. Rees and I have accepted in cases of doubt as a final arbiter. Our thanks are also due to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press for pushing on the publication of the book in spite of many competing war-time claims upon the Press.

I cannot conclude this Preface without recording two debts which Farquharson himself would not, I think, have passed over in silence—debts to two who were in different senses his companions throughout the work: one, to his wife, whose pure taste and deep sympathy were for him unfailing resources; the other, to his precursor Thomas Gataker, for whom he habitually expressed an admiration and a reverence second only to his admiration and reverence for 'the Emperor' himself.

JOHN SPARROW.

Oct. 1943.

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INTRODUCTION

I. MARCUS AURELIUS AS A MAN OF LETTERS

TO the ancient world Marcus Aurelius was best known not as a wise ruler and conqueror of German and Sarmatian barbarians but as philosopher and patron of learning. His Latin biographer^[1] opens with the words: 'Marcus Antoninus, who was a lifelong philosopher, excelling all chiefs of the state in holiness'; so in the tenth century, in Suidas' *Lexicon*,^[2] he is 'Marcus Antoninus, King of the Romans, the entirely laudable philosopher.' In his lifetime the advocates of Christian liberty so address him. Thus Justin Martyr in his first *Apology*^[3] terms him Verissimus, the philosopher; and Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher, begins with the address: 'To the Emperors M. Aurelius Antoninus and L. Aurelius Commodus, conquerors of Armenia and Sarmatia, but more than all else philosophers.'^[4]

Though professing philosophy as his guide in life and following her rule, Marcus makes no pretence to learning or wisdom for himself. Indeed, in the account of his education in his own first Book, he dwells on the variety and excellence of the teaching he had enjoyed, theoretical and practical alike, but expresses satisfaction more than once^[5] that the admonition of his confidential teacher Rusticus, a sense of his own inability, and the urgent claims of his

imperial station had diverted him from his boyish ambitions as student and author to the endeavour to act justly and to speak the truth, not to converse and write about goodness.

Again, on the very threshold of his second Book, he interrupts himself to say: 'Put away your books, remember that you are an old man, do not suffer your real self to be any longer a bond-servant.'^[6] That by his books he means not his library merely but actual composition is evident from a later passage: 'Do not wander from your path any longer; you are not likely to read your Notebooks, your Deeds of ancient worthies of Rome and Greece, the Extracts you made from literature and put by against old age.'^[7]

Clearly he had, at some time, devoted himself to a variety of composition, some of it original, some derived from his reading and reflection in history and literature. Here he resembles his successor Julian, our own King Alfred, and Frederick the Great of Prussia. His aspirations had been postponed to his public duty, his writing put on one side and never completed.

That we possess a considerable and, in form at least, most original work from his pen contradicts this depreciation of literary ambition and his repeatedly expressed diffidence of his own gift for philosophy.

Besides the present work, written in Greek, there survive the fragments of a correspondence with his Latin and rhetoric master, the famous orator, M. Cornelius Fronto.^[8] The letters cover the years A.D. 138–*circ.* 165. This collection of familiar letters and original compositions was recovered by Cardinal Angelo Mai from the palimpsest pages of a Christian manuscript, in the Ambrosian and Vatican libraries, in the early nineteenth century.

Sadly fragmentary and partly ruined by chemical reagents, it consists partly of notes exchanged by Fronto and his royal pupils, Marcus and Lucius, and their adoptive father, the Emperor Pius; partly of more studied compositions in epistolary form by the correspondents, models of the new or revived Latin style, the *elocutio novella*, which Hadrian himself encouraged and practised. Mainly written in this archaizing Latin, the collection includes a few Greek epistles as well as a speech in which Fronto attempts an erotic discourse in imitation of those in Plato's *Phaedrus*. This and another Greek essay were designed in compliment to Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus, herself a patroness of Greek letters, in whose father's house Herodes Atticus had stayed in his youth. Fronto encloses it under cover to Marcus, begging him to remove any blunders in the unfamiliar tongue before submitting it to Domitia.^[9]

This correspondence, evidently in part written for publication, proves that Marcus had, at this period, literary aims which went beyond the official oratory which Fronto

had been engaged to teach him. We read of hexameter verses^[10] by Marcus, the subject of playful secrecy between him and his tutor, and Fronto devotes two long letters to the outlines of Latin eloquence and historical composition. Marcus once writes: 'I prefer now to write in Greek. You ask me why! Because I want to experiment, to see whether what I have not been taught will be more obedient than what I have, for indeed what I have endeavoured to learn plays truant.'^[11] Marcus had been used from his boyhood to speak and write in Greek; it was as familiar to him, no doubt, as French was to Frederick the Great.

There followed in Marcus' life a momentous breach with mere rhetoric. He had been reading Aristo, the Stoic philosopher. He tells Fronto that he cannot argue on both sides of a question any longer; he is indeed turning from his old tutor to follow Rusticus and philosophy. Fronto rallies him upon the contorted and crabbed stock-in-trade of his new Stoic models, warns him shrewdly of the danger he runs in deserting Latin eloquence, but to no purpose. The young Caesar had made up his mind; for him oratory becomes henceforth a dead letter.^[12]

Here and there, in the subsequent centuries, we meet references to a collection of private letters by Marcus, in Greek, which survived, whether genuine or not, to the ninth or the tenth century, the period of the Byzantine renaissance. Thus Philostratus remarks of this correspondence, in distinction from imperial constitutions

and rescripts, that: 'besides precision of thought, the strength of Marcus' character is stamped on his words',^[13] a summary of the Emperor's style not inapt to parts of his authentic Book. Again in the ninth century, the learned Patriarch Photius,^[14] writing to Amphilochius, Bishop of Cyzicus, commends to his attention certain epistolary models, Plato's letters, the epistles ascribed to Phalaris, and those of the 'royal philosopher'. Since many of these ancient collections consist of brief apophthegms, addressed to fictitious recipients, and are indeed in no sense genuine private letters, it is possible that the *Letters of Marcus* were issued by an enterprising bookseller and consisted, among other matter, of pieces from the genuine work of the 'royal philosopher'. This might help to explain the curiously diverse forms in which Marcus is quoted by Suidas.

II. THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK IN THE EARLY CENTURIES

Of the publication of the *Meditations* we know as little as we do of that of most ancient and some modern masterpieces. There have been advocates of the view that Marcus gave his thoughts to the public before his death in A.D. 180. Their intimate and unpremeditated character, and a certain disorder in them as they have survived, seem decisive against such a theory. Who the editor was, when they did come out, is equally unknown. Chryseros, a freedman of Marcus, author of a chronicle to the date of

Commodus, has been suggested, but by pure hypothesis. We can but surmise that the work was done, under the direction of a relative or friend, by a subordinate, perhaps by Marcus' Greek secretary, Alexander.^[15] The present state of the work suggests that the author's notes were already in some order, though left unfinished, and that they were treated scrupulously.^[16]

Remarkably little evidence has survived from the troubled period which followed upon the accession of Commodus in A.D. 180 and from the still darker years of anarchy which followed. There are, however, a few doubtful indications that a philosophic treatise by Marcus Aurelius was known to the world, something a little more definite than the loose phrases of his biographer, writing so many years later, indicate.

Thus Herodian, a writer of the third century, who opens his history^[17] with the accession of Commodus, notices the old-fashioned mannerism of Marcus,^[18] and in the epitome of the history of Dio Cassius, who wrote under the Severi, we meet an occasional phrase in the speeches put into Marcus' mouth, which attempts to give verisimilitude by the use of words which recall the Emperor's writings. For example, in a speech read to the troops, a kind of Order of the Day, on the occasion of the ill-timed revolt of Avidius Cassius, Marcus is made to say: 'how has faith perished, how have expectations of honour perished'.^[19] This seems an echo of 'Faith and Reverence and Justice and Truth have

gone to Olympus from the wide-paved earth'.^[20] The oration ends: 'if only I might make this gain out of the present evils, if I might but *settle the matter happily* and show to all the world that a right use may be made even of civil wars.'^[21] Here the proverbial saying, 'to settle the matter happily', is an echo from the *Meditations*. There are other touches of this kind, but the ground is difficult and doubtful, and opinions will vary about the value of such evidence.

In Julian, who was Emperor A.D. 361–63, I can find no certain verbal reminiscence of Marcus' work, such as you would expect from so ardent an admirer.^[22] Even in that curious vision of judgement, the *Symposium* or *Kronia*, where Marcus is made to speak in his own behalf, the language, though faithful to his habitual manner of life and thought, does not reflect the style we know so well. There is no attempt at verbal representation. The nearest suggestion is in the passage where Marcus is summoned before the divine conclave. He enters shining in bodily form with the 'purest and clearest light'.^[23] This looks like a reference to two passages in the *Meditations*. Julian's own style is rhetorical to excess and atticizing, he is full of reminiscences of Homer and the Attic tragedians and Plato, his linguistic affinity is to the Neoplatonist writers and not to Stoicism; thus he may have instinctively avoided any verbal imitation of Marcus. Indeed his own work belongs to an epoch which had absorbed the practical truths of Stoicism and Christianity, but which had submerged the

distinctive reflective attitude of the Porch under a flood of orientalism and mystical writing.^[24]

The first direct mention of the *Meditations* as a *book* known to his hearers is made by the friend of Julian, the orator Themistius, in A.D. 364, the year after Julian's death. He is addressing Valens, the feeble colleague of Valentinian I, on *Brotherly Love*, and says: 'You have no need of the *Admonitions* of a Marcus or the excellent words of this or that ruler of days gone by; you have your Phoenix in your own house.'^[25] The title *Admonitions* recalls a word used by the biographer of Avidius Cassius,^[26] whose work belongs to about this date. He says: 'Antoninus, on the eve of his departure for the Marcomannic war, was invited not from flattery but seriously to publish his philosophic precepts. Accordingly, for three successive days, the emperor disputed publicly in a series of *Exhortations*.' If it is true that this biography and others in the *Historia Augusta* were composed under the influence of Julian, to justify his political ideals, we see that the writer states here the view which contemporaries had adopted of the *Meditations*, viz. that they were admonitions intended for the world. Many years later the fiction has altered, and they are thought to be *Offices* written for the behoof of Commodus, as Cicero wrote his famous *Offices* for his son Marcus. Still later we find them described in a manuscript of extracts from the *Meditations* as the *Second Manual of Epictetus*! After Themistius, darkness falls again. There is no extract, such as we might well have expected, in the ample store of prose

and poetry in the *Eclogues* of Johannes Stobaeus *circa* A.D. 450. We have to wait more than four centuries for the next notice of the book.

III. THE MEDITATIONS FROM THE NINTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Arethas, the deacon of Patras who was afterwards Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, a follower of Photius and fellow worker in the revival of Greek literature at the end of the ninth century (*circa* A.D. 850–935), was a great collector of manuscripts. Writing at some date before 907, when he was a bishop, to Demetrius, Archbishop of Heracleia, he sends him an ancient volume of the *Meditations*: 'I have had for some time an old copy of the Emperor Marcus' most profitable book, so old indeed that it is altogether falling to pieces. . . . This I have had copied and am able to hand down to posterity in its new dress. . . . Thinking accordingly that it would be a sign of a grudging disposition to retain what is a duplicate, I designed to make your Holiness the inheritor of my former possession.'^[27] So he sends the Archbishop the old copy and puts the new one on his shelves. Arethas writes with the enthusiasm of a lover of learning and wise doctrine, as well as with the ardour of a bibliophile. He does not say, however, that Marcus' book is a rarity, only that its teaching is most profitable and that he has obtained an old and tattered copy.

He writes as of a volume with which his correspondent will be already acquainted.

We know what the restored and perhaps emended text would have been like from the many beautiful manuscripts from Arethas' collection in our libraries, the *Euclid*, for instance, in the Bodleian, the *Plato*, which Clarke brought to Oxford from Patmos, the *Clement of Alexandria* in Paris, and the Aristotle's *Categories* at Rome.^[28] But alas! the inestimable *Meditations* has vanished, and we can only surmise that the learned deacon edited this copy with the same care that he lavished upon his Plato. Many scholars suppose that this Arethas volume is the ancestor of our present late versions. All that is certain is what we can gather from the letter to Demetrius, and from notes made by the learned Archbishop of Caesarea in others of his books,^[29] where he refers to passages in Marcus' *Treatise to Himself*, the title which the book bore in the manuscript from which the first edition was printed by Gesner in A.D. 1558–9.

Some fifty years later (*circa* A.D. 950) Suidas published his *Lexicon*. There he refers to the Emperor's *Conduct of his own Life*, in xii Books,^[30] the first mention of the now familiar division into twelve Books. The *Lexicon* has preserved many passages of our author and, as Suidas clearly used earlier collections, we have important evidence as to the text from an older tradition than that of our

manuscripts, if these, as some scholars suppose, are all to be traced to Arethas' recension.

Two hundred years later Tzetzes (A.D. 1110–85) cites Marcus by name in his *Chiliades*,^[31] but as that work is in verse, what he quotes cannot be used to correct the actual words of our text.

That the reputation of the philosophic Emperor persisted in the Byzantine period, and perhaps some knowledge of his sayings, is shown by four notes in the Bodleian manuscript of Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*.^[32] The manuscript is of the late eleventh or early twelfth century and these scholia may, so Schenkl thought, be copied from an earlier manuscript. On the words of Epictetus: 'the individual part, which God has torn from himself and given to us', the marginal note says: 'presumably what flows from above'. Schenkl derives this from Arethas himself, linking it with a marginal note in Dio Chrysostom,^[33] where Arethas quotes from Marcus: 'all flows from that other world' or, as he cites it, 'from above'.

Where Epictetus writes: 'So watch yourselves in what you do and you will discover of what calling (or "sect") you are', there is a note: 'It is proper to say the same also of us, that few are of the sect of Antoninus.' Again in the chapter on the Cynic's life and profession, where Epictetus says: 'perhaps we do not perceive his greatness, do not worthily imagine Diogenes' character', the note is: 'nor we the

character of Antoninus.' So, on the text: 'What is the character of his doctrines? On these we accept or reject him', the annotator has: 'carry this out in regard to monks who appear to be somewhat: if these have the character of those who formerly ruled in this sect, Antoninus and his followers, I mean, let them be Fathers.'^[34] The passages show that there was still an interest in the Stoic school and a recognition that Marcus Antoninus professed its tenets.

IV. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BOOK AT THE OPENING OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

That the *Meditations* were in the hands of the learned in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is attested by the number of manuscripts of excerpts which have survived from that period. The extracts in the Munich MS. Graec. 323 (Mo 81) are indeed thought to be as late as the early sixteenth century, and the New College MS. Coll: Nov: 270, of the C class (Cv), which was written for Richard Pace, since 1519 Dean of St. Paul's, London, by Zacharias Callierges, is dated 8 December 1523, in Rome. Some scholars^[35] are of opinion that the excerpts of the X group, which in most examples are mixed with extracts from Aelian's *De Animalibus*, are derived from an anthology made by Maximus Planudes (A.D. 1260–1310). In his *Ecclesiastical History* Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, A.D. 1295–1360, states^[36] that 'Marcus Antoninus composed a book

for the education of his son Marcus, full of all worldly experience and instruction', meaning by Marcus the Emperor Commodus, who in his inscriptions often usurped his father's name.

This false description of the *Meditations* has induced some writers to imagine a lost work of this character by Marcus, for which there is no evidence. It may have had another result—it perhaps suggested to Antonio Guevara his extravagant romance, commonly known as the *Golden Book of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*.^[37] This may well be described as 'full of worldly wisdom'. It was a favourite book of Montaigne's father,^[38] though he himself disliked the euphuistic style of Guevara, as well probably as his absurd matter. The *Golden Book* and the *Diall* had so great a vogue in the sixteenth century (being more often translated than any book except the *Holy Scriptures*) that they created in the reading public an entirely erroneous judgement of Marcus' character and especially of his relations with Faustina. Only gradually, in the seventeenth century, as the *Meditations* became known, and the public taste altered, was this romantic judgement corrected. A curious problem is suggested by Guevara's two books. When he says that he had translated a Greek original in Florence, had he some hazy knowledge of the existence in the Laurentian library of a manuscript of extracts from the *Meditations*? It is impossible to know, but apparently he was ignorant of Greek, on his own confession, and

vehement protests were made, in his lifetime, against his romancing.^[39]

It looks as if even the learned were, at this date, unfamiliar with the *Meditations* themselves, although they were aware of the existence of the book and some few possessed copies of extracts from the work. This comparative oblivion is also shown by five references to the actual book in the middle of the sixteenth century, just before the issue of the *editio princeps*. In his *Bibliotheca Universalis*, A.D. 1545, Conrad Gesner refers to the *Meditations* as the work of the author of the *Itinerarium*, and employs the title καθ' ἑαυτόν.^[40] The same title is used by Lilius Giralduus,^[41] in the same year, and he speaks of Marcus' various learning almost as if he fancied that the extracts from Aelian's *Natural History*, which are interspersed with Marcus' own words in these manuscripts, were Marcus' own work, just as elsewhere he reports a work by the Emperor *On Fishes*.^[42] Neither Petrarch^[43] nor any of the writers of this period cited by Gataker in his *Testimonia* shows an acquaintance with what Marcus actually wrote.

V. THE EDITIO PRINCEPS, A.D. 1559

The recent history of the *Meditations* dates from the issue of the first printed edition by Andreas Gesner, filius, at Zürich in A.D. 1558–9. It was accompanied by Marinus'

Proclus vel De Felicitate, also a first edition. Both books were translated into Latin, the former by Wm. Xylander of Augsburg (1532–76), and brief notes to each author were added.

The importance of this text of the *Meditations* is that the manuscript from which Conrad Gesner caused it to be printed is now lost, so that it is one of the two principal sources of all modern texts, there being only one complete manuscript, Vaticanus Gk. 1950 (referred to as A), with which to compare it. The other evidence for the text, besides these two, is of little independent value. The book was produced under the auspices of the learned naturalist and humanist, Conrad Gesner (A.D. 1516–65), who says in his dedicatory letter^[44] that he 'received the books of Marcus from the gifted poet Michael Toxites^[45] from the library of Otto Heinrich, Prince Palatine', that is from the famous collection at Heidelberg. Conrad Gesner, writing in 1562, states that he 'gave the books of M. Antoninus and Marinus to his cousin Andrew to print in 1558, with Latin translations, of Antoninus by William Xylander, of Marinus by a friend, a learned youth, who modestly desired to be anonymous'.^[46]

Xylander dates his Latin dedication from Heidelberg in October 1558, whither he had recently gone from Basel to become professor of Greek and later librarian to the Prince Palatine. It looks as though the printers took the volume to pieces and sent the Marcus leaves to Xylander, for the latter

says in the dedicatory introduction to his second edition (Basel, Guarinus 1568): 'the copy of Antoninus which I used was, so Gesner stated, taken from a volume belonging to the famous library of the late illustrious Elector Palatine, Otto Heinrich.'^[47] He implies, that is, that the pages he worked with bore no evidence of their origin.

Xylander, as he states in his notes, made a few corrections of the manuscript text, and these were most, not quite all, adopted by Gesner in the printed text. Generally the text was left as he found it, his Latin translation indicating what he took to be the sense, and silently suggesting a good many emendations. This is the same scrupulous regard for the manuscript text which he observed in his edition of Plutarch (*Vitae* 1560, *Moralia* 1570). He explains his method in the introduction to this second edition: 'in case some ungenerous critic should fancy that I am serving him with a rechauffe, I have corrected my preface, the author's words in the Greek and Latin, and not only have I removed the misprints, I have also reviewed and corrected my own translation in several places and made some additions to the notes. . . . Some places^[48] there are in the book which it appeared better not to touch rather than by conjecture to substitute possibly for Antoninus' own words diction that would be foreign to him.'

The translation is most elegant, and, on the whole, remarkably exact. Sometimes Xylander goes astray, and sometimes his fidelity to the words makes little sense,

although it has the advantage of showing what text he had before him. Still we cannot use his work, like one of the old verbal Latin translations, as certain evidence of the words of his manuscript. He sometimes paraphrases and condenses, but we can detect words and sentences which the printers overlooked. He says in his first dedication: 'I neither desired nor indeed was I justified in attempting a faithful verbal translation. I have indeed followed the sense, but whether I have hit it always I leave to the judgement of others. There are many plain reasons why this was difficult, yet I confess that in some points I required the help either of divination or of a bold departure whether from the Greek manuscript or from normal Greek usage.'^[49] We are reminded of Wyttenbach's tribute to the great scholar's memory: 'Xylander I love for his candour, his probity, his honesty, manifest proofs of which are conspicuous not only in his writings but in his whole life.'^[50] We must remember that he was printing a plain text, without *marginalia* or footnotes, and be grateful to him for his fidelity.

So much of the editor. What is to be said of Gesner's compositors? Xylander writes in the second edition: 'as my lucubration . . . was vilely reproduced by the carelessness of the printers and so published that it might fairly be held not to have been edited at all, I have been thinking for some time of remedying this'.^[51] The indictment is serious and the original editor's words have been repeated by subsequent editors. I am inclined to think it exaggerated. We must at least remember that Xylander made his

corrections for the second edition without reference to the manuscript. That, it appears, had not been returned to Heidelberg; certainly Xylander makes no reference to it (except the above) in his second edition. Is it not possible that in reading the printed text he noticed and corrected many puerile mistakes which reproduced the original faithfully? Of the Gesner press very little has been written, so that its reputation is not known.^[52]

A curious problem, of little importance for the criticism of our text, has lately been suggested by H. Schenkl. He argues that the manuscript of the *Meditations*, in distinction from that of Marinus' *Proclus*, did not come from the Palatine library, but was procured by Toxites from a source unknown, perhaps even copied by himself from the original, thus introducing a further stage in the manuscript tradition. Yet the Latin title-page to the *Meditations* bears the words: *e bibliotheca illustrissimi principis Ottonis Henrici*; and, as if to make assurance doubly sure, there are on the reverse to the Latin title of the *Proclus* the words 'The Printer to the Reader. Forasmuch as Marinus' *Life of Proclus* was contained in the same codex with the books of M. Antoninus, I thought I too ought to include it, especially as this work of Marinus is not a big one and has not, so far as I know, been previously published; in its argument too it is not far removed from the books of Antoninus.'^[53] This agrees with what both Conrad Gesner and Xylander believed. Again Xylander in his second dedication gives as one reason for including the *Meditations* that it originally

came from a library other treasures from which he is now printing for the first time with the permission of Prince Otto Heinrich's successor.^[54]

Nothing would appear more certain than that the two books were in a single volume, brought to Gesner at Zürich by Toxites from Heidelberg. Schenkl, however, points out that Xylander, writing in 1568, says only that he was assured by Conrad Gesner that the *Marcus* came from the Palatine library, not that he knew that fact himself.^[55] He suggests therefore that Gesner, in his dedication, confused the *Marinus* which did come from the Palatine library with the *Marcus*, which did not. He appears to overlook the fact that the printer says expressly that both books were in the same volume, a volume which Xylander presumably never saw in its entirety. Schenkl has a further point. He says: 'Inasmuch as the copy of *Marinus' Proclus* handed to Gesner by Toxites was certainly copied from a codex formerly in the Palatine library *and now preserved in the Vatican at Rome*, it might easily happen that Gesner should fancy that what he found noted about the origin of his apograph applied also to the *Meditations*, which he supposed were bound up in the same volume.'^[56] It is strange that, if this were indeed the fact, Boissonade should have treated the first edition of *Marinus' Proclus* as evidence for the text instead of consulting the manuscript from which it is here presumed to be derived. Further, the Vatican MS. to which Schenkl is referring is dated.^[57] It was written by Andreas Darmarius in Madrid for Julius Pacius de Beriga in A.D. 1579,^[58] just

twenty years after Gesner printed the *Marcus* and the *Marinus*. Again, the first edition stops with the opening words of ch. 22, the printer adding: 'pauca videntur deesse', whereas Pacius' manuscript, now in the Palatine library at Rome, contains the entire thirty-eight chapters.

The lamentable truth is that both parts of Gesner's MS. are at present lost. The precious codex may never have been reassembled and returned to Heidelberg, or it may have been lost in the journey to Rome or in the later passage of some of the Vatican treasures to Paris and back. It is no longer accessible to our inquiry.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE EDITIO PRINCEPS AND THE MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

The first edition is a small 8^{vo} volume, clearly printed on good paper and in an elegant Greek fount. It has none of the magnificence of some early classics and, like the small Elzevirs, is clearly intended for the pocket. A good copy, like Bywater's in the Bodleian Library, measures 6.5 in. by 3.9 in. The pagination is as follows:

Latin title, verso blank: *M. ANTONI/NI IMPERATORIS / ROMANI ET PHILOSOPHI / De seipso seu vita sua Libri xii, Graece / Latinè nunc primum editi, GVILIELMO XY/LANDRO Augustano interprete: /*

*qui etiam Annotationes adiecit./ MARINI
NEAPO-/LITANI DE PROCLI VITA/ET
FOELICITATE LIBER: / Graecè Latiné-ῥ; nunc
primum publicatus, / Innominato quodam interprete
/ adiestis [sic] itidem Scholiis. / E BIBLIOTHECA
ILLVSTRISSIMI / principis Othonis Henrici, / CVM
PRIVILEGIO IN TRIENNIVM. / T1GVRI APVD
ANDREAM / Gesnerum F. M.D.LIX.*

Xylander's dedication follows, dated *Heidelbergae Calendis Octobribus. Anno salutis 1558*, and a translation of the Testimonia (6 leaves); Latin translation (pp. 1–200); Xylander's notes (13 leaves); title-page: Marini *De Procli Vita* etc.; verso, TYPOGRAPHUS LECTORI &c., Latin translation and notes (pp. 3–36), two blank leaves.

Greek title, verso blank: ΜΑΡΚΟΥ / ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΑΥ/
ΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΣΟ/ΦΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ
ΕΑΥΤΟΝ / ΒΙΒΛΙΑ ΙΒ (Andrew Gesner's Device)
ΤΙΓΒΡΙ ΑΡΒΔ ΑΝ/dream Gesnerum F. (undated in
some examples, in others, MDLIX).

Conrad's dedication in Greek follows and Greek Testimonia (pp. 3–13, p. 14 blank, 1 blank leaf); ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟ/ρος τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν Βιβλίον α, followed by the Greek text, the second book beginning at ii. 4 of our editions, each book with the same title, numerated β, γ, &c., pp. 1–156. ΜΑΡΙΝΠΟΥ ΝΕΑ/ΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΚΛΟΣ Η ΠΕ/ρὶ εὐδαιμονίας. Then the

Greek text, pp. 157—81, which ends at ἐκ δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης viz. ch. 22, with a note: Pauca uidentur deesse. Page 182 blank, 1 blank leaf.

The existent manuscript sources are the following:

A. Vaticanus Graecus 1950, contained in a codex^[59] which passed to the Vatican Library from Stefano Gradi's^[60] collection in A.D. 1683. The codex contains the following manuscripts now bound up together, written by at least five different hands. The authors so combined are:

Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* and other works,^[61] fols. 1–271v (272–9 blank).

Xenophon, *Memorabilia Socratis*, fols. 280–340v.

Marcus Antoninus (except viii. 61), fols. 341–392v. (incl. 389 and 389 a).

Epictetus, *Manual* (Christian paraphrase), fols. 392v–399.

Fragmenta rhetorica; Epicurus, *Allocutio*,^[62] fols. 401–4v.

Maximus Tyrius, *Philosophumena*,^[63] fols. 408–518v.

Alcinous, *Dogmata Platonis*, fols. 519–41.

Aristotle: *De Motu Animalium*,^[64] fols. 542–5v.

Fols. 271–404v (except 337a) are in the third hand, dated late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

Subsidiary evidence is derived from the many collections of excerpts from Marcus Antoninus, dating from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, contained in the following:

D. Codex Darmstadtinus 2773, misc. Gr., XIVth cent, fols. 348V-358V,^[65] containing: i. 7–16 (om. parts of 15 and 16); ii. 1–17 (om. δῆλα . . . δέχται ch. 15); iii. 1–6; iv. 2–4, 7, 8, 19–21, 35, 36, 43, 46, (viii. 55, ii. 3 εἰ δόγματα . . . τῷ θεῷ), 47, 50 (part); v. 1–6, 9, 10, 14, 28, 31, 33; vi. 1–12, 15 (ὥσπερ εἴ τις to end), 16–19, 21, 22; vii. 28, 29 (part), 55, 59–61 (part), 63, 70, 71, 74; viii. 8–10, 12, 36, 50, 51, 54, 55 (iterum); ix. 2–7, 21–5, 29–31 δικαιοσύνης δέ, where the manuscript breaks off, some folios having been lost.

There are a good many omissions of sentences, and the sense is sometimes paraphrased. The actual proportion of lines in D to the lines in the modern text (between i and ix. 31) is 2:5 (roughly 1,026 out of 2,621 lines).

In fol. 354, among the excerpts from Marcus, occur two fragments (24 and 33) of Epicuri *Allocutio*, which is contained in Vat. Gr. 1950. The codex has extracts from Maximus Tyrius and Alcinous, besides much else.

C. Excerpts, preserved wholly or in part, in codices which also contain Stobaei *Eclogae*, Theoctisti *Sententiae*, Aristoxenus, Fragment on Gyara.

Cα Cβ Vaticanus Graec. 955, 954

Cγ Venetus S. Marci App. Cl. iv. 29

Cλ Laurentianus Gr. lviii. 11.

Cv Oxon. Coll. Nov. 270, dated Rome, A.D. 1523, written by Zach. Callierges for Richard Pace, Dean of St. Paul's, fol. 295v-298r.

Co Oxon. Bodl. Canonici. Gr. 69 (ends at ii. 1 1). XVIth cent.

Cπ Paris Suppl. Gr. 319. XVth or XVIth cent.^[66]

The C excerpts are from: i. 8, 15, 16; ii. 1–3, 9–14, 17; iii. 1, 3, 4; iv. 3, 5, 14–18, 20; iii. 5, 10, 13–14. These fragments bear the mark of derivation not directly from a manuscript of Marcus but from a *Florilegium*.

Mo 1 (M. Schenkl). Monacensis Gr. 323, XVth or XVIth cent. fol. 9r, 19–20V, repeated fol. 88v-90v. Brief extracts or single sentences from ii. 10, 13, 16, 17; iii. 1, 16; iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 46; vii. 50.

X. Excerpts preserved, in whole or in part, in the following codices of the XIVth-XVth cent.

V 1–6 Vat. Gr. 953, 20, 98, 100, 926, 2231^[67]

L 1–4 Laurentianus Gr. lv. 7, lix. 17, lxxiv. 13, lix. 44

M 1, 2 Venet. S. Marci App. Cl. xi. 1 and 15

a Athous Movñς Ἰβήρων 189

G Guelferbytanus Gudianus 77

B (b Schenkl) Barberinus ii. 99

Par. 1.2.3.4.5.6. Parisinus Gr. 1000 fol. 101 sq.; 1698 fol. 79; 2075 fol. 394 sq.; 2649 fol. 174 sq. (written by J. Lascaris); suppl. Gr. 1164 fol. 3V sq.; De Coislin 341 fol. 332v sq. [\[68\]](#)

Their order, with some exceptions, is: vii. 22, 18, 7; iv. 49 (part); v. 8, 18, 26; vi. 13, 31, 39, 40; vii. 53, 62–3, 66, 70, 71; viii. 15, 17 (part), 34, 48, 54, 57, 56; ix. 1, 40; xi. 19; ix. 42; x. 28, 29, 32, 34, 35; xi. 34, 35; xii. 2; xi. 9, 21; xii. 4 (part), 14, 15, 34.

Mo 2 (B Schenkl). Cod. Monacensis 529 (olim Augustanus). This XIVth cent, manuscript includes most of the X excerpts, with vii. 23, which precedes (22, 18, 7) and is followed by vi. 35, 43, 44; iv. 33; vi. 33, interpolated between (31 and 39); (vii. 63) precedes vii. 64; viii. 21 (part) precedes (viii. 34). The manuscript ends with xi. 16, 17, 18. 1, ἀλλήγων.

This is the Codex Hoeschelianus which M. Casaubon used. He says that Hoeschel consulted for his collation *two* manuscripts at Augsburg, one ending at τί γίνεται ix. 40, the other at τῶν κρειπτόνων (ἔνεκεν) xi. 18. 1.

The X fragments are normally intermingled with excerpts from Aelian περὶ ζώων. The order is given in tabular form by E. Miller, *Mélanges de litt. grecque*, Paris, 1868, p. 347, and in their editions by Stich, Leipsic, 1882, p. xiii, and Schenkl 1913, p. xxxv. There is no obvious connexion between the contents of the passages from the two authors, nor has any explanation been discovered for the strange disorder of the extracts from Marcus.

It will be noticed that the C extracts come from the earlier Books, the X from the later. Only vii. 63, 70 and 71, and viii. 54 are common to D and X.

The excerpts in Mo 2 and X together equal about one-ninth of the whole *Meditations*.

VII. VALUE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS AND OF THE EDITIO PRINCEPS FOR THE TEXT

The evidence to be derived from the existing manuscripts for the construction of the text of the *Meditations* is scanty enough in quantity, as will be seen from the last section. In quality it is also unsatisfactory, since all the manuscripts, as well as the lost original of the first edition, P cod., belong indisputably to a single tradition. This is now represented by evidence which is not older than the late fourteenth century; and there is some reason to believe that the

archetype to which all our manuscripts point is a copy of the eleventh or twelfth century, which had already suffered by verbal corruption and by the loss of sentences which, unless new evidence be discovered, are indeterminable in meaning and extent.

The two complete, or nearly complete, sources are Vat. Graec. 1950, A, and Gesner's printed text, P, which depends upon a lost manuscript, P cod. The order of their chapters and, in general, their text correspond with our present printed text. In spite of minor discrepancies they agree remarkably in the places where they are corrupt or deficient, in many minor errors, and even in small points of orthography and accentuation.

The manuscripts of Excerpts follow closely the text of either A or P, or both A and P, but scholars are agreed that none of them is directly derived from A or P. Even D, which so closely resembles A, is not a transcript from A, but appears to be derived from a source which lies between (A and D) and the presumed archetype of A (D) and P. This follows not only from the fact that D often gives a condensed version of A, or a loose paraphrase of its presumed original, and not only from its agreement at places with P as against A (for these may all be conjectural corrections by its scribe), but from the fact that it has preserved a number of scholia, of which A retains no trace. The Excerpts C and X present a text which at one place in C certainly, at more than one place in X, appears to be derived

from what we have called the archetype. This is and P. This follows not only from the fact that D often gives a condensed version of A, or a loose paraphrase of its presumed original, and not only from its agreement at places with P as against A (for these may all be conjectural corrections by its scribe), but from the fact that it has preserved a number of scholia, of which A retains no trace. The Excerpts C and X present a text which at one place in C certainly, at more than one place in X, appears to especially clear in Book V ch. 8, 5, where X preserves six words which are certainly genuine, although their omission from P had not been noticed because they are not essential to the argument.

Although the Excerpts are of little importance, if any, for the actual words of the text, since their occasional improvements of passages may well be due to ingenious emendation, they raise a general problem as to the integrity of the present disposition of the several chapters. The X Excerpts especially are not arranged in the order of the complete manuscripts; they begin, for example, with extracts from Book vii, but in the order ch. 22, ch. 18, ch. 7. The fact that our present text appears dislocated at more than one place, that the sequence of thought of the writer is often interrupted by what appears to be an intrusive aphorism, or series of aphorisms, suggests when coupled with this evidence that the order of the various sections has been at some time disturbed. This is discussed elsewhere (*infra*, pp. lxxvii-lxxiv).

There is another remarkable feature in these Excerpts. The actual chapters excerpted differ in the various groups. Even D, which does follow our present order, has a collection of chapters which only at two places overlaps the other Excerpts. Thus, if we had only the Excerpts to go on, we could put together a considerable series of the actual *Meditations*, with practically no repetitions. It appears, therefore, possible that there was at an earlier date a single collection, a *Florilegium* of Marcus' thoughts, from which these have been derived. It will be noticed that, with very few exceptions, the extracts thus preserved would be of a general moral character; all the aphorisms which are of a personal nature would have disappeared.

To return to P and A. The resemblances between them point to a common original. But in externals they are remarkably different. P is arranged in twelve Books: A has no numerical marks of Books, although some of the Books are separated by an interval. The chapters in the several Books in P are distinguished, although they are not numbered, and the distinctions correspond generally with the sequence of thought; the chapters in A are marked by rubricated capitals, but the resultant divisions are frequently incoherent. Yet it is in the actual text that the difference is most remarkable. If we read P, we meet many small errors, such as are common in all manuscripts, but the general impression left is of a text with many idiosyncrasies but an intelligible text; if, on the other hand, we take up A at any point, not only do we find continual omissions of lines,

parts of lines, even of longer passages of some two or three lines, but the amount of corruption of individual words is such that it is possible to make only an approach to the meaning of the author, sometimes not even that. Besides this, especially in the later Books, we meet forms of words which are corrupted according to no known rules of manuscript interpretation. The problem of the origin of all these difficulties is intensified by the fact that the hand of the scribe is quite a good one, although late, that he has often patched up a *lapsus calami*, and has occasionally written a correction of a form in the space above the line, without erasing his first attempt. He appears to have tried to be intelligent.

Clearly the principal problem of an editor is to determine what weight is to be attached to the evidence of P and A respectively in a case of difference between them, and what are the grounds for his decision. In regard to P there is one question to be answered first, viz. how widely does the printed text of Gesner, which Xylander edited, differ from the lost original P cod.? There are many obvious misprints in P, which Xylander remedied in the second or Basel edition; there are many other mistakes in the form of words, which Xylander did not correct, some of which certainly appear to be misprints, though others may have been errors of the scribe. Schenkl's estimate is that Xylander corrected thirty-six mistakes but overlooked forty-four, generally graver, errors, which he had silently amended in his original Latin version. It is certain that Xylander did not carry out

his revision as carefully as we should expect and wish; but he was now working on the printed text and no longer had the manuscript to consult. Thus there is an at least plausible explanation of his apparent negligence, viz. that he was anxious to preserve, so far as possible, the text of the original manuscript. Certainly he did this in the first edition, leaving his version or his notes to show the reader the mistakes he detected. Moreover, this was his practice in his great edition of Plutarch. It may be argued then, I think, that it would be just the graver mistakes of his original that he would leave intact. My own conclusion is that most of these blunders were in the original manuscript, that at least it is safer to work on this hypothesis. There is no evidence that either Toxites, who brought the manuscript to Conrad Gesner's attention, Conrad himself, or Andrew the printer corrected the text as it passed through their hands. We may, as the earlier editors did, use the evidence of P, with the necessary reservations.

As to the weight to be attached to A, the history of the twentieth century text exhibits first the effort of successive editors, by scholarly conjecture, to make an intelligible text on the basis of Xylander's two editions and the Lyons text of 1626. Secondly, the vulgate, thus derived from Xylander's text, was emended by the use of the manuscripts (first of the Excerpts, later of A as well as of the Excerpts), and the tendency to prefer A to P grew more marked from the date of Coraes's text of 1816 and Schultz's of 1820. This movement culminated in Schenkl's text of 1913. The

editor speaks of the Vatican manuscript 'coming into its own'; and his own practice is evident from the fact that, apart from such minutiae as final nu and sigma before a closed syllable, the Leipsic text differs in some 180 places from Leopold's Oxford text of 1908. Yet Leopold himself had said that A, in spite of its many patent errors, 'has often preserved the genuine reading more faithfully than P or made at least a closer approach to the truth'. Most of Schenkl's differences from Leopold arise from a restoration of A's readings or of something supposed to be indicated by them, and there are many places besides (in his *app. crit.* and *adnotationis suppl.*) where he has shown great ingenuity in the attempt to find a possible lost reading which might plausibly explain A's idiosyncrasies.

The hypothesis underlying this restoration is that A, by its fidelity to its original, a fidelity not shared by P cod., has preserved an older and truer version of their common original: the illiterate witness is more likely to give an unvarnished statement of what he saw than one who is more educated. This hypothesis has, no doubt, been adopted the more readily because in the criticism of many texts (for instance, of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Poetics*) early manuscripts have, in spite of, or even because of, their unsophisticated crudity, been given greater weight than later and more ostensibly literate manuscripts of the same text. In the case of A, however, as evidence for what Marcus wrote, we are not dealing with an old but with a very late manuscript, we are presuming that A has preserved more

closely than P cod. the text of their common archetype, not that an early manuscript is *ceteris paribus* likely to be nearer the original than a later one. Moreover, a close study of A's individual readings shows that many are deliberate, even if infelicitous, corrections of a text which P cod. has preserved, while a similar study of P shows traces of that very *naïveté* of report which has been ascribed to A. Again, the existence of D shows that A and D depend upon an original which is one step further from the archetype of A D and P cod. than P cod. is. Further, a noticeable feature of A is its steady deterioration in accuracy in the later Books. M. Trannoy gives the statistics: Book i, errors common to P A, 17 to 20, errors peculiar to P, 14, peculiar to A, 21; Book xii, common errors 17 to 20, individual to P, 21, to A, 80. Are we to suppose that A is a better witness in Book xii than in Book i, since this increase of error shows, by hypothesis, a greater simplicity and therefore a nearer correspondence with the truth? Finally, if A is to be considered analogous to certain manuscripts (K^b , A^c) of Aristotle, we ought to be able to point to some remarkable restorations of an old text which are derived from A's mistakes. But, so far as the modern editions go, there is not a single case of such restoration which is not based upon an error common to P and A.

A different explanation is clearly possible, viz. that A is the work of an inexact scribe reporting (perhaps at secondhand) an earlier state of the text, whereas P's report of the same earlier text is generally more correct. In short, that P is the

more credible of the two witnesses. There is nothing here to prevent a critic from preferring on intrinsic grounds a reading he finds in A to one in P; only, if the readings are equally possible intrinsically, the balance of probability is on the side of P. A study of the text, even in Schenkl, shows that, in fact, the present revised vulgate is far closer to the *editio princeps* than it is to A. P is not only more complete, but is in details far more accurate than A.

As to the archetype of A, Polak,^[69] who made a close study of this manuscript, concluded that it was probably copied from an eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscript, in which the words of the original *scriptura continua* were already separated, the breathings and accents supplied, and the sentences distinguished. If this view be adopted, then P cod. also must have been derived from a minuscule of that date; behind this our manuscripts do not point. Polak gives some instances of misreading, as he supposes, of an uncial text, but nearly all, if not all, of these can, I think, be explained on the hypothesis of a minuscule original. If there are any mistakes of an uncial origin, and this is not certain, they would, we must suppose, have already been in the presumed archetype of P and A.

Schenkl did not live to publish his proposed study of the text, but he appears to have thought that A, or perhaps its archetype of the eleventh or twelfth century, bears evidence of an editor of the text, who wrestled long and painfully with an old and mutilated original. He means, no doubt,

Arethas. He goes further and suggests that the common source of all our manuscripts is the presumed edition of the learned deacon of Patras at the end of the ninth century. This is a suggestive and interesting hypothesis which other critics have adopted, but the evidence is too slight and conjectural to carry conviction.

There is, however, one source from which we can judge of this theory, the evidence of Suidas' *Lexicon*. He has preserved, very fortunately, passages of considerable length from the *Meditations*. Wherever the extracts he gives are actual extracts, their text is substantially our present text, and what he gives must represent citations from his original sources, which are older than the tenth century, how old we cannot determine. Thus whatever Arethas did to the text, the evidence we have from Suidas suggests that the manuscript he used was in its readings close to the tradition preserved to us. Unfortunately the majority of the passages in Suidas are paraphrases of the original text, and cannot therefore be used as evidence for the exact words of the original; indeed it looks as though the source of many of them was not the text of the complete original, but a *Florilegium* of some kind from the *Meditations*: they are so often introduced by ὅτι or a similar word, like the passages we have in the C excerpts. If this be true, the process of making selections from Marcus had already begun before the time of Suidas, as would indeed be probable on general grounds.

There is one other line of inquiry to be considered in reference to the transmission of the *Meditations*. This depends on the length of the known omissions in A. The commonest length is of sentences consisting of from 30 to 40 letters, say an average of 35 letters. Schenkl has compared this modulus with the length of lines in the papyrus of Hierocles and with that in some old codices. I presume that he means especially the length of line in some of the manuscripts which we know to have been transcribed for Arethas' library, the Bodleian *Euclid*, for example. Several of A's omissions, however, are of 23–5 letters in length, corresponding to the 24 (23) letters dropped by both P and A in Book v. 8. It is tempting to suppose that 23–5 was the length of line in an early stage of the text, since it is common in many papyrus rolls of the second century A.D. The fact, however, that the one omission common to A. and P (v. 8) is supplied from the X excerpts might be held to show that this oversight belongs to a later period of the transmission. We may perhaps safely use these two *moduli* in an estimate of a given conjectural emendation or supplement, like Gataker's in v. 16. To argue on the basis of either length to the original format of the *Meditations* is too hazardous, in view of the variety of lines even in early rolls, much more in the minuscule stage.

As to the sources of literal corruption in both P and A, and their presumed archetype, the ground here is familiar. The errors are such as are met with in the study of every Greek text, and are abundantly illustrated from the *apparatus*

criticus of modern texts of Marcus. The fact that A rarely writes iota subscript proves that his original was of later date than the iota adscript period. P's occasional omission of iota (it is not always easy to read in the print) points in the same direction. More than one explanation might be suggested for the uncertainty about final nu in both P and A. It may be due partly to pronunciation, partly to the use of abbreviation in the original, sometimes it is clearly caused by a misunderstanding of the imperative infinitive. The omission of rubricated capitals or the rubrication of erroneous capitals is very common in A, especially in the later Books. This need not deceive us; it is akin to our modern misprint. More important is the evidence of the existence in the archetype of marginal or interlinear variants. Here and there, these have crept into our manuscripts; there are also a few cases where glosses appear to have been embodied. These are, however, very few, I believe, though many more have been suspected by critics of the Cobet school. These presumed glosses were supposed by Nauck to be the work of a needy schoolmaster (iv. 30); Schenkl discovers occasionally the bowdlerism of a prudish scribe or the reverence of a Christian monk. More than one critic has detected the work of a physician, who doctored his copy with scraps of medical lore. Dr. Rendall has indicated many glosses which he presumes to have arisen in this way. He even suggests (no doubt half playfully) that the great Galen may sometimes have been at his imperial patient's elbow as he worked. One recent critic, presuming these to be glosses, traces the hand of the young

doctor Toxites upon the manuscript which he brought to Conrad Gesner. He forgets that A contains the same additions, and that Toxites had no access to that manuscript.

I have spoken above of dislocations of certain places in the text. Gataker expressed the same suspicion in more than one of his notes. He and the great Saumaise in the seventeenth, and Morus in the eighteenth century, suggested transpositions of some shorter passages. Leopold and Schenkl, following Coraes, have made such a change in x. 1, and Dr. Kronenberg has lately proposed one such change, a change which had occurred to myself independently (vii. 66, 67). I have at a few places adopted the same kind of dangerous remedy.

The text which is here printed is frankly eclectic. I do not think it is scientific to restore A's text at the expense of P. I have been guided by intrinsic probability where the evidence differs, with a slight predisposition in favour of P. In certain small details of spelling certainty is quite impossible. The method I have followed may be seen in the course of the notes.

VIII. PRINTED EDITIONS

Little of importance for the text or interpretation of the *Meditations* was published for seventy-five years (1559–

1634), although the book was read widely and highly esteemed, as is shown by scholars' references to it in their works and correspondence. Casaubon uses it freely in his notes to Persius; both he and Saumaise cite it in their notes to the *Historia Augusta*; Canter made two emendations in his *Novae Lectiones*.^[70] Barthius refers to the *Meditations* frequently in his *Adversaria*, and he it was who first expressed the view that what has been preserved is merely a collection of extracts from a lost original.^[71]

Of close study of the doctrines of Marcus there is, however, no trace in this period, not even in Justus Lipsius' works on Stoicism.^[72] Naturally he mentions Marcus more than once, but he nowhere manifests an intimacy with the *Meditations*, relying upon other sources for the substance of Stoic teaching. It is the same, I think, with Valla and other writers of Stoic-Christian books.^[73]

That the *Meditations* had many readers is proved by its frequent republication, and by the fact that fifty years after issue copies of Xylander's two editions were already rare, not only in England but also abroad. At Lyons, in 1559, Tornaesius brought out Xylander's Latin translation, with the anonymous version of Marinus' *Life of Proclus*; in 1570, in the same city, appeared the first vernacular translation, a version into French, by the learned civilian Pardoux Duprat (1520–1569/70). Zetzner appears to have bought up the 'remainder' sheets of the Basel edition, and published them with a new title-page at Strassburg in 1590.^[74] At Lyons, in

1626, de la Bottière issued what its title-page suggests to have been an *editio princeps*,^[75] though it is in reality a reproduction of the 1559 edition (including many of the misprints already corrected by the Basel edition), with a few modifications of the Greek text and Latin translation. The novelty is that Xylander's Latin is printed *vis-à-vis* the Greek, and the Books are for the first time divided into *numbered* chapters, though Xylander had indicated the divisions, for the most part, without numbering them. *Marcus* was accompanied by *Marinus*, but the sub-title seems to indicate that the demand was for the *Meditations*, 'a work of importance to Morals, now first published with a Latin translation opposite to the Greek text'. This Lyons edition, with its handful of notes by Amadeus Saly, obstructed rather than cleared the path of scholars. Gataker pays the book much severe and ironical attention. The text of Casaubon's edition suffers, because he was obliged, *faute de mieux*, to use it as his copy for the press. Only here and there have editors adopted some obvious correction first made by its editor. Thus, besides the *editio princeps*, which Gataker did not possess, but first saw when Meric Casaubon called upon him, the Basel edition, which Gataker printed, with marginal corrections (sometimes based on fresh corruptions in the Basel text), and the Strassburg reissue, with which Saumaise worked, an editor has to take into consideration this Lyons text and translation, which rests on no fresh evidence and has no value, critical or evidential.

A fresh impetus to the study and interpretation of Marcus was given by Meric Casaubon's English translation, dedicated to Archbishop Laud, 1634.^[76] The valuable introduction gives reasons, directed against Xylander (who considered the traditional text to be mutilated) and some unnamed critics (who held the theory of 'excerpts'), for believing that the *Meditations* has been preserved intact. By the latter, no doubt, Casaubon intended especially Barthius, who is referred to later on in the introduction with veiled censure: 'I know not any that hath had more to doe with Antoninus than Barthius in his *Adversaria*: I will not say to what purpose.' Casaubon also criticized Xylander's version, in many places, with vehemence.^[77] At the end are detailed notes upon the Greek text of the first two Books, with cursory reflections upon the remainder.

The interpretation of Marcus is very much aided by the grouping together of chapters which Casaubon recognized to be closely related in argument, and by the paraphrases introduced between brackets, to assist a reader. It is to this translation that Gataker refers in his own notes, turning Casaubon's English version as exactly as he could into his own Latin.

In 1643 followed Casaubon's edition of the Greek text, with an amended form of Xylander's Latin version.^[78] Casaubon based his text upon Xylander's two editions, the Lyons edition, and a collation of the Munich MS., Mo 2, prepared for him by the learned Hoeschel at Augsburg, where the

manuscript or manuscripts then were. The editor states his disappointment, on looking through his father's papers and copy of *Marcus*, not to have found the learned notes he had expected. With modest candour he explains that he had postponed his own intended edition on hearing that Thomas Gataker (4 Sept. 1574–27 July 1654) was engaged in the same task. He waited some time, at last procured an introduction, and called on Gataker in May 1642. After some talk he was shown two stout manuscript volumes, the one with the Greek text, a Latin translation, and marginalia, the other a prolix commentary, both ready for the press. They had been completed some time past, but Gataker despaired, in those dark days, of finding printer or publisher. His generous host urged Casaubon to proceed with his proposed edition. Casaubon had already translated the book, was a facile writer, and did not project anything on a scale beyond his powers and his little leisure. His edition came out within twelve months. The work is slight but estimable, for the editor was well versed in pagan and Christian literature, and therefore interprets *Marcus* with a wide vision. He also made many emendations which have been adopted by successive editors. The book is still of interest, but has been obscured by Gataker's great work, so much so that even Hallam writes of Gataker's edition as the first English commentary upon *Marcus Aurelius*.

This train of events will explain how it is that Gataker, in his notes, refers to Casaubon's English translation, not to his Greek text, and is often in doubt as to what text Casaubon

intended to adopt. It makes obvious too the reason why Gataker published as his own many emendations already, when his book came out, made by Casaubon and actually printed.

Casaubon, as a High Churchman, was deprived of his ecclesiastical preferments by the faction in power in 1644; but Gataker, though one of the Puritan clergy who signed the address (18 Jan. 1649) against the trial of King Charles, did not relinquish his benefice.^[79] In 1652 the energy of his Cambridge friends procured the publication by the University of his master work.^[80]

Of this judicious and masculine performance it is difficult to speak with sober moderation. It is a monument of vast and fastidious erudition in the four tongues, and (like his *Cinnus*, 1651, and posthumous *Adversaria Miscellanea*, 1659) a magazine of comprehensive and precise knowledge. Gataker wrote much besides, not least his balanced contribution to the vexed problem of the *Style of the New Testament*, 1648; and posterity has praised his commentaries on *Isaiah*, 1645, and *Jeremiah and the Lamentations*, 1651, his share in the puritan *Notes upon the Bible*. For ten years Preacher to Lincoln's Inn, he was Rector of Rotherhithe, near London, until his death, and was an active and moderate member, from 1643 to 1645, of the Westminster Assembly which drew up the Confession of Faith, 1647, Above all, he was a faithful minister of the Gospel. To quote a poet with whom he was clearly familiar:

But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parissheis devoutly wolde he teche.

Devoted as he was in his daily ministrations, his sermons are models of learning and exposition, enriched with wealth of marginal annotation. It is wonderful how he found the time to achieve, besides all this, an edition of Marcus Aurelius, so vast in its compass, so varied and exact in detail.

Readers familiar with the classical commentaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries will recall the repeated reference to Tho. Gataker, the frequent illustrations drawn from his notes.^[81] Ingram Bywater, inaugurating his tenure of the Greek Chair at Oxford, 1893–1908, said: 'the great Greek scholar of the Caroline age (i.e. in England) is, I think, beyond a doubt Gataker, whose Antoninus is to this day a book of unquestioned value and authority'. Bywater had just been speaking of Sir Henry Savile's *Chrysostom* and of Selden's *Marmor Parium*. Porson refers to 'our Cambridge Gataker, that scholar of vast erudition', touching characteristically, in passing, on a weak joint in the giant's harness, his defective sense of Greek prosody.

The edition offers a much improved text, conjecturally supplies some gaps in the traditional text, and makes an occasional transposition. It has been criticized as too free in conjecture; but the proposals are always in the margin or the notes, and are not so hazardous as those of Saumaise. In the margin too are careful cross-references, like those in the Authorized Version of the Bible; they are invaluable for the elucidation of the subject-matter. Opposite the Greek text is an entirely new Latin version, very close and accurate. There follows a continuous commentary, with scrupulous inquiry into the work of earlier interpreters, explanations of the technical terms and phrases, parallels from authors, ancient and modern, and many references to the Sacred Scriptures. The sources of Marcus' sayings are indicated and his doctrine illustrated. The chronological and material background is filled in from historical documents and literary evidence. In passing, Gataker proposes many palmary emendations of the authors, sacred and profane, whose works he quotes.

The notes are enriched by communications made to Gataker by Saumaise, Patrick Young (Junius), the Biblical scholar and King's librarian, and by Arnold Boot, a learned Dutchman, a physician who was the friend of Archbishop Ussher. Besides all this, there are copious indexes and a preface with a study of the Stoic philosophy, and a generous but judicious comparison of the moral teaching of Marcus Aurelius with that of Christianity. The preface closes with the words: 'this dissertation, such as it is, with eyes clouded

by old age and troubled with rheum, a hand trembling with the frost and sickness (as I had no secretary to assist me), I have heaped together rather than composed, scribbled rather than written this poor work, in Surrey, in the parish of Redrith (Rotherhithe), a suburb of my native city London, in January, in a severe winter, twin brother to the winter of old age and weakness, in the year of salvation 1651, the seventy-eighth of my life'.

These sad lines will explain how it was that Gataker had little or no part in seeing the volume through the press. The reader will condone a few blemishes upon so vast a performance, mistaken references (few in all) from one part of the book to another, occasional inexactitudes and some misprints, hardly any of which, it must be said, are corrected in the later issues. [\[82\]](#)

Gataker's edition has long been, and will always remain, the principal authority for any one undertaking to study or edit the *Meditations*.

Casaubon's edition was never reprinted, but his notes with Xylander's were annexed to the Utrecht edition of Gataker; his text and Latin translation were reprinted at Oxford, 1680, with a few selections from Xylander's and Gataker's notes. Gataker's edition was reprinted at London, 1697 and 1707, with a life of Marcus by G. Stanhope and notes selected from the D'Aciers' French translation of 1690–1. At Utrecht appeared a splendidly printed reissue, 1697

(Gataker's *Opera Critica* followed in 1698), the Greek citations in Gataker's notes being translated into Latin. This, the last edition, includes, in the *Opera Critica*, a reprint of Gataker's autobiography, with a further account of his life by his son Charles.

Gataker's text and translation, with very brief extracts from his notes and Casaubon's, were reprinted at Oxford, 1704. The editor, R.I. ^[83], has added a few good remarks. The text and translation also appeared at Leipsic, 1729, with a good summary of Marcus' philosophy by Budde, and a life by Wolle. The text and translation were again published at Glasgow (Foulis), 1744 and 1751, and at Leipsic 1775. ^[84] This last issue is memorable for the brief notes and emendations appended by S. F. N. Morus, and the consequent text became a kind of *authorized version* until the end of the nineteenth century.

Casaubon had consulted one manuscript of the X family of excerpts (Mo 2), which is nearly related to A.

Lucas Holste ^[85] (1596–1661) of Hamburg, the learned custos first of the Barberini collection, then of the Vatican Library, was meanwhile visiting Oxford, Paris, and Florence, studying manuscripts, primarily for his edition of the Greek geographers. When in France he bought the Lyons edition of *Marcus* and *Marinus*, and discovering in Florence that the *Life of Proclus* was existent in its complete form, he contemplated editing both works. He

made a proposal to the Elzevirs^[86] in 1636 for an edition of the *Meditations*, to be accompanied by other authors. He was a man of larger projects than performance, and only a part of his store of learning was published by himself or posthumously. In the case of the *Meditations*, he may have abandoned his project when Gataker's edition appeared. His *adversaria* on Marcus and Marinus are noted in his copy of the Lyons text, which is now in the Bodleian, a part of the D'Orville purchase of 1805. He has collated the text of the *Meditations* with a manuscript of the X excerpts at Florence, L. 4^[87], and the Marinus text with Med. Laur. LXXXVI. 3, which he elsewhere says is 'the best manuscript I have collated, and I have collated many'.^[88] He has corrected the faulty Lyons text from Xylander and Casaubon, and freely revised the Latin version.^[89] There is also a full list of the Suidas extracts, and many parallels from Greek literature are noted. His own emendations, at more than one place, anticipate those of later critics. He does not mention Vaticanus A; but at one place he enters a variant which must be derived from that manuscript, viz. ἐπὶ τὰ for ἔπειτα, xii. 30.

In 1675 Holste's friend and patron Cardinal Francesco Barberini,^[90] nephew of Urban VIII, published an Italian version of the *XII Books of M. Aurelius Antoninus*.^[91] He notes at the end a number of variants from Vaticanus A, and I have thought it possible that Holste drew his attention to the manuscript when he had himself abandoned his

projected edition. The book was part of Stefano Gradi's collection,^[92] and did not come into the Vatican until after Barberini's death.

In the second half of the eighteenth century J. P. de Joly, whose work is described below,^[93] obtained a collation of Vat. Gr. 1950 (A), from Winckelmann, by permission of Cardinal Alexandre Albani. He also secured collations of five of the Vatican excerpts, and of three Laurentian. He himself consulted Par. 2649. The results he published in his Greek text of 1775,^[94] which was accompanied by Gataker's translation.

The path indicated by an amateur was now pursued by professed scholars. J. M. Schultz had published an excellent German translation with occasional critical notes, Schleswig, 1799; a Greek text, with Latin version, followed, 1802.^[95] He corrected the vulgate text by the help of A, one or more of the Paris excerpta, four Laurentian excerpts, and Guelferbytanus 77 (G). He also first published Menage's and Reiske's *adversaria*.

Schultz's edition was unfavourably, even harshly, reviewed, and he expresses his chagrin in the sad preface to his second edition, Leipsic, 1820. The text he then gives is much improved, but he follows Coray's edition, almost slavishly. His text was stereotyped by Tauchnitz, 1829, and was for long a familiar edition. Its readings are adopted in the Didot edition, 1840, with little change.

In 1816 a greater scholar, the Greek patriot Adamantios Coraês, issued a revised text, being volume iv of his *Parerga* for the Chian society. His introduction, in modern Greek, gives an account of the Emperor's precepts, with a brief bibliography (Gataker, Leipsic, 1775, and Schultz).^[96] In the footnotes he merely gives his corrections, which are based upon A, and his own conjectures, the book being a school edition. Many solecisms are removed from the previously accepted text, good readings are adopted from A, and his own emendations are most felicitous. After Casaubon, Gataker, and Reiske, he has done far the most to establish a sound text.

The eccentric edition of the younger Capel Lofft followed in 1861.^[97] It was not noticed until Dr. Rendall drew attention to its merits. Lofft gives a perfect swarm of emendations, followed by a second set in the appendix. Recent editors have adopted some of his suggestions, and his very audacity often draws attention to textual problems which may easily be overlooked.

In 1882 Johann Stich^[98] published a text, with a critical introduction and an *apparatus criticus* of the now familiar type. He added a considerable index. For his edition he himself first collated M1 and M2, Barberinus, and Mo 2. He omitted the C group, though Cramer had published a collation of C at Oxford in 1839. A second edition, with a new preface, bringing the history of criticism up to date, followed in 1903, but his excellent text he left substantially

as in his first edition. His tendency is to prefer the readings of A, where tenable, without exaggeration. He recorded all Nauck's corrections.

In the present century four editions of the text have succeeded to Stich's, viz. I. H. Leopold, Oxford, 1908; H. Schenkl (ed. major et minor), Teubner, Leipsic, 1913; A. I. Trannoy's text, with French *vis-à-vis*, Paris, 1925; C. R. Haines, *The Communings with Himself of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, Loeb, London, 1916. One further manuscript of the X group, Vat. Gr. 2231 (V 6), was described and collated by Weyland, just after Schenkl's text was published, in 1914.

Leopold's text is eclectic, as indeed any text of Marcus must be with our present evidence. He appears to attach more weight to P than Stich or Schenkl were inclined to do. More than once he leaves corrupt places with no indication of their precarious condition. The brief *apparatus criticus* pays excessive attention to recent emendations, especially by Englishmen; perhaps he wished to pay a compliment to English work. Schenkl has banished most conjectures and many variant readings to a supplement. His preface, *apparatus criticus*, and supplement give a very full account of the manuscripts and his opinion of their value and interrelation. He divided the chapters, for reference purposes, into a very large number of sections (here he is followed by M. Trannoy). A most valuable index follows. The distinctive feature of Schenkl's text is his determined

predilection for A. He follows this manuscript, even where it appears to have been corrupted by familiar causes, easily illustrated from itself. Moreover, he has a strong fancy to construct readings which contaminate P and A, where these authorities differ. The result is a text which differs from Leopold's in at least 180 places, not counting *minutiae* of orthography. His own conjectures are usually recorded in the *apparatus criticus*, and he speaks very modestly about them. Neither in his *Epictetus* nor in his *Marcus Antoninus* does he show himself a master of conjecture,^[99] but scholars will be grateful for the immense labour he gave to these two tasks of his youth and age.^[100]

M. Trannoy's edition, with a translation into French *vis-à-vis*, Bude, 1925, was preluded by five pamphlets on the text, containing a liberal number of emendations.^[101] Some of these have been adopted in the Budé edition, others he has later relinquished overtly, or has tacitly abandoned. The *apparatus criticus* follows Schenkl's report of the manuscripts closely, and contains in consequence some inaccuracies. A few emendations by M. Mondry Beaudouin are recorded. M. A. Puech's preface is brilliant, and there follows an interesting introduction on the Stoic doctrine and the manuscript evidence by M. Trannoy. The character of the Loeb series did not allow Mr. Haines to indulge in a full *apparatus criticus*. He has a few emendations, and an independent and exact translation into English. There are valuable historical notes and a good index to the subject-matter.

IX. TRANSLATIONS

The *Meditations* have been more often translated than edited. Wickham Legg^[102] has printed a list of texts and translations down to 1908. He says: 'Translations into Latin, English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, and the Norse languages are extant. But besides these we have versions into Czech, Polish, and Russian, and even into Persian.' He gives a list of thirty-six such translators, and adds: 'we have amongst his editors a Roman prelate like Cardinal Francis Barberini; a non-juring bishop like Jeremy Collier; a prosperous Dean like Dr. George Stanhope; seventeenth century scholars like Meric Casaubon and Gataker, with Dacier and his wife; a mere theologian like Grabe; a *lieutenant des chasses* like de Joly; a time-server like Thomas Rousseau; and we may contrast amongst editors a visionary like the younger Capel Lofft . . . with a real Stoic, like George Long'.^[103] He adds: 'the 17th century produced some 26 editions or issues; the eighteenth 58, the 19th 81, while the 20th during the eight years of its existence has already brought forth 28.'

The bare enumeration shows the extraordinary favour which has been paid to Marcus' book. Many great names too are connected with it. Sir Thomas Browne used the *Meditations*, and refers to it directly in one quaint sentence. The sublime passage in Pascal about the two infinities was

probably suggested by Marcus' well-known words.^[104] Pope used the *Meditations*, in Jeremy Collier's translation, for his *Essay on Man*; Bolingbroke refers to the last chapter, not naming it, in *The Spirit of Patriotism*: 'Whether the piece be of three or five acts, the part may be long'. Legg reports a lithographed book at Munich containing nearly a hundred pages of selections made by Maximilian the Second, King of Bavaria. But a more famous name connected with the *Meditations* is that of Frederick the Great of Prussia. He made a paraphrase of its chief doctrines in *Le Stoicien*, and he continually refers to Marcus in his writings and correspondence.^[105] He thought that the book is suited for hours of disappointment and sorrow, to fortify man's courage. Goethe knew the book, and often speaks of it in his correspondence; he was especially interested in Marcus' acknowledgement of indebtedness to his teachers in Book 1. He showed sympathy with Stoical teaching from his early days, and the frequent reminder in his poems that doing, not being, is man's duty is derived from this school, if not necessarily from Marcus.

Of more recent books Maeterlinck's *Sagesse et Destinée* continually refers to the *Meditations*, but in other writers the debt is not so easy to trace with confidence. What is more important is the effect upon the circle of everyday readers. Dr. Rendall has said: 'Translations, essays, and the records of biographies all testify how simple and learned alike fall under his spell.' I remember to have read that in 1914, when the news arrived that the Germans had broken

faith and violated the frontier of Belgium, the United States Minister to the court of King Albert drove into the countryside to reflect upon the crisis, taking with him the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.^[106] In view of the wide interest taken in the book and its teaching, it is surprising that there should be no modern exegetical commentary upon the *Meditations* since 1652, as we have no modern commentary upon Epictetus, since Upton's of 1741 and Schweighäuser's of 1799. It has been left to the historians of philosophy to reconstruct the broad lines of Stoicism, so that, although the text of these two writers has been so carefully and thoroughly explored, little direct commentary upon detailed problems is available to the student. My friend Hastings Crossley, in England, had indeed contemplated an edition of *Marcus*, but his delicate health only permitted the publication of one Book.^[107] Besides this work much valuable and exact criticism of the *Meditations* may be found in Paul Fournier's edition of Couat's translation,^[108] as well as in Dr. Rendall's and Mr. J. Jackson's versions of the book.

X. THE FORM AND CONTENTS OF THE *Meditations*

The question we are now to ask can, within the limits of an introduction, be indicated but briefly; it is a question that forces itself upon a reader, fascinating him by its insolubility.

Is the book which now lies before us the authentic original, or has what Marcus wrote survived only in an incomplete and mutilated form? So many of the writings of classical antiquity have perished entirely or have been carried down by the river of time in a fragmentary or abbreviated condition, that a similar misfortune may certainly have befallen the Emperor's work. [\[109\]](#)

The form of the *Meditations* is incomplete; sometimes, at least on first perusal, incoherent. Books, chapters even, are not clearly and certainly divided from one another, neither are they always concerned with distinct problems; their present arrangement seems artificially (or should we say artlessly) imposed. The Books, if we except the first, possibly the first three, are a broken series of meditations, like improvisations upon themes in a variety of keys, where similar, even identical, motives recur to a listener's confusion. The subjects shift also so abruptly that connexion is hard to distinguish, even in quite brief phrases. Then, again, a sequence will be interrupted by a theme which appears irrelevant, something strayed from an alien context. Finally, a thought will be repeated, for no obvious reason, in a place hardly removed from that in which it made its last appearance.

The explanation usually given, and now generally accepted, for this disorder and inconsequence is that accident has preserved a private journal, the record of the odd moments of leisure of a busy public man, a philosophical *aide-*

mémoire intended for his own sole use and guidance. What consecutiveness there is, is the sequence of occasion, not subject, and the occasions can only, at best, be divined.

Thus Gataker^[110] contrasts Arrian's *Memoirs*, which profess to be notes of lectures, with the discourses of Marcus: 'which were plainly taken from his own notebooks, as the Proverbs of the wise King of Israel were copied largely from his autographs by the amanuenses of King Hezekiah'.^[111] 'It was', he continues, 'this great man's practice, engaged as he was, whether in peace or war, with his pursuit of philosophy, to note down on paper what occurred to him, not consistently observing any continuous series of subjects, but jotting them down, for one reason or another, according to the times and places in which they occurred to his mind or memory. Consequently, they are very often disconnected; identical reflexions are frequently repeated, as they more frequently come to mind, and most of them are expressed not merely briefly, but even incompletely . . . there is just enough to refresh and support the memory in topics so familiar. They are designed principally for his own use; thus some are grammatically imperfect, many introduced without any formal preparation.'

In this way Gataker explains the frequent obscurities, the many uncertainties as to the meaning and bearing of single sayings. The clue to the writer's immediate purpose is lost for want of sufficient knowledge of the occasion which prompted his expression. 'Thus the suspicion that some

have entertained of mutilation and corruption are not justified; the text is, as a rule, pure, genuine and entire, surviving in the authentic form in which it originally flowed from the author's pen.'^[112] Meric Casaubon's contention in the *Preface* to his English translation and the *Prolegomena* to his Greek edition agrees in the main with Gataker's judgement. For the difficulties of interpretation he gives two additional reasons. The disconnectedness, he suggests, is inseparable from the style which Marcus adopted, the manner of writing in aphorisms; the obscurity is due to the wealth of quotation from older authors or of allusions to their works; Marcus refers briefly to what he knew intimately from his wide reading, but we, without the originals, do not follow his meaning. Sometimes, too, Marcus seems inconsistent with himself, where he is in fact stating briefly an opinion with which he does not agree. Many difficulties Casaubon condones because 'what Antoninus wrote, he wrote it not for the publick, but for his owne private use'.

He appears, however, to regard the *Meditations* as more continuous and connected than Gataker's words would imply them to be. He assumes longer trains of reasoning, and shows this by his grouping of the chapters, a continuity disguised by the aphoristic form into which the thoughts are thrown.

An entirely different view of the origin and present form of the *Meditations* was taken from the first; and this view has

since been advocated more than once. The hypothesis is twofold: it is contended that Marcus designed and did in fact compose a regular moral treatise, and, secondly, that all we now possess is, upon that assumption, an assemblage of the scattered members of a lost original.

Already Casaubon refers to 'the opinion of those who have judged that these xii Books are merely excerpts and eclogues from an ampler and more perfect work'. He does not say who these critics were; and, although he occasionally refers to Xylander as though he were one of them, 'excerpts and eclogues' sounds as if he were aiming at Barthius, who held this opinion.

Whether there were others, as Casaubon implies, or not, Barthius^[113] had said: 'The Florida or Eclogues, should you use that term, which have reached us from the books of the Emperor Antoninus are heavenly.' Moreover, he continually referred to our present text as 'the Excerpts from Antoninus'.

This opinion he founds upon internal and external evidence. The form of such chapters as the first of Book i he takes to be plain proof of an excerptor's work, where 'neither head nor foot appears'. His external ground is one of which Joly later was to make use, the existence 'in Italy of written exemplars, which are designated Eclogues out of the Book

to Himself'. The manuscripts Barthius had clearly not himself examined, for he rests his statement on Conrad Gesner's entry in his *Bibliotheca Universalis*,^[114] but does not cite that entry exactly. Nor does he go closely into the serious question he has raised, being content with a loose comparison of Marcus' work with the *Florida* of Apuleius.

In 1742 Jean-Pierre de Joly published anonymously *Réflexions de l'Empereur Marc-Aurèle Antonin*, the whole rearranged by subjects in thirty-six sections. He used the translation of M. and Mme d'Acier. Later, continuing his study and reflecting upon the origin of the *Meditations*, he published in 1770 a new French translation, distributed into thirty-five sections, with a valuable bibliography and notes on the manuscript sources. This was followed in 1774 by his revised Greek text, with Gataker's translation, and a similar rearrangement by subjects.

His theory is that Marcus had, during his campaigns, composed a moral treatise upon a series of tablets; after his death, these were distributed to relatives and friends, and treasured by them as relics of their admired sovereign. In this way the entirety of the work was dismembered from the first. Later on, some editor made the best collection he could of these Sibylline leaves, and so they were copied out, as they now appear in the Vatican MS., continuously and in disorder, with no indication of Books or subjects. Joly believed that the survival of the X excerpts, in a somewhat different order (they begin with chapters from

Book vii, in an inverse sequence), was confirmatory of his view. He regarded the arrangement by Books in the manuscript from which the first edition was printed with suspicion.

Joly produced a more or less orderly composition under titles; he did in fact, though he does not suggest the analogy, what a succession of editors have attempted to do for Pascal's *Pensées*, he reassembled the *Meditations* into a kind of Apology for Stoicism.

Few critics have accepted Joly's hypothesis, although similar attempts have since been made from time to time, with the inevitable divergent results. As to his theory of the cause of the dispersion of the parts, there is no evidence of a Greek book, at this date certainly, being preserved thus upon a series of wax tablets, consisting of pieces of such divergent lengths, and presumably docketed by subjects. One would suppose that the notes would have been transferred by Marcus' secretary to a roll or codex at some early stage of his work.

But there are two difficulties which appear insuperable when the results achieved by this method are considered. The new or revived *Meditations* are not in fact a continuous treatise, neither is the confusion and repetition of the actual book removed. The new order appears less explicable, fairly judged, than the old. The second difficulty is that, in this new construction, the passages now juxtaposed do not

agree in composition with that of their neighbours: passages which in the present text are closely connected, either in subject or in verbal expression, or in both, have become widely sundered. To take two crucial instances, the sections of the present Book i, with their evident order and purpose, are now parcelled out in a different order and under more than one heading. Again the last chapter of Book xii, which has every indication of a designed close, is removed elsewhere, connected indeed with cognate reflections, but robbed of its natural intention and effect. ^[115]

The latest attempt in this manner is M. Gustav Loisel's *A moi-même*, ^[116] an arrangement this time in twelve Books. The *Meditations* so presented are interesting to read, and the editor throws light on the mind of Marcus by his work; but it is difficult to accept his results or his further contention that Marcus has left the clue to the order of his work. In his candid preface M. Loisel has recorded M. Haussoulie's critique of his work and it is, I think, conclusive. May we not say that he has done for Marcus, what was done by Budde ^[117] with no idea of reproducing a lost original? He has enabled us to view together under subject-headings, ^[118] a variety of attempts made by Marcus to meet his most pressing difficulties, to comment upon his reading of history, to summarize his own experiences, and to provide wholesome precepts for 'the Conduct of his own life', to use Suidas' title for the work.

That there is evidence of some such continuity in the *Meditations* appears to have been the contention of Braune in an essay which I have not been able to procure.^[119] Stich refers to this attempt as equally futile with Joly's undertaking. Readers of *Marius the Epicurean* will recall a reconstruction of part of Marcus' thought in that romance. Pater introduces it under the guise of a lecture traditionally delivered by Marcus in Rome before he set out for his campaign on the Danube.^[120] This occasion may well have been invented by the biographer who wrote the feeble and mendacious life of Avidius Cassius in the time of Julian (A.D. 360).

My own opinion is that the order is disturbed, but I have not tried to reconstruct an original of whose existence we have no evidence; I have rather endeavoured to indicate traces of continuity both of subject-matter and verbal expression in the individual parts as they have been preserved to us.

Although any attempt to reconstruct an original is doomed to failure, it is certainly conceivable that in the *Meditations* we possess the elements of a book which the author had projected, and which death prevented him from completing. It is possible also that not all the passages which have been preserved would have found a place in the completed book. We may possess portions of composition written at different times with different purposes in view. Apart from the continuity of reflection which I seem to detect in considerable passages, and which would be clearer if we

might make some small changes of order in the present text, the general character of the whole is not, fairly viewed, what Gataker has suggested. Many of the chapters are indeed brief memoranda, some are hardly grammatical as they stand, but the greater number are carefully composed and can hardly be designed to recall aspects of a creed already entirely familiar to their author. Again, many maxims have primarily a personal reference, may be private counsels and encouragements, but still more of them impress the reader as addressed, even if unconsciously, to a listener other than Marcus. There is again a whole class of reflections, like Book xi, ch. 18, which might well belong to a hortatory or expository discourse. The brief aphorisms, too, are many of them thrown into a proverbial, sometimes an antithetic form, modelled perhaps on sentences like the traditional words of the Seven Sages or the sayings of Heraclitus and Democritus; their very phrases are chosen with such care and precision as a man hardly uses when recording his thoughts in his own behoof. To take three instances: 'What does not advantage the hive, does not advantage the bee' (vi. 54); 'How many whose praises have been loudly sung are now committed to oblivion; how many who sang their praises are long ago departed' (vii. 6); 'Whosoever does wrong, wrongs himself: whosoever does injustice, does it to himself, making himself evil' (ix. 4).

Then again there are longer passages, scattered through the work, which are essays in little, fastidiously composed to the best of the writer's ability. Here are a few, chosen almost

at hazard: on retreat or *recueillement*, iv. 3; lessons from the industry of animals and from the artisan's devotion to his work, v. 1; reflections upon the transitoriness of all things created, iv. 33; upon divine dispensation, v. 8; upon Nature's gradual evolution, ix. 9; on human fellowship, xi. 8. These and others, such as reflections upon lives lived fruitlessly or governed by a ruling passion (iv. 32, 48; vi. 47; xii. 27) are hardly to be viewed as personal reminders; rather they are admonitory and consolatory thoughts, statements of religious belief, criticisms upon the vanity of human wishes, all such as might be elements of a book of wholesome doctrine.

To the two distinct kinds of material corresponds broadly a contrast of style. There are, on the one hand, the unstudied notes, the *aides-mémoire* or brief hints, which Marcus himself compares to a surgeon's 'first-aid' equipment, aphorisms resembling the well-known *Prescriptions* of Hippocrates. These are often bald and simple in shape. Much the larger part, on the other hand, is laboured with care, worked up into something approaching artistic finish. The style is always notably parsimonious, free from rhetorical artifice and, except for an occasional alliteration, brief, succinct, and severe. An extreme case will illustrate my meaning. The chapter upon the Age of the Emperor Augustus (viii. 31) is the quintessence of this studied manner; the effect upon a reader who recalls the long reign, involuntarily contrasting its outward success as recorded on the Monument of Ancyra with its domestic failure, the

chagrin and sorrow of the solitary ruler, is overwhelming. Very powerful too is the brief corollary; the thought of Rome's street of tombs, and the melancholy epigram: 'The last of his line'.

Samuel Johnson once said:^[121] 'I fancy mankind may come in time to write all aphoristically, except in narrative, grow weary of preparation, and connection, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made.' Is not much of the *Meditations* an attempt to create a novel form of literature and to find the proper vehicle for its expression? Marcus at times seems to aim at conveying into his Greek sentences something of the lapidary force of the Latin tongue.

Another mode of composition consists in the rare sentences written in a satiric vein; 'All that comes to pass is as familiar and well-known as the rose in spring and the grape in summer. Of like fashion are sickness, death, calumny, intrigue, and all that gladdens or saddens fools' (iv. 44: cf. v. 33, vi. 13, and the masterly vignette x. 36, and the dialogues, v. 1, 28 and 36). This occasional indulgence of satiric power, so quickly dropped or silenced, gives diversity to the prevailing monochrome; it resembles an artifice of Pascal, whose ironical pictures of men's ambition and distraction are a foil to his religious earnestness.

A study of the *Meditations* then, as a whole, suggests a various character of invention, which may be due to a

variety of motives in the composition of its parts; that the larger bulk has a decided literary aim appears to me indisputable.

XI. THE ACTUAL STATE OF THE WORK AS IT HAS BEEN PRESERVED

Returning to the *Meditations* as we now possess them, what indication of unities or incipient unities of composition do we actually discern? Book i stands by itself, with its clearly defined plan and distinct physiognomy. Only one other passage in the remainder is written in the same style, the duplicate portrait of Antoninus Pius in vi. 30. 2. Book ii, if we omit ch. 10, leaves a strong impression of unity. Book iii again approaches a unity, with a marked close. Further these two Books have, in their headings, definite marks of their place of composition.

The structure of the remainder is less clearly determined and the distribution into Books, if we had to make it for ourselves, might certainly be altered. Some signs, however, there are of openings and closes. Thus Book v has a marked beginning and end. The first chapters of Books ix, x, and xi might fairly be taken to be commencements of new reflections; Book viii, however, runs on continuously with the last chapter of Book vii. Of the composite character of Books vii and xi I shall speak when examining the evidence

to be derived from the state of the manuscripts. As to the last two Books, with only the contents to guide us we should be led to make a break after xi. 18, and to begin a new Book at xi. 19, which would run to the end of Book xii.

Not necessarily demanding from the author the precision and method of a regular treatise, but assuming a general order in the parts of his book, we are struck by some anomalies. There are passages of considerable length which appear alien in their present context. The most conspicuous is the extract from the *Moralia* of Theophrastus, or the paraphrase of his words, at ii. 10, in a Book which has otherwise a distinct and orderly development. Where it now stands, this chapter has a very remote connexion, if any, with what precedes and follows it. Similar passages, or fragments, are the aesthetic essay in iii. 2, possibly the inquiry about Retreat or Retirement at iv. 3; the inquiry into the source of Socrates' moral grandeur, on the basis of Aeschines' dialogue *Telauges*, vii. 66; the striking discussion of Tragedy and Comedy, xi. 6. To these we may perhaps add the shorter character of Antoninus Pius, vi. 30. 2.

All these appear to the reader unexpected in their present places; they are, moreover, somewhat different in complexion and in literary technique from the *Meditations* generally.

M. Trannoy^[122] has discussed some of these digressions. He regards them as strata of earlier composition: 'old notes, grouped in some measure by subjects and utilized later in our work to piece out its somewhat meagre bulk'. But utilized by whom? M. Trannoy evidently considers this patchwork to be due to Marcus himself, not to some hypothetical editor of his remains.

The disorder in the passages just considered might certainly be explicable in this way, or by Gataker's theory of a mere commonplace book, never rearranged, perhaps not intended to be rearranged. But there is a further difficulty in the present text, which is most simply explained by supposing that the original order has been disturbed. Two paragraphs which appear to be continuous are often sundered by a short and, in the context, quite irrelevant sentence. To give one or two instances. The sequence of iv. 27 and 29 is broken by iv. 28, so much so that Gataker proposed to move iv. 28 to follow and interpret iv. 18. Again, vii. 23 and 25 belong together, while vii. 22 and 24 would make a satisfactory sequence. In Book ix, 13 and 15 are congruous but severed by 14; so 18 and 20, 19 and 21 appear to be closely allied.

The natural explanation is that displacement of the author's order has occurred, not that Marcus introduced an irrelevance. That such accidents occurred, even in carefully guarded texts like Aristotle's, is well known. Simplicius^[123] suggests that this has befallen chapters 16, 17, and 18 of Epictetus' *Manual*, the original order having been 16, 18,

17, and he was writing within a few centuries of its publication. We are not precluded from such an hypothesis in the case of a text whose history extends over thirteen centuries.

The evidence of the manuscripts, P cod and A, confirms on the whole the impression gained from the study made in the last section. P cod was divided, Xylander tells us, directly or by implication, into twelve Books, with the general title: 'The writings of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus to Himself.' There was one difference in the book division; i closed at ii. 3 and, ii began at the present ii. 4. At the close of i. 17, the words: 'Written among the Quadi, on the Gran' appear in the text, followed by a (viz. a', that is, Book i). This appears to be the title of the present ii, which was originally labelled i. We may surmise that the present first Book once stood apart from the *Meditations* proper, being prefixed as an Introduction or, as some think, intended for an Epilogue. Books ii–xii may thus have originally been separate volumes, a distinct book, with a different purpose.

That the present vii may have once been two Books (in which way the number twelve would be completed) is suggested by a note which has got into the text of the first edition, though missing in A. Book vii, as was remarked above, is at present disordered. After vii. 31 (the end of which is mutilated) follow three chapters labelled: 'On Death', 'On Pain', 'On Glory' (such labels are nowhere else employed by Marcus); then comes a series of extracts from

Plato, Euripides, and others, with one or two aphorisms which may be original, vii. 35–51. To this succeed chs. 52–75 in the author's familiar manner of writing.

At ch. 52 init. a marginal note, as Xylander remarks, had crept into the text of P cod. It runs: 'This is not a beginning but is continuous with the chapters above, which preceded the Plato citations (viz. preceded ch. 35).'^[124] This would appear to indicate that the original Book ran vii. 1–34 (or 1–31 more probably), 52–75. The evidence of A is perhaps confirmatory. The scribe has left a space of half a line at the end of ch. 51. He begins ch. 52 with a capital, in red, and he found his original obscure.

A more conspicuous case of intrusion will be found at the close of xi. Chapters 22–39 are a mere collection of poetic extracts, anecdotes, and maxims, the latter being summaries of known passages of Epictetus or remarks now generally assigned to him. Nearly all trivial in interest and markedly inferior to the extracts in vii, they have no bearing on what precedes and follows them in the *Meditations*.

Nor is this all. These fragments break the continuity of xi. 20–1 with xii. 1. Not merely the subject-matter but also the form of language in xii. 1 is closely related to the part of xi which precedes the fragments. Here the scribe of A comes to our assistance. At the end of the extracts he has drawn an asterisk, after which is the entry: 'Of the Emperor Antoninus'. This is the exact form of words which is the

heading of the set of excerpts called C. It is reasonable then to suppose that the material of xii was derived from a set of detached folios and that the extracts of which we are speaking are derived from another source and either did not belong to the body of the *Meditations*, or at best belonged to a different part of that book. The state of things is at least some evidence of dismemberment or partial dismemberment of the *Meditations*.

The general condition of A, if regarded apart from P, might in itself suggest, as Joly said, that it contains a series of chapters which have survived from a larger and more complete whole. There is no numeration of Books, no title. The chapters are indicated by rubricated letters, but these capital letters are often introduced so as to interrupt the natural sequence of thought. The Books, where they are distinguished, are merely distinguished by an interval of a line or two. If we had only the evidence of A, we should get the following provisional grouping: i, ii. 1–3, ii. 4 to end, iii–iv, v–vi, vii–viii, ix, x–xi, xii, that is to say, nine Books, or a prefatory Book followed by eight Books. We might, therefore surmise that if there were originally twelve Books, as Suidas says there were, three have been lost, and that the original from which both A and P are derived was renumbered by the scribe of P cod to give an appearance of a complete twelve Books.

There is one other disturbing feature in the text as it has reached us. There are some chapters, especially in Book xii,

which not only resemble mere notes but are introduced by ὅτι, a well-known sign of an extract in collections of eclogues.^[125] This is a characteristic of the manuscripts of excerpts from Marcus which are denominated C,^[126] and the same is true of many of the excerpts of the *Meditations* in Suidas. This seems evidence that, before the date of the archetype of our manuscripts, there existed a set of eclogues from the *Meditations* which Suidas sometimes drew from. From this the C excerpts which do not precisely follow our present order may have been derived.

The X excerpts have two remarkable features. They appear to come from a *Florilegium* (which most critics ascribe to Planudes, 13th–14th century) in which extracts from Marcus are mixed with extracts from Appian's book on the *Nature of Animals*, for no reason that can be discovered. Their other characteristic is that they do not follow the present order of the text. They begin with passages from Book vii arranged in inverse order.^[127] This, so far as it goes, points to Book vii, which we have seen to be of a composite arrangement, having once had a different order of chapters and possibly a different position in some earlier manuscript. The state of the excerpts generally does seem to suggest that our present manuscripts (as their internal evidence at two points indicates) were at some time assembled from sheets which had fallen into disorder.

Two other lines of inquiry occur to one as possible. First, in chapters which so often refer to experiences in the author's

life, we might expect to find definite historical allusions which should fix the order in which individual passages were composed, and in this way determine the periods in which the Books were written. Secondly, the same problem might be resolved by the manner of writing used by the author, that is either by stylistic evidence, or by the way in which he treats his subjects of contemplation. Both these lines of investigation have been pursued, but neither with any definite result. [\[128\]](#)

Mr. Haines's summary of the two inquiries arrives at the conclusion that the *Meditations* were 'composed as a connected whole, Books ii–xii being written consecutively in that order and Book i added afterwards as an introduction.' The dates which he tentatively suggests are:

Book ii written in the land of the Quadi, A.D. 171–2.

Book iii at Carnuntum, A.D. 172–3.

Books iv–viii at the front, A.D. 173–5.

Books ix–x during the revolt of Cassius, A.D. 175–6.

Books xi–xii at Rome before Marcus went North, A.D. 178.

Book i written in or shortly after A.D. 178.

I have discussed some of these questions in the introduction to the several Books; here it is enough to say that the results attained are extremely doubtful, and are reached only by minimizing the negative instances. In fact the only certain points are that the whole work was clearly written towards the end of the life of Marcus, certainly after his accession to the throne, and, as to details, that the death of Domitia Lucilla (*circa* A.D. 156) is mentioned in i. 17. 7, and implied in viii. 25 and ix. 21; that Marcus alludes to Lucius Aurelius Verus' death (A.D. 169) as some time past in viii. 37; that Marcus probably refers to his title Sarmaticus (A.D. 175) in x. 10; that he certainly appears to refer in ix. 3 to the approaching birth of a child, and that his youngest child was born in A.D. 166–7. As to the composition of Book i the reasoning is hazardous in the extreme. There is the reference to Alexander the Platonist (i. 12), who is thought to have become Greek secretary about A.D. 174, but who is in this chapter classed as a teacher, with the other teachers of an earlier date; and there is the mention of Faustina in i. 17. 8, which would naturally be taken to imply that she was alive when it was written. The only ground advanced for a late date is that the sketch of Pius in vi. 30. 2 is shorter than that in i. 16, and so more likely to be written later than A.D. 174, about which time Book vi is dated.

As Mr. Haines says, as much may be said against as for Breithaupt's reasoning from the *manner* of composition, viz. that, assuming the present order of the Books, subjects of composition are treated more briefly when they recur. To

me iv. 3. 2–3 would appear, by itself, fatal to Breithaupt's argument, for there seven favourite positions of the writer are enunciated for the first time, in the curtest fashion, and they are all treated later at various places and at considerable length. Such a passage shows that the statements of doctrine rest upon lessons accepted by the writer before he began to compose, as we should expect from their nature would be the case. When these points arise, as they do from time to time, the development of them is longer or shorter according to the mood and interest of the moment.

XII. COMPARISON OF THE *Meditations* WITH OTHER BOOKS OF SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION

The conclusion that a study of the *Meditations* from its various sides has led me tentatively to adopt is that the book enshrines a variety of reflections gradually accumulated over a period of some ten to fifteen years, and governed by the idea of producing a work of consolation and encouragement; it is the deposit of those quiet hours when, as Marcus says, he left his stepmother, the Palace, to set up his rest with his own mother, Philosophy (vi. 12). His retirement from public affairs was not spent in the contemplation of a mystic, rather he began at first to record for his own use those short elementary maxims of his faith and practice (iv. 3). Later he was led to expand, with a

larger view, what he began for his own service. He desired to point his fellows to the City of God, which is the reality in what seems a world of coming into being and quickly passing away. That he was in fact occupied with some literary and philosophic attempt seems indicated by that one passage in which he has definitely referred to this side of his life: 'You are now', he says, 'not likely to read your Memoranda, your Deeds of Greece and Rome, the Extracts you made and laid up against old age' (iii. 14). To this variety of past and present activity he may again allude where he says: 'Put away your volumes' and 'Cast out your appetite for books' (ii. 2 and 3). *Memoranda* is the diminutive form of the word he himself employs for Epictetus' *Memoirs*,^[129] which Arrian himself uses to describe that work, and which is used by Galen and others for works of considerable compass. 'Memoranda and Extracts' covers the substance of the *Meditations* as they have come down to us.

After the death of the Emperor in March A.D. 180, an editor, perhaps Marcus' Greek secretary Alexander,^[130] may have made a selection from the literary remains. The partial disorder would be explicable in one of three ways: the editor may have followed, without readjustment, the incomplete and unarranged rolls to which he had access; again, he may have put them together into an order which satisfied himself but is not satisfactory to us; or again, the publication may have originally been more regular, and

since have suffered dislocation and occasional truncation in the course of transmission.

Perhaps the likeliest hypothesis, as it is the simplest, is that the editor recorded religiously what he had to his hand, misunderstanding sometimes notes which marked passages not destined for their present context, sometimes embodying at the wrong place marginal additions. Sentences are undoubtedly left standing now which appear to belong to a different order of thought and purpose from their neighbours, perhaps even from the main collection.

This explanation certainly assumes what cannot be proved. Indeed it is contrary to the opinion of Gataker and other critics, probably also to the sense of an ordinary reader, for it implies that Marcus was occupied with a work which he intended some day to publish. In favour of this explanation are the traces in what we possess of a unity, especially the completed first Book, the nearly finished Books ii and iii, the other incipient unities, and the conclusion of Book xii. The difficulty which will be felt is that the tenour of so much of the writing is as of a soliloquy, not intended to be overheard. This may be met in part by supposing that the original purpose was to fortify the writer's own heart and mind, and that this only gradually expanded itself to a wider ambit, an address to his fellow men. Marcus has hit upon a form of self-expression not previously used in Greek letters, and has written a manual of admonitions useful for the philosophic life, *Spiritual Consolations*, in fact a *Religio*

Imperatoris. He is gradually feeling his way to the right expressional use of his new instrument, and has often failed to reach the final and sufficient shape.

A clue to the origin of the *Meditations* is furnished by another work of similar form and content, whose genesis we are acquainted with. I do not mean St. Augustine's *Confessions* or the famous book of Jean Jacques Rousseau, with which the *Meditations* is sometimes compared, but a considerable book, which appears to have grown up, in a similar way to this one, in the busy loneliness of the Chartreuse. The thoughts of Guigue, 5th Prior (born A.D. 1083, elected A.D. 1110), have at last been printed in their original order and completeness.^[131] They reveal a series of religious musings: 'not a treatise nor the scraps of a treatise, not an autobiography, but the sequence of the Prior's reflexions, written scrupulously but with no affectation, in order to see clearly into himself, and to seek humbly in the strength of his God a sure refuge for his own frailty'.^[132] From the context it is clear that Dom Wilmart, as he penned this sentence, was conscious of the striking resemblance in manner and motive of Guigue to the Roman Emperor. In what follows he again writes in terms closely applicable to the Book we are considering: 'Guigue, when he likes, knows well how to pursue a train of argument . . . yet his habitual taste is for sentences more or less brief, where he endeavours to present an original thought, to enunciate a true maxim, suggest an antithesis, outline a miniature.' A further resemblance between the Prior of the Chartreuse and

Marcus consists in their occasional references to experiences of their own life, with here and there the mention of a contemporary by name, for instance the Prior's namesake, the Baron Guigo.

The *Meditations* might then be taken as an exactly similar book,^[133] with a parallel genesis, and, with the necessary allowances, much the same outlook upon experience. A closer analogue is another book better known to most English readers. This is Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*. The learned Norwich physician tells us of his famous essay: 'This I confess . . . for my private exercise and satisfaction, I had at leisurable hours composed.' Criticism he disarms by the excuse: 'being a private Exercise directed to my self, what is delivered therein, was rather a Memorial unto me, than an Example or Rule unto any other.'^[134]

'Directed to myself', 'a Memorial unto me';—the terms might be thought a reminiscence, they are certainly a happy rendering, of Marcus' Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν, 'his meditations concerning Himself'. Like Marcus too the 'whimsical Knight' had his commonplace books, the armoury upon which he drew for this work and his *Christian Morals*.

Still more to the point is an even more famous writing, Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*. Left incomplete and in fragments at his death, it at length came out, with considerable expense to order and textual integrity, in the Port Royal

edition, put together in a manner believed to agree with the dead man's purpose. However it be arranged, and arrangements have been many, the sense of the several paragraphs, the *liaison* of argument, the precise point of those occasional barbed shafts of incomparable irony, can, at least by the ordinary reader, be now surmised and no more. Pascal's general aim is easy to detect, if we have sympathy with him and even dimly share his faith, but the whole is there in promise only, not in performance. I have often entertained the thought that the *Meditations* grew up like the *Pensées*, that Marcus had in mind a Defence of Philosophic Belief which he had neither leisure nor ability to complete.

Pascal's *Pensées* are incomplete and isolated fragments, some written by himself, some dictated, the whole edited and published by other hands. Did the same fate overtake the Emperor's tablets and rolls, corrected perhaps already at some places by himself? We shall never know. All things considered, it appears reasonable to conjecture that an effort was made to collect faithfully what was thought to be best worth preserving, to respect the autographs or originals, to leave alone the repetitions, interruptions, digressions, even the inconsequences; to rearrange but little. If so, what we have may be no more than a selection, collected and arranged by an editor very much in its present shape. [\[135\]](#) The unity which runs through the whole arises from the rare sincerity and earnestness of the writer; what is logically inconsequent leaves behind a sense of continuity; as we

read, many anomalies become intelligible, many hard places plain, though some will still be dark, even insoluble. But even so, with the injuries, dealt by the hand of time and by the misunderstandings of copyists, the unfinished pages are not incomplete. The merit and charm of Marcus is that, wherever you take him up and whenever you lay him down, you have had communion with a wise and chastened temper, faithful to its prescribed limits, always consistent in itself. 'It is not like acting and dancing, where the whole, if you interrupt it, is ruined. In every act and wherever surprised, the soul has made what it purposed entire, and nowhere deficient; so that it can say: *I possess what is my own*' (xi. 1. 1). The radiance of a lofty and humble spirit illuminates these sentences, as the sun lights up and blends the coloured fragments of an ancient window.

A. CONTRIBUTORS TO THE HISTORY AND CRITICISM OF THE TEXT

Editions of the text described in the preceding pages are indicated by ed.; translations by tr. The brackets indicate abbreviations in the app. crit.

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B. MODE OF REFERENCE TO ORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

Abbreviations are usually those adopted in Liddell & Scott's Lexicon, a new edition. In regard to the following authors the method used is:

- AETIUS: Book and ch. with page in Diels's *Dox. Graeci*.
- ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS: title of treatise, p. of Berlin
Acad. ed.
- ARISTOTELIAN COMMENTATORS: name of comm, and p. of
Berlin Acad. ed.
- ARRIAN's Diss. of Epictetus: Epict. with Book, ch. and sect.
(Sch.); Manual of Epict.: *Ench.* ch. and sect. (Sch.).
- CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Clem. Alex, title of treatise, page
of Potter, ed. Stählin.
- DIO CASSIUS: Dio Cass. Book, ch. and sect. ed. L. Dindorf.
- DIO PRUSAEUS: Dio Chrys. number of oration, Reiske's page.
- GALEN: (unless otherwise stated) Kühn's vol. and page.

HERACLITUS: the numbers of Diels's (D) and Bywater's (B) edit.

HIPPOCRATES: Kühn's vol. and page.

Historia Augusta: The number of the life, ch. and sect., ed. Peters.

JULIAN: page of Spanheim, ed. Hertlein.

PHILO JUDAEUS: unless otherwise stated Mangey's vol. and page, Cohn's text.

PLUTARCH, *Moralia*: short title, with Wyttenbach's page.

PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS: Names with number of fragment in Diels's *Vorsokratiker*, ed. 3.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS: *Pyrrh. hyp.* or *Math.*, followed by Bekker's Book and section.

SIMPLICIUS: Comm, on Epict. *Ench.* Heinse's page.

STOBAEUS, *Eclogues*: *Ecl.* followed by vol. and page in Wachsmuth-Heinse.

STRABO, *Geog.*: Strabo with Cas.'s page.

1. ↑ 'Marco Antonino, in omni vita philosophanti viro et qui sanctitate vitae omnibus principibus antecellit' *Hist. Aug.* iv. i. i. In Justinian's *Novels* he has ceased to be Divus Marcus and is referred to like this: εὖ μὲν ἀρξάμενος ὁ φιλοσοφώτατος ἐθέσπισε Μάρκος *Corpus J. C.*, *Novel* xxii. 19; καὶ ὁ φιλόσοφος ἐν βασιλεῦσι Μάρκος *ibid*, cviii, *proem*, § 2. Cf. Photius, cited p. xii, note 4.
2. ↑ Μάρκος, ὁ καὶ Ἀντωνῖνος, βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων, ὁ ἐπαιφετὸς κατὰ πάντα φιλόσοφος, s.v. Μάρκος

3. [↑](#) Αὐτοκράτορι Τίτῳ Αἰλίῳ Ἀδριανῷ Ἀντωνίνῳ
Εὐσεβεῖ Σεβαστῷ Καίσαρι καὶ Οὐηρισσίμῳ υἱῷ
Φιλοσόφῳ καὶ Λουκίῳ Φιλοσόφῳ . . . ἔραστῇ
παιδείας *Ap.* I, ch. 1. 1.
4. [↑](#) Αὐτοκράτορσι Μάρκῳ Αὐρηλίῳ Ἀντωνίνῳ καὶ
Λουκίῳ Αὐρηλίῳ Κομμόδῳ, Ἀρμενιοκοῖς,
Σαρματικοῖς, τὸ δὲ μέγιστον Φιλοσόφοις *Legatio*, 1.
1.
5. [↑](#) *M. Ant.* i. 7. 1; i. 17. 4 and 9.
6. [↑](#) ii. 2; cf. ii. 3.
7. [↑](#) τὰ ὑπομνημάτιά σου, τὰς τῶν ἀρχαίων Ῥωμαίων
καὶ Ἑλλήνων πράξεις καὶ τὰς ἐκ τῶν συγγραμμάτων
ἐκλογάς iii. 14.
8. [↑](#) *M. Cornelii Frontonis Opera Inedita*, Angelus
Maius, Milan, 1815; 2nd edit, (plus centum epistolis
aucta), Rome, 1823. Edited and translated in the Loeb
Classical Library by C. R. Haines, 1919. My
references are to the pages of *M. Cornelii Frontonis et
M. Aurelii Imp. Epistulae*, S. A. Naber, Leipsic, 1867.
9. [↑](#) "Tu prior lege: et si quis inerit barbarismus, tu, qui a
graecis litteris recentior es, corrige atque ita matri
redde: nolo enim me mater tua ut opicum contemnat'
Naber, p. 24, cf. p. 239.
10. [↑](#) Hexameters, id. pp. 24 and 34.
11. [↑](#) Mihi vero nunc potissimum Graece scribendum est.
Quam ob rem, rogas? Volo periculum facere an id
quod non didici facilius obsecundet mihi, quoniam
quidem illud, quod didici, deserit' id. p. 252.

12. ↑ op. cit. p. 143 sq.; 'eloquentiae studium reliquisse, ad philosophiam devertisse' p. 150, cf. p. 75.
13. ↑ πρὸς γὰρ τῷ κεκριμένῳ τοῦ λόγου καὶ ἔδραϊον τοῦ ἥθους ἐντετύπωτο τοῖς γράμμασιν Philostr. *Dial.* vol. ii. p. 258 Kayser (Leipsic). Cf. Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 2. 12, p. 243 for what purports to be a private letter of Marcus. There is a fictitious letter in Migne, *Patr. Gr.* cxv, p. 1233.
14. ↑ ἔχεις δ', ἵνα μηδὲ μακρὸν ἦ σοι τὸ τῆς γυμνασίας στάδιον, τὰς εἰς Φάλαριν ἐκεῖνον, οἶμαι . . . ἀναφερόμενας ἐπιστολάς, καὶ αἷς Βροῦτος ὁ Ῥωμαίων στρατηγὸς ἐπιγράφεται καὶ τὸν ἐν βασιλεῦσι φιλόσοφον Photius *Patr. Constantin.*, Ep. 233 (cii, p. 861 Migne)
15. ↑ M. Ant. i. 12.
16. ↑ Conrad Gesner says: παρὰ τοσούτου συγγραφέως ἐξεδόθη, εἰ καὶ μὴ εἰς ἔκδοσιν ἴσως ὕπ' αὐτοῦ γραφέν Edit. princeps, *Dedicatio*, p. 11.
17. ↑ τῆς μετὰ Μάρκον βασιλεῖς ἱστορίαι in eight Books, covering the period A.D. 180–238.
18. ↑ λόγων τε ἀρχαιότητος ἦν ἐραστής . . . δηλοῖ δὲ ὅσα καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς ἦλθεν ἢ λεχθέντα πρὸς αὐτοῦ ἢ γραφέντα Herod, i. 2. 3.
19. ↑ πῶς δ' οὐκ ἀπόλωλε μὲν πίστις, ἀπόλωλε δὲ ἐλπίς ἀγαθή; Dio. Cass. *Epit.* lxxi. 24. 2
20. ↑ Πίστις δὲ καὶ Αἰδῶς καὶ Δίκη καὶ Ἀλήθεια,
'πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυαδείης' (Hes. *Op.* 197) M. Ant. v. 33.

21. [↑](#) ὥς ἔγωγε τοῦτ' ἂν μόνον ἐκ τῶν παρόντων κακῶν κερδάναιμι, εἰ δυνηθείην καλῶς θέσθαι τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ δεῖξαι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὅτι καὶ ἐμφυλίοις πολέμοις ἔστιν ὀρθῶς χρήσασθαι Dio. Cass. l.c. 26. 4; cf. ἀρκεῖ οὖν καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτης τὸ παρὸν εὖ θέσθαι M. Ant. vi. 2.
22. [↑](#) καὶ μοι πάλαι μὲν οἰομένῳ πρὸς τε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ τὸν Μάρκον . . . εἶφαι τῆς ἄμιλλαν *Epist. ad Them.* p. 253 a.
23. [↑](#) καθαρώτατον καὶ εἰλικρινέστατον θῶς p. 317 d.; cf. M. Ant. x. i, xi. 12.
24. [↑](#) The nearest phrases are ἄκομψον καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστον, applied to Marcus, p. 317c, cf. ἄκομψος vi. 30. 1; of Pius, καλλωπισμός i. 16. 5; καινοτομήσαντι p. 334 cf. καινοτόμον i. 16. 3; ἀπρὶξ εἵχετο p. 335 d. cf. iv. 32. 2, where both are perhaps imitating Pl. *Tht.* 155 e. Christ, however, says that the *Meditations* were familiar to Julian, referring to Geffcken, *Julianus*, 1914 (*Geschichte griech. Litt.*, p. 831, ed. 6).
25. [↑](#) οὐδέν σοι προσδεῖ τῶν Μάρκου παραγγελμάτων οὐδ' εἴ τι χρηστὸν ὁ δεῖνα τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων ῥῆμα προήκατο *Them. Philadelphi Or.* 6, p. 81 c.
26. [↑](#) 'Iturus ad bellum Marcomannicum, timentibus cunctis ne quid fatale proveniret, rogatus sit non adulatione sed serio ut praecepta philosophiae ederet. nec ille timuit sed per ordinem paraineseos (hoc est praeceptionum) per triduum disputavit.' *Hist. Aug.* vi. 3. 6–7, cf. Aurel. Victor, *De Caes.* 16. 9. The date of

this extravagant life of Avidius Cassius is generally put in Julian's reign—see Baynes, *Hist. Augusta*, p. 84.

27. ↑ Μάρκου τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος τὸ μεγαλωφελέστατον βιβλίον παλαιὸν μὲν καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἔχων, οὐ μὴν ὅτι καὶ παντάπασι διερρηκὸς καὶ τοῦ χρησίμου ἑαυτοῦ τοῖς πουλομένοις βασκῆναντος, ὅμως ἐπεὶ τὸ νῦν ἐξεγένετό μοι ἐκεῖθεν ἀντιγράψαι καὶ νεαρὸν αὖθις τοῖς μεθ' ἡμᾶς παραπέμψαι, διττὸν δὲ τοῦτο κεκτῆσθαι ἑτέρου μηδὲ καθ' ἓν ἔχοντος χρῆσθαι, φθανερᾶς ἔργον καλῶς ὑπολαμβάνων ψυχῆς . . . ἐπιδείκνυσθαι τὸ γλίσχρον . . . τῆς προτέρας ἐμοὶ κτήσεως κληρονόμον δίκαιον ὦήθην τὴν μανίερων ὑμῶν καταστῆσαι ἀγίωσύνην Cod. Mosc. 315 f. 115 r., ed. Sonny, *Philol.* liv, p. 182. For a full account of Arethas and his MSS., see Kougeas, *Arethas of Caesarea*, Athens, 1913.
28. ↑ Kougeas gives references to eight such codices, l.c., p. 99. One or more are to be seen reproduced in most Greek palaeographical books, e.g. Maunde Thompson, *An Introduction* etc. Nos. 53 and 54.
29. ↑ *Testimonia* M. Ant. ii. 3; iv. 3.1; vi. 47; οὗ Μᾶρκος ἐφ' τοῖς Ἡθικοῖς αὐτοῦ μέμνηται *Test.* viii. 25; ἥς καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ καῖσαρ ἐφ' τοῖς εἰς ἑαυτὸν Ἡθικοῖς αὐτοῦ μέμνηται *Test.* viii. 37.
30. ↑ Μάρκος, ὁ καὶ Ἀντωνῖνος . . . οὗτος ἔγραψε τοῦ ἰδίου βίου ἀγωγὴν ἐν βιβλίῳ ιβ' Suid. s.v. Μάρκος.
31. ↑ *Testimonia*, M. Ant. iv. 21; v. 33; vi. 13.
32. ↑ This is the one manuscript upon which our knowledge of Epictetus' *Discourses* depends. The

notes have been displaced in the margin, which shows that they have been copied from an earlier source. They belong to Epict. i. 17. 27; ii. 19. 20; iii. 22, 80; iv. 5. 17. See Schenkl, *Epict.* (1894), pp. lxxii (Schenkl, *M. Ant.* p. v), lxxvi, lxxix, lxxxiii. The MS. actually has Ἀντώνινος for Ἀντωνῖνος in each case, a scribal error which occurs, e.g. in the title of the *Marcus Excerpts*, X vat. 6, μάρκου Ἀντωνίου αὐτοκράτορος ἐκ τῶν εἰς ἐαυτὸν (Weyland, *Berlin*, pb. W. 1914, col. 1181); in a note in the excerpts D, fol. 161r: ζητεῖ τὸ ἐξῆς ὅπισθε εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ Ἀντωνίου. The error appears venial; at least it abounds in modern books and catalogues, e.g. in Lilius Giralduus, cited at p. xxii, note 3, in the xvth, and in Hobein's *Maximus Tyrius* (p. xl) in the xxth cent.

33. ↑ *Test*, to ii. 3, σύμφωνον τοῦτο τῷ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Μάρκου· πάντα ἄνωθεν ῥεῖ σοφῶς εἰρηκότος Sonny, *Analecta ad Dio. Chrys.* p. 116. The note in Epict. *schol.* is οἶμαι διὰ τὰ ἄνωθεφ ῥεύσαντα.
34. ↑ τοῦτο θεωρεῖσθω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μοναχῶν τῶν δοκούντων εἶναί τι· ja! ἔαν ἔχωσι τοὺς χαρακτηῖρας τῶν προβεβασιλευκότων ἐν τούτῳ τῷ τάγματι, Ἀντωνίου φημι καὶ τῶν κατ' αὐτόν, ἔστωσαν ἡμῖν πατέρες· εἰ δὲ νέας χαραγὰς φέρωσιν, τῷ χρυσεψητῇ παραπεμφθήτωσαν· κἀκεῖνος αὐτοὺς δοκιμάσει l.c. lxxxiii (corrected ed. min., 1916, *schol.* ad iv. 5. 17). If τῷ χρυσεψητῇ refers to Marcus, we have the first use in his connexion of a title which suggests the famous 'Golden Book'.

35. ↑ See Stich's first edition of *M. Ant. Praef.* p. x, Leopold *M. Ant. Praef.* p. vi, Schenkl *M. Ant. Praef.* p. xv, p. xix. The evidence for the connexion with the Anthology is inconclusive.
36. ↑ ὁ Μάρκος Ἀντωνῖνος οὗτος καὶ βιβλίον [παιδείας] τῷ παιδὶ Μάρκῳ συντάττει πάσης κοσμικῆς ἔμπειρίας καὶ παιδείας μεστόν *Niceph. Hist. Eccl.* 3. 31 (Migne, *Patr. Gr.* cxlv, p. 960.)
37. ↑ *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio*, &c. Seville, 1528 (19 subsequent editions in the XVIth cent.); *Libro del Emperador Marco Aurelio co relox de principes*, Valladolid, 1529 (9 subsequent issues in the XVIth cent.). English translations were: *The golden boke translated out of Frenche &c.*, John Bouchier Knyghte, lorde Berners, 1534; *The Diall of Princes*, Th. North, 1557. In Christ's *Geschichte der griech. Litt.* 1924, p. 832, Berners's translation is cited as evidence that the *Meditations* 'were very much read in England'.
38. ↑ (Mon père) 'si mesloit son langage de quelque ornement des livres vulgaires, sur tout espagnols: et entre les Espagnols, luy estoit ordinaire celuy qu'ils nommoient Marc Aurele' *Essais*, ii. 2. For his own opinion, see *Essais*, i. 48.
39. ↑ K. N. Colville says: 'In his own century the learned Rhua protested against his unscholarly romancing and his latest Spanish editor admits that he has mingled true and false quotations and ascriptions beyond all unravelling' *The Diall of Princes*, 1919, p. xxx. He

refers to Pedro de Rhua, *Cartas sobre las obras del . . . obispo de Mondonedo*, 1549, and to M. Martinez de Burgos. There is not the smallest trace of the narratives in the *Hist. Aug.* or other true sources, much less of the *Meditations* either in Berners's book or in North's *Dial*, in which I have read Guevara.

40. ↑ 'Antonini Augusti itinerarium; Ejusdem liber ἐκ τῶν καθ' αὐτόν, Romae servatum Graece' *Bibl. Univ.* f. 53v. This is the title usual in the Vatican X excerpts.
41. ↑ 'Eius certe librum graece scriptum legi: cuius titulus Μάρκου Ἀντωνίνου ἐκ τῶν καθ' αὐτόν, ex quo variam et multiplicem illius sapientiam facile colligere possumus' Lilius Giralduus, *Dial*, v, *de Poetarum Historia*, Basel, 1545, p. 603.
42. ↑ 'Demum et M. Antonius [sic] Caesar et philosophus de piscibus nonnihil scripsit, cuius etiam quaedam extant adhuc' *De Lat. Poetis*, op. cit., p. 553.
43. ↑ 'Adde his M. Aurelium Antoninum longe sapientissimum, eum dico qui Philosophicum maluit quam Caesareum cognomen' Petrarcha, *De Officio et virtutibus imp.*, *Opera*, Basle, 1554, p. 438.
44. ↑ τούτου τὰ βιβλία παρὰ καλοῦ κάγαθοῦ ἀνδρός Μιχαήλου Τοξίτου, ποιητοῦ εὐφροεστάτου (ἐκ τοῦ Ὁθωνος Εἰνερίχου τοῦ Παλατίνου ἄρχοντος λαμπροτάτου βιβλιοθήκης) λαβὼν p. 10.
45. ↑ *Michael Schutz genannt Toxites*, C. Schmidt, Strassburg, 1888, see Schenkl's edition of *M. Ant.*, p. viii.

46. ↑ Morelli, prefect of the Bibliotheca Marciana, writes to Boissonade: 'Interpres Latinus quinam fuerit cum Fabricio ignoro . . . testatur Conr. Gesnerus in Epistola ann. 1562 ad Guillclmum Turnerum de libris a se editis, Tiguri impressa ann. 1566 cum vita Gesneri auctore Iosia Simlero, se Antonini et Marini libros Andreae patrueli anno 1558 excudendos dedisse, una cum translationibus latinis, in Antonini quidem libros Guil. Xylandri, in Marini vero Proclum, amici cujusdam nostri, iuvenis pereruditi, qui prac modestia nomen suum exprimi noluit' J. F. Boissonade, *Marinus, Vita Procli*, Leipsic, 1814, p. ix.
47. ↑ 'Cum enim ex eodem omnia haec opuscula penu sint deprompta, (nam Antonini exemplum quo usus sum, de Palatini Electoris illustrissimi inclytae memoriae OTHONIS HENRICI, et bibliothecae libro fuisse transsumtum, Gesnerus, vir incomparabilis doctrinae ac humanitatis . . . affirmavit) idemque iis interpres, tarmet si diversis temporibus, contigerit' p. 4. He refers to *inedita*, Antoninus Liberalis, &c., which he published from the Heidelberg library, with his second edition of Marcus.
48. ↑ 'Sunt quaedam in eo libro quae prorsus non attingere videbatur praestare, quam conjiciendo aliena pro Antoninianis fortassis ingerere' *ibid.*, p. 4.
49. ↑ 'Verba appendere ad trutinam neque volui, neque vero debui: sensum quidem secutus sum, an autem assecutus sim ubique aliorum opto iudicium: cur difficile hoc fuerit, multae sunt, neque non manifestae

causae. Etsi fateor, in quibusdam me vel ut divinarem opus habuisse, vel audacter a codice Graeco aut usu communi discessisse' op. cit., p. 25 (i.e. p. 9).

50. [↑](#) 'Xylandrum etiam amo, propter animi ejus candorem, probitatem, honestatem, quarum virtutum manifesta exstant indicia, cum in scriptis viri, tum in tota ejus vita' Plu. *Moralia* Oxon. A.D. 1795, p. cvi.
51. [↑](#) 'Quae mea lucubratio cum (quod in promptu est cuiuis videre atque iudicare) foede esset incuria operarum typographicarum deprauata, itaque plane edita, ut pro non edita censi optimo iure posset, iam pridem cogitaram de remedio ei malo faciendo ' op. cit., p. 3–4.
52. [↑](#) Dr. V. Scholderer informs me that 'the books are full of complaints about the dearth of good accounts of Zürich printing. The article on the Gesners by Schottenloher in the *Lexicon des gesamten Buchwesens*, 1935, is of twelve lines only.'
53. [↑](#) 'cum in eodem codice manuscripto M. Antonini libris, Marini Proclus quoque contineretur.'
54. [↑](#) See Xylander, cited at p. xxiii above, note 4.
55. [↑](#) 'Gesnerus affirmavit'. See Sch. in *BphW*, 1914, col. 485.
56. [↑](#) Schenkl, M. Antoninus, 1913, ed. maj. Praef. pp. viii-ix; 'est cod. Pal. Gr. 404 (fol. 73–101) descriptus in Henrici Stevensoni sen. catalogo (Romae 1886) [read 1885], p. 263.'
57. [↑](#) The colophon says: ὑπὸ ἀνδρέου δαρμαρίου τοῦ ἐπιδουρίου εἴληφε τέρμα ἐν τῷ ἔτει ,αφοθ'. H.

Stevenson, *Catalogus Palat.* 1885. That is, the codex was completed in A.D. 1579.

58. ↑ Pacius' MSS. were purchased by Peiresc, who gave some of them to Holste. It would be natural that the Marinus should be one of those that were so given, as Holste was intending to publish the complete text (see p. 1) and writing to Peiresc about it. Was it by this channel that it got into the Palatine collection?
59. ↑ Described by C. Schenkl, after R. Schöll, *Xen. Studien*, iii. 72; by Prof. W. W. Baker, *Trans. Am. Phil. Ass.* xliii, 1912, item xi. See also Stich, *Rhein. Mus.* xxxvi, p 175.
60. ↑ Stephanus Gradius, Ragusinus, appointed by Innocent XI Primarius et Major Custos of the Vatican Library 14 Jan. 1682, died 7 May 1683. Cardinal Barberini, who used the MS. for his Italian version, says: 'conservato nella Biblioteca e musco del nobile nō meno che dotto Signore Abbate Gradi.'
61. ↑ Dated s. xv, in Marchant's edition of *Xen. Hiero, Agesilaus, Lac. Pol., Vect., Ath. Pol.* Closely related to Vat. Gr. 1335, s. x vel xi.
62. ↑ First published by K. Wotke in *Wien. Stud.* x. 175, 1888. See C. Bailey, *Epicurus*, p. 375.
63. ↑ Hobein, *Maximus Tyrius*, Leipsic, 1910, p. xi, note 1, p. xl. It is remarkable that, in the first decade of the XIXth century, no one working on Marcus Antoninus appears to have realized that Vat. Gr. 1950 was then in Paris. See the list of manuscripts taken from Rome to Paris, *Recensio ms. cod.* Leipsic, 1803, p. 76.

64. ↑ Schenkl, *M. Antoninus*, 1913, Praef. p. xi says *De Animalium Incessu*, but in fact it is *De Motu*, beginning περὶ ζώων κινήσεως.
65. ↑ First collated by Werfer, *Act. Phil. Monac.* iii. 3, 1822, p. 417; described by Voltzx and Cronert, *Centralbl. für Bibl.* xiv, p. 558.
66. ↑ Collated by Cramer, *Anecd. Graec. Paris.* vol. i, p. 173, 1839; H. Schenkl, *Eran. Vindob.* p. 163, 1893. I have taken Sch.'s abbreviations, ed. mai. p. xxxiii, using his descriptions and Leopold's, Oxon. 1908, p. v. I have collated Cv and Co, and referred to Cramer for Cπ and to Sch.'s and Leop.'s app. crit. for the rest of C.
67. ↑ V 6 was described, with a collation by Weyland, *Berl. phsl. Woch.* 1914, col. 1180, subsequently to the issue of H. Schenkl's text.
68. ↑ For these X excerpts, I have followed Leop.'s and Schenkl's app. crit., with Weyland's report of V 6. See Stich, *adnot. crit. ad M. Anton.* Program, Zweibrücken, 1880–1.
69. ↑ H. J. Polak in *Hermes*, xxi, p. 321, 1886.
70. ↑ M. Ant. i. 17. 4 and vi. 55 in Canterus, *Novarum Lectionum*, lib. 7, ch. 1.
71. ↑ He calls the *Meditations* 'Eclogae', Casp. Barthii, *Adversariorum Commentariorum Libri LX*, Francofurti, MDCXXIV, cf. p. lxi below.
72. ↑ See especially Justus Lipsius, *Opera*, vol. iv, *Vesaliae*, 1675.
73. ↑ Zanta, *La Renaissance du Stoïcisme au XVIe Siècle*, Paris, 1914.

74. ↑ *M. Antonini Ro: Imp: De Vita Sua Lib. xii ad animi tranquillitatem fortuna tam secunda quam adversa parandam perquam utiles, etc. Argentinae, MDXC. See Schenkl, ed. mai., Praefatio, p. xxviii.*
75. ↑ *Marci Antonini Imperatoris et Philosophi, de Vita sua Libri xii. Graece et Latine. Opus ad mores insigne, nunc primum Latinae interpretationis e regione Graeci contextus et numerorum ac distinctionis ad nouas quasque sentential appositione illustratum. Accessit Marini Proclus item Graece et Latine. Lugduni . . . MDCXXVI.*
76. ↑ *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus the Roman Emperor, his Meditations concerning Himselfe: treating of a naturall Mans happinesse; Wherein it consisteth, and of the meanes to attain unto it. Translated out of the Originall Grecke; with Notes by Meric Casaubon, B. of D. and Prebendarie of Christ Church, Canterbury . . . London MDCXXXIV. Republished 1635, 1663, 1673, 1692. Reprinted in briefer form, Dent, 1898, edited by W. H. D. Rouse, London, 1900, 1906.*
77. ↑ Especially the translation of i. 17. 35 viii. 7 fin.; vii. 24; v. 36; vii. 75. The criticism of the last two instances is not so happy as that of the remainder.
78. ↑ *Marci Antonini Imperatoris De Seipso et Ad Seipsum libri xii. Guil. Xylander Augustanus Graece et Latine primus edidit: Nunc vero, Xylandri Versionem locis plurimis emendavit et novam fecit: in Antonini libros Notas et Emendationces adjecit Mericus Casaubonus Is. F. . . . Londini, MDCXLIII.*

79. ↑ Gataker declined in the year 1644 the offer made to him by the Earl of Manchester to become Master of Trinity.
80. ↑ *Marci Antonini Imperatoris de rebus suis, sive de eis quae ad se pertinere censebat, Libri xii, Locis haud paucis repurgati, suppleti, restituti: Versione insuper Latina nova; Lectionibus item variis, Locis-que parallelis, ad marginem adjectis; ac Commentario perpetuo, expiicati atque illustrati; Studio opera-que Thomae Gatakeri Londinatis. Cantabrigiae . . . Anno Dom: MDCLII.*
81. ↑ He is still sometimes cited, e.g. in Galen, *De aff. dign.*, ed. de Boer, Leipsic and Berlin, 1937, Testimonia, p. 22.
82. ↑ For instance, the omission of the word 'boni', iv. 42, stood until the Oxford edition of 1704.
83. ↑ In Brunet, in the Bodl. written catalogue, and elsewhere, R.I. is said to be Ibbetson. Bywater, however, informed Crossley that the initials stand for R. Ives or Ivies. I have failed to confirm this.
84. ↑ Unfortunately this text is that of Xylander's second edition; the translation is Gataker's, but his marginal emendations of the Greek are not printed.
85. ↑ Lucas Holste (Holstenius) of Hamburg, created Primarius et Major Custos of the Vatican Library by Innocent X, 2 September 1653, died 2 February 1661. There is a most interesting account of his life and labours by Boissonade in Michaud's *Biographie Universelle*, Milton visited him when staying in Rome.

86. ↑ Writing to Peiresc from Aquae Sextiae, he says: 'Procli Vitam Lugduni editam cum Antonino de Vitae Suae Officiis in transitu mihi comparavi . . . meum exemplar (sc. Marini) dimidio auctius est; 'he intends to publish Marinus: 'sequetur deinceps Vita Procli auctore Marino media (leg. dimidia) parte auctior quam hactenus edita fuit' Boissonade, *Lucae Holstenii Epistolae*, p. 85, p. 47. His proposal is dated Idibus Maiis 1636: 'Quae de . . . Paraenesion M. Aurelii Imp. nova editione Graeco-Latina tecum egi patruis tuis significabis, quibussi consilium hoc probetur, singulos ego auctores diligentissime emendatos, quod quidem tu oculata fide testari poteris, subpeditabo' (to Lud. Elzevir, from Rome), Meursii, *Op.* vol. xi, p. 599 F, ed. 1762, Boissonade, l.c., p. 267. In a letter to Donio, Holste mentions: 'li miei Geographi e Filosofi antichi, Hierocle, M. Antonino, Arriano', Boissonade l.c., p. 307.
87. ↑ Med. Laurent, lix. 44; this is made certain, *inter alia*, by his citing ὥστε xi. 9, a variant which is only in L 4 and P 6.
88. ↑ Boissonade, *Marini Vita Procli*, 1814 Praef. p. xiii.
89. ↑ His mode of working here, although on a smaller scale, resembles very closely what is described of his annotation of Arcerius' edition of the *Life of Pythagoras*, see L. Heubner, *Iamblichi De Vita Pythagorsca liber*, Leipsic, 1937, p. xii. Holste evidently intended to publish a commentary on

Iamblichus' Life and to combine it with Marinus'*Proclus*.

90. ↑ Franciscus Barberinus Florentine 'creatus S.R.E. Bibliothecarius ab Urbano VIII, Kal. Jul. 1626.' He died 10 December 1679.
91. ↑ *I Dodici Librs di Marco Aurelso Antonino Imperadore di sè stesso ed a sè stesso* Rome, 1675. The translation is anonymous but is known to be by the Cardinal. There is a copy in the Codrington Library, at All Souls College, Oxford.
92. ↑ Barberini says: 'conservato nella Bibliotheca e museo del nobile nô meno che dotto Signore Abbate Gradi'.
93. ↑ p. lxi.
94. ↑ *Pugillaria Imperatoris* M. A. Antonini, Graece scripta, disjecta membratim et . . . restituta pro ratione argumentorum. Sequitur Interpretatio Gatakeri Londinatis similiter ordinata. Curante . . . Johanne-Petro de Joly, Parisiis, MDCCLXXIV.
95. ↑ *Marci Antonini Imperatoris Commentariorum*, quos ipse sibi scripsit, libri duodecimo Graeca ad codicum manuscriptorum fidem emendavit, notationem varietatis lectionum et interpretationem latinam castigatam adjunxit . . . J. M. Schultz, Slesvici, MDCCCII.
96. ↑ ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΑ ΙΒ' . . . ΕΝ ΠΑΡΙΣΙΟΙΣ ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ Ι.Μ. ΕΒΕΡΑΡΤΟΥ 1816. The preface is signed Α. ΚΟΡΑΗΣ.

97. [↑](#) ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ ΠΑΛΑΙ ΜΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΠΩΜΑΙΟΥ Δυναστευοντος δ'ετι νυν, καὶ εἰσαεῖ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ . . . ΤΑ ΕΙΣ ἘΑΥΤΟΝ, C. L. PORCHER, N. Eboraci U.S. A.D. 1861 A. Liberatae Reip. 1. The pseudonym stands for C(apel) L(offt) Stoicus. Here are two of his notes: (on ὥσπερ τὰς ἄλλας . . . φύσις viii. 35) ως περὶ τὰς ἀλλὰς δυναμεις εσκευαστο τῶν λογικῶν σχεδον οἷον ἢ τῶν ἀλογων φύσις: Chaotica haec critici, diu sed frustra, velut caeci Cyclopes in caverna ψηλαφητι tentabant. Nimia jamdudum; ad nauseam usque; quid plura? Habes quae arida nuper ossa in corpus verum vivumque constituta. Again (on ἐὰν ὑπὸ ἄλλου γένηται τὰ δίκαια x. 13): Deliri est delira proponere. Itaque ego ψεγῆται, quod et prope, et spero probe. (This has been accepted.) Schenkl writes: κρίνεται Lofft; ψεγῆται idem sec. Rend, (in Loftii editione non adparet), Adn. suppl. p. 189. Possibly Lofft changed his mind in the reprint of 1863, which Schenkl used (Praef. p. xxx) and which I have not seen; it was lent him by Dr. Rendall.
98. [↑](#) This is the familiar Teubner edition, to which Schenkl 's text of 1913 succeeded.
99. [↑](#) That this may not seem an easy generality, see ἐπὶ τοῦ γρίφους for ἐπὶ τοὺς συγγραφεῖς i. 17. 9; καὶ περὶ τῶν ἰδίων ἦτοι v. 7; ἐγρήγορσις x. 38.
100. [↑](#) *Epictetus*, 1894, but based on work done at Oxford in 1881; *Marcus Aurelius*, 1913.
101. [↑](#) *Hypothèses critiques sur les Pensées de Marc-Aurèle*, i-v, 1920–2, A. I. Trannoy.

102. ↑ J. Wickham Legg, *A Bibliography of the Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* 1908, reprinted 1910.
103. ↑ George Long, *The Thoughts of the Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus*, 1862; revised 1869; included, with Matthew Arnold's essay, in the York Library, George Bell, 1905. This translation has been of great assistance to me by its scholarly accuracy.
104. ↑ 'Quand je considère la petite durée de ma vie, absorbée dans l'éternité précédant et suivant, 205 Brunschvicg', see M. Ant. iv. 3.
105. ↑ See *Friedrich der Grosse als Philosoph*, Ed. Zeller, 1886, pp. 35 sq., 73, 82; and *Anmerkungen* 15, 116 c, 118, 120 (where are references to the King's correspondence), 174.
106. ↑ President Roosevelt seems to have been thinking of the *Meditations* when he said: 'Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds. They have within themselves the power to become free at any moment.' Address at the celebration of the Pan-American Union's 49th Birthday, 14 April 1939.
107. ↑ Hastings Crossley, *The Fourth Book of the Meditations &c.* 1882.
108. ↑ *Pensées de Marc-Aurèle*, Traduction d'Auguste Couat, éditée par Paul Fournier, Bordeaux, 1904.
109. ↑ Only four of the eight original books of Arrian's *Memoirs of Epictetus* now survive, with the *Manual*, which purports to be a digest by Arrian himself. They depend upon one manuscript, the XIIth-century one in the Bodleian Library. To read the *Memoirs* is to be

convinced that they are no longer in their original form and order.

110. ↑ *Praeloquium*.

111. ↑ 'These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out.' *Proverbs*, heading of ch. 25 R.V.

112. ↑ Contrast this with what Gataker says elsewhere: 'Verum ejusmodi quam plurima in scripto illo insigni passim est deprehendere, partim misere divulsa, partim male coalita, alia luxata et loco dimota, alia superflua et redundantia, alia manca et mutilata, alia in mentem vel nullam vel perversam vel adversam etiam depravata.' *Adversaria miscell.* Utrecht, 1698, p. 564a. Contrast also Saumaise: 'Haud alium puto autorem ex antiquitate Graeca corruptiorem ad nos, injuria temporum, fortean etiam hominum, qui eum interpolarent, transmissum. Ubique hiatus et lacunae, quae tamen solidum mentiantur. Transpositiones etiam multis locis commissae ab hominibus, uti videtur, sciolis, qui sententias plerumque minutis punctiunculis, Stoico more, signatas non capiebant.' *Epistula ad Gat. missa* cited by Gat. in his *Praeloquium*.

113. ↑ Caspar Barthius, *Adversaria*, 1624, Lib. i, ch. 11, pp. 22–4, cf. pp. 2412–18. An emendation (he says it was made in youth) of viii. 3 is: οὐ μὲν γὰρ εἶδον τὰ πράγματα καὶ τὰ ἡγεμονικά· ἦν αὐτῶν ταῦτα πρόνοια καὶ αἱ ὕλαι· ἐκεῖ δὲ ὅσων δουκεία πεσών l.c. p. 23.

114. ↑ p. xxii, note i, supra.
115. ↑ L. C. T. Rousseau, *Morale de Marc-Aurèle, Empereur Romain*, Paris, An. vii (1798–9), has eight chapters, divided into twenty-four sections. There is also *Histoire philosophique de Marc-Aurèle*, avec les pensées de ce prince présentées dans un ordre nouveau . . . par feu M. Ripault, Paris 1830.
116. ↑ *A moi-même*, Paris, 1926, par Gustave Loisel. M. Loisel has also written a popular, but careful, life of the Emperor.
117. ↑ *Marci Antonini libri xii*, Leipsic, 1729; Introductionem ad philosophiam stoicam ex mente M. Antonini praemisit Ioan. Franciscus Buddeus . . . Ienensis.
118. ↑ Some idea of M. Loisel's reconstruction may be got from the close of his new Book xii. His order is: xi. 3; x. 29; ix. 21; xii. 23; vi. 28; xii. 35; viii. 58; vii. 18; iv. 5; xii. 36; iv. 14; viii. 18; vi. 10.
119. ↑ Braune *Marc Aurels Meditationen in ihrer Einheit und Bedeutung*, Altenburg, 1878.
120. ↑ W. Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*, vol. i, ch. xii, p. 219. Dr. Rendall refers tacitly to Pater in *M. Aurelius Antoninus To Himself*, 1898, Introduction, p. ciii. The ancient references to the lecture are *Hist. Aug.* vi. 3. 6–7 ('per triduum disputavit'), S. Aurelius Victor (*circa* A.D. 360) *Caes.* 16. 9. The lecture in Pater would take 20 minutes in delivery.
121. ↑ *Journey to the Hebrides*, ed. Chapman, p. 184.
122. ↑ In his edition in the Budé series, Introduction, p. vii.

123. ↑ Simplicius, *Comm, in Manuale Epict.* ed. Schw. p. 208. ed. Heinse p. 128 c.
124. ↑ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀνωτέρω τῶν πρὸ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν συναφές Ed. princ. p. 83. The MS. P cod. had Πλατωνικόν, in the text before ch. 35, and it will be seen that this and other glosses appear in the text of the first edition. Not all are in A.
125. ↑ e.g. ii. 15; iv. 10; viii. 4; xii. 16, 21, 22.
126. ↑ e.g. in i. 15: περὶ ὧν λέγοι. ὅτι οὕτως φρονεῖ καὶ περὶ ὧν πράττωι. ὅτι οὐ δικαίως πράττει as if separate dicta.
127. ↑ The order in Mo 2 is vii. 23, 22, 18, 7; vi. 35, 43, 44 &c.
128. ↑ Schenkl, *Berl. ph. W.* 1916, col. 33; *Wiener Studien*, xxxiv, 1912; Breithaupt, *De M. Aurelii Ant. Commentariis Quaestiones selectae*, Göttingen, 1913; Haines, *J. of Phil.* xxxiii, 1914, pp. 278–95.
129. ↑ τὰ ὑπομνημάτια iii. 14; τοῖς Ἐπικτητείοις ὑπομνήμασιν i. 7. 3; γραψάμενος ὑπομνήματα εἰς ὕστερον ἑμαυτῷ διαφυλάξαι Arr. *Epict. Proem.* 2; δι' ὑπομνημάτων ἔχειν Galen v. 1.
130. ↑ Some have supposed that his freedman Chryseros may have been charged with this duty. All we know is that Chryseros wrote an annalistic history of Rome.
131. ↑ *Le Recueil des Pensées du B. Guigue*, Dom André Wilmart, Paris, 1936. Guigue was previously accessible in a rearrangement in twenty chapters, selected from the entire work, Louvain, 1546

(Wilmart, op.c. Preface, p. 41). Gataker more than once cites this edition to illustrate Marcus.

132. ↑ op.c. Preface, p. 10 and p. 13.
133. ↑ What Dr. Rendall says of Marcus, op.c. Introd., p. civ, is unconsciously very close to Dom Wilmart's description of Guigue's aim and manner.
134. ↑ Browne's Preface to *Rel. Med.*; cf. his Letter to Sir K. Digby, 3 March 1642.
135. ↑ In connexion with what has been said of the editing of Marcus' book, compare what is recorded of Frederick the Great's posthumous verses: 'Lorsque le Roi eut mis la dernière main aux pièces que nous avons nommées *Poésies posthumes*, il fit présent à son lecteur, Henri de Catt, du manuscrit destiné à l'impression . . . ce manuscrit se composait de trois cahiers, écrits par le secrétaire et chargés de corrections de la main du poète' *Œuvres poétiques de Frédéric II*, 1849, Tome III, Avertissement, p. ix.

ERRATA

VOLUME I

- p. 22, app. crit. *For* 1–26 D *read* 1–25 D
- p. 52, app. crit. *For* 6–29 D *read* 1–26 D
- p. 60, app. crit. *For* 1–13 D *read* 1–11 D
- p. 65, 1. 24. *For* proportion, only so you will not be dejected if *read* proportion;
only so will you not be dejected, if
- p. 79, 1. 16. *For* too. *read* too.'
- p. 132, 1. 19. *Delete* 42
- p. 132, 1. 20. *Insert* 42
- p. 132, 1. 15, *Test. For* 1. 90, *read* 1. 93,
- p. 136, 1. 13, *Test. For* χρήζουσι *read* χρήζουσιν
- p. 238, 1. 6. *For* ἰλέως *read* ἴλεως
- p. 405, 1. 3. *For* shell *read* cell

SIGLA

P = editio princeps (Xylandri ed. prior) ex codice hodie deperdito Tiguri a.d. MDLIX⁰ impressa.

P cod. = eiusdem codicis verba in notis Xyl. servata.

A = cod. Vaticanus Gr. 1950, saec. xv.

D = cod. Darmstadtinus 2773 (cod. Creuzeri), saec. xiv vel xv, excerpta continens.

C = codd. excerpta c libris i-iv continentes.

Mo 1 = cod. Monacensis Gr. 323, saec. xvi, excerpta continens.

Mo 2 = cod. Monacensis Gr. 529, olim Augustanus, saec. xiv, excerpta classis X continens (cod. Hoeschelianus apud Cas.: B apud Schenkl).

X = codd. excerpta e libris iv. 49–xii. 34 continentes.

Consensus codicum nullo signo addito exhibetur.

Bas. = Xyl. editio altera, Basileae a.d. MDLXVIII⁰ impressa.

Xyl. versio Latina uncinis rotundis inclusa citatur.

Testimonia ex Suida vel aliunde petita: loci auctorum parallel, ad calcem textus exhibentur.

Foliorum cod. A series (341 r-392 v) in textu nota |, inter testimonia verbo primo indicatur.

Index compendiorum p. lxxx datur.

Footnotes

ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΥ
ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ
ΤΑ ΕΙΣ ΕΑΥΤΟΝ

THE MEDITATIONS OF THE
EMPEROR
MARCUS ANTONINUS

BOOK I

1. From my grandfather Verus: the lessons of noble character and even temper.
2. From my father's reputation and my memory of him: modesty and manliness.
3. 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.
4. From my mother's grandfather: not to have attended public schools but enjoyed good teachers at home, and to have learned the lesson that on things like these it is a duty to spend liberally.
5. From my tutor: not to become a partisan of the Green jacket or the Blue in the races, nor of Thracian or Samnite gladiators; to bear pain and be content with little; to work with my own hands, to mind my own business, and to be slow to listen to slander.
6. From Diognetus: to avoid idle enthusiasms; to disbelieve the professions of sorcerers and impostors about incantations and exorcism of spirits and the like; not to cock-fight or to be excited about such sports; to put up with plain-speaking and to become familiar with philosophy; to

hear the lectures first of Baccheius, then of Tandasis and Marcian, in boyhood to write essays and to aspire to the camp-bed and skin coverlet and the other things which are part of the Greek training.

7. From Rusticus: to get an impression of need for reform and treatment of character; not to run off into zeal for rhetoric, writing on speculative themes, discoursing on edifying texts, exhibiting in fanciful colours the ascetic or the philanthropist. To avoid oratory, poetry, and preciousness; not to parade at home in ceremonial costume or to do things of that kind; to write letters in the simple style, like his own from Sinuessa to my mother. To be easily recalled to myself and easily reconciled with those who provoke and offend, as soon as they are willing to meet me. To read books accurately and not be satisfied with superficial thinking about things or agree hurriedly with those who talk round a subject. To have made the acquaintance of the *Discourses* of Epictetus, of which he allowed me to share a copy of his own.

8. From Apollonius: moral freedom, not to expose oneself to the insecurity of fortune; to look to nothing else, even for a little while, except to reason. To be always the same, in sharp attacks of pain, in the loss of a child, in long illnesses. To see clearly in a living example that a man can be at once very much in earnest and yet able to relax.

Not to be censorious in exposition; and to see a man who plainly considered technical knowledge and ease in communicating general truths as the least of his good gifts. The lesson how one ought to receive from friends what are esteemed favours, neither lowering oneself on their account, nor returning them tactlessly.

9. From Sextus: graciousness, and the pattern of a household governed by its head, and the notion of life according to Nature. Dignity without pretence, solicitous consideration for friends, tolerance of amateurs and of those whose opinions have no ground in science.

A happy accommodation to every man, so that not only was his conversation more agreeable than any flattery, but he excited the greatest reverence at that very time in the very persons about him. Certainty of grasp, and method in the discovery and arrangement of the principles necessary to human life.

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. To praise without noise, to be widely learned without display.

10. From Alexander the grammarian: to avoid fault-finding and not to censure in a carping spirit any who employ an exotic phrase, a solecism, or harsh expression, but oneself to use, neatly and precisely, the correct phrase, by way of

answer or confirmation or handling of the actual question—the thing, not its verbal expression—or by some other equally happy reminder.

11. 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.

12. From Alexander the Platonist: seldom and only when absolutely necessary to say to any one or write in a letter: 'I am too busy'; nor by such a turn of phrase to evade continually the duties incident to our relations to those who live with us, on the plea of 'present circumstances'.

13. From Catulus: not to neglect a friend's remonstrance, even if he may be unreasonable in his remonstrance, but to endeavour to restore him to his usual temper. Hearty praise, too, of teachers, like what is recorded of Athenodotus and Domitius, and genuine love towards children.

14. From Severus: love of family, love of truth, and love of justice. To have got by his help to understand Thræsea, Helvidius, Cato, Dio, Brutus, and 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. From him, too, consistency and uniformity in regard for philosophy; to do good, to communicate liberally, to be hopeful; to believe in the affection of friends

and to use no concealment towards those who incurred his censure, and that his friends had no necessity to conjecture his wishes or the reverse, but he was open with them.

15. From Maximus: mastery of self and vacillation in nothing; cheerfulness in all circumstances and especially in illness. A happy blend of character, mildness with dignity, readiness to do without complaining what is given to be done. To see how in his case every one believed 'he really thinks what he says, and what he does, he does without evil intent'; not to be surprised or alarmed; 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. To be generous, forgiving, void of deceit. To give the impression of inflexible rectitude rather than of one who is corrected. The fact, too, that no one would ever have dreamt that he was looked down on by him or would have endured to conceive himself to be his superior. To be agreeable also (in social life).

16. From my father (by adoption): gentleness and unshaken resolution in judgements taken after full examination; no vainglory about external honours; love of work and perseverance; readiness to hear those who had anything to contribute to the public advantage; the desire to award to every man according to desert without partiality; the experience that knew where to tighten the rein, where to relax. Prohibition of unnatural practices, social tact and permission to his suite not invariably to be present at his

banquets nor to attend his progress from Rome, as a matter of obligation, and always to be found the same by those who had failed to attend him through engagements. Exact scrutiny in council and patience; not that he was avoiding investigation, satisfied with first impressions. An inclination to keep his friends, and nowhere fastidious or the victim of manias but his own master in everything, and his outward mien cheerful. His long foresight and ordering of the merest trifle without making scenes. The check in his reign put upon organized applause and every form of lip-service; his unceasing watch over the needs of the empire and his stewardship of its resources; his patience under criticism by individuals of such conduct. No superstitious fear of divine powers nor with man any courting of the public or obsequiousness or cultivation of popular favour, but temperance in all things and firmness; nowhere want of taste or search for novelty.

In the things which contribute to life's comfort, where Fortune was lavish to him, use without display and at the same time without apology, so as to take them when they were there quite simply and not to require them when they were absent. The fact that no one would have said that he was a sophist, an impostor, or a pedant, but a ripe man, an entire man, above flattery, able to preside over his own and his subjects' business.

Besides all this the inclination to respect genuine followers of philosophy, but towards the other sort no tendency to

reproach nor on the other hand to be hoodwinked by them; affability, too, and humour, but not to excess. Care of his health in moderation, not as one in love with living nor with an eye to personal appearance nor on the other hand neglecting it, but so far as by attention to self to need doctoring or medicine and external applications for very few ailments.

A very strong point, to give way without jealousy to those who had some particular gift like literary expression or knowledge of the Civil Law or customs or other matters, even sharing their enthusiasm that each might get the reputation due to his individual excellence. Acting always according to the tradition of our forefathers, yet not endeavouring that this regard for tradition should be noticed. No tendency, moreover, to chop and change, but a settled course in the same places and the same practices. After acute attacks of headache, fresh and vigorous at once for his accustomed duties; and not to have many secrets, only very few and by way of exception, and those solely because of matters of State. Discretion and moderation alike in the provision of shows, in carrying out public works, in donations to the populace, and so on; the behaviour in fact of one who has an eye precisely to what it is his duty to do, not to the reputation which attends the doing.

He was not one who bathed at odd hours, not fond of building, no connoisseur of the table, of the stuff and colour of his dress, of the beauty of his slaves. His costume was

brought to Rome from his country house at Lorium; his manner of life at Lanuvium; the way he treated the tax-collector who apologized at Tusculum, and all his behaviour of that sort. Nowhere harsh, merciless, or blustering, nor so that you might ever say 'to fever heat', but everything nicely calculated and divided into its times, as by a leisured man; no bustle, complete order, strength, consistency. What is recorded of Socrates would exactly fit him: he could equally be abstinent from or enjoy what many are too weak to abstain from and too self-indulgent in enjoying. To be strong, to endure, and in either case to be sober belong to the man of perfect and invincible spirit, like the spirit of Maximus in his illness.

17. From the gods: to have had good grandparents, good parents, a good sister, good masters, good intimates, kinsfolk, friends, almost everything; and that in regard to not one of them did I stumble into offence, although I had the kind of disposition which might in some circumstances have led me to behave thus; but it was the goodness of the gods that no conjunction of events came about which was likely to expose my weakness. That I was not brought up longer than I was with my grandfather's second wife, that I preserved the flower of my youth and did not play the man before my time, but even delayed a little longer. That my station in life was under a governor 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 that a prince must perform on behalf of the public. That I met with so good a brother, able by his character not only to rouse me to care of myself but at the same time to hearten me by respect and natural affection; that my children were not deficient in mind nor deformed in body; that I made no further progress in eloquence and poetry and those other pursuits wherein, had I seen myself progressing along an easy road, I should perhaps have become absorbed. That I made haste to advance my masters to the honours which they appeared to covet and did not put them off with hopes that, as they were still young, I should do it later on. To have got to know Apollonius, Rusticus, Maximus. To have pictured to myself clearly and repeatedly what life in obedience to Nature really is, so that, so far as concerns the gods and communications from the other world, and aids and inspirations, nothing hinders my living at once in obedience to Nature, though I still come somewhat short of this by my own fault and by not observing the reminders and almost the instructions of the gods. That my body has held out so well in a life like mine; that I did not touch Benedicta or Theodotus, but that even in later years when I experienced the passion of love I was cured; that though I was often angry with Rusticus I never went to extremes for which I should have been sorry; that though my mother was fated to die young, she still spent her last years with me. That whenever I wanted to help any

one in poverty or some other necessity I was never told that I could not afford it, and that I did not myself fall into the same necessity so as to take help from another; that my wife is what she is, so obedient, so affectionate, and so simple; that I was well provided with suitable tutors for my children. That I was granted assistance in dreams, especially how to avoid spitting blood and fits of giddiness, and the answer of the oracle at Caieta: 'Even as thou shalt employ thyself'; and that, although in love with philosophy, I did not meet with any sophist or retire to disentangle literary works or syllogisms or busy myself with problems 'in the clouds'. For all these things require 'the gods to help and Fortune's hand'.

BOOK II

Written among the Quadi on the river Gran. I^[1]

1. Say to yourself in the early morning: I shall meet to-day inquisitive, ungrateful, violent, treacherous, envious, uncharitable men. All these things have come upon them through ignorance of real good and ill. But I, because I have seen that the nature of good is the right, and of ill the wrong, and that the nature of the man himself who does wrong is akin to my own (not of the same blood and seed, but partaking with me in mind, that is in a portion of divinity), I can neither be harmed by any of them, for no man will involve me in wrong, nor can I be angry with my kinsman or hate him; for we have come into the world to work together, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of upper and lower teeth. To work against one another therefore is to oppose Nature, and to be vexed with another or to turn away from him is to tend to antagonism.

2. This whatever it is that I am, is flesh and vital spirit and the governing self. Disdain the flesh: blood and bones and network, a twisted skein of nerves, veins, arteries. Consider also what the vital spirit is: a current of air, not even

continuously the same, but every hour being expelled and sucked in again. There is then a third part, the governing self. Put away your books, be distracted no longer, they are not your portion. Rather, as if on the point of death, reflect like this: 'you are an old man, suffer this governing part of you no longer to be in bondage, no longer to be a puppet pulled by selfish impulse, no longer to be indignant with what is allotted in the present or to suspect what is allotted in the future.'

3. The work of the gods is full of Providence: the work of Fortune is not divorced from Nature or the spinning and winding of the threads ordained by Providence. All flows from that other world; and there is, besides, necessity and the wellbeing of the whole universe, whereof you are a part. Now to every part of Nature that is good which the nature of the Whole brings, and which preserves that nature; and the whole world is preserved as much by the changes of the compound bodies as by the changes of the elements which compose those bodies. Let this be sufficient for you, these be continually your doctrines. But put away your thirst for books, that so you may not die murmuring, but truly reconciled and grateful from your heart to the gods.

4. Remember how long you have been putting off these things, and how many times the gods have given you days of grace, and yet you do not use them. Now is it high time to perceive the kind of Universe whereof you are a part and the nature of the governor of the Universe from whom you

subsist as an effluence, and that the term of your time is circumscribed, and that unless you use it to attain calm of mind, time will be gone and you will be gone and the opportunity to use it will not be yours again.

5. Each hour be minded, valiantly as becomes a Roman and a man, to do what is to your hand, with precise . . . and unaffected dignity, natural love, freedom and justice; and to give yourself repose from every other imagination. And so you will, if only you do each act as though it were your last, freed from every random aim, from wilful turning away from the directing Reason, from pretence, self-love and displeasure with what is allotted to you. You see how few things a man need master in order to live a smooth and godfearing life; for the gods themselves will require nothing more of him who keeps these precepts.

6. You are doing yourself violence, violence, my soul; and you will have no second occasion to do yourself honour. Brief is the life of each of us, and this of yours is nearly ended, and yet you do not reverence yourself, but commit your well-being to the charge of other men's souls.

7. Do things from outside break in to distract you? Give yourself a time of quiet to learn some new good thing and cease to wander out of your course. But, when you have done that, be on your guard against a second kind of wandering. For those who are sick to death in life, with no mark on which they direct every impulse or in general

every imagination, are triflers, not in words only but also in their deeds.

8. Men are not easily seen to be brought into evil case by failure to consider what passes in another's soul; but they who do not read aright the motions of their own soul are bound to be in evil case.

9. Always remember the following: what the nature of the Whole is; what my own nature; the relation of this nature to that; what kind of part it is of what kind of Whole; and that no man can hinder your saying and doing at all times what is in accordance with that Nature whereof you are a part.

10. Like a true philosopher Theophrastus says, when comparing, as men commonly do compare, various faults, that errors of appetite are graver than errors of temper. For clearly one who loses his temper is turning away from Reason with a kind of pain and inward spasm; whereas he who offends through appetite is the victim of pleasure and is clearly more vicious in a way and more effeminate in his wrong-doing. Rightly then and in a truly philosophic spirit Theophrastus said that an offence attended with pleasure involves greater censure than one attended with pain. And, generally, the latter resembles more a man who was originally wronged and so is forced by pain to lose his temper; the other has begun it himself and has been impelled to do wrong, carried away by appetite to do what he does.

11. In the conviction that it is possible you may depart from life at once, act and speak and think in every case accordingly. But to leave the company of men is nothing to fear, if gods exist; for they would not involve you in ill. If, however, they do not exist or if they take no care for man's affairs, why should I go on living in a world void of gods, or void of providence? But they do exist, and they do care for men's lives, and they have put it entirely in a man's power not to fall into real ills; for the rest, if anything were an ill, they would have provided also for this, that it may be in every man's power not to fall into it; (and how could what does not make a man worse make his life worse?)[2] But the nature of the Whole would not have winked at these things either out of ignorance or because (though it knew of them) it had not the power to guard against them or to put them right; neither would it have made so vast an error, from want of power or skill, as to permit good and ill to befall indifferently, both good and bad men equally. Now death, and life, good report and evil report, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty, these all befall men, good and bad alike, equally, and are themselves neither right nor wrong:[2] they are therefore neither good nor ill.

12. How all things are vanishing swiftly, bodies themselves in the Universe and the memorials of them in Time; what is the character of all the things of sense, and most of all those which attract by the bait of pleasure or terrify by the threat of pain or are shouted abroad by vanity, how cheap, contemptible, soiled, corruptible, and mortal:—these are for

the faculty of mind to consider. To consider too what kind of men those are whose judgements and voices confer honour and dishonour; what it is to die, and that if a man looks at it by itself and by the separating activity of thought strips off all the images associated with death, he will come to judge it to be nothing else but Nature's handiwork. But if a man fears Nature's handiwork he is a mere child; and yet death is not merely Nature's handiwork, but also her well-being. To consider also how mortal man touches God and through what organ of himself, and when that part of him is in what sort of condition.

13. Nothing is more wretched than the man who goes round and round everything, and, as Pindar says, 'searches the bowels of the earth', and seeks by conjecture to sound the minds of his neighbours, but fails to perceive that it is enough to abide with the Divinity that is within himself and to do Him genuine service. Now that service is to keep Him unsullied by passion, trifling, and discontent with what comes from God or men. What comes from the Gods is to be revered because of excellence; what comes from men is dear because they are of one kindred with himself; pitiful too sometimes, humanly speaking, by reason of their ignorance of good and ill. This disablement is more grievous than that which robs the eyes of the power to distinguish light from darkness.

14. Even were you about to live three thousand years or thrice ten thousand, nevertheless remember this, that no one

loses any other life than this which he is living, nor lives any other than this which he is losing. Thus the longest and the shortest come to the same thing. For the present is equal for all, and what is passing is therefore equal: thus what is being lost is proved to be barely a moment. For a man could lose neither past nor future; how can one rob him of what he has not got? Always remember, then, these two things: one, that all things from everlasting are of the same kind, and are in rotation; and it matters nothing whether it be for a hundred years or for two hundred or for an infinite time that a man shall behold the same spectacle; the other, that the longest-lived and the soonest to die have an equal loss; for it is the present alone of which either will be deprived, since (as we saw) this is all he has and a man does not lose what he has not got.

15. 'Everything is what you judge it to be.' While the retort made to the Cynic philosopher Monimus is plain enough, plain too is the use of the saying, if one only take the gist of it, so far as it is true.

16. The soul of a man does violence to itself, first and foremost when it becomes so far as in it lies, a separate growth, a blain as it were upon the Universe. For to turn against anything that comes to pass is a separation from Nature, by which the natures of each of the rest are severally comprehended. Secondly, when it turns away from any human being or is swept counter to him, meaning to injure him, as is the case with the natures of those who

are enraged. It violates itself, thirdly, when it is the victim of pleasure or pain; fourthly, when it acts a part, and says or does anything both feignedly and falsely. Fifthly, when, failing to direct any act or impulse of its own upon a mark, it behaves in any matter without a plan or conscious purpose, whereas even the smallest act ought to have a reference to the end. Now the end of reasonable creatures is this: to obey the rule and ordinance of the most venerable of all cities and governments.

17. Of man's life, his time is a point, his existence a flux, his sensation clouded, his body's entire composition corruptible, his vital spirit an eddy of breath, his fortune hard to predict, his fame uncertain. Briefly, all the things of the body, a river; all the things of the spirit, dream and delirium; his life a warfare and a sojourn in a strange land, his after-fame oblivion. What then can be his escort through life? One thing and one thing only, Philosophy. And this is to keep the spirit within him unwronged and unscathed, master of pains and pleasures, doing nothing at random, nothing falsely and with pretence; needing no other to do aught or to leave aught undone; and moreover accepting what befalls it, that is, what is assigned to it, as coming from that other world from which it came itself. And in all things awaiting death, with a mind that is satisfied, counting it nothing else than a release of the elements from which each living creature is composed. Now if there is no hurt to the elements themselves in their ceaseless changing each into other, why should a man apprehend anxiously the

change and dissolution of them all? For this is according to Nature; and no evil is according to Nature.

1. [↑] [1](#) The southern part of Bohemia, where the battle of the 'Thundering legion' was fought. The words are thought to be the title of the second Book, and are so printed here.
2. [↑] [2.02.1](#) These words in brackets should perhaps follow 'neither right nor wrong.'

Footnotes

BOOK III

Written in Carnuntum^[1]

1. We ought to take into account not only the fact that day by day life is being spent and a smaller balance remaining, but this further point also that, should we live longer, it is at least doubtful whether the intellect will hereafter be the same, still sufficient to comprehend events and the speculation which contributes to the understanding alike of things divine and human. For, if the mind begin to decay, there will be no failure of functions like transpiration, nutrition, sense-impression, and desire; but the right employment of ourselves, precision in regard to the related elements of duty, analysis of the indications of sense, to know just whether the time is come to take leave of life, and all questions of the kind which specially require a trained judgement,—these are extinguished before the rest. Accordingly we must press forward, not only because every day we are drawing nearer to death, but also because the apprehension of events and the ability to adapt ourselves to them begin to wane before the end.

2. We must also observe closely points of this kind, that even the secondary effects of Nature's processes possess a sort of grace and attraction. To take one instance, bread when it is being baked breaks open at some places; now even these cracks, which in one way contradict the promise

of the baker's art, somehow catch the eye and stimulate in a special way our appetite for the food. And again figs, when fully mature, gape, and in ripe olives their very approach to decay adds a certain beauty of its own to the fruit. Ears of corn too when they bend downwards, the lion's wrinkled brow, the foam flowing from the boar's mouth, and many other characteristics that are far from beautiful if we look at them in isolation, do nevertheless because they follow from Nature's processes lend those a further ornament and a fascination. And so, if a man has a feeling for, and a deeper insight into the processes of the Universe, there is hardly one but will somehow appear to present itself pleasantly to him, even among mere attendant circumstances. Such a man also will feel no less pleasure in looking at the actual jaws of wild beasts than at the imitations which painters and sculptors exhibit, and he will be enabled to see in an old woman or an old man a kind of freshness and bloom, and to look upon the charms of his own boy slaves with sober eyes. And many such experiences there will be, not convincing to every one but occurring to him and to him alone who has become genuinely familiar with Nature and her works.

3. Hippocrates, after curing many sicknesses, himself fell sick and died. The Chaldean astrologers foretold the death of many persons, then the hour of fate overtook them also. Alexander, Pompeius, and Julius Caesar, after so often utterly destroying whole towns and slaying in the field many myriads of horse and foot, themselves also one day

departed from life. Heraclitus, after many speculations about the fire which should consume the Universe, was waterlogged by dropsy, poulticed himself with cow-dung and died. Vermin killed Democritus; another kind of vermin Socrates. What is the moral? You went on board, you set sail, you have made the port. Step ashore: if to a second life, nothing is void of gods, not even in that other world; but if to unconsciousness, you will cease to suffer pains and pleasures and to be the servant of an earthly vessel as far inferior as that which does it service is superior; for the one is mind and deity, the other clay and gore.

4. Do not waste the balance of life left to you in thoughts about other persons, when you are not referring to some advantage of your fellows—for why do you rob yourself of something else which you might do—,^[2] I mean if you imagine to yourself what so and so is doing, and why; what he is saying or thinking or planning, and every thought of the kind which leads you astray from close watch over your governing self?

Rather you must, in the train of your thoughts, avoid what is merely casual and without purpose, and above all curiosity and malice; you must habituate yourself only to thoughts about which if some one were suddenly to ask: 'What is in your mind now?', you would at once reply, quite frankly, this or that; and so from the answer it would immediately be plain that all was simplicity and kindness, the thoughts of a social being, who disregards pleasurable, or to speak more

generally luxurious imaginings or rivalry of any kind, or envy and suspicion or anything else about which you would blush to put into words that you had it in your head.

A man so minded, putting off no longer to be one of the elect, is surely a priest and minister of gods, employing aright that which is seated within him, which makes the mere mortal to be unstained by pleasures, unscathed by any pain, untouched by any wrong, unconscious of any wickedness; a wrestler in the greatest contest of all, not to be overthrown by any passion; dyed with justice to the core, welcoming with his whole heart all that comes to pass and is assigned to him; seldom and only under some great necessity and for the common good imagining what another person is saying or doing or thinking. For he has only his own work to realize and he keeps in mind continually what is assigned to him from the Whole;—his work he makes perfect, his lot he is convinced is good; for the birth-spirit assigned to every man goes with him and carries him along with it.

Moreover, he remembers that all reasonable beings are akin to himself, and that although to care for all men is in accord with man's nature, he is to cling not to the opinion of all men, but only of men who live in accord with Nature. Indeed, he remembers continually what those who do not so live are like, in their homes and abroad, by night and by day; what manner of men they are, and those with whom they defile themselves. Therefore he takes no account even

of the praise of such men,—men who are not even acceptable to themselves.

5. Do not act unwillingly nor selfishly nor without self-examination, nor with divergent motives. Let no affectation veneer your thinking. Be neither a busy talker, nor a busybody. Moreover let the God within be the guardian of a real man, a man of ripe years, a statesman, a Roman, a magistrate, who has taken his post like one waiting for the Retreat to sound, ready to depart, needing no oath nor any man as witness. And see that you have gladness of face, no need of service from without nor the peace that other men bestow. You should stand upright, not be held upright.

6. If you discover in the life of man something higher than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, and generally speaking than your understanding contented with itself, where it presents you behaving by the rule of right, and satisfied with destiny, in what is assigned to you and is not yours to choose; if, I say, you see something higher than this, turn to it with all your heart and enjoy the supreme good now that it is found. But if nothing higher is revealed than the very divinity seated within you, subordinating your private impulses to itself, examining your thoughts, having withdrawn itself, as Socrates used to say, from the sense-affections, and subordinated itself to the gods and making men its first care; if you find all else to be smaller and cheaper than this, give no room to anything else, to which when once you incline and turn, you will no longer have the

power without a struggle to prefer in honour that which is your own, your peculiar good. For it is not right to set up a rival of another kind to the good of Reason and of the Commonwealth; the praise of the multitude, for example, or place or wealth or pleasurable indulgence. All these, though they appear for a little while to be in accord, suddenly gain the mastery and carry a man away. Do you then, I say, simply and of your own free will, choose the higher and hold fast to that. 'But the higher is what is to our advantage'; if to the advantage of a reasonable being, keep hold of that, but if to the advantage of a mere animate creature, say so and preserve your decision without parade; only see to it that you make a choice that will not betray you.

7. Never value as an advantage to yourself what will force you one day to break your word, to abandon self-respect, to hate, suspect, execrate another, to act a part, to covet anything that calls for walls or coverings to conceal it. A man who puts first his own mind and divinity, and the holy rites of its excellence, makes no scene, utters no groans, will need neither the refuge of solitude nor the crowded streets. What is most worth while, he will pass his days neither in pursuit nor in avoidance, and it is no concern at all of his whether the time be longer or shorter for which he shall have the use of the soul in its bodily envelope; for even if he must be released at once, he will depart as easily as he would perform any other act that can be done with reverence and sobriety, being careful all his life of this one

thing alone that his understanding be not found in any state which is foreign to a reasonable social being.

8. In the understanding of a man of chastened and purified spirit you will find, no trace of festering wound, no ulceration, no abscess beneath the skin. The hour of fate does not surprise his life before its fulfilment, so that one would say that the actor is leaving the stage before he has fulfilled his role, before the play is over. You will find nothing servile or artificial, no dependence on others nor severance from them; nothing to account for, nothing that needs a hole to hide in.

9. Reverence your faculty of judgement. On this it entirely rests that your governing self no longer has a judgement disobedient to Nature and to the estate of a reasonable being. This judgement promises deliberateness, familiar friendship with men, and to follow in the train of the gods.

10. Therefore throw all else aside, and hold fast only these few things; further calling to mind at the same time that each of us lives only in the present, this brief moment; the rest is either a life that is past, or is in an uncertain future. Little the life each lives, little the corner of the earth he lives in, little even the longest fame hereafter, and even that dependent on a succession of poor mortals, who will very soon be dead, and have not learnt to know themselves, much less the man who was dead long years ago.

11. To the above supports let one more be added. Always make a figure or outline of the imagined object as it occurs, in order to see distinctly what it is in its essence, naked, as a whole and parts; and say to yourself its individual name and the names of the things of which it was compounded and into which it will be broken up. For nothing is so able to create greatness of mind as the power methodically and truthfully to test each thing that meets one in life, and always to look upon it so as to attend at the same time to the use which this particular thing contributes to a Universe of a certain definite kind, what value it has in reference to the Whole, and what to man, who is a citizen of the highest City, whereof all other cities are like households. What is this which now creates an image in me, what is its composition? how long will it naturally continue, what virtue is of use to meet it; for example, gentleness, fortitude, truth, good faith, simplicity, self-reliance, and the rest? Therefore, in each case, we must say: this has come from God; this by the actual co-ordination of events, the complicated web and similar coincidence or chance; this again from my fellow man, my kinsman, my comrade, yet one who does not know what is natural for himself. But I do know; wherefore I use him kindly and justly, according to the natural law of fellowship, aiming, however, at the same time at his desert, where the question is morally indifferent.

12. If you complete the present work, following the rule of right, earnestly, with all your might, with kindness, and admit no side issue, but preserve your own divinity pure

and erect, as if you have this moment to restore it; if you make this secure, expecting nothing and avoiding nothing, but content with present action in accord with Nature and with heroic truth in what you mean and say, you will live the blessed life. Now there is no one who is able to prevent this.

13. As doctors have their instruments and scalpels always at hand to meet sudden demands for treatment, so do you have your doctrines ready in order to recognize the divine and human, and so to do everything, even the very smallest, as mindful of the bond which unites the divine and human; for you will not do any act well which concerns man without referring it to the divine; and the same is true of your conduct to God.

14. Do not wander from your path any longer, for you are not likely to read your note-books or your deeds of ancient Rome and Greece or your extracts from their writings, which you laid up against old age. Hasten then to the goal, lay idle hopes aside, and come to your own help, if you care at all for yourself, while still you may.

15. They have not learnt to know the manifold significance of theft, of sowing, of buying, resting, seeing what ought to be done. This depends not on the bodily eye but on another kind of vision.

16. Body, vital spirit, mind: of the body, sense perceptions; of the vital spirit, impulses; of the mind, doctrines. To be impressed by images belongs also to the beasts of the field, to be swayed by the strings of impulse to wild beasts, to men who sin against nature, to a Phalaris or a Nero. To have the mind as guide to what appear to be duties belongs also to men who do not believe in gods, who betray their own country, who do anything and everything once they have locked their doors. If then all else is common to you with those whom I have mentioned, it remains the peculiar mark of the good man to love and welcome what befalls him and is the thread fate spins for him; not to soil the divinity seated within his breast nor to disquiet it with a mob of imaginations, but to preserve and to propitiate it, following God in orderly wise, uttering no word contrary to truth, doing no act contrary to justice. And if all men disbelieve that he lives simply, modestly, and cheerfully, he is not angry with any one of them nor diverted from the road that leads to the goal of his life, at which he must arrive, pure, peaceful, ready to depart, in effortless accord with his own birth-spirit.

1. ↑ This is the title to Book III in the *editio princeps*. General headquarters were at Carnuntum (near Haimburg) from A.D. 171 to 173 for the war with the German tribes, Marcomanni and Quadi.
2. ↑ The text is faulty.

Footnotes

BOOK IV

1. The sovereign power within, in its natural state, so confronts what comes to pass as always to adapt itself readily to what is feasible and is presented to it. This is because it puts its affection upon no material of its own choice; rather it sets itself upon its objects with a reservation, and then makes the opposition which encounters it into material for itself. It is like a fire, when it masters what falls into it, whereby a little taper would have been put out, but a bright fire very quickly appropriates and devours what is heaped upon it, and leaps up higher out of those very obstacles.

2. Nothing that is undertaken is to be undertaken without a purpose, nor otherwise than according to a principle which makes the art of living perfect.

3. Men look for retreats for themselves, the country, the sea-shore, the hills; and you yourself, too, are peculiarly accustomed to feel the same want. Yet all this is very unlike a philosopher, when you may at any hour you please retreat into yourself. For nowhere does a man retreat into more quiet or more privacy than into his own mind, especially one who has within such things that he has only to look into, and become at once in perfect ease; and by ease I mean nothing else but good behaviour. Continually,

therefore, grant yourself this retreat and repair yourself. But let them be brief and fundamental truths, which will suffice at once by their presence to wash away all sorrow, and to send you back without repugnance to the life to which you return.

For what is it that shall move your repugnance? The wickedness of men? Recall the judgement that reasonable creatures have come into the world for the sake of one another; that patience is a part of justice; that men do wrong involuntarily; and how many at last, after enmity, suspicion, hatred, warfare, have been laid out on their death-beds and come to dust. This should make you pause. But shall what is assigned from Universal Nature be repugnant to you? Revive the alternative: 'either Providence or blind atoms', and the many proofs that the Universe is a kind of Commonwealth. Shall then the things of the flesh still have hold upon you? Reflect that the understanding, when once it takes control of itself and recognizes its own power, does not mingle with the vital spirit, be its current smooth or broken, and finally reflect upon all that you have heard and consented to about pain and pleasure.

Well, then, shall mere glory distract you? Look at the swiftness of the oblivion of all men; the gulf of endless time, behind and before; the hollowness of applause, the fickleness and folly of those who seem to speak well of you, and the narrow room in which it is confined. This should make you pause. For the entire earth is a point in

space, and how small a corner thereof is this your dwelling place, and how few and how paltry those who will sing your praises here!

Finally, therefore, remember your retreat into this little domain which is yourself, and above all be not disturbed nor on the rack, but be free and look at things as a man, a human being, a citizen, a creature that must die. And among what is most ready to hand into which you will look have these two: the one, that things do not take hold upon the mind, but stand without unmoved, and that disturbances come only from the judgement within; the second, that all that your eyes behold will change in a moment and be no more; and of how many things you have already witnessed the changes, think continually of that.

The Universe is change, life is opinion.

4. If mind is common to us all, then also the reason, whereby we are reasoning beings, is common. If this be so, then also the reason which enjoins what is to be done or left undone is common. If this be so, law also is common; if this be so, we are citizens; if this be so, we are partakers in one constitution; if this be so, the Universe is a kind of Commonwealth. For in what other common government can we say that the whole race of men partakes? And thence, from this common City, is derived our mind itself, our reason and our sense of law, or from what else? For as the earthy is in me a portion from some earth, and the

watery from a second element, and the vital spirit from some source, and the hot and fiery from yet another source of its own (for nothing comes from nothing, just as nothing returns to nothing), so therefore the mind also has come from some source.

5. Death is like birth, a mystery of Nature; a coming together out of identical elements and a dissolution into the same. Looked at generally this is not a thing of which man should be ashamed, for it is contrary neither to what is conformable to a reasonable creature nor to the principle of his constitution.

6. These are natural and necessary results from creatures of this kind, and one who wants this to be otherwise wants the fig-tree not to yield its acrid juice. And in general remember this, that within a very little while both he and you will be dead, and a little after not even your name nor his will be left.

7. Get rid of the judgement; you are rid of the 'I am hurt'; get rid of the 'I am hurt', you are rid of the hurt itself.

8. What does not make a man worse than he was, neither makes his life worse than it was, nor hurts him without or within.

9. It was a law of necessity that what is naturally beneficial should bring this about.

10. 'All that comes to pass comes to pass with justice.' You will find this to be so if you watch carefully. I do not mean only in accordance with the ordered series of events, but in accordance with justice and as it were by some one who assigns what has respect to worth. Watch, therefore, as you have begun and whatever you do, do it with this, with goodness in the specific sense in which the notion of the good man is conceived. Preserve this goodness in everything you do.

11. Don't regard things in the light in which he who does the wrong judges them, nor as he wishes you to judge them: but see them as in truth they are.

12. In these two ways you must always be prepared: the one, only to act as the principle of the royal and law-giving art prescribes for the benefit of mankind; the second, to change your purpose, if some one is there to correct and to guide you away from some fancy of yours. The guidance must, however, always be from a conviction of justice or common benefit ensuing, and what you prefer must be similar, not because it looked pleasant or popular.

13. 'You have reason?' 'Yes, I have!' 'Why not use it then? If this is doing its part, what else do you want?'

14. You came into the world as a part. You will vanish in that which gave you birth, or rather you will be taken up into its generative reason by the process of change.

15. Many grains of incense upon the same altar; one falls first, another later, but difference there is none.

16. Within ten days you will appear a god even to those to whom to-day you seem a beast or a baboon, if you return to your principles and your reverence of the Word.

17. Don't live as though you were going to live a myriad years. Fate is hanging over your head; while you have life, while you may, become good.

18. How great a rest from labour he gains who does not look to what his neighbour says or does or thinks, but only to what he himself is doing, in order that exactly this may be just and holy, or in accord with a good man's conduct.^[1] 'Do not look round at a black character,' but run toward the goal, balanced, not throwing your body about.

19. The man in a flutter for after-fame fails to picture to himself that each of those who remember him will himself also very shortly die, then again the man who succeeded him, until the whole remembrance is extinguished as it runs along a line of men who are kindled and then put out. And put the case that those who will remember never die, and the remembrance never dies, what is that to you? And I do not say that it is nothing to the dead; what is praise to the living, except perhaps for some practical purpose? For now you are putting off unseasonably the gift of Nature, which does not depend on the testimony of some one else . . .^[2]

20. Everything in any way lovely is lovely of itself and terminates in itself, holding praise to be no part of itself. At all events, in no case does what is praised become better or worse. This I say also of what is commonly called lovely, for instance materials and works of art; and indeed what is there lacking at all to that which is really lovely? No more than to law, no more than to truth, no more than to kindness or reverence of self. Which of these is lovely because it is praised or corrupted because it is blamed? Does an emerald become worse than it was, if it be not praised? And what of gold, ivory, purple, a lute, a sword-blade, a flower-bud, a little plant?

21. You ask how, if souls continue to exist, the atmosphere has room for them from time eternal. But how does the ground have room for the bodies of those who for so long an age are buried in it? The answer is that, as on earth change and dissolution after a continuance for so long make room for other dead bodies, so in the atmosphere souls pass on and continue for so long, and then change and are poured out and are kindled being assumed into the generative principle of Universal Nature, and so provide room for those which succeed to their place. This would be the answer presuming that souls do continue. But we must consider not only the multitude of bodies that are thus buried, but also the number of animals eaten every day by ourselves and the rest of the animal creation. How large a number are devoured and in a manner of speaking buried in the bodies of those who feed upon them; and yet there is

room to contain them because they are turned into blood, because they are changed into forms of air and heat. How shall we investigate the truth of this? By a distinction into the material and the causal.

22. Do not wander without a purpose, but in all your impulses render what is just, and in all your imaginations preserve what you apprehend.

23. 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'?

24. Democritus has said: 'Do few things, if you would enjoy tranquillity.' May it not be better to do the necessary things and what the reason of a creature intended by Nature to be social prescribes, and as that reason prescribes? For this brings not only the tranquillity from doing right but also from doing few things. For if one removes most of what we say and do as unnecessary, he will have more leisure and less interruption. Wherefore on each occasion he should remind himself: 'Is this not one of the necessary things?' And he should remove not actions merely that are unnecessary, but imaginations also, for in this way superfluous actions too will not follow in their train.

25. Make trial for yourself how the life of the good man, too, fares well, of the man pleased with what is assigned from Universal Nature and contented by his own just action and kind disposition.

26. You have seen those things, look now at these: do not trouble yourself, make yourself simple. Does a man do wrong? He does wrong to himself. Has some chance befallen you? It is well; from Universal Nature, from the beginning, all that befalls was determined for you and the thread was spun. The sum of the matter is this: life is short; the present must be turned to profit with reasonableness and right. Be sober without effort.

27. Either an ordered Universe or a medley heaped together mechanically but still an order; or can order subsist in you and disorder in the Whole! And that, too, when all things are so distinguished and yet intermingled and sympathetic.

28. A black heart is an unmanly heart, a stubborn heart; resembling a beast of prey, a mere brute, or a child; foolish, crafty, ribald, mercenary, despotic.

29. If he is a foreigner in the Universe who does not recognize the essence of the Universe, no less is he a foreigner, who does not recognize what comes to pass in it. A fugitive is he who runs away from the reasonable law of his City; a blind man, he who shuts the eye of the mind; a beggar, he who has need of another and has not all that is

necessary for life in himself; a blain on the Universe, he who rebels and separates himself from the reason of our common nature because he is displeased with what comes to pass (for Nature who bore you, brings these things also into being); a fragment cut off from the City, he who cuts off his own soul from the soul of reasonable creatures, which is one.

30. Here is a philosopher without a tunic, another without a book, another here half-naked. 'I have no bread,' he says, 'still I stand firm by the Word.' And I have nourishment from my lessons and yet do not stand firm.

31. Love the art which you were taught, set up your rest in this. Pass through what is left of life as one who has committed all that is yours, with your whole heart, to the gods, and of men making yourself neither despot nor servant to any.

32. Call to mind by way of example the time of Vespasian: you will see everything the same: men marrying, bringing up children, falling ill, dying, fighting, feasting, trading, farming, flattering, asserting themselves, suspecting, plotting, praying for another's death, murmuring at the present, lusting, heaping up riches, setting their heart on offices and thrones. And now that life of theirs is no more and nowhere.

Again pass on to the time of Trajan; again everything the same. That life, too, is dead. In like manner contemplate and behold the rest of the records of times and whole nations; and see how many after their struggles fell in a little while and were resolved into the elements. But most of all you must run over in mind those whom you yourself have known to be distracted in vain, neglecting to perform what was agreeable to their own constitution, to hold fast to this and to be content with this. And here you are bound to remember that the attention paid to each action has its own worth and proportion, only so you will not be dejected if in smaller matters you are occupied no farther than was appropriate.

33. Words familiar in olden times are now archaisms; so also the names of those whose praises were hymned in bygone days are now in a sense archaisms; Camillus, Caeso, Volesus, Dentatus; a little after, Scipio too and Cato; then also Augustus, then also Hadrian and Antoninus. For all things quickly fade and turn to fable, and quickly, too, utter oblivion covers them like sand. And this I say of those who shone like stars to wonder at; the rest, as soon as the breath was out of their bodies were 'unnoticed and unwept'. And what after all is everlasting remembrance? Utter vanity. What then is that about which a man ought to spend his pains? This one thing: right understanding, neighbourly behaviour, speech which would never lie, and a disposition welcoming all which comes to pass, as necessary, as familiar, as flowing from a source and fountain like itself.

34. With your whole will surrender yourself to Clotho to spin your fate into whatever web of things she will.

35. All is ephemeral, both what remembers and what is remembered.

36. Contemplate continually all things coming to pass by change, and accustom yourself to think that Universal Nature loves nothing so much as to change what is and to create new things in their likeness. For everything that is, is in a way the seed of what will come out of it, whereas you imagine seeds to be only those which are cast into the earth or into the womb. But that is very unscientific.

37. You will presently be dead and are not yet simple, untroubled, void of suspicion that anything from outside can hurt you, not yet propitious to all men, nor counting wisdom to consist only in just action.

38. Look into their governing principles, even the wise among them, what petty things they avoid and what pursue!

39. Your evil does not consist in another's governing principle, nor indeed in any change and alteration of your environment. Where then? Where the part of you which judges about evil is. Let it not frame the judgement, and all is well. Even if what is nearest to it, your body, is cut, cauterized, suppurates, mortifies, still let the part which judges about these things be at rest; that is, let it decide that

nothing is good or evil which can happen indifferently to the evil man and the good. For what happens indifferently to one whose life is contrary to Nature and to one whose life is according to Nature, this is neither according to nor contrary to Nature.

40. Constantly think of the Universe as one living creature, embracing one being and one soul; how all is absorbed into the one consciousness of this living creature; how it compasses all things with a single purpose, and how all things work together to cause all that comes to pass, and their wonderful web and texture.

41. You are a spirit bearing the weight of a dead body, as Epictetus used to say.

42. For what comes to pass in the course of change nothing is evil, as nothing is good for what exists in consequence of change.

43. There is a kind of river of things passing into being, and Time is a violent torrent. For no sooner is each seen, than it has been carried away, and another is being carried by, and that, too, will be carried away.

44. All that comes to pass is as familiar and well known as the rose in spring and the grape in summer. Of like fashion are sickness, death, calumny, intrigue, and all that gladdens or saddens the foolish.

45. What follows is always organically related to what went before; for it is not like a simple enumeration of units separately determined by necessity, but a rational combination; and as Being is arranged in a mutual coordination, so the phenomena of Becoming display no bare succession but a wonderful organic interrelation.

46. Always remember what Heraclitus said: 'the death of earth is the birth of water, the death of water is the birth of atmosphere, the death of atmosphere is fire, and conversely'. Remember, too, his image of the man who forgets the way he is going; and: 'they are at variance with that with which they most continuously have converse (Reason which governs the Universe), and the things they meet with every day appear alien to them'; and again: 'we must not act and speak like men who sleep, for in sleep we suppose that we act and speak'; and 'we must not be like children with parents', that is, accept things simply as we have received them.

47. Just as, if one of the gods told you: 'to-morrow you will be dead or in any case the day after to-morrow', you would no longer be making that day after important any more than to-morrow, unless you are an arrant coward (for the difference is a mere trifle), in the same way count it no great matter to live to a year that is an infinite distance off rather than till to-morrow.

48. Think continually how many physicians have died, after often knitting their foreheads over their patients; how many astrologers after prophesying other men's deaths, as though to die were a great matter; how many philosophers after endless debate on death or survival after death; how many paladins after slaying their thousands; how many tyrants after using their power over men's lives with monstrous arrogance, as if themselves immortal; how many entire cities have, if I may use the term, died, Helice, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and others innumerable. Run over, too, the many also you know of, one after another. One followed this man's funeral and then was himself laid on the bier; another followed him, and all in a little while. This is the whole matter: see always how ephemeral and cheap are the things of man—yesterday, a spot of albumen, to-morrow, ashes or a mummy. Therefore make your passage through this span of time in obedience to Nature and gladly lay down your life, as an olive, when ripe, might fall, blessing her who bare it and grateful to the tree which gave it life.

49. Be like the headland on which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and about it the boiling waters sink to sleep. 'Unlucky am I, because this has befallen me.' Nay rather: 'Lucky am I, because, though this befell me, I continue free from sorrow, neither crushed by the present, nor fearing what is to come.' For such an event might have befallen any man, but not every man would have continued in it free from sorrow. On what grounds then is this ill fortune more than that good fortune? Do you, speaking

generally, call what is not a deviation from man's nature a man's ill fortune, and do you suppose that what is not opposed to his natural will is a deviation from his nature? Very well, you have been taught what that will is. Can what has befallen you prevent your being just, high-minded, temperate, prudent, free from rash judgements, trustful, self-reverent, free, and whatever else by its presence with him enables a man's nature to secure what is really his? Finally, in every event which leads you to sorrow, remember to use this principle: that this is not a misfortune, but that to bear it like a brave man is good fortune.

50. An unscientific but none the less a helpful support to disdain of death is to review those who have clung tenaciously to life. What more did they gain than those who died prematurely? In every case they are laid in some grave at last: Caedicianus, Fabius, Julianus, Lepidus, and any others like them, who after carrying many to the grave were themselves carried out. To speak generally the difference is a small one, and this difference long-drawn-out through what great toils and with what sorts of men and in how weak a body Do not count it then as a thing . . . ; for see the gulf of time behind and another infinite time in front: in this what difference is there between a three-days-old infant and a Nestor of three generations?

51. Run always the short road, and Nature's road is short. Therefore say and do everything in the soundest way,

because a purpose like this delivers a man from troubles and warfare, from every care and superfluity.

1. [↑](#) The text is faulty and the sense obscure.
2. [↑](#) There appears to be a lacuna here, and the text is again faulty.

Footnotes

BOOK V

1. At dawn of day, when you dislike being called, have this thought ready: 'I am called to man's labour; why then do I make a difficulty if I am going out to do what I was born to do and what I was brought into the world for? Is it for this that I am fashioned, to lie in bedclothes and keep myself warm?' 'But this is more pleasant.' 'Were you born then to please yourself; in fact for feeling, not for action? Can't you see the plants, the birds, the ants, the spiders, the bees each doing his own work, helping for their part to adjust a world? And then you refuse to do a man's office and don't make haste to do what is according to your own nature.' 'But a man needs rest as well.' I agree, he does, yet Nature assigns limits to rest, as well as to eating and drinking, and you nevertheless go beyond her limits, beyond what is sufficient; in your actions only this is no longer so, there you keep inside what is in your power. The explanation is that you do not love your own self, else surely you would love both your nature and *her* purpose. But other men who love their own crafts wear themselves out in labours upon them, unwashed and unfed; while you hold your own nature in less honour than the smith his metal work, the dancer his art, the miser his coin, the lover of vainglory his fame. Yet they, when the passion is on them, refuse either to eat or to sleep sooner than refuse to advance the objects they care

about, whereas you imagine acts of fellowship to bring a smaller return and to be deserving of less pains.

2. How simple to reject and to wipe away every disturbing or alien imagination, and straightway to be in perfect calm.

3. Make up your mind that you deserve every word and work that is according to Nature, and do not allow the ensuing blame or speech of any men to talk you over; but, if it is right to be done or said, do not count yourself undeserving of it. Those others have their own selves to govern them, and use their several inclinations. Don't look round at that, but walk the straight way, following your own and the common Nature, for the path of them both is one.

4. I walk in Nature's way until I shall lie down and rest, breathing my last in this from which I draw my daily breath, and lying down on this from which my father drew his vital seed, my mother her blood, my nurse her milk; from which for so many years I am fed and watered day by day; which bears my footstep and my misusing it for so many purposes.

5. 'Your mental powers they cannot admire.' Granted! but there is much else of which you cannot say: 'that is no gift of mine'. Bring forth then what is wholly in your power, freedom from guile, dignity, endurance of labour, distaste for pleasure, contentment with your portion, need of little, kindness, freedom, plain-living, reserve in speech,

magnanimity. See you not how much you are able to bring forth, where there is no excuse of want of gift or want of facility, and yet you are content to keep a lower place? Are you obliged to grumble, to be grasping, to flatter, to blame your poor body,^[1] to be obsequious, to vaunt yourself, to be tossed about in mind, because you have been fashioned without talent? No, by heaven, you had the power to be rid of all this long ago, and only, if at all, to be convicted of some slowness and tardiness of understanding; and even there you should exercise yourself, not disregarding your faults nor finding satisfaction in your dullness.

6. One kind of man, when he does a good turn to some one, is forward also to set down the favour to his account. Another is not forward to do this, but still within himself he thinks as though he were a creditor and is conscious of what he has done. A third is in a sense not even conscious of what he has done, but he is like a vine which has 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.'

7. A prayer of the people of Athens: 'Rain, beloved Zeus, rain on the cornfields and the plains of Attica.' One ought to pray thus simply and freely, or not to pray at all.

8. We commonly say: 'Aesculapius ordered a man horse-exercise, cold baths, or no shoes'; similarly we might say: 'Universal Nature ordered him sickness, disablement, loss or some other affliction.' In the former phrase 'ordered' virtually means 'laid this down for him as appropriate to health'; in the latter what befits every man has been laid down for him as appropriate to the natural order. So, too, we say things 'befit us' as workmen talk of squared blocks 'fitting' in walls or pyramids, bonding with one another in a definite structure. For in the whole of things there is one connecting harmony, and as out of all material bodies the world is made perfect into a connected body, so out of all causes the order of Nature is made perfect into one connected cause. Even quite simple folk have in their minds what I am saying, for they use the phrase; 'it was sent to him'; and so this was 'sent' to him, that is, 'this was ordered for him.' Accordingly let us accept these orders as we accept what Aesculapius orders. Many of them, too, are assuredly severe, yet we welcome them in hopes of health. Let the performance and completion of the pleasure of the

Universal Nature seem to you to be your pleasure, precisely as the conduct of your health is seen to be, and so welcome all that comes to pass, even though it appear rather cruel, because it leads to that end, to the health of the universe, that is to the welfare and well-being of Zeus. For he would not 'send' this to one, if it were not to the well-being of the whole, no more than any living principle you may choose 'sends' anything which is not appropriate to what is governed by it. Thus there are two reasons why you must be content with what happens to you: first because it was for you it came to pass, for you it was ordered and to you it was related, a thread of destiny stretching back to the most ancient causes; secondly because that which has come to each individually is a cause of the welfare and the completion and in very truth of the actual continuance of that which governs the Whole. For the perfect Whole is mutilated if you sever the least part of the contact and continuity alike of its causes as of its members; and you do this so far as in you lies, whenever you are disaffected, and in a measure you are destroying it.

9. Don't be disgusted, don't give up, don't be impatient if you do not carry out entirely conduct based in every detail upon right principles; but after a fall return again, and rejoice if most of your actions are worthier of human character. Love that to which you go back, and don't return to Philosophy as to a schoolmaster, but as a man with sore eyes to the sponge and salve, as another to a poultice, another to a fomentation. For so you will show that to obey

Reason is no great matter but rather you will find rest in it. Remember, too, that philosophy wills nothing else than the will of your own nature, whereas you were willing some other thing not in accord with Nature. For what is sweeter than this accord? Does not pleasure overcome us just by sweetness? Well, see whether magnanimity, freedom, simplicity, consideration for others, holiness are not sweeter; for what is sweeter than wisdom itself when you bear in mind the unbroken current in all things of the faculty of understanding and knowledge?

10. Realities are so veiled, one might say, from our eyes that not a few and those not insignificant thinkers thought them to be incomprehensible, while even the Stoics think them difficult of comprehension; and all our assent to perceptions is liable to alter. For where is the infallible man to be met? Pass on, then, to objects of experience—how short their duration, how cheap, and able to be in the possession of the bestial, the harlot, or the brigand. Next pass to the characters of those who live with you, even the best of whom it is hard to suffer, not to say that it is hard for a man even to endure himself. In such a fog and filth, in so great a torrent of being and time and movement and moving things, what can be respected or be altogether the object of earnest pursuit I do not see. On the contrary, one must console oneself by awaiting Nature's release, and not chafing at the circumstances of delay, but finding repose only in two things: one, that nothing will befall me which is not in accordance with the nature of the Whole; the other,

that it is in my power to do nothing contrary to my God and inward Spirit; for there is no one who shall force me to sin against this.

11. 'To what purpose, then, am I now using my soul?' In every case ask yourself this question and examine yourself: 'What have I now in this part which men call the governing part, and whose soul have I at present? A child's, a boy's, a woman's, a despot's, a dumb animal's, a dangerous beast's?'

12. You could apprehend the character of what the majority of men fancy to be 'goods' like this. If a man were to conceive the existence of real goods, like wisdom, temperance, justice, fortitude, he could not with those in his mind still listen to the popular proverb about 'goods in every corner', for it will not fit. But with what appear to the majority of men to be goods in his mind he will listen to and readily accept what the comic poet said as an appropriate witticism. In this way even the majority perceive the difference, otherwise this proverb would not in the one case offend and be disclaimed, whereas in the case of wealth and the blessings which lead to luxury or show we accept it as a witticism to fit the case. Go on, then, and ask whether one should respect and conceive to be good, things to which when one has thought of them one could properly apply the proverb that their owner is so well off that he 'has not a corner where to ease himself'.

13. I was composed of a formal and a material substance; and of these neither will pass away into nothingness, just as neither came to exist out of nothingness. Thus, every part of me will be assigned its place by change into some part of the Universe, and that again into another part of the Universe, and so on to infinity. By a similar change both my parents and I came to exist, and so on to another infinity of regression. For there is no reason to prevent one speaking so, even if the Universe is governed according to finite periods (of coming to be and passing away).

14. Reason and the method of reasoning are abilities, sufficient to themselves and their own operations. Thus, they start from their appropriate principle and proceed to their proposed end; wherefore reasonable acts are called right acts, to indicate the rightness of their path.

15. A man ought to treasure none of these things, which does not fall to a man's portion *qua* man. They are not requirements of a man, nor does man's nature profess them, nor are they accomplishments of man's nature. Accordingly man's end does not lie in them, and certainly not the good which is complementary to his end. Moreover, if any of these were given as his portion to man, it would not have been his portion to disdain them and to resist them, nor would the man who made himself independent of them have been laudable nor the man who took less of them than he might, have been good, if they were really 'goods'. But as things are, the more a man robs himself of these and other

such, the more he forbears when he is robbed of them, so much the more is he good.

16. As are your repeated imaginations so will your mind be, for the soul is dyed by its imaginations. Dye it, then, in a succession of imaginations like these: for instance, where it is possible to live, there also it is possible to live well: but it is possible to live in a palace, *ergo* it is also possible to live well in a palace. Or once more: a creature is made for that in whose interest it was created: and that for which it was made, to this it tends: and to what it tends, in this is its end: and where its end is, there is the advantage and the good alike of each creature: therefore fellowship is the good of a reasonable creature. For it has been proved long ago that we are born for fellowship; or was it not plain that the inferior creatures are in the interests of the superior, the superior of one another? But the animate are superior to the inanimate and the reasoning to the merely animate.

17. To pursue the impossible is madness: but it is impossible for evil men not to do things of this sort.

18. Nothing befalls anything which that thing is not naturally made to bear. The same experience befalls another, and he is unruffled and remains unharmed; either because he is unaware that it has happened or because he exhibits greatness of soul. Is it not strange that ignorance and complaisance are stronger than wisdom . . . ?

19. Things as such do not touch the soul in the least: they have no avenue to the soul nor can they turn or move it. It alone turns and moves itself, and it makes what is submitted to it resemble the judgements of which it deems itself deserving.

20. In one relation man is the nearest creature to ourselves, so far as we must do them good and suffer them. But so far as they are obstacles to my peculiar duties, man becomes something indifferent to me as much as sun or wind or injurious beast. By these some action might be hindered, but they are not hindrances to my impulse and disposition, because of my power of reservation and adaptation; for the understanding adapts and alters every obstacle to action to suit its object, and a hindrance to a given duty becomes a help, an obstacle in a given path a furtherance.

21. Reverence the sovereign power over things in the Universe; this is what uses all and marshals all. In like manner, too, reverence the sovereign power in yourself; and this is of one kind with that. For in you also this is what uses the rest, and your manner of living is governed by this.

22. What is not injurious to the city does not injure the citizens either. On the occasion of every imagination that you have been injured apply this canon: 'If the city is not injured by this neither am I injured.' But if the city is injured you must not be angry, only point out to him who injures the city what he has failed to see.

23. Repeatedly dwell on the swiftness of the passage and departure of things that are and of things that come to be. For substance is like a river in perpetual flux, its activities are in continuous changes, and its causes in myriad varieties, and there is scarce anything which stands still, even what is near at hand; dwell, too, on the infinite gulf of the past and the future, in which all things vanish away. Then how is he not a fool who in all this is puffed up or distracted or takes it hardly, as if he were in some lasting scene, which has troubled him for long?

24. Call to mind the whole of Substance of which you have a very small portion, and the whole of time whereof a small hair's breadth has been determined for you, and of the chain of causation whereof you are how small a link.

25. Another does wrong. What is that to me? Let him look to it; he has his own disposition, his own activity. I have now what Universal Nature wills me to have, and I do what my own nature wills me to do.

26. See that the governing and sovereign part of your soul is undiverted by the smooth or broken movement in the flesh, and let it not blend therewith, but circumscribe itself, and limit those affections within the (bodily) parts. But when they are diffused into the understanding by dint of that other sympathy, as needs must be in a united system, then you must not try to resist the sensation, which is natural, yet the

governing part must not of itself add to the affection the judgement that it is either good or bad.

27. 'Live with the gods.' But he is living with the gods who continuously exhibits his soul to them, as satisfied with its dispensation and doing what the deity, the portion of himself which Zeus has given to each man to guard and guide him, wills. And this deity is each man's mind and reason.

28. Are you angry with the man whose person or whose breath is rank? What will anger profit you? He has a foul mouth, he has foul armpits; there is a necessary connexion between the effluvia and its causes. 'Well, but the creature has reason, and can, if he stops to think, understand why he is offensive.' Bless you! and so too have you reason; let reasonable disposition move reasonable disposition; point it out, remind him; for if he hearkens, you will cure him and anger will be superfluous. You are neither play-actor nor harlot.

29. As you intend to live when you depart, so you are able to live in this world; but if they do not allow you to do so, then depart this life, yet so as if you suffered no evil fate. The chimney smokes and I leave the room. Why do you think it a great matter? But while no such reason drives me out, I remain a free tenant and none shall prevent me acting as I will, and I will what agrees with the nature of a reasonable and social creature.

30. The mind of the Whole is social. Certainly it has made the inferior in the interests of the superior and has connected the superior one with another. You see how it has subordinated, co-ordinated, and allotted to each its due and brought the ruling creatures into agreement one with another.

31. How have you hitherto borne yourself to gods, parents, brother, wife, children, masters, tutors, friends, connexions, servants? Has your relation to all men hitherto been: 'not to have wrought nor to have said a lawless thing to any'? Remind yourself of the kinds of things you have passed through and the kinds you have had strength to endure; that the story of your life is written and your service accomplished. How many beautiful things have been revealed, how many pleasures and pains you have looked down upon, how many ambitions ignored, to how many unkind persons you have been kind!

32. Why do the ignorant and unlearned confound men of knowledge and learning? What soul has knowledge and learning? That which knows the beginning and end and the reason which informs the whole substance and through all eternity governs the Whole according to appointed cycles.

33. In how short a time, ashes or a bare anatomy, and either a name or not even a name; and if a name, then a sound and an echo. And all that is prized in life empty, rotten, and petty; puppies biting one another, little children quarrelling,

laughing, and then soon crying. And Faith, Self-respect, Right, and Truth

'fled to Olympus from the spacious earth'.

What, then, still keeps one here, if the sensible is ever-changing, never in one stay, the senses blurred and subject to false impressions; the soul itself an exhalation from blood, and a good reputation in such conditions vanity? What shall we say? Wait in peace, whether for extinction or a change of state; and until its due time arrives, what is sufficient? What else than to worship and bless the gods, to do good to men, to bear them and to forbear; and, for all that lies within the limits of mere flesh and spirit, to remember that this is neither yours nor in your power?

34. You are able always to have a favourable tide, if you are able to take a right path, if, that is, you are able both to conceive and to act with rectitude. These two things are common to God's soul and to man's, that is, to the soul of every reasonable creature: not to be subject to another's hindrance, to find his good in righteous act and disposition, and to terminate his desire in what is right.

35. If this is neither evil of mine nor action which results from evil of mine, and if the Universe is not injured, why am I troubled because of it? And what injury is there to the Universe?

36. Don't be carried away by imagination which sees only the surface, but help men as best you may and as they deserve, even though their loss be of something indifferent. Do not, however, imagine the loss to be an injury, for that habit is bad. Like the old man who, when he went away, used to ask for his foster-child's top, but did not forget that it was a top; so you should act also in this instance. And so you are lamenting in the pulpit! Have you forgotten, my friend, what these things were worth? 'I know, but to the sufferers they were of vast importance.' Is that a reason why you should make a fool of yourself too?

37. 'There was a time when I was fortune's favourite, wherever and whenever she visited me.' Yes, but to be fortune's favourite meant assigning good fortune to yourself; and good fortune means good dispositions of the soul, good impulses, good actions.

1. ↑ 'to blame your poor body' should perhaps follow 'to be tossed about in mind'.

Footnotes

BOOK VI

1. The matter of the Whole is docile and adaptable, and the Reason that controls it has in its own nature no ground to create evil, for it contains no evil; nor does it create anything amiss nor is any injury done by it; and all things come into being and are accomplished according to it.
2. Provided you are doing your proper work it should be indifferent to you whether you are cold or comfortably warm, whether drowsy or with sufficient sleep, whether your report is evil or good, whether you are in the act of death or doing something else. For even that wherein we die is one of the acts of life, and so even at that moment to 'make the best use of the present' is enough.
3. Look to what is within: do not allow the intrinsic quality or the worth of any one fact to escape you.
4. All things that exist will very swiftly change; either they will pass into vapour, if we presume that matter is a whole, or else they will be dispersed into their atoms.
5. The controlling Reason knows its own disposition, what it creates, and the material upon which it works.
6. The noblest kind of retribution is not to become like your enemy.

7. Rejoice and set up your rest in one thing: to pass from act to act of fellowship, keeping God in remembrance.

8. The governing principle it is which wakes itself up and adapts itself, making itself of whatever kind it wills and making all that happens to it appear to be of whatever kind it wills.

9. All things are being accomplished in each case according to the nature of the Whole; for certainly they cannot be in accordance with any other nature, whether embracing them without, or enclosed within, or attached to them outside.

10. Either a medley, a mutual interlacing of atoms and their scattering: or unification, order, providence. If then the former, why do I so much as desire to wear out my days in a world compounded by accident and in a confusion governed by chance? Why am I concerned about anything else than how I am in one way or another to 'return to earth'? And why am I troubled? Whatever I do, the scattering into atoms will come upon me. But, if the alternative be true, I bow my head, I am calm, I take courage in that which orders all.

11. Whenever you are obliged by circumstances to be in a way troubled, quickly return to yourself, and do not, more than you are obliged, fall out of step; for you will be more master of the measure by continually returning to it.

12. Had you a step-mother and a mother at the same time, you would wait upon the former but still be continually returning to your mother. This is now what the palace and your philosophy are to you. Return to her again and again, and set up your rest in her, on whose account that other life appears tolerable to you and you tolerable in it.

13. Surely it is an excellent plan, when you are seated before delicacies and choice foods, to impress upon your imagination that this is the dead body of a fish, that the dead body of a bird or a pig; and again, that the Falernian wine is grape juice and that robe of purple a lamb's fleece dipped in a shell-fish's blood; and in matters of sex intercourse, that it is attrition of an entrail and a convulsive expulsion of mere mucus. Surely these are excellent imaginations, going to the heart of actual facts and penetrating them so as to see the kind of things they really are. You should adopt this practice all through your life, and where things make an impression which is very plausible, uncover their nakedness, see into their cheapness, strip off the profession on which they vaunt themselves. For pride is an arch-seducer of reason, and just when you fancy you are most certainly busy in good works, then you are most certainly the victim of imposture. Consider for instance what Crates says even about Xenocrates.

14. Most of the objects which the vulgar admire may be referred to the general heads of what is held together by 'stress', like minerals and timber, or by 'growth', like figs,

vines, olives; those admired by slightly superior folk to things held together by 'animal spirit', for instance flocks and herds or bare ownership of a multitude of slaves; those by persons still more refined to things held together by 'reasonable spirit', not, however, reasonable as such but so far as to be technical or skilled in something else. But one who reveres spirit in its full sense of reasonable and political regards those other objects no longer, but above all continually keeps his own spirit in reasonable and social being and activity, co-operating with a fellow being to this end.

15. Some things are hastening to be, others to have come and gone, and a part of what is coming into being is already extinct. Flux and change renew the world incessantly, as the unbroken passage of time makes boundless eternity ever young. In this river, therefore, on which he cannot stand, which of these things that race past him should a man greatly prize? As though he^[1] should begin to set his heart on one of the little sparrows that fly past, when already it has gone away out of his sight. Truly the life of every man is itself as fleeting as the exhalation of spirit from his blood or the breath he draws from the atmosphere. For just as it is to draw in a single breath and to return it, which we do every moment, so is it to render back the whole power of respiration, which you acquired but yesterday or the day before, at birth, to that other world from which you first drew it in.

16. To transpire like plants or to breathe like cattle or wild beasts is not a thing to value, nor to be stamped by sense impression or drawn by the strings of impulse, nor to live in herds or to take in nourishment—this last is on a level with relieving the body of the dregs of that nourishment. What, then, should be valued? The clapping of hands? Surely not; and so not even the clapping of tongues, for the applause of multitudes is a clapping of tongues. Therefore you have put mere glory away. What is left to be valued? To my thinking to move and to be held back according to man's proper constitution, the end to which both rustic industries and the arts give the lead. (For every art aims at this, that what it fashions should be suited to the purpose for which it has been fashioned. This is the aim of the gardener and of the vine-dresser, of the breaker of colts and the trainer of dogs.) And to what end do children's training and teaching labour? Here, then, is what is of true value, and if this be well, you will not endeavour to obtain for yourself any one of the rest. Will you not cease to value many other things besides? Then you will not be free or self-contained or passionless; for you will be obliged to entertain envy and rivalry, to regard with suspicion those who are able to take away those things, to plot against those who have what is valued by you. To sum up, he who feels the want of any one of those things must be sullied thereby and besides must often blame the gods. But to reverence and value your own understanding will make you acceptable to yourself, harmonious with your fellows, and in concord with the

gods; that is, praising whatsoever they assign and have ordained.

17. The motions of the Elements are up, down, in circles: the movement of man's excellence is in none of these, but proceeding in a more divine way and on a path past finding out it fares well.

18. Only think what it is they do. They refuse to speak good of men living at the same time and in their company, yet themselves set great store on being spoken well of by those who will be born after them, whom they have never seen and never will see. Yet this is next door to being sad because men born before you were not speaking good words about you.

19. Do not because a thing is hard for you yourself to accomplish, imagine that it is humanly impossible: but if a thing is humanly possible and appropriate, consider it also to be within your own reach.

20. In the field a player may have scratched us with his nails or given us a blow with his head, in a rage, yet we do not label him for that or hit back or suspect him afterwards of designs against us. Still, we do, in fact, keep away from him, not, however, as a foe and not with suspicion but with good-natured avoidance. Let us take this for an example in other departments of life; let us overlook much in the case of those who are, so to speak, our opponents in the game;

for, as I said, it is possible to avoid them, yet neither to suspect nor hate them.

21. Suppose a man can convince me of error and bring home to me that I am mistaken in thought or act; I shall be glad to alter, for the truth is what I pursue, and no one was ever injured by the truth, whereas he is injured who continues in his own self-deception and ignorance.

22. Let me do my own duty; nothing else distracts me, for it is either lifeless or without reason or has gone astray and is ignorant of the true path.

23. Use dumb animals and lifeless things and objects generally with a generous and free spirit, because you have reason and they have not; use men because they have reason, in a neighbourly spirit; and in all things call upon the gods for help. Let it make no difference to you for how long a time you will do these things, for even three hours in this spirit is enough.

24. Alexander the Great and his stable boy were levelled in death, for they were either taken up into the same life-giving principles of the Universe or were scattered without distinction into atoms.

25. Reflect upon the multitude of bodily and mental events taking place in the same brief time, simultaneously in every one of us; and so you will not be surprised that many more

events, or rather all things that come to pass, exist simultaneously in the one and entire unity, which we call the Universe.

26. Suppose a man puts you the problem how to write the name Antoninus. Will you raise your voice to pronounce each of its component parts? Then suppose they are angry, will you be angry in return? Will you not quietly enumerate and go over in succession each of the letters? In the same way then, in our life here, remember that every duty has its complement of definite numbers. These you must preserve and not be troubled, and if men make difficulties, not meet them with difficulties, but bring what you propose to do methodically to completion.

27. How inhuman it is to forbid men to set out after what appears suitable and advantageous to themselves. Yet, in a way, you are not allowing them to do this, whenever you are indignant because they do wrong; for certainly they are moved to what looks to be suitable and advantageous to themselves. 'But it is, in fact, not so.' Very well, instruct them and make it plain; don't be indignant.

28. Death is repose from sense-response, from the stimulus of impulse, from intellectual analysis and the service of the flesh.

29. It is absurdly wrong that, in this life where your body does not give in, your spirit should be the first to surrender.

30. Take heed not to be transformed into a Caesar, not to be dipped in the purple dye; for it does happen. Keep yourself therefore, simple, good, pure, grave, unaffected, the friend of justice, religious, kind, affectionate, strong for your proper work. Wrestle to continue to be the man Philosophy wished to make you. Reverence the gods, save men. Life is brief; there is one harvest of earthly existence, a holy disposition and neighbourly acts. In all things like a pupil of Antoninus; his energy on behalf of what was done in accord with reason, his equability everywhere, his serene expression, his sweetness, his disdain of glory, his ambition to grasp affairs.

Also how he let nothing at all pass without first looking well into it and understanding it clearly; how he would suffer those who blamed him unjustly, not blaming them in return; how he was in no hurry about anything; how he refused to entertain slander; how exactly he scrutinized men's characters and actions, was not given to reproach, not alarmed by rumour, not suspicious, not affecting to be wise; how he was content with little, in lodging, in his bed, in dress, in food, in service; how he loved work and was long-suffering.

What a man, too, he was to remain in his place until evening; because of his spare diet not needing even to relieve nature except at his usual hour. Moreover, his constancy and uniformity to his friends, his tolerance of plain-spoken opposition to his opinions and delight when

any one indicated a better course; and how he revered the gods without superstition. So may your last hour find you, like him, with a conscience void of reproach.

31. Be sober once more, recall yourself and shake off sleep again. Perceive that they were dreams which troubled you, and once again fully awake, look at these things as you looked at those.

32. I am composed of body and spirit. Now to the body all things are indifferent, for it cannot distinguish them itself. And to the understanding all that are not its own activities are indifferent, and all that are its own activities are in its control. Even of these, however, it is concerned only about the present, for its future and past activities are themselves also at the present moment indifferent.

33. Neither pain of hand nor pain of foot is contrary to Nature, provided the foot is doing the service of a foot or the hand of a hand. It follows that not even for a man, as man, is pain contrary to Nature, while he is doing the service of a man, and if pain for him is not contrary to Nature, neither is it an evil for him.

34. What monstrous pleasures brigands, pathics, parricides, and despots enjoy.

35. Do you not see how mechanic craftsmen suit themselves up to a point to amateurs, yet none the less stick

to the rule of their craft and never submit to desert that? Is it not grievous, then, that architect and physician will reverence, each the principle of his art, more than man his own principle, which he has in common with the gods?

36. Asia and Europe are corners in the Universe; every sea, a drop in the Universe; Mount Athos, a clod of earth in the Universe; every instant of time, a pin-prick of eternity. All things are petty, easily changed, vanishing away. All things come from that other world, starting from that common governing principle, or else are secondary consequences of it. Thus, even the lion's jaws, deadly poison, and every injurious thing, like a thistle or a bog, are by-products from those august and lovely principles. Do not, then, imagine them to be contrary to what you reverence, but reflect upon the fountain of all things.

37. He who sees what is now has seen all things, whatsoever came to pass from everlasting and whatsoever shall be unto unlimited time. For all things are of one kin and of one kind.

38. Meditate often upon the bond of all in the Universe and their mutual relationship. For all things are in a way woven together and all are because of this dear to one another; for these follow in order one upon another because of the stress-movement and common spirit and the unification of matter.

39. Fit yourself into accord with the things in which your portion has been cast, and love the men among whom your lot has fallen, but love them truly.

40. Every instrument, tool, and vessel is well off, if it carry out the work for which it was fashioned. Yet here the maker is outside the tool. Where things are held together by a natural principle, the power which made them is within and abides with them. You must accordingly reverence it the more, and believe that if you are and continue according to the will of that power, you have all things to your mind. And in like manner its things are to the mind of the All.

41. Should you propose to yourself as good or evil something beyond your will, the necessary result is that, if you fall into that evil or fail of that good, you blame the gods and you hate men who are or who you suspect will be the causes of your loss of the good or your falling into the evil; and indeed we commit many wrongs from concern in regard to these things, If, however, we decide that only what our will controls is good or evil, then no ground is left either to arraign God or to adopt the position of an enemy to man.

42. We are all working together to a single end, some consciously and with understanding, some without knowledge, as Heraclitus, I think, says that even 'Sleepers are workers and fellow-workers in what comes to pass in the world'. One helps in one way, one in another, and *ex*

abundanti even he who finds fault and tries to resist or destroy what is coming to pass; for the Universe has need even for such a one. Finally, therefore, see with which you take your post, for in any event he who controls the whole will employ you aright and will accept you as one part of the fellow-labourers and fellow-workers; only do not you become as mean a part as the cheap and ridiculous verse in the comedy, which Chrysippus mentions.

43. Does the Sun god claim to do the work of the god of rain, or Aesculapius the work of the Fruit-bearing goddess? And how is it with each of the stars? Is not their province different, but they are working together to the same end?

44. If so be that the gods took counsel about me and what must happen to me, they took counsel for good; for it is not easy to conceive a god without purpose, and on what possible ground would they be likely to desire to do me harm? What advantage would there be from this either for themselves or for the common good, which is their principal care? But if they took no counsel about me as an individual, surely they did for the common good, and as the present follows upon that by way of consequence, I am bound to welcome and to love it. But suppose they take counsel, if you will, about nothing (a thing it is impious to believe, or else let us cease to sacrifice and pray to them, to swear by them and to do all else that we do, believing them to be present and living in our midst); yet still, suppose they take counsel about none of our concerns, I am able to take

counsel about myself, and my consideration is about what is advantageous. Now the advantage of each is what is proper to his own constitution and nature, and my nature is reasonable and social. As Antoninus, my city and my fatherland is Rome; as a man, the Universe. All then that benefits these cities is alone my good.

45. All that befalls the individual is to the advantage of the Whole. This should be enough. However, if you watch carefully, you will generally see this besides: what advantages a man also advantages the rest of men; but here advantage must be taken in its more usual acceptance of what lies in between good and evil.

46. Just as the performances in the amphitheatre and such places pall upon you, being for ever the same scenes, and the similarity makes the spectacle nauseating, so you feel in the same way about life as a whole; for all things, up and down, are the same and follow from the same. How long will it last?

47. Think constantly of the death of men of all sorts, of all sorts of pursuits and of every kind of nation, so that your thought comes down to Philistio, Phoebus, and Origanio. Now pass on to the remaining classes of men. We are bound to change to that other world, where are so many subtle orators, so many grave philosophers, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates; so many heroes of old, captains and kings of later days. Besides these, Eudoxus,

Hipparchus, and Archimedes, other acute natures, great minds, hard workers, rogues, self-willed men, those who made mock of man's mortal and transient life itself, like Menippus and all of his kind. Of them all reflect that long ago they were laid in the ground. Why was it dreadful for them, why dreadful for those whose names are not even remembered? One thing here is of great price, to live out life with truth and righteousness, gracious to liars and to the unrighteous.

48. Whenever you desire to cheer yourself, think upon the merits of those who are alive with you; the energy of one, for instance, the modesty of another, the generosity of a third, of another some other gift. For nothing is so cheering as the images of the virtues shining in the character of contemporaries, and meeting so far as possible in a group. Therefore you should keep them ready to your hand.

49. You are not discontented, surely, because you weigh only so many pounds and not three hundred? So, too, because you may only live so many years and no longer? As you are contented with the quantity of matter determined for you, so also be contented with your days.

50. Endeavour to persuade them, but act even if they themselves are unwilling, when the rule of justice so directs. If, however, a man employs force to resist, change your object to resignation and freedom from a sense of present injury, and use the opposition to elicit in yourself a

different virtue. Remember, too, that you set out with a reservation and were not aiming at the impossible. What then was your aim? 'An aim qualified by a reservation.' But you do achieve this; what we proposed to ourselves does come to pass.

51. He who loves glory thinks the activity of another to be his own good; he who loves pleasure thinks his own feeling to be his good; he who has intelligence, thinks his own action to be his good.

52. It is possible to entertain no thought about this, and not to be troubled in spirit; for things of themselves are not so constituted as to create our judgements upon them.

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

54. What does not benefit the hive is no benefit to the bee.

55. If the crew spoke evil of the master of the ship or his patients of the doctor, would they listen to any one else? Or how should the master achieve safety for the passengers or health for those he is treating?

56. How many in whose company I came into the world are gone away already!

57. Honey appears bitter to the jaundiced, water is dreaded by those bitten by a mad dog, and to little boys a ball seems a fine thing. Why then am I angry? Or do you think that misrepresentation has smaller power over men than bile over the jaundiced or poison over the victim of a bite?

58. No one will prevent your living by the rule of your own nature: nothing will happen to you contrary to the rule of Universal Nature.

59. What creatures they are whom they wish to please, and by what kind of results and what kind of actions! How swiftly eternity will cover all things, and how many it has covered already!

1. [↑](#) Possibly we should read: 'as though a boy should . . .'

Footnotes

BOOK VII

1. This is Evil; it is that which you have often seen. Have this ready to hand at every emergency, that this is what you have often seen. You will in general find the same things repeated up and down the world. The ancient chronicles are full of them, those of the middle age, the recent. Cities and households to-day are full of them. There is nothing new, all alike familiar and short-lived.

2. Your principles are living principles. How else can they become lifeless, except the images which tally with them be extinguished? And with you it lies to rekindle them constantly. 'I am able to think as I ought about this; if, then, I am able, why am I troubled? Things outside my understanding are nothing at all in regard to my understanding.' Master this, and you stand upright. To come back to life is in your power; look once more at things as once you did, for herein to come back to life consists.

3. A procession's vain pomp, plays on a stage, flocks, herds, sham fights, a bone thrown to puppies, a crumb into fishponds, toiling and moiling of ants carrying their loads, scurrying of startled mice, marionettes dancing to strings. Well, then, you must stand up in all this, kindly and not carrying your head proudly; yet understand that every man is worth just so much as the worth of what he has set his heart upon.

4. In conversation one ought to follow closely what is being said; in the field of impulse to follow what is happening; in the latter case to see immediately what is the object of reference, in the former to mark closely the meaning expressed.

5. Is my understanding sufficient for this or not? If it is sufficient, I employ it for the task as an instrument bestowed on me by Universal Nature. But if it is insufficient, either I withdraw from the task in favour of one who can accomplish it better (provided in other ways this is my duty), or else I do it as best I can, taking to help me one who by using my intelligence to assist him can do what is now opportune and beneficial for the general public. For whatever I do, by myself or with another, should contribute solely to this, the general benefit and harmony.

6. How many whose praises have been loudly sung are now committed to oblivion: how many who sang their praises are long ago departed.

7. Do not be ashamed to be helped; the task before you is to accomplish what falls to your lot, like a soldier in a storming-party. Suppose you are lame and cannot scale the wall by yourself, yet it can be done with another's help.

8. Let not the future trouble you; for you will come to it, if come you must, bearing with you the same reason which you are using now to meet the present.

9. All things are woven together and the common bond is sacred, and scarcely one thing is foreign to another, for they have been arranged together in their places and together make the same ordered Universe. For there is one Universe out of all, one God through all, one substance and one law, one common Reason of all intelligent creatures and one truth, if indeed the perfection of creatures of the same family and partaking of the same Reason is one.

10. Everything material vanishes very swiftly in the Universal Substance, every cause is very swiftly taken up into the Universal Reason, and the memorial of everything is very swiftly buried in eternity.

11. For a reasonable creature the same act is according to Nature and according to Reason.

12. Upright, or held upright.

13. 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 more if you say to yourself: 'I am a member of the system made up of reasonable beings.' If, however, by the change of one letter, you call yourself a part, you do not yet 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.

14. Let what will from outside happen to what can be affected by this happening, for the parts which are affected shall, if they please, find fault; whereas I myself, unless I conceive the accident to be evil, am not yet harmed; and it is in my power not to conceive it to be evil.

15. Whatever any one may do or say, I am bound to be good; exactly as if gold or emerald or purple were continually to say this: 'whatever any one may do or say, I am bound to be an emerald and to keep the colour that is mine'.

16. The governing self does not create disorder for itself; I mean, for instance, it does not alarm itself or (lead itself)^[1] to appetite. If, however, any one else can alarm it or give it pain, let him do so, for it will not itself, with the consent of its judgement, turn to such moods. Let the body, if it can, be careful itself to suffer nothing; and the vital spirit which entertains fear and grief, if it suffers anywhere, let it say that it does; but that which delivers judgement generally on these affections will not suffer, for it will not itself be hasty to deliver such a judgement. The governing power regarded by itself has no wants, unless it create want for itself, and in the same way it is untroubled and unhindered, unless it trouble and hinder itself.

17. Happiness is a good genius or a good familiar spirit. 'What then are you doing here, phantom of imagination? Depart, in God's name, the way you came; I have no need

of you. But you have come according to your ancient habit. I am not angry with you, only depart.'

18. Is it change that a man fears? Why, what can have come to be without change, and what is dearer or more familiar to Universal Nature? Can you yourself take your bath, unless the firewood changes? Can you be nourished, unless what you eat changes? Can any other service be accomplished without change? Do you not see that it is precisely your changing which is similar, and similarly necessary to Universal Nature?

19. Through the matter of the Whole, as through a winter torrent, all bodies are passing, connatural with the Whole and co-operating with it, as our members work with one another. How many a Chrysippus, a Socrates, an Epictetus has Eternity already sucked down! Let the same thought strike you in the case of any single individual or object.

20. One thing only troubles me, that I may not myself do something which the constitution of man does not intend, or in the way it does not intend, or which at this moment it does not intend.

21. Near at hand is your forgetting all; near, too, all forgetting you.

22. It is a property of man to love even those who stumble. This feeling ensues if it occur to you at the time that men

are your kindred and go wrong because of ignorance and against their will; that in a little while both of you will be dead; but, above all, that he did you no harm, for he did not make your governing self worse than it was before.

23. Universal Nature out of its whole material, as from wax, models now the figure of a horse, then melting this down uses the material for a tree, next for a man, next for something else. And these, every one, subsist for a very brief while. Yet it is no hardship for a box to be broken up, as it was none for it to be nailed together.

24. A scowl on the face is eminently against Nature and, whenever it is often repeated, the expression dies or is at last extinguished, so that it loses the power to light up again. . . .^[2] Try to understand this very point that it is against Reason. For if even the consciousness of doing wrong has gone, what ground for living is left?

25. Everything that your eyes look upon will be changed almost in a moment by Nature which orders the Whole, and out of the material it will create other things, and again out of their material others, in order that the world may be ever fresh and young.

26. When a man offends against you, think at once what conception of good or ill it was which made him offend. And, seeing this, you will pity him, and feel neither surprise nor anger. For you yourself still conceive either the same

object as he does to be good, or something else of the same type; you are bound, therefore, to excuse him. If, on the other hand, you no longer conceive things of that kind to be goods or ills, you will the more easily be kind to one whose eye is darkened.

27. Do not think of what are absent as though they were now existing, but ponder on the most fortunate of what you have got, and on account of them remind yourself how they would have been missed, if they had not been here. Take heed at the same time not to accustom yourself to overvalue the things you are thus contented to have, so as to be troubled if at any time they are not here.

28. Withdraw into yourself: the reasonable governing self is by its nature content with its own just actions and the tranquillity it thus secures.

29. Wipe away the impress of imagination. Stay the impulse which is drawing you. Define the time which is present. Recognize what is happening to yourself or another. Divide and separate the event into its causal and material aspects. Dwell in thought upon your last hour. Leave the wrong done by another where the wrong arose.

30. Direct your thought to what is being said. Let your mind gain an entrance into what is occurring and who is producing it.

31. Make yourself glad in simplicity, self-respect, and indifference to what lies between virtue and vice. Love mankind. Follow God. Democritus says: 'All (sensibles) are ruled by law, but in reality the elements alone exist.' Enough for you to remember that 'all exist by law'; now is there very little else.^[3]

32. On Death: either dispersal, if we are composed of atoms; or if we are a living unity, either extinction or a change of abode.

33. On Pain: what we cannot bear removes us from life; what lasts can be borne. The understanding, too, preserves its own tranquillity by abstraction, and the governing self does not grow worse; but it is for the parts which are injured by the pain, if they can, to declare it.

34. On Fame: see what their minds are like, what they avoid, what pursue. And, besides, that as the sands are constantly carried over one another, hiding what went before, so in our life what was before is very swiftly hidden by what is carried after.

35. 'Do you really imagine that an intelligence endowed with greatness of heart and a vision of all time and all reality thinks this mortal life to be a great thing?' 'Impossible', was his answer. 'Then such a man as that will consider even death not a thing to be dreaded, will he not?' 'Most assuredly.'

36. 'A King's part: to do good and to be reviled.'

37. It is absurd that a man's expression should obey and take a certain shape and fashion of beauty at the bidding of the mind, whereas the mind itself is not shaped and fashioned to beauty by itself.

38. 'Man must not vent his passion on dead things,
Since they care nothing. . . .'

39. 'May it be joy that you give to the immortal gods and to men.'

40. 'Life, like ripe corn, must to the sickle yield,
And one must be, another cease to be.'

41. 'Were the gods careless of my sons and me,
Yet there is reason here.'

42. 'For with me stand both Righteousness and Good.'

43. 'Mourn not with them that sorrow; feel no thrill.'

44. 'But I should have a right answer to give him, as follows: "You speak unadvisedly, my friend, if you fancy that a man who is worth anything ought to take the risk of life or death into account, and not to consider only one thing, when he is acting, whether he does what is right or wrong, the actions of a good man or a bad."'

45. 'For really and truly, men of Athens, the matter stands like this: wherever a man takes post, believing it to be the best, or is posted by his captain, there he ought, as I think, to remain and abide the risk, taking into account nothing, whether death or anything else, in comparison with dishonour.'

46. 'But consider, my friend, whether possibly high spirit and virtue are not something other than saving one's life and being saved. Perhaps a man who is really a man must leave on one side the question of living as long as he can, and must not love his life, but commit these things to God, and, believing the women's proverb that no one ever escaped his destiny, must consider, with that in his mind, how he may live the best possible life in the time that is given him to live.'

47. Watch and see the courses of the stars as if you ran with them, and continually dwell in mind upon the changes of the elements into one another; for these imaginations wash away the foulness of life on the ground.

48. Moreover, when discoursing about mankind, look upon earthly things below as if from some place above them—herds, armies, farms, weddings, divorces, births, deaths, noise of law courts, lonely places, divers foreign nations, festivals, mournings, market places, a mixture of everything and an order composed of contraries.

49. Behold the past, the many changes of dynasties; the future, too, you are able to foresee, for it will be of like fashion, and it is impossible for the future to escape from the rhythm of the present. Therefore to study the life of man for forty years is no different from studying it for a hundred centuries. For what more will you see?

50. 'The earth-born parts return to earth again,
But what did blossom of ethereal seed
Returns again to the celestial pole.'

Or else this: an undoing of the interlacement of the atoms
and a similar shattering of the senseless molecules.

51. 'With gifts of meat and drink and magic charms
Turning aside the current not to die.'

'Man must endure whatever wind doth blow
From God, and labour still without lament.'

52. 'A better man at wrestling': but not more sociable or more modest or better trained to meet occasion or kinder to the faults of neighbours.

53. Where work can be accomplished according to the reason which is common to gods and men, there is nothing to fear; for where it is possible to obtain benefit by action which moves on an easy path and according to your constitution, there is no injury to suspect.

54. Everywhere and continually it is in your power to be reverently content with your present circumstance, to behave to men who are present with you according to right and to handle skilfully the present impression, that nothing you have not mastered may cross the threshold of the mind.

55. Do not look round to the governing selves of men different from yourself, but keep looking straight forward to the goal to which Nature is leading you, Universal Nature through what befalls you, and your own nature by what has to be done by yourself. Now each must do what follows from its constitution, and while the other creatures are constituted for the sake of the reasonable (just as in all else the inferior are for the sake of the superior), the reasonable are for one another's sake. Thus the principal end in man's constitution is the social; and the second, to resist the passions of the body; for it is a property of reasonable and intelligent movement to limit itself and never to be worsted by movements of sense or impulse; for each of those belong to the animal in us, but the movement of intelligence resolves to be sovereign and not to be mastered by those movements outside itself. And rightly so, for that is constituted by Nature to make use of them. The third end in a reasonable constitution is to avoid rash judgement and not to be deceived. Let the governing self, therefore, hold fast to these, and progress on a straight path, and it possesses what is its own.

56. As though you were now dead and have not lived your life up to the present moment, use the balance remaining to live henceforward according to Nature.

57. Love only what falls to your lot and is destined for you; what is more suited to you than that?

58. On each occurrence keep before your eyes those to whom the same happened, and then they were sorry, were surprised, complained. And now where are they? Nowhere. Very well, do you, too, desire what they desired? Will you not leave the moods of others to those who shift their moods and are shifted, and yourself be entirely concerned with the way to treat them? For you will treat them well and they will be material for yourself; only attend and resolve to be fair to yourself in all that you do, and call both things to your mind that what you do is important and that it is unimportant in what sphere your action lies.^[4]

59. Delve within; within is the fountain of good, and it is always ready to bubble up, if you always delve.

60. The body, too, should be composed, not sprawling about, whether in motion or in repose. For we should require of the body as a whole just what the mind exhibits in the face, when it preserves it intelligent and comely. But all these precautions must be adopted without affectation.

61. The art of living resembles wrestling more than dancing, in as much as it stands prepared and unshaken to meet what comes and what it did not foresee.

62. Constantly stop and consider the manner of men these are whose testimony you desire to gain, and their ruling principles; for, if you look into the sources of their judgement and impulse, you will not blame those who stumble involuntarily nor will you invite their testimony to yourself.

63. 'No soul is willing to be robbed of truth', he says. The same holds of justice, too, of temperance, of kindness, and the like. It is most necessary to remember this continually, for thus you will be more gentle to all men.

64. In the case of every pain be ready with the reflection that it is not an evil, and does not injure the intelligence at the helm; for it does not destroy it, in so far as the soul is reasonable and social. In the case of most pains, however, the saying of Epicurus should help you: 'Pain is neither intolerable nor continuing, provided you remember its limits and do not let your imagination add to it'. Remember, too, that many disagreeable feelings are identical with pain, and yet we do not perceive that they are; drowsiness, for example, and extreme heat, and loss of appetite. Whenever, then, you are disgusted in one or other of these ways, say to yourself: 'you are giving in to pain'.

65. See that you do not feel to the inhuman what they feel to mankind.

66. How do we know that Telauges was not in character superior to Socrates? It is not enough that Socrates won more glory by his death, argued more fluently with the Sophists, spent the whole frosty night in the open with more endurance, thought it braver to refuse, when ordered to arrest Leo of Salamis, and 'carried his head high in the streets' (a trait in regard to which one might question whether it was true). No, we have to consider this: what kind of soul Socrates had, whether he could be content with being just in his dealings with men and righteous in his dealing with the gods, whether he was neither hastily indignant with wickedness nor a servant to any man's ignorance, whether he neither accepted as unfamiliar anything assigned by Universal Nature or endured it as intolerable, nor submitted his mind to be affected by the affections of the flesh.

67. Nature did not so blend you with the compound Whole that she did not permit you to circumscribe yourself and to bring what is its own into submission to itself. Always bear this in mind, and further that to live the blessed life rests upon very few conditions; and do not, just because you have abandoned hope of being a thinker and a student of science, on this account despair of being free, modest, sociable, and obedient to God; for it is possible to become

an entirely godlike man and yet not to be recognized by any one.

68. Live out your life without restraint in entire gladness even if all men shout what they please against you, even if wild beasts tear in pieces the poor members of this lump of matter that has hardened about you. For, in the midst of all this, what hinders the mind from preserving its own self in tranquillity, in true judgement about what surrounds it and ready use of what is submitted to it, so that judgement says to what befalls it: 'this is what you are in reality, even if you seem other in appearance', and use says to what is given to it: 'I was looking for you, for the present is to me always material of reasonable and political virtue, that is (generally speaking) of the art of man or God'; since whatever comes to pass is suited to God or man, and is neither novel nor hard to deal with, but familiar and easy to handle.

69. Perfection of character possesses this: to live each day as if the last, to be neither feverish nor apathetic, and not to act a part.

70. The gods, who have no part in death, are not grieved because in so long an eternity they will be obliged always and entirely to suffer so many and such worthless men; and besides they take care of them in all kinds of ways. Yet do you, who are all but at the point of vanishing, give up the struggle, and that though you are one of the worthless?

71. It is ridiculous not to flee from one's own wickedness, which is possible, but to flee from other men's wickedness, which is impossible.

72. Whatever the reasonable and political faculty discovers to be neither intelligent nor social, with good reason it decides to be beneath itself.

73. When you have done good and another has been its object, why do you require a third thing besides, like the foolish—to be thought to have done good or to get a return?

74. No one wearies of receiving benefits, and to benefit another is to act according to Nature. Do not weary then of the benefits you receive by the doing of them.

1. [↑](#) This passage is mutilated and some words are missing.
2. [↑](#) The text is at fault here.
3. [↑](#) The text and interpretation are doubtful.
4. [↑](#) The text is defective.

Footnotes

BOOK VIII

1. This also conduces to contempt of vain-glory, that it is no longer in your power to have lived your whole life, or at any rate your life from manhood, in the pursuit of philosophy. To yourself as well as to many others it is plain that you fall far short of philosophy. And so you are tainted, and it is no longer easy for you to acquire the reputation of a philosopher. Your calling, too, in life has a rival claim. Therefore, if you have truly seen where the matter at issue lies, put away the question of what men will think of you and be satisfied if you live the rest of your life, be it more or less, as your nature wills. Consider accordingly what it does will, and let nothing besides distract you; for experience has taught you in how many paths you have strayed and nowhere found the good life: not in logical arguments, not in riches, not in glory, not in self-indulgence, nowhere. Where then is it to be found? In doing what man's nature requires. How then will he do this? If he hold fast doctrines upon which impulses and actions depend. What doctrines are these? They concern good and evil, how nothing is good for man which does not make him just, sober, brave and free; nothing evil which does not produce effects the opposite of these.

2. On the occasion of each act, ask yourself: 'How is this related to me? Shall I repent of it? But a little while and I am dead and all things are taken away. What more do I

require, if my present work is the work of an intelligent and social creature, subject to the same law as God?'

3. Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Pompeius, what are they by comparison with Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates? For these men saw reality and its causal and material aspects, and their ruling selves were self-determined; but as for the former, how much there was to provide for, and of how many things they were the servants,

4. Even if you break your heart, none the less they will do just the same.

5. In the first place, be not troubled; for all things are according to Universal Nature, and in a little while you will be no one and nowhere, even as Hadrian and Augustus are no more. Next, looking earnestly at the question, perceive its essence, and reminding yourself that your duty is to be a good man, and what it is that man's nature demands, do that without swerving, and speak the thing that appears to you to be most just, provided only that it is with kindness and modesty, and without hypocrisy.

6. The work of Universal Nature is this: to transfer what is here to there, to make changes, to take up from here and to carry there. All things are alterations, but the assignments, too, are impartial: all things are familiar, but not so that we need dread some new experience.

7. Every natural thing is satisfied when it fares well, and a reasonable nature fares well when it gives its assent to nothing false or obscure in its imaginations, directs its impulses only to social ends, desires and avoids only what is in our power, and welcomes all that is assigned by Universal Nature. For it is a part of Universal Nature, just as the leaf's nature is part of the plant's, only in that case the leaf's nature is part of a Nature naturally without sense or reason and able to be hindered, whereas man's nature is part of a Nature which is unhindered and reasonable and just, inasmuch as it assigns to each, impartially and according to its worth, its share of times, substance, cause, activity, experience. Consider, however, not whether you will find one thing equal to another in everything, but whether the whole of this taken together is not equal to the whole of that other.

8. You are not able to read; but you are able to restrain your arrogance, you are able to rise above pleasures and pains, you are able to be superior to fame, you are able not only not to be angry with the unfeeling and graceless, but to care for them besides.

9. Let no one any longer hear you finding fault with your life in a palace; nay, do not even hear yourself.

10. Regret is blame of oneself for having let something useful go by; but the good must be something useful and worth the attention of a really good man. Now no really

good man would regret having let a pleasure go by: no pleasure, therefore, is either useful or good.

11. What is this by itself in its own constitution, what is its substance or substrate, what its causal element, what its function in the world and how long a time does it persist?

12. When you are called from sleep with difficulty, revive the thought that to render social acts is according to your constitution and to human nature, but to sleep is what you share also with dumb animals. Now what to every creature is according to Nature is also more closely related to it, more part of its flesh and bone, yes, and also more agreeable.

13. Continually and, if possible, on the occasion of every imagination, test it by natural science, by psychology, by logic.

14. Whatever man you meet, say to yourself at once: 'what are the principles this man entertains about human goods and ills?' For if he has certain principles about pleasure and pain and the sources of these, about honour and dishonour, about death and life, it will not seem surprising or strange to me if he acts in certain ways, and I shall remember that he is obliged to act like this.

15. Remember that it is as absurd to be surprised that the world brings forth the fruits with which it teems as that the

fig-tree should bear figs. And it is absurd for the physician or the master of a ship to be surprised, if a patient is feverish or if a head-wind gets up.

16. Remember that to change your course and to follow some one who puts you right is not to be less free. For the change is your own action, proceeding according to your own impulse and decision, and indeed according to your mind.

17. If it is in your power to decide, why do you do it? But if in another's, whom do you find fault with? The atoms or the gods? Either is madness. You must find fault with no one. If you are able, put him right; if you can't do this, at least put the thing itself right; but if you can't even do this, to what purpose still does fault-finding tend? For nothing should be done without a purpose.

18. What dies does not fall outside the Universe. If it remains here and changes here, it is also resolved here into the eternal constituents, which are elements of the Universe and of yourself. And the elements themselves change and make no grievance of it.

19. Each has come into being for a purpose—a horse, say, or a vine. Why are you surprised? So the Sun God will say: 'I came into being for a purpose', and the rest of the gods too. What then is the purpose of your coming to be? 'To

please yourself?' See whether the idea allows itself to be framed.

20. Nature has designed the ending of each thing, no less than its beginning and its continuance, like one who throws a ball up. What good is it to the ball to go up or harm to come down and even fall to the ground? What good to the bubble to be blown or harm to it to burst? The same is true of a candle.

21. Turn it inside out and see the sort of thing it is, what it is like when it grows old or falls sick or^[1] Short-lived alike are praiser and the praised, he who remembers and he who is remembered. Moreover, they live in a mere corner of this region of the globe and even here all are not in accord, nor is even a man in accord with himself. The whole earth, too, is a mere point.

22. Attend to the subject, the activity, the doctrine, or the meaning.

You deserve to suffer this; so you would rather become good to-morrow than be good to-day.

23. Am I doing something? I relate the act to beneficence to men. Does an accident befall me? I accept it, relating it to the gods and to the source of all things, from which all that comes to pass depends by a common thread.

24. As your bath appears to your senses—soap, sweat, dirt, greasy water, all disgusting—so is every piece of life and every object.

25. Lucilla^[2] laid Verus in the grave, Lucilla followed; Secunda buried Maximus, Secunda next; Epitynchanus buried Diotimus, Epitynchanus next; Antoninus Faustina, Antoninus next. The same story over again. Celer Hadrian, Celer came next. Where now are those acute minds, those who unveiled the future, those who were swollen with pride? acute minds like Charax and Demetrius and Eudaemon and others of their kind. All creatures of a day, dead long since; some remembered not even for a little while, some turned to fable, and some even now fading out of fable. Keep these facts in mind, that your own frame is bound either to be scattered into atoms or your spirit to be extinguished or to change its place and be stationed somewhere else.

26. A man's joy is to do what is proper to man, and man's proper work is kindness to his fellow man, disdain of the movements of the senses, to discern plausible imaginations, to meditate on Universal Nature and the work of her hands.

27. There are three relations: one to your environment, one to the divine cause from which all things come to pass for all, one to those who live at the same time with you.

28. Pain is an evil, either to the body, in which case let the body say that it is so, or to the soul. But it is in the soul's power to preserve its own quiet and calm, and not to judge pain to be an evil; for every judgement, impulse, desire, or aversion is within, and nothing evil makes its way up to this.

29. Wipe out impressions by continually saying to yourself: it is in my power now not to allow any wickedness to be in this soul of mine, any appetite or disturbance at all, but seeing what is the character of them all I employ each according to its worth. Remember this power as Nature requires.

30. Speak both in the senate and to every man of whatever rank with propriety, without affectation. Use words that ring true.

31. The court of Augustus, his wife, daughter, grandsons, stepsons, sister, Agrippa, his kinsmen, familiar friends, Areios, Maecenas, doctors, sacrificial ministers—a whole court dead. Next pass on to other courts—death not of a single individual, but of a family, like the children of Pompeius. Then the familiar inscription upon tombs: the last of his line. Calculate all the anxiety of those who preceded them in order to leave behind an heir, and then it was ordained that one should be the last; here again a whole family dead.

32. You must plan your life, one action at a time, and be content if each acquires its own end as best it can; and that it should acquire its end, no one at all can prevent you. 'But some external obstacle will be in the way.' None to prevent action with justice, temperance, and due reflection. 'But possibly some other activity will be hindered.' Still, by meeting the actual obstacle with resignation and good-temperedly altering your course to what is granted you, a new action is at once substituted, which will fit into the plan of which we are speaking.

33. Accept without pride, relinquish without a struggle.

34. If you have ever seen a dismembered hand or foot or a head cut off, lying somewhere apart from the rest of the trunk, you have an image of what a man makes of himself, so far as in him lies, when he refuses to associate his will with what happens and cuts himself off or when he does some unneighbourly act. You have somehow made yourself an outcast from the unity which is according to Nature; for you came into the world as a part and now you have cut yourself off. Yet here there is this admirable provision that it is in your power to make yourself once more part of the unity—God has permitted this to no other part, to come together again, once it has been severed and cut off. But consider the kindness with which he has honoured man. He has put it in his power, to begin with, not to be broken off from the Whole, and then, if he has been broken off, to

come back again once more and to grow together and to recover his position as a part.

35. As each reasonable creature receives the rest of his abilities from the Nature of the Whole, so have we received this ability, too, from her.^[3] Just as she converts every obstacle and resistance, puts it into its place in the order of necessity and makes it a part of herself, so, too, the reasonable creature can make every obstacle material for himself and employ it for whatever kind of purpose he has set out upon.

36. Do not allow the imagination of the whole of your life to confuse you, do not dwell upon all the manifold troubles which have come to pass and will come to pass, but ask yourself in regard to every present piece of work: what is there here that can't be borne and can't be endured? You will be ashamed to make the confession. Then remind yourself that it is not the future or the past that weighs heavy upon you, but always the present, and that this gradually grows less, if only you isolate it and reprove your understanding, if that is not strong enough to hold out against it, thus taken by itself.

37. Is Panthea or Pergamos still sitting by the funeral bier of Verus; Chabrias or Diotimus by Hadrian's bier? Absurd! And if they were still sitting there, would the dead perceive it? And if they did perceive it, would it give them pleasure? And, if it gave them pleasure, would the mourners live for

ever? Were not they too fated first to become old men and women, and then to die? And when they were dead, what would those they mourned do afterwards? This is all a smell of corruption and blood, and dust in a winding sheet.

38. If you have a sharp sight; 'see', says he, 'and judge, by the wisest judgements you have'.

39. In the constitution of a reasonable creature I see no virtue able to oppose justice: but I see one able to oppose pleasure, self-control.

40. If you cancel your judgement about what seems to pain you, you yourself stand firm on surest ground. 'What is self?' 'Reason.' 'But I am not reason.' 'Granted; then do not let reason itself trouble itself, but if some other part of you is harmed, let it form its own judgement about itself.'

41. An obstacle to sense perception is injurious to animal nature; an obstacle to impulse is equally injurious to animal nature. (And something else may similarly be an obstacle and injurious to the constitution of a plant). Thus then an obstacle to reason is injurious to a reasoning nature. Transfer, therefore, all these considerations to yourself. Perhaps pain and pleasure are affecting you. Sense affection must look to it. Did an obstacle oppose your impulse? If you started out to satisfy it without mental reservation, the obstacle is at once injurious to you as a reasonable being; but if you experience the general lot, you are not yet hurt or

hindered. The properties of the mind, you know, no one else is wont to hinder, for neither fire nor steel nor despot nor abuse affect it one whit, when it has become 'a sphere rounded and at rest'.

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

43. One thing gives joy to one man, another to another; it is my joy if I keep my governing self intact, not turning my back on any human being nor on anything that befalls men, but seeing everything with kind eyes, welcoming and employing each occasion according to its merits.

44. See that you bestow this present time upon yourself. Those who rather run after fame in the future leave out of account that men hereafter will be just such others as these whom they find hard to bear, and those men, too, will be liable to death. What, after all, is it to you if men hereafter resound your name with such and such voices or have such and such a judgement about you?

45. 'Take me up and cast me where you please.' For there I shall keep the divinity within me propitious; satisfied, that is, if it should behave and act consistently with its own constitution.

Is this a sufficient reason why my soul should be in evil case, should lower itself, be humbled, craving, fettered,

fluttering? What will you discover to be a sufficient reason for that?

46. Nothing can happen to any human being which is not an incident appropriate to man, nor to an ox which is not appropriate to oxen, nor to a vine which is not appropriate to vines, nor to a stone which is not peculiar to a stone. If then that happens to each which is both customary and natural, why should you be discontented with your lot? For the Universal Nature did not bring to you what you could not bear.

47. If you suffer pain because of some external cause, what troubles you is not the thing but your decision about it, and this it is in your power to wipe out at once. But if what pains you is something in your own disposition, who prevents you from correcting your judgement? And similarly, if you are pained because you fail in some particular action which you imagine to be sound, why not continue to act rather than to feel pain? 'But something too strong for you opposes itself'. Then do not be pained, for the reason why the act is not done does not rest with you. 'Well, but if this be left undone, life is not worth living.' Depart then from life in a spirit of good will, even as he dies who achieves his end, contented, too, with what opposes you.

48. Remember that the governing self becomes invincible when it withdraws into itself and is satisfied with itself,

doing nothing which it does not will to do, even if its opposition is unreasonable. How much more then when it decides both with reason and circumspection about a given case? On this account the understanding free from passions is a citadel of refuge; for man has nothing stronger into which to retreat and be thereafter inexpugnable. He then who has not seen this is uninstructed; he who has seen it and does not retreat is unfortunate.

49. Do not say more to yourself than the first impressions report. You have been told that some one speaks evil of you. This is what you have been told; you have not been told that you are injured. I see that the little child is ill; this is what I see, but that he is in danger I do not see. In this way then abide always by the first impressions and add nothing of your own from within, and that's an end of it; or rather one thought you may add, as one who is acquainted with every change and chance of the world.

50. The cucumber is bitter? Put it down. There are brambles in the path? Step to one side. That is enough, without also asking: 'Why did these things come into the world at all?' Because the student of Nature will ridicule the question, exactly as a carpenter or cobbler would laugh at you if you found fault because you see shavings and clippings from their work in their shops. Still, they do have a place to throw rubbish into, whereas Universal Nature has nothing outside herself, and yet the astonishing thing in *her* way of working is that, having fixed her own limits, she is ever

changing into herself everything within those limits that looks as though it were going bad and getting old and useless, and out of these very things creating again others that are young, in order that she may need no substance from outside nor require any place to throw away what begins to decay. Thus she is satisfied with her own room, her own material and her own way of working.

51. Be not a sluggard in action nor confused in conversation nor wandering in imagination. Briefly, neither contract into yourself nor boil over in spirit nor in your mode of life leave no room for leisure.

'They kill you, cut you in pieces, pursue you with curses.' What has this to do with your understanding abiding pure, sane, temperate, and just? As if a man should stand by a sweet and crystal spring of water and curse it, but it never ceases bubbling up in water fresh to drink, and if he throw in mud or dung, it will quickly break it up and wash it away and will in no way be discoloured. How then shall you possess an everflowing fountain, not a mere cistern? If you guard yourself every hour unto freedom, contentedly, too, simply and reverently.

52. He who does not know that the Universe exists, does not know where he is. He who does not know the purpose of the Universe, does not know who he is nor what the Universe is. He who fails in any one of these respects could not even declare the purpose of his own birth. What then do

you imagine him to be, who shuns or pursues the praises of men who applaud, and yet do not know either where they are or who they are?

53. Do you wish to be praised by a man who curses himself three times every hour? Do you wish to please a man who doesn't please himself? Does a man please himself who repents of nearly everything that he does?

54. No longer merely breathe with the atmosphere that surrounds you, but now think also with the mind that surrounds all things. For the power of mind is as much poured out everywhere and distributed for him who is willing to absorb it, as the power of atmosphere for him who is able to respire it.

55. In general evil does no injury to the Universe, and particular evil does no injury to a neighbour, but only injures him to whom it is permitted to be delivered from it as soon as ever he himself determines.

56. To my will the will of a neighbour is as indifferent as his vital spirit and his flesh. For even though we were brought into the world more than anything else for the sake of one another, still each of our governing selves has its own sovereign right; for otherwise the evil of my neighbour would surely be evil of mine, and that was not God's good pleasure, in order that my unhappiness might not depend on someone other than myself.

57. The sun appears to be poured down and indeed is poured in every direction but not poured out. For this pouring is extension, and so its beams are called rays from their being extended. Now you may see what kind of thing a ray is by observing the sun's light streaming through a chink into a darkened room. For it is stretched in a straight line, and rests so to speak upon any solid body that meets it and cuts off the flow of air beyond.^[4] It rests there and does not glide off or fall. The pouring and diffusion of the understanding then should be similar, in no way a pouring out, but an extension, and it should not rest forcibly or violently on obstacles that meet it nor yet fall down, but stand still and illuminate the object that receives it; for that which does not reflect it will rob itself of the light.

58. He who fears death fears either total loss of consciousness or a change of consciousness. Now if you should no longer possess consciousness, you will no longer be aware of any evil; alternatively, if you possess an altered consciousness, you will be an altered creature and will not cease from living.

59. Men have come into the world for the sake of one another. Either instruct them then or bear with them.

60. An arrow's path and the mind's path are different. Nevertheless, both when it is on its guard and when it revolves round a subject of inquiry, the path of mind is none the less direct and upon its object.

61. Enter into the governing self of every man and permit every other man to enter into your own.

1. [↑](#) The word, are corrupt, nor has any satisfactory remedy been proposed.
2. [↑](#) Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus, and her husband M. Annii Verus, i. 2 and 3.
3. [↑](#) There is a corruption in the text; see notes to Greek text.
4. [↑](#) Lit. 'the air beyond', stopping the light fluid from going past it.

Footnotes

BOOK IX

1. Whosoever does injustice commits sin; for Universal Nature having made reasonable creatures for the sake of one another, to benefit each other according to desert but in no wise to do injury, manifestly he who transgresses her will sins against the most venerable of the gods, because Universal Nature is a nature of what is, and what is is related to all that exists.

And further, he who lies sins in regard to the same divine being, and she is named Truth and is the first cause of all truths. Now he who lies voluntarily commits sin in so far as by deceit he does injustice, and he who lies involuntarily sins, in so far as he is discordant with Universal Nature and creates disorder by fighting against the natural order of the Universe; for he who is carried of himself counter to truth docs so fight, since he had before received from Nature aptitudes by neglecting which he is now not able to distinguish falsehood from truth.

Moreover, he who runs after pleasures as goods and away from pains as evils commits sin; for being such a man he must necessarily often blame Universal Nature for distributing to bad and good contrary to their desert, because the bad are often employed in pleasures and

acquire what may produce these, while the good are involved in pain and in what may produce this.

And further, he who fears pains will sometimes fear what is to come to pass in the Universe, and this is at once sinful, while he who pursues pleasures will not abstain from doing injustice, and this is plainly sinful. But those who wish to follow Nature, being like-minded with her, must be indifferent towards the things to which she is indifferent, for she would not create both were she not indifferent towards both. Whosoever, therefore, is not himself indifferent to pain and pleasure, death and life, honour and dishonour, which Universal Nature employs indifferently, plainly commits sin.

And by 'Universal Nature employing these indifferently', I mean that in the natural order they happen indifferently to what comes to pass and follows upon an original impulse of Providence, whereby from an original cause it had an impulse to this world order, having conceived certain principles of what should come to be, and appointed powers generative of substances and changes and successions of the like kind.

2. A wiser man's part had been to go away from men without tasting falsehood, hypocrisy, luxury, and pride; a second-best course is to breathe your last filled at least with distaste for these things. Or is it your choice to sit down with wickedness and does not your experience even yet

persuade you to flee from the plague? For corruption of understanding is much more a plague than such a distemper and change of this environing atmosphere; for this is a plague to animals, as animate beings, that is a plague to men, as human beings.

3. Disdain not death, but be well satisfied with it, because this, too, is one of the things which Nature wills. For as are adolescence and old age, growth and maturity, development of teeth and beard and grey hair, begetting, conception and childbearing and the rest of the natural functions which life's seasons bring, such also is actual dissolution. This, therefore, is like a man of trained reason, not to be rash or violent or disdainful in the face of death, but to wait for it as one of the natural functions; and, as you now wait for the unborn child to come forth from your wife's womb, so expect the hour in which your soul will drop from this shell.

And if you would have an everyday rule to touch your heart, it will make you most contented with death to dwell upon the objects from which you are about to be parted and the kind of characters with whom your soul will be no longer contaminated. For you should in no wise be offended by them, but rather both care for them and bear them gently, yet still remember that your deliverance will not be from men like-minded with yourself. This alone, if anything could, might draw you back and detain you in life, were it granted you to live with those who had adopted the same doctrines; but, as it is, you see how great is the burden in

the discord of life lived with them, so that you say: 'Come swiftly, death, for fear I, too, forget myself.'

4. Whosoever does wrong, wrongs himself; whosoever does injustice, does it to himself, making himself evil.

5. Often he who omits an act does injustice, not only he who commits an act.

6. Sufficient are the present judgement that grasps its object, the present social act, the present disposition well satisfied with all that comes to pass from a cause outside the self.

7. Wipe out imagination: check impulse: quench desire: keep the governing self in its own control.

8. One vital spirit is distributed in irrational creatures: one mind spirit is divided in rational creatures; just as one element earth is in all earthy things and we see by one light and breathe one atmosphere, all that have sight and vital spirit.

9. All that partake in something common to them hasten towards what is of the same kind. The earthy all tends to earth, the watery all flows together, and the nature of air is similar so that they even need things to hold them apart by compulsion. Fire rises because of the elemental fire, but is so ready to combine in combustion with all fire here below that every material that is a little too dry is easily ignited,

because what hinders ignition is mixed in it in too small proportions. Therefore also, all that partakes of a common mind similarly, or even more swiftly, hastens to what is akin; for in proportion as it is superior to the rest, so is it more ready to mix and be blended with its own kind.

At any rate there were found from the first among irrational creatures, hives, and flocks, care for nestlings, and what resembles love; for already there were vital spirits there, and in the higher part the tendency to union was found raised in degree, as it was not in plants or minerals or trees. Among reasonable creatures, constitutions, friendships, households, and gatherings were found, conventions too and armistices in war. Among the yet higher, even among beings in a sense separated, there subsisted a unity such as obtains among the stars. Thus progress towards the higher was able to produce a sympathy even in what are separated.

Notice then what occurs now; only intelligent creatures have now forgotten that zeal and inclination to each other, and here only you do not see concurrence. Yet even so, they are overtaken in their flight, for nature is too strong for them. Watch and you will observe what I mean; certainly one would more quickly discover something earthy not attaching itself to the earthy than man entirely cut off from man.

10. Man, God, and the Universe alike bear fruit, each in the appropriate season, but if custom has come to apply the

word strictly of the vine and similar fruits, no matter. Reason, too, has its fruit, for the Whole and for itself, and from reason other results similar to itself come to pass.

11. If you can, change him by teaching, but if you cannot, remember that kindness was given you for this. The gods, too, are kind to such men and even co-operate with them to some objects, to health, to wealth, to reputation, so good are they to men; and you may be so too; or say, who is there to prevent you?

12. Labour, not like one who is unfortunate, nor wishing to be pitied or admired: rather have only one wish: to bestir yourself or to keep quiet as the reason of the City requires.

13. To-day I escaped all circumstance, or rather I cast out all circumstance, for it was not outside me, but within, in my judgements.

14. All things are the same: familiar in experience, transient in time, sordid in their material; all now such as in the days of those whom we have buried.

15. Things stand outside our doors, themselves by themselves, neither knowing nor reporting anything about themselves. What then does report about them? The governing self.

16. Not in feeling but in action is the good and ill of the reasonable social creature; even as his excellence and his

failings are not in feeling but in action.

17. To the stone that is thrown up it is no ill to be carried down nor good to be carried upwards.

18. Penetrate within, into their governing selves, and you will see what critics you fear, and what poor critics they are of themselves.

19. All things are in change, and you yourself in continuous alteration and in a sense destruction. So, too, is the Universe as a whole.

20. Another's wrong act you must leave where it is.

21 The ceasing of action, impulse, judgement is a pause and a kind of death, not any evil. Now pass to the ages of your life, boyhood for instance, youth, manhood, old age; for each change of these was a death; was it anything to be afraid of? Pass now to your manner of life under your grandfather, then under your mother, then under your (adoptive) father, and when you discover many another destruction, change, and ending, ask yourself: 'Was it anything to be afraid of?' So then even the ceasing, pause, and change of your whole life is not.

22. Make haste to your own governing self, to that of the Whole, and that of this man. To your own, to make it a righteous mind; to that of the Whole, to remind yourself what it is of which you are a part; to this man's, that you

may observe whether it is ignorance or design, and may reflect at the same time that his self is of one kind with your own.

23. As you are yourself a complement of a social system, so let every act of yours be complementary of a social living principle. Every act of yours, therefore, which is not referred directly or remotely to the social end sunders your life, does not allow it to be a unity, and is a partisan act, like a man in a republic who for his own part sunders himself from the harmony of his fellows.

24. Children's fits of temper and dolls and 'spirits carrying dead bodies', so that the story of the visit to the abode of Death strikes one more vividly.

25. Penetrate to the individuality of the cause and separating it from the matter, look into it; next isolate the time which at longest this individuality can by its nature subsist.

26. You endure a myriad troubles because you are not content with your governing self doing the kind of things it was formed to do. But enough.

27. When another blames or hates you or men express such sentiments, go to their inward selves, pass in and see what kind of men they are. You will see that you ought not to torment yourself in order that they may hold some opinion

about you. You must, however, be well disposed to them; for in the natural order they are friends, and moreover the gods help them in a variety of ways, by dreams, by prophecy;—to get, however, the objects about which they are concerned.

28. The rotations of the Universe are the same, up and down, from age to age.

Now either the mind of the Whole has an impulse to each individual; and if that is so, welcome what it initiates; or else it had an impulse once for all and what follows is consequential upon that; and why are you anxious? And whether the Whole be God, all is well—or whether it be Chance, somehow molecules or atoms, be not yourself then ruled by Chance.

In a moment earth will cover us all, then earth, too, will change and what ensues will change to eternity and that again to eternity. A man who thinks of the continuous waves of change and alteration, and the swift passage of all mortal things, will hold them in disdain.

29. The matter of the Whole is a torrent; it carries all in its stream. What then, man, is your part? Act as Nature this moment requires; set about it, if it is granted you, and don't look round to see whether any one will know. Don't hope for Plato's Utopia, but be content to make a very small step forward and reflect that the result even of this is no trifle.

How cheap are these mere men with their policies and their philosophic practice, as they suppose; they are full of drivel. For who will change men's convictions? And without a change of conviction what else is there save a bondage of men who groan and pretend to obey? Go to now and talk to me of Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius of Phalerum. If they saw what Universal Nature willed and went to school to her, I will follow: but if they were actors on the world's stage, no one has condemned me to imitate them. The work of Philosophy is simplicity and self-respect; lead me not away to vainglory.

30. 'Look from above' at the spectacle of myriad herds, myriad rites, and manifold journeying in storm and calm; diversities of creatures who are being born, coming together, passing away. Ponder, too, the life led by others long ago, the life that will be led after you, the life being led in uncivilized races; how many do not even know your name, how many will very soon forget it and how many who praise you perhaps now will very soon blame you; and that neither memorial nor fame nor anything else at all is worth a thought.

31. Calm, in respect of what comes to pass from a cause outside you; justice, in acts done in accord with a cause from yourself: that is to say, impulse and act terminating simply in neighbourly conduct, because for you this is according to Nature.

32. You have the power to strip off many superfluities which trouble you and are wholly in your own judgement; and you will make a large room at once for yourself by embracing in your thought the whole Universe, grasping ever-continuing Time and pondering the rapid change in the parts of each object, how brief the interval from birth to dissolution, and the time before birth a yawning gulf even as the period after dissolution equally boundless.

33. All that your eyes behold will very quickly pass away, and those who saw it passing will themselves also pass away very quickly; and he who dies in extreme age will be made equal in years with the infant who meets an untimely end.

34. What governing selves are theirs, what mean ends have they pursued, for what mean reasons do they give love and esteem! Accustom yourself to look at their souls in nakedness. When they fancy that their blame hurts or their praise profits, how great their vanity.

35. Loss is nothing else but change. In this Universal Nature rejoices and by her all things come to pass well. From eternity they came to pass in like fashion and will be to everlasting in other similar shapes. Why then do you say 'all things ever came to pass badly and that all will ever be bad'? So no power it seems was ever found in so many gods to remedy this, but the world is condemned to be straitened in uninterrupted evils?

36. The rottenness of the matter which underlies everything. Water, dust, bones, stench. Again: marble, an incrustation of earth; gold and silver, sediments; your dress, the hair of animals; the purple dye, blood, and so all the rest. What is of the nature of breath too is similar and changing from this to that.

37. Enough of this wretched way of life, of complaining and mimicry. Why are you troubled, what novelty is there in this, what takes you out of yourself? The formal side of things? Look it in the face. The material side then? Face that. Besides these there is nothing, except even now at this late hour to become simpler and better in your relation to the gods. To acquaint yourself with these things for a hundred years or for three is the same.

38. If he did wrong, the harm is with him; but perhaps he did not.

39. Either all comes to pass from one fountain of mind, as in a single organic body, and the part must not find fault with what is for the good of the whole; or else there are atoms, nothing but a mechanical mixture and dispersal. Why then be troubled? Say to your governing self: 'are you dead, gone to corruption, turned into a beast, are you acting a part, running with the herd, feeding with it?'

40. The gods are either powerless or powerful. If then they are powerless, why do you pray? But if they are powerful,

why not rather pray them for the gift to fear none of these things, to desire none of them, to sorrow for none of them, rather than that any one of them should be present or absent? For surely if they can co-operate with man, they can co-operate to these ends. But perhaps you will say: 'The gods put these things in my power.' Were it not better then to use what is in your power with a free spirit rather than to be concerned for what is not in your power with a servile and abject spirit? Besides, 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. That man prays: 'How may I know that woman'; do you pray: 'How may I not desire to know her.' Another prays: 'How may I get rid of him'; do you pray: 'How may I not want to be rid of him.' Another: 'How may I not lose my little child'; do you pray: 'How may I not be afraid to lose him.' Turn your prayers round in this way generally and see what is the result.

41. Epicurus says: 'In illness my conversation was not about the sufferings of my body, nor used I', he says, 'to talk to my visitors about such matters, but I continued to debate leading principles of science and to keep only to this, how the understanding while conscious of such changes in the mere flesh is yet undisturbed and preserves its own proper good. I did not even', he goes on, 'permit the medical men to give themselves airs as though they were doing some great thing, but my life passed on happily and brightly.' Do the same then as he did, in sickness if you are sick and in

any other circumstance, for it is common to every school not to desert Philosophy in any at all of the accidents of life and not to gossip with the ignorant and unlearned. Be intent only on what is now being done and on the instrument you use to do it.

42. Whenever you are offended by a man's shamelessness, ask yourself immediately: 'Is it possible then for the shameless not to be in the world?' It is not; do not then ask for the impossible; for he, too, is one of the shameless who must exist in the world. And have the same ready also for the rogue, the traitor, and every kind of wrongdoer; for directly you remind yourself that the class of such persons cannot but be, you will be gentler to them as individuals. Another useful thing is to call to mind immediately what virtue Nature gave man to meet this wrong, for she gave as an antidote against the unfeeling, mildness, against another, some other faculty, and generally speaking it is in your power to convert the man who has gone astray, for every man who does wrong is going wrong from the goal set before him and has gone astray. And what harm have you suffered? For you will find that none of those with whom you are angry has done the kind of thing by which your understanding was likely to become worse and it is there that your ills and harms have their entire existence.

How is it an evil or strange event that the uninstructed does what uninstructed men do? See whether you should not rather find fault with yourself for not expecting that he

would do this wrong; for you had aptitudes from reason to enable you to argue that in all probability this man will do this wrong, and yet you forgot and are surprised that he did wrong.

But, most important of all, turn inward to your own self, whenever you blame the traitor or the ungrateful, for the fault is plainly yours, whether you trusted a man with such a disposition to keep faith or whether, when you bestowed a favour, you did not give it unreservedly or so that you received the whole fruit from your act itself then and there. For when you have done good, what more, oh man, do you wish? Is it not enough that what you did was in agreement with your nature and do you seek a recompense for this? As if the eye asked a return for seeing or the feet for walking; for just as these were made for this which they effect according to their proper constitution, and so get what is theirs, even thus man is made by Nature to be benevolent, and whenever he contributes to the common stock by benevolence or otherwise, he has done what he was constituted for, and gets what is his own.

BOOK X

1. Wilt thou one day, my soul, be good, simple, single, naked, plainer to see than the body surrounding thee? Wilt thou one day taste a loving and devoted disposition? Wilt thou one day be filled and without want, craving nothing and desiring nothing, animate or inanimate, for indulgence in pleasures; not time wherein longer to indulge thyself, nor happy situation of place or room or breezes nor harmony of men? Wilt thou rather be satisfied with present circumstance and pleased with all the present, and convince thyself that all is present for thee from the gods and all is well for thee and will be well whatsoever is dear to them to give and whatsoever they purpose to bestow for the sustenance of the perfect living creature, the good and just and beautiful, which begets, sustains, includes, and embraces all things that are being resolved into the generation of others like themselves? Wilt thou one day be such as to dwell in the society of gods and men so as neither to find fault at all with them nor to be condemned by them?

2. Observe what your nature requires in so far as you are governed by mere physical nature; then do that and accept that, if only your nature as part of the animal world will not be rendered worse. Next you are to observe what your nature as part of the animal world requires and to take it all, if only your nature as a reasonable being will not be rendered worse. But what is reasonable is consequently also

social. Make use then of these rules and do not be troubled about anything besides.

3. Every event happens in such a way that your nature can either support it or cannot. If then it happens so that your nature can support it, do not complain but support it as it is your nature to do; but if so that your nature cannot support it, do not complain, for it will destroy you quickly. Remember, however, that your nature can support everything which it is in the power of your own judgement to make tolerable and endurable by representing to yourself that to do this is to your advantage or is your duty.

4. If he goes wrong, instruct him kindly and point out what is being overlooked; if you fail, blame yourself or, better, not even yourself.

5. Whatever befalls you was prepared for you beforehand from eternity and the thread of causes was spinning from everlasting both your existence and this which befalls you.

6. Whether there are Atoms or Nature, the first postulate must be: 'I am part of the Whole which is governed by Nature'; the second: 'I am allied in some way to the parts that are of the same kind with me.' For if I remember these postulates, I shall, in so far as I am a part, not be disaffected to anything assigned by the Whole; for nothing which benefits the Whole is injurious to the part, since the Whole contains nothing which does not benefit itself, and while all

natural existences have this common attribute, the nature of the Universe has this farther attribute that no external cause can compel it to generate anything injurious to itself.

By remembering, therefore, that I am a part of a Whole so characterized, I shall be well-affected to all that results from it, and in as much as I am allied in some way to the parts of the same kind as myself, I will do no unsocial act, rather I will study the good of my kind and direct every impulse to the common benefit and divert it from what opposes that benefit. Now when things are being accomplished in this way, life must needs flow smoothly, just as you would see that a citizen's life is smooth as he progresses by acts which benefit his fellow-citizens and welcomes whatever his city assigns.

7. The parts of the Whole, all which the Universe naturally includes, must necessarily perish, a word which is to be interpreted to denote change. Now if this were naturally evil as well as necessary for the parts, the Whole would not continue to be in a right condition while its parts were tending to change and had been put together specifically with a view to perishing. (For whether did Nature herself undertake to injure the parts of herself and to create them with a tendency to evil, and bound by necessity to fall into evil, or did such things come to pass without her knowledge? Neither view is credible.)

But now suppose one dispensed with Nature and expounded facts by way of 'natural law'; how absurd it is in one breath to assert that the parts of the Whole change by natural law, and in the same moment to be surprised or indignant as though at an occurrence in violation of natural law, particularly when the dissolution of each is taking place into the elements out of which each is composed. For this dissolution is either a dissipation of the atoms out of which they were compounded or else a turning of the solid into its earthy and of the vital spirit into its airy part, so that these too are caught up into the Reason of the Whole, whether the Whole returns periodically to fire or is renewed by eternal exchanges.

And do not imagine this solid body and this vital spirit to be that of its original entry into existence, for all this it took in only yesterday or the day before, an influx from foodstuffs and the atmosphere which is respired; what is changing then is what it took in, not what its mother brought into the world. And even suppose that what thus is changing binds you intimately to the individual self, that is in fact nothing, I think, to affect my present argument.

8. After giving yourself these titles: good, self-respecting, true, sane, conforming, high-minded, take care not to get others in their place; and, if you do lose these titles, be quick to return to them. Remember, further, that 'sanity' was intended to denote apprehensive attention to individual objects and the reverse of negligence; 'conformity' glad

acceptance of the assignments of Universal Nature; and 'high-mindedness' elevation of the thinking part above the smooth or interrupted movement of the flesh, above petty reputation and death and all indifferent things.

Therefore, if you continue to preserve yourself in these titles, not aspiring to be called them by others, you will be a changed man and will enter upon a changed life. For still to be such as you have been up to the present, to be torn and polluted in such a way of life, is to be utterly brutalized, to cling to mere life like half-devoured combatants in the arena, a mass of wounds and dusty blood, yet imploring to be kept alive until the morrow, only to be exposed in that state to the same teeth and claws.

Adventure yourself then upon these few titles, and if you are able to abide in them, abide like a man translated to Islands of the Blest; but if you perceive that you are falling away and losing control, go bravely away into some corner, there to recover control, or even depart altogether from life, not angrily, but simply and freely and with self-respect, having done at least this one thing in life, to have made your exit thus.

To remember the titles, however, it will be a great help to you to remember the gods, and that they at least do not wish to be the objects of servility, but for all rational beings to be made into their likeness, and that the fig-tree should be

what does the work of a fig-tree, the dog of a dog, the bee of a bee, and man the work of a man.

9. Play-acting, warfare, excitement, lethargy—in fact slavery!

Every day those sacred doctrines of yours, whichever of them you imagine and admit without scientific investigation, will be obliterated, whereas you should look at every object and do every act so that, at one and the same time, circumstance is accomplished and theory exercised, and the confidence which comes from a scientific knowledge of each experience is preserved, unnoticed, not concealed. For when will you take your indulgence in simplicity, when in dignity, when in the knowledge of what each object is in essence, what station it holds in the world, how long it naturally persists, of what it is compounded, to whom it can belong, who can give it and who take it away?

10. A spider is proud when he traps a fly, a man when he snares a leveret, another when he nets a sprat, another boars, another bears, another Sarmatian prisoners. If you test their sentiments, are they not bandits?

11. Acquire a methodical insight into the way all things change, one into another; attend continually to this part of Nature and exercise yourself in it, for nothing is so likely to promote an elevation of mind. He has put off the body and, reflecting that he will be bound almost at once to leave all

these things behind and to depart from men, he has devoted his whole self to justice in what is being accomplished by himself, and to Universal Nature in what comes to pass otherwise. And he spends no thought about what some one may say or think about him or do against him, but is contented with these two things, if he is himself acting justly in what is done in the present, and if he embraces what is assigned to him in the present; and he has put away every preoccupation and enthusiasm, and has no other will than to pursue a straight path according to the law and, pursuing it, to follow in God's train.

12. What need have you of a hint or suggestion, when it is possible to see what ought to be done and, if you are conscious of that, kindly to proceed on this path without turning back; but if you are not conscious of it, to suspend judgement and use the best men to advise you; or if some further points bar this advice, to go forward according to your present opportunities cautiously, holding fast to what seems to be just? For it is best to achieve justice, since, as you see, failure is to fail in this. The man who in everything follows the rule of Reason is at once master of his time and quick to act, at once cheerful in expression and composed.

13. Ask yourself directly you awake from sleep: will it be of any moment to you, if just and right acts are blamed by another? No, it will not. Have you forgotten what these who plume themselves upon praise or censure of others are like at bed and board, the sort of things they do and avoid or

pursue, how they steal and plunder, not with hands and feet, but with the most precious part of themselves, in which, whenever it determines, faith, self-respect, truth, law, a good divinity come into being?

14. 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.

15. Small is this balance of life left to you. Live as on a height; for here or there matters nothing, if everywhere one lives in the Universe, as in a city. Let men see, let them study a true man, a man who lives in accord with Nature. If they cannot bear him, let them kill him, for it were better so than for him to live on those terms.

16. Don't any more discuss at large what the good man is like, but be good.

17. Let your imagination dwell continually upon the whole of Time and the whole of Substance, and realize that their several parts are, by comparison with Substance, a fig-seed; by comparison with Time, the turn of a gimlet.

18. Dwell upon everything that exists and reflect that it is already in process of dissolution and coming into being by

change and a kind of decay or dispersion, or in what way it is born to die, in a manner of speaking.

19. What creatures they are; they eat, sleep, copulate, relieve nature, and so on; then what are they like as rulers, imperious or angry and fault-finding to excess; yet but yesterday how many masters were they slaving for and to what purpose, and to-morrow they will be in a like condition.

20. Each man's benefit is what Universal Nature brings to each, and it is his benefit precisely at the time she brings it.

21. 'Earth loves the rain': 'the glorious ether loves to fall in rain'. The Universe, too, loves to create what is to be. Therefore I say to the Universe: 'Your love is mine.' Is not that also the meaning of the phrase: 'This loves to happen'?

22. Either you go on living in the world and are familiar with it by now, or you go out, and that by your own will, or else you die and your service is accomplished. There is nothing beside these three: therefore be of good courage.

23. Always realize vividly the saying that one place of retreat is like any other, and how everything in the place you are in is the same as it would be on the top of a hill or by the sea or wherever you choose. You will find exactly what Plato says: 'building round himself a fold on a hill and milking his bleating flocks'.

24. What is my governing self to me, and what sort of thing am I making it now, and for what purpose am I employing it now? Is it void of reason? Is it severed and torn asunder from society? Is it so melted into and blended with the flesh that it conforms to its movements?

25. He who runs away from his master is a fugitive slave. But law is a master and therefore the transgressor of law is a fugitive slave. In the same way, also, he who gives way to sorrow or anger or fear, wishes that something had not been or were not now, or should not be hereafter, of what is appointed by that which ordains all things; and that is law, laying down for every man what falls to his lot. He, therefore, who yields to fear or pain or anger is a fugitive slave.

26. A man drops seed into a womb and goes his way and thereupon another causal principle takes it, labours upon it and completes a new-born babe. What a marvellous result of that small beginning. Next the babe passes food through the gullet and thereupon another causal principle takes it and creates sensation and impulse; in a word, life and strength and other results, how many and how marvellous. Contemplate, therefore, in thought what comes to pass in such a hidden way, and see the power, as we see the force which makes things gravitate or tend upwards, not with the eyes, but none the less clearly.

27. Reflect continually how all things came to pass in days gone by as they do to-day, and reflect that so they will hereafter; and put before your eyes whole dramas and scenes of the same kind, which you have known in your own experience or from earlier history, the whole court of Hadrian, for instance, or of Antoninus; of Philip, Alexander, and Croesus; for those were all like these; the actors only were different.

28. Picture to yourself every man who gives way to pain or discontent at any thing at all as like a pig being sacrificed, kicking and squealing. Such also is the man who groans on his bed, alone and in silence. Think of the chain we are bound by, and that to the rational creature only is it given to obey circumstances of his own will, while mere obedience is necessary for all.

29. At the time of each separate act, stop and ask yourself whether death is to be feared because you are deprived of this.

30. When you run against some one's wrong behaviour, go on at once to reflect what similar wrong act of your own there is; for instance, to esteem money or pleasure or glory as goods, and so on with each kind. For if you attend to this, you will quickly forget your anger, when it occurs to you at the same time that he is compelled, for what else can he do? Alternatively, if you can, remove what in him is subject to compulsion.

31. When you see Satyrion, Eutyches, or Hymen, picture a follower of Socrates; or an Euphrates, when you see Eutychion or Silvanus; an Alciphron, when you see Tropaeophorus; and a Crito or Xenophon, when you see Severus. So when you look at yourself, picture one of the Caesars, and in every case picture a parallel. Then let the thought strike you in the same moment: 'Where are they all? Nowhere, or we know not where.' For in this way you will continually see that man's life is smoke and nothingness, especially if you remind yourself that what has once changed will be no more in infinite Time. Why then are you bothered? Why not satisfied to pass through this brief moment ordering your ways? What kind of material condition and station are you running away from? What is it all except a school of exercise for a reason which has exactly and scientifically looked into what life contains? Wait, therefore, until you assimilate even these things to yourself, as a strong stomach assimilates any food and a bright fire turns whatever you throw into it to flame and light.

32. Don't let it be possible for any one to say of you truthfully that you are not simple and good, but let him be a liar who thinks any of these things about you. And this entirely rests with you; for who prevents your being good and simple? Only make up your mind not to go on living, if you are not like that, for Reason, too, disowns one who is not like that.

33. What is the soundest thing that can be done or said in a given material condition? For whatever this may be, you are able to do or say it, and you are not to make the excuse that you are prevented. You will never cease groaning until you feel that to act appropriately to man's constitution in any material condition which occurs to you or befalls you is for you what luxury is to the sensualist. For you should regard as an indulgence whatever you can achieve in accord with your own nature, and this you can achieve everywhere. Now the roller is not allowed everywhere to be moved according to its own natural movement, nor are water, fire, and the rest, which are governed by natural law or life without reason—for there are many things which separate them and resist them. Mind and reason are able to move through any thing that opposes, as their nature and their will prescribe. Put before your eyes this ease with which reason will prove to be carried through all things (as fire moves upwards, a stone down, a roller on a slope) and ask for nothing more, for the remaining obstacles are either of the lifeless body or else do not overwhelm it or do any harm at all without the judgement and the consent of reason itself.

For mark you, were it not so, the man affected would have become evil at once; at all events in all other constituted things whatever is affected itself becomes worse because of any evil which happens to it, whereas in this case, if one may so put it, a man becomes better and more laudable by right use of circumstances. And generally, remember that nothing harms the natural citizen which does not harm the

city and nothing harms the city which does not harm the law. Now none of what are called strokes of bad luck harms the law: wherefore, not harming the law, it harms neither city nor citizen.

34. For one bitten by true doctrines even the briefest and most familiar saying is reminder enough to dispel sorrow and fear, for instance:

'leaves,
the wind scatters some on the face of the ground;
like unto them are the children of men.'

Yes, 'leaves' too are your children, and 'leaves' those whose voices shout and applaud convincingly or on the contrary curse you or blame and rail beneath their breath; 'leaves' too even those who will receive and hand on your fame hereafter. For they all 'shoot in the season of spring'; then the wind has thrown them down and the woodland 'bears others' in their stead. Brief life is the common portion of all, yet you avoid and pursue each thing as though it will be for everlasting. A little while and you will close your eyes, and now another will be lamenting him who carried you out.

35. The healthy eye should be able to look at every object of sight, and not to say: 'I wish it were green', for this is what a man does who has ophthalmia. The healthy ear and nose must be ready for every object of hearing or smell, and the healthy stomach must be disposed to every kind of

nourishment as the mill is ready for everything which it is made to grind. Accordingly the healthy understanding too must be ready for all circumstances; but that which says: 'may my children be kept safe' or 'may all men praise whatever I do', is the eye looking for green or the teeth for what is tender.

36. No one is so fortunate but that when he is dying some will be at his bedside welcoming the evil that is coming to him. Was he earnest and wise; perhaps there will be someone at the end to say of him: 'we shall breathe more freely now this schoolmaster has gone; he was not hard on any of us, but I could feel he was tacitly condemning us.' So much for the earnest man; but in our own case what a number of other things there are for which many want to be rid of us. You will think then of this as you die and will depart more easily, thinking to yourself: 'I am going away from the kind of life in which even my fellow men, for whom I laboured, prayed and thought so much, even they wish me to go away, hoping perhaps for some relief by my death.' Why then should one hold on to a longer stay in this world? Do not, however, on this account leave them with less kindness, but preserve your own character, friendly and well disposed and propitious; and again do not go as if you were being torn away, but as for a man who has a quiet end the soul slips easily from its casing, so should your departure be from them. For it was Nature who bound you and united you to them, and now she sets you free. I am set free from men who are certainly my kinsfolk, yet I do not

resist and I go under no compulsion. For this, too, is one of the things which are according to Nature.

37. Accustom yourself in the case of whatever is done by any one, so far as possible to inquire within yourself: 'to what end does this man do this?' And begin with yourself and first examine yourself.

38. Remember that what is hidden within you controls the strings; that is activity, that is life, that, if one may say so, is the man, Never occupy your imagination besides with the body which encloses you like a vessel and these organs which are moulded round you. They are like an axe, only differing as being attached to the body. For, indeed, these parts are of no more use without the cause which moves or checks them than the shuttle to the weaver, the pen to the writer or the whip to the man who holds the reins.

BOOK XI

1. The properties of the rational soul: it is conscious of itself, it moulds itself, makes of itself whatever it will, the fruit which it bears it gathers itself (whereas others gather the fruits of the field and what in animals corresponds to fruit), it achieves its proper end, wherever the close of life comes upon it; if any interruption occur, its whole action is not rendered incomplete as is the case in the dance or a play and similar arts, but in every scene of life and wherever it may be overtaken, it makes what it proposed to itself complete and entire, so that it can say: 'I have what is my own.'

Moreover, it goes over the whole Universe and the surrounding void and surveys its shape, reaches out into the boundless extent of time, embraces and ponders the periodic rebirth of the Whole and understands that those who come after us will behold nothing new nor did those who came before us behold anything greater, but in a way the man of forty years, if he have any understanding at all, has seen all that has been and that will be by reason of its uniformity. A property, too, of the rational soul is love of one's neighbour, truth, self-reverence and to honour nothing more than itself; and this last is a property of law also; accordingly right principle and the principle of justice differ not at all.

2. You will despise joyous song and the dance and the combat-at-arms if you disintegrate the tuneful phrase into every one of its notes, and ask yourself about each whether you are its servant; for you will be ashamed. And so you will be if you do what corresponds in the case of the dance in respect of each movement or pose, and the same also in the case of the combat-at-arms. Generally then, excepting virtue and its effects, remember to have recourse to the several parts and by analysis to go on to despise them, and to apply the same process to life as a whole.

3. How admirable is the soul which is ready and resolved, if it must this moment be released from the body, to be either extinguished or scattered or to persist. This resolve, too, must arise from a specific decision, not out of sheer opposition like the Christians, but after reflection and with dignity, and so as to convince others, without histrionic display.

4. Have I done a neighbourly act? I am thereby benefited. Let this always be ready to your mind, and nowhere desist.

5. What is your art? To be good. But how is this done except by principles of thought, concerned both with Universal Nature and with man's individual constitution?

6. First of all tragedies were put on the stage to remind you of what comes to pass and that it is Nature's law for things to happen like that, and that you are not to make what

charmed you on the stage a heavy burden on the world's greater stage. For you see that those events are bound to have that ending and that even those endure them who have cried aloud: 'Alas! Alas! Cithaeron.' There are also valuable sayings in the dramatists; an especially famous one, for instance:

'Were the gods careless of my sons and me,
Yet there is reason here',

and again:

'Man must not vent his passion on mere things',

or:

'Life, like ripe corn, must to the sickle yield',

and the many others of the same sort.

After Tragedy was introduced the Old Comedy, which through its instructive frankness and its reminder by actual plainness of language to avoid vanity was not without profit, and this directness Diogenes also adopted with a somewhat similar object. After the Old, observe what the Middle Comedy was like and afterwards with what end the New Comedy was adopted, passing little by little into a love of technique based on imitation. It is recognized that there are profitable sayings of these authors also, but after all

what was the object to which the whole aim of such poetry and drama looked?

7. How vividly it strikes you that no other calling in life is so fitted for the practice of philosophy as this in which you now find yourself.

8. A branch cut off from the bough it belonged to cannot but be cut off also from the whole tree. Similarly a man, if severed from a single man, has fallen away from society as a whole. Now in the case of a branch, it is cut off by another agency, whereas man by his own act divides himself from his neighbour, when he hates him and turns from him, yet he does not realize that at the same time he has severed himself from the whole Commonwealth. Only there is this singular gift of Zeus who brought society together, that we are enabled to join again with the man we belong to, and again to become complements of the Whole. Yet, if it is often repeated, the effect of such separation is to make what separates difficult to unite and to restore. Generally speaking, too, the branch which originally grew with the tree and shared its transpiration, by remaining with it, is different from the branch which is engrafted again after being cut off, whatever gardeners may say.

'Grow together with them but do not share their doctrines.'

9. Just as those who oppose you as you progress in agreement with right principle will not be able to divert you from sound conduct, so do not let them force you to abandon your kindness towards them; but be equally on your guard in both respects, in steady judgement and behaviour as well as in gentleness towards those who try to hinder you or are difficult in other ways. For to be hard upon them is a weakness just as much as to abandon your course and to give in, from fright; for both are equally deserters from their post, the man who is in a panic as well as the man who is alienated from his natural kinsman and friend.

10. 'No Nature is inferior to Art', for the crafts imitate natural things. If then this be true, the Nature which is the most perfect of all natures and all inclusive would not fall short of technical inventiveness. Moreover, all crafts create the lower in the interests of the higher, wherefore the Universal Nature does the same. And so from her is the birth of Justice, and from Justice the rest of the virtues have their existence; for Justice will not be preserved if we are concerned for indifferent objects or are easily deceived by them or are liable to stumble or to change.

11. The objects whose pursuit or avoidance disturbs your peace do not come to you, but in a measure you go to them. Let your judgement at all events about them be untroubled and they will remain unmoved, and you will be seen neither to pursue nor to avoid them.

12. The sphere of the soul is true to its own form, when it is neither extended in any way nor contracted inwards; when it is neither scattered nor dies down, but is lighted by the light whereby it sees the truth of all things and the truth within itself.

13. Will any man despise me? Let him see to it. But I will see to it that I may not be found doing or saying anything that deserves to be despised. Will he hate me? Let him see to it. But I will be kind and well-disposed to every man and ready to show him what is overlooked, not reproachfully nor as though I were displaying forbearance, but genuinely and generously like the famous Phocion, if he was not in fact pretending. For the inward parts ought to be like that, and a man ought to be seen by the gods to be neither disposed to indignation nor complaining. For what harm is there to you if you are yourself at the moment doing the thing which is appropriate to your nature and accepting what is at this moment in season for Universal Nature, as a human being intent upon the common benefit being somehow realized?

14. They despise one another, yet they flatter one another; they want to get above one another and yet bow down to one another.

15. How rotten and crafty is the man who says: 'I have made up my mind to deal plainly with you.' What are you about, my friend? This preface is not necessary. The

intention will reveal itself, it ought to be graven on the forehead; the tone of voice should give that sound at once; the intention should shine out in the eyes at once, as the beloved at once reads the whole in the glances of lovers. The simple and good man ought to be entirely such, like the unsavoury man, that those who stand by detect him at once, whether he will or not, as soon as he comes near. But the affectation of simplicity is like a razor; nothing is uglier than the wolf's profession of friendship, avoid that above all. The good and simple and kind has these qualities in his eyes and they are not hidden.

16. Live constantly the highest life. This power is in a man's soul, if he is indifferent to what is indifferent; and he will be so, if he regard every one of these indifferent objects as a whole and in its parts, remembering that none of them creates in us a conception about itself nor even comes to us, but they are motionless, and it is we who create judgements about them and so to speak inscribe them on ourselves; and yet we need not inscribe them and, if we do so unconsciously, we can wipe them off again at once. Remember, too, that attention to this kind of thing will last but a little while and, after that, life will have reached its close. And yet what difficulty do these things present? If they are what Nature wills, rejoice in them and you will find them easy: if they are not, look for what your own nature wills and hasten to this, even should it bring you no glory; for every man is pardoned if he seeks his own good.

17. What the origin of each experience is and the material conditions of each; what it is changing into and what it will be like when it has changed, and that it will suffer no injury by the change.

18. First, what is my position in regard to others and how we came into the world for one another; and, to put it in a different way, that I was born to protect them, as the ram protects his flock or the bull his herd. Then, going further back, proceed from the truth that, unless the Universe is mere atoms, it is Nature which administers the Whole and, granted this, the lower are in the interests of the higher, the higher for one another.

Secondly, what creatures they are at board and in bed and so on, and above all what kind of compulsion they are under because of their opinions, and with what arrogance they do what they do.

Thirdly, that, if they do what is right, you ought not to complain, but if what is wrong, clearly they act involuntarily and in ignorance—for as every soul is unwilling to be deprived of the truth, so is it unwilling not to be related to every man according to his worth; at any rate they resent it, if they are spoken of as unjust, inconsiderate, overreaching, in a word as wrong-doers in regard to their neighbours.

Fourthly, that you yourself also often do wrong and are another such as they are, and that, even if you do abstain from some kinds of wrong action, at all events you have at least a proclivity to them, though cowardice or tenderness for your good name or some similar bad motive keeps you from offences like theirs.

Fifthly, that you are not even sure that they actually do wrong; for many actions are done to serve a given purpose and, generally, one must ascertain much before making a certainly correct decision upon a neighbour's conduct.

Sixthly, when you are highly indignant or actually suffering, that man's life is but a moment, and in a little we are one and all laid low in death.

Seventhly, that it is not what they do that troubles us, for that lies in their own governing selves, but it is our judgements about them. Very well then, remove your judgement about the supposed hurt and make up your mind to dismiss it, and your anger is gone. How then will you remove it? By reflecting that what hurts you is not morally bad; for unless what is morally bad is alone hurtful, it follows of necessity that you also do much wrong and become a brigand and a shifty character.

Eighthly, how much more grievous are what fits of anger and the consequent sorrows bring than the actual things are which produce in us those angry fits and sorrows.

Ninthly, that gentleness is invincible, if it be genuine and not sneering or hypocritical. 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, 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 nor 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.

Remember these nine brief prescriptions, taking them as a gift from the Muses, and begin at last to be a human being, while life remains. And be as much on your guard against flattering them as against being angry with them, for both faults are unsocial and tend to injury. And in your angry fits have the maxim ready that it is not passion that is manly, but that what is kind and gentle as it is more human so is it more manly, and that this is the character which has strength and sinews and fortitude, not that which is indignant and displeased; for as this is nearer to imperturbability so it is nearer to power; and as grief is a mark of weakness, so also is anger, for both have been wounded and have surrendered to the wound.

And, if you will, receive a tenth gift from the leader of the nine Muses, to wit that it is madness to require bad men not to do wrong, for it is aiming at the impossible. Still, to permit them to be such to others and to require them not to do wrong to yourself is to be unfeeling and tyrannical.

19. You are especially to guard unremittingly against four moods of the governing self, and to wipe them out whenever you detect them, using in each case the following remedies: this imagination is not necessary; this is a solvent of society; this which you are about to say is not from yourself, and not to speak from yourself you must consider to be most incongruous.

The fourth thing that will cause you to reproach yourself is that this ensues from your more divine part being overcome and yielding to the less honourable and mortal portion, the body and its gross pleasures.

20. Your element of spirit and all the element of fire that is mingled in you, in spite of their natural upward tendency, nevertheless obey the ordering of the Whole and are held forcibly in the compounded body in this region of the earth. Once more, all the elements of earth and of water in you, in spite of their downward tendency, are nevertheless lifted up and keep to a position which is not natural to them. In this way then even the elements are obedient to the Whole and, when they are stationed at a given point, remain there by

compulsion until once more the signal for their dissolution is made from the other world.

Is it not then monstrous that only your mind-element should disobey and be dissatisfied with its station? Yet nothing is imposed upon it that does violence to it, only what is in accord with its own nature, and still it does not tolerate this, but is carried in a reverse direction. For movement towards acts of injustice and habitual vice, towards wrath and sorrow and fear, is nothing else but a movement of severance from Nature. Moreover, when the governing self is discontented with any circumstance, then, too, it deserts its proper station, for it is constituted for holiness and the service of God no less than for just dealing with man. For these relations belong in kind to good fellowship, or rather are even more to be revered than just dealings.

21. 'He who has not one and the same aim in life is unable to remain one and the same through all his life.' The saying is incomplete unless you add what sort of aim it should be. For as the conception of all the variety of goods which the majority of men fancy in any way to be good is not the same, but only the conception of certain of the kinds of goods, namely the general goods, so the aim to be set before oneself must be the social aim, that is the aim of the Commonwealth. For he who directs every private impulse to this will make all his actions uniform and because of this will always be the same man.

22. The mountain mouse and the town mouse, and the fright and scurry of the latter.

23. Socrates used to call the opinions of the multitude like other things: 'Bogies', things to frighten children.

24. The Spartans used to put seats for visitors at their entertainments in the shade, and to seat themselves wherever they found room.

25. Socrates' message to Perdiccas to excuse a visit to his court: 'to avoid', he said, 'coming to a most unfortunate end, that is, to be treated handsomely and not to have the power to return it'.

26. The writings of the school of Epicurus lay down the injunction to remind oneself continually of one of those who practised virtue in the days gone by.

27. The Pythagoreans say: Took up to the sky before morning breaks', to remind ourselves of beings who always in the same relations and in the same way accomplish their work, and of their order, purity, and nakedness; for a star has no veil.

28. What a man Socrates was in his under garment only, when Xanthippe took his upper garment and went out; and what he said to the friends who were shocked and retired when they saw him in that dress.

29. In writing and reciting you will not be a master before you have been a pupil. This is much more true of living.

30. 'You are a slave by nature: reason is not your part.'

31. 'And my dear heart laughed within.'

32. 'Virtue they will reproach, mocking her with harsh words.'

33. Only a madman expects a fig in winter; such is he who expects a child when it is no longer permitted.

34. Epictetus used to say that, as you kissed your child, you should say in your heart: 'to-morrow maybe you will die'. 'Those are words of ill omen.' 'No,' he replied, 'nothing that means an act of Nature is of evil omen, or it would be a bad omen to say that the corn has been reaped.'

35. The unripe grape, the ripe bunch, the dried raisin, all are changes; not to nothing, but to what at this moment is nothing.

36. 'There is no robber of the will,' as Epictetus says.

37. He said too: 'you must find out an art of assent, and keep your attention fixed in the sphere of the impulses, that they may be controlled by reservation, be social, and in proportion to value; and you must wholly abstain from

desire and employ aversion in regard to nothing that is not in our own control.

38. 'So we are contending,' he said, 'for no ordinary prize, but for whether we are to be sane or insane.'

39. Socrates used to say: 'What do you want? To have souls of rational or irrational beings?' 'Rational.' 'What rational beings, sound or inferior?' 'Sound.' 'Why don't you seek them?' 'Because we have them.' 'Why then do you fight and disagree?'

BOOK XII

1. It is in your power to secure at once all the objects which you dream of reaching by a roundabout path, if you will be fair to yourself: that is, if you will leave all the past behind, commit the future to Providence, and direct the present, and that alone, to Holiness and Justice. Holiness, to love your dispensation—for Nature brought it to you and you to it; Justice, freely and without circumlocution both to speak the truth and to do the things that are according to law and according to worth. And be not hampered by another's evil, his judgement, or his words, much less by the sensation of the flesh that has formed itself about you—let the part affected look to itself. If then, when you arrive at last at your final exit, resigning all else, you honour your governing self alone and the divine element within you, if what you dread is not that some day you will cease to live, but rather never to begin at all to live with Nature, you will be a man worthy of the Universe that gave you birth, and will cease to be a stranger in your own country, surprised by what is coming to pass every day, as at something you did not look to see, and absorbed in this thing or in that.

2. God beholds the governing selves of all men stripped of their material vessels and coverings and dross; for with His own mind alone He touches only what has flowed and been drawn from Himself into these selves. You, too, if you make it your habit to do this, will rid yourself of your

exceeding unrest. For it would be strange that one who does not behold the poor envelope of flesh should yet lose his time in admiring dress and dwelling and reputation, and all such trappings and masquerade.

3. There are three things of which you are compounded: body, vital spirit, mind. Two of these are your own in so far as you must take care of them, but only the third is in the strict sense your own. So, if you separate from yourself, namely from your mind, all that others do or say, all that you yourself did or said, all that troubles you in the future, all that as part of the bodily envelope or natural spirit attaches to you without your will, and all that the external circumfluent vortex whirls round, so that your mind power, freed from the chain of necessity, lives purified and released by itself—doing what is just, willing what comes to pass, and speaking what is true; if you separate, I say, from this governing self what is attached to it by sensibility, and what of time is hereafter or has gone by, and make yourself like the sphere of Empedocles,

'Rounded, rejoicing in the solitude which is about it',^[1]

and practise only to live the life you are living, that is the present, then you will have it in your power at least to live out the time that is left until you die, untroubled and with kindness and reconciled with your own good Spirit.

4. I often wonder how it is that every one loves himself more than all the world and yet takes less account of his own judgement of himself than of the judgement of the world. At all events, if a god appeared to him or some wise master and bade him think and contemplate nothing within himself without at the same time speaking it out loud, he would not tolerate it even for a single day. Thus we respect whatever our neighbours will think about us more highly than we respect ourselves.

5. How was it that the gods, who ordered all things aright and with love to man, overlooked this one thing only, that among mortal men some altogether good, who had, so to speak, most commerce with the Godhead, and by holy acts and solemn rites had grown in the highest degree familiar with Him, should, once dead, never come into being again but be entirely extinguished?

Now, if indeed it is so, be certain of this that, if it ought to have been otherwise, the gods would have made it so; for were it just, it would also be possible, and were it accordant with Nature, Nature would have brought it about. Therefore from its not being so, if indeed it is not so, you should believe that it ought not to come to pass. For you yourself see that, by questioning thus, you are arguing a point of justice with God. Now we should not be debating thus with the gods unless they were most good and most just; and if this is true, they would not have permitted any part of the

ordered world they govern to be unjustly and unreasonably neglected.

6. Practise even the things which you despair of achieving. For even the left hand, which for other uses is slow from want of practice, has a stronger hold upon the bridle rein than the right; for it has been practised in this.

7. What ought one to be like both in body and soul, when overtaken by death; the brevity of life; the gulf of Time hereafter and gone by; the weakness of all matter.

8. Consider the causes of reality stripped of their covering; the relations of your actions; the nature of pain, pleasure, death, fame; who is not the author of his own unrest; how none is hindered by his neighbour; that all things are what we judge them to be.

9. In the use of principles model yourself on the boxer, not the gladiator. The one puts away the sword he uses and takes it up again; the other has his hand always, and need but clench it.

10. See facts as they really are, distinguishing their matter, cause, relation.

11. How large a liberty man has to do nothing other than what God will commend, and to welcome all that God assigns to him as a consequence of Nature.

12. The gods must not be blamed; for they do no wrong, willingly or unwillingly; nor human beings; for they do no wrong except unwillingly. Therefore no one is to be blamed.

13. How ridiculous and like a stranger to the world is he who is surprised at any one of the events of life.

14–15. Either the Necessity of destiny and an order none may transgress, or Providence that hears intercession, or an ungoverned welter without a purpose. If then a Necessity which none may transgress, why do you resist? If a Providence admitting intercession, make yourself worthy of assistance from the Godhead. If an undirected welter, be glad that in so great a flood of waves you have yourself within you a directing mind; and, if the flood carry you away, let it carry away flesh, vital-spirit, the rest of you; for your mind it shall not carry away. Does the light of the lamp shine and not lose its radiance until it be put out, and shall truth and justice and temperance be put out in you before the end?

16. In the case of one who gives the impression that he did wrong, how do I know that this was a wrong? And, if he certainly did wrong, how do I know that he was not condemning himself, and so what he did was like tearing his own face? One who wants an evil man not to do wrong is like a man who wants a fig-tree not to produce its acrid juice in the figs, and infants not to cry, and a horse not to

neigh, and whatever else is inevitable. With that kind of disposition what else can he do? Very well then, if you are man enough, cure this disposition.

17–18. If it is not right, don't do it: if it is not true, don't say it. Let your impulse be to see always and entirely what precisely it is which is creating an impression in your imagination, and to open it up by dividing it into cause, matter, relation, and into the period within which it will be bound to have ceased.

19. Perceive at last that you have within yourself something stronger and more divine than the things which create your passions and make a downright puppet of you. What is my consciousness at this instant? Fright, suspicion, appetite? Some similar evil state?

20. First, do nothing aimlessly nor without relation to an end. Secondly, relate your action to no other end except the good of human fellowship.

21. A little while and you will be nobody and nowhere, nor will anything which you now behold exist, nor one of those who are now alive. Nature's law is that all things change and turn, and pass away, so that in due order different things may come to be.

22. All things are what we judge them to be, and that rests with you. Put away, therefore, when you will, the

judgement; and, as though you had doubled the headland, there is calm, 'all smoothly strewn and a waveless bay'.

23. Any single activity you choose, which ceases in due season, suffers no evil because it has ceased, neither has he, whose activity it was, suffered any evil merely because his activity has ceased. Similarly, therefore, the complex of all activities, which is a man's life, suffers no evil merely because it has ceased, provided that it ceases in due season, nor is he badly used who in due season brings his series of activities to a close. But the season and the term Nature assigns—sometimes the individual nature, as in old age, but in any event Universal Nature, for by the changes of her parts the whole world continues ever young and in her prime. Now what tends to the advantage of the Whole is ever altogether lovely and in season; therefore for each individual the cessation of his life is no evil, for it is no dishonour to him, being neither of his choosing nor without relation to the common good: rather is it good, because it is in due season for the Whole, benefiting it and itself benefited by it. For thus is he both carried by God, who is borne along the same course with God, and of purpose borne to the same ends as God.

24. These three thoughts keep always ready for use: First, in what you do that your act be not without purpose and not otherwise than Right itself would have done, and that outward circumstances depend either on chance or Providence; but neither is chance to be blamed, nor

Providence arraigned. The second, to remember the nature of each individual from his conception to his first breath, and from his first breath until he gives back the breath of life, and the mere elements of which he is compounded and into which he is resolved. The third, to realize that 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 aether, 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.

25. Cast out the judgement; you are saved. Who then hinders your casting it out?

26. Whenever you feel something hard to bear, you have forgotten (a) that all comes to pass according to the Nature of the Whole, (b) that the wrong is not your own but another's, further (c) that all that is coming to pass always did, always will, and does now everywhere thus come to pass, (d) the great kinship of man with all mankind, for the bond of kind is not blood nor the seed of life, but mind. You have forgotten, moreover, (e) that every individual's mind is of God and has flowed from that other world, (f) that nothing is a man's own, but even his child, his body, and his vital spirit itself have come from that other world, (g) that all is judgement, (h) that every man lives only the present life and this is what he is losing.

27. Continually run over in mind men who were highly indignant at some event; men who attained the greatest heights of fame or disaster or enmity or of any kind of fortune whatever. Then pause and think: 'Where is it all now?' Smoke and ashes and a tale that is told, or not so much as a tale. And see that all such as this occurs to you together: Fabius Catullinus, for instance, in his country retreat, Lusius Lupus in his gardens, Stertinus at Baiae, Tiberius in Capri, and Velius Rufus—and generally some idiosyncrasy coupled with vanity; and how cheap is all that man strains to get, and how much wiser it were, with the material granted to you, to present yourself just, temperate, obedient to the gods in all simplicity; for pride smouldering under a cover of humility is the most grievous pride of all.

28. To those who ask the question: 'Where have you seen the gods, or whence have you apprehended that they exist, that you thus worship them?' First, they are visible even to the eyes; secondly, I have not seen my own soul and yet I honour it; and so, too, with the gods, from my experiences every instant of their power, from these I apprehend that they exist and I do them reverence.

29. 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?

30. One light of the Sun, even though it be sundered by walls, by mountains, by a myriad other barriers. One common Matter, even though it be sundered in a myriad individual bodies. One vital spirit, even though it be sundered in a myriad natural forms and individual outlines. One intelligent spirit, even though it appears to be divided. Now of the things we have named the other parts, for instance animal spirits and material bodies without sense, are even unrelated to one another; yet even them the principle of unity and the gravitation of like to like holds together. But understanding has a peculiar property, it tends to its fellow and combines therewith, and the feeling of fellowship is not sundered.

31. What more do you ask? To go on in your mere existence? Well then, to enjoy your senses, your impulses? To wax and then to wane? To employ your tongue, your intelligence? Which of these do you suppose is worth your longing? But if each and all are to be despised, go forward to the final act, to follow Reason, that is God. But to honour those other ends, to be distressed because death will rob one of them, conflicts with this end.

32. What a fraction of infinite and gaping time has been assigned to every man; for very swiftly it vanishes in the eternal; and what a fraction of the whole of matter, and what a fraction of the whole of the life Spirit. On what a small clod, too, of the whole earth you creep. Pondering all these things, imagine nothing to be great but this: to act as

your own nature guides, to suffer what Universal Nature brings.

33. How is the governing self employing itself? For therein is everything. The rest are either within your will or without it, ashes and smoke.

34. This is a stirring call to disdain of death, that even those who judge pleasure to be good and pain evil, nevertheless disdain death.

35. For him whose sole good is what is in due season, who counts it all one to render according to right reason more acts or fewer, and to whom it is no matter whether he beholds the world a longer or a shorter time—for him even death has lost its terrors.

36. Mortal man, you have been a citizen in this great City; what does it matter to you whether for five or fifty years? For what is according to its laws is equal for every man. Why is it hard, then, if Nature who brought you in, and no despot nor unjust judge, sends you out of the City—as though the master of the show, who engaged an actor, were to dismiss him from the stage? 'But I have not spoken my five acts, only three.' 'What you say is true, but in life three acts are the whole play.' For He determines the perfect whole, the cause yesterday of your composition, to-day of your dissolution; you are the cause of neither. Leave the

stage, therefore, and be reconciled, for He also who lets his servant depart is reconciled.

1. [↑](#) 'And round its stable centre glad to run.' Thomas Taylor, *The Commentaries of Proclus on the Timaeus of Plato*, 1820.

Footnotes

CHRONOLOGY

RULERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR	Assassinated 44 B.C.	
IMPERATOR AUGUSTUS CAESAR	27 B.C.–A.D. 14.	
TIBERIUS CAESAR	A.D. 14–37.	
GAIUS CAESAR (Caligula)	A.D. 37–Jan. (assassinated).	41
CLAUDIUS CAESAR	A.D. 41–54.	
NERO CAESAR	A.D. 54–June (assassinated).	68
GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS	A.D. 68–9.	

FLAVIAN DYNASTY

T. FLAVIUS VESPASIANUS	A.D. Dec. 69–79.	
TITUS	A.D. 79–81.	
DOMITIANUS	A.D. 81–96 (assassinated).	

Adoptive Emperors

NERVA	A.D. Sept. 96–Jan. 98.	
M. ULPIUS TRAJANUS	A.D. 98–117.	
P. AELIUS HADRIANUS	A.D. 117–138.	
T. AURELIUS ANTONINUS (PIUS)	A.D. 10 July 138–161.	
M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS	A.D. 7 March 161–17 March 180.	
L. AURELIUS VERUS	A.D. 161–169.	
L. AURELIUS ANTONINUS	A.D. 177–192 (assassinated).	

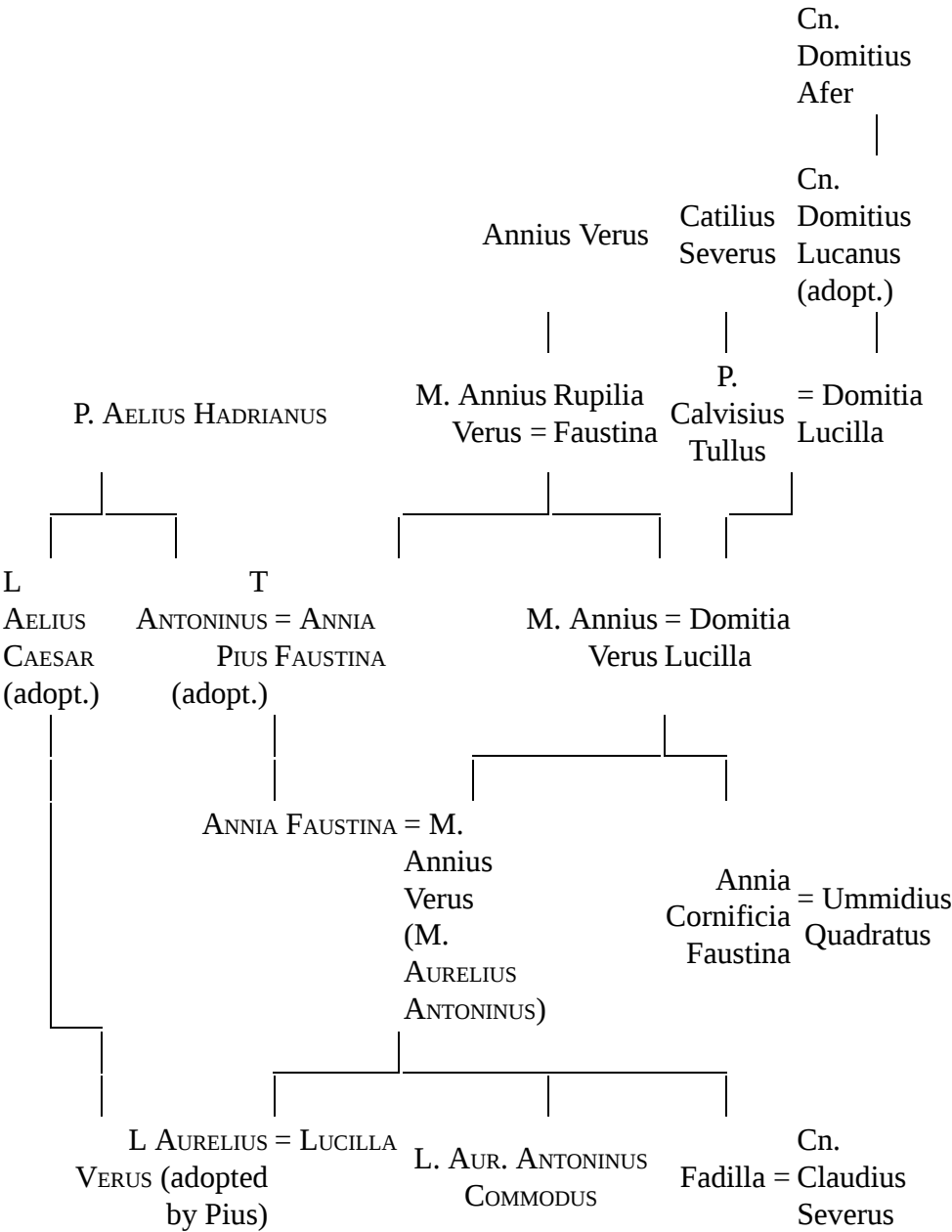
ANNALS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

121	Birth 26 April	M. Annius Verus consul ii.
127	Eques	
136	Toga virilis 26 April	
138	25 Feb. Adopted by Pius, who was adopted by Hadrian; betrothed to Fabia, daughter of L. Aelius Caesar	Death of L. Aelius Caesar. 10 July. Death of Hadrian.
139	Caesar	
140	Consul i	Faustina the elder dies.
145	Consul ii, married to Faustina	
146	Trib. pot.: Imp. procons.	Faustina Augusta.
148		Birth of Lucilla.
161	Consul iii. 7 March. Imp. Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, Pont, max.,	Death of Pius. 31 Aug. Birth of Commodus and twin brother.

	Imp. Caesar L. Aurelius Verus	
161		Parthian Median War begins.
164	Armeniacus	Lucius Aurelius Verus marries Lucilla.
166	Medicus, Parthicus Maximus, Pater patriae	Commodus and Annius Verus Caesares.
167		Plague breaks out. Germans cross Brenner. War in Pannonia.
169	Death of L. Aurelius Verus	War with Marcomanni.
172	Germanicus	End of first German war.
173		War with Iazyges and Sarmatians.
174		War with Quadi.
175	Sarmaticus	Revolt of Avidius Cassius. Marcus and Faustina visit the East. Death of Faustina at Halala, 176.
176	27 Nov. Triumph at Rome	

177	Commodus, Trib. pot., Imp. procons. Augustus	Commodus Crispina.	marries
178– 179		Second German War	
180	Death 17 March		

GENEALOGICAL TABLE



LIFE

The author of these *Meditations*, M. Aurelius Antoninus, was born in Rome on 26 April A.D. 121, and died at Sirmium (Mitrovitz) or Vindobona (Vienna) on the Danube frontier on 17 March A.D. 180, leaving to his son Commodus, who had become joint Emperor at the end of A.D. 176, the unachieved task of settling the war with the German and Sarmatian peoples along that frontier.

He closes the series of adoptive Emperors, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, under whom the Mediterranean world enjoyed a period of liberty and material comfort such as has been rarely the good fortune of mankind; 'if a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian (A.D. 89) to the accession of Commodus'. For sufficient reasons Marcus made his young and inexperienced son his successor, and later writers fixed upon this step as the one blot upon his exalted memory.

Caesar Augustus, great-nephew of Julius Caesar, had established an autocracy, under forms of law, after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C. and the subsequent overthrow of the children of Pompey. The succession continued in his family, his direct or indirect

descendants, until the assassination of Nero in A.D. 69. The Flavian Dynasty, based on military command, succeeded under Vespasian and his two sons, Titus and Domitian, and when the younger son's gloomy and savage tyranny closed with his assassination in A.D. 89, the writers of the day and public opinion hailed a new era of liberty and enlightenment, an era which lasted about ninety years, closing with the death of Marcus or at least with the end of the second century of our era.

One of the saddest themes in the *Meditations* is that of the extinction of famous families, and Marcus touches at least once upon a second topic, the inhumanity of the old Roman nobility, the Patricians so styled. He himself belonged to the new governing aristocracy, recruited largely from the middle class and from colonist stocks in Gaul and Spain and Africa, which came to the front under Vespasian's dynasty. His great-grandfather Verus came from a family originally settled in Baetica, a province of Spain. His grandfather, M. Annius Verus, created a patrician by Vespasian and Titus, was consul for the second time in A.D. 121, the year of his grandson's birth. He was Prefect of the City of Rome and afterwards consul for a third time. His father, M. Annius Verus, died young, after becoming praetor. His mother's grandfather, L. Catilius Severus, twice consul and probably Annius Verus' successor as Prefect of Rome, was removed from office by Hadrian at the end of his reign as a suspected candidate for the purple. From Pliny's letters we gather that he was of austere life and

literary tastes, and from the *Meditations* that he took a generous interest in his young kinsman's education. Indeed, there is some evidence that Marcus was at first named after him (Annius) Catilius Severus. His mother, Domitia Lucilla, inherited a large fortune, in part derived from the famous advocate Gnaeus Domitius Afer, the master of the rhetoric teacher and advocate Quintilian. Her house, on the Mons Caelius, close to what is now the Church of St. John Lateran, was a centre of Greek culture, and it was no doubt her influence which inclined her son to Greek letters and philosophy at an early age. Like most cultivated Romans of that day she was familiar with the Greek language, and Tiberius Claudius Atticiis Herodes, the wealthy Athenian orator, stayed in her house in January A.D. 143, when he came to Rome to hold the consulship, and appears to have enjoyed her patronage in his early years.

Marcus was a boy when his father died, and was then adopted by his paternal grandfather, taking the name M. Annius Verus, by which he was known until he was adopted by Antoninus Pius. Looking back on his life, he divides it into the periods under his grandfather Verus, under his mother, and under Antoninus, and is thankful that he escaped the influence of the elder Verus' second wife. Returning to his mother's care, he underwent the ascetic discipline of Greek training, wrote literary essays, and enjoyed good masters at home, by the wise advice of his great-grandfather, Catilius Severus.

So born and so circumstanced, Marcus might naturally have expected to take a considerable, even a distinguished, part in Roman public life. Happily for his country, although perhaps unhappily for himself, he had, as a child of 6, taken the fancy of the childless Emperor Hadrian. The old man bestowed marked distinctions upon him, nicknaming him playfully Verissimus, 'most truthful'. When he came of age at 15, he was betrothed to Fabia, the daughter of L. Ceionius Commodus, Hadrian's adopted son and intended successor. These arrangements collapsed on the death of Lucius Aelius Caesar, as Commodus was now named, and Hadrian then adopted Titus Aurelius Antoninus, the husband of the elder Galeria Faustina, Marcus' paternal aunt. Antoninus was, in his turn, to adopt Marcus, then a youth of 17, and the young son of L. Aelius Caesar, afterwards the Emperor L. Aurelius Verus. This done, the earlier engagement to Fabia was broken off and Marcus betrothed to his first cousin, the daughter of Antoninus, the younger Faustina.

The day of his adoption was 25 February A.D. 138. Hadrian died on 10 July, and Marcus became Quaestor, the first step in office, on 5 December. In 139 he received the title Caesar, and was consul with the Emperor in A.D. 140. His biographer Capitolinus tells a story, which reminds one of Asser's tale of King Alfred, that when Marcus learned that he was to be thus adopted into the Aelian Aurelian family and to remove to the Tiberian palace on the Palatine, he left his mother's gardens on Mount Caelius with regret. Asked

why he was sad, he discoursed upon 'the ills which a royal station brings in its train'.

To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty . . .
Would you enforce me to a world of cares?

In A.D. 145 he was married to Faustina, and, after the birth of a daughter (*circa* June A.D. 146), he received the Tribunician Power and the Proconsular Imperium (10 December A.D. 146), thus becoming, in all except title, joint Emperor. From now on, until his adoptive father's death, he was constantly at his side, learning the lessons of government. In the *Meditations* he has left two character studies of his admired pattern and predecessor.

Marcus was not yet 17 at his adoption, and Antoninus Pius wisely determined to leave him, at first, time to develop his character and powers by study. Thus he was able to devote seven years partly to social and state duties, but principally to determined application to the theory and practice of public speaking, and to the elements of Roman law. In this period his two masters were M. Cornelius Fronto, leader of the Roman bar, and L. Volusius Maecianus, a pupil himself of P. Salvius Julianus, the celebrated legal minister of Hadrian and codifier of the Praetorian edict. The fortunate discovery by Cardinal Mai of large fragments of Fronto's correspondence has given us a lively picture of this stage of

Marcus' life. They present a full and happy life, a temper, serious indeed but relieved by delicate tact and humour, a character still immature and self-distrustful and overflowing with affection to his tutor, his mother Lucilla, his wife Faustina, and their children. Under the rather affected mannerisms which Marcus employed to please Fronto, the leader of a literary revolt from the style of the preceding century, we get a pleasant insight into the life led by the young Caesar in Rome, in his adoptive father's country seats at Lorium and Lanuvium, near the capital, and at the seaside resorts on the Bay of Naples and the Mediterranean coast. The manners of the imperial family resemble those which Pliny has so admirably depicted in his *Letters*, the same cultured urbanity, love of antiquities and the countryside, devotion to learning and literature, a return especially to the authors of the Republic. Ordered days and nights, simple habits, mild exercise varied by occasional hunting expeditions, a long round of social and political engagements, constant attendance in the Senate, anxious preparation by Marcus of the laboured speeches which he composed under Fronto's careful eye.

Towards the end of this period Marcus was drawn away from Fronto into the influence of Junius Rusticus, a public man whom Antoninus made Prefect of Rome. He was a follower of the Stoic philosophy and introduced his friend and pupil to the teaching of Epictetus. The breach which ensued between Rhetoric and Philosophy is plainly marked in the correspondence, and Fronto rallies his pupil on the

subject. In the *Meditations* the name of Rusticus is introduced before that of Fronto, and it is noticeable that Marcus says nothing of the literary lessons he learnt from his old tutor, dwelling instead on the moral qualities which he had observed in Fronto, especially that natural affection which is preferred to the cold inhumanity of 'our so-called aristocrats'. From this time onwards Marcus clearly devoted himself to an unaffected, candid form of speaking which was the counterpart of the simple life which his Stoic teacher prescribed.

The reign of Antoninus Pius is almost a blank in history, the literary records being lost. There was little anxiety at home, little trouble abroad, nothing to suggest the tempests which were to break upon his successor. The good Emperor died at his country house at Lorium on 7 March A.D. 161, his last act, in the intervals of fever, being to order the statue of Fortuna to be carried to Marcus' room; the watchword he gave was Equanimity, a gentle hint to a successor, a nice allusion to the Stoic creed.

Marcus now took the name M. Aelius Aurelius Antoninus and, associating his brother Lucius as Emperor, gave him the title L. Aelius Aurelius Verus, the dynastic names with his own cognomen Verus. Probably he did this to prevent civil strife, but he was also looking to the East where the power of Parthia was threatening, and desired to send his colleague out with the prestige of emperor. There followed the Parthian and Armenian war, A.D. 161–6, in the course of

which Marcus sent Lucilla, his eldest child, to be married to Lucius at Ephesus. The conduct of operations was in the hands of Avidius Cassius, who captured Ctesiphon and added a large province in the Euphrates and Tigris valleys to the Roman Empire. Lucius took the titles of Armeniacus, Parthicus Maximus, and Medicus, but had done little to deserve them, spending his time, so gossip said, in sensual pleasures in the famous city of Antioch on the Orontes. The returning legions brought back to Italy and the neighbouring lands a dreadful bubonic plague, which lasted many decades and to which some modern writers have ascribed the decline of the population of the Empire, leaving it a prey to the attack of the barbarians from the north.

Marcus meanwhile had been occupied at home with measures for the well-being of Rome and the Provinces, but now he was called to take the field against the Germans, who had broken through the frontier defences, crossed the Brenner Pass, and were actually investing Aquileia, in the neighbourhood of Trieste. The threat of 300 years earlier, when Marius broke the inroads of the Cimbri and Teutones, seemed again to menace the valley of the Po, perhaps Rome itself. What followed is obscure; there was serious fighting and the enemy were driven back by the two Emperors in A.D. 166, so that the immediate danger was relieved. In 168–9 there was another expedition which was hindered by a fresh outbreak of plague, and in January of the latter year L. Aurelius Verus died of apoplexy at Altinum, as the two

Emperors were returning towards Rome from the area of pestilence. Marcus now ruled alone, until in A.D. 177 he raised his son Commodus to the position of joint Emperor, which Lucius had enjoyed.

The remainder of the reign was mostly spent in northern warfare, at first against the tribes in Bohemia, later farther east on the edge of the Roumanian salient. The war falls into two periods, A.D. 169–75 and A.D. 177–80. The first period was closed by the revolt of Avidius Cassius, the successful general of the Parthian war. Marcus had given him large powers to control the Eastern Provinces as governor of Syria. In April A.D. 175 he declared himself Emperor at Antioch. Marcus at once made a necessary armistice with the tribes beyond the Danube, moving a large body of troops under chosen leaders to crush the pretender. He showed his determination to hold his position by causing his son Commodus to come of age on 19 May A.D. 175. In July Cassius was assassinated and his 'brief dream of supremacy closed after three months and six days'. Marcus treated the conspirator's family and the principal rebels with leniency, but his actions show that the later accounts of his willingness to abdicate are mere inventions. Equally absurd is the fiction that Faustina herself was implicated with Cassius.

Marcus now first visited the East. He made a progress with the Empress, visiting Antioch and Alexandria and travelling, apparently, as far as Tarsus. On the return

journey Faustina died at Halala in A.D. 176, at the foot of the Taurus range. Marcus raised the village to the status of a colony, *Faustinopolis*, allowed her memory to be consecrated, with the titles of *Diva* and *Pia*, raised a temple in her honour and instituted a kind of orphanage, *Puellae Faustinianae*, to her memory. Thus, if he was aware of them, he replied to the calumnies which had desecrated her fame. In his *Meditations* he speaks of her briefly: 'I owe it to the gods that my wife is what she is, so obedient, so naturally loving, so simple in her tastes.' In September 176 Marcus was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, and during his visit to Athens instituted new philosophic chairs in the University and received Athenagoras' *Apology for Christianity*. On December 23 he triumphed with his son Commodus, now joint Emperor, at Rome.

The war in the north breaking out again, the two Emperors went to the frontier, probably making headquarters at Sirmium (Mitrovitz on the Save). Here, after a successful campaign, Marcus Aurelius died, possibly of the plague, but more probably of exhaustion. His son succeeded to the throne without opposition. Mommsen summarizes the result of the long series of battles with the Germans and Sarmatians as follows: 'After fourteen years of almost ceaseless warfare, he who was a warrior in spite of his will had reached the goal; the Romans were a second time faced with the acquisition of the upper waters of the river Elbe; now all that remained to do was the proclamation of the wish to retain what he had won. Thereupon he died . . . not

yet 60 years old, in the camp on March 17, A.D. 180. We must recognize not merely the ruler's resolution and tenacity, we must further admit that he did what right policy enjoined . . . the war secured the supremacy of Rome in these regions for the future, in spite of the fact that Commodus let slip the prize of victory. It was not by the tribes that had fought in this war that the blow was dealt to which the Roman world-power succumbed.'

Of the domestic government of Marcus Aurelius Bury says: 'That which above all things links together the reigns of Antoninus and Marcus . . . is the policy in legislation and administration of justice common to both. To come to the aid of the weaker, to protect the condition of wards were the objects of Marcus, as of his predecessor. . . . The emperor was himself untiring in hearing cases and his sentences were marked by leniency. Like Antoninus, he was anxious to defend the provinces against the oppression of procurators [i.e. the financial agents of the Treasury] and to come to the assistance of communities in the case of public disasters.'

Marcus has sometimes been censured for permitting the growth of centralization and bureaucratic control, instituted by Trajan and Hadrian, and for unwise and reckless abuse of public finances. These mistakes, which ultimately led to the deplorable state of affairs in the later Empire, have been put down, too hastily, to his mild nature and philosophic temper; they should rather be viewed as the outcome of

causes beyond one man's control, however enlightened his view. Such causes led to similar results in the administration of France under Louis XIV and his ministers. Further, the criticism of his financial measures must be judged by remembering the insuperable effects upon the imperial treasury of nearly fourteen years of a great war, added to its other burdens.

For his character as a ruler and as an individual little, if anything, can be added to Gibbons's portrait, which is the more impressive as drawn by one who not only depicted history upon a large and just scale but whose judgement is never, or rarely, biased by sentiment. 'His *Meditations*', he writes, 'composed in the tumult of a camp are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons on philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage or the dignity of an emperor. But his life was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno. He was severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfection of others, just and beneficent to all mankind. . . . War he detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human nature; but when the necessity of a just defence called upon him to take up arms, he readily exposed his person to eight winter campaigns on the frozen banks of the Danube, the severity of which was at last fatal to the weakness of his constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful posterity, and above a century after his death many persons preserved the image of Marcus Antoninus among those of their household gods.' Similarly Montesquieu has said:

'Search through all nature and you will not find greater objects than the two Antonines.'

Two further questions deserve a brief notice—the presumed weakness of husband, brother, and father to Faustina, his colleague Lucius and his son Commodus, and what is sometimes called his persecution of the Christian Churches. Immediately upon his accession he made Lucius joint Emperor and betrothed his daughter Lucilla to him. Lucius was son of L. Aelius Caesar, originally nominated to succeed Hadrian, a man who inherited his father's handsome presence and promise of intellectual gifts, which we may presume belonged to the chosen favourite of the experienced Hadrian. Marcus had as Caesar taken a large share in government and his health was precarious. Probably, almost certainly, he foresaw civil strife if he ignored a man who had a kind of claim upon the throne and had besides attributes which appeal at least to vulgar admiration. From the references in the *Meditations* to Lucius as well as from the correspondence of Fronto we can detect that Lucius at this date had a warm, if superficial, temper. In his defence we must also recognize, as Marcus did, that he was loyal to his older colleague. Marcus solved the problem by adopting a policy, familiar in later centuries, of instituting two Emperors. The experiment was not a striking success, but neither was it a complete failure. Lucius proved indolent, vain, and luxurious, but not wholly unworthy of his position. In the case of Commodus Marcus followed the same course. He made him Caesar, and

designated him as successor, raising him at the time of the revolt of Avidius to be joint Emperor. He left him to the guidance of experienced men, but Commodus turned out to be unworthy of his office. The judgement of posterity is expressed by Ausonius:

'Hoc solo patriae, quod genuit, nocuit.'^[1]

There is no good evidence that Commodus had, when his father died, betrayed an evil promise; he was young and foolish, spoilt like Nero by irresponsibility; even so the wisest of kings was the father of Rehoboam. The ill fame of Faustina is notorious, and nothing will now overcome what was so long believed about her. She has become a byword. Yet the evidence against her is late and suspect, and when it has been weighed, as by Boissier, Merivale, and others, the verdict has been at worst a not-proven. I should prefer to credit the happy picture in Fronto's letters, the saying of her father 'I had rather live with Faustina in Gyara than without her in Rome', and the express words of her truth-loving husband. The next best evidence is Julian. In his pasquinade, the *aturnia*, where he does not spare his predecessors, all he says is that Marcus was wrong to deify a woman; he says nothing against her good reputation.^[2]

The question of the Christians cannot be settled in a few words. What appears certain is that there was no such thing as a general persecution, although there can be no reasonable doubt that the Christian communities at Lyon

and Vienne, in Gaul, suffered by an outbreak of fanaticism, that the governor referred the matter to Marcus, and that he replied that the law must take its course. The reply was inevitable in view of the nature of the Roman government, as well as of the general social attitude to misunderstood religious disobedience. Nothing better has been said on the subject than by J. S. Mill in his Essay on *Liberty*: 'This man, a better Christian, in all but the dogmatic sense of the word, than almost any of the ostensibly Christian sovereigns who have since reigned, persecuted Christianity. Placed at the summit of all the previous attainments of humanity, with an open, unfettered intellect, and a character which led him of himself to embody in his moral writings the Christian ideal, he yet failed to see that Christianity was to be a good and not an evil to the world. . . . To my mind this is one of the most tragical facts in all history.' The only reference to the Christians in the *Meditations* illustrates the failure of a good and wise ruler to rise above ignorance and prejudice, and in no sense indicates the temper and purpose of a persecutor.

To his personal character his book bears incontrovertible witness, a witness confirmed by every act and deed recorded of him. Matthew Arnold has said: 'He is perhaps the most beautiful figure in history. He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand for ever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by signal goodness in high places; for

that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men.' He goes on to compare him with St. Louis of France and King Alfred of England. So the great historian of Greek philosophy, Edward Zeller, has written: 'We know how consistently Marcus Antoninus himself lived up to his precepts. From his life, as from his words, there comes to us a nobility of soul, a purity of mind, a conscientiousness, a loyalty to duty, a gentleness, piety and love of man, which in that century, and on the Roman imperial throne, we must admire two-fold.'

Renan speaks of the 'gospel which never grows old', revealed in the *Meditations*, and M. Aimé Puech has written recently of Marcus Aurelius: 'Si le stoïcisme, quand il en est l'interprète, nous inspire un attrait qu'aucun autre de ses sectateurs n'a su lui donner, c'est que nous voyons dans les *Pensées* non pas la doctrine enseignée, mais la doctrine vécue.' It is of this doctrine that the following pages endeavour to give a summary, by following his teaching, Book by Book, as he expounds it.

1. ↑ 'Herein alone he harmed his country, that he had a son.
2. ↑ See Renan, *Examen de quelques faits relatifs à l'impératrice Faustine, femme de Marc Aurèle*, C.R.

Acad. Inscript, belles lettres, p. 203, Aug. 1867;
Merivale, *A History of the Romans under the Empire*
vii. p. 587 seq.

Footnotes

ENGLISH COMMENTARY

BOOK I

This Book is a personal acknowledgement of lessons learned and good gifts received from the men and women who seemed in retrospect to have had the most influence on his life, especially on his intellectual and moral training. This acknowledgement takes the happy form of brief character sketches, so that the manner of the Book is different from the remainder of the *Meditations*, with the exception of Book vi. 30. 2. Recently the view has been expressed that it was intended as an Epilogue, rather than an Introduction, and was the last to be written.

In substance a group of reminiscences, its arrangement is determined partly in reference to Marcus' life, partly by the old Greek view, discussed in Plato's *Meno*, that character rests upon inherited endowment, on training of habits, on explicit instruction, but depends in the last resort on Divine grace.

Thus Marcus begins with his paternal grandfather, Annius Verus, and his own father, passes to childhood's discipline, the Greek training adopted in Rome, introduces next his earlier and later tutors, thus leading up to his instruction by his adoptive father, the Emperor Titus Aurelius Antoninus Pius, for public life. Finally, he remembers his debt to the

immortal gods for the many good persons, in his own family and kinsfolk, who had assisted him.

With this arrangement contrast the strictly chronological epitome of ix. 21: his life under his grandfather after his father's death; his early youth under Lucius Catilius Severus, his mother's grandfather, and in his mother's gardens on the Caelian Hill in Rome; his life as Caesar, or heir-apparent, in the Palatine or in the Emperor's country seats at Lorium and Lanuvium.

Ch. 1. M. Annius Verus was son of a Roman provincial of a family long settled in Spain. His father rose to be praetor in the capital of the Empire. He was himself three times consul and Prefect of the City, A.D. 121–37, when he was succeeded by Catilius Severus (i. 4). Vespasian and Titus had created him a patrician. He adopted his grandson, Marcus, on the death of his son (ch. ii), *circa* A.D. 130, and is said to have been in the Senate on the occasion of Hadrian's adoption of Antoninus Pius, 25 February A.D. 138. Galen, the physician of Marcus Aurelius, mentions that Verus was a votary of the small ball game, and we have a tribute to his skill at ball in the curious epitaph on a champion player named Ursus.^[1]

The reference to government of temper refers to a common failing of noble Romans. Marcus confesses that he was himself liable to the failing (i. 17. 7) and appears from his *Meditations* to have been specially occupied with resistance

to this passion and, another Roman weakness, ambition and love of glory.

Ch. 2. Marcus was about 10 years old when he lost his father, whose modesty and manly character he records. In Romans of the best type modesty was a virtue which included respect for others and reverence for self, a virtue well joined with manliness, which covers all that is the reverse of effeminacy, a common failing in Roman youth.

Ch. 3. Domitia Lucilla, his mother, was daughter of P. Calvisius Tullus and Domitia Lucilla. The latter inherited from her father Cn. Domitius Lucanus and her uncle Cn. Domitius Tullus the fortune of Cn. Domitius Afer, the famous orator and master of Quintilian. Marcus' mother succeeded to this estate, part of it invested in a factory of tiles, on which her name is stamped. Though he says that she died young (i. 17. 7), she must have been nearly 50 when she passed away between A.D. 155 and Marcus' accession in A.D. 161. The correspondence of Fronto has given us a picture of Marcus' home life with the future Empress, Faustina the younger, and Domitia Lucilla is often mentioned in the letters. Her house, near what is now the Church of St. John Lateran, was a centre of Hellenic culture, and the Athenian orator and benefactor of Hellas, Herodes Atticus, was her guest on one of his visits to Rome. Fronto writes letters to her in Greek and sends her a speech modelled on one of those in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Her wealth

and social position lends point to the description of the simplicity of her appointments and table.

Ch. 4. Domitia Lucilla's paternal grandfather, L. Catilius Severus, after being governor of Syria and proconsul of Asia, succeeded M. Annius Verus in the City Prefecture and was consul a second time. Hadrian removed him from office in A.D. 138, as a rival of Antoninus whom he had decided to adopt as his successor. Severus belonged to the younger Pliny's cultured circle, and what Marcus says of his care for his own education confirms the impression of him we get from Pliny's letters as a cultured lover of learning. There is a tradition that before his adoption by his grandfather Marcus bore the names Catilius Severus.

Ch. 5. The name of this good man, who was probably a slave, is not known. We learn from the biographer^[2] that Marcus was moved to tears at his death, and was rebuked by the court attendants for his display of feeling, but that Antoninus said: 'Allow him to be human: for neither philosophy nor a throne are bars to affection.'

Ch. 6. Diognetus was his painting master. In view of the remarks about exorcism of evil spirits, the question whether this Diognetus is the man to whom the celebrated *Letter to Diognetus*, with its defence of the Christians, was addressed is interesting. Westcott thought the identification chronologically possible, dating the letter about A.D. 117.

Recent writers follow Harnack, who puts the letter as late as the third century.

Cock-fighting, especially with quails, was a favourite pastime of the upper-class youth at Athens, as at Rome. Plato's brother Glauco was a fancier, and the quail has an amusing role in one of Babrius' *Fables*. The objection to the sport was not so much its cruelty as the low company into which it led young gentlemen:

Thus we poor Cocks exert our skill and bravery
For idle Gulls and Kites, that trade in knavery.

What Marcus says of Greek training is illustrated in a passage by the biographer: 'on entering his twelfth year he adopted the dress of a philosopher and the consequent ascetic habit of living, he studied in the Greek gown and slept on the bare ground. Only at his mother's request he took to a pallet covered with skins.' Of the three lecturers, presumably in philosophy, nothing is recorded. Some editors substitute Maecianus for Marcianus, thinking that the jurist L. Volusius Maecianus, his law tutor, is meant. Such a reference would be inappropriate here; it was not until Marcus was Caesar that he studied under Maecianus. At that date he says to Fronto: 'I write this hurriedly because Maecianus is pressing. . . . I must remember that I

ought to show as much reverence to my tutor as I bestow love on you, who are my friend.'^[3]

Ch. 7. To carry on the subject of his philosophic education, Marcus introduces Q. Junius Rusticus out of chronological order. Rusticus was not a professional philosopher and has left no writings; he belongs to the tradition of Cato, Brutus, and Thrasea Paetus, Roman statesmen who modelled their lives on Stoic principles. Marcus made him consul a second time in A.D. 162 and Prefect of the City in A.D. 163, and it was as prefect that he condemned Justin Martyr to death, *circa* A.D. 165. He died perhaps in A.D. 168, the year in which he ceased to be Prefect. Dio Cassius says that he practised Zeno's precepts, and the biographer Capitolinus describes him as the intimate friend of Marcus. We can see from the correspondence with Fronto that his influence began when the young Caesar was about 25 years of age. Fronto struggled hard to resist his pupil's tendency to abandon Latin eloquence for the Stoic creed, warning Marcus of the danger a prince ran in deserting the study of language for the arid and formless disputes of philosophy. What Marcus says here about preciousness of speech refers to the *elocutio novella*, the elaborated diction, which Fronto laboured to inculcate. Notice the likeness of structure in this chapter and the preceding, with the enumeration side by side of grave and relatively trivial lessons. The object of the Stoic profession was to cover all sides of a man's life by its principles.

Ch. 8. Apollonius of Chalcedon, a Stoic philosopher, was summoned to Rome by Antoninus to instruct Marcus. The enthusiasm of the pupil is in curious contrast with the unfavourable impression of Apollonius which we get from Lucian and from the biographer. Lucian says that he saw him on his way to Rome, like a new Jason, sailing in quest of the Golden Fleece. The jest refers to the *Argonautica* of his namesake Apollonius of Rhodes. Arrived in Rome, he insisted that Marcus should wait upon him, whereupon Antoninus Pius remarked: 'No doubt he found it less trouble to come from Colchis to Rome than he finds it now to go from his lodging in Rome to the Palatine.' He is selected for special mention with Rusticus and Maximus (i. 17. 4).

Ch. 9. Sextus of Chaeronea in Boeotia, nephew of the famous biographer and moralist Plutarch, taught Marcus after he became Emperor in A.D. 161. He is called a Stoic by Marcus' biographer, and what is said of him here agrees with this. There is some evidence that he was connected by marriage with the family of Musonius, the Stoic teacher of Epictetus. It is interesting that whereas Plutarch was a Platonist and wrote a vigorous attack on Stoical doctrines, his nephew should have belonged to the school of Zeno. The mention of Sextus' natural affection and family life and of his wide learning reminds us of two striking traits of Plutarch himself. It is said that the Emperor used to visit him for instruction and to consult him even upon legal questions.

Ch. 10. Alexander Cotiaensis was one of the most celebrated Greek grammarians of the day, being best known for his Homeric scholarship. The simple sketch of Marcus is in curious contrast to the charming but over-elaborate eulogy of him by Aelius Aristides. The latter says that he lived in the Palace, using his intimacy with Marcus and his colleague Lucius to serve the interests of the Greek world, and he depicts the aged scholar spending the last night of his life at work on his beloved books. His urbane method of teaching, his stress upon matter rather than manner, as Marcus represents him, are in remarkable contrast to the writings of his great contemporary, the grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus, who lived in learned poverty and neglect in Alexandria and Rome; Apollonius is too fond of such phrases as: 'it would appear to be superfluous to contradict such silly ideas', 'this too is sheer folly'.

Though Marcus had spoken Greek from childhood, to compose is a different matter, and some of his own care in expression and choiceness of phrase, as well as his tendency to use poetical and even Homeric words, may be derived from his lessons with Alexander.

Ch. 11. From his Greek master Marcus passes to his close friend, M. Cornelius Fronto, an orator from Cirta in Africa, the leader of the Roman bar in Hadrian's closing years. Fronto's correspondence throws a remarkable light upon his relations with Marcus and his colleague Lucius Verus, but its recovery destroyed his own reputation as a second

Cicero. He was the leader of an antiquarian revival, encouraged by Hadrian, back to the Latin writers of the pre-Augustan period, and to the speech of the people. He laboured with all his might to teach Marcus one of the essentials of style, the exact choice of word and phrase. We can trace his influence in the language of the *Meditations*. His pupil, however, is here concerned with moral lessons; he dwells in retrospect upon his tutor's affectionate nature, and especially upon the natural, impulsive humanity which clearly underlies the exaggerated warmth of expression of the letters. Fronto's influence may well have softened the austerity of the Stoic creed, and helped to give the *Meditations* their notable accent of human kindness. What Marcus here says about the Roman aristocrats' lack of true human affection, as it appeared to his tutor, is exactly illustrated by a letter of Fronto, in which he uses the same Greek word: 'Affection is not, I think, a Roman quality: in my whole life in Rome I have found anything rather than a sincerely affectionate man, so that I believe that it is because no one in Rome is in fact affectionate that there is no Roman name for this human excellence.'

Ch. 12. This Alexander is probably a rhetorician from Seleucia, whom Marcus appointed to be his Greek secretary, when his head-quarters were in Pannonia. The epithet 'Platonist' is perhaps chosen because Alexander's nickname among his contemporaries was 'the Plato of clay'. The mention of letter-writing may also help to confirm the identification.

Ch. 13. Cinna Catulus, a Stoic philosopher, of whom nothing more is known. His emphasis upon the duty of commending one's teachers leads Marcus to refer to Athenodotus, Fronto's master, and so to Domitius Afer, the orator (mentioned in Ch. 3 introduction), who may well have taught Athenodotus. Fronto himself refers to the latter as 'my master and my parent'.

Ch. 14. Severus is generally understood to be Claudius Severus, whose son Cn. Claudius Severus married a daughter of the Emperor. If the identification is correct, it is remarkable that a statesman, whom Galen describes as an Aristotelian, should have acquainted Marcus with the political and rather doctrinaire theories of the Stoical opposition of the early Empire. Tacitus says that part of the political programme of Nerva and Trajan was 'to unite the position of supreme magistrate with liberty, objects incompatible under the first Caesars'. This ideal was taken up by the Antonines, and what Marcus states here to be the teaching of Severus is echoed in the language both of Aelius Aristides, the pagan orator, and of Athenagoras, the Christian apologist. The former speaks of the endeavour of Marcus and his colleague 'to exercise guidance and providence for their subjects, and not to be despotic rulers', and Athenagoras, presenting an address on behalf of the Christians to Marcus and his son, probably on the occasion of their visit to Athens in A.D. 176, says: 'by the wisdom of yourself and your son Commodus, individuals enjoy

equality of law, cities partake in equal honour, the whole world enjoys profound peace.'

Ch. 15. Claudius Maximus, a Stoic, is mentioned again with Rusticus and Apollonius (i. 17. 5). Marcus represents him as the idealized sage, with the Stoic qualities softened by pardon and pity.

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man.'

(Shak., *Jul. Caes.* v. 5.)

He may be the proconsul of Africa before whom the Latin writer Apuleius delivered the apology for his own life in which he calls him a most religious man. He and his wife Secunda are mentioned in viii. 25, after his death.

Ch. 16. This remarkable portrait of Antoninus Pius is to be compared with the shorter sketch in vi. 30. 2. Together they make one of the noblest tributes that a great man has paid to another. Without them and the familiar letters of Fronto we would know almost nothing of Antoninus, since this part of the history of Dio Cassius is absent even from the epitome of his work, and the biography is a slight thing. The method which Marcus follows is to enumerate particular traits, beginning with his public and ending with his private life. At some places he appears to be, perhaps unconsciously,

contrasting Antoninus with his predecessor Hadrian. His love of old ways, his religious conservatism is opposed to Hadrian's variety and caprice, his public economy and private thrift to Hadrian's extravagance, his simplicity to Hadrian's passion for building, for luxurious dinners and boy favourites. Hadrian too was envious and intolerant of rivals, even of men of genius like the architect Apollodorus, and the fantastic extravagance of his famous villa at Tivoli may have seemed to Marcus in strange contrast to the old-fashioned country residences of Pius. As we read of this simple, practical country gentleman we are reminded of the restless, irritable, often (especially at the close of his life) unhappy and unhealthy man of genius, Hadrian.

Ch. 17. This closing chapter reads like a prayer of thanksgiving. The expression of happiness is in marked contrast to the sad, almost sombre, tone of so much of the later Books. There is also an undoubted tendency to retrospective idealization of persons, notably in the few words about his colleague, Lucius Aurelius Verus. Writers too on this period have usually preferred to accept the scandals contained in the biographers about Faustina's character to Marcus' own simple and convincing statement. The evidence that Marcus shared the belief of most of his contemporaries in the occasional revelation of God to man by dreams and oracles is noteworthy. There is very little trace of this in the *Meditations* as a whole.

§ 1. The good sister is Annia Cornificia Faustina the elder, the only other child of Marcus' parents. She married M. Ummidius Quadratus, and Marcus handed over to her the whole of his paternal inheritance. To her son he gave a portion of the fortune he inherited from his mother, Domitia Lucilla.

§ 2. What he says of his youthful innocence will remind the reader of Milton's

En etiam tibi virginei servantur honores,

and of Hawthorne's beautiful words: 'Living in solitude till the fulness of time was come, I still kept the dew of my youth . . . and the freshness of my heart.' Mark Pattison has referred to this passage: 'I experienced what Marcus Aurelius reckoned among the favours of the gods, and the growth of anything that could be called mind in me was equally backward.' Probably Pattison thought of the letters to Fronto, which give the impression of intellectual and moral simplicity, even immaturity, in the young Caesar.

§ 3. This is a reminiscence of the twenty-three years lived in subordination to and close collaboration with his adoptive father. The happy phrase about his preservation of dignity with all his simplicity reminds one of Bossuet's: 'cet art obligeant qui fait qu'on se rabaisse sans se dégrader.'

§ 4. Marcus made L. Ceionius Commodus, the son of L. Aelius Caesar whom Hadrian had originally intended to succeed him, joint Emperor in A.D. 161. He gave him the title Lucius Aurelius Verus. Lucius was married to Lucilla, Marcus' eldest daughter. Tradition describes him as a libertine, with no sense of his public responsibility. Probably this is a worse character than he deserved, employed as a foil by later writers to Marcus, as the perfected wise man. The few letters exchanged between him and Fronto suggest an amiable and somewhat vain character, and some traces of good remain even in his biography: 'Antoninus Pius loved the simplicity of Lucius' character and the purity of his life, even urging Marcus to model himself on his brother', and again 'he was of simple behaviour and could not conceal anything'. In later years he was unfavourably affected by his visit to Antioch, and Galen mentions the luxury and affectation of his favourite servants, contrasting them with the puritan simplicity of Marcus' household. Marcus mentions Lucius' beautiful mistress, Panthea, without censure and with some feeling (viii. 37). He died very suddenly in A.D. 169.

The remark here about 'stimulating me to take care of myself' probably refers to Marcus' delicate health. Lucius at least showed respect and natural affection by abstaining from any attempt to overthrow Marcus in order to secure the throne for himself.

'My children.' Faustina was the mother of thirteen children, between her marriage in A.D. 145 and the birth of a daughter in A.D. 168, of whom six died in infancy. The unfortunate Commodus was one of twin sons born 31 August A.D. 161, and, when he succeeded Marcus, was the only surviving son.

§ 7. The tradition about the health of Marcus is various; some writers represent him as vigorous in youth but worn out in later years, some say that by care and abstinence he preserved a naturally delicate constitution. Benedicta and Theodotus were no doubt slaves. The names, at first sight, suggest that they were Christians, but it seems certain that, at this date, such names were not common among Christians, whereas these and similar names were often borne by pagan servants.

§ 8. Annia Galeria Faustina the younger, or Faustina Augusta as she became in A.D. 146, was first cousin to Marcus, being the daughter of Faustina the elder, Marcus' paternal aunt, the wife of Antoninus Pius. She accompanied Marcus to the Danube front and was with him when, after the insurrection of Avidius Cassius, governor of Syria, in A.D. 175, he went to the eastern part of the Empire to restore the situation. In A.D. 176 she died suddenly of gout at Halala in the Taurus. Marcus made Halala into a colony called Faustinopolis, caused her to be consecrated as Diva Faustina Pia and instituted in her memory a guild of Puellae Faustinianae. Her memory, as is notorious, has been

blackened, as her mother's also was, by Dio Cassius and the biographers. The problem is whether we are to believe a tissue of lewd and malignant legends, some of which are obvious fictions (like the story that Commodus, the imperial gladiator, was himself the son of a gladiator), rather than the carefully chosen words of her husband, the evidence of Fronto's correspondence, and the testimony of Antoninus, who in a letter to Fronto of A.D. 143 wrote: 'I would sooner live with Faustina in Gyara [an island to which offenders were banished] than without her in the palace.'

It is perhaps worth observing that Guevara's once famous romance, *The Dial of Princes*, an extraordinary medley of matter in which I cannot find a grain of historical truth, contributed largely to the traditional view, which makes her name a byeword for infidelity. Since Merivale wrote on the subject most historians have agreed to acquit her or at least to return a verdict of not-proven.

The way in which Marcus speaks of her here suggests that she was still living, so that the passage (and presumably the Book) would be dated before A.D. 176.

1. ↑ Printed as No. 290 in the *Oxford Book of Latin Verse*:

consule
.....
saepius.
.....

sum victus ipse, fateor, a ter
.....
Vero patrono, nec semel sed
.....

2. [↑] I refer throughout these introductions to the writers of the various biographies in the *Historia Augusta* as 'the biographer', since they are composite writings, of uncertain origin and date.
3. [↑] *The Letters of M. Cornelius Fronto* (translated by Haines in the Loeb classics), p. 61, Naber.

Footnotes

BOOK II

The inscriptions: 'Written among the Quadi on the river Gran' at the close of Book i, and 'Written at Carnuntum' at the beginning of Book iii, are now generally thought to be titles to Book ii and Book iii. In that case the present Book will have been composed in the anxious months of the campaign in Moravia, the most striking incident of which was the famous battle connected in Christian legend with the Thundering Legion. Amid like conditions of doubtful warfare Frederick the Great wrote his poem *Le Stoicien*, under the inspiration of Marcus.

This and Book iii are remarkably alike in matter and manner; they resemble most nearly Book xii, and I have sometimes thought that ii, iii, and xii were the original draft out of which the whole *Meditations* later grew. In particular the doctrine of the indwelling Genius or Divinity, so prominent in Books ii and iii, recurs but rarely until we pass to Book xii.

The date of the miraculous victory over the Quadi is most likely to be A.D. 173, as general head-quarters removed in the winter A.D. 173–4 to Sirmium (Mitrovitz) on the Saar. Marcus then was writing in the field, on the Danube line and north of it, away from the libraries at Rome. To this situation the allusions to his books and memoranda may perhaps refer (ii. 2 and 3; iii. 14). One notable difference

distinguishes the two Books. The solemn and lugubrious stress upon the transience and pettiness of man's life, which shadows the pages of Book ii, gives way in its successor to a more hopeful tone; the burden of disillusionment and disappointment seems lifted. May we suppose that this change reflects the relief, when the anxieties of the campaign in Moravia were past, and Marcus allowed himself to be saluted *Imperator* for the seventh time and to assume the title *Germanicus*?

The two Books then are alike, yet contrasted, each has a unity and spirit of its own. Certainly in Book ii there is a nearly continuous current of reflection, uniting the brief and formally distinct chapters; prominence is given to special points of thought and practice, noticeable words and phrases recur, and ch. 17 is a carefully composed conclusion. There is a pause between ch. 3 and ch. 4 as if the first three chapters were a proem, but the impression of unity is confirmed from what is a nearly complete summary of the topics of the Book in xii. 26. He begins by distinguishing the three aspects of Duty, to my neighbour, to myself, and to Nature and the God who sustains Nature. Throughout he assumes the familiar principle of the Stoic school: that there is no good in the strict sense for man save the good of human personality:

to live by law,

Acting the law we live by without fear;

And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.^[1]

To true good and evil, to right and wrong, are contrasted what the Stoic school called 'indifferent' ends: life and death, riches and poverty, good report and evil report, pleasures and pains. Self-respect and self-reverence are the virtues of the individual, as an individual, and they depend upon the judgement of the true man, his governing faculty, what we may term reasonable Will, something close to Conscience. This judgement is in our power to control, so that man's chief tasks are to be one with his fellow man and one with the providential system of which he is a part. Indeed his chief duty and privilege is to preserve his own soul, the indwelling Divinity, in holiness, because the reason in which he participates is derived from the Divine reason, a 'grain of glory mix'd with humbleness'.

Ch. 1. This morning meditation is not devotional, like the Pythagorean maxim: 'In the morning lift up your eyes to the heavens',^[2] nor is it strictly an *examen de conscience*. It is rather a summary of moral precepts, stated rationally, even coldly, though as the writer proceeds we discover behind his words a strong religious, even at times an enthusiastic, strain of devotion. The form of the chapter is a dialogue with self or between two aspects of the self.^[3] A problem is stated, an answer suggested. A second form, occasionally employed, is that of a dialogue between two persons.^[4]

Both forms were familiar to Marcus from Roman poetry and satire, beginning with Lucilius, but he uses them rarely. He can himself at times discover a vein of the satiric spirit, which is in so much of his country's literature. Normally he propounds maxims for his own guidance, and in so doing he not seldom seems to contemplate an unknown reader. The soul is 'discoursing with itself, concerning itself, in that active dialogue which is the "active principle" of the dialectic method as an instrument for the attainment of truth'.^[5] The implication is that there is a division in the self, requiring to be settled. Thus these solitary meditations are linked to the dramatic dialogues of the Greek genius, which begin in that famous passage in the *Iliad*^[6] where Ulysses is shown, deserted by his comrades, debating within himself whether to leave the battle:

Now on the field Ulysses stands alone,
The Greeks all fled, the Trojans pouring on:
But stands collected in himself, and whole,
And questions thus his own unconquer'd soul.

The purpose of the chapter is to show the reason why we are not to meet evil in another by evil in ourselves, by resentment and hate. Facing frankly the fact that we meet evil in our everyday life, Marcus does not here attempt to explain the existence, in a world ultimately ruled by good, of evil-doers, he merely considers what remedies there are

in our own conduct for such evil. First he puts the paradox of Socrates that the man has attempted to do me evil from ignorance of what is real good and real evil. That is, he has chosen for himself mistaken ends. As is said in ch. 13, he is blinded to the distinction between light and darkness. He is to be pitied rather than to be hated.

Again, as is put at greater length in ch. 11, he has not injured me, because the gods do not permit a man to be morally injured, only to be hurt in those things which are not either good or evil, in property or fame, even in life and death. We are ourselves given the power of moral independence.

Thirdly, the wrong-doer is after all my kinsman; we participate, both of us, in the Divine reason; I cannot therefore be angry with or hate one who belongs to the same reasonable society with myself. We came into the world as members of one body, we are designed to work together, as the physical organism works in unison to preserve its natural existence. Anything then in me that tends to work against my fellow man is a resistance to Nature and natural law, and to return apparent evil by real evil in myself is to resist Nature. Thus the doctrines, so briefly stated in this opening chapter, are three. First that men are reasonable by nature, because they have in them a particle of Divine reason, and therefore contain a principle which is a deeper source of social unity than mere fellowship by blood and common race; secondly that this

reason informs man that his only true good and evil is right and wrong, and that he is able to secure this for himself; thirdly that right and wrong rest upon knowledge, so that evil ultimately means ignorance, that is unenlightenment by reason. The particle of reason is called in ch. 4 an effluence from the mind which administers the Universe. In ch. 2 it is identified with the governing element in man, the central understanding. That it is here called a particle is in accordance with the Stoic teaching, which gives a material substratum to consciousness, inasmuch as the whole world revealed to our consciousness is matter informed by energy. We are reminded of St. Augustine's^[7] struggle with materialistic presuppositions: 'How could it all profit me, so long as I thought that Thou, O Lord God, who art Truth, wast an infinite luminous body, and that I was a piece broken off that body', and of an expression of Sir Thomas Browne:^[8] 'there is surely a piece of divinity in us'.

The use of the analogy from the bodily organism to the political union of man is familiar from its employment in St. John's gospel and in St. Paul's epistles. Marcus' great physician, Galen, whose teaching is probably reflected in the analysis of ch. 2, endeavoured to show in his work *On the use of the parts of the body* how the co-ordination, which Marcus illustrates from the limbs, the jaw, and the eyelids, runs through every physiological adaptation, and is, as he thinks, evidence of the ruling purpose of Nature in her works. The assumption that in man's life only *moral* good and *moral* evil are in fact good and evil is the boldest and

most wholesome of the Stoic hypotheses: 'We understand', says Cicero,^[9] 'right to be such that, waiving all utility, it can be justly commended of itself, without any rewards or profits'.

Ch. 2. Man partakes with his fellow men in Mind, a portion of the Divine allotted to each man (ch. 1), whereby man himself is able to touch God (ch. 12). What then is that of which I say 'I am', that which is *par excellence* myself? In answer Marcus gives the broad popular distinction between soul and body, but divides the body, the psycho-physical organism, into the physical structure and the animating breath, the *pneuma*. For what is often called soul he substitutes the Stoical term, 'the governing self', corresponding to our expression 'the reasonable will'. Later he sometimes employs the phrase 'governing self' for the ruling power in the Universe.

This governing self in man is often identified with Mind^[10] or Understanding or the reasonable part, sometimes with the Divine in man. In this Book, however, Marcus distinguishes it from the indwelling Genius,^[11] the god-in-man. This distinction is characteristic of the second and third Books and the twelfth, whereas the other Books rarely mention the Genius.

The almost ascetic tone in which he speaks of the body reflects a temper of mind which appears to be personal. It is not far removed from the view expressed by Socrates in the

Phaedo of Plato, where the body is a prison-house of the soul. This aspect of Marcus' thought has been supposed to reflect a Platonizing tendency in later Stoicism. Clearly it conflicts with the view which represents the body, as much as the mind, as part of a world-process which is determined to good by a wise Providence. We may best understand it as the outcome of a religious dualism which is opposed to the scientific reflection of genuine Stoicism, a reflection which unifies the world of experience in the light of natural law. Marcus appears to be concerned in this Book to emphasize the importance to moral well-being of a reverence for self, which is also a reverence for the indwelling spirit. At the outset then he lays stress upon the importance of the reasonable judgement to moral well-being, and speaks of moral freedom as opposed to servitude to the flesh, and of man's end as being a restoration of the harmony of the individual with the universal mind.

This contempt for the body is extended elsewhere in his reflections to a depreciation of the world man lives in by comparison with the world of the heavenly luminaries, the visible gods (as Marcus believed). This attitude of mind runs through much of Greek speculation, even of their natural philosophy, but is seen most conspicuously in their language about the visible heavens. We find a more convincing 'piece of divinity' in the hyssop upon the wall than in the solar system; they find the godlike in what is above this region of mist and darkness. A good illustration of this fundamental diversity of view may be drawn from

the conclusion of Marcus' younger contemporary Galen. He closes his work on the *Use of the bodily parts*, after showing the marvels of organic structure even in the minutest living beings, by contrasting these corruptible, muddy, things with the purer manifestations of mind in the heavens. In much the same spirit Aristotle had vindicated his study of *The Parts of Animals*, and even more conspicuously Plato had depreciated all the things of sense by comparison with the ideas of pure Reason.

The curious little digression upon the distractions of books is repeated in ch. 3. It is a characteristic note of Roman Stoicism, this reminder that conduct is our concern, not theory. Cicero insists upon it in his *Offices* and it is a commonplace of Seneca's *Moral Letters*: 'we make a burden of life as well by our indulgence in literature as in all else', he writes to Lucilius.^[12] The moral is taken over by Montaigne: 'I have been pleased . . . to see men in devotion vow ignorance, as well as chastity, poverty and penitence: 'tis also a gelding of our unruly appetites to blunt this cupidity that spurs on to the study of books.'^[13] The saying is echoed by Pope: 'or Learning's luxury or idleness',^[14] and there is no more frequent moral in Goethe's writings.^[15]

Ch. 3. 'You are not to repine at what is allotted to you, now or hereafter.' This chapter takes up the close of the last, and rapidly reviews the variety of names which have been given to man's destiny, to all of which the Stoic philosophy tried to give a meaning agreeable to its system—The gods,

Providence, Fortune, Nature, the web woven by the three Fates, Necessity, the advantage of the whole Universe, of which man is a part.

He begins with the works of the gods, which are 'full of Providence'. He means that from the parts of the world, where we can see the working of the gods, we can argue to a providential system, a care for us and for every part. To the Stoics the regular movements of the Heavens, of the Sun and other luminaries, visible gods as they held them to be, were plain evidence of a divine government of the Universe.

Next, the things of Fortune, the daily accidents of human life, are not in fact accidents but the effect of Nature, the result of the vast concatenation of the threads held in the hands of Providence, her purposeful dispensation. Here he is referring to a view that events which we do not understand and so ascribe to the goddess Fortune are the after-effects of an original creative impulse, which works according to a chain of causes and effects. If this be accepted, 'all flows from that other world'. Behind the constant changes of experience lies the supreme and all-pervading Reason, the divine Logos. The word 'flows' introduces the thought, adopted by Zeno from Heraclitus, that the world is the scene of unceasing changes, of eternal coming to be and passing away, behind which lies the unchanging law of Reason.

Next he takes Necessity, the Stoic word for what we call Natural Law and equates it to the benefit of the Whole, that which preserves the Universe. The Universe (the Greek word means 'ordered scheme') is preserved by the continual changes of the Elements and of the compounds into which they enter. In this way, as Marcus often says later, the whole is kept ever young.

This is your *viaticum*; you need only these doctrines to enable you to live and die with heartfelt gratitude to the gods.

The chapter is an example of the simplicity and yet extreme difficulty of the writer. He is simple because he states with conviction a conclusion which has sunk into the common consciousness of religious men and women; difficult because of his deep knowledge of a system every tenet of which had been discussed and criticized, and because of his parsimony of words, his reference to suppressed arguments.

Observe the exact care in verbal choice, the alliteration and assonance, the way in which he begins with 'the gods' and closes with the same word. The effect corresponds with the energy and concentration of thought, the simplicity and conviction of the writer.

Chs. 4–5. The first edition opens the second Book with ch. 4, and the Vatican MS. here begins a new folio. The

connexion, however, of these two chapters with what went before is marked by the words 'from the gods', which take up the closing words of ch. 3 and by the repetition of 'the gods' at the end of ch. 5.

He has too long neglected the days of grace; before it is too late he must perceive the nature of the whole of which he is an effluence (ch. 1). Then follows the statement of his duty as a Roman and a man, which is to be done each day as if it were the last. The duty is expressed in five precepts, which are repeated positively in ch. 16: content with the station assigned by his destiny; regard for reason, which eschews passion, especially anger; resists pleasure and pain, hypocrisy, and self-love; forbids a life without purpose. These few precepts of practice correspond to the few doctrines of theory given in ch. 3. They afford leisure from alien imaginations, ensure unaffected dignity, natural love of the kind, freedom and justice (which in the Stoic system includes benevolence), and thus permit a man to live the smooth and godlike life.

Ch. 6. To do wrong to the self is contrasted with paying honour and reverence to the self and the Divinity within. The word Marcus uses for wrong or outrage is in Greek tragedy that which begets the self-willed autocrat. Hesiod opposes this vice to reverence in a passage which Marcus paraphrases in v. 33. Again he says: 'reverence and the honour of your own thinking self will reconcile you to

yourself, your neighbour and the gods,'^[16] the three aspects of duty emphasized above.

By Plato temperance and self-control are opposed to violence and wrong, but Marcus prefers a word which Democritus first used in the sense of self-reverence. He often couples it with faith or truth or simplicity, using it only once in its older sense of modesty. Dr. Gilbert Murray says: 'if you look into the history of later Greek Ethics, it is rather a surprise to find how small a place is occupied by *Aidôs*.'^[17] Marcus perhaps chose the word partly as appropriate to translate the Roman *verecundia*, partly in need of a word for one of the triad 'self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control', partly as marking the contrast with the despot's outrage of his subjects and himself, the shamelessness of a Nero or Domitian. 'Do not become a Caesar, do not be dyed with the purple', he says,^[18] and he repeatedly shows his keen sense of the dangers of absolutism, of the wilful violence of which Seneca makes Caligula the awful example. He may then have himself felt the peculiar need of that sense of shame which is, in Dr. Murray's words: 'essentially the thing that is left when all other moral sanctions fail',^[19] that sense which made Francesco Barberini, in his own words, 'blush more deeply than his cardinal's crimson at the virtues of this heathen'.^[20]

Ch. 7. The godlike life (ch. 5) and the leisure from alien imaginations may be disturbed by the allurements of some sense-image from without or by the sense of a wrong done

to one by a neighbour. The way to correct this impression is to use the intrusive imagination, with the impulse which inevitably follows it, or the opposition of another's will, to prompt the right response in a virtuous activity.^[21] This will correct the tendency to wander from the smooth life of virtue. There is a second danger, a different kind of instability. Beware of employing your leisure to drift from one distraction, as we say, to another.

Marcus refers to the 'busy idleness', the 'listless occupation' satirized by Horace. Lucretius^[22] says, 'whose very life is little more than death'; Seneca that men are sick with a sickness which is death; they seek retreats yet cannot escape the fear of death.^[23] Similarly Addison speaks of such dilettanti as 'not moribund but dead'. The other aspect, the aimlessness of such living, is vividly suggested by Ennius:^[24] 'we go here, then there; arrived there, it is our pleasure to leave, our mind wanders without fixed purpose, *praeterpropter vitam vivitur*'. Seneca compares them to sailors without a star to give them a bearing.

Ch. 8. This chapter should follow ch. 6, just as ch. 9 runs well after ch. 7.

Montaigne^[25] illustrates the sense: "'Do thy own work and know thyself", of which two parts, both the one and the other generally comprehend our whole duty, and do each of them in like manner involve the other; for who will do his own work aright will find that his first lesson is to know

what he is and that which is proper to himself; and who rightly understands himself will never mistake another man's work for his own, but will love and improve himself above all other things, will refuse superfluous employments and reject all unprofitable thoughts and propositions. As folly, on the one side, though it should enjoy all it desire, would notwithstanding never be content; so, on the other, wisdom, acquiescing in the present, is never dissatisfied with itself.'

Ch. 9. We shall escape the wandering courses of ch. 7 if we remember that our nature is part of Universal Nature, and should be related to her, following her order and purposiveness. She has put it in our power (a truth which Epictetus loves to repeat) to do and say what is in accord with her, and none can hinder our will within the limits she prescribes. [\[26\]](#)

Ch. 10. This illustration from Theophrastus of the difference between faults due to anger and those due to appetite is out of place in this context. The only connexion with the subjects of the Book is that in ch. 16 Marcus puts anger down as one of the unsocial virtues and then mentions yielding to pleasure and pain. He says 'as we commonly do distinguish them' because the Stoic school strictly held that all vices are equally evil. The fragment has not been preserved elsewhere, but we can illustrate Theophrastus' meaning from Plato and Aristotle. Plato [\[27\]](#) remarks that we commonly reproach a man more who lacks

self-control in the presence of pleasure than one who yields to pain. So Aristotle says that in common opinion want of control arising from anger is less culpable than that caused by appetite.^[28] Anger, he goes on, hears the voice of reason in a sense, is accompanied by pain, is natural and undisguised. Appetite, on the contrary, follows at once the solicitation of sense, is pleasurable, unnatural in its excess, secret in pursuit of its end. Theophrastus emphasizes Aristotle's first two points. There is reason for anger, because the injury complained of was a precedent pain, and the pain accompanying anger proves that there is some compulsion upon the will. By contrast the victim of appetite acts of his own accord, at once and without reflection; he is carried away by the prospect of a pleasure which his imagination suggests. Moreover, appetite is less easy to correct and more effeminate, even as anger is more manly.

The question of the propriety of anger, in the form of just indignation, was at issue between the Peripatetic school (the followers of Aristotle and Theophrastus) and the Stoics. It is interesting, as exhibiting Marcus' range of study and impartiality, to find him commending Theophrastus here, as elsewhere he speaks with commendation of Epicurus.^[29]

Ch. 11. This and the next chapter are principally directed to remove the fear of death, but Marcus uses them to bring out some of his favourite philosophic positions.

§ 1. To leave this mortal life is not a ground of fear, if there are gods, for they will bestow not evil but good. His meaning is, and here he agrees with the Epicureans, that what is beyond the grave is not an existence of darkness and suffering. [\[30\]](#)

But if the gods do not exist or if, as the Epicureans hold, they take no care for men, wherefore should I live in a world devoid of gods and Providence?

§ 2. But the gods do exist and make human life their care, and they have put it in man's power to avoid true evils, that is, moral failure. If anything else that befalls man were evil, they would have put it in man's power to avoid it. He leaves the conclusion unexpressed, viz. that as man cannot escape what are commonly called evils, they cannot actually be evils.

§ 3. We know that so-called goods and evils befall men indifferently; there is no exemption of the good man from suffering or of the bad man from blessings. These goods and evils cannot be true goods and evils or the gods would not have allowed them. We cannot believe that they would have allowed them in ignorance, or have consciously permitted them because they were not strong enough or wise enough to prevent or correct them.

§ 4. And certainly death and life, honour and dishonour, wealth and poverty, pain and pleasure fall to good and bad

indifferently; but they are morally neither good nor evil, because what does not make a man morally worse cannot make his life worse. They are therefore neither good nor evil.

Marcus, in his train of thought, combines two arguments. One is from the goodness of the gods (or of Nature). Material blessings and sufferings would not be permitted by Heaven, if they were real goods and evils, to fall equally upon the just and the unjust. The second is that material goods and ills are not real goods and ills because they do not affect a man's moral integrity or (he might have added) compensate his moral failure.

The axioms that gods exist, and that they are all wise and all powerful, and that they are the cause only of good, are derived ultimately from Plato's teaching in *The Republic* and *The Laws*. In the later Books Marcus prefers generally to preserve an open mind between belief in the gods and the Epicurean atomism, and again between believing in a divine general providence and in divine care for the individual. Here there is no hesitation in his belief.

Incidentally he rejects a statement of Epictetus,^[31] who taught that the gods did not put material things in men's power, 'not because they would not, but because they could not', and of Seneca that 'what is refused to us was not in their power to give'.^[32] Lastly, it will be observed that neither here nor anywhere else does he discuss the later

Stoic view that these material goods and evils may, where moral freedom is not affected, be treated by the good man as 'preferred' or 'rejected'. Presumably he believed, as is indeed the case, that to admit this kind of casuistry is to tamper with the purity of the moral doctrine he had accepted.

Ch. 12. The transition is from the 'indifferent' goods and ills of the last chapter to the power of thought in man, which can judge of the worthlessness of all temporal things by comparison with itself and the Divine, which it can touch if it is rightly disposed. The dread of death is removed by disillusionment in regard to life and by recognizing that the king of terrors, stripped of his trappings, is nothing else than a work of Nature and a work which serves her purpose. The reference to the child's dread is an allusion to the fable of the boy who was frightened by the mask he had himself made. The two kinds of disillusionment are followed by the reassertion of the mind's power to dwell in contact with the godhead. These closing words are the motive of ch. 13 and are continued in ch. 15 and ch. 17.

The main topics of the chapter were familiar to the ancient reader from the literature of consolation, in its many forms. The 'horror naturalis' of decomposition and decay had been treated with all his poetic power by Lucretius,^[33] and Seneca often dwells on the same theme.^[34] In modern literature the subject is handled by Montaigne in an essay^[35] largely based on Lucretius and Seneca, and

Bacon^[36] follows Montaigne in the words: 'and by him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, *pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa*. Groans and convulsions and a discoloured face, and friends weeping and blacks and obsequies, and the like shew Death terrible.' Similarly Adam Smith^[37] reminds us: 'We sympathize even with the dead, and overlooking what is of real importance in their situation . . . we are chiefly affected by those circumstances which strike our senses.'

Ch. 13. The central subject of this chapter is the manner in which the deity within us is to be maintained in that purity which enables it to be the organ of intercourse with God, to be in contact with God, as was said at the end of the last chapter. The opening words are, however, difficult to interpret. Do they condemn the endless, restless curiosity for knowledge which the quotation from Pindar illustrates in the *Theaetetus* of Plato, from which Marcus seems to have taken it? There Plato contrasts the absorption of the philosopher in what he holds to be real with his neglect of everyday interests, the affairs of his neighbour, and even the business of his city. Here Marcus seems to condemn alike the curiosity of speculative inquiry and the curiosity as to our neighbours, and to treat them as similar in character. He takes an opposite view of the speculative activity of the mind in xi. 1.

The explanation is probably that he wishes to put everything else aside by comparison with devotion to the

God within.

This cult of the Genius or Daemon forms perhaps the most remarkable problem in our Book. Does Marcus think of it as the godhead which has taken up its abode in him? That is the natural interpretation of what he says here and in ch. 17. In other places he identifies this Divinity with mind, what Locke calls 'that thinking thing within you', that which in Aristotle's *De Anima* alone survives death, because it belongs to universal mind. Marcus has asserted in ch. 1 that the mind of man is a particle of divine origin. This, strictly taken, must mean something material, however much refined, and the doctrine would agree with what many Stoics held, that the infant at birth inhales the mind element from the circumambient atmosphere. This would conform with what Marcus says elsewhere of the destiny of the soul at the dissolution which is death.^[38] He seems to think of the souls as becoming reabsorbed into the air and so into the ultimate fire. But his physical and material view is not in question here. He seems to be conscious of the indwelling of a divine spirit, not merely of a divine understanding nor of a part of the world substance and world soul.

There are similar expressions, belonging to a devotional manner of thought, not only in many Roman Stoics, but also in the Greek thinkers of that school, and before them in Plato. Thus Manilius says: 'into whom God descends and dwells',^[39] and Lucan: 'full of the God, whom he bore in his silent mind.'^[40] Seneca, still more remarkably, says: 'God is

near you, is with you, is within . . . a sacred spirit resides within us, observer and guardian of our good and ill', and again he speaks of 'God, a guest within man's body'.^[41] Even more plainly Epictetus asserts: 'Zeus has set every man's divinity to care for him, and to be his guardian: this divinity sleeps not and cannot be controverted'; and again 'the God is within and your divinity within'.^[42] Similar thoughts are already in Plato's *Timaeus*, whether derived from contemporary religious speculation or from Pythagorean and Orphic influences, and many now think that Xenocrates, a successor of Plato in the Academy, developed this 'daemonizing' side of his master and that it passed into Stoicism through the labours of Cicero's teacher Posidonius. The latter said: 'the cause of passions, that is of disagreement (with Nature) and of an unhappy life, is not to follow always the deity in man, which is akin to and has a similar nature with that which governs the whole universe'.^[43]

The exact history of this remarkable doctrine of the Genius is obscure, but, whether or not it was inherent in Stoicism from its inception (as Bonhöffer, for instance, maintained), it illustrates a double tendency, not only in Stoicism but in Greek thought generally. There is on the one hand an attempt to give reasonable expression to men's ordinary beliefs, on the other an effort to retain the substance of those beliefs, however much the reasoning process may have modified them. 'Greek thought moved from Myth to Logos', it has been said, and in Plato myth remains by the

side of reason in his most completed work. To Roman thinkers, though not so much in Marcus, this kind of religious speculation was made easier by the deep-seated belief in the good genius of the family, and the genius or spiritual power in the individual's being. These notions were also present to the Greek naive consciousness, and were submitted by philosophers to extreme rationalization, whereas by the more religious thinkers and the great mass of unconscious men they were used to embody that without which ordinary belief and philosophic interpretation both became unintelligible.

The remarkable feature in all Marcus' meditations is the way in which he keeps himself true to a spiritual conviction of the communion between God and man, free from the superstitions of a world full of strange credulity and fantastic devotions.

Ch. 14. Like ch. 12 this chapter is written in the interests of disillusionment. To emphasize life's brevity is intended to make death seem less dreadful.

Two lines of thought are combined: we lose by death no more than we lose as each moment of the present passes, and secondly, death does not rob us of any new experience, since life has revealed all its secrets to one who has lived even a little while.

The former thought is repeated, differently put, in the second half of § 2. The very old man and the infant dying immaturely suffer an identical loss, the present passing moment. Both thoughts are derived from the Epicurean school; they appear in Lucretius, the first^[44] in the form that however long a man lives, death that lasts for eternity still awaits him; the difference between a long and a short life is negligible when compared with Eternal Time. The same reasoning is used by Pascal:^[45] 'Is not the duration of our life equally removed from eternity, even should it last ten years more? In view of these infinities, all finites are equal.' The argument is that infinite time + 1 year = infinite time + 101 years, but it is false to conclude from this that one year of finite existence = 101 years.

Marcus prefers to say that life consists of separate units, only one of which is destroyed by death; one day is negligible by comparison with infinite time; so that the old man and the child alike lose only a negligible duration of existence, one day.

The second reflection (about the sameness of experience) is given identically in Lucretius:^[46] 'all things remain the same if you live a very long life, and still more so if you were never to die.' He seems to have in mind the misery of Tithonus. The points made by both writers appear to be subtle perhaps, but false and frigid, like Pope's:

The blest to-day is as completely so
As who began a thousand years ago, [\[47\]](#)

which is, some critics suppose, what Marcus intends here.

Ch. 15. Monimus, a Cynic philosopher, used to say: 'Everything is fancy'; 'Everything is vanity'. He went further in his scepticism, declaring that what men take for reality is like the background in a theatre, [\[48\]](#) 'the painted veil called life'.

The objection which was taken is obvious, says Marcus; no doubt it was the retort that, if the dictum were true, his own scepticism was itself an illusion. We can, however, take the dictum for our own use, to correct man's vain affectation of himself and his knowledge. Marcus sometimes himself speaks [\[49\]](#) as if all man's life were a dream and a delirium, as though he thought 'our little life is rounded with a sleep'.

He normally uses Monimus' text, however, to mean that everything depends upon our judgement about it, nothing is good or bad but 'thinking makes it so'. [\[50\]](#) If the reason is truly awake, the judgement is enlightened; the good man corrects his false imaginations, distinguishes what is good, sees the good even in apparent evil. The bad, on the other hand, have a tainted imagination, in their ignorance they cannot distinguish light from darkness, as he said in ch. 13, to which this chapter perhaps originally belonged.

The same is true of the intellectual life; truth, for the Stoics, resulted from acquiescence, after due scrutiny, in a clear and distinct apprehension. Bion^[51] puts well and simply what Marcus means: 'the pain of things arises because of man's judgement (the word Monimus used in the sense of "fancy"); judge of them like Socrates: you will suffer no pain; judge of them amiss: you will be hurt by your own moods, your own false opinion.' So Marcus says:^[52] 'Remove the judgement: with it the "I am hurt" is removed; remove the "I am hurt": the hurt itself is gone.'

Ch. 16. Marcus here sums up much of what he has been saying before. There are five ways in which the soul of man does outrage to itself, abandons self-reverence.^[53] By this outrage it becomes a foreign growth in the Universe, superfluous and injurious to the whole. 'The Stoics used to say that the selfish man is a cancer in the Universe . . . the parallel is scientifically exact.'^[54] Such evil, Marcus says, is 'disobedience to the reason and ordinance of the most reverend City and Commonwealth'.

This is his first mention of the greatest of Stoic ideas, the Eternal City in which all outward differences of race, creed, station, and gifts disappear beside the power of reason, which enables men to live in equal communion with one another and the gods.

From one point of view the Roman Empire represented to contemporary thinkers this realm of equal right and law.

Polybius,^[55] the Greek historian, had seen this in the days of the younger Scipio; Plutarch^[56] recognized the truth in the first century A.D. The Romans, he thought, were realizing what Alexander the Great had begun. Marcus himself is conscious of this.^[57] From a second and deeper standpoint, the Emperor is suggesting the City of the Universe (St. Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, Kant's *Kingdom of Ends*). He had read the story of the past too well to dream that even the great world-power, which he governed, would last beyond its appointed hour. The City of God, of which he is thinking here, is eternal, founded in the heavens.

Of its 'reason and ordinance' again there are two aspects, the temporal and the eternal. For those who saw in Rome the Immortal City, the Roman law, which flourished under the Antonines, partly quickened by the Stoic ideas of natural law and equity, is the expression of this ordered Reason. Marcus must have been aware of this, as we see from his own words, from the language of his legislation and of the great jurists who served him. But here he is thinking of eternal law, that of which human enactments are a mere shadow. He puts before himself the common law, the common Logos, which belong to the commonwealth of gods and men.^[58]

Ch. 17. This chapter, evidently conceived as an Epilogue to the Book, has been termed^[59] a '*Sursum corda*, le dernier mot du Stoïcisme'.

It falls into two parts; the first is prompted by the mention of the Eternal City at the close of ch. 16. By contrast, all mortal life is small and transitory, a pilgrimage in a foreign land, like 'the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day'.^[60]

Strictly man's reasonable home is here and now, he must live in the present. The writer has unconsciously passed to the thought of that most reverend City as the place of man's inheritance, 'that imperial palace whence he came', the land of Promise.

The second thought is that the love of wisdom and the cult of the God within is the sole safe-conduct for man, detained for a moment in this swiftly vanishing scene. The maxims of Philosophy are the chart whereby he may steer a true course and await Death with contentment, as Nature's good purpose and his own:

Que l'homme est malheureux qui au monde se fie!
O Dieux, que veritable est la Philosophic,
Qui dit que toute chose à la fin perira,
Et qu'en changeant de forme une autre vestira.^[61]

1. ↑ Tennyson, *Oenone*.
2. ↑ M. Ant. xi. 27.
3. ↑ Ibid. iv. 49; ix. 42.
4. ↑ Ibid. v. 65 viii. 40.

5. ↑ Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, p. 129.
6. ↑ *Il.* xi. 401.
7. ↑ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, iv. 16. 31.
8. ↑ Sir Tho. Browne, *Religio Medici*, ii. 11.
9. ↑ Cic. *De Finibus*, ii. 45; cf. Tennyson's *Oenone*, cited above.
10. ↑ M. Ant. iii. 16, 1; xii. 3.
11. ↑ *Ibid.* ii. 17.
12. ↑ Sen. *Ep.* 106. 12.
13. ↑ Montaigne, *Essais*, iii. 12 (tr. Cotton).
14. ↑ Pope, *Essay on Man*, ii. 46.
15. ↑ e.g. the discussion of the meaning of Logos in *Faust*.
16. ↑ M. Ant. vi. 16. 5.
17. ↑ *The Rise of the Greek Epic*³, p. 89.,
18. ↑ M. Ant. vi. 30. 1.
19. ↑ *l.c.* p. 90.
20. ↑ 'ti farà piu della porpora arrossire', in the dedication to his translation of Marcus into Italian, 1675.
21. ↑ M. Ant. iv. 1; v. 20; vi. 50.
22. ↑ 'mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti', Lucr. 3. 1046 (Dryden's translation, line 263).
23. ↑ See the brilliant pages in *De Brev. Vitae*, ch. 2.
24. ↑ Ennius, *Sc.* 240 ed. Vahlen.
25. ↑ *Essais*, i. 3 (Cotton).
26. ↑ M. Ant. v. 21; v. 34; xi. 1.
27. ↑ Pl. *Leg.* 663 e.
28. ↑ Arlst. *Eth. Nic.* vii. 6.
29. ↑ M. Ant. vii. 33; vii. 64; ix. 41; xi. 26.

30. ↑ He puts this, in the manner of Socrates: 'if to a further existence, then there are gods too in that world; if to insensibility, you will rest from pleasures and pains', iii. 3.
31. ↑ Epict. i 1. 12.
32. ↑ *De Benef.* ii. 29; cf. *Epist.* 58. 27.
33. ↑ See especially *Lucr.* 3. 881.
34. ↑ *Sen. Ep.* 14. 6; 24. 12 and 14; 120. 18.
35. ↑ *Essais*, i. 19.
36. ↑ *Essay on Death*, 'Death's sad array, not Death itself, alarms men.'
37. ↑ *Moral Sentiments*, i. 1. 1.
38. ↑ *M. Ant.* iv. 4 and 21.
39. ↑ *Manil.* ii. 107.
40. ↑ *Pharsalia*, ix. 563.
41. ↑ *Sen. Ep.* 41. 2.
42. ↑ *Epict.* i. 14. 12 and 14.
43. ↑ ap. *Galen*, v. 469.
44. ↑ *Lucr.* 3. 1090.
45. ↑ *Pensées*, Sect. ii. 72 Brunschvicg.
46. ↑ *Lucr.* 3. 947.
47. ↑ *Essay on Man*, 1. 75.
48. ↑ *Sextus Emp. Math.* 7. 88, cf. 8. 5. Pascal says 'l'imagination dispose de tout' and refers to an Italian book: *Della opinione regina del mondo*; ii, § 82 Br.
49. ↑ *M. Ant.* ii. 17; iv. 3. 4.
50. ↑ *Ibid.* iii. 9; iv. 39; xii. 8, 22, 25, and 26.
51. ↑ *Stobaeus, Eclog.* iii, p. 41 Wachsmuth and Hense.
52. ↑ *M. Ant.* iv. 7.

53. ↑ Ibid. ii. 5 and 16.
54. ↑ W. R. Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 111.
55. ↑ Polyb. 1. 2. 7; 1. 3. 4.
56. ↑ Plu. *De Fort. Alex.* 1. 6–8; *De Fort. Rom.* 1–2.
57. ↑ M. Ant. i. 14.
58. ↑ See the splendid words in iv. 4.
59. ↑ Fournier's edit, of Couat's *Les Pensées de Marc-Aurèle*, note to ii. 17.
60. ↑ Wisdom 5. 14, quoted by Pascal in a passage which appears to have been inspired in part by M. Ant. iv. 3. 3, *Pensées*, § 205 Br.
61. ↑ Ronsard, *Elegy II*, 'The Wood-cutters of Gastine'.

Footnotes

BOOK III

This Book has a happier tone than the second, and the language is less abstract and impersonal; the writer seems to be in a clearer atmosphere, above the mists of difficulty and doubt, the melancholy sense of transience and human futility which lies at least on the surface of Book ii. The sentences convey an impression of personal devotion to a religious ideal, an evident warmth of feeling, a sentiment which rarely recurs in the *Meditations* until we reach the closing Book. This effect is produced partly by the repeated call to austere self-dedication in the presence of approaching death, partly by the recognition of the 'God seated within', the visitant from another world, of whom Marcus hardly speaks again until the closing pages.

The whole Book gives a sense of unity of composition, which is reflected in the linguistic expression; there is a recurrence of arresting words and phrases, many of them peculiar to this Book. As I have said elsewhere, the general character may correspond to the circumstances in which the reflections were composed, a time of relative quiet at general head-quarters, in Carnuntum, from which this part of the *Meditations* is dated.

Chs. 1–3. These three chapters are designed as a preface to the precepts which begin in ch. 4. The familiar thought that life is spending itself day by day is reinforced by the

reminder that man's mental powers often wane before the body is exhausted. He says that he must press on 'while the evil days come not nor the years draw nigh' when the power of understanding 'truths human and divine' will be darkened.

Ch. 1. The phrase, 'knowledge of divine and human things', is a Stoic definition of philosophy. The Stoics generalized the view common to Greeks and Romans that men's happiness lies in keeping the religious observances of their fathers, in showing justice and generosity to their fellows. The formula embraced what, in other words, Marcus calls the Holy and the Right (xi. 20, 21; xii. 1).

The Stoic creed universalized this national expression of religious and social duty to include the duty which is common to all men. To live by the right rule of Nature was to become a member of the Commonwealth of gods and men (iv. 4). Thus they gave a wider and richer sense to Plato's words: 'to be like God is to become just and holy by the aid of understanding.'^[1]

But while Plato and Aristotle found in the contemplation of the pure objects of scientific reason that which satisfied and elevated the character, gave man all that he could attain of immortality, the Stoics, and especially the Roman Stoics, thought that this knowledge of divine law pointed primarily to right conduct. Thus Lactantius, writing about A.D. 300 for Roman Christians, summarizes Cicero's doctrine in the

words: 'God's law orders always the right and honest, forbids the wrong and dishonourable . . . this is the most holy and sure ordinance that we must obey, in order to live justly and lawfully.'^[2] Seneca puts the ideal less legalistically: 'a good man must exhibit the utmost piety towards the gods. Therefore, whatever befalls him he will bear with equanimity. He will know that it has come to pass by divine Law, whereby the Universe is ordered. This being so, his sole good is what is right.'^[3]

For Marcus this knowledge means the joyous acceptance of God's dispensation, the submission of man's will to His, but also the duty of justice and kindness to all men; 'following God in due order, uttering no word contrary to Truth, doing no act contrary to Justice'.^[4]

Ch. 2. The thought of old age and the inevitable decline of strength leads Marcus to reflect upon phenomena which are, superficially viewed, painful, injurious, and ugly. These, he says, are secondary and consequent upon primary laws which are good. The Stoic theory was that apparent evil is to be explained as a necessary result of the 'leading principles'. If these are good, then their consequences also must be good. Marcus does not here state, much less try to establish, this doctrine. Nor does he, except by implication, use the doctrine to explain the extreme case of mental decrepitude from which he started. Instead he gives instances of the beauty and use of what is, at first sight, failure. Both in the artificial creations of man and in the

changing seasons of Nature, instances abound of a subtle charm which accompanies apparent ugliness and decay. He reads this lesson in the baker's loaf and in the mellow tints of autumn.

Next he adds a further consideration, that of Nature's purposiveness, her adaptation of means to ends. To the student of Nature the loose overhanging skin of the lion's forehead, so forbidding to a child's eye, is evidence of purpose. It assists, so Aristotle had surmised, the lion's vision; it exhibits the adaptation of structure to end. The grown man delights in this mark of purpose in the handiwork of the artist Nature as much as he had once enjoyed the evidence of the human artist's skill in the portraiture of these natural features. Thus, very simply, Marcus passes from the recognition of external utility to the principle of immanent purpose.

The close of the chapter is brief, compressed almost to enigma. He recurs to the problem of senile decay and death. In the white hair and wrinkled face of age he detects a purpose, and therefore a beauty, even a bloom as of autumn; a supervenient charm like the complexion of adolescence, when life is at its spring time. The comparison of age to autumn, of youth to spring dictates a final reflection. To one who has kept watch on Nature youthful beauty will take a 'sober colouring', will excite no passion, but only awaken the admiration which Nature's handiwork inspires.

The connexion, if not the identification, of the pleasure aroused by beauty with the pleasure in the recognition of purpose or design goes back to Socrates. Xenophon^[5] reports Socrates as saying to Aristippus, the Hedonist, that all good and beautiful things are such in reference to the purposes which they serve. The argument before us, however, seems to be directly connected with Aristotle's eloquent defence of the study of the whole animal kingdom. 'If seen through the eyes of science,' he says, 'they are so fashioned by Nature as to give infinite pleasure to one who is enabled to recognize their reasons, the natural philosopher, in fact. A strange paradox, to enjoy the sight of pictures of them because we see at the same time the human art which fashioned those pictures, and yet not to delight even more in the contemplation of Nature's living works, when we are enabled to see the reason why. And so we must not feel a child's distaste in seeing animals which have little honour, for in all natural things . . . we find the evidence of purpose in an eminent degree, and the purpose for which they are constructed or created occupies ground which is common with the beautiful.'^[6] Similarly Galen, in his treatise upon the structure of the body in reference to its functions, writes: 'You will discover the beauty of a bodily organ by a comparison of its construction with its uses: this is your canon, measure, and test of natural excellence as well as of true beauty.'^[7] The remark that the relation of pleasure in beauty to pleasure in function not only removes any natural repugnance to 'the parallels on beauty's brow',

but also sublimates the contemplation of youthful beauty, appears to be original to Marcus.

Ch. 3. The work of Nature is not only life, but change and death. The happy tone of ch. 2 gives place to what are almost cynical reflections upon mortality:

The sceptre, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust. (Shirley.)

The chapter, like iv. 48 and vi. 57, belongs in form and content to that strain of reflection upon life which Marcus employs as a meditation for death. This vein, half of irony, half of consolation, recurs from time to time in the *Meditations*; here irony unexpectedly predominates. What did his skill avail the father of medicine, the lesson of the stars those wise men of the East? Great generals, God's scourges of mankind, went the way of all flesh. Heraclitus died a death which was a parody of his own doctrine. Democritus, the father of atomism, was the prey of minute pests, Socrates of pests in human guise. The expected conclusion does not follow; it is postponed to iv. 10. Instead the answer is like that given in ii. 11, that man is master of himself in the hour of death. Marcus adds the image of life's voyage, the haven, and the landing on the farther shore, and what Socrates prophesied should be there, a world governed like this world by the gods, or else the unawakening sleep.

He has in mind the conviction that Socrates expressed to his judges: 'It is not permitted by God that evil men should hurt the good', and again: 'now the time is come to go away, you to live and I to die, but which to the better destiny is known only to God.'^[8]

Chs. 4–12. With the words 'do not waste the balance of life left to you' the writer resumes the opening sentence of ch. I, and occupies himself up to the end of ch. 12 with a statement from various angles of a good man's and a good ruler's ideal. Nowhere else in the *Meditations* is this personal ideal stated with such fullness and nobility; nowhere else is such emphasis laid upon the service of the God within, and the need for entire candour of thought and deed. The images of the wrestler at the games, of the robe dyed in the unfading colour of justice, of the soldier at his post waiting for 'kind Nature's signal of retreat' are effectively suggested; nor does the Emperor forget that he is the first magistrate of Rome, with the care of a world on his shoulders. He needs no oath of service, looks not to men for approval; rather he regards the

perfect witness of all judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed.

In the language of à Kempis: 'he that seeks no witness for himself without, has clearly committed himself wholly unto

God'.^[9]

Ch. 4. The principal subject of this chapter is the opinion of others, the question of the weight which the good man should allow to his reputation in the world. The answer is that, except where the common interest requires, our own conduct, not the acts or judgements of our neighbours, is our proper concern. This concern with ourselves will not be injurious if we are careful of our own thoughts, certain that, if they were laid open to the light of day, they would bear inspection. This leads to the profession of § 3, the ideal of a priest and minister of the gods, and to the half-satirical question of § 4, why we should regard the opinions of men who do not share our ideals, and who are not even, if the truth were known, acceptable to themselves. This passage and some others in the *Meditations* have been criticized as self-righteous. This complaint against the Stoic ideal of the wise man was common in antiquity. On the point at issue here Cicero says in his worldly-wise way: 'we must pay some respect to men, whether the best of them or the rank and file. To neglect what every man thinks of one is the part not only of an arrogant, but even of an abandoned man.'^[10] Similarly Tacitus remarks that 'by the contempt of fame, virtue is contemned'^[11]; and Fronto, Marcus' rhetoric tutor, writes to him: 'it is true that he who ignores the reputation of virtue, ignores also virtue itself.'^[12] Among the grain and chaff of the biographer of Marcus there is the tradition that 'he was very curious of his reputation, and required exact information of what was said of him, correcting what he

thought justly criticized', and again: 'either in writing or in speech he answered malicious critics'. Further there is a recorded saying: 'it is fairer for me to follow the advice of so many and such good friends, than for my many and good friends to obey my single wishes.'^[13] There is no grave inconsistency between this tradition and what Marcus says here, where he is writing for his own private guidance. Milton says^[14]

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies.

And so Socrates says to Crito:^[15] 'We must not, my good friend, entertain a thought of what the multitude will say of us, but only of what he who knows about justice and injustice will say, and Truth herself.'

Ch. 5. This chapter comes closer to the writer's everyday task of government. In ii. 5 there is the same insistence on the Emperor's proud inheritance of the name Roman. Here he further reminds himself that he is Rome's magistrate, a constitutional ruler. Renan^[16] writes: 'La tradition romaine est un dogme pour Marc-Aurèle . . . Les préjugés du stoicien se doublèrent ainsi de ceux du patrioter.' Another French critic^[17] says: 'Ce juste orgueil que ressent une âme aussi indépendante et aussi désintéressée que celle de

l'Empereur philosophe, est de toutes les nations et de tous les temps. . . . C'est comme une religion, qui a aussi ses indomptables martyrs.' Of his father-in-law, Antoninus Pius, Marcus says: 'he did everything according to the tradition of his fatherland, but he did not attempt to seem to others to be observing tradition' (i. 16. 6), that is, he did what he did to restore old religious beliefs and customs, without reference to his reputation.

The grand simile of the soldier 'waiting for the Retreat to sound' is used by S. Johnson in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*,

For Faith that panting for a holier seat
Counts Death kind Nature's signal of Retreat.

Ch. 6. The old problem of the relation of virtue to advantage, and the kindred question, which of the many ends that man has proposed to himself is his true end. The answer to the first resembles that of Bishop Butler in his sermon on Self-love. Nature, said the Stoics, has made all her creatures endeavour to persist in their own being. Man's being is, when he reaches his true nature, a life of reasonable will. This then is the advantage which Nature's purpose intends. Marcus returns to this problem more than once, notably in v. 16, where he identifies the advantage and the good of every man with his true end in living, and

at vi. 44, where advantage is said to be determined by man's reasonable and social constitution, and by his place in the world. Here the problem is put half-ironically. The language chosen seems reminiscent of the famous paradox debated in Plato's *Republic*, whether justice is the advantage of the superior (or stronger), in short, whether might is right, and, if so, what kind of might. Marcus says, in effect, that a man must choose for himself what is, in his eyes, superior. If he chooses fame, or power, or wealth, or pleasant indulgence, let him stick to his choice. But he must remember first that he is choosing what is superior in the view of his inferior self, the body or the merely animate creature, and secondly, that these unreasonable ends appear to suit only for a time, then suddenly they get the mastery, and the man who has proposed them to himself turns out to be their servant (iii. 3). The Stoics held firmly to the view, which is also the view of Socrates, that there cannot be a conflict for the good man between expediency and right, since what is right is advantageous and nothing can advantage a man which is not right. [\[18\]](#)

Chs. 7–8. The true advantage of the reasonable man, who has his life among his fellows, is contrasted with the miserable lot of one whose choice is governed by ends which lead him to bad faith, hatred, suspicion and so forth. What a contrast to the man who observes the ritual of the spirit within him!

Ch. 9. Marcus states more fully what was briefly hinted in ii. 15. What determines a man's conduct is his imagination, and that depends upon his judgment. If he honours and disciplines that power within him which is independent of circumstance, he can be a free man, a reasonable member of the Commonwealth, man's fellow, God's disciple.

How the judgment is to be disciplined is explained in ch. 11.

Ch. 10. The present moment, which was said in ii. 14 to be all man has, is of primary importance; a brief instant between two eternities of time (iv. 50; ix. 32; xii. 7). Compared with the Universe how small the little corner of the earth man inhabits, how small even the most lasting reputation! The object of the aphorism appears to be to humble conceit as well as to emphasize the immediacy of duty. The same order of reflection appears in Pascal, [\[19\]](#) with much of the same purpose: 'Que l'homme, étant revenu à soi, considère cc qu'il est au prix de ce qui est; qu'il se regarde comme égaré dans ce canton détourné de la nature, et que de ce petit cachot où il se trouve logé, j'entends l'univers, is apprenne à estimer la terre, les royaumes, les villes et soi-même son juste prix. Qu'est-ce qu'un homme dans l'infini?'

Ch. 11. This is his first statement of a method which Marcus often recommends or refers to in passing. The object is to secure sanity of judgement, to clarify and fortify

the reason and will. Without clearness and distinctness, as Descartes has said, speculative investigation is deluded, practical life vague and undetermined, even misguided. To put it in the language of the Stoics, the object is to obtain the imagination which 'grasps its object', a state of mind which they regarded as the intellectual and moral criterion. The method is here applied to the objects of moral judgment. Test every experience which presents itself in order to determine what that which affects the imagination through the senses (and will therefore move the impulses) really is. Strip it of all irrelevant circumstances till it stands before you in its naked outline, unprejudiced by subjectivity. Divide it into the elements which compose it. Fortify the will by giving the true name to the object in question and to its parts. The effect is like bringing an object under the microscope into the centre of the field and focusing it.

Then, with the object thus exhibited in its entirety to the understanding, remind yourself of the nature of this Universe of which it is a part. It has its purpose, because the Universe is a providential system, no chance congeries of atoms as materialists pretend. Ask, therefore, what is the value of the present object in such a system of necessary law. Relate it to the whole system, and to your individual system, which is itself a microcosm and is so constituted as to enable you to play your part in the Kingdom of all reasonable creatures. Thus, and thus only, the object's real nature, its components, its relative worth (if it be pleasant),

its transitory nature (if it be painful), may be determined. Finally, ask what virtue is appropriate to meet its challenge; in any case, remind yourself that it is derived from Nature, or is an aftereffect of a predetermined, inevitable scheme; or, should it result from a neighbour's action, remember that its apparently injurious character flows from his blindness to right, from his ignorance. Enough: realize the insight which is yours, the power of seeing from which he is debarred. This will enable you to treat him according to Nature's law of fellowship, though you will endeavour to understand the merely relative worth of what is morally indifferent (viz. that the apparent injury cannot affect your own moral life, ii. 1).

This remarkable chapter is in fact a plea for that disinterestedness which the Stoics called 'indifference', a term easily misunderstood and misrepresented. The attempt is to reach in moral life that purely objective standard which is the ambition in the intellectual life of all true followers of science. We cannot doubt its strengthening and salutary effect upon character; the question is whether, so rigorously pursued, it does not produce in the moral self a hardness and lack of sensibility, which is injurious to the whole. [\[20\]](#)

Ch. 12. A reassertion of the ideal, which was put more at large in ch. 6, a reaffirmation of the claim of the Deity within; finally, an assertion of moral freedom.

Ch. 13. After a comparison of the philosopher's maxims to the physician's instruments, which are always in readiness, Marcus reasserts and develops the statement of ch. 1 about the 'knowledge of the divine and human'. Right conduct depends on recognition of the intimate bond between man's reasonable life and the divine world of law and order. Right relation to man demands reference to natural law, to the reason realized in the Universe; right behaviour towards God requires the recognition of man's bond to all his fellow men.

Ch. 14. Duty requires every other occupation to be put aside (ii. 2 and 3), even the innocent intellectual pursuits reserved for declining years. This is the fullest reference to the author's literary labours, outside his youthful correspondence with Fronto. The *Note-books* may be lecture notes (the word is used in that sense) or possibly jottings for the work we have before us. *The histories of old Greeks and Romans* may be such as old Cato wrote for his son, 'that he might learn of the great deeds of old Rome, and the customs (i. 16. 6) of his fatherland'.^[21] The *Extracts* were no doubt largely of commonplaces, like the prose and poetry we meet with in Books vii and xi.

Ch. 15. One of those intrusive fragments, disturbing the natural sequence. The meaning is enigmatic, though the general purport is that the foolish neither understand the world they live in, nor the real meaning of the words they use. Marcus seems to have been meditating in the satirical

vein of a favourite author, Heraclitus, who contrasts^[22] the outward senses with the inward vision: 'the many do not understand the things they meet with, nor when they are told of them do they know what they mean, though they appear to themselves to understand.'

Ch. 16. The same tripartite division of man as in ii. 2. Commentators have all felt great difficulty in the ascription of reason to atheists and unpatriotic evil-doers. Observe, however, that the writer is careful to say: 'to have the mind as guide to what *appear to be* duties'. Men possess mind by contrast with beasts who have no more than 'spirit', or 'animal spirit'. The difference between ordinary men and instructed men is that the latter's minds are directed to right ends. These right ends are, to sum up what he has said in this Book, 'to love and welcome what befalls a man and is ordained for him, to keep the divinity untainted by evil imaginations, to follow God, to speak the truth and to act justly'.

There is a further difficulty. Who are the men who disbelieve in the gods, betray their country, do evil behind locked doors? Mr. Haines^[23] has suggested that the Emperor means the Christians, against whom precisely these charges were levelled. We should then have a severe condemnation of his Christian subjects, insinuated and not openly stated, by the ruler whom Mr. Haines regards as having been actually favourable to the infant Church. The same charges were levelled against the followers of

Epicurus by the vulgar, and Lucian classes them with the Christians as atheists. But Marcus founded an Epicurean chair at Athens, and though he criticizes their atomism and their pursuit of pleasure, he nowhere passes a moral censure upon them. Rather, like Seneca, he takes comfort from some of their brave sayings (vii. 33. 64; ix. 41; xi. 26). Is it necessary to suppose that he means any others than those evil men, whom he so often refers to as ignorantly doing evil in darkness? (iii. 4. 4; vi. 59; x. 13.)

With regard to Nero, it is remarkable how soon he became the type of a tyrant, taking the place which Caligula holds in the pages of Seneca. Epictetus^[24] couples his name with that of Sardanapalus, and Nero became the Antichrist in early Christian literature.

The Book ends, like the last, with an effective epilogue, the final words, 'in accord with the genius allotted to him at birth', introducing under the name of *Moirā* the divinity within the breast (iii. 4. 3).

1. ↑ Pl. *Tht.* 176 b.
2. ↑ *Div. Inst.* vi. 24.
3. ↑ Sen. *Ep.* 76. 23.
4. ↑ M. Ant. iii. 16; xii. 1.
5. ↑ *Mem.* iii. 8. 4–7.
6. ↑ Arist. *De Part. Anim.* i. 5.
7. ↑ Galen, *De usu partium*, iii, p. 24; cf. 'There is in these works of Nature, which seem to puzzle reason,

something Divine, and hath more in it than *the eye of a common spectator* doth discover' Browne, *Rel. Med.* i. 39.

8. ↑ Pl. *Apology of Socrates*, 30 c, 42 a.
9. ↑ *Imit. Christi* ii. 6, cf. M. Ant. iii. 16.
10. ↑ Cic. *Off.* i. 99.
11. ↑ Tac. *Ann.* iv. 38.
12. ↑ Fronto, *Ep.* p. 195 Naber.
13. ↑ *Hist. Aug.* iv. 20. 5; 22. 4–5.
14. ↑ Milton, *Lycidas*, 78.
15. ↑ Pl. *Crito*, 48 a.
16. ↑ Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 54.
17. ↑ Barthélemy-St. Hilaire, *Pensées de M.-A.*, p. 61.
18. ↑ Cic. *Off.* iii, esp. ch. 8.
19. ↑ Pascal, *Pensées*, 72 Br.
20. ↑ See also iv. 7; vi. 8 and 13; ix. 36; xi. 2; xii. 8 and 18.
21. ↑ Plu. *Cato Major*, ch. 20.
22. ↑ Heraclitus, *Fr.* 5 B, 17 D; cf. M. Ant. iv. 29; iv. 46.
23. ↑ Haines, *The Communings with Himself* (Loeb series), p. 381; *Journal of Phil.* xxxiii, p. 288.
24. ↑ Epict. iii. 22. 30.

Footnotes

BOOK IV

With this Book we enter upon a series of *Meditations* composed in a manner markedly different from the second and third Books. The tone is less personal and devotional, more speculative and doctrinal; the style too is easier and less condensed. In particular the indwelling spirit is rarely mentioned, appeal being rather made to Universal Nature and to man's Intelligence as a part of that Nature. Not until Book xii do we again meet that personal emotion and aspiration which make Books ii and iii so individual and intense. There are indeed exceptional outbursts of personal feeling, but on the whole these central Books might have been intended for the use of a learner rather than for solitary self-revelation. Moreover, much that was earlier taken for granted is here stated more fully, and new and larger matters are introduced. Thus we have the question of retirement or retreat from the world (chs. 3 and 24); the alternative between an ordered providential system and a mechanical atomistic theory (chs. 3. 2 and 27); the problem of the soul's persistence after death (ch. 21, contrast iii. 3); the great conception of the Eternal City and its law (chs. 4, 12, and 23, contrast ii. 16); the declaration of the intrinsic worth of Goodness and Beauty (ch. 20, contrast iii. 2). Again, the writer puts more fully and more clearly the Stoic belief in the sympathetic unity which underlies and governs the ceaseless coming into particular being and passing away of the world of experience, and with this he connects the

doctrine of Heraclitus of Ephesus (chs. 36, 42, 43, 45, and 46).

Against this background of ordered change his own life and fortunes, his personal fame, dwindle to their just insignificance, and death is regarded with calm detachment as a natural incident in an eternal process. All that is required of a man is to maintain his moral independence, 'to be free and to regard circumstance as a man, a human being, a member of the Eternal City, a mortal.'^[1] This moral independence is secured by the assertion of the reason, which is his individual nature, by continual control of his thoughts and imaginations, by right and beneficent conduct to his neighbour, by a joyous acceptance of the portion assigned to him from eternity.

Of the date of composition there is no evidence, unless we may suppose that the figure of the sands of oblivion (ch. 33), the mention of embalming (ch. 48), the references to the destruction of Helice (ch. 48) and to the pyramids (v. 8) were suggested by the Emperor's visit to Egypt and the East in A.D. 175–6.

Chs. 1–5. The first five chapters arise from reflection upon two difficulties of the moral life, difficulties which had often been pressed against the Stoics. The first is the problem of reconciling moral freedom with the facts of human experience and with the ordered, inevitable process of a Universe governed by law and apparently ignoring the

individual. The second is the question of retirement or withdrawal from the world. Actual political and moral life being so manifestly imperfect, and philosophy being a protest against evil and injustice, should not the wise man retire from practical life, like Socrates, and 'shelter' in Plato's words 'behind a wall'? Then, if a man chooses retirement, what is the nature and meaning of that withdrawal? The answers to these questions are connected with one another. To the first Marcus replies that he must adapt himself to circumstance, turning apparent evil to his own good by the use of the appropriate virtue, as a strong fire converts its material to itself (ch. 1). The good man is a trained artist in living; he does not create the stuff he works in, he takes and handles it with a devotion which is like that of the artist with his given material (ch. 2). This he expresses elsewhere as the truth that apparent evil, like the artist's stubborn material, strengthens a man by an opposition to be convinced or overcome (v. 20; vi. 50; viii. 41; x. 33. 4).

Ch. 3. The question of retreat is answered by the distinction of the two lives of action and of meditation. The wisdom of the answer is that the connexion between the two lives (or aspects of living) is made quite clear. To retire is not to seek refuge from the world, but to find in reflection the maxims which are to make living possible and good. This he pictures here by the image of retirement into the little country place which is the soul's domain. Elsewhere he speaks of a virgin citadel, and again of seeking refreshment

from a hard stepmother in a mother's society (viii. 48; vi. 12).

The terms which he uses, especially the word for 'retreat', might evidently be taken in a mystical sense. This is true also of other passages of the *Meditations*. Thus he speaks of 'drawing inward into the self' (vii. 28; viii. 48; ix. 42); of finding the fountain of good within (vii. 59); of making himself simple (iv. 26); language which anticipates that used by Neoplatonists about the soul. What is so admirable in Marcus is that this return to the self is no absorption in the self, but an appeal by the self to the reasonable principles of philosophy, as may be seen from the simple truths which he gives as those to which the self returns. This explains the connexion with ch. 4. By withdrawing from all outward distractions to the reasonable self, he is enabled to recognize the common law which unites him to his fellows and to the Universe, so that he can realize his membership with them in one eternal Commonwealth. The longing for repose and rest he meets by the challenge to live now and always by the reason of the mind which runs through all and governs all. A passage from Seneca will make the meaning clearer. He says: 'Let us have in mind two cities, one that great and truly universal city, the home of gods and of men, wherein we look neither to this little corner nor to that, but measure the boundaries of our fatherland by the sun. The other city is that bestowed upon us by the conditions of our birth. . . . To that greater city we can be servants in our hours of retirement, and perhaps

better then, for then we may inquire of the nature of goodness . . . ?^[2]

What Marcus well says is that there is nothing to prevent our making the law of the Eternal City the rule of our daily life; there is nothing to prevent our closing the door (to use his image) for a moment upon the temporal, and renewing ourselves by the Eternal. Notice how he ignores all the easy commonplaces of essays upon exile, upon retirement, upon loss; the favourite topics that the soul can nowhere escape itself, that it bears its own burden into the retreats which it seeks, that:

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to the wise man ports and happy havens.

He ends the fourth chapter with the argument that the existence of the Eternal City, thus established by reason, is proof that man's reason flows from the reason which rules and inspires the City of God. He leaves room for an immaterial origin of the reason of man, but he seems himself to be referring to a doctrine of Aristotle's school, viz. that the reasonable self is derived from a fifth element, which inhabits the region of the fiery ether. He clearly distinguishes the source of man's reason from the fire which is the origin of the quickening spirit in the body, the vital spirit^[3] At least Marcus makes evident the difficulty of a

material explanation. Similarly in ch. 5, reflecting upon death, in connexion with the problem of the source of man's reason, he is content to say that both birth and death are mysteries of Nature (ix. 9; x. 7).

Chs. 4–5. The grand conception that the Universe is a society of all reasonable beings, governed by divine law, well befits the ruler of the Roman world and the source of Roman law. This city of reason is taken here to follow of necessity from the fact that mind is common, that is, general or universal. Two different lines of reasoning appear to be combined. Mind transcends particularity, bridging the gulf which in appearance divides men (with their individual persons, wills, ends, senses) from one another by means of the reason which they have in common. One expression of this reason is the legislative reason, which itself finds expression in a law common to gods and men. Secondly, mind is common, and because men have this link they are fellow beings or kinsmen, members not of one community of blood but of one fellowship of reason. This was assumed in Book ii, ch. 1, 'we came into the world to work together'.

The arguments are often identified by modern thinkers, but are not the same. Marcus is, however, entitled to use the second, because it ultimately rests upon an argument from the purpose exhibited in the world (v. 30; ix. 9. 1). Here he is concerned with the former line of reasoning, and the remarkable similarity to the language of Cicero^[4] shows

that the argument is derived from the Stoic school at least of the second century B.C. This is also clear from its form, that of a sorites, which is a favourite with the Stoics. In principle it goes much farther back than to the middle Stoics, namely to Heraclitus of Ephesus (*circa* 500 B.C.), who had said:^[5] 'Understanding is common to all. If we speak with thought we must hold fast by that which is common to all, as a city by its law, yea much more firmly. For all human laws are sustained by one divine law;' and again, 'wherefore we must obey the common, but though reason is common, the many behave as if they had a private judgement.' The political section of Heraclitus' book appears thus to have related human law to the reason which governs the universe. This conception the Stoics adopted and gave a fuller expression to it. The likeness of Kant's moral theory to this conception is remarkable. The difference is that for Kant the intelligible world of which the moral law is the natural order is contrasted with the natural order of the phenomenal world, where necessity and natural causality obtain. For the Stoics, however difficult their view may be to support, the law of the Divine Universe which man shares with the gods is the law which rules also in the phenomenal world. As Marcus so often asserts, the freedom of man's will is expressed by his accepting unconditionally and gladly the law of the Whole; in the sense of the third chapter he can retire from the world of external conditions by realizing at any moment his own freedom, that is, by affirming and accepting the principles of the City of which he is a Freeman. This is the explanation also of what seems, at first sight, a merely

formal reference to the axiom of continuity, 'nothing comes from nothing or passes into nothing' (cf. iv. 21). The Stoics combined this axiom with the principle of sufficient reason, that the process of becoming is governed by the law of necessary determination. Thus, if the material part of man is derived from and returns to the four elements, his spiritual part must be derived, on the principal of sufficient reason, from the universal mind, and into that it returns. ^[6]

Chs. 6–11. It is characteristic of the writer to pass from large questions to relatively small points of practice. These brief reflections turn upon two points, the difficulty of reconciling the unkindness or evil conduct of men with the reasonableness of the whole, and of explaining pain and suffering which seem to run counter to the justice and kindness of God. Chs. 6–8 and ch. 11 give remedies in practice for the former difficulty, chs. 9–10 for the latter.

Chs. 6–8. Reflections as to the right attitude to the evil and erring recur throughout the *Meditations*. Marcus seems to have felt the problem acutely, whether what he is concerned about is the right treatment of the wrong-doer, or the meaning in the world of such evil men and so much apparent moral evil. His ways of dealing with the question are these: (i) we cannot expect to find no wickedness in men; it is a fact of experience and must be considered to be a necessity; (2) the evil do wrong involuntarily because their moral sense has been blinded, or because they pursue private interests, and are guided by reason of a kind, but

mistaken reason; (3) all men are endowed with like reason to our own: we are therefore bound to them by the tie of kindred, must therefore be concerned for the thankless and hostile so far as even to love and cherish them (this attitude gets stronger in the later books); (4) we are immune from injury, that is moral harm, from evil-doers; we can even turn their evil to our own good by using the virtuous activity which is appropriate; we can sometimes convince them, at least we can bear with them, be neither angry nor at a loss when we have to do with them; we can be merciful and forgiving, more than merely tolerant.^[2]

Chs. 9–10. In suffering and sorrow, in the loss of what we held dear, we must remember that what comes to pass is dictated by the universal order, which works for the benefit of the whole. He goes farther in ch. 10, insisting that our dispensations are not only necessary but just, and just with reference to our individual good (v. 8. 18; viii. 46; x. 25).

Ch. 11. This maxim belongs to the same order of thought as ch. 6 and ch. 18. It interrupts the sequence of ch. 12 on the end of ch. 10. It is repeated with more stress on the moral aspect at vii. 22; ix. 11; xi. 18. 4.

Chs. 12–13. 'The principle of the kingly and legislative art' governs the action of the man who is to be good in the specific sense of good (end of ch. 10). The remarkable expression refers to the speculations upon the ideal king and lawgiver which we meet in Plato's *Politicus* and Aristotle's

Politics. Similarly Socrates^[8] speaks of the royal art, 'to be competent to govern and to benefit at once other men and oneself'. St. James^[9] says: 'if however ye fulfil the royal law, as it is written, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and St. Paul^[10] speaks of 'the kindness and love to man (philanthropy) of God, our Saviour'. Beneficence and Truth are often spoken of by the Greeks as the two divine attributes. This second attribute may be imitated by man, if he will put away conceit of his own opinion and embrace the truth which another declares.

The problem when and how a man may wisely 'change his mind' was commonly debated in antiquity, with Hesiod's words as text:

He is far best who knows all things of himself.
Good, he that hearkens to the right advice.^[11]

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, inverted Hesiod's order, meaning no doubt that the greatest victory over self is to abandon one's purpose, if convinced by judicious advice. The saying of Hesiod was familiar to Romans from Livy's^[12] brilliant narrative of the moral conviction and repentance of Minucius Rufus, master of the horse to the great dictator Q. Fabius Maximus. The other famous instance of a change of mind is that used by Aristotle^[13]—Neoptolemus repented of his purpose, after he had been

persuaded by Ulysses to deceive Philoctetes. Marcus takes up the word Logos,^[14] in the sense of reasonable rule, and uses it in its other sense of reason, the indwelling Logos which apprehends what is right. If this reason is active, you need nothing besides, neither thanks nor commendation (iv. 20; vii. 73; ix. 42. 4).

Chs. 14–15. These two aphorisms are rightly combined in the manuscripts. The second illustrates the first. The stress in the first sentence is on the word 'part'. The Logos of which he has been speaking is a part of the divine Logos, which 'begat' it. This will return (iv. 4) to its parent, the generative seed of reason. This return seems to be (iv. 21; viii. 25, 58; xii. 5) conceived as a gradual reabsorption into the fiery or causal Being, even as the frankincense is absorbed into the smoke of offering. So a life well lived is a dedication to God. An earlier Stoic had used this image to illustrate the unity of the world, the sweet savour of the incense transfusing like an essence the material which conveys it. The simile reminds us of St. Paul's words.^[15] Bossuet^[16] may have had the words of Marcus in his mind when he wrote: 'Jusqu'à ce que les ombres se dissipent et que le jour de la bienheureuse éternité paraisse, j'irai dans la solitude (cf. v. 4), sur la montagne de la myrrhe et sur la colline de l'encens (cf. x. 15), pour contempler de là les vérités éternelles et pour m'élever à Dieu par la pénitence et par l'oraison, comme l'encens monte au ciel, en se détruisant lui-même et en se consommant dans la flamme.'

One of the panels of Marcus' Arch of triumph shows him in the act of offering incense (cf. x. 28).

Chs. 16–17. This is the only passage in the *Meditations* where the writer speaks as if a man might become a god, a mode of speech often employed both by Stoics and Epicureans. He clearly means you may become really good, and so appear godlike where you now seem like a beast or an ape, as not governed by reason; Marcus' attitude in all his thoughts is that he himself falls too short of what a man has in him to attain, and he speaks just as he had done in ii. 4 and iii. 14. (Compare ii. 5, end, v. 27.)

Ch. 18. If you are to be good, your prime concern is with your own conduct and thoughts, not with your neighbour. This will give the quiet and ease of which we heard in iii. 4 and iv. 3, and to which we shall return in iv. 24 in connexion with the Epicurean teaching on Tranquillity.

The text at the end is corrupt. Many critics suppose that the last words of this chapter were a citation from the poet Agathon, a younger contemporary of Euripides.

Chs. 19–20. The transition of thought to fame arises from the reference to other selves in ch. 18. A man who seeks fame puts himself into the hands of others and depends for satisfaction upon their judgement. Marcus has touched upon the subject already in ii. 17. 1, iv. 3. 3, and here he speaks, as elsewhere, fully upon the 'last infirmity of noble mind'.

The two chapters are complementary; the former shows the folly of desire for glory hereafter, the second reminds us that what is intrinsically good or beautiful needs no praise to recommend it. Beauty, like goodness, terminates in itself. Life's handicap is imaged under the simile of a torch race, where the relay runners pass on the torch of life, and themselves in succession fall out from the race. The beautiful picture may have been suggested by Plato's^[17] 'men handing on life, from one to another, like a torch', or by Lucretius'^[18] 'nations wax and wane, and in a short space the generations of the living change, and like men in a race pass on the torch of life.' Notice that Lucretius explains in this context, after the manner of his school, the problem raised in ch. 21 about disposal of dead bodies.

The desire for fame was both with Greeks and Romans a stimulus to worthy deeds in war and peace. Fame with posterity was a substitute for a belief in the survival of personality. Marcus never refers to the apotheosis of the Caesars, though he allowed Faustina's spirit to be represented as ascending to the gods. His own attitude is 'let not thy peace be in the tongues of men; for whether they construe thee well or ill: thou art not therefore another man,'^[19] or, as Cicero^[20] says: 'Virtue herself by her own attractions should draw you to the truth: what others may speak about you, let them look to it, but still they will speak.' The last words of this chapter are corrupt.

Ch. 20. Marcus states as self-evident the intrinsic value of the beautiful in natural and artistic objects. Then, since the term 'beautiful' covers in his philosophy both aesthetic and moral excellence, he shows that praise or blame is as irrelevant to moral good as to beauty. The instances exhibit his delicate sensibility in these matters. His theory implies that the feeling or pleasure of the observer, or the utility of the object observed, is not the determining element in the moral or aesthetic value.

The remarkable phrase 'terminates in itself' describes a psychological fact and anticipates such expressions as 'the very nature of affection, the idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its object as an end', and 'the objects of those affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible to be pursued upon its own account, and to be rested in as an end'.^[21] Cicero^[22] says something which approaches the idea: 'what we speak truly, even if it be praised by none, is naturally praiseworthy.'

Ch. 21. The problem is perhaps supposed to be raised by an antagonist belonging to the atomic school. On your hypothesis of the survival of the soul, which you assume to be material, however much refined, how is there room for disembodied souls in your limited universe? The answer given in both parts of the chapter turns upon the redistribution of the material elements of organized bodies, so that the conclusion seems to be that the spirit part also must be reabsorbed ultimately. This was the view

entertained by most Stoics. The end of the chapter suggests a different explanation, viz. that the soul is the form or formative principle of the body. This view probably came to the Stoics from Aristotle, but even so they held that the form was not immaterial; it was the active as distinguished from the relatively passive, and as such would return to the informing reason, and be reabsorbed therein (iv. 4; vi. 24; vii. 32; viii. 25. 58; xii. 5).

Marcus is content to leave the whole question an open one, satisfied that the spirit is in the hand of God. He nowhere indulges in the comfort of that view which Cicero and Seneca handle so eloquently, the picture of the soul enjoying a blessed immortality, as in the dream of Scipio, [23] and in Seneca's [24] 'lifted up on high, he runs his race among the happy spirits; and the sacred company welcomes him, the Scipios and the Catos, men who disdained life, and were made free by the kindness of death'.

Seneca's words perhaps suggested Milton's

There entertain him all the Saints above
In solemn troops and sweet societies. [25]

Ch. 22. Before passing to ch. 23, which gives the real answer to this question of the survival of the soul, we have

the practical reminder that present duty requires just conduct, and control of the judgement in every imagination.

Ch. 23. The thought of this beautiful chapter may be illustrated from à Kempis: 'I am in Thy hand, spin me forward or spin me back.'^[26] Crossley says 'it is a good example of that intensity, which, when combined with their prevailing simplicity and earnestness, raises Stoic utterances to the level of poetry'. He thinks that Milton's sonnet, 'How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth', may have been inspired by this chapter, especially the words:

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure ev'n.
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n.^[27]

Marcus clearly means that the fate of our spirit is irrelevant to our present purpose, for we may live here and now in the Eternal City; as Spinoza^[28] says: 'the wise man is hardly moved in mind (ch. 22), but conscious by a certain eternal necessity of himself, of God, and of the universe, never ceases to exist, but is always master of a true satisfaction of spirit'.

Ch. 24. Marcus is here referring to discussions upon Tranquillity, in which a favourite text was the saying of

Democritus,^[29] the spirit of which had been accepted by Epicurus: 'he who intends tranquillity must avoid doing many things, in public and in private, and in what he does must not undertake what exceeds his strength and nature.' What Marcus means is that we are not to avoid public and private obligations, as some Stoics did, and as the Epicureans preferred to do. He is carrying out in this connexion the advice he gave in ch. 3 in regard to retirement. His words are not inconsistent with what Democritus said, but with the interpretation that had been put upon them. He adds a wholesome remark that if we are to avoid superfluous actions, we must control the imaginations and thoughts which lead to them.

An excellent modern book on the avoidance of plain duty through selfish sensitiveness, as a malady of civilized society, is Henri Bordeaux's *Peur de vivre*; much that he says will be found in Seneca, writing for a similar age.

Chs. 25–6. These chapters put in various ways the effect of carrying out the principles of ch. 24. They repeat what he has said many times already. The last words, 'be sober in relaxation', sum up what he said in reference to Democritus, and may be meant as a kind of parallel to the Epicurean maxim 'live a life which avoids observation'.

Ch. 27. The maxim, so familiar from the earlier Books, that all that comes to pass comes from the Whole (ch. 26), and is necessarily determined and connected, suggests the

question: 'Why should we believe that the universe is an ordered system?' The problem is raised again at vi. 10; ix. 39; xi. 18. 1; xii. 14, and by suggestion at vii. 31. The opposed views are those of the Stoics and the Epicureans, which are represented by the antitheses of unity and unification to welter and chance medley; marshalling in order to mechanical attachment of atoms; providence to blind scattering. That is, the difference between law regarded as the expression of intelligence, and law as the outcome of accidental concurrence; living unity in the parts as opposed to composition of atoms; a world divine in all its parts and in the whole as against a world without the intervention of gods or providence. Summarily speaking, Spirit, Life, Providence against Matter, Mechanism, Accident. In xii. 14, and there alone, Marcus asks the question, debated within the Stoic school itself, whether the order of the Universe, marshalled from a remote beginning, implies an unalterable predetermination or whether there is room for the conception of a personal Providence open to intercession by the individual. Here his argument is simply from the microcosm to the macrocosm, from order and foresight in man to the same attributes of God. This is perhaps the commonest argument in Stoic writers.

Ch. 28. This chapter breaks the connexion between 27 and 29. Gataker thought that it had originally followed ch. 18, as an explanation of the words 'black character'. The origin of the aphorism is a reflection such as prompted v. 11 and ix. 39. Matthew Arnold suggested that he was thinking of

'the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian . . . and wrote down for himself such a warning entry as this, significant and terrible in its abruptness.'^[30]

Chs. 29–30. Assuming that the Universe is ordered, the man who is ignorant of its purpose is a stranger and a runaway, a blind beggar, a blain and a fragment. He is contrasted with the man who has all that is sufficient in himself, the poor ill-dressed and ill-fed follower of wisdom. The images of the blind man recur in ii. 13, iii. 15; of the needy man, ii. 17. 2, iii. 5; of the blain, ii. 16; and of the fragment, viii. 34.

Ch. 31. The art in which he finds refreshment is the reasonable conduct of life (iv. 2; v. 1. 3). This is the equivalent of retirement from the court and the world (iv. 3; v. 9; vi. 7 and 12).

Chs. 32–7. Reflections upon the two periods which immediately preceded his own birth, the Flavian epoch A.D. 69–96, and the Nerva-Trajan age, A.D. 96–117. In the next chapter he selects the three greatest figures, perhaps, of the early Imperial age, Augustus, Hadrian, Pius. In ii. 14 the stress was upon history as showing length of life to be unimportant, the actual present to be of pressing weight. Time in moral life is not measured by duration. Here, as in vii. 48, 58; ix. 30; x. 27, the moral is that men spend themselves on things of little worth, so that history should teach man to measure his effort by the occasion's worth, and

by consequence should be able to tell what kind of effort is really worth while. Thus ch. 32 draws the former lesson, ch. 33 states the latter. Brief aphorisms, chs. 34–7, give point to these two lessons.

Matthew Arnold^[31] said of ch. 32: 'Nothing is in general more gloomy and monotonous than declamations on the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur: but here, too, the great charm of Marcus Aurelius, his emotion, comes in to relieve the monotony and to break through the gloom; and even on this eternally used topic he is imaginative, fresh, and striking.' Deissman^[32] summarizing his study of the papyrus rolls recovered from Egypt, says: 'In the lower stratum (of society) there is always the same bustle of so many humble souls, eating, drinking, sowing, tilling, marrying and giving in marriage.'

Perhaps the Emperor had read Lucian's *Charon*, with its brilliant variations on a like theme—Hermes pointing out to the old ferryman all the kingdoms of the world, and Charon's comment: 'how strange are the doings of unhappy mortals. And never a thought of Charon.' (vi. 37. 46; vii. 49; ix. 28; xii. 24.)

Camillus, Caeso, Volesus, Dentatus are heroes of the early republic. Camillus delivered Rome from the Celtic invaders; Caeso is probably the brave exiled son of old Quinctius Cincinnatus, the dictator, who was called from his ploughing to deliver Rome; Volesus is an ancient

patrician name, 'one of the sons of Tros' according to Juvenal. Dentatus is the ancient worthy Curius Dentatus. So Milton^[33] says:

Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus—
For I esteem those names of men so poor
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings.

The reference to those forgotten so soon as the breath is out of them may have suggested to Wordsworth,

Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame
And leave a dead unprofitable name.^[34]

A like thought is: 'And some there be which have no memorial, who are perished as though they had never been.'^[35]

The point of mentioning Clotho is that she is the Fate who spins the present web. Plato writes: 'the distaff rotates on the knees of Necessity . . . and seated around, at equal interval, three, each upon a throne, daughters of Necessity, in white garments, with wreaths on their heads, Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos, the Fates, singing to the Sirens' song;

Lachesis, the past: Clotho, the present: Atropos, what is to be.' While they sing, they draw out the thread of Destiny. [\[36\]](#)

Ch. 35. This practical reflection introduces ch. 36 which gives the reason for the transience, that ordered change is the rule of the Universe.

Chs. 37–51. With one or two exceptions, the motive for which is not quite certain, the remainder of the Book consists of consolatory reflections based upon a speculative view of the Universe as a living organism determining its changing phenomena according to necessary law. In this great system the individual vanishes almost as soon as he is created; his only good is that he can distinguish real good, that is moral good, and fulfil it. For the rest he can understand the changing whole of Reality at least so far as to see that the human terms good and evil do not apply to the Universe; in one sense it is all good because the actual is good, in another sense good and evil are merely relative terms (ch. 42).

Chs. 37–9. Practical reflections based upon the necessary brevity of the individual life. The important thing is man's judgement and man's will, not the opinions of others, not any material circumstance, not even the health of the body. They are alike indifferent to moral well-being for the reasons already given at ii. 11. 4.

Ch. 40. This is to be read with ch. 45. In these two chapters Marcus gives a summary statement of the view of the Universe which the Stoics adopted. The whole is one substance, with one informing Logos or Reason, metaphorically called soul, principle of life (v. 32; vi. 1 and 4). The Stoics used the term 'Unification (Henosis)' to express this (vi. 10; vii. 32; viii. 34). All the parts of this unity are connected by a kind of fellow-feeling, or sympathy, as all the constituent members of a living organism appear to be (vi. 38; vii. 9). Marcus nowhere gives the arguments for this hypothesis, but he illustrates it from the interrelation of the elements of physical bodies, the social instincts of animals, the connexion of the sun, the planets, and the stars (ix. 9). This term 'sympathy' was originally a term of magic, but is characteristically adopted by the school in a professedly scientific sense; it was used in a different sense by the Neoplatonists. The argument from the coincidence between changes of the astronomical bodies and mundane phenomena, for instance the relation between the moon's phases and the tides, was a favourite one for exhibiting this presumed sympathy.

Ch. 41. This quotation from Epictetus is again referred to in ix. 24. It is singularly out of place here, since the body of man is in no sense a dead body but, like the Universe in the last chapter, a living substance informed by soul.

Chs. 42–4. From the scientific point of view, derived from Heraclitus, the terms 'good' and 'evil' are inappropriate to

the changing substance of the Universe (vii. 23; viii. 20 and 50). The next two chapters repeat the familiar themes of the transitory or finite nature of man's experience, and of its ordered recurrence in the annual seasons. The end of ch. 44 gets its force from its unexpectedness and is in the satirical manner rare with Marcus.

Ch. 45. This chapter is to be read with ch. 40, and the passages from other Books referred to there. Marcus is endeavouring to explain the Stoic doctrine of the unification or organic character of the Universe. He attempts this by contrasting a group of numbers in mutual exclusion, that is, in fact, exclusive units which are no series, with the reciprocal action of individual realities or intelligible unities. Galen, often elsewhere a severe critic of the Stoics or of reasoners who professed Stoicism, holds very firmly to an organic doctrine in *Physiology* (a kind of early Vitalism), which is in principle identical with the Stoic view of the Universe. The thought is that which Mephistopheles expresses in *Faust*:^[37] 'He who would know and describe what is alive, seeks first to expel its spirit. Then he holds the parts in his hand but alas! the spiritual bond is wanting. Chemistry terms it *encheiresis naturae*, mocks itself and knows it not'; words which have often been used in argument against a merely atomic or mechanical explanation of Nature.

Ch. 46. These quotations from Heraclitus, the great Ionian nature-philosopher of the beginning of the fifth century B.C.,

who was a kind of prophet to the Stoics, suggest the question whether his book still survived in the second century and was known to Marcus. There was a contemporary interest in his work, as we see from the frequent quotations of him, especially in Christian writers; he serves to illustrate a point or to embellish their compositions.

The first quotation here is the kernel of the doctrine of continuous and ordered change (chs. 3, § 2, 4 and 29). The rest illustrate the moral doctrine, which was adumbrated in Heraclitus and worked out by the Stoics. The Commonwealth, Marcus says, rests upon the Logos, or common Reason; as a drunken man, who is immersed in the senses, misses the road home (iv. 29; vi. 22), so the multitude are at variance with the universal law, which is in truth always near them, and find what they meet every day to be strange and foreign to them (iv. 29). They are in the slumber of the senses, but we must not be like men who sleep, ^[38] although sleepers do in fact play their part in the whole (vi. 42); neither must we be like children who accept things from their parents instead of using their own reason.

Ch. 48. Compare iii. 3 and vi. 47. Here the destruction of famous cities, like Pompeii, is included in the catalogue of things vanishing. The sudden destruction of Bura and Helice in Achaia (373 B.C.) is described by Pausanias, ^[39] but he was more moved by the decline of Megalopolis from its former greatness than by these sudden cataclysms. So

too was the 'Roman friend of Rome's least mortal mind', Sulpicius Rufus, in the famous letter to Cicero which Byron paraphrases.^[40] Pausanias moralizes also upon Nineveh and Babylon, as Lucian does in his *Charon*.

Both Plato and Aristotle thought there had been many destructions of men in the long past ages, by deluge, disease, or other causes, after which a handful of survivors slowly rebuilt civilization. Thus Plato in *Critias* dates the destruction of the fabled Atlantis at the third deluge before Deucalion, the Noah of Greek legend.

The moral for the individual is pointed by Seneca, 'the sea swallowed Helice and Buris entire: am I to be afraid for one little human frame?'^[41] Marcus draws the moral for humanity, with its passage from conception to corruption, and the Middle Ages added to the sadness by making the origin of man evil, as we get it in Chaucer's 'and nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene'.^[42]

M. Casaubon's note on 'ashes or a skeleton', with an account of the urns at Newington in Kent, seems to have set Sir Tho. Browne on the study of Norfolk urns which prompted his famous *Urn Burial*, with its opening phrase: 'When the funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes.'

The beautiful close upon inanimate nature, here given a voice of thankfulness, contrasts remarkably with Pascal's 'le dernier acte est sanglant, quelque belle que soit le comédie en tout le reste: on jette enfin de la terre sur la tête, et en voilà pour jamais.'^[43]

Ch. 49. The simile of the wise man's security goes back to Homer's comparison of a battle-line to a strong headland.^[44] Virgil used it of King Latinus,^[45] from whom Seneca transferred it to the wise man's constancy,^[46] and Tennyson employs it in his poem *Will*.

The second half of the chapter is on the subject of bearing apparent misfortunes. The right attitude to sorrow and ill-fortune is summarized at the close of Book v.

Ch. 50. A reflection upon length of life to be compared with xii. 27. That the names of almost all these old men are now mere names illustrates Marcus' theme. The last words are a curious play upon a three days' child and the thrice-veteran Nestor.

Ch. 51. A quiet epilogue.

1. ↑ iv. 3. 4. Contrast ii. 5 and iii. 5, where the emphasis is on his duty as a Roman.
2. ↑ Sen. *De Otio*, iv. 1.
3. ↑ Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, iv. 16. 31. Cited in Donne, *Sermons*, vol. iv, p. 524, ed. Alford; p. 282

supra.

4. ↑ Cic. *Lg.* i. 23 and 33.
5. ↑ Heraclitus, *Fr.* 91 B, i 13–14 D; 92 B, 2 D.
6. ↑ Compare ch. 4 with x. 33, especially § 4. The connexion of chs. 4 and 5 is made clear by comparison with x. 6 and 7.
7. ↑ See: (1) v. 17. 28; viii. 15; ix. 3. 42; (2) iii. 11; iv. 3; vi. 27; vii. 22; viii. 14; ix. 27; x. 30; xi i. 12; (3) ii. 1; viii. 8, 26, 59; ix. 22; (4) vi. 50; viii. 56; ix. 11; x. 13. xi. 18 summarizes the lessons on Duty to a Neighbour.
8. ↑ X. *Mem.* iv. 2. 11.
9. ↑ St. James, *Ep.* 2. 8.
10. ↑ *Titus*, 3. 4.
11. ↑ Hesiod, *Op.* 293.
12. ↑ Livy, xxii. 29. 8.
13. ↑ Arist. *Eth. Nic.* vii. 2 and 9.
14. ↑ Cf. *ibid.* vii. 9.
15. ↑ *Ephes.* 5. 2.
16. ↑ *Sur le triste état des pécheurs* (cited by B.-S^t Hilaire, *Pensées de M.-Aurèle*).
17. ↑ Pl. *Leg.* 776 b.
18. ↑ Lucr. 2. 78.
19. ↑ à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, iv (iii), 28.
20. ↑ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 25.
21. ↑ Butler, *Serm.*, Pref. 37 and xiii, 4, ed. Gladstone.
22. ↑ Cic. *Off.* 1. 14.
23. ↑ Cic. *Rep.* 6. 9.
24. ↑ Sen. *ad Marc.* 25.
25. ↑ Milton, *Lycidas*, 178.

26. ↑ *Imit. Christi*, iv (iii), 15.
27. ↑ Crossley, *M. Antoninus*, Book iv, ch. 23 note; Milton, *Sonnet 7*.
28. ↑ Spinoza, *Eth.* v. 42.
29. ↑ Democritus, *Fr.* 3, Diels.
30. ↑ M. Arnold, *Mixed Essays: Marcus Aurelius*.
31. ↑ M. Arnold, l.c.
32. ↑ Deissman, *Light from the East*, Eng. trans. p. 292.
33. ↑ Milton, *Par. Reg.* ii. 446.
34. ↑ Wordsworth, *Happy Warrior*.
35. ↑ *Ecclus.* 44. 9.
36. ↑ *Pl. Rep.* Book x, fin.
37. ↑ *Faust*, Part i, pp. 69, 70 (Stuttgart, 1866).
38. ↑ St. Paul, *1 Thess.* 5. 6.
39. ↑ Paus. vii. 25 and 24.
40. ↑ *Childe Harold*, iv. 44–5.
41. ↑ *Sen. N.Q.* vi. 32, 2–8.
42. ↑ Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, *Monk's Tale*, B. 3199.
43. ↑ Pascal, *Pensées*, 210 (63) Br.
44. ↑ *Il.* xv. 618.
45. ↑ *Aen.* vii. 586.
46. ↑ *Sen. Const. Sap.* 3. 5.

Footnotes

BOOK V

This Book consists of little essays, principally on familiar moral themes, and is almost free from the technical expressions of the Stoic school. The lessons may be intended for Marcus himself, but they read more like admonitions to a learner. More than any of the Books it might be taken to be the work of an older man addressing a younger.

Marcus appears also to be writing with a more conscious literary aim, and the Book is in consequence simpler in its effect. The first and the last chapters are in the dialogue form which is familiar to us from the satires of Horace and Persius. There are two attempts in the more cynical manner, chs. 12 and 28, the former of which fails through want of literary skill. Chapter 8 is a short justification of suffering by a comparison of Nature's treatment of man to the pains inflicted by the god of healing, Aesculapius, upon his patients.

There is an entire absence of the historical references which meet the reader in most of the Books, and no reference to the position and responsibilities of Marcus himself. Towards the end a kind of despondency, like that of Book ii, closes over the writer, and ch. 33 is very sad and hopeless in its condensed expression of despair, and disdain of mortal life.

Ch. 1. The single Greek word 'At dawn' resembles the 'At daybreak' which heralds Book ii. The discourse on the familiar text: 'Are mortals born to sleep their lives away' is enlivened by the appeal to the example of animals: 'Go to the ant thou sluggard and consider her ways.' This simple philosophy, familiar to us from the Old Testament, is rare in Greek and Latin authors; it is absent, for instance, from Persius' third Satire which is on the same subject, 'Sleep'. The topic may have been familiar from the proverbs of common folk, but the *Fables* of Aesop and Babrius, like the medieval stories of Reynard the Fox, are not in this vein; animals are introduced in a cynical way to satirize men's foibles, which they share, not to serve as an example to them. We meet this kind of reflection first in the rather childish collections of stories upon the wisdom of creatures by Aelian (A.D. 170–235), though it may already be detected in the first century in Plutarch's essay, *That brutes employ reason*.

The Stoics, generally, regarded animals, including the social insects, as moved by 'soul' in distinction from man's prerogative of 'reason'. Thus Marcus' usual point of view is that animals exhibit the economy of Nature, are evidence of Divine providence, have instinct, as we say, not conscious intelligence. So when he returns to this subject (viii. 12) he is content to say that we share sleep with animals, the part of life where reason is in abeyance.

There is thus a certain originality in this chapter, and still more in the charming reinforcement of the innocent lesson in ch. 6 with its stress upon animals labouring unselfishly for man, the *sic vos non vobis* suggestion.

The chapter closes with a high appeal to disinterestedness in moral life by the example of the artisan's selfless devotion to his craft. This argument had been used by Plato in *The Republic* to enforce public morality by the example of the single-mindedness of the true artist.^[1] Aristotle has a different lesson, he points to the pleasure of the craftsman as increasing his energy.^[2] Marcus uses the analogy to illustrate the ardour, as well as the unselfishness, which should go to social duties. Sometimes he calls this single-mindedness true self-interest (vi. 35). He puts it well, but somewhat differently, in vii. 13 and ix. 42. It is independent of men's praise (iv. 20), it is an intrinsic characteristic, like a jewel's beauty or a lovely colour (vii. 15).

Ch. 2. Earnest absorption in a pursuit at the expense of food and sleep leads to the subject of what normally hinders moral progress. This is imagination, troublesome or inappropriate. Epictetus^[3] says that neither wealth nor health nor glory is in man's control, but only the right treatment of imagination, and Marcus dwells often, like his predecessor, on the psychology and pathology of imagination. An image forces an entrance into the mind, it calls up a further image, and, if this be entertained, impulse is excited and is followed by act. Again the mind is

coloured by its imaginations, the dye sinks in by repetition (ch. 16). The remedies which Marcus suggests are either negative, to expel or to wipe out the impression, or positive, to turn the mind to right word or act, whereupon the right imaginations will follow. He gives this a fuller treatment at viii. 7 and xi. 19; see also what he says at vii. 16, followed as it is by the little dialogue: 'What are you doing here, Imagination? Be off with you the way you came; I have no use for you. But you have come according to your ancient wont. I am not angry with you; only be off.' The explanation is that the psychical effect of being angry is to strengthen, instead of weakening, the intrusive fancy. Sometimes he speaks of these imaginations as conceptions or thoughts, a kind of higher power of the same thing (xii. 22 and 25).

Ch. 3. There are three points here. The first, that man's will must be made accordant with Nature's will or purpose, that is, we must generalize our wills; the second, that our real will is identical with the general will, and that we must recognize that in realizing this will we value ourselves at our proper worth, in other words should practise true self-love (v. 1.2). Thirdly, we can neglect the criticism of others because their wills are private or selfish wills. The chapter is influenced, directly or indirectly, by the teaching of Heraclitus:^[4] 'We must follow the general Logos . . . but though the Logos is general, the many live as though they had a private understanding.' Again, in the last words Marcus appears to be thinking of 'the straight and crooked

path of the fuller's brush, which is one'.^[5] The spiral brush, which worked up and down and yet rotated, illustrates the reconciliation of the apparent opposition between the general and the particular.

Ch. 4. A beautiful variation upon the theme 'the earth that's nature's mother', only that Marcus makes the relation to be to the Whole, treating Earth as but one aspect of that Whole. When he says 'falling, I shall rest', he probably recalls another of Heraclitus' sayings:^[6] 'it (the fiery principle) changes and it rests', that is, the Whole is subject to perpetual alternations of activity and of rest; of this, waking and sleeping, life and death are instances.

Ch. 5. Moral excellence is independent of intellectual acuteness, a favourite theme of Christian teachers. By reason, Marcus, like Epictetus, means the practical reason, the source of moral judgement. We may illustrate what Marcus says from a little dialogue in *The Schoolmaster*^[7] of Clement of Alexandria, which appears to be of Stoic origin: 'No one who has intellect would put pleasure before good.' 'But we aren't all of us philosophers, don't we all love and pursue life?' 'How do you love God and your neighbour, without philosophy? How do you love yourself, without loving life?' 'I never learned my letters.' 'But even if you never learned to read, you cannot pretend to be deaf.'

Marcus adds that we have a duty to cultivate by practice such intellectual powers as we possess; as Horace said,

Some point of moral progress each may gain
Though to aspire beyond it should prove vain.^[8]

See what he says in xii. 6.

The chapter is usually interpreted as an expression of conscious intellectual inferiority on the part of Marcus. It is more natural to think that he is teaching a general lesson. Notice too how the list of necessary attributes of the good life, and the complementary catalogue of failings, have grown since he wrote ii. 5.

Ch. 6. The dialogue in § 2 has been arranged differently by different editors. The sense of the chapter is, in any case, manifest. The reward of goodness lies in doing good. Marcus puts this in an original way. Man is to fulfil his social duties with an instinctiveness like that of the animals; nay more, as naturally as a cultivated plant bears its flower and fruit. Kindness and generosity should be a second nature. This, objects his critic, is to abrogate from man's distinctive gift, reason, and reason involves self-consciousness. The reply is an appeal to the unsophisticated conscience. Reason can certainly estimate gain and loss, so that, if you make a gift, the beneficiary is no doubt in your debt. But it is for him, not for you, to recognize the debt; otherwise your gift was not a free gift. The same point is made by Seneca,^[9] and Marcus may remember Seneca or the source on which Seneca drew.

Ch. 7. He now pursues the problem of unselfish goodness, considering man's relation to Him from whom all blessings flow. Prayer should be for good gifts, not for ourselves only but for our neighbour also. For a fuller discussion of Prayer from a different angle see ix. 40. The words preserved by Marcus are thought to be a primitive formula, a magic incantation to the Rain-god. They were perhaps used in connexion with a rude image of Earth, which Pausanias records to have been dedicated at a time of drought either in Attica or in all Hellas. Perhaps the learned had questioned whether prayer should not pass beyond the bounds of Attica, to embrace the fields of their neighbours and even of their enemies. [\[10\]](#)

By 'simply' Marcus means that, as Socrates said, we are to ask God for good, not for good either for ourselves individually or for some private end; by 'freely' he means 'without cringing or crawling', a freeman's devotion, not a slave's. We are to stand up when we pray, as Socrates was said to have done.

No doubt Marcus knew what Plato had said on this subject in the *Euthyphro*, and was familiar with Persius' second Satire and its source, the dialogue *Alcibiades ii*.

Ch. 8. The subject of Prayer leads him to open the hardest of all problems to a consistent Stoic, the existence of physical and mental suffering and moral evil.

A conspicuous example of men's prayer is that directed to Aesculapius, god of healing. Men ask the god for relief, his answer is to prescribe a painful and severe remedy.

Suffering, then, in this world, Marcus argues, may be looked on as prescribed to man, like a regimen given by a good physician to his patient. What men commonly call ills are part of the economy of the Whole. You must therefore not only submit to suffering; you must welcome it as assigned to you by a long chain of necessary sequence, and also as contributory to the perfection of the Whole. Marcus goes even further. He says paradoxically that apparent evil assists the permanence of the eternal Cause, while human discontent actually injures the perfect Unity.

Notice that he does not say (though some thinkers have said it) that my suffering benefits me; only that my suffering is for the good of the whole. The individual is regarded as a member of the body that is treated, even chastised, for the good of that great body, the City of God.

The worship of Aesculapius had a great vogue in the second century A.D. He is the saviour and healer of men. This cult is known from literary sources, like the *Sacred Orations* of Aelius Aristides, with which Marcus would be familiar (he heard with emotion that author's speech on the disaster at Smyrna), and from the excavations at Epidamnus and elsewhere. Pater has drawn a charming picture of this healing art in *Marius the Epicurean*.

Notice the Stoic rationalization of ancient beliefs, a rationalization which was perhaps easier in the case of Aesculapius, who was originally a man, but a man with divine powers. Notice also the vein of etymology, so characteristic of Marcus, who had a very real interest in *semantics*.

Ch. 9. Medical treatment reminds the writer that philosophy is the medicine of the soul; that he is himself an invalid, at best a convalescent. Regard your call to philosophy as a call to cure yourself, look on the philosopher as a wise friend, not a pedant.

Ch. 10. Hitherto the temper of the Book has been of sustained cheerfulness; now philosophic doubt combines with disillusionment in a manner strongly contrasting with the brave optimism of ch. 8, and the simple commonsense of ch. 9. Compare the tone of ix. 3. With this vein of half despair the inward deity (ii. 13 and iii. 5) is once more mentioned, being here almost identified with the governing self.

The chapter closes with a reassertion of faith in the Universe, and in the power of the human will.

Ch. 11. This chapter is a pendant to ch. 10, suggested by reflection upon the deity within, and the contrast between it and a corrupted heart.

Moltke seems to have had this and similar passages in the *Meditations* in mind when he wrote in his *Trostgedanken*: 'the reason is absolutely sovereign; knows no authority above itself; no power can enforce it to accept as false what it has once recognized to be true.'

Ch. 12. A chapter in the cynical vein, which sits uneasily upon Marcus, to illustrate the contrast between real goods, viz. goods of the soul, and mere possessions, the wealth of the vulgar. There are many stories in the remains of Greek literature which resemble what he alludes to here. The best of these is told of Aristippus, the Cyrenaic hedonist, who, after suffering shipwreck, said that he had not lost anything to matter, for what really mattered to him was his easy adaptable character, and that he had not lost. Galen tells a story of Diogenes the Cynic, who rudely spat in his wealthy host's face as the least valuable thing in a room full of 'goods'. The proverb is from a passage lately recovered in a papyrus fragment of Menander's *Ghost*; a slave is frankly lecturing his young master, and apologizes for quoting the proverb:

A vulgar proverb's just occurred to me,
(Asking your pardon, if I make too free):
With all your goods, young sir, it comes to this:
You've not a corner left in which to——.

There are two points, the difference between real goods and material possessions, and the fact that even the vulgar, like Menander's slave, see the difference, but, perhaps through a corruption in the text, the second point is obscured.

Ch. 13. The distinction in ch. 12, between real and material goods, to which he returns in ch. 15, leads him to reflect on the formal and material in his own composition (iv. 21). Though the one (the spiritual) is superior to the matter which it informs, both are subject to the law of continuity and change. This suggests a reflection (v. 32; x. 7. 2; xi. 1) on the doctrine held by many Stoics, and perhaps by Heraclitus before them, that the Universe, at the end of one world-process, is reabsorbed into the primitive condition of Fiery Matter. Then the process is repeated so that exactly the same series is repeated, and so on. The speculation resembles one which was common in the nineteenth century, popularly stated in the form: 'Is the world running down?' Marcus keeps an open mind, as the question does not affect our finite lives.

Chs. 14–15. What does concern us is that the formal principle in us, what he here calls Logos, should realize itself in right acts. But we must not demand of a man what does not belong to him. His end and his good cannot lie in those material goods which he properly disdains, and which he is commended for forgoing.

Chs. 16–18. Marcus here states, first, a psychological truth, that the effect of repetition, of dwelling upon an image, is to confirm the impression in the consciousness. The psychical self is stained by its frequent imaginations; the dyer's hand, as Shakespeare says, is coloured by what it works in. Marcus combines this truth with a law of mental association, by which ideas previously connected tend to reinstate themselves. We are therefore not only to control our imaginations (ch. 11) but to habituate ourselves to coherent trains of thought.

He gives two examples of such associated trains of thought in this chapter, and two further illustrations in chs. 17 and 18.

Most emphasis is laid upon his favourite doctrine that man's end is fellowship, and that in fellowship man discovers his benefit and his good. To establish this doctrine he appeals to the argument from structure and tendency in living organisms, how that in the animate kingdom universally there is a striving by each creature for its own good, to accomplish which it is constructed by Nature.

This 'natural adaptation' is accompanied by 'natural subordination'; the lower creatures are for the sake of the higher, the higher are for the sake of one another. The natural world exhibits a graded series, the *Scala Naturae*, what Sir Tho. Browne^[11] calls 'a stair or manifest scale of

creatures'. Thus to subordination succeeds co-ordination, mutual services in the Kingdom of ends.

In reference to the last argument Marcus says that 'it has been demonstrated long ago', a reference probably to Socrates, Plato, and especially Aristotle, from whom the Stoics took the conception. To us it is familiar from St. Paul^[12] and St. John.^[13] It has been called a purely 'external teleology', but it is much more than this both in Christian and Stoic writers. In regard to the animal kingdom it had its bad effects, leading Aristotle to use it to justify, in the name of Nature, the perpetual tutelage of slaves, and, in both Christian and pagan thought, causing the erroneous conclusion that animals were made by God solely for the service of man. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this brought into being the Cartesian notion, adopted by Bossuet among other religious writers, that the creatures are merely animate mechanisms. This false theory has had far-reaching practical consequences in the treatment not only of animals but of the weaker races of man. The slave-trade of the eighteenth century is a strange outcome of supposed enlightenment.

Chs. 17–22. The first two chapters continue the thought of ch. 16, but lead on (with a digression at ch. 21) to the inquiry how to deal in practice with the unkind and unsocial (Book ii. 1). Thus good life in a palace, and the principle that man's end is fellowship are justified by what appears, at first sight, to be a negative instance. The digression in ch.

21 actually points the same way, since the highest power in self may and can use good and evil alike, for so does the Whole, in its wisdom.

Ch. 17. A practical solution of what is a theoretical problem to an optimistic creed. Marcus often recurs to it (iv. 6; v. 20, 28; vi. 50; ix. 42; xi. 9; xii. 16). The English proverb is that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Ch. 18. Man has strength to support his lot. He can shoulder trouble, though he is conscious of it, as easily as the foolish man, who is not conscious of it, or the man who makes a parade of his endurance. The last appears to mean the man spoken of in iii. 16 and viii. 48, and would include the Christian recusant of xi. 3. He bears and endures, but on unreasonable grounds, without moral judgement. Marcus explained the reasons for endurance in v. 8. 5, and returns to them in viii. 46 and x. 3.

Chs. 19–20. The independence of the mind in regard to all external circumstances is a fundamental tenet of Stoicism. It is a favourite topic of Epictetus, and was stated clearly at iv. 3. 4. (Compare vi. 8; vii. 16; xi. 1. n and 16.)

The next chapter gives the practical bearing of the maxims in ch. 19. He adds that every obstacle, even injurious men, can be used to advantage our moral life. This must have been the original meaning of 'making a virtue of necessity', though it has been vulgarized to an equivalent for 'grin and

bear it'. Wordsworth retains the true sense when he says that the *Happy Warrior* 'turns his necessity to glorious gain'. It appears to be already proverbial in Quintilian and St. Jerome.

Ch. 21. The sovereign power is, in the Universe and man, of one kind. Marcus uses this term 'sovereign' or 'most excellent' in place of the usual 'governing' faculty, with reference to the long debate in Greek writers upon the saying 'Justice is the benefit of the superior', where the word 'superior' may be interpreted 'better'. So here the 'sovereign' could be, and is no doubt by Marcus, interpreted as the 'best'. He identifies it elsewhere with Reason (Logos) and its objective expression Law. When he says 'it uses all and orders all', he is probably thinking of Heraclitus, [\[14\]](#) who said of Logos that 'it is as strong as it wills, suffices for all and prevails over all', and perhaps of Pindar's enigmatic saying: 'Law, the lord of all, mortals and immortals, guides with a high hand.'[\[15\]](#)

Ch. 22. He passes from the principle of law to its realization in the State. The test of illegality is injury to the State, not to the individual, so that an imaginary grievance can usually be disposed of by asking whether the supposed wrong injures society. The interpretation of the conclusion of the chapter is uncertain. With the punctuation adopted in the text, the respondent objects that righteous anger is justified in regard to an injury to the State; to this Marcus replies: 'Not anger! you forget that you must instruct him

reasonably, that is, show him his mistake.' This is the teaching of Marcus at x. 4 and xi. 13. No doubt there is a reference, however we interpret the words, to a forgotten controversy between the Stoics and the followers of Aristotle. The latter held that anger is given to man to reinforce his reason, a doctrine of Plato in *The Republic*. The Stoics held that anger, as a passion of the soul, is never to be justified.

It will be seen that the real question involved is the theory of punishment. Those who take the retributive view of punishment censure the Stoic view, as Lactantius did already.

Here Marcus appears to be referring to the actual State; when, however, he speaks, as he does elsewhere, of the Eternal City, he insists that the Whole cannot be injured any more than the good man (v. 25), and we should have expected him to adopt the same view about the actual State (v. 35).

Chs. 23–4. These reflections upon the rapid passage of the world of generation and the littleness of mortal man by comparison with the whole are now familiar to the reader (ii. 17; iv. 43; v. 10. 2). Here they are correctives for anger, elsewhere for pride, distraction and idle complaint. The 'boundless gulf of past and future' probably suggested Pascal's: 'quand je considère la petite durée de ma vie, absorbée dans l'éternité précédant et suivant, je m'effraie'.

[16] Collier's translation of ch. 24 seems to have suggested to Pope: 'His time a moment, and a point his space.'^[17]

Ch. 25. Error arises from following one's private judgement, whereas duty is to identify the individual with the general will.

The offender's responsibility is his own, as Marcus said in iv. 26, repeating it at xi. 13, where the subject is treated more fully.

The phrase 'let him see to it', which is nearly equivalent to the Hebrew 'his blood be on his own head', occurs in the *New Testament* in two remarkable places, St. Matt. 27. 4 and 24, *Acts* 18. 15.

Ch. 26. Marcus here distinguishes the subconscious changes, the smooth or broken movement of the nerve-current (animal spirit) in the psycho-physical organism, from their effects in consciousness, which arise from the sympathetic reaction of the central self. He does not pretend that we can ignore this reaction—

we are not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the Mind
To suffer with the body^[18]—

indeed he takes the same standpoint as Epicurus did (ix. 41). We cannot ignore the resultant effects, only we are not to judge either that they are good, if pleasant, or evil, if painful. His difference from Epicurus is that the latter insisted on treating the pleasures of the mind and higher self as of the same kind with sensual pleasures, and as good. For Marcus only moral activity is good, the emotion which accompanies it is its consequent and concurrent.

Ch. 27. This is the one place in the *Meditations* where man is thought able to live in the society of the gods. Usually Marcus speaks of following in God's footsteps, a Pythagorean simile, or making oneself like God, a Platonic ideal.

Ch. 28. Marcus only occasionally indulges the cynical vein in which he most resembles Persius of Roman authors. Both reveal in such passages as this a delicate aesthetic sensibility, almost as if evil were distasteful more than shocking to them. The passage illustrates the view that vice is due to ignorance and can be remedied by reviving in the evil-doer his latent knowledge of good and evil. Marcus speaks here like a physician who is not moved to anger by detecting a bad habit. This is one of several passages which can hardly be understood as intended merely for his private edification; the tone resembles such hortatory discourses as Galen's two treatises upon the Passions and their cure, [\[19\]](#) and his *Protrepticus*.

The last four words are one of the unsolved enigmas of our book. Gataker thought that Marcus means that a good man neither lauds it over the evil-doer nor panders to him.

Ch, 29. The image of the smoky chimney is derived from Epictetus: 'the room is full of smoke; if it be tolerable, I shall stop there; if it is excessive, I walk out.' Other images were from leaving a banquet, abandoning a dilapidated tenement.

Marcus speaks of suicide in five or six places. That the Stoics justified it in some circumstances is well known, and many admired followers of the Porch died by their own hand, like Cato the younger and Marcus Brutus.

The most important passage in the *Meditations* on this topic is x. 8. 3. There self-destruction is contemplated hypothetically, as a last resort: if you cannot be your own master, go into a corner and learn your lesson; if you fail, depart life, not in anger or indignantly (he is thinking of Ajax, perhaps), but simply, like a freeman, not for effect. Clearly Marcus does not advocate suicide there; what he would have one do is to acquire mastery of self. In the present passage, by repeating the language of ch. 25 and the sentiment of ch. 27, he points to the life of liberty as the true path; it is only when the good life is made impossible, not by man's own fault, that a voluntary death is justified. In viii. 47 his solution, as in x. 8, is that you are not to grieve, for you are not responsible for the impediment that thwarts

your activity. In x. 32 he says it were better to depart than to continue in evil, that is, if you cannot be good and simple, implying that you are able to be such, and he says much the same in x. 22. In vii. 33 and x. 3 he cites the maxim of Epicurus that extreme pain brings its own relief by bringing death in its train.

Suicide then is contemplated by Marcus, and here he follows the best Stoic teaching, only as an escape from insuperable moral evil, whether imposed from without or arising from his own failure. If adopted at all, it must be upon reasonable choice, neither precipitately, in anger, nor for display. The good man is normally to stand to his post (iii. 7), as Socrates taught, waiting for God's signal of retreat.

On the whole matter Sir Thomas Browne^[20] speaks wisely and fairly: 'we are happier with death than we should have been without it: there is no misery but in himself, where there is no end of misery; and so indeed, in his own sense, the Stoic is in the right. He forgets that he can die, who complains of misery; we are in the power of no calamity while death is in our own.'

Ch. 30. The first words take up the close of ch. 29. The mind of the whole is a mind of fellowship. The rest repeats in another form what was said in v. 16.

Ch. 31. The thought that Nature's purpose is to bring to pass concord among her children prompts the writer to inquire how he himself has supported life's varied relations. These relations, it will be noted, include those to one's servants and subordinates. The quotation is loosely made from the *Odyssey*, and he perhaps also thinks of a question suggested by Pythagoras:^[21]

Where did I transgress? What have I done, what duty not fulfilled?

This profession of innocence has no parallel elsewhere in Marcus; we are reminded of St. Paul's occasional outbursts, like^[22] 'You are witnesses and God how holily and righteously and without blame we behaved to you who hold the Faith'. So 'your service is accomplished' will awaken memories of the apostle's words.

The phrase 'how many fair things your eyes have seen' appears to be a reminiscence of Menander's exquisite verses:^[23]

that man is blest
Who having viewed at ease this solemn show
Of sun, stars, ocean, fire, doth quickly go
Back to his home.

Ch. 32. The meaning and connexion of this chapter are obscure, as no direct answer is given to the inquiry in the first sentence. If Marcus were a Christian writer, we should know the answer, but he certainly does not hold that things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes. Again, the spirit or mind described in the third sentence can hardly be other than the mind of the whole. No finite mind can have knowledge of the beginning and the end, and of the reason which orders all and runs through all being. Does Marcus mean then that no human spirit is master of art and knowledge? This would explain why the seeming masters are confounded by the uninstructed.

Chs. 33–5. Not even the sad tone of ch. 10 has prepared the reader for what is the most extreme expression in the *Meditations* of the little worth, the evil of this present life. The powerful phrases and the quotation from Hesiod add to the effect of the sober close, where the writer, leaving the future an open question, reaffirms as a present duty what is the central lesson of this Book. The next two chapters continue the lesson, and give reasons for confidence in the victory of goodness in spite of what was said in the first part of ch. 33.

Ch. 36. The internal connexion of this chapter is puzzling and the text is partly corrupt. The opening sentence shows by its language that Marcus has in mind a chapter of Epictetus.^[24] There it is said that when you see a man carried away by his grief, say at the loss of a child, your

imagination is not to be carried away by the suggestion of his lamentations. You may sympathize with him and even lament with him, but within you are not to grieve. The reason given is the familiar one that the loss, properly conceived, is not an evil; the evil lies in the inward judgement.

Thus we must supply at the beginning of the chapter some words like: 'When you see a man carried away by a supposed loss.' Marcus says you are not to imagine his loss to be a real evil; the apparent evil is external, it lies in circumstance, your judgement tells you that it is not a hurt.

He illustrates this from a reference to an old man, perhaps a foster father, in some lost comedy. When he left, he used to beg to take away his charge's top with him, but he did not forget that it was a toy.

The rest of this part of the chapter is corrupt, but the general drift is that if you allow yourself to entertain sorrow because your fellow-man overrates what he has lost, you do but share his folly. He has forgotten what is the reality, he is lamenting a loss which was inevitable.

The last paragraph is by some taken to be a separate aphorism. It may, however, continue the dialogue (possibly it is a paraphrase of some well-known passage of complaint): 'Once upon a time I was a lucky man. . . .' 'Lucky you say, but what is luck? It depends upon your own

disciplined temper.' Thus the chapter closes by a reassertion of what is the main teaching of chs. 33, 34, and 35.

1. ↑ Pl. *Rep.* Book i, 341 c–342 e.
2. ↑ Arist. *Eth. Nic.* x. 5.
3. ↑ Epict. ii. 19. 32, and often elsewhere.
4. ↑ Heraclitus, *Fr.* 2 D., 92 B. (Test).
5. ↑ Ibid. 59 D., 50 B.
6. ↑ Ibid. 84 a D., 83 B.
7. ↑ *Paidagogos*, iii. 11, p. 299 P.
8. ↑ 'est quadam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra', Hor. *Ep.* i. 1. 32 (Conington).
9. ↑ Sen. *De Benef.*, especially ii. 9 and 10.
10. ↑ Paus. i. 24. 3.
11. ↑ *Religio Medici*, i. 33.
12. ↑ 1 Cor. 12. 12.
13. ↑ St. John, xv. 4.
14. ↑ Heraclitus, 114 D., 91 B.
15. ↑ Pindar, *Fr.* 169 (1 51).
16. ↑ *Pensées*, 205 Br.
17. ↑ *Essay on Man*, i. 72.
18. ↑ Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ii. 4. 10.
19. ↑ 'There are tracts to heal the passions of the self by Chrysippus and other 'writers', Galen (*De Dignotione*) v. 3.
20. ↑ *Religio Medici*, i. 44.
21. ↑ *Od.* iv. 690 and D.L. viii. 22 (cited in the *Testimonia* to the Greek text).
22. ↑ 1 *Thess.* 2. 10.

23. [↑](#) Menander, *Fr.* 481 (J. A. Symondi).
24. [↑](#) *Manual (Encheiridion)*, ch. 16.

Footnotes

BOOK VI

The Book opens with a brief statement that the Universe is good, because it is created and informed by an entirely good will, the Reason (Logos) that shapes the material in which and through which it works (v. 32); it closes^[1] with the summary: 'No one shall prevent your living by the reason of your own nature: nothing will happen to you contrary to the Reason of universal nature.' Your will is free to realize its good purpose, your earthly dispensation also is good; there shall no evil happen to you, save of your own making. Similarly Marcus says, in what is the central chapter (ch. 30): 'Wrestle to abide such as philosophy would have made you. Reverence the gods, save mankind.' The last two words imply the third aspect of his creed; man's reason binds him to his fellow men, as both they and he are members of one whole. This duty to, and love of, neighbours, put first in vii. 55, is in this Book rarely stressed, except in sayings like: 'As Antoninus, my city and my fatherland is Rome; as a man, the Universe' (vi. 44); the City of God, so prominent in Book iv, lies in the background of his thought. The language, except in the occasional moral aphorisms, is almost entirely impersonal, the writer has reached the serene atmosphere of pantheistic calm. His words breathe a settled contentment and trust, with hardly a suggestion of that trouble and sadness which too often ruffle the surface of the *Meditations*.

In detail, the structure of the Book is hard to grasp; the continuity is repeatedly broken by practical reminders whose occasion is now not obvious to us; sometimes indeed it is hard to resist the conviction that they have been misplaced either originally by an editor or in transmission. This absence of continuity may be variously explained—whether by the author's own method or by accident we cannot now tell—and it becomes more noticeable in Book vii, where such intrusive sections seem to have been derived, at least many of them, from a book of commonplaces. One singular digression in the present Book (vi. 30. 2) seems deliberate; the character-study of his predecessor, the Emperor Antoninus Pius, which appears to be intended for its place in the centre of the Book, and indeed of the *Meditations*. The following chapters give a thread to the whole: 1, 4–5, 8–10, 15–17, 25, 36–45. 58.

Ch. 1. A summary statement of Stoic optimism about the Universe. Two original principles underlie the world process: Substance or Matter, which is passive; Reason or Logos, which is active. Using a favourite Greek image, Marcus speaks of Logos as of an artist modelling a plastic substance. The material so shaped is obedient, so that no room is left for an explanation of evil, as being the consequence of rebellious 'matter'.

Again, the principle of reason has no evil in its own nature, no ground therefore to create evil. Moreover, the divine

artificer has not only a good purpose and a perfect material, but he never blunders as a human artist may blunder.

Finally, and by consequence, he does not inflict any hurt, he is free from envy and malice, does not mar man or any of his creatures for his sport. A wise and perfect craftsman, he is also a kind and benevolent spirit. As Plato had said, there is no seat for envy among the gods.

Characteristically the conclusion is left to be drawn by the reader. The Logos guides all things from their generation to their end or dissolution, therefore there can be no real evil in the whole. 'God does everything for the best and nothing will have power to injure those who love him.'^[2]

Ch. 2. The world is good, and therefore the physical hindrances in this present life, evil report or good report, even death itself, are good. They are dispensed from a source which is good and they are the field of moral action. The paradox that to die is a moment of life^[3] rests upon the belief that there is no breach in the continuity of Nature's process, and that from a moral point of view 'Death is one of Life's Offices'.^[4]

Ch. 3. A brief reminder of what is fully described at iii. 11.
^[5]

Chs. 4–5. The first *explicit* reference in the *Meditations* to the vitalistic or 'holist' view of the Universe, which is

central in Stoicism. Against the mechanical atomism of Epicurus the Stoics took over from the early Ionian philosophy, mediated by one side of Plato's and Aristotle's doctrine, the belief that all bodies are animated, that a spirit runs through the whole Universe, and that each part of the whole, besides participating in the world-life, contains its own proper vital principle. Galen, the physician of Marcus, although opposed philosophically to Stoicism, held to vitalism in medicine very stoutly, so that his opinion in regard to bodily functions may have fortified the faith of Marcus, just as his optimism, so largely expressed in his great book, *On the use of bodily organs*, no doubt also did. As to the dissolution of all generated things, Marcus here expresses the view, ultimately derived from Heraclitus, that the Universe passes back to vapour, and so in the end to the primal Fire. Alternatively, on the Epicurean view, it continually breaks up into its constituent atoms. He adds (ch. 5) that the controlling Reason understands, so that even if Atomism be the true solution, we must believe that the courses of the atoms are ruled by law.^[6]

Chs. 6–7. The first aphorism is the converse of Plato's saying: 'The greatest retribution for evil doing is to be made like to evil men.'^[7] There is irony in the word 'retribution'; it could mean retaliation or revenge, as in Solomon's 'coals of fire'.^[8] The cynic Diogenes had said: 'How may I avenge myself upon my enemy? By becoming good myself.'^[9]

The second maxim also concerns our duty to our neighbour, but is positive in character. Marcus likes to dwell on the joy of kindness, and since beneficence is a distinctive quality of the divine nature, there is special point in the words: 'Keeping God in remembrance.'^[10]

Chs. 8–10. The main thread is resumed; in words reminiscent of what was said in ch. 1 of the divine Reason the creative freedom of the individual personality, in its own sphere, is asserted.^[11] Then the unity of the all-embracing, self-contained Universe is repeated.^[12] Finally we have the antithesis between the mechanistic and vitalistic theories of Nature, and their consequences to human happiness.^[13]

Chs. 11–12. The necessity to spiritual life of retiring from the press. The point of view is the same as in iv. 3, and he returns to it again at vii. 28. Some have thought to see in this retirement an anticipation of the Neoplatonic withdrawal into self, a kind of mystical vein in Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus. Yet the words of Marcus, at least, indicate something simpler than mystical absorption, not the turning back of the self into itself, but the everyday religious prescription that a man should refresh himself with holy doctrine.

As Guigue puts it: 'Retreat and draw back from every side (the Latin word is equivalent to the Greek of vii. 28), lest haply the whirlpool of changing things find you therein and

you suffer torment', or in the words of à Kempis: 'How can he abide long in peace . . . who little or seldom collects himself within?'^[14]

The thought is illustrated here by two similes. One is that of recovering a broken rhythm, and becoming master of the melody by a return to it; that is recovering equilibrium after trouble and disturbance by a return to the balanced self. This makes a man 'content with self, in harmony with his fellows, in tune with the gods'.^[15] The second simile is the simple and happy thought which makes court life a step-dame, philosophy a natural mother. Surely those are wrong who see in this a naive reference to his own mother Domitia and to the Empress, the elder Faustina, who was in fact his own father's sister and his wife's mother.

Ch. 13. This advice to effect disillusionment from sense imaginations by the use of analysis continues what was said in iii. 11. There the object was to remove the fear of death, here it is to overcome self-indulgence and self-esteem, which may arise from misrepresentation to one's self of the springs of virtuous behaviour. The austerity of Xenocrates appears to have been represented by the Cynic philosopher Crates as a kind of pharisaism or self-righteousness, but the story does not appear elsewhere. It is remarkable that Diogenes Laertius commends Xenocrates, who was head of the Academy, just for the virtue of freedom from pride.

Chs. 14–16. These chapters illustrate the difference between real values and the objects of vulgar esteem. Thus they are related to ch. 13, which gives remedies for mistaken admiration. In ch. 14 the admiration of different classes of mankind is arranged in a scale which corresponds with the rising scale of Nature's products, the inorganic, the organic, animate existence, intelligent life. The lowest are admired and coveted by the least instructed, and so in a gradation of taste and understanding. Only moral truth and conduct deserve a wise man's esteem; he honours reasonable and social selves. [\[16\]](#)

There is a touch of satire in the reference to contemporary *virtuosi* and to the multitude of slaves in a rich Roman's house. This vein continues in chs. 15–16. In the former he reminds himself of the relativity of the world of experience; and by the vigorous image of the passing bird illustrates the vanity of setting affection on things below, quite in the spirit of Christian asceticism. The passage may have suggested the like comparison to Guigue, who calls God a kind nurse preventing her charge from catching a passing sparrow. The sparrow typifies earthly goods, the possession of which absorbs and exhausts the spirit of man. 'Behold how the soul is taken captive by things of the body and is tormented when so taken captive, like the child. He is captivated when he sees the sparrow. And if he take the bird, he is the victim of as many chances as the sparrow itself. How secure the soul is before it is the captive of such objects. Her pleasures take hold of her, so that she can be

punished when they go amiss.'^[17] In ch. 16 the idea of a scale of perfection is used to compare man's lower and less rational activities with the higher. The moral is that he should value his highest powers. This leads to some excellent remarks upon education, which is compared with the cultivation of trees and animals. Education is the instructress in true values. Self-reverence will satisfy the highest self and bring it into the harmony of fellow men and the gods. The image of ch. 11 is thus repeated; man's felicity is to be in harmony with the divine will, a harmony which Dante compares to a 'wheel whose motion nothing jars'.^[18]

Ch. 17. A corollary to ch. 16 with its image of rhythmical harmony. The activity of virtue moves on a path which transcends human understanding, and which is different from the paths of the elements. There is perhaps a thought of the fifth element, the motion of which transcends earthly movement, a hint of the opposition between mind and matter which belongs to the occasional Pythagorean or Platonic inclination of Marcus' thought.

Chs. 18–24. A set of disconnected aphorisms. Ch. 18 gives a new turn to the theme of glory. Men are greedy for the praise of posterity, yet grudge it to their contemporaries. The curious point that our predecessors did not know our fame is made by Scipio Africanus in Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*,^[19] but he adds that they were better men than the present and their praise therefore more worth our having.

Ch. 19. A rendering of the maxim, 'we can because we believe we can'. Epictetus^[20] has a study of the weakness which is characteristic of ages of decline, want of self-confidence. He makes it the antithesis to self-conceit. His remedy is to practise oneself in difficulties, to propose what is reasonably in one's power, to remember that progress must be gradual.

Ch. 20. A short and rather clumsy statement of what is now called 'playing the game'.

Ch. 21. A chapter in the exact spirit of Socrates, 'the life not subjected to criticism is not worth living'.

Chs. 22–3. By those 'who lose their way' Marcus means the ignorant. Probably he is alluding to Heraclitus' picture^[21] of the drunken man led home by a beardless boy, 'the man who forgets where the road leads' (iv. 46). The 'three hours' of the closing words have been interpreted to mean three hours of prayer, but a more natural sense is that three hours rightly spent are as good as three years, a favourite paradox.^[22]

Ch. 24. Whether we accept Zeno's view of death or that of Epicurus, the same fate awaits conqueror and clown. The moral to be drawn is: 'Will you then demur and think that you do not deserve to die?' Perhaps 'Alexander the Great and his stable boy' was a proverbial saying, like 'Imperious Caesar dead and turned to clay.'

In any case Marcus seems to have in mind the passage in Lucretius^[23] where Scipio, the conqueror of Carthage, 'renders his bones to the ground like the lowest of his household', a passage too which ends with a satire upon the man immersed in sleep, who strays like a drunken man:

But still uncertain, with thyself at strife,
Thou wander'st in the Labyrinth of life.^[24]

T. H. Huxley^[25] makes a curious reflection upon the atoms of our body: 'It is very possible that atoms which once formed an integral part of the busy brain of Julius Caesar may now enter into the composition of Caesar, the housedog in an English homestead.'

Ch. 25. Reflections upon the redistribution of material particles, or (as the Stoics say) of the elements and the seminal principles, leads to a reflection upon a problem already touched upon in iv. 21. 'How is there room in the Universe for all these changing incidents of life and death?' Here he draws an analogy from man's organism on the one hand, with its complication of processes at any given moment, and man's mind with its multiplicity of impressions, all physically determined, to the Universe on the other, with its infinity of simultaneous and successive changes. Similar considerations led Epictetus^[26] to ask why God should not be able to oversee all things, to be present

everywhere in the Universe, as mind and consciousness are everywhere present in man's constitution.

Chs. 26–7. On Patience, Tolerance, and Forbearance. The curious illustration from spelling his name seems to mean that as a name is composed of definite elements—letters or syllables—so duty is made up of certain 'numbers'.^[27] Then he goes on to say that, if opposition arouses your wrath, you can calm yourself by repeating the alphabet, 'like to him that would say over the four and twenty letters when he was angry', as Bacon advises. Ch. 27 gives a reason why we are not to be angry with those who 'spell' their aims and objects differently from ourselves.

Marcus often recurs to this subject of Anger, and, as it seems in reading his book, with increasing charity. In xi. 18 he summarizes his position in a kind of 'Duty to my neighbour'. Elsewhere he gives these precepts to himself:

Be kind to the offender and not angry; the gods are not provoked and even bestow upon men the inferior goods which they desire, health, wealth and glory.^[28]

When tempted to be angry, examine your own shortcomings.^[29]

Cure by reasoning and, if you must reprove, do it in a corner, without display of arrogance or anger.^[30]

Never blink the fact that evil is evil, only treat all evil with charity.^[31]

Chs. 28–9. The thought of Death as rest and relief is succeeded by a reminder that while the body can still carry

on, the spirit dishonours itself by surrender. This leads to the profession of the central chapter of the Book.

Ch. 30. The self-dedication, with its reminder of the temptations of his imperial station, is followed by the character sketch of him whose disciple he calls himself. The portrait converts the abstract terms 'simple, good, etc.' proposed to himself, into the exquisite detail of the conduct of his predecessor, as head of the State.

Much has been made of this passage in the endeavour to show that vi. 30 was written earlier than i. 16, with its fuller study of Antoninus Pius. But it might well be a redraft of the earlier chapter, on a scale suitable to this place.

Ch. 31. The thought of the last hour leads to this call to life from sleep and death.^[32] The last words are difficult. He seems to mean 'look at the present as clearly as you looked at the past' (vii. 2).

Chs. 32–4. The way to look at the present is to be independent of mere bodily sensations, and of all except present activities; for (33) if the activity is appropriate, the pain or pleasure it may bring are of as little moment as the labour which attends the limbs in their functions. Moreover (34), if pain and labour are not, as such, evils, neither are pleasures, as such, goods, as you may see from the pleasures of evil men.

Ch. 35. Man's peculiar art, to live by reason, is one which he shares with the gods. He should respect this, as the builder and the physician refuse to neglect their arts and are guided by them. Grote^[33] calls this a striking statement of the 'fundamental analogy, which governed the reasoning of Socrates, between the special professions and social living generally—transferring to the latter the ideas of a preconceived End, a Theory, and a regulated Practice or Art, which are observed in the former.' We are to rise, that is, above merely private ends. In the light of the development of the professions, it is remarkable to find the physician and the master builder still classed as mere artisans. Galen^[34], on the contrary, puts medicine on a level with the liberal arts, music, painting, and sculpture. When we come down to Sir Thomas Browne, medicine is classed with law and divinity.

Ch. 36. The claim to partake in reason with the gods is at once corrected by reflection upon the relative pettiness of man's life and his earthly habitation. Here too, he says, there is much that appears to be evil and harmful.^[35] We are not, however, to regard physical evil as alien to Nature, but to see in it a necessary consequence, directly planned by or arising as a subordinate consequence from the source of all good. When we see physical evil, we are to dwell in thought upon the eternal Fountain of good; in Wordsworth's phrase 'that imperial palace whence we came'.

The reference to Mount Athos may depend upon a favourite rhetorical theme,^[36] the canal made by Xerxes during his war with Greece, or Marcus may be recalling the striking effect of grandeur made by the rugged peninsula as you sail past it. In this case he will be writing after A.D. 175–6 when he visited the East.

Ch. 37. 'There is nothing new under the sun', a familiar theme.^[37]

Chs. 38–45. Chapter 36 mediates the return to the principal theme of the Book. We are to consider the overruling Reason and to submit our wills to its providence, to think of the Universe as a single whole, where what befalls ourselves is purposeful, and what benefits us also benefits our neighbour. This group of chapters illustrates the theme variously.

Ch. 38. A fuller reference to the unity and unification of Nature.^[38] He adds here 'the bond of all things', one of the many Stoic phrases to express the belief in a necessary chain of antecedents and consequents, the necessary connexion which made the assertion of human freedom a paradox. Plutarch had criticized this view in the first century, and Alexander of Aphrodisias, the Aristotelian commentator (*circa* A.D. 200), attempts to destroy it in his *De Fato*. Here too we have the sole reference in the *Meditations* to the 'movement of stress', the mysterious force of 'spirit', which penetrates all things and at any given

place and time holds the balance between attraction and repulsion, or contraction and expansion. Galen appears to entertain the notion as a possible explanation of the movement set up by muscular contraction.

Next Marcus refers to the 'sympathy', by which *actio in distans* was explained by his school. Galen says that Hippocrates held the doctrine of a sympathy in the physical organism, and to this Leibniz refers: 'Wherefore it follows that this intercommunication of things extends to any distance, however great. And consequently every body feels the effect of all that takes place in the universe, so that he who sees all might read in each what is happening everywhere, and even what has happened or will happen, observing in the present that which is far off as well in time as in place: tout est conspirant, as Hippocrates said.'^[39] Marcus^[40] uses the language of this theory, when he speaks of a branch remaining in living relation with the organism of the tree.

Ch. 39. Thus in ch. 39, the corollary is that man is by love to his neighbour to 'fit himself into' (the word might mean 'tune himself to accord with') the scheme of things of which he is a fated member.

Ch. 40. Nature is here contrasted with Art, quite in Aristotle's manner. The living principle lives within Nature's work. Man must reverence the power which works

within him and obey its will.^[41] All will then be to his mind, as the work of the Whole is to its mind.

Ch. 41. The secret of a good life is to avoid making any object which lies without our will the goal of our endeavour; to have as our end only our spiritual life. This in the *Manual* of Epictetus is the first of all maxims. The lower ends lead to strife with man and discontent with God.

Chs. 42–3. The truth which corrects the idea of wilful disunion at the end of the last chapter. Voluntarily or involuntarily, sleeping or waking, acting well or ill, we all work together to one end. The Reason administering the whole (here spoken of as a person) will in any case employ you to subserve the whole, as the playwright disposes his lines in the drama. The illustration of the ludicrous line in the play, which Chrysippus the Stoic used to show that evil is the complement of the good and subordinated to it, is referred to by Leibniz^[42] in his *Théodicée*. To this great end the Sun-god and the planets, the Rain-god, Aesculapius, god of healing, and Demeter, who gives the fruits of the earth, all contribute.

Ch. 44. The ordered character of the Universe has been assumed in chs. 42–3. The writer now pauses to ask what ground there is for our belief in Providence. He had touched on this subject at ii. 11. 2 and at vi. 1. He now asks whether the gods take thought for the individual, or whether

Epicurus was right to believe in the blessed gods, but not in their care for men.

First, then, assuming they did take counsel for man, they must have counselled for man's good. Evil could not benefit them or the Universe which is their special care.^[43] Secondly, if they took no counsel for man, they certainly did for the whole. Man must welcome whatever flows from those high ends by way of consequence.^[44] Thirdly, if we suppose they took counsel for nothing, we shall be overthrowing the universal belief of mankind, and all our religious practices will become a farce. (This is an allusion to the famous argument of the Stoics from universal consent.) Rejecting this, we may still think that they had no care for man. Then, even so, I must fulfil the demands of my reasonable nature; my duty to the Empire and to the world is to serve their advantage.

This is the fullest statement of the matter in the *Meditations*. It is put hypothetically and merely to exhibit the difficulties of disbelief. If faith be challenged, the refuge is in the integrity of the individual and in reasonable good will.

Ch. 45. This puts briefly the consequence of the close of ch. 44. What is the advantage there spoken of? What advantages the individual advantages the whole; what benefits one man benefits the rest. This may be said to be the principle of the humanity and natural equity^[45] which was the goal of the legislation and administration of the

Antonines, and out of which came the great Roman system of public and private law.

Ch. 46. The Emperor was obliged to be present at these shows of the Amphitheatre and the Circus. Already, in his youthful correspondence, he writes to Fronto of the time taken up by attendance at the theatre. Fronto warns him of the danger of seeming ungracious by using the time for business or reading. The biographer also preserves the tradition that Marcus would dictate letters during these spectacles. It is remarkable that Marcus never censures the inhumanity of the amphitheatre,^[46] as Seneca had done with great power in the *Moral Letters*.

Ch. 47. The artifice of grouping in threes is noticeable. Philistion was a contemporary writer of revues. The three men of science, Eudoxus, Hipparchus, Archimedes, are well chosen; they are three of the greatest Greek mathematicians and physicists. Menippus^[47] is the Cynic satirist of the third century B.C., well known to Romans through his influence upon Varro. Possibly Marcus had read Lucian's mordant dialogue *Menippus*; certainly the words 'long ago they are fallen' resemble the theme of much of Lucian's moralizing.

Ch. 48. So Spinoza^[48] says: 'he will be careful to speak of man's lack of self-restraint sparingly, but largely of man's virtue and power, and how it may be perfected; that so men may be moved, not by fear or abhorrence, but only by the

affection of joy, to endeavour, as far as in them lies, to live by the rule of reason.'

Ch. 50. A restatement of his favourite doctrines^[49] that opposition to endeavour may be used to elicit other virtues, and that we must set out to action with the mental reservation that it may not be able to be realized.

Ch. 51. The three human ends, pleasure, fame, and virtue, recall early Greek moralizing. Marcus makes his familiar point that either of the first two aims leads to loss of that self-government which is the true end. 'Nous cherchons notre bonheur hors de nous-mêmes, et dans l'opinion des hommes que nous connaissons flatteurs, peu sincères, sans équité, pleins d'envie, de caprices et de préventions. Quelle bizarrerie!'^[50]

Ch. 55. Two favourite Socratic illustrations of the necessity for political subordination.

Ch. 58. This appears to be the moral of the main argument of the Book.^[51]

Ch. 59. The form and matter of the sentence have many parallels.^[52] The fragment itself is clearly not in place at the close of a Book. It appears to be an antidote to love of glory.

1. ↑ Ignoring ch. 59, which appears to be wrongly placed.

2. [↑](#) Leibniz, *Discours de Métaphysique*, 5, vol. iv, p. 430, Gerhardt.
3. [↑](#) iii. 7; ix. 3. 1.
4. [↑](#) Sen. *Ep.* 77. 19.
5. [↑](#) Cf. vi. 53; vii. 30; viii. 29.
6. [↑](#) iv. 15. 21; v. 30; vi. 10. 38; vii. 31.
7. [↑](#) *Laws*, Book v, 728 b.
8. [↑](#) *Prov.* 25. 22; St. Paul, *Rom.* 12. 20.
9. [↑](#) Plu. *De Cap.* 88 b.
10. [↑](#) iii. 13; v. 34; vi. 23; vii. 70; xii. 29.
11. [↑](#) v. 9. 25, 29; vi. 14.
12. [↑](#) vi. 1. 40; viii. 50; x. 1.
13. [↑](#) iv. 27; ix. 39.
14. [↑](#) *Meditationes Guigonis*, 218; à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, i. 11. 1.
15. [↑](#) vi. 16. 5.
16. [↑](#) xi. 2; xii. 2.
17. [↑](#) Guigue, l.c. 188, cf. 454–5. M. Ant. vi. 41 (and 16, § 4).
18. [↑](#) See Dr. Binyon's lecture on *Chinese Art* and what he says of the rhythm of universal life, quoting the Dante passage.
19. [↑](#) Cic. *Rep.* vi. 23.
20. [↑](#) Epict. ii. 13. 1; iii. 14. 8.
21. [↑](#) Heraclitus, 117 D., 73 B.
22. [↑](#) iii. 7; iv. 50.
23. [↑](#) Lucr. 3. 1024–52.
24. [↑](#) Lucretius, transl. Dryden, cf. ch. 22 above.
25. [↑](#) *Elementary Physiology*, 1902, p. 29.

26. ↑ Epict. i. 14. 9.
27. ↑ Compare iii. 1.
28. ↑ vii. 70; ix. 11. 27.
29. ↑ vii. 70; ix. 42. 4.
30. ↑ xi. 13, and the beautiful passage xi. 18. 4.
31. ↑ v. 28. 31; vii. 26; viii. 8; ix. 3. 2; x. 4.
32. ↑ Cf. St. Paul, *Eph.* 5. 14.
33. ↑ *Greek History*, Part II, ch. 68; vol. vii, p. 120, ed. 1904.
34. ↑ Galen, i. 38–9.
35. ↑ iii. 2; vi. 42; vii. 75.
36. ↑ Juvenal, x. 173; Lucian, *Rh. Praecept.* 18.
37. ↑ ii. 14. 2; iv. 32; vii. i. 49; xi. 1; xii, 24, and in this Book, 46–7.
38. ↑ vi. 4.
39. ↑ *The Monadology*, § 61, cf. *New Essays*, p. 373, in Leibniz, *The Monadology*, Latta (Clar. Press).
40. ↑ xi. 8; cf. v. 26; ix. 9. 2.
41. ↑ v. 25. 29.
42. ↑ *Theod.* iii, § 334. He criticizes v. 8, *ibid.* ii, § 217.
43. ↑ The gods could not lack skill, or power, or knowledge, ii. 11. 2; vi. 1.
44. ↑ vi. 36; vii. 75.
45. ↑ iv. 4.
46. ↑ Cf. x. 8. 2.
47. ↑ Dryden, *Essay on Satire*, ii. 66, Ker; cf. Monimus, *M. Ant.* ii. 15.
48. ↑ *Ethics*, iv. App. 25. Similarly Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*, ii. 6.

49. [↑](#) iv. i; v. 20.

50. [↑](#) La Bruyère, *De L'Homme*.

51. [↑](#) vi. 45; vii. 55.

52. [↑](#) iii. 4. 4; iv. 19; vii. 34. 62; ix. 34; x. 19; xi. 14.

Footnotes

BOOK VII

This Book is a collection of maxims, like vi. 51–end, partly his own, partly derived from commonplace books. They appear to be intended for everyday use, to bring the quiet and contentment which come from understanding and trust. The mind gets its colour from its frequent imagination and thoughts,^[1] and the doctrines are kept alive by reviving the imaginations upon which they rest;^[2] therefore to quicken these doctrines, he runs over the cognate illustrations. Chapters 32–52 are, with two exceptions, well-known citations and may, quite possibly, have intruded into the text from the Emperor's other note-books. There are signs of dislocation; thus chs. 5 and 7 belong together, so also chs. 14 and 16, chs. 23 and 25, and ch. 17 is made up of two quite separate aphorisms. The reader of the Greek text will notice that it is more frequently corrupted than in any other Book.

Ch. 1. The remedy, when you meet evil, is to recognize that it is part of the material of moral life,^[3] and therefore familiar;^[4] it is also short-lived.^[5] This way of dealing with evil is explained by examples in ix. 42.

Ch. 2. This chapter may be compared with that entitled 'How to wrestle with imaginations', in Epictetus.^[6] Normally Marcus supposes that moral recovery is possible, though with a struggle.^[7] Here he contemplates the

mortification of the moral self by the destruction of its guiding maxims.^[8]

The relation of the imaginations to the maxims seems to be that, in given cases, we are to revive the particular thoughts which illustrate the general rule. The principle of action is only actualized in individual instances, where imagination is necessarily present, and only kept alive by being so presented. Conversely, when you are disturbed you are to return to yourself, to recover the appropriate maxim. The relation of rule to individual case is reciprocal.

Further, he is stating a fact of moral life, that thoughts and ideas on which conduct rests must be the object of repeated observation and reflection. The last sentence of the chapter is not a separate aphorism; the return to life is likened to waking from sleep.^[9]

Ch. 3. Man's worth is measured by the worth of his ambitions. The life of most men is passed in a vain show, of which Marcus gives a concentrated and scornful picture.

Ch. 5. This chapter and ch. 7 are closely connected in thought, so that ch. 6 must have been displaced. He commended the Emperor Pius for welcoming the help of others.^[10] The joint action is to be in the common service.

Ch. 8. We cannot but compare 'Be not anxious for the morrow'.^[11] The phrase 'armed with the same reason' may

perhaps mean 'bearing with you the inspired word'. If this be so, compare the remarkable expression at the close of xii. 23.

Chs. 9–10. The mention of the indwelling reason seems to kindle the writer's enthusiasm, so that he gives utterance to this splendid statement of belief in Providence and the penetration of the whole Universe by the one Reason (Logos). 'One universe out of all, . . . and one truth.' The language of St. Paul^[12] resembles this: 'One body and one spirit . . . one God and Father of all, God over all and through all and in all', as (using Stoic words) he spoke just before of preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

The 'sacred bond' is interpreted by Pope:^[13]

Vast chain of Being, which from God began,

and Marcus may refer to the Stoic allegorization of the chain fastened to Zeus in Homer,^[14] which his contemporary Aelius Aristides^[15] interprets in this sense. Characteristically the expression of unity is followed by the other dominant motive, the rapid vanishing of the temporal.
^[16]

Ch. 11. The identification here of Nature and Reason implies the principle that natural things endeavour to persist in their own being. The apparent self-seeking of the

individual is in animals unconsciously subordinated to reason, in man consciously. Thus his interest and his duty to fellow-man and to the Whole are one. 'As (natural agents) have their law, which law directeth them in the means whereby they tend to their own perfection: so likewise another law there is, which toucheth them as they are sociable parts united into one body; a law which bindeth them each to serve unto other's good, and all to prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular.'^[17]

Ch. 12. 'Upright or held upright' agrees with ch. 7 in meaning. We may suppose that Marcus has advanced from the orthodox position of iii. 5 to an increased sense of dependence upon God's help. 'He shall rise if God extraordinarily lends him His hand; he shall rise by abandoning and renouncing his own proper means, and by suffering himself to be raised and elevated by means purely celestial. It belongs to our Christian faith and not to his Stoical virtue to pretend to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis.'^[18] As his *Meditations* progress, the author divests himself of the pride and the austerity towards others, which belonged to the straitest of his sect.

Ch. 13. Counsel, in the spirit of vii. 2, to keep alive the maxim of mutual dependence and membership in one rational system, by the imagination: 'I am a living member of the whole.' He illustrates his point by a little harmless

etymology. The Greek word for 'part' contains the canine letter R; the Greek word for 'limb' suggests melody.

What he says of reasonable creatures, locally severed, being related as members of one single organic body, and of an identity of ratio not of equality, is a Stoical tenet which is familiar to us from St. Paul,^[19] and which in its widest comprehension is derived from Aristotle.^[20]

The beautiful thought 'an act of kindness to yourself' recurs at vii. 74.

Chs. 14–17. Although the argument of ch. 13 gains its chief force from the sympathy which binds the whole body together, Marcus here asserts the independence of the reason, just as he elsewhere asserts that the individual's perfection is his own chief end, that he is not his brother's keeper.^[21] The moral self-dependence of chs. 14 and 16 is illustrated by the exquisite imagery of ch. 15.

The second part of ch. 17 follows ch. 16 naturally. The first sentence may originally have followed ch. 15; as it stands in the MS. it is incomplete, just as the text of ch. 16 is deficient and corrupt.

Ch. 17. 'Happiness is a good genius or a good familiar spirit.' We are reminded of Heraclitus' dictum: 'A good character is man's genius.' The etymological pun of the

amended text cannot be reproduced in English. The second part of the chapter recalls Epictetus ii. 18. 24.

Chs. 18–21. Reflections upon change and death, the swiftness, sameness, and inexorable law of Nature and Time. Ch. 20 is again a little irrelevant, in appearance, to the context.

Ch. 22. The best statement in the *Meditations* of the maxim 'Love your enemy', which in Roman Stoicism, at least, redeems the notorious arrogance of the Stoic creed. Marcus justifies the maxim by these reasons:^[22] he is your kinsman, one with you in origin; he errs unwittingly and therefore unwillingly; both he and you will soon be numbered with the dead; it is not in his power to harm you.

But no theoretic statement does justice to the spirit of Marcus' life and profession. 'If a man's mind be truly inflamed with charity, it doth work him suddenly into greater perfection than all the doctrine of morality can do, which is but a sophist in comparison of the other.'^[23]

Chs. 23 and 25. The connexion between these two chapters is broken by the insertion of ch. 24 out of place. Nature is like an artist^[24] modelling wax into successive forms, each short-lived. By continual change she renews the Universe. The individual cannot reasonably complain either of his creation or of his dissolution.

In his sermon on Death Bossuet has a passage which may have been inspired by ch. 23: 'Tout nous appelle à la mort; la nature, comme si elle était presque envieuse du bien qu'elle nous a fait, nous déclare souvent et nous fait signifier qu'elle ne peut pas nous laisser longtemps ce peu de matière qu'elle nous prete.. . . Elle en a besoin pour d'autres formes: elle le redemande pour d'autres usages.'

Ch. 24. A parallel is drawn, as in ch. 37, between the mind's control over the expression of the face and its control over itself. The text is corrupted, but we may suppose that his point was that as an evil expression becomes unalterably set, so an engrained bad habit makes the mind hardened until even the consciousness of evil is dead. The Greek word for conscience occurs only here and at the end of vi. 30. 2 in the *Meditations*. The thought underlying the chapter is that as life consists in perpetual alteration, so death is loss of the power to change.

Ch. 26. Marcus resumes the subject of ch. 22. Pity is no longer qualified as it was in ii. 13, and he adds that self-scrutiny may discover in ourselves the fault we criticize in another. The word for to pardon might also mean to excuse, and its form suggests fellow feeling and understanding.^[25]

Dio Cassius says of the Emperor that 'he bore the faults of others, neither inquiring closely into them, nor chastising them'.^[26] Dio means no doubt injuries to himself which he might have held to be *lèse-majesté*. Dio also says that he

felt pity for his barbarian foes.^[27] One of the bas-reliefs from his triumphal arch shows him stretching out his hand to Germans and Sarmatians in pardon.

Ch. 27. The text is difficult, but the general sense clear and the maxims wise. Their object is to inculcate the Stoic tranquillity or indifference to desires the realization of which seldom, if ever, brings contentment.

Ch. 28. The retirement into the inward self which he described more fully in iv. 3, and to which he frequently alludes.^[28]

Ch. 29. A summary of what is put more at large elsewhere.^[29] To dwell upon one's last hour is a religious mode of speech derived from the belief in judgement to come and adopted by Stoicism for its own end. Probably Marcus means that we are to treat the present moment as though it were the last.^[30]

To leave another's sin upon his shoulders implies responsibility for one's own. Guigue has said: 'Let each flee from his own vices, for the vices of another will not harm him.'^[31]

Ch. 30. A repetition in other words of vi. 3 and 53, vii. 4.

Ch. 31. These are the briefest of notes upon subjects treated of elsewhere. Simplicity^[32] and self-respect^[33] are

imprinted on the face.^[34] We may contrast a favourite theme of Greek writers that you cannot detect an evil character from the face.^[35] Independence is of all, except of moral good and evil.^[36] 'Love mankind'^[37] is coupled with the maxim 'Follow God'.^[38] The latter is Pythagorean in origin. It was adopted by Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, but Philo says that it was a maxim of Apollo of Delphi, that is, it belonged to the popular religious teaching. The exact meaning fluctuates between following God as a leader, obeying God's precepts, and imitating God and making oneself like to Him. In Stoicism it includes the precept to follow Nature and to obey and reverence Nature's prescriptions. Thus, here, Marcus immediately passes to the phrase 'all things are by law'. Julian in his 'Judgement of the Caesars'^[39] introduces Marcus as saying that the noblest end of mortal life is to imitate the gods.

The last few words are corrupt. Marcus seems to be playing upon the double sense of the Greek word 'by law', a double sense which recurs frequently in the great philosophers. The Atomists had said that all human experience is 'by law', viz. is relative, the reality behind is atoms and the void. Here 'by law' meant subjective. Marcus replies that it is enough to accept what they say, all is indeed 'by law', viz. governed by law, since in their own view the behaviour of atoms in the void depended upon mathematical and physical laws, while, in his own view, all things are governed by the law of Providence.

We find a similar controversial artifice at iv. 27 and x. 7. 2.

Chs. 32–52. These twenty-one chapters consist largely of citations from earlier writings, and their arrangement and occasional titles suggest an anthology or Commonplace Book. 'On Death', 'On Pain', 'On Glory', 'A fine saying of Plato' savour of a later editor. The arrangement seems to be by Triads.

Chs. 32–4. Death, Pain, Glory.

Chs. 35–7. Magnanimity (ch. 37 appears to be original).

Chs. 38–40. Destiny and Patience.

Chs. 41–3. Reason may prevail and does prevail, even in Suffering.

Chs. 44–6. Socrates on Danger, Duty, and the Values of life and death.

Chs. 47–9. Variations, apparently by the author, on Pythagorean, Platonic, and Stoic *motifs*.

Ch. 50. Anaxagoras' view of the Soul's destiny against Democritus and the Atomists.

Ch. 51. Death and a stormy passage are both inevitable.

Ch. 52. A Spartan saying reinterpreted.

Even if the choice of these aphorisms is Marcus', and even if some bear evidence of his own composition, yet the passages can hardly, as I have said elsewhere, have been intended for their present place. They do indeed throw light upon the mind of Marcus, for if he arranged them in their present mutual relation it is easy to appreciate our embarrassment in following the sequence of his thought elsewhere. He seems to revolve a limited group of problems, to return to them again and again, but not in the same order, nor in the same words. There is hardly a verbal repetition in the *Meditations*, and the thread which joins the thoughts is the continuity of an exalted and beautiful mind.

Elter has endeavoured to prove that many of the fragments of poetry used by Marcus are derived from a collection made by Chrysippus. This, however, applies only to a handful; the remainder of his quotations show a familiar acquaintance with Greek literature such as we should expect from one whose early letters exhibit a wide and serious study of Latin authors. Thus of the four selections from Plato (vii. 35, 44, 45, 46) the two famous places from the *Apology* are often cited (at least by writers of a later date than Marcus), but the striking extracts from the *Gorgias* and the *Republic* are quoted, I think, nowhere else.

Ch. 33. Herrick translated this saying of Epicurus:[\[40\]](#)

Grief if't be great, 'tis short: if long, 'tis light,

and Thomas More^[41] had answered it in Latin, which may be rendered:

Long grief's not light: grave grief is never short,
thus grasping either horn of the dilemma.

Epicurus had noticed a fact of sensibility. 'Pains are intermittent; even though their cause persists, there comes a point where the capacity for suffering is for the time exhausted, and then a period of rest begins during which force is gathered for renewed suffering.'^[42] Epicurus himself endured great pain with wonderful fortitude.

Ch. 34. Glory is nothing, if you but consider the kind of men who confer it. Then, as in vi. 59, he passes to the consideration that death will shortly overtake the praiser and the praised.

Chs. 35–7. Three aphorisms to kindle magnanimity in the face of death, because life is a little thing compared with eternity; in the face of ill-repute, which is the correlate of glory; and in the face of pain. If, he says, we can school our expression to deride pain, we should equally be strong enough to control our judgement despite sorrow and suffering.

The splendid saying, ch. 36, is ascribed to the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes. Elsewhere it is put into the mouth

of Alexander the Great. It stands on the title-page of *Eikon Basilike*.

Ch. 38. Euripides continues: 'but if a man rightly handles the things he meets, he fares well'. External events, Marcus often says, stand without; if we judge them coolly and employ them rightly, we fare well. Plutarch uses this passage to illustrate his doctrine of cheerfulness.

Ch. 39. Context and source are both unknown. Gataker supposed the words to be a father's prayer for his son's happiness. Perhaps Marcus means, as in v. 7, to illustrate the right form our prayers should take.

Ch. 40. The explanation given by Marcus, in xi. 6, of these lines is that the tragedian teaches us that 'so these things must be accomplished', or, as is said here, 'thus necessity ordains'.

The discovery of papyrus fragments has shown where they stood in Euripides' *Hypsipyle*. Amphiaraus consoles Eurydice upon the death of her child Archemorus. Thus they belong to the literature of consolation. They were famous in antiquity, being translated by Cicero. Plutarch cites them, and so does Clement of Alexandria. The latter draws the moral: 'Lord, let this trial come; I triumph over dangers because of my love to Thee.'^[43] Sir Walter Scott touches the same sad theme:

The hand of the reaper takes the ears that are hoary;
But the voice of the weeper wails manhood in glory.

Ch. 41. The sons of Merope, Amphion and Zethus, are referred to. Dr. Rendall has suggested that Marcus may be thinking of his sons, Commodus and Veras, the latter of whom died in infancy. In any case the point is that there is reason in what man does not understand.

Ch. 42. This line, which Aristophanes parodied, [\[44\]](#) is cited by Cicero in his letters to Atticus as a kind of proverb. Clement quotes the line, adding, in terms derived partly no doubt from a Stoic source: 'the soul deems nothing to be evil save ignorance and action not according with right Reason, always in all things giving thanks to God.'

Ch. 43. The fragment, whose origin and context are unknown, appears to be quoted to illustrate the point of v. 36 and vii. 69, that we are not to be carried out of our course by the sorrow of another.

Chs. 44–6. Socrates taught, by precept and example, the incomparable worth of a good life; in comparison length of days does not count in the balance.

Chs. 47–9. These aphorisms, which are in the manner of Marcus, are intended to promote purity of imagination, elevation of soul, resignation to life's brevity. The first is a

variation upon a Pythagorean theme,^[45] without, however, any reference to the music of the spheres, whose songs 'divide the night and lift our thoughts to Heaven'.^[46] It is combined with a reference to the Heraclitean doctrine of continual change.^[47] The contrast between the lucid order of the heavenly luminaries and the grime of terrestrial things is continued in ch. 48, in an image perhaps suggested by Plato,^[48] that of rising above human life to contemplate it from above.^[49] This second aphorism also closes with a reference to the *concordia discors* of Heraclitus. This leads to ch. 49, with its stress upon the rhythm^[50] that rules a world of transient appearance. Thus we meet, as elsewhere in the *Meditations*, with the antithesis between all-pervasive law and mundane squalor and pettiness. This is a contradiction present in the older thinkers. Consider the contempt which Plato throws upon man's littleness in his last work, the *Laws*, how Aristotle depreciates his inquiries into the animal world by comparison with astronomy. So Galen, Marcus' younger contemporary, ends his massive treatise on the *Bodily Functions and their Uses* by contrasting the 'mire of this body of man', 'a compound of flesh and blood and phlegm and yellow and black bile',^[51] with mind's majesty as exhibited in the courses of the sun and moon, the planets, and the stars. A modern cannot recover that ancient sense of the heavenly luminaries as divinities ruling the world and governing themselves according to constant and beneficent law.

Boethius, writing in A.D. 524, carries on the tradition when he thus addresses Philosophy: 'With thy rod thou didst map out for me the paths of the stars and didst frame my manners and my whole method of life to the pattern of the order of the heavens';^[52] indeed the wise minister of Theodoric seems to have the *Meditations* in mind when he writes: 'If by turns you look down to the sordid earth and up to heaven, setting on one side all outward things, by the actual law of sight, at one moment you seem to be in the mire, at another present with the stars.'^[53]

Filled with these aspirations, Marcus closes on the familiar note: 'To study man's life, forty years are as ample as a myriad.'

Chs. 50–2. This triad is suggested by what preceded. He inquires what is the destiny of the human spirit; shows that sorrow and death are inevitable and are to be borne as determined by God. Finally he contrasts the rule of force with the modesty, order, and charity of the rightly endowed Reason.

Ch. 50. This passage from the *Chrysippus* of Euripides was familiar to Roman readers from Lucretius' translation.^[54] Vitruvius,^[55] the architect of Augustus, mentions it. Philo, Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, Galen, and Clement of Alexandria all refer to it. Euripides was believed to be giving the doctrine of Anaxagoras, when he ascribes creation to the union of Aether and Earth. Therefore, at

death, the earthy returns to earth, the etherial spirit regains the spaces of the sky.

Marcus asks whether this doctrine, which the Epicurean poet, Lucretius, had by a splendid inconsequence accepted, is consistent with his materialist creed of the dissolution of the spirit into the atoms. He produces a marked effect by opposing the beautiful poetic fragment to his own remorseless version of the atomic doctrine. That this inconsistency in Lucretius was recognized by other ancient critics is clear from Lactantius,^[56] who writes: 'what was of earth, that is resolved into earth: what was of heavenly spirit, that ever persists and lives, since the divine spirit is everlasting. Moreover Lucretius, forgetting his assertions and the dogma he was defending, has written these verses. . . . It was not for him, who maintained that spirits perish with their bodies, to say this; but he was vanquished by the Truth; reason surprised him and stole the verity from him.'

Ch. 51. The first two lines are from Euripides' extant play, *The Suppliants*. Iphis speaks them, beginning: 'I hate those who desire to prolong their life.' Plutarch has cited the lines, in connexion with Heraclitus' doctrine of the ever-flowing river of generation, in a tract upon Consolation. The context and source of the other two lines is unknown. The point is that adversity proceeds from God and that, like brave men, we must bear what befalls us. This is the title of many similar fragments in Stobaeus.^[57]

Ch. 52. A Spartan, worsted at Olympia, was told: 'Your adversary proved the better man.' 'No,' he replied, 'not better; better able to throw his man.' The point is the superiority of moral courage.^[58]

Chs. 53–8. After the purple threads of poetry the Book returns to reflections upon right conduct in everyday life, maxims of detail which are to keep alive the moral consciousness.^[59]

Ch. 53. Action according to the general law brings with it advantage to the individual and deliverance from all harm.^[60]

Ch. 54. The present is our concern, to be content with our dispensation, to behave justly, to govern our imaginations.^[61]

Ch. 55. We are to keep Nature's straight path, independently of praise or blame;^[62] thus we fulfil the dictates of a rational self, which is supreme in the scale of Nature.^[63] In man's constitution there are three principles, the social bond, the victory over sense affections and bodily impulses,^[64] judgement which is deliberate and undeceived.^[65]

Chs. 56–7. He here appears to be giving his own turn to the worldly maxim, familiar from Horace, that happiness lies in being content with saying each day 'I have lived', and

counting a new day as gain. He says, in short, each day is sufficient that is lived by Nature's law. If you so live you will embrace your destiny, for nothing is more in agreement with yourself.

Ch. 58. If you are disposed to rebel against circumstance, picture others who so rebelled and are dead; turn obstacles into material^[66] for goodness.

Ch. 59. The idea of a fountain of living water within is developed in viii. 51.

Ch. 60. The outer self should be controlled like the inward; a thought akin to those in vii. 24 and 37.

Ch. 61. The art of living is contrasted, in another way, with acting and dancing, xi. 2, and compared with boxing and sword play, xii. 9.

Chs. 62–3. A subject to which Marcus often recurs, that evil is due to ignorance, and therefore must be treated leniently;^[67] here he adds the reflection that praise or blame by the ignorant can well be ignored.^[68]

Ch. 64. Pain is not a moral evil and need not, as Epicurus himself says,^[69] affect the governing mind. When you complain of disagreeables, remember that they are a kind of pain, so that you are neglecting the rule not to complain of pain.

Chs. 65–6. The inhuman persons of ch. 65 appear to be the ascetic and cynical teachers who shamed human society. This introduces the remarkable digression upon Telauges and Socrates. Aeschines, the author of *Telauges*, was a pupil of Socrates and wrote dialogues of which mere scraps survive. In the *Telauges*, Socrates appears to have been introduced debating with a Pythagorean ascetic, dressed in sordid clothes. Aeschines probably represented Socrates as superior to Telauges, and, to prove this, brought in some of the famous incidents of his life. Marcus says that Telauges was not inferior on these grounds, nor because of his failure in dialectical skill, but simply from moral inferiority.

When the Cynics had become prominent, it would be natural to discuss this kind of question, and we know from Lucian that they were to the front in the second century A.D. There is a long discussion by Epictetus in which he shows that nicety of dress and person behoves the professed philosopher.^[70] The point then of this chapter is that Marcus wishes to show Socrates to have been the man that Plato represents him, for instance in the *Protagoras* and the *Symposium*, and Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* and *Oeconomicus*.^[71]

The passage illustrates Marcus' command of his literary sources and his use of some which are a little off the beaten track. If we had these sources we should be able to understand much in him that is now obscure to us.

Ch. 67. If we could read the *Telauges* we should probably see the connexion of this chapter with 66. Certainly it appears to follow from the consideration of what the strength of Socrates really consisted in. The two main points are eminently Socratic: the reasoning self, though bound to the body, can rise superior to mere bodily affections; moreover, moral superiority is irrespective of scientific attainment and dialectical skill.

The phrase 'divine' man was a Spartan expression for an eminent statesman. Marcus says that you can exhibit all the simple virtues though you are not a man of great intellectual skill; you can define your sphere and fill it—in fact be a 'divine' man—and yet nobody may recognize it.

Ch. 68. Continuing the topic of independence, which Socrates illustrated in his life and death, Marcus now uses what appears to be exaggerated language.^[72] How could a man remain thus calm when torn by savage beasts, and, even more, how could the Emperor, if he indeed does so, contemplate such a trial of his faith?

Had he been reading some passage like this of Epictetus:^[73] 'the true Cynic must have such endurance as to appear to the vulgar to be as insensible as a stone; his poor body he freely gives to any one who wills to treat as he will . . . no robber, no tyrant prevails over his will, but over his body, yes!'

For a moment he is led into the mental attitude of Luther's

What if they take our life: goods, honour, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small: these things shall perish all.

or of Sir Walter Raleigh's^[74]

Stab at thee, he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.

Chs. 69–74. In contrast with ch. 68, these brief sentences resume the normal tone of peace and serenity, until ch. 75 closes upon the note of confidence in the ordering of the Whole by the master Spirit of the Universe, upon which the comfort and quiet of the individual depend.

1. ↑ v. 16.
2. ↑ vii. 2.
3. ↑ vi. 42; ix. 42. 1.
4. ↑ iv. 44; v. 10.
5. ↑ vii. 64.
6. ↑ Epict. ii. 18
7. ↑ x. 8. 3; xi. 8.
8. ↑ vii. 24.
9. ↑ vi. 31.
10. ↑ i. 16. 6.

11. ↑ *St. Matt.* 6. 34.
12. ↑ *Eph.* 4. 4.
13. ↑ *Essay on Man*, 1. 237.
14. ↑ *Il.* viii. 19.
15. ↑ *Orat. to Zeus*, 43. 15 K.
16. ↑ ii. 12 (enlarged); v. 13.
17. ↑ Hooker, *Eccl. Polity*, 1. 3. 5.
18. ↑ Montaigne, *Essais*, 2. 12 (Raimond de Sebonde).
19. ↑ St. Paul, *1 Cor.* 12. 26.
20. ↑ Cf. d'Arcy Thompson's note, *Arist. History of Animals*, i. 1, Oxf. Tr.
21. ↑ viii. 56.
22. ↑ (a) ii. 1; iii. 11; (b) ii. 1, 13; iii. 11; vii. 26; (c) xi. 18. 3; (d) ii. 1; xi. 18. 3.
23. ↑ Bacon, *Adv. of Learning*, ii. 22. 15.
24. ↑ vi. 1 and 45.
25. ↑ xi. 16.
26. ↑ Dio Cass. lxxi. 34. 4.
27. ↑ Id. lxxi. 10. 4.
28. ↑ vi. 1 1; viii. 48; ix. 7 and 42.
29. ↑ v. 2, viii. 29, ix. 7; ii. 2, vii. 3, ix. 7; iii. 10, viii. 32; vi. 8, viii. 49; iv. 21. 2, v. 13, viii. ii, ix. 25. 37, xii. 10, 18, 29.
30. ↑ ii. 5; iii. 12.
31. ↑ Guigue, l.c. 230, cf. *M. Ant.* ix. 20 and 38; xii. 16.
32. ↑ iv. 26
33. ↑ i. 2; ii. 6; iii. 7.
34. ↑ iii. 5; vii. 60; x. 12; xi. 15.
35. ↑ e.g. *Eur. Med.* 519.

36. ↑ ii. 11. 4.
37. ↑ iii. 9, vii. 22.
38. ↑ iii. 9 and i6; x. 11; xii. 27 and 31.
39. ↑ *Convivium*, 333 c.
40. ↑ Cf. vii. 64.
41. ↑ More, *Lucubrationes* &c., Basle, 1563.
42. ↑ Richet, *Recherches sur la Sensibilité*, p. 303, cited by Höffding, *Psychology*, p. 277 of English edition.
43. ↑ Cf. M. Ant. x. 14.
44. ↑ *Acharnians*, 661.
45. ↑ Cf. xi. 27.
46. ↑ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 688.
47. ↑ M. Ant. iv. 46.
48. ↑ *Tht.* 175 d; *Soph.* 216 c.
49. ↑ Cf. xii. 24.
50. ↑ M. Ant. vi. 11 and 39; vii. 57.
51. ↑ Cf. M. Ant. ii. 2.
52. ↑ *Consolatio Phil.* i, *Prose*, 4.
53. ↑ Id. iv, *Prose*, 4.
54. ↑ Lucr. ii. 991–1001.
55. ↑ *De Architectura*, viii, praef. 1.
56. ↑ *Divin. Inst.* vii. 12.
57. ↑ Stob. *Flor.* iv. 44 (Heinse), where the fragment vii. 40 is quoted, p. 960.
58. ↑ Cf. M. Ant. xi. 18. 5.
59. ↑ vii. 2.
60. ↑ ii. 11; v 34; vii. 74; x. 33; xi. 4.
61. ↑ iii. 4. 1; iv. 22; x. 6; vi. 2. 32; ix. 6; x. 1. 6.
62. ↑ iii. 4. 3; iv. 18; v. 3; vii. 34; x. 11.

- 63. [↑](#) v. 16, 30.
- 64. [↑](#) iii. 6. 2; v. 26; vii. 66.
- 65. [↑](#) iii. 9; xi. 11.
- 66. [↑](#) iv. 49; vii. 68; x. 33.
- 67. [↑](#) viii. 14; x. 30; xi. 18. 2.
- 68. [↑](#) ii. 12; iii. 5.
- 69. [↑](#) cf. vii. 33.
- 70. [↑](#) Epict. iii. 22. 86 sq.
- 71. [↑](#) Cf. M. Ant. i. 16. 9; iii. 6; iv. 30; xi. 28.
- 72. [↑](#) Cf. iv. 39; viii. 51.
- 73. [↑](#) Epict. iii. 22. 100–5.
- 74. [↑](#) From Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Lie*.

Footnotes

BOOK VIII

The Book opens, like Books v and xii, with a reminder that he must meet the requirements of man's true nature in the little time that is left. To do this he must recall the doctrines which guide right thought, right impulse, and right conduct. The chapters which follow are accordingly, almost all of them, concise restatements of positions reached in the earlier Books.

Towards the close are one or two chapters of a more speculative kind; otherwise the content of this Book and the next is peculiarly personal, and there are more references than usual to memories and experiences of his own life.

Ch. 1. The self-criticism and confession of a pursuit of inferior aims in the past are remarkable. One recalls the words of Dr. Johnson: 'I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been framing schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing therefore is pressing, since the time of doing is short.'^[1]

The passing reference to the conflict between his calling as a ruler and his desire to be a philosopher differs from what he says elsewhere, both where he speaks of men's longing for retreat, and where he says that refreshment may be found at any time from the life of a court in philosophic

calm, and even more explicitly where he reminds himself 'that no other calling in life is so suited to philosophy as the one in which you now happen to be' (iv. 3; vi. 12; xi. 7).

These regrets are wrung from him by an aspiration for man's high calling. As Kant said:^[2] 'the conception of the moral law robs self-love of its influence, self-conceit of its illusion.' In good men the sense of failure is proof of lofty purpose, evidence also perhaps of nervous exhaustion; it is what Milton felt when he said:^[3]

My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.

Though Marcus says these things of himself, we can hardly, in the case of one whose whole life was so dedicated to duty and to good, so devoted to the care of a great government, press the words 'in how many paths have you strayed and nowhere found the good life.'

Chs. 2–3. Goodness is the conduct of every day, guided by the law which man as reasonable enjoys in common with God; it is justice, self-control, fortitude, liberty. This obedience to law distinguishes the apostles of freedom, Socrates and the like, from the great conquerors who imposed their will upon the world; Pompeius Magnus, whom Romans liked to compare, for his Eastern conquests,

with Alexander, and his rival Julius Caesar, in whom Stoic thought at least saw the destroyer of the Republic rather than the builder of the Empire. Their violence and power was at the expense of their country and themselves. Even Alexander,^[4] of whose grand political aims Plutarch was aware, is continually censured by the moralists for his self-will and notorious personal weaknesses.

Probably Marcus' mind recurs to what he said in ch. 1 of the conflict between his own imperial calling, his duty in the theatre of war, and his desire to imitate the philosophic guides of man's life. The judgement he passes is upon two kinds of life. So Pascal contrasts the soldier with the Carthusian recluse; both monk and warrior are in perpetual servitude but 'le soldat espère toujours devenir maître et ne le devient jamais, car les capitaines et les princes mêmes sont toujours esclaves et dépendants.'^[5]

Chs. 4–5. Though you cannot change men's minds, you can recover inward peace by remembering that all things are disposed by Nature and that your court will soon be like the court of your predecessors, Augustus and Antoninus; then remember in each single event what is the requirement of your true nature (ch. 1); be just in act and true in word.

Chs. 6–7. Change is Nature's law, but her awards are equal. Man, like a leaf, is part of the changing whole; but, unlike the leaf, he is conscious of his destiny. Every part of Nature is content, if it follows *its* nature. Man's nature is to consent

to no false imagination, to shape his conduct to social ends, to welcome his portion. Nature awards to each his due, if only you regard what is assigned not in the particulars, but in the whole. For the analysis of what is allotted into matter, cause, &c., see ch. 11.

Chs. 8–9. Though your life in a palace leaves little leisure for study, you can exercise yourself in virtue. Do not find fault with your station to yourself or to others.

Ch. 10. The subject of repentance or regret takes up a suggestion in ch. 2, 'shall I repent of this?' His argument is the reverse of that where he said that to despise pleasure is to deserve praise. Here he gives a formal proof that pleasure cannot be good, else we should repent a lost opportunity for pleasure.

If we lose a benefit we repent its loss, but we do not repent the loss of a pleasure: therefore in losing a pleasure we have not lost a benefit. Pleasure then is not a benefit. But the good is a benefit, therefore pleasure is not a good.

Chs. 11–13. Chapters 11 and 13 are closely connected. The intervening chapter puts very briefly what was argued at length in v. 1, that man can take a lesson from the dumb creation.

Ch. 11. These are heads of methodical inquiry into the objects of experience, in order to acquire the right

judgement which is the foundation of moral conduct. Thus they are, in the first instance, principles of intellectual inquiry, like Descartes's rules for gaining clearness and distinctness in science. In ch. 13 Marcus calls this method 'physiology'.

Although the suggested inquiry applies to all objects presented to the mind of an observer, the interest of the moralist is in good, evil, and indifferent imaginations, right and wrong thoughts. Marcus is especially alive to what we call ideo-motor activity, the effect of imagination upon impulse, the tendency of impulse to realize itself in action. This is what in ch. 13 he calls 'pathology'.

The third stage of moral science is called 'dialectic' in ch. 13. This word stands for the inward debate upon the objects which have been systematically examined in the stages of 'physiology' and 'pathology', what we may call the logic of moral science. This kind of inquiry is into what he calls here 'its function in the world and the length of its duration'.

An illustration from the *Manual* of Epictetus and the commentary of Simplicius may make Marcus' meaning precise and clear.

'Make it your study', says Epictetus, 'to face every difficult imagination of your mind at once with the words: "You are an imagination and not entirely what you appear to be." Next test it by your canons of thought, and first and above

all by this: "Does it or does it not concern what is within the power of the will or not?" If it be concerned with what is not in the power of the will, be ready with the maxim: "This is no concern of mine."^[6] Simplicius' comment is: 'First say: "You are a mere imagination." To say this checks its power, because you realize that it may present or represent what is true, your benefit or even your pleasure; again it may be only a dreamlike fantasy. Having thus checked its immediate tendency to set up an impulse in you to give it effect in action, ask whether it refers to a spiritual good, a good of the flesh, a mere external good. Next ask whether its reference is to benefit or merely to pleasure; then whether it is practicable or impracticable. Then ask what the wise or the foolish would say to it, what God would have to say about it, and generally whether, if practicable, it is practicable for yourself or not.'^[7]

Such was the careful study of moral psychology and pathology which these physicians of man's soul, these 'budge doctors of the Stoic fur' attempted. Galen's treatise on the *Passions*^[8] (anger, appetite, sorrow, and so forth) is a similar psychological investigation by a great medical man. He divides his subject into 'guarding against passions', their 'diagnosis', their 'correction'.

Chs. 14–19. These chapters are examples, for use, of his moral method. They serve to illustrate some sides of what is described in outline in chs. 11 and 13.

Chs. 14–15. Reflection upon evil in other men and the cure for anger in ourselves. The philosopher regards his experience of evil men much as a physician his 'cases' of sickness, the master-mariner a contrary wind or foul weather. They are, each of them, natural and inevitable results of physical laws.

Ch. 16. Change of mind or purpose, upon correction, is not a sacrifice of moral freedom but an outcome of man's liberty (vi. 21).

Ch. 17. He continues the subject of evil conduct in oneself or another. If the evil is inevitable, patience and not rebellious complaint is the remedy.

Ch. 18. Fear of death is cured by remembering the general law of continuity and change in Nature.

Ch. 19. The purpose of the world process proves that man's end cannot be the gratification of pleasure.

Chs. 20–3. The trend of these chapters is to emphasize the insignificance of the individual against the background of the Whole, of which he is so small a part, but at the same time to express belief in the providential order (from which he starts in ch. 20 and to which he returns in ch. 23). The charm of the *Meditations* depends in part upon these frequent images of transience, expressed quite simply; the ball which

no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left, as strikes the Player, goes;^[9]

the bubble on the stream 'a moment there, then gone for ever';^[10] the lamp which flickers and goes out when the oil is spent.

Without Providence these images suggest fatalism, with Providence they demand trust and resignation; 'as he that flings a ball to the ground or to a wall intends in that action that that ball should return back, so even now, when God does throw me down, it is the way that He hath chosen to return me to Himself'^[11] (viii. 45).

Chs. 24–5. The comparison of the bath to terrene filth shows the fastidious temperament of Marcus. From it he passes to personal reminiscences of the death of relatives and acquaintances, which serve to recall himself to the certainty of his own end, with the uncertain future beyond.

He begins with Domitia Lucilla, his mother, who lost her husband Annius Verus when Marcus was a child; passes to Maximus, his philosophy teacher (i. 15; 16. 10; 17. 5), and Secunda his wife; thence to Diotimus and Epitynchanus, perhaps favourites of Hadrian. Last he mentions Hadrian and acute minds of his circle, names of which we know nothing, so that they fitly illustrate to us his sad moral of mortality and oblivion. And so he passes to his aunt, the

Empress Faustina the elder, who died early in the reign of Pius.

Chs. 26–7. Joy, the joy of man's characteristic activities, is contrasted with sorrow and death. The three fundamental moral relations to self, to neighbour, and to Universal nature are outlined in two different ways.

Chs. 28–9. Once more the reminder that natural reason and right judgement can vanquish sorrow and wipe out all weak, idle, and evil fancies, so that a man may win calm and peace of soul.

Chs. 30–1. A brief exhortation to use language which rings true in addressing the Senate leads him to think of older scenes in what was still an august body, though its power was gone. There follows the most effective of his many aphorisms upon time's passage and death's equality.

In a long series of single names, the characters of Rome's golden age, the persons of the court of Augustus Caesar file before the reader, and then, to point the moral, he dwells for a moment upon the memorials with which Rome's street of tombs, the Via Appia, is crowded—records of the anxious care of families to maintain a succession of heirs, only to end with the final epitaph: THE LAST OF HIS LINE.

The names are familiar, some made more familiar by Shakespeare's genius: Octavianus Caesar, great-nephew of

Julius, his avenger and heir, the Emperor Augustus; the Empress Livia Augusta, mother of the Emperor Tiberius and of Drusus Germanicus; his daughter, the dissolute and disgraced Julia, wife first of Marcellus, then of Agrippa; his grandsons, Julia's children, the younger Marcellus, Gaius Caesar, Lucius Caesar, destined to be heirs of Augustus, all three untimely dead; his stepsons Tiberius and Drusus; his sister Octavia, married to Mark Antony, so generous a stepmother to Cleopatra's children. There succeed Agrippa, the victor of Actium, once destined by Augustus to be Emperor; the philosopher friend of Augustus, Areius of Alexandria; Maecenas, patron of Propertius, Horace, and Virgil, his Minister of the Interior; finally kinsmen, intimates, members of the household, physicians, soothsayers. The procession passes through the writer's mind, pageant of an age that was gone:

High events as these
Strike those that make them; and their story is
No less in pity than *his* glory which
Brought them to be lamented. [\[12\]](#)

The chapter is partly corrupt in its text, so that it is not certain whether he goes on to speak of the extinction of the family of Pompeius Magnus, whose sons kept up an unequal struggle with Augustus, or of the destruction of Pompeii, in the reign of Vespasian.

Ch. 32. Life is built up, act by act, into a whole. Obstacles give opportunity for fresh acts, whether of patience or modification of an original aim. These new acts fit into the whole.

Ch. 33. This aphorism is based on what was said of Socrates (i. 16. 9). He was equally able to abstain from life's good things or to enjoy them moderately.

Ch. 34. The parable of the body and its members is here illustrated from Marcus' memory of a field of battle. Man can sever himself from the body politic, but he has the power to restore himself to union. Elsewhere Marcus reminds himself that repeated severance makes it harder to heal the breach (xi. 8), and that in all Nature only rational beings are found to forget the law of social unity (ix. 9).

Ch. 35. He goes back to what he had touched upon in ch. 32, the right treatment of obstacles in the path of chosen activity. Man, like Nature, can convert obstacles to the necessary order (ch. 50).

Ch. 36. Just as imagination exaggerates its own or another's suffering or misrepresents the actual reality, so it runs off to future anxieties when it should mirror faithfully the present experience. When isolated from 'past regret and future fears', the present shrinks to its true size and is tolerable:

What need a man forestall his date of grief

And run to meet what he would most avoid.^[13]

Ch. 37. The folly of protracted mourning for the dead is illustrated by four names, only one of which is otherwise known. Panthea was a beautiful woman from Smyrna, who returned with L. Aurelius Verus after the Parthian war of A.D. 161–6. Her talents of mind and bodily charms are the subject of a brilliant study by Lucian.^[14]

Ch. 38. The text here is corrupt and the meaning and origin of the saying unknown.

Ch. 39. Justice is one of the four cardinal virtues, but also, as the root of social good conduct, it enjoys a certain primacy over the others. Moreover, the Stoics taught the unity of virtue, so that the Greek word translated *justice* often stands for all righteousness.

What Marcus says, then, is that there is no conflict between the various virtues or aspects of right conduct, but that if pleasure be treated as an end, it must be controlled (even in the view of Epicurus) and is therefore subordinate to goodness.

Chs. 40–1. The mention of pleasure leads to this discussion of pain or sorrow, which may be defined as the sense of hindrance to life and living activity.

First he repeats his principle that pleasure and pain depend upon moral judgement. If that is sound, the man himself is secure. 'But', an objector says, 'I am not pure reason.' The answer is to accept the objection, to admit that the self is complex, but to require (even with that admission) that the judgement should keep itself free from passions which belong to what we call the lower self.

He then asks what the features of this complex self are. They depend on the fact that man has, like plants, a body which is the scene of unconscious organic change and growth; an animate self like that of animals; and thirdly what we call mind (the reason of ch. 40). Pain indicates hindrance to the unconscious or to the conscious functions, and our duty is to remove the cause of pain, if this is not to do injury to the higher elements (x. 2; vi. 14). But if the mind, or controlling self, is rightly governed, nothing can prove an obstacle to it. It can attain to entire self-contained realization, like the Universe itself, which Empedocles and Plato image as a sphere.^[15]

Chs. 42–8. Aphorisms intended to illustrate and confirm what he has just said of the freedom of the enlightened understanding.

Socrates said, at his trial, that having never wronged any man intentionally, he did not deserve to injure himself by proposing a fine to escape the death penalty. Using the same idiom of popular speech and thought, Marcus says that he

does not deserve to suffer sorrow since he has not made others suffer, by wronging them, and indeed any suffering which he may have he brings upon himself (ch. 42). Then, turning from sorrow to joy (ch. 26), he dwells upon the gladness of charity and content, coupled with health of soul (ch. 43); thus he may bestow the present time upon himself, realizing the folly of the pursuit of fame hereafter (ch. 44).

Whatever fate befall him, man can preserve the godhead within him, satisfied with the endowment which Nature has furnished. Nothing is of worth which implies the degradation of the self (ch. 45), nor can Nature's rule be broken, for she gives to every one of her creatures the faculty to bear what belongs to its own constitution (ch. 46).

Trouble arises not from external circumstance but from man's judgement, a judgement within his control; in the last resort, a contented death is open to a man who can no longer act with freedom (ch. 47). Death is a refuge, but the fortress of the soul is secure against all assaults, and to that fortress a man should flee for safety. He is a fool who has not learned this lesson, an unhappy man who, learning it, chooses to remain outside (ch. 48).

'He that is within the wall and rampart of that City need not fear that he deserves to be an exile: he who ceases to desire to dwell herein, ceases likewise to deserve her shelter.'^[16]

Chs. 49–50. Man's judgement is upheld by making certain of the experience presented to it, and by adding nothing to it from itself. All it can add is the recognition that what befalls it is not a surprise to it, but an instance of what it has already learned.

Surprise at and complaint about events is as foolish as to find fault with the shavings in a carpenter's workshop; they are waste, but inevitable results of the material he works in. In Nature's workshop the great Artificer employs what man in his folly condemns as waste in order to create what is new and flourishing; with her handicraft, her material, her own room, Nature is satisfied.

This is the solution Marcus offers to the problem, proposed by the Epicureans^[17] and other critics, of waste and imperfection in the Universe. He would have met in the like spirit of optimism any criticism of imperfection, Helmholtz's remarks^[18] on the eye as an imperfect organ of sight, or Huxley's censure of the extravagant waste of life in the natural world.^[19]

Ch. 51. Two distinct aphorisms. The first is a reminder of moral requirements often proposed by him before, the second an image of the self-dependence of the soul, or rather of its dependence upon a hidden source within.

The vivid words, 'they slay, they cut in pieces, they hunt down with curses', like those in vii. 68, and like Plato's

description of the just man broken on the rack,^[20] serve to show the power of moral liberty. In a literary sense, they are a foil to the beautiful description of the crystal water rising from the spring, a description which recalls the words addressed to the woman of Samaria: 'the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.'^[21] The contrast of the spring and the cistern appears also in modern literature, e.g.:

The fountain from the which my current runs
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in!^[22]

Now for this consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I, shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.^[23]

Chs. 52–3. The chapter begins with a reminiscence of the man who becomes a stranger and exile in his own land, by cutting himself off from the common reason (iv. 29). Such a man is ignorant of the City in which he resides, and of what his own reasonable nature is. To care for fame is to care for the applause of such ignorant persons. Indeed (ch. 53), it is

to esteem men who, as their conduct shows, do not even satisfy themselves.

Ch. 54. The dependence of man's intelligence upon the all-pervading Universal spirit is analogous with the dependence of man's vitality upon the atmosphere which surrounds him.

Many of the early physicists of Greece regarded the air as the origin of reason in man; they even identified the soul or spirit, which is the cause of perception and movement, with the atmosphere. This view the Stoics adopted, making the spirit of life and reason an all-pervasive power or energy upon which the existence of life in creatures, and of reason in all reasonable beings, depends. In ch. 57 the illumination of reason is made analogous with the light and energy radiated through the visible Universe by the sun, its source.

Chs. 55–6. A return to the topic of ch. 50. Evil, generally, cannot be injurious to the Universe,^[24] for it plays a part for good in the whole. Evil individually, viz. injury by one person of another, can only be real evil by the will of that other,^[25] who has the remedy in his own judgement. Each of us can by an exercise of will obviate moral injury. Thus my neighbour's will is in one point of view important to me, because he belongs with me to one reasonable society, but in another way he is a matter of indifference to me^[26] (i.e. he does not affect me), because his will lies outside my control. His conduct in this aspect is to me like the unconscious external forces of Nature, the wind or the sun.

No harm can come to me from his acts, because God has given each the power to realize his own will in the moral sphere, which alone is his concern.

Ch. 57. A comparison, worked out with unusual fullness, between the activity of the sun in the natural world and the irradiation of mind in the realm of spirit.

In the *Republic*^[27] Plato speaks of the idea of the Good which, like the sun, is the source of light to the world of understanding, the cause also of life and growth. In the Hellenistic thinkers this became a semi-mystical religious tenet; its influence may be seen for example in St. John's gospel. To the Emperor Julian the sun-god himself was the object of an enthusiastic devotion. The widespread worship of Mithra in the third century A.D. shows the influence at work in the rank and file, especially the soldiers, of the Empire.

What Marcus says here might be interpreted to mean that the sun pours his light and heat upon the world without exhausting thereby his energy, and similarly mind in the Universe, and mind in man, pours itself out upon its objects without effusion, without loss. This was in the next century a tenet of Neoplatonic philosophers.

The main purport, however, of the chapter is to illustrate from the analogy of light the direct illumination of its objects by the energy of mind. The light of the sun rests

upon what at first appear to be obstacles to its path. Everyone who has observed a pencil of light shining into a dark room will recall the impression made as the ray falls upon a solid body, almost as if the light were fluid and might stream off the object. Marcus suggests that what appears to be a hindrance is an opportunity for the exercise of the light-bearing quality, as he has often said that impediments rightly used are opportunities for virtue.

In the last words he introduces a fresh thought, which, again, may have a semi-mystical suggestion. The persons who are in appearance obstacles to goodness are like solid bodies which refuse to transmit the illumination or (if that is his meaning) to reflect it. This image is employed by St. John and St. Paul. Those who do not believe in the Light walk in darkness because they refuse to receive the illumination of the Logos.^[28] Everything, says St. Paul, which is shone upon becomes light,^[29] and he follows this with the image, which Marcus also uses,^[30] of awaking from the slumber of sin, of rising from death into the light of Christ. Is something like this what Marcus means here? He certainly elsewhere^[31] employs the image of light to illustrate the doctrine of the penetration of the whole universe by one spirit of life, as the world of reason is lightened by one reasonable spirit. There, too, he closes with the remark that the path of thought is direct, like a ray of sunshine.

The question, like the question of the effusion of the light, is interesting and suggestive. We must, however, hesitate before giving a mystical interpretation to the words of a writer who is above all simple and direct in his moral teaching. He seems here rather to seek an illustration from the phenomena of light than to hint at a deeper religious significance in the beautiful effect of sunshine streaming into a dark chamber and kindling to life its secret recesses.

Ch. 58. The attitude to death in this chapter is different from that taken by Marcus elsewhere. The first alternative is indeed that of Epicurus, the second resembles rather the Pythagorean belief in the migration of the life-spirit, itself immortal, from one animate being to another. In the second case life, Marcus says, will persist, but personality will not, so that he decidedly rejects the teaching of the Pythagorean school of metempsychosis (or metempsychosis), with its cycles of existence for the individual soul.

Ch. 59. A variant on the maxim 'Bear or Forbear'. Our social duty is to instruct our fellows or to suffer them gladly.

Ch. 60. The exact meaning is difficult to discover. Marcus seems to be recurring to ch. 57, with its emphasis on the direct path of thought, like a rectilinear ray. Here he says that the directness of thought is a metaphorical expression, the movement of thought is determined by the end

proposed; even when it is discursive it goes 'straight' to its goal.

As in ch. 54 and ch. 57, he is aware of the failure of terms derived from physical phenomena to do more than illustrate mental phenomena; they cannot express or explain mind.

Ch. 61. The first half of this excellent saying resembles an aphorism of Galen: 'let your door always be open, that your neighbour may at all times enter.' Galen does not, however, say that we are in turn to penetrate to our neighbour's mind; that would savour of curiosity. Marcus' words seem at first to conflict with what he elsewhere says on this subject. Still, he does sometimes say that we are to inquire into the minds of our fellows (ix. 22).

Candour is instinctive in the child, an inclination he is earliest taught to check and even to suppress. Propriety in candour requires a very delicate sensibility, which is out of place in the everyday world. Dr. Johnson^[32] said: 'Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and certainly what we hide from ourselves we do not show to our friends.' Tennyson^[33] urges reserve:

Be wise; not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart
Let in the day.

1. ↑ Boswell's *Life*, A.D. 1764, *aet.* 55.
2. ↑ *Works*, vol viii, p. 200, Rosenkranz und Schubert.
3. ↑ *Sonnet* 7.
4. ↑ For Alexander's political ideal see Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, Raleigh Lecture, 1933.
5. ↑ *Pensées*, No. 539 Br.
6. ↑ Epict., *Man.* 1.5.
7. ↑ Paraphrase of Simplicius' *Commentary*, p. 43 b Heinse.
8. ↑ Galen, *De dignotione*, &c. v. 1–103 K.
9. ↑ Fitzgerald, *Omar Khayyám*.
10. ↑ Burns: of the snowflake on the stream.
11. ↑ Donne, *Sermon* cxi, Alford, vol. iv, p. 544.
12. ↑ *Antony and Cleopatra*. The words of Octavius at the close.
13. ↑ Milton, *Comus*, 362.
14. ↑ Lucian, *Portraits*, 6 seq.
15. ↑ Cf. 'Fortis, et in se ipso totus, teres atque rotundus' Hor. *Sat.* ii. 7. 86.
16. ↑ Boethius, *Consolatio*, 1, Prose 5.
17. ↑ 'tanta stat praedita culpa', Lucr. v. 199.
18. ↑ *Popular Lectures*, Scientific, p. 197, 1873.
19. ↑ T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, 1895.
20. ↑ *Rep.* ii, 361 e.
21. ↑ St. John, 4. 14.

- 22. [↑](#) Shak., *Othello*, 4. 2. 61.
- 23. [↑](#) Wordsworth, *A Complaint*; cited by Macaulay, Trevelyan, *Life*, &c. p. 572.
- 24. [↑](#) iii. ii; vi. 1.
- 25. [↑](#) vii 71; ix. 4.
- 26. [↑](#) v. 20 and 25; vi. 32.
- 27. [↑](#) *Rep.* vi. 508.
- 28. [↑](#) St. John, 12. 35 sq.
- 29. [↑](#) *Ephes.* 5. 13.
- 30. [↑](#) vi. 31; vii. 2.
- 31. [↑](#) xii. 30.
- 32. [↑](#) *Life of Pope*, § 273, edition of Birkbeck Hill.
- 33. [↑](#) *The Gardener's Daughter*.

Footnotes

BOOK IX

The practice of dividing longer sections by brief practical aphorisms is continued in this Book. In spite of some repetition, the general impression made is of continuous composition, and the interest, as in the last Book, is heightened at many places by more personal and less highly generalized sentiments than are usual in the central Books. Here and there Marcus appears to have been prompted to write by an experience of the moment; more than once he expresses a struggle with a sense of disappointment in himself and his fellows, the language reflecting trouble, anxiety, and even personal loss.^[1]

Both the inquiry into the right use and advantage of intercession (ch. 40) and the quotation from a letter of Epicurus (ch. 41) have this note of immediate personal feeling. Remarkable too is the repeated return to the subject of criticism or dislike of himself.^[2]

Some parts of the Book appear to belong to an earlier period of his life than the contemporary events mentioned in Book viii. Thus the reference to the Plague (ch. 2), which first broke out in Italy on the return of Lucius Aurelius Verus from the Parthian campaign, would be naturally dated to the years A.D. 166–8, and in the next chapter Marcus writes as though expecting the birth of a child. His youngest child, Vibia Aurelia, was born in A.D. 166. If the whole

Book belongs together and is relatively early in composition, we may see an explanation of a tone and feeling nearer to the living moment than he is wont to express when composing in riper age and philosophic calm.

Ch. 1. The object of this carefully written section is to give a religious foundation to the moral system of Stoicism. Injustice, untruth, indulgence in pleasure, rebellion in pain, care for the external and indifferent goods of life—these are all, in the end, offences against the will of the supreme Divine principle, attempts to resist the law of Reason and Universal Nature. Passions like these can only be the outcome of failure to obey the Divine purpose, to believe in and trust the perfect ordinance of Providence. In much the same spirit Plato in the *Laws*,^[3] his last work, insists that the ordinances of the Ideal City must rest upon a reasoned conviction in its citizens that God exists, and that he governs for good ends. Plato, however, ordained punishment for the persistent unbeliever; there is no trace in Marcus, here or elsewhere, of the least leaning to the persecution of opinion. We learn that he founded a chair at Athens for the Epicurean philosophy, as well as for three rival schools.^[4] The language of paragraph 5 is of interest because the 'natural powers', issuing from Nature's creative impulse and propagating themselves in the world of plants and animals and men, belong to a theory of creation which is seldom elsewhere mentioned in the *Meditations*.^[5] The point of view is deistic rather than pantheistic, a side of Stoical philosophy (or of general contemporary thought)

which left its trace, at any rate linguistically, upon the Neoplatonic writers of a later date, with their doctrine of 'powers' flowing into the visible and created world from the eternal realm of ideas.

These 'natural powers' play a part in Galen's physiology,^[6] and his teaching about them, which went back to Hippocrates, is the original of the 'dormitive' and other faculties with which Molière makes merry.

Ch. 2. Marcus begins with the image of life as a banquet, an image employed with such force by Lucretius. In his usual manner he slightly alters the maxim of worldly writers, that the guest should leave life's table after enjoying its good things, or if dissatisfied should rise at once and go. Happier, Marcus says, to depart without tasting the allurements of evil; next best to go like a disillusioned diner.

From this he turns to another allegory, drawn from the pestilence which devastated the Empire. Far worse, far more to be avoided, is the plague which destroys the understanding. Some historians have supposed that this pestilence, which the legions brought back as a punishment for the sack of Ctesiphon, in Mesopotamia, was a principal cause of the decline of the Empire. It was still prevalent in the reign of Commodus,^[7] and broke out again later. The last words of Marcus,^[8] by one account, were: 'Why weep for me and not think rather of the pestilence and the general mortality?'

Ch. 3. Here Marcus returns to a favourite remedy in the prospect of death. Death is natural, as natural as birth and adolescence, and all life's seasons from sowing time to harvest. Death then is to be welcomed. Later he illustrates his meaning from the steps his own life had traced.^[9] Each change, however dreaded, had proved natural when it was completed. The chapter ends upon a different note from that of v. 10. There he expresses faith in the disposer of his destiny and his confidence to be able to live in agreement with the god within; here he seems 'in love with easeful death', invokes him as a deliverer from earthly circumstance and evil company. This is a less mature attitude of mind than the other.

The passage about the child's birth is referred to by Bishop Butler, who says, in his treatment of the analogy between birth and death: 'death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does.' He continues: 'this according to Strabo was the opinion of the Brachmans, to which opinion perhaps Antoninus may allude in these words, "as you are now waiting for the unborn child . . .".'^[10]

Seneca uses this analogy as pointing to a life beyond the grave, and Marcus here speaks of the living seed, in an image, falling to the ground from the pod. Death is once more spoken of in x. 36 as a delivery from discordant influence, but with a feeling which accords better with

Marcus' faith in the bond of kind. The present chapter may have suggested the lines:

To die
Is to begin to live. It is to end
An old, stale, weary work and to commence
A newer and a better. 'Tis to leave
Deceitful knaves for the society
Of gods and goodness. [\[11\]](#)

There may also be an echo of Marcus in Montaigne's words: 'your death is a part of the order of the universe, 'tis a part of the life of the world', [\[12\]](#) in an essay based principally upon Lucretius for the one part and Seneca for the other.

Ch. 4. The writer turns, according to his wont, to practical maxims, preserving the connexion by repeating in this chapter the form of the opening of ch. 1.

The wrongdoer not only sins but he wrongs himself; he not only endeavours to disturb the harmony of the Universe, he also disturbs his own. This paradox that it hurts a man more to do wrong than to suffer wrong was taught by Socrates, who said that punishment benefits the criminal far more than to escape the consequences of crime.

Ch. 5. There are wrongs of omission as well as of commission. This truth appears now to be a truism; it is the counterpart in ancient Ethics to the golden rule of Christian morality: 'whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.'

Ch. 6. A restatement of vii. 54. There are two points: first, that present action is our only concern; secondly, that rectitude depends upon clear and distinct apprehension of the object pursued, reference to social good, and contentment with circumstance.

By 'a cause without' Marcus means what is beyond one's own control, what he often calls, in the language of his school, 'the indifferent', objects such as pleasure and pain, good and ill repute.

Ch. 7. Again a restatement, of what he said in vii. 29, but with the addition of stress upon self-government. By saying that the self is to be in its own control he touches upon the problem that is suggested in ch. 4, the division in the man himself, the imperfect unity which contrasts with his reasonable constitution. This was the subject of part of vii. 55, where he said that the reasonable self is not to be inferior to, not to give in to bodily feelings. In the earlier Books the problem is met by the suggested relation of the man to the divine within him, the god in the breast. In the central Books the answer is that man's reason must be

consistent with his natural constitution; in that way he may establish also his relations with fellow men and with God.

Chs. 8–9. Government of self, and the subordination of the body to the soul, and of the lower in man to the higher, are related in vii. 54–5 to the government of the whole, with its subordination and co-ordination of its parts and members.

Here Marcus gives a more complete survey of an optimistic view of the Universe, especially of his belief that moral life and social concord rest upon and express the systematic unity which Nature manifests throughout. In ch. 8 he compares the one spirit which runs through and orders both irrational and reasonable beings with the common light by which we see and the atmosphere which we respire.

In ch. 9 he begins from the instances of unity in the physical elements. The natural science of his school held a vague anticipation of the theory of gravitation, at least in the elements Earth and Water: 'every pebble attracts every other pebble, though truly with a force almost infinitesimal.'^[13] With this the Stoics, like most Greek physicists, held the false notion of the natural levitation of Air and Fire. Marcus here relates this to a primitive notion that Air and Fire are fluids, and obey similar laws to those of water. The movement to unification is only prevented by a force which was called 'tension'.

This uniting tendency becomes more obvious, as we mount the scale of Nature, in the social instincts of animals. There followed in the early history of man tendencies to union and society which even caused cessation of wars.

Highest of all is the cosmic sympathy which unites the widely sundered starry heavens;

Connexion exquisite of distant worlds,
Distinguished link in Being's endless chain; [\[14\]](#)

or to quote Sir Oliver Lodge: 'Things which appear discontinuous, like stars, are ultimately connected or united by something which is by no means obvious to the senses, and has to be inferred.' [\[15\]](#)

Finally (ch. 9. 3) Marcus observes that only reasonable creatures have forgotten this urgent law of common sympathy; but he continues, conforming his language to the teaching of Heraclitus, man cannot escape the principle of unity which controls the whole, Nature overtakes and masters him. [\[16\]](#)

This view of evolution is interesting because there is no trace, such as we find in some Stoical writers, of the age of gold. Marcus recognizes in the animal world a tendency to permanency of union in the social insects, in gregarious animals and in birds, but in man both unity and strife. He

does not take the Epicurean view of war of all against all, but an intermediate position. With this early stage of society he appears then to contrast a later, where men have degenerated—'see then what now is coming to pass'; thus men, though reasonably endowed, have deserted the path that Nature marked out for them.

Ch. 10. The writer's mind moves from reflection upon the gradual scale of Nature to consider the fruit of that system: in man, the good fellowship which is only made possible by union and subordination to common ends; in Nature herself, the ordered Whole. The simile of fruit reminds one of the words: 'as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.'[\[17\]](#)

Chs. 11–16. A sequence of maxims for practice. The first conveys a gentle irony. The goods men ask of the gods the gods bestow; that is, external goods, which to the wise are indifferent. Marcus makes a similar suggestion in ch. 27 in regard to men's prayers.

Ch. 12. A warning against self-pity and self-regard, two weaknesses which are often induced by hard work and devotion to unselfish ends.

The words probably contain a punning reference to the labours of Hercules, a hero who is transformed by Epictetus into a model of Stoic endeavour. We may illustrate this

Stoic interpretation from Browning's idealization of Hercules in *Balaustion's Adventure*.

Chs. 13–15. The favourite themes that man can preserve himself in any conditions of life by integrity of moral judgement (ch. 13), and that 'brute' experience stands silent, powerless in itself without the door of the soul (ch. 15), are evidently connected, the thread being broken by ch. 14, which repeats what has been so often said about the monotony of life.

Ch. 16. 'The whole praise of virtue consists in action', says Cicero in his *Offices*, and to Marcus the very kernel of his creed is that action and not sentiment is man's duty; he must, in Goethe's phrase, fulfil 'the demands of the day'.^[18]

Bishop Butler^[19] cites this chapter to illustrate his theme that the object of the practical discerning power within us lies in 'actions, comprehending under that name active or practical principles', and adds that 'we never, in the moral way, applaud or blame either ourselves or others for what we enjoy or suffer, or for the impressions made upon us, which we consider as altogether out of our power, but only for what we do.' Marcus makes a tacit reply to the refined sentimentalism (or sensuality, as his opponents thought) of Epicurus.

Ch. 17. Marcus here appears to be combating a fatalism which may be the other side of resignation. One is tempted

to hazard the objection that man is no ball or stone, nor a lamp to be lit and again put out (cf. viii. 20).

Chs. 18–21. Chapters 18 and 20 belong together, and chs. 19 and 21 are clearly connected. The tenderness to opinion, which Marcus expresses in ch. 18, as in chs. 27 and 34, is perhaps pardonable if these are private reflections, intended primarily for himself. His sensitiveness, which is remarked by his biographer, tallies with the delicate regard for others which is a striking trait of the *Meditations*, and which is expressed in ch. 20 (cf. vii. 29; ix. 38).

Ch. 19. To fortify himself against fear of death Marcus, here and in ch. 21, employs a reflection which had found its way, naturally enough, into the literature of Consolation. We die daily, since our bodily frames, like every other part of the world of becoming, are continually being built up and decaying.

The thought is derived ultimately from Heraclitus (*circa* 500 B.C.), the first who framed the law of serial change; it is often found combined with another, also derived from Heraclitus, that waking and sleeping are images of life and death: 'the living and the dead, the sleeper and the watcher, the young and the old are the same.'^[20] Heraclitus thus expresses enigmatically the rhythm of the life process, which underlies its continuity, a rhythm also illustrated by the psychological truth, with which ch. 21 opens, that effort and impulse die with the attainment of their object.

Popular thought added a further consideration, rarely touched upon by the philosophers, that life's rhythm is made intelligible by the persistence of the individual life through the continuous changes. This is a thought implied by Marcus in x. 7. 3. Plutarch and Seneca use this to console the mourner, that he may be comforted in the presence of death by the belief that there is an awakening to follow, as we awake from our nightly slumber.

St. Augustine reflected upon this, with special reference to the pre-existence of the individual spirit. As he dwells upon this problem he remarks, very much in the manner of Marcus: 'And lo! my infancy died long since, and I am alive.' . . . 'Declare to me, your suppliant, did my infancy succeed to some age of mine that is also dead?'^[21]

Bishop Butler appears to have had this passage in mind when he wrote: 'We have passed undestroyed through those many and great resolutions of matter, so peculiarly appropriated to us ourselves; why should we imagine death will be so fatal to us?'^[22]

Marcus does not draw any such conclusion. True to his sober and patient thinking, he gives merely the older view of pantheistic thought: we are to realize that death is an example of the universal law of continuity and change, of generation and dissolution. That being so, our duty is to accept the rule, without question, to welcome it as an aspect

of the eternal order; we must at last fall into earth's lap, like the ripe olive (iv. 48; v. 4).

After stating the general law he illustrates it from his own life. His father's early death put him under the guardianship of his grandfather, Annius Verus, the prefect of the City of Rome.^[23] Then he lived with his mother Domitia Lucilla, under the direction of her grandfather, Catilius Severus.^[24] Next, by Hadrian's enactment, he was adopted by Titus Aurelius Antoninus,^[25] and on the latter's accession shortly became Caesar, or heir apparent, and married his cousin, the younger Faustina.

His apprehensions about these changes were false; there was nothing to fear; neither then is the approaching change, Death itself, to be feared.

Ch. 20. This is the same reflection as we met in vii. 29, and shall meet again in ix. 38.

Chs. 22–3. After restating the triple relation of the self to God, to a neighbour, and to his own constitution (the main subject of Book ii, with a stress here upon the subordination and co-ordination involved), he passes to the recognition of his own role in the imperial commonwealth, which is the counterpart of his place as a member of the Eternal city. Loyalty to those relations resembles the duty of a citizen of a State to observe its ordinances. The conception of his own

position as head of the State is faithful to the ideal of the Roman Stoics which he sketched in i. 14.

Ch. 24. A group of images suggested by a satirical sense of the aimlessness and pettiness of human endeavour. Marcus used the simile of children at play in v. 33, to pass from that to the transitory nature of human life. Here his thought moves from the quarrels of children over their dolls to the grim picture of spirits bearing about dead bodies (iv. 41), and so to the imagination of Homer's underworld of shadowy wraiths, a realm as insubstantial as the present.

Ch. 25. This is a brief reminder of what he set out fully in iii. 11. Similar notes will be found at iv. 21 end; vi. 3; vii. 29; viii. 11; xii. 8, 10, 18, and 29. The principal omission here is that of relation (xii. 10), viz. the reference of an object to its end.

Ch. 26. An expression of regret for mistaken efforts and anxieties, given in greater detail in viii. 1.

Ch. 27. The reflection in ch. 18 that we may ignore the opinions of others, when we see their manner of living, here takes an unexpected turn. We are to be charitable to them, although their lives and aims are unworthy, and we shall be encouraged in this by observing that the gods are good to them, assisting them by dreams and augury.

In view of his own attitude to prayer in ch. 40, that it should be a request for help to be right-minded, and his usual teaching that man's true ends can be secured by sound understanding and sincere effort, without the special help which weakness tempts man to ask of God, we cannot but detect a certain irony in his words. Yet he himself thanks the gods for their revealed help for bodily ailments (i. 17. 9), so that he shared the common conviction of his time that God sometimes speaks to men, and not to good men only, in visions and dreams.

His attitude closely resembles that of Socrates, who told his followers to use their understanding for the purpose to which it was given by God, and only where there was genuine obscurity to consult the art of prophecy. So Socrates himself believed in the Divine voice vouchsafed to him from childhood, and expressly says in Plato's *Apology* that his mission to mankind was 'enjoined by signs and dreams and in every way that Divine dispensation enjoins things on men'.^[26]

We are not then to take Marcus to task for credulity nor to swallow the amusing fables that Lucian relates of him, but to respect his simple piety.

Two extracts well illustrate what he says: 'the universal attention which has been paid to dreams in all ages proves that the superstition is natural, and I have heard too many well-attested facts . . . not to believe that impressions are

sometimes made in this manner and forewarnings communicated, which cannot be explained by material philosophy',^[27] and this from Dr. Johnson: 'by appearance, impulses, dreams or in any other manner agreeable to Thy government.'^[28]

Ch. 28. The return from religious reflection to his philosophic creed is characteristic. Marcus makes three points: the regularity of the Universe, a point common to Stoics and Epicureans; the alternative Stoical view that either what individually befalls each is determined at every moment by Nature or that the order of things flows regularly and inevitably upon a divine primal impulse; finally, the opposition between Divine purpose, whether providence or predestination, and the atomism and chance of the Epicureans. If we accept the last view, the soul, as Epicurus himself taught, can still avoid, by its own purpose, subjection to Chance.

There follow reflections on the transitory, summed up in the first words of ch. 29.

Ch. 29. In presence of the vast stream of cosmic process, your part is present duty, without concern for recognition. Plato's dream of a Utopia cannot become real, for who can change men's hearts? Be content with a few steps forward. How small are men's political views, how vain their theories of life! The great conquerors, like Alexander, were only great if they looked to Nature's lead; otherwise they

were mere tragic actors on the boards. May I not be led away by my high station to pomp and vanity.

Nowhere else has the Emperor put so well and so concisely his disdain of theories, his recognition of true political idealism. Here is no philosophic pedantry, only the frank recognition of the littleness even of the best endeavour.

Ch. 30. The temptation to vanity may be corrected by looking down in imagination, as Marcus must often have looked down from his place in the amphitheatre, upon the countless pettiness of men's acts and thoughts (vii. 48). Even the Roman Empire is bounded in extent, and many nations and climes know nothing of its ruler's name and deeds; if they do, they will soon forget them.

Chs. 31–3. Three chapters teaching calm amid circumstance; the first is derived from the transitory fate of human endeavour, from the duty of just dealing, and from the need to express Nature's common law in everyday life. The second enforces this lesson by a fresh reminder of Time's brevity and Change's rapidity; the third repeats the old thought that all finite time, long or short, is equal when compared with infinite time (ii. 14).

Ch. 34. What is the worth of those who censure and hate, if you look through the outward covering to the petty selves within? (chs. 18, 27).

Chs. 35–7. These three chapters are either a dialogue with the lower self, or with an imaginary interlocutor. The word 'loss', with which they begin, suggests that Marcus is here correcting the tendency in the hour of bereavement to rebel against what his creed holds to be both inevitable and good. He who rebels ascribes suffering to the cruelty or weakness of the gods.

Marcus lost a child, called by his own name, Annius Verus, in A.D. 169. The skill of Galen could not cure him of a growth in the ear.^[29] The subject is handled exquisitely by Walter Pater.^[30]

Chapter 36 seems also to have been prompted by loss. The method of analysis beginning with the dead body and ending with the breath of life is used as a remedy in the presence of mortality.

Chapter 37 is difficult to arrange. Perhaps the first sentence is spoken by the sufferer of ch. 35, the rest is the reply by way of comfort and healing. Marcus recalls, in his own way, the familiar consolatory theme, the unimportance of length of days when weighed with eternity (ch. 33). Then he reminds himself of the duty of reverence to the disposer of his days, in the spirit of the Psalmist: 'Why are thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.'^[31]

Macaulay, who had felt and expressed repugnance with Stoicism, later uses exactly Stoical terms when he says (aet. 58): 'To be angry is unworthy not merely of a good man but of a rational being. Yet I see instances enough of such irritability to fear that I may be guilty of it. But I will take care. I have thought several times of late that the last scene of the play was approaching. I should wish to act it simply, but with fortitude and gentleness united.'^[32] The 'last scene' suggests that he had been reading xii. 36.

Ch. 38. An old thought, but with a charitable reminder added. With the lapse of years and the growth of his mind, this consideration for others grows in the writer.

Chs. 39–40. Two chapters on man's relation to God and the Universe, with a reflection upon Prayer. First there is the opposition between the organic view of Nature and the atomistic, followed by the remarkable apostrophe to the self, as it appears, not to sink as low or lower than the beasts which perish. Marcus is thinking of the inevitable result of the view that man is little else than a brute led by his senses.

The meaning of the chapter on Prayer is that the good man is to supplicate for a right mind to external events, especially to sorrow and self-indulgence, but not to expect that prayer can alter events.^[33]

The last words are an anticipation of what is often taught by religious writers to-day; we are to try Prayer and to test its efficacy by results. This is the converse of the older doctrine that if Prayer be not heard, it is because the petitioner lacks faith.

Ch. 41. This fragment, which seems to be from a letter of Epicurus, is not elsewhere preserved. There are several parallels in his remains.^[34] Marcus follows the example of Seneca in his readiness to take what is good from an opponent. He was, no doubt, impressed by the calm benignity of Epicurus in the presence of acute pain and the shadow of death.

Ch. 42. A collection of aphorisms upon the fact that the world contains evil men, upon the possible reason for this, and the right attitude to be adopted to the wrong-doer.

Mr. Haines has suggested^[35] that the emphasis here upon ingratitude and treason points to a particular experience. In or about A.D. 175 Avidius Cassius,^[36] governor of Syria, in whom the Emperor had reposed great trust, revolted and was proclaimed Emperor. Marcus, who was engaged in serious warfare on the Danube frontier, took vigorous steps and the traitor met with an ignominious end. The account in the epitome of Dio Cassius certainly has parallels, in the speeches put into the mouth of Marcus, to what the Emperor writes in this chapter. Probably, however, the historian wrote up his rhetoric on the basis of Marcus'

writings or the general tradition of his character and conduct. The whole passage here, like the *Meditations* generally, seems to rise clear of any particular experience, and to originate in generalization upon experiences often enough, no doubt, repeated in his life.

To the six reflections of the chapter we may add from elsewhere that:

every purpose should be with reservation (iv. 1; vi. 50; viii. 41);

we are all members of one fellowship (ii. 1; xi. 18. 1);
life is short and both your enemy and yourself will soon be in the grave, where all things are forgotten (viii. 21).

1. ↑ Chs. 2, 3, 21, 29–30, 35, 37, and perhaps 42.
2. ↑ Chs. 18, 27, and 34.
3. ↑ Pl., *Leg. Bk. x*, p. 884 sq.
4. ↑ Philostratus, *Vit. Soph.* ii. 15. 2.
5. ↑ iv. 14.
6. ↑ See, for instance, Galen's *Natural Faculties*, translated by Dr. Brock, in the Loeb series.
7. ↑ Herodian, i. 12. 1–2. It is mentioned in an inscription of Commodus' reign.
8. ↑ *Hist. Aug.* iv. 28.
9. ↑ ix. 21.
10. ↑ *Analogy*, i. 1.
11. ↑ Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Triumph of Honour*.

12. ↑ Montaigne, *Essais*, i. 19 (Cotton), cf. Lucr. iii. 938.
13. ↑ O. Lodge, *Modern Scientific Ideas*.
14. ↑ Young, *Night Thoughts*, Bk. i.
15. ↑ O. Lodge, l.c., p. 13.
16. ↑ Heraclitus. *Fr.* 91 B., 114 D.
17. ↑ *St. John*, 15. 4.
18. ↑ 'die Forderung des Tages', Goethe, *Betrachtungen*, i. 42 (ii), p. 167, Weimar edn.
19. ↑ Butler's *Dissertation* ii, § 4, vol. i, p. 329, Gladstone.
20. ↑ Heraclitus, *Fr.* 78 B., 83 D., adopted by Euripides, whom Aristophanes ridicules for it.
21. ↑ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, i. 9; cf. *De Civitai Dei*, x. 30, xi. 23.
22. ↑ Butler, *Analogy*, i. x. 15.
23. ↑ M. Ant. i. 1 and 2.
24. ↑ Id. i. 3, 4, 17. 7.
25. ↑ Id. i. 16; vi. 30. 2.
26. ↑ Pl. *Apol.* 33 c, cf. *Crito*, 44 a; X. *Mem.* i. 1.9, *Anab.* iii. 1. 11.
27. ↑ Southey, *Life of Wesley*, i. 359.
28. ↑ *Johnsonian Misc.*, G. B. Hill, p. 11.
29. ↑ *Hist. Aug.* iv. 21. 3.
30. ↑ *Marius the Epicurean*, ch. xviii, vol. ii, p. 61.
31. ↑ *Psalms*, 42. 5.
32. ↑ Trevelyan, *Life and Letters*, &c. p. 681.
33. ↑ St. Luke, 11. 13; *1 John*, 5. 14, where the writer passes on, like Marcus, to the erring brother.
34. ↑ Usener, *Epicurea*, pp. 139, 143, 144.
35. ↑ In his edition of the *Meditations* in the Loeb series.

36. [↑](#) Dio Cassius, *Epitome*, 71. 27. 3.

Footnotes

BOOK X

Beginning with the striking address to his Soul to find satisfaction in present right conduct and contentment with what the gods give, Marcus passes to an assertion of the perfection of the Universe, the living unity which includes and sustains the ever-changing present, the Whole of which he and his fellow men are members and upon whose Law depends the spiritual commonwealth of gods and men.

The following chapters dwell upon some implications of this opening statement and upon the practical requirements of life lived according to that Law. The Book closes with a statement that the Soul is the man himself, so related to the body and its members and to external reality as the efficient cause to its material, a view in fact not distinguishable from that held by Socrates and Plato.

Although, however, his main contention is that man's work is to be a loyal member of the Eternal City, freely obeying the Reason or Law which governs the Universe, both in its physical and moral aspect, a righteous Law completing its purpose whether this or that individual voluntarily conforms his will to it or not, Marcus pauses more than once to ask himself what are the implications of a rival theory, one which asserts mere natural uniformity in things, founded upon a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, a blind world governed by no divine purpose. What, he seems to ask, is

man's position if the individual consists, as the plain evidence of things suggests, of a body and soul intimately united in life and dissipated at death?

Again he frankly recognizes in this Book, as nowhere else, the presence in the actual world of a barrier opposed by evil men to righteous endeavour. In such a world the remedies are understanding and charity, and so far as possible the correction of the blindness of evil selves.

Lastly, the near approach of Death, the need of courage in its presence, lie not far beneath the surface of his thoughts. More than once he welcomes Death, as a deliverer from evil company and from bondage to the body.

Ch. 1. In hardly any other passage has Marcus allowed himself to express so warmly that ardour for the beauty of holiness, that passion to be at one with Nature, which possessed him. The language resembles the words of some Hebrew psalm, or an outburst like that of à Kempis: 'O that that day had dawned and that all these temporal things were ended. . . . When shall I enjoy true freedom without impediment, without trouble of mind or body? When shall I possess solid peace, peace undisturbed and secure, peace within and peace without, peace every way assured?'^[1] The sentiment is that of Shelley:

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?

Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou should'st now depart.^[2]

The Emperor Julian^[3] may have been thinking of this passage of the *Meditations* when he describes Marcus presenting himself in the conclave of the gods, 'his body transparent and translucent like to the purest and clearest flame.'

The description of the Universe seems to be derived from Plato: 'God, when forming the Universe, created mind in soul and soul in body, building them into one that he might be the framer of a work that should be most beautiful and most perfect in its nature.'^[4] The saying, too, that the gods preserve this Universe is perhaps a reminiscence of Plato's statement that the Creator retired to his own solitude after accomplishing his work, and left the rest to the 'younger gods'.^[5] Strictly this conception of God is inconsistent with the Stoic belief in a self-informed Whole, where an active spirit informs a passive matter, and the gods are embraced in one unity. The enthusiasm for a divine Universe, so remote and impersonal, is hardly to be understood except by the light of the Nature poetry of the early nineteenth century:

The One remains, the many change and pass,
and again:

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all object of all thought,
And rolls through all things.^[6]

Chs. 2–3. The thought of the writer passes from the soul or higher self to man, a composite creature, in the present world. Nature's scale, which manifests a gradual ascent from lifeless things to plant-life and thence to animals and to reasonable beings, is exhibited also in man both in his development from the embryo to maturity and in the structure of his being, when perfected by this process. The grown man's life is sustained by activities some of which resemble plant-life, his nourishment, growth, and reproduction, some mere animal life, his maintenance by respiration and by means of the senses and impulses, and finally the life of reason, his individual and social existence.

Man has a duty to observe the laws which govern these lower and higher activities of his complex constitution, but like Nature he must subordinate the claims of the lower to the higher, in each degree.

Thus Marcus affirms implicitly the continuity of the living human creature and follows closely the teaching of Aristotle and of the school of medicine to which his own physician, the learned Galen, adhered. Man does not, as some Stoics seem to have held, leave behind him at birth

the plant and take on the animal. This is important for the interpretation of a later chapter in this Book (ch. 7. 3).

Ch. 3. The composite self (ch. 3) is in one sense merely an animate body. Man may be regarded, by the scientific physician, primarily as composed of body and vital spirit. His organism is liable to suffering, sometimes to suffering which is intolerable. When this is the case, the suffering or sickness passes with the patient's life.

Marcus writes here with the teaching of Epicurus in his mind, that pain which lasts can be borne, extreme pain brings the relief of death (vii. 33, 64). What he says indeed is what Shakespeare said of all life, what an observer may think at least of the body, after extreme endurance: 'after life's fitful fever he sleeps well'.

But, from a moral point of view, man has power by his understanding to support whatever befalls him; what is evil, because destructive to the mere animal organism, can always be borne. The judgement can interpret its experience, especially by conceiving that what Nature brings, and at the time when she brings it, is good.

Marcus may have been thinking of the brave fight which Epicurus made against acute bodily pain. We have a letter^[2] of his where he says: 'On this happy day at the close of my life, I write this to you. My ailment pursues its course, abating nothing of its severity; but this is all countered by

joy in myself, when I recall our talks together.' This courage in the presence of pain and death Marcus refers to in ix. 41; to the critics of Epicurus it appeared to be the paradox of the Hedonism which they misunderstood and misrepresented.

Ch. 4. A brief note interrupting the connexion which unites chs. 2–3 to chs. 5–7. How rightly to use a fellow man, who offends or appears to offend you, is the subject of xi. 9, 13, 18. 4, 37 (cf. xii. 12 and 16).

Chs. 5–7. The right judgement referred to in ch. 3 involves an understanding of the chain of necessary causation, what is called here by the poetical name of 'the web of Destiny'. From this he passes in ch. 6 to Nature's subordination of the parts of the Universe to the whole and to the co-ordination of the parts within the whole. On these two principles human society is based, the law which rules the life of a city is the correlate of the law which rules the eternal Commonwealth of gods and men.

Again (ch. 7), the parts of Nature all obey the law of regeneration by change. Decay and death, like life and growth, are instances of change. These changes must be good, since Nature cares for her parts and cannot be ignorant of the vicissitudes which those parts undergo.

But even if we surrender a belief in a reasonable Universe, wisely and justly determining its eternal process for good,

and adopt a contrary view (ch. 7, § 2), what is the result? We may adopt the view of the Atomists, based on observed uniformity, and recognize that a chance concourse of material particles has resulted, as Epicurus taught, in a natural law by which this world, like a multitude of others, is subject to a constant process of decay and dissolution. We cannot therefore repine at the change and death of any individual, as if that were contrary to nature.

Such appears to be the force of what is condensed to extreme brevity. In fact the chief object of Epicurus' natural philosophy was confessedly to teach men by the realization of Nature's law to rise above the fear of death and superstition. In a later Book (xii. 34) Marcus recognizes this, as in an earlier passage (vii. 31) he said that if we accept the answer of the Atomist, 'it is sufficient to remember that all is by law'. Whether then death is a shattering into atoms or, as the Stoics held, a separation of the material and spiritual, each returning to its own kind; whether, as he adds, the world passes ultimately to the primal Fire and so the process of generation begins anew or (as some Stoics held with Aristotle) the world is eternal, and is sustained by a continuous series of renewals, the individual has no cause for surprise at death, no ground to complain of his destiny in a world of generation and decay.

So far the argument is clear, but the last section has been found difficult, ever since Gataker himself said that he 'stuck in it'. The difficulty is due to the obscurity of the

problem at issue, namely, the meaning of individuality, but also to uncertainty as to the exact doctrine of the Stoic school in this question as well as that of Marcus himself.

He begins with a reflection familiar to-day, but then something of a paradox to the ordinary man. What passes away at death is a composite frame, built up only yesterday out of the solid and gaseous matter which the organism absorbed from food solids and the atmosphere it breathed. We cannot then take the popular view that death means that the breath leaves the body, for the breath (the vital spirit) is itself a material element in the compound. Neither is what passes away the same as what came into the visible world at birth; obviously that too was a composition of elements gradually brought together in the womb by Nature's formative energy. See what he says below in ch. 26.

Death then, as he stated in § 2, is a disintegration of a composite whole, either, as Epicurus held, into atoms or into the elements which the Stoics believed to be its basis. Death is merely one instance of the 'alteration' which obtains in the universe generally. That 'alteration' is a rearrangement of matter or substance by which nothing is lost of the whole material which Nature disposes.

Then, as I understand the last words, Marcus says: 'Suppose for a moment that, as Epicurus and the school of medicine of Asclepiades held, you yourself are merely an intimate union of this changing composite, this continually

integrating and disintegrating 'body', with the individuality which has persisted throughout your life, what then?' The answer is in the words which close the chapter, 'that hypothesis and its implications have nothing to do with my present argument'. His present argument is that death is an example of a universal law in this world of generation and decay, therefore it is not something of which we are entitled to complain, being, in the view of Epicurus and Zeno alike, a necessary incident of the life we know.

Paul Fournier gives as his opinion that Marcus here gives last and final expression to a pantheism which leaves no room for individual existence beyond the grave. Is it not rather true that the wise Emperor is reminding himself that our concern is with the present and with present dutiful action? Personal survival is not a question which we can or should trouble about, we should be satisfied to resign ourselves to the rule of Nature and the ruler of the Universe. What has he said elsewhere? 'Your own frame is bound either to be scattered into atoms or your own spirit to be extinguished or else to change its place and to be stationed somewhere else' (vii. 32). Different though his cherished philosophy is from the confident atomism of the Epicureans, realizing though he does that there is no final answer to his obstinate questionings within the limits of pure reason, he holds as strongly as the great Latin poet that 'this terror and darkness of mind must be dispelled not by the sun's rays or the lucid shafts of day (that is to say, by no

evidence of the senses), but by the perceived form and inner principle of Nature'.^[8]

Ch. 8. The suggestion for these reflections on Names or Titles appears to be a chapter in Epictetus, headed 'How Duties may be discovered from Names', where it is said that 'each of the names, when we ponder upon it, gives an outline or model for the actions associated with it'.

Marcus may also have been reflecting upon the ascriptions current upon his own coins. Thus Hadrian is entitled Clement, Indulgent, Just, Tranquil, Patient in illness. Here Marcus avoids imperial titles, preferring names that belong to a good man or a philosopher. There is a third influence at work, that love for etymology which is characteristic of him, mixed perhaps with the almost superstitious reverence in antiquity for proper names, which made the derivation of Apollo or Ajax or Oedipus a thing of serious import.

The last section of the chapter is an afterthought. He seems to mean that worshippers bend the knee at the sacred name, whereas what God desires is that man should be made and make himself into His likeness; this can only be done by living the life appropriate to man, as the fig-tree bears its fruit in due season and as each creature pursues its appointed work (v. 6).

The incidental reference to the *Islands of the Blest* or the *Fortunate Isles* is to the old belief in some islands in the far

West, where heroes enjoyed an existence of quiet and content, without a divorce of soul from body. The expression, which was already proverbial in Plato's day, means no more than we should imply by speaking of the Vale of Avalon or the Earthly Paradise.

Ch. 9. This appeal to the self to enjoy a true life in the present, with its recurrence to the theme of ch. 1, was perhaps suggested by the passing reference to the *Islands of the Blest*.

The fruit of philosophy is here and now; it rests upon sound doctrines and these depend on true reflection upon impressions and impulses.

Ch. 10. Once more his favourite thought that the crucial test of men, of great rulers, and even of a Socrates, is the doctrine which they hold and carry out in act.

He was himself called, for his victories in the North, *Germanicus* and *Sarmaticus*, the latter title being first conferred in A.D. 175 with *Imperator VIII*.

The closing moral 'Are they not robbers?' suggests that Marcus may have had in mind a traditional tale (which St. Augustine refers to^[9]) about Alexander and a captured pirate. The latter told the king that the only difference between them was that Alexander's robbery was on a larger scale:

Right so bitwixe a titlelees tiraunt
And an outlawe or a theef erraunt,
The same I seye, ther is no difference;
To Alisaundre was told this sentence. [\[10\]](#)

Ch. 11. True magnanimity, as distinguished from the robber spirit of the last chapter, comes from realizing Nature's law of mutation (iii. 11. 2). A man's aim should be justice, resignation, contempt of vainglory, and to walk in the straight path of Nature. Marcus uses the third person, as he did in iii. 16, to avoid the suggestion that he claims to have reached this ideal.

The closing words allude to a splendid passage in the *Laws* of Plato: [\[11\]](#) 'God, holding the beginning and the end and the middle of all things that are, proceeds naturally in a circular course, straight to his purpose. And with him follows Right, to punish those who come short of Divine Law. He who would be happy holds fast to Right and follows in his train, humbly and orderly . . .' The image is drawn from the observed rotation of the starry heavens, as they appear all through the night, following in the path of the sun, and may have been derived by Plato from the Pythagoreans.

Ch. 12. The path of duty is plain, and he who follows reason enjoys a tranquil activity. So Wordsworth says *The Happy Warrior*

Is happy as a lover, and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired.

Marcus handles slightly differently the topics of v. 20; vi. 50; vii. 5; and viii. 32.

Ch. 13. The right attitude in regard to adverse criticism (ch. 4). Here he contrasts the fruits of a right use of reason with the results of its misuse.

Chs. 14–15. The beautiful expression of resignation to Nature's will is like that in iv. 23. This is followed by an adjuration to the self to live life on earth as if on a mountain. Similarly in ch. 23 he insists that the life of retirement may be lived anywhere equally well, a lesson stated fully in iv. 3 and repeated in vi. 11 and 12.

Ch. 16. A lesson enjoined by his tutor Rusticus, i. 7.

Chs. 17–18. The familiar thought of the pettiness of this world and of finite time against the background of Cosmic space and time, and how all things are in perpetual mutation.

Ch. 19. An expression of withering scorn and contempt of wickedness in high places. The word 'slavery' may be literal, in which case he would be thinking of men who had risen from low estate or even slavery to a station where they abused their temporary authority by brutality to those

beneath them; or he may be using 'slavery' to contrast immoral servitude, as he often does, with moral freedom.

Ch. 20. An aphorism on a favourite theme, with a play upon words which we have had before.

Ch. 21. This beautiful thought is founded upon a passage in Euripides, ^[12] which was often quoted in antiquity. The poet gave expression to the very primitive myth that the birth of all things came from a union between the sky god and the earth mother.

The effect here is a little spoiled by the verbal comment, which turns upon the use in both Greek and Latin of the word 'to love' in the sense 'to be usual'.

Chs. 22–3. This simple prescription for content, followed by the recognition, as in ch. 15, that change of place is no remedy for disquiet, seems to be a recall to prosaic duty after the enthusiastic words of ch. 21.

The word translated 'place of retreat' means literally 'farm' or 'country seat'. It is often used in the New Comedy for the country as a place of quiet and natural life in contrast with the town, a scene of bustle and unreal conventions.

Marcus uses it, as in iv. 3. 4, for 'retreat' in the spiritual sense, a meaning which may be derived from its use in Homer's *Odyssey* for the retirement of Laertes. The point is a favourite with the writers on exile and the satirists,

namely, that change of scene does not bring change of temper.

The quotation from Plato's *Theaetetus*^[13] seems to mean that the man who shuns his station and retires to solitude takes his selfish desires with him and lives on the mountain at the expense of his dependants. Plato had said that the ruler is only a herdsman on a grand scale, like a boorish farmer in the uplands. Marcus remembers the general notion only, using it to illustrate the point that solitude on a height may be uncultivated and selfish.

Ch. 24. From the mistaken search for solitude he returns to self-examination. The passage to be compared is v. 11, where also he regards the governing self as degraded to a lower level. The temptations to a divorce from neighbourly duty and to absorption in bodily emotions are again touched upon in xi. 19. There the latter fault is spoken of as subordination of the divine part to the mortal, quite in the manner of Plato; here the language is derived from the Epicurean image of smooth or impeded movements of the flesh, as in v. 26 and x. 8. 1.

Ch. 25. The rule of the lower self is enslavement to passions, like fear and grief and anger. To be subject to passion is to desert reason, which is embodied in Law. Such a man then is like a law-breaker, he deserves the severe usage which Roman custom meted out to a runaway slave or to a deserter (xi. 9) from the ranks. See the fuller

treatment in iv. 29. Marcus again plays on words, in suggesting the derivation of Law from assignment, that which distributes to each man his role, assigns to him his duty and reward.

Ch. 26. Reasoning argues from the seen to the unseen, from effect to concealed cause. Here the illustrations from elaboration of the embryo and absorption of nourishment are intended to prove the constant operation of the spermatic, generative, and restorative energies of Nature in physiological development. Marcus in simple words uses much the same argument as Galen in the opening chapters of his *Natural Faculties*. The great scientist there uncovers the hidden powers of the natural body from observation of results, and beginning with the shaping of the inborn child exhibits what he calls Generation, Growth, and Nutrition as processes designed and directed by Nature. Compare what Marcus said at iv. 36.

Ch. 27. As Physiology is a science of observed uniformities, the search for unity in hidden causes, so the student of History discovers behind ostensibly changed relations the unity of Law.

Marcus puts his philosophy of history in the form that life is a series of scenes in a drama which repeats itself, where the complication and denouement are determined by the great author of the piece. Similarly Aristotle in his *Theory of Poetry*^[14] says that tragedies belong to the same type, not

because they present the fame individuals or even the same story, but because their construction follows an identical series of development.

Marcus used Vespasian and Trajan to illustrate his point in v. 32. Here he first names his elder contemporaries Hadrian and Pius, and then runs back to Philip of Macedon and his great son, and so to Croesus, who is made by Herodotus the standing example in history of a tragic reversal of fortune.

Ch. 28. Human destiny, like the 'sad stories of the death of rings' or the pictures of heroes on the tragic stage (xi. 6), is the fulfilment of a necessary chain of causes and effects. The man who rebels against circumstance, the runaway slave of ch. 25, the spiritual invalid upon his couch are like the reluctant pig appointed for sacrifice.

The last words refer to a poetic fragment of Cleanthes, the Stoic philosopher and pupil of Zeno:^[15]

Lead me, O Zeus, and lead me, Destiny,
Whatway soe'er ye have appointed me.
I follow unafraid: yea, though the will
Turn recreant, I needs must follow still.

Chaucer thus puts the truth in the *Knight's Tale*:^[16]

And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to him that al may gye.

Marcus succeeds here in securing remarkable literary effect by his favourite device of condensed thought and parsimony of expression.

Chs. 29–30. The first reflection is to be interpreted in the light of xii. 31. To set our affections upon material things, things of little worth, inspires that fear of death which will take them all away. This is accordingly a hindrance to following in the train of Reason and of God.

The thought is continued in ch. 30. Evil conduct springs from wrong ends. If we are honest with ourselves, we recognize that conflict with others originates in our own esteem of money or pleasure or reputation, which is the same as theirs. This thought is an antidote to anger; at the same time, if our ends are less mistaken, we must endeavour to correct theirs.

Chs. 31–2. The present is illuminated by the past. The conduct, perhaps the failure, of a Caesar may well be an encouragement or a warning to Marcus himself.

The other examples are obscured by our ignorance of some of the names and probably by a corruption of the text. They illustrate the sameness of human life and its transience.

From these thoughts Marcus turns to the reflection that life is a training school and a discipline for the reasonable will, and to an injunction (ch. 32), by way of corollary, to simplicity and goodness.

Ch. 33. The object of this chapter is to illustrate the freedom of the reasonable being, in comparison with the hindrances to which the inorganic parts of the world are exposed. The clue to the underlying thought is given by the instances chosen. They belong to discussions of the relation of man's freedom to the necessary determination of the Universe. The answer given by the Stoics attempted to reconcile a definite, that is a limited, freedom of the individual with the notion of the Universe as the scene of predetermined Necessity. The 'roller' (or 'cylinder') recurs in this discussion both in the Stoic writers and in their critics. The point clearly was not (as it is often misrepresented) that the roller if started rolls down a slope, but that the motion of the roller is determined by its shape, and therefore, when set free, it pursues its own path. Within limits it is so to speak free. Similarly man in obeying his impulses is relatively free, since every animated being has an impulse to its own preservation. But man achieves what freedom he possesses as rational only by conforming his impulses to what he knows to be a natural law for reasonable creatures. Thus though the roller cannot behave otherwise, it still carries out what is determined by its conformation, and, similarly, man consciously, if he is rational, carries out what is determined by himself according to his own construction.

This solution of the problem of freedom does not deserve the scorn which Plutarch and others exhibit in their criticism. This criticism comes to saying that man is not free according to the Stoic showing and yet that moral conduct depends on man's consciousness of freedom. What none of the critics understands is the certainty with which Zeno and his followers had grasped the law of necessary cause and effect in the Universe. Given this, the Stoic solution, which is the recognition of limited freedom of the will, is the best that can be found. Marcus seems to have clearly grasped the Stoic answer, and he repeatedly enforces the true liberty of the disciplined reason.

Minor points of interest in the chapter are the assertion of the joy which consists in the exercise of man's real nature, which he boldly compares with the hedonist's self-indulgence, and the true statement (after repeating once more that obstacles to goodness are only obstacles because our judgement makes concessions to false ends, and that hindrances are not injurious unless they are themselves morally evil) that man is strengthened by these tests of his goodness. That is a favourite doctrine of Epictetus, which Marcus has appropriated; the Happy Warrior, as Wordsworth says, 'turns his necessity to glorious gain'.

Ch. 34. This beautiful chapter belongs to the consolatory strain in the *Meditations*. The passage of Homer to which Marcus refers was called by the poet Simonides 'the most beautiful of the sayings of the poet of Chios':

Like as the generation of leaves, even such are the children
of men,
The wind scatters them on the face of the ground, but others
the woodland
Brings forth again in its strength and they shoot in the
season of spring;
Like to them are the children of men, one waxes, another is
waning.

Marcus uses the passage to illustrate his doctrine of serial change in human life. Our mistake is to forget the brevity of human existence; we pursue or shun the temporal as though it were eternal.

Ch. 35. Health of mind is like health of the body and its senses. The understanding which rebels against its circumstance is like the jaundiced eye or squeamish stomach. The misfortunes we repine at, the death of children or the blame of men, connect the thought with the last chapter and lead on to the next.

Ch. 36. This is one of the occasional passages which are written in a vein of pleasant satire, quickly shifting to a more serious reflection.

Lord Tweedsmuir's *Oliver Cromwell* contains a parallel to the image of the schoolmaster: 'But to most men, after the first shock, came a half-ashamed sense of relief. They had

lost their protector, but also their mentor. They had been dragged up to unfamiliar heights and they were weary of the rarefied air.'

The phrase 'the soul slips easily from its casing' is probably an allusion to a favourite representation in contemporary works of art of the disembodied spirit as winged.^[17] The soul is thought of as the perfected *imago* escaping from the *pupa*, just as the word Psyche meant in Greek the moth or butterfly. Marcus here uses the diminutive 'little soul' as Hadrian^[18] did in his famous poem beginning 'animula blandula, vagula',

little soul, kindly little wanderer
friend and comrade of my day.

We cannot, however, read any philosophic theory into Marcus' words. They are poetical like Byron's 'why even the worm at last disdains her shatter'd shell'^[19] or Tennyson's

And these are but the shattered stalks
Or ruined chrysalis of one.^[20]

Ch. 37. Actions, our neighbour's as our own, are to be tested by their relation to the whole to which they belong,

especially by the relation of human purpose to an end.^[21]

Ch. 38. Whatever the right interpretation of the hard saying in x. 7. 3, Marcus here says that the higher self, the mind (or Psyche as he sometimes calls it), is seated in the man as a controlling motive cause. This no doubt is the strict sense of the term so often used, the *governing* principle. The view is Platonic rather than Stoic, if we take it to express a metaphysical theory, and implies that the intellectual soul is not united to the body as the form in the material but as a motive cause to that which is moved, the view of Plato in the *Laws*, Book x. Here the statement leads to the opening chapter of Book xi and, if not pressed unduly, is intelligible to a simple mind, whatever its difficulties to a scientific thinker or to a philosopher. Like Marcus, Butler says: 'Upon the whole then our organs of sense and our limbs are certainly instruments, which the living persons, ourselves, make use of to perceive and move with'; and he goes further and says: 'it follows that our organized bodies are no more ourselves or part of ourselves than any other matter around us.'^[22]

1. ↑ à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, iv (iii), 48. 1.
2. ↑ *Adonais*, liii.
3. ↑ Julian, *Convivium*, 317 c.
4. ↑ Pl. *Ti.* 30 b.
5. ↑ *Ibid.* 42 d.
6. ↑ Shelley, *Adon.* lii; Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, 100.
7. ↑ Epicurus, D. L. x, 22, *Fr.* 30 Bailey.

8. ↑ Lucr. i. 146; ii. 59; iii. 91; vi. 39.
9. ↑ *De Civitate Dei*, iv. 4.
10. ↑ Chaucer, *Manciple's Tale*, H. 223.
11. ↑ Pl. *Laws*, iv. 715 e, cf. above, v. 3, vii. 55.
12. ↑ Euripides, *Chrysippus*, Fr. 898.
13. ↑ Pl. *Tht.* 174 d.
14. ↑ Arist. *Poet.* ch. 18, 1456^a 7.
15. ↑ Epict. *Manual*, 53, translated by Seneca, *Ep.* 107. 10.
16. ↑ *Canterbury Tales*, A. 3045.
17. ↑ Fraser, *Golden Bough*², i. 253; contrast the image in ix. 3.
18. ↑ *Oxford Book of Latin Verse*, No. 287.
19. ↑ Byron, *Childe Harold* ii. 5.
20. ↑ *In Memoriam*, 82.
21. ↑ xii. 8, 10, 18.
22. ↑ Butler's *Analogy*, 1. 1. 19 and 1. 1. 11.

Footnotes

BOOK XI

This Book is made up out of two distinct parts. The first twenty-one chapters consist, in Marcus' familiar manner, of longer reflections interspersed with brief practical reflections or admonitions. The last seventeen chapters are mere extracts from a commonplace book, resembling in this some chapters of Book vii, but with the difference that they have little intrinsic merit and no bearing upon the rest of the Book, and that none of them bear the authentic stamp of the author's thought or expression. The main purpose of chs. 1–18 appears to be a statement of the various ways in which a reasonable character, that is the reason of the Universe manifesting itself in a conscious being, maintains its self-government in various circumstances and various relations. This part ends with a long chapter which is a kind of Duty to my neighbour.

Chapter 19 states four aspects of the self which militate against its rational unity, i.e. its life according to Nature, and ch. 20 contrasts this failure of the self, this desertion of its appointed post, with the co-ordination and subordination exhibited in the physical universe. It is a briefer statement of what was said in ix. 9. The end of ch. 20, with its emphasis upon holiness and justice, points back to the close of ch. 1 and forward to the opening of Book xii. There follows ch. 21 on the ideal of self-consistency, that is,

action which is consistent with the common end prescribed by the law of Reason.

There is one remarkable digression, ch. 6, on the history and purpose of drama.

Ch. 1. The opening of Book x is an address to the Soul to enter upon its divinely appointed inheritance, the identification of human will with the unity and purpose of the World soul. Book x. 2 shows how man's nature rises from mere life to animal life, and builds on this a life which is reasonable and social, what is elsewhere called life in the company of gods and men.

Here Marcus gives his ideal of soul entirely rationalized, the claim of man's spirit to be a free personality. In xi. 8 he starts from the nature of the Whole and rises to a similar view. The marks of this reasonable spirit are that it sees itself, is self-conscious, moulds itself (the Greek word for the articulation of the embryo), makes and wins its freedom by a gradual effort, guided by will. Thus it rises out of the animal stage of sensation and impulse into a life of conscious habituation to right.

This growth completed, it enjoys the fruit of the Word, is master of itself at any and every moment of its conscious life of virtue. Good life, the Stoics held, is the exercise of reasonable free-will; it does not need, as Aristotle taught, a completed lease of life for its own fulfilment.

This autonomy is further seen in the freedom of the spirit as intelligence, its power, in Plato's phrase,^[1] 'to contemplate all time and all existence'. The language here shows a remarkable advance from the depreciation of intellectual adventure in the earlier Books.^[2] Had Marcus been reading Plato's *Republic* and *Theaetetus*^[3] once more, and reconsidering Pindar's words about the 'flight of the soul'? Perhaps he had meanwhile studied Galen's *Introduction to the Sciences*,^[4] where the student is said 'not to shun geometry and astronomy but to "contemplate things below and above the firmament", as Pindar writes'. More probably he had in mind Lucretius' splendid passage^[5] about 'passing beyond the flaming ramparts of the world'. There is a remarkable parallel to what Marcus writes here in Hegel.^[6] 'This feeling that we are all our own is characteristic of freedom of thought, of that voyage into the open, where nothing is below or above us but we stand in solitude, alone by ourselves.'

The sudden drop from these lofty intellectual claims to the remark that a man in middle life can have learned all there is to know is surprising. Plato, indeed, both in the passage of the *Republic* and that of the *Theaetetus* cited above, contrasts the pettiness of human life with the philosopher's glance into eternity, but Marcus' point is that life here is always the same; a poor thing indeed, but a sufficient field for moral struggle and success. Certainly he turns to the gifts of the soul, love of fellows, truth, self-reverence, the

honour due to Reason, somewhat as the apostle^[7] passes from 'the liberty with which Christ has made us free' to the actual fruits of the Spirit.

This recognition of virtuous activity, which is the concrete aspect of the large and general claim to liberty, leads up to one of the sudden surprises of Marcus' reflection. The respect for self, which is respect for right Reason or the true Word, resembles, he says, the respect of Law for its own enactments. Thus the principle which governs the individual is identical with the Law which sustains society, and this is identical with Universal reason. The Daciers remark:^[8] 'il y a dans ce passage une profondeur de sens étonnante et c'est cette profondeur qui en fait l'obscurité.' Its meaning becomes clearer in the light of the closing words of xi. 20.

Ch. 2. The arts, like dancing and acting, are incomplete in their separate phases (ch. 1. 1), whereas moral activity is entire at any moment. He adds that the attraction and illusion of the arts may be destroyed by analysis of the whole into its elements (iii. 11; vi. 13). The object of Marcus is to correct that susceptibility to artistic emotion which impedes a life dedicated to action:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?^[9]

With a 'happy inconsistency' Marcus adds that although the same analysis will demonstrate the pettiness of all parts of life, it is not to be applied to virtuous activities. Should he not have said that analysis cannot touch virtue since that rests upon the unity of self-consciousness which was emphasized in ch. 1?

Marcus' attitude here is in striking contrast to what he has said in iii. 2 and iv. 20 of the intrinsic character of the beautiful.

Ch. 3. The little worth of life leads to the consideration of what a soul prepared for death must be like. He is thinking of voluntary death as well as of death in the course of Nature, and so contrasts the right philosophic attitude with the enthusiasm for martyrdom exhibited by some of the Stoics, as well as by the Christians, whom he takes as examples of those who chose death on grounds of private judgement.

This, the only explicit mention of the Christians in the *Meditations*, has provoked much discussion. Some are for cancelling the words as a marginal note which has intruded into the text. Others have tried to remove from the history of Marcus' reign the few but significant traditions of Christian suffering for the Faith. Some have supposed that the Emperor made this note with direct reference to the martyrdoms at Lyon and Vienne (*circa* A.D. 177). [\[10\]](#)

The most noteworthy point is the implication that the attitude of some Christians at least was so familiar as to be almost proverbial. This is more striking than the easily understood failure of the Emperor to sympathize with the infant Church. The remark is parenthetical; Marcus is not condemning the Christians, he is only illustrating a point by an example which has a poignant interest to us.

The words 'sheer opposition' have sometimes been translated 'mere perversity', applying the younger Pliny's famous phrase used in describing to Trajan the opposition of his Christian subjects in Bithynia.^[11] Marcus means *unreasoned resistance*, and that implies stubbornness, whether in a good cause or a bad.

The most eloquent and impartial comment upon this text is the noble passage in Mill, *On Liberty*;^[12] the sentiment of a reader is exquisitely phrased by Matthew Arnold:^[13] 'What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians! The effusion of Christianity, its relieving tears, its happy self-sacrifice, were the very element, one feels, for which his soul longed; they were near him, they brushed him, he touched them, he passed them by.'

Chs. 4–5. The first of these brief chapters serves to illustrate the saying in ch. 1, that the soul garners its own fruit. Action for the sake of others is its own reward; there is a joy to the Self in fulfilling its own law.

Chapter 5 reiterates the truth that the soul makes itself what it will. This it does by the guidance of general principles of two kinds, the one referring to the natural law of the Universe, the other to the true character of man's constitution.

The word *art* is used, in the manner of Plato and Aristotle, to embrace activity guided by virtuous ends, the arts being in general the adaptation of given material to ideal purposes. The word may have been specially chosen here, as it was in v. 1, because Marcus has been reflecting upon the likeness and contrast between moral activity and the arts of relaxation and amusement.

Ch. 6. At first sight ch. 6 seems out of place, but its introduction here may perhaps be explained on the ground that the writer wishes to illustrate the parallel between the artist's presentation of life and actual life. Drama is the most striking instance of an art which handles reality in a manner which is a pretence. What justification is there for man's pleasure in such make-believe?

Marcus makes these points. First, Tragedy reminds us of what actually does happen:

We are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and universal theatre

Presents more woful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in.^[14]

Secondly, the catastrophe is a necessary outcome of the complication which precedes it: we see 'the inscrutable destiny interwoven with the legend'.^[15] The play is, for Marcus, a picture of the necessity which he believed to govern universal Nature.

Thirdly, we are captivated by the sorrows of the story and we see that the kings and heroes of legend were obliged to endure those sufferings. The poet addresses a message to his public: 'you are not to complain if your experience on life's stage tallies with what I show you here'.

The word 'captivated', used here, is also employed in iii. 2, where our pleasure in the appearances of the decay of nature, and in artistic representations of death and what in actual experience is disgusting, is debated. The pleasure depends, Marcus says, upon recognition of natural law. His theory here is the same, though he does not state it explicitly. St. Augustine^[16] asked but did not answer a similar question about his pleasure in the adventures of lovers, as shown on the comic stage.

The fourth point is drawn from what Aristotle calls the intellectual element in dramatic poetry, where the poet embodies his criticism of life in striking maxims.

The Old Comedy Marcus prefers to what succeeded to it. He approves its direct and unvarnished style, so strongly contrasted with the later innuendo, and its manly criticism of great statesmen, even of philosophers. Aristophanes administered an antidote to vain-glory. In passing he remarks that Cynics, like Diogenes, copied this candour; they called a spade a spade, mercilessly exposed men who stood high in their own esteem, even an Alexander of whom he no doubt is thinking.

Comedy declined through its middle period to the new fashion, which was reproduced in the Roman comedy of Plautus, Terence, and their successors, whom Marcus ignores. It was content to hold a mirror to everyday and often ignoble manners: 'Oh! Menander and Man's life, which of you imitated the other?' We can easily illustrate Marcus' meaning by comparing Ben Jonson with Congreve and his fellows. His moral is: 'Comedy is essentially a lecture of virtue but . . . is become a school of debauchery.'^[17] Benjamin Jowett has a vigorous passage, which may illustrate what Marcus says, in his introduction to Plato's *Gorgias*.^[18]

What Marcus says of the maxims of the New Comedy is pointed by the fact that until the recent recoveries in Egypt all that was preserved of these poets were brief sayings treasured for their pithy sentiment, like 'evil communications corrupt good manners', or what Marcus quotes from Menander at v. 12.

Ch. 7. From the dramatic picture of life he returns to actual life, tacitly correcting what he said earlier about the conflict between his own calling and the claims of philosophy.^[19] The question was debated by philosophers, especially the Stoics and Epicureans, whether the wise man should take part in the service of the state. Clearly he must, and his life will be the best exercise of his principles. Marcus himself, as Emperor, is called to protect his people, as the bull protects the herd.^[20] For him it is to fill the role in life's comedy which God, the master of the show, assigns.^[21]

This is a point in which these later Books mark a change of view, perhaps a heightened knowledge. Earlier Marcus had regarded philosophy as a place of momentary retirement,^[22] his mother by comparison with his stepmother, the life of the palace;^[23] now he says that our vocation is to do the work that lies to our hand, 'cultiver notre jardin'.

Marcus is fond of playing upon words, and may here be alluding to another sense of the words he uses: he may intend to suggest to the reader, if he contemplates a reader, 'the plot or outline' of your life, that which is yours to work out, as the poet's task is to develop his theme.

Ch, 8. Social and political unity were illustrated from the parable of the body and its members,^[24] so here we meet the image of the tree and its branches, with the further illustration of 'grafting'.^[25] The last simile is very familiar from St. Paul's use of it in *Romans*.^[26] Neither writer draws

attention to the importance in horticulture of grafting a cultivated branch or bud upon a wild stock. Marcus is even mistaken as to the result of grafting a cultivated branch upon its parent tree; he says that the gardeners are wrong to suppose that the graft will ever recover its full union with the original stock.

Ch. 9. The last words convey the main point of this chapter. Both the coward and the unsocial citizen are deserters from duty, they break the ranks of the body politic.^[27] The earlier part refers to another question debated in the schools. The Stoics were at issue both with the followers of Aristotle, the Peripatetics, and with the Epicureans as to the place of anger in human life.^[28] Their opponents emphasized the advantage to society and the individual of anger, especially in the form of moral indignation, Marcus holds, with his school, that anger, like every other passion, is a weakness, not a strength. Wrath then is to be resisted as much as sorrow or pleasure, if a man is to fulfil his duty.^[29]

In his moral writings Galen, whose mother, he tells us, was liable to violent fits of temper, lays frequent stress upon the unreasoning anger in which Romans of high rank indulged. He tells, for example,^[30] how the Emperor Hadrian once blinded a servant in one eye. He inquired how he might make amends, and the victim replied by asking for the return of his eye.

Ch. 10. The argument is condensed and the ending difficult. First Marcus says that every 'nature', i.e. living organism, is superior to human art, because the arts and crafts are, in their processes, imitations of natural products. He means that spinning is suggested by the spider's web; weaving, perhaps, by the nests of birds. The crafts achieve man's purposes by the right use of their materials, and especially by a subordination of the lower to the higher, of means to ends, and of ancillary to architectonic arts.

Similarly every natural creation, tree and animal, has the power of employing its materials for its growth and maintenance. This power the physiologists of the school of Hippocrates, whose lead Galen followed, called Nature's 'justice', and Nature so at work they called 'artistic' nature.

Marcus concludes, from this common character of all 'natures', that the 'common' nature, being more perfect than its parts and including the Universe, could not be inferior to her parts in technical invention, in adaptation of means to her general ends, still less to the human crafts which imitate nature.

From this universal nature human justice is derived, and, he adds in Plato's manner, upon justice the rest of the virtues depend. This last point he proves by saying that if, for example, man is concerned for indifferent ends, for pleasure and praise, for health and wealth, he will destroy justice, which, as was said above, is right reason.

Chs. 11–12. From considerations about justice and social unity, the main subject of the Book, Marcus turns back to the self-realization from which he started in ch. 1. If the soul refuses to concern itself about what is indifferent to its moral health, about what lies outside its own choice, it can remain poised like the sphere of the Universe, illuminated by its own light.^[31] This light it turns upon objects, to secure truth, and upon itself, to enlighten its judgements and the impulses which depend for their efficacy upon reason.

Ch. 13. Kindness and gentleness, admonition of an offender without parade or self-sufficiency, are in private life the remedies against scorn and hate. This charity is made to rest upon a belief that God sees into men's hearts, and that no evil can befall him who is rightly disposed within and without, reconciled to his dispensation and aiming solely at his neighbour's good.

The reference to the Athenian statesman, Phocion, whom his fellow countrymen put to death, is puzzling in its apparent scepticism. Phocion is depicted by Plutarch as a model of strong wisdom and calm courage. Marcus seems to refer to the familiar story that as he drank the hemlock Phocion told his sons to bear no grudge against Athens.

Ch. 14. Marcus appears to be continuing the reflections of the opening of ch. 13, coloured by the facts of Phocion's career. He never shuts his eyes to the ignoble character of the many who dislike and oppose good men and goodness.

Ch. 15. Chapter 14 leads to this charming plea for sincerity, which resembles what is said elsewhere of the imprint of evil upon the outward expression and the inward man.^[32] He begins with 'the villain with a smiling cheek' and ends with the 'wolf in sheep's clothing'.

For the lines drawn on the forehead, compare Corneille's

Ses rides sur son front ont gravé ses exploits,^[33]

and for the whole image: 'Doctor Cudworth says "a good conscience is the looking-glass of heaven, and there's a serenity in a friend's face which always reflects it".'^[34]

Ch. 16. A restatement of the positions that we can refuse to be affected by objects or claims which are morally indifferent, and that this is secured by viewing them distinctly, and by not allowing them to impress themselves upon the imagination. Life, too, with its apparent troubles is but for a moment. If circumstance is indeed disposed by Nature, we should welcome it; if it is hurtful, we have the virtue suited to confront it.

He adds, ironically, that the advocates of self-interest must surely permit me to pursue what I hold to be to my own advantage in the law of right conduct.

Ch. 17. This corollary to ch. 16 gives instances of the right way to form a judgement of experience, as a whole and in

its parts.

Ch. 18. "The nine rules which he draws up for himself, as subjects for reflection when anyone had offended him . . . are written with that effusion of sadness and benevolence to which it is difficult to find a parallel. To give them their highest praise, they would have delighted the great Christian apostle who wrote: "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Nay, are they not even in full accordance with the mind and spirit of Him who said: "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother"?"^[35]

i. The argument is obscure. The meaning is apparently that our bond to others rests ultimately upon an order of Providence, which arranges the whole and its parts. Although, then, all men are equals because all share in Reason, yet some have primacy over the rest, like the ram over his flock, to which Homer has compared Agamemnon, King of men.

ii. The unenlightened must be governed and their censure ignored, because both their opinions and acts argue ignorance of the right end of society.

iii. Do not resent admonishment which you see to be just. If it be mistaken, remember that the error arises from involuntary ignorance. The fact that evil men resent the

name appropriate to the wrong they commit proves that they do in fact recognize goodness. It is the homage vice pays to virtue.

iv. We often err in intention, although we may from wrong motives, fear of public opinion, or cowardice avoid overt evil acts.

v. Men's motives are hidden, therefore we cannot infer evil principles from evil appearances.

(The words translated 'to serve a given purpose' mean literally 'according to economy'. The Greek word 'economy' has a remarkable history. It meant originally subordination of lower to higher, of parts to whole, in a household. Then it was used of an artist's employment of his means to his work. Later it was used for dispensation to evil that good may result, and so it passed into the sense of dissimulation, what we call economy of truth. The word was sometimes used to cover the presence of evil in the world, which was said to be 'according to economy', and it is possible that Marcus has this in mind here.)

vi. A maxim equivalent to the vulgar saying: 'it will be all the same a hundred years hence.'

vii. The favourite principle that apprehension is determined by imagination, and this should be schooled by deliberate judgement. The origin of anger is not ultimately the conduct

of another but the effect his conduct excites in our imagination. The remedy for anger, then, is to reflect that moral good and evil consist in states of our understanding and their effect in the consequent acts of will. Anger is out of place, for another's action cannot involve us in evil; and, if we forget this, our own act becomes evil by injuring ourselves.

viii. A profound and wholesome observation. Anger and sorrow bring in their train more suffering than the causes of those passions in a presumed injury. One of the commonest causes of suffering is what is called an 'imaginary' grievance, and it is one we recognize to be foolish in our neighbour.

ix. Kindness, if genuine, is invincible. This passage is one which has been justly admired in Marcus. His life was, by all accounts, a running commentary on his precept.

Two remarks are rather negligently interposed in § 5, to avoid breaking the symmetry of the 'sacred Nine'. One, if not both, is a separate remedy for anger. To flatter men is as unsocial as to be angry with them; gentleness is stronger than wrath, because to be gentle is to be free from passion (vii. 52; xi. 9).

§ 6. The tenth gift is from Apollo himself, the leader of the Nine Muses. To expect fools not to offend is madness; to

permit them to harm others, and yet to resent their conduct to ourselves, is to play the despot.

Ch. 19. At the close of ch. 18 it might well be considered that Book xii begins. Otherwise we may think that Marcus returns to the soul, the inward man, with which he began Book xi.

Four tempers of the mind are to be avoided: superfluity in imagination, unsocial thoughts, insincere speech, slavery of the divine element to the government of the flesh.

Ch. 20. This chapter touches upon a moral paradox, which especially embarrassed the Stoics. If Nature made man with impulses to achieve his own good, why does his governing self, in despite of natural law, resist the right? They refused to divide the soul into two powers, reason and desire, as though two rival powers struggled for the mastery of the soul; they said truly that it is the self which errs, the self which identifies itself with its desires.

St. Augustine has examined this point, in relation to his own life, in one of the most subtle and difficult passages of his *Confessions*, at the climax of his spiritual struggle.^[36] Marcus does not, like Augustine, reveal his own past difficulties; he is content to say that vice, and especially injustice and wrong, are solvents of the social bond. He adds that the unjust man not only sins against his fellow

man, but deserts the service of God. The highest virtue is Holiness and the Fear of God. ^[37]

Ch. 21. To be true to his principles, to be a consistent man, was a Stoic ideal. Marcus chooses this as one of the merits of his predecessor, Antoninus Pius. Our own great Jacobean commentator and divine, Gataker, speaks with enthusiasm of Queen Elizabeth as living worthily of her motto 'Semper eadem'.

The point here is that consistency as such is no good ideal, it must be consistency in goodness. This means faithfulness to a common end, the law, that is, of the Eternal City, and this is nothing else than the service of God. In like high temper, Socrates says^[38] in effect, at the close of his first defence, and repeats it to Crito when in prison: 'my life has been consistent in public and private; I have been guided by two ideals, to do nothing contrary to holiness, nothing contrary to justice'.

Chs. 22–39. These fragments are certainly foreign to their present place in the *Meditations*. Whoever first edited the *Meditations* from the Emperor's note-books may have been so scrupulous as to preserve them in the place where he found them, or they may be leaves from some other source, which later got into their present place.

Ch. 22. The country mouse in Horace's Satire comes from the hill country, so that the highland mouse here may be a

Roman form of the fable. Babrius does not use the adjective 'mountain' nor any other Greek fabulist, but in Babrius it is the sleek town-dweller who is frightened, as here.

Ch. 23. These bogies

Be but as buggs to fearen babes withal
Compared with the creatures in the sea's entral. [\[39\]](#)

Ch. 24. The story may illustrate the hardness of the Spartans, not merely their courtesy.

Ch. 25. The story is elsewhere told of Socrates and Archelaus, the son of Perdiccas. The same tale is told of Euripides, who did in fact spend his declining years in the court of the Macedonian King Archelaus.

Ch. 26. This is known from Seneca to have been a precept of Epicurus. Marcus himself prescribes the rule in vi. 48.

Ch. 27. Marcus has a similar reflection at vii. 47. In the fragments of the Pythagorean school, which were revived in the first century B.C., this maxim is associated with 'following God', which seems originally to have meant moving in harmony with the celestial bodies (x. 11).

Ch. 28. What Socrates answered is nowhere preserved. Xanthippe is by tradition the wise man's scold. There is

little contemporary evidence of this, and Burnet has suggested that she was in fact a lady of high birth. He argues from her name (which belonged to the family of Pericles) and Lamprocles, their eldest son's name. There is something amusing to the vulgar in such stories at the expense of great men, and soon they are believed. Similarly it is probably gossip and spite that have injured the fair name of both Faustina and her mother.

Ch. 29. A form of a famous proverb referred to by Democritus, Aristophanes, and Aristotle.

Ch. 30. The quotation was used probably to illustrate the truth that servility indicates the absence of reason. Originally the word translated reason may have meant the right of speech, reserved for freemen, or even the ability in a slave to do more than obey an order.

Chs. 31–2. The point of these quotations is even more obscure than that of the rest. The second has a possible connexion with the sensitiveness to criticism which seems often to disturb the author.

Chapter 30 and both these quotations belong to the traditional literature of consolation.

Chs. 33–9. These fragments are either condensed summaries of extant chapters of Epictetus or are, it is

thought, fragments from lost chapters of Arrian's *Memoirs* of that writer.

1. ↑ Pl. *Rep.* vi, 486a, cited above at vii. 35.
2. ↑ i. 7; i. 17. 9; ii. 13.
3. ↑ He refers to the *Theaetetus* in x. 23.
4. ↑ Galen, *Protrepticus*, ch. 1.
5. ↑ Lucr. 1. 72.
6. ↑ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia, Logic*, ch. 3, § 31.
7. ↑ St. Paul, *Gal.* 5. i and 22–3.
8. ↑ *Réflexions Morales de l'Empereur Marc Antonin*, ed. 1690, p. 670, where they cite 1 *Cor.* 2. 15.
9. ↑ Keats, *Lamia*, ii. 229.
10. ↑ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. i.
11. ↑ Plin. *Ep.* x. 96 and 97. Pliny speaks of 'pertinacia et inflexibilis obstinatio', of 'amentia', and uses the expression 'paenitentiae locus'.
12. ↑ Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 48, ed. 3; cited Introduction, p. 267.
13. ↑ Arnold, *Mixed Essays*, 1879 (included in *Essays, Literary and Critical*, Dent).
14. ↑ Shak., *As You Like It*, ii. 7 (the Duke speaks).
15. ↑ Jebb, *Introduction to Oedipus Rex*.
16. ↑ St. Augustine, *Conf.* iii. 2.
17. ↑ Rapin, *Réflexions*, ii. 23, cited in Spingam's *Critical Essays of the XVIIth Century*, p. 333, cf. 'The business of Comedy being to render Vice ridiculous', Sir R. Blackmore, *Preface to Prince Arthur*, *ibid.*, p. 228
18. ↑ Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, ii, p. 313, ed. 3.

19. ↑ viii. 1.
20. ↑ xi. 18. 1; cf. iii. 5.
21. ↑ xii. 36.
22. ↑ iv. 3.
23. ↑ vi. 11 and 12.
24. ↑ viii. 34.
25. ↑ Cf. the close of viii. 34.
26. ↑ Rom. 11. 23.
27. ↑ Cf, the quotation from Socrates' *Apology* in vii. 45.
28. ↑ See the Epicurean Philodemus, *On Anger*.
29. ↑ xi. 18. 5.
30. ↑ *De Dignotione*, Galen, v. 17.
31. ↑ The soul like a sphere, viii. 41; xii. 3. 2.
32. ↑ vi. 30. 1; vii. 24.
33. ↑ Corneille, *Le Cid*, i. 1.
34. ↑ Thackeray, *Esmond*.
35. ↑ Farrar, *Seekers after God*, p. 282; 2 *Thess.* 4. 15; *St. Matt.* 18. 15.
36. ↑ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, viii. 8–ix. 1.
37. ↑ This is taken up again at xii. 1, cf. x. 1.
38. ↑ Pl. *Apol.* 35c; *Crito* 51c.
39. ↑ Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, 2. 12.

Footnotes

BOOK XII

This Book appears to have been left unfinished, or rather consists partly of incomplete work; mixed with careful chapters are a number of mere jottings. See, for instance, ch. 8. Others are prefaced by ὅτι, which is usually the mark of an extract, and a condensed extract, from some other source (chs. 16, 21, 22, and 24). The opening chapter is closely connected in thought and expression with xi. 20, so that the original beginning of the Book, presuming that the original was in Books, may have been xi. 19, after the long summary of remedies for anger. The concluding chapter is clearly intended for its place, at the end of a Book, if not at the close of the whole *Meditations*.

Ch. 1. The opening chapter resembles ix. 1, in that Holiness and Justice are made to stand for man's chief ends. The thread of discourse is resumed from xi. 20–1, where holiness and the service of God were coupled with Justice, the right relation to our fellows, the good of the Commonwealth of rational creatures.

There is also a resemblance to viii. 1 and x. 1 in the reminder that to adopt the right rule and to press straight to the goal, while there is still time, is an urgent necessity.

To fulfil these two duties man must ignore all externals; be true to himself and to the divine element within him. This is

called 'mind' in ch. 3, and the life set before a man is a life which his own *genius* or divinity is propitious to (xii. 36). This recurrence to the notion of the indwelling deity connects this Book more closely with Books ii and iii than with the intermediate Books, and helps to give it the religious character which marks what is perhaps at the beginning, certainly at the close, regarded as the concluding section of the whole work.

Ch. 2. The mention of the divine element in man leads to a statement of the mode of intercourse between God and man. At the end of ii. 12 Marcus had said that we must observe 'with what part of himself man touches God'; here he says that God sees the selves of men stripped of material coverings, and touches with his mind alone only what has flowed into them from himself.

The lesson that he draws here is not, as we should expect, that man's concern is to keep the divine part of himself pure and untouched by passion (ii. 17), but that he must ignore, as God ignores, all material circumstance, the flesh and its adjuncts. He waits until ch. 3 to draw this conclusion, after making a fresh start.

Ch. 3. The last chapter had distinguished the man himself from his material environment, here he separates from the other elements of the complex self the mind itself. This governs the vital spirit which informs the body, making it a living creature, and the body itself.

This is the same psychological analysis as was used in ii. 2, except that the mind there was called 'the ruling self'. In x. 2 he had, more scientifically, distinguished in man the merely natural, the animate, and the rational. There, as here, he says that we are to care for the two lower aspects of the self, but that they are subordinated to the third, as in Nature the inferior is always for the sake of the superior. He does not, however, suggest an ideal in which the lower is brought, as it is in the Universe, into the service of the higher, but dwells earnestly on the need to separate the mind element from its natural environment; to dwell, as it were, entirely in the life of the spirit.

The image of the sphere of Empedocles has already been used in viii. 41 and xi, 12. He insists (ii. 14) on the soul's immediate concern, the present act and word. He refuses to concern himself, as Epicurus recommends one to do, with the pleasures of memory, and he deliberately closes his eyes to hope.

Ch. 4. From the description of the true self and self-centred goodness he passes to the question of self-respect, just as he passed in ii. 5–6 from the smooth and godlike life to the self-reverence, which is reverence for the godhead within. Similarly in iii. 4–5 he had said that the soldier who stands to his post needs no man's witness to his integrity.

Why, he asks drily, are we not content with the approval of our own conscience; why do we, whom Nature has taught

to love ourselves before others, prefer their opinion of us to our own? The reason is that we in fact entertain thoughts and designs which we could not bear to expose before a god or a wise mentor; we do not really respect ourselves, are not sincerely candid within. And so we respect the opinion of others (from whom we hide our real thoughts) more than we respect ourselves, or our opinion of ourselves. Galen, in his *Exhortation to Virtue*, is so convinced that progress in virtue is difficult by oneself unaided that he counsels even older men to find some friend who should be with them and admonish them of their faults, though he does not go so far as to suggest that the patient should confess his thoughts to the friend.

St. Bernard^[1] would almost appear to have known the subtle observation of Marcus when he said: 'On every other point a man trusts his own opinion before his neighbours': about himself alone he trusts his neighbours before himself'; Pascal^[2] too might have had this passage of Marcus in his mind when he wrote: 'Il estime si grande la raison de l'homme que, quelque avantage qu'il ait sur la terre, s'il n'est placé avantageusement aussi dans la raison de l'homme, il n'est pas content. C'est la plus belle place du monde.'

Ch. 5. The imperfection of his own inward and secret thoughts leads him to consider men whose lives have actually been lived in close communion with God. Probably his revered adoptive father, the Emperor Pius, is in his mind (i. 16; vi. 30). How is it that such men are entirely

extinguished by death? Do they never return to this world of generation and decay?

For once he puts his thoughts into the form of hypothetical reasoning, which was so much affected by the Stoic doctors:

If it had been just for them not to be extinguished, the gods would have preserved them (since what is just is within the power of Nature):

But, on the supposition that the dead are extinguished, the gods have not preserved them: therefore it is just for them to be extinguished.

Again:

If the gods were unjust and unrighteous, we should not be debating with them: but (by raising our problem) we are debating with them:

Therefore the gods are just and righteous.

The foundation of the reasoning is the assumption that justice and goodness as much as power are Divine attributes. Marcus, having suggested the notion of conditional immortality, dismisses it, and is content to found himself on God's goodness and justice. He clearly feels the absurdity of debating with God's wisdom: 'Beware thou dispute not of high matters, nor of the secret

judgements of God,—why this man is so abandoned and that man taken into so high favour, . . . answer with the prophet: "Thou are just, O Lord, and thy judgement is right."^[3] Thomas Gataker cannot speak too highly of the Emperor, 'who wishes to account nothing unjust or unfair to God'; Renan,^[4] on the contrary, selects the chapter for gentle censure: 'Ah! c'est trop de résignation, cher maître. S'il en est véritablement ainsi, nous avons le droit de nous plaindre. Dire que, si ce monde n'a pas sa contre-partie, l'homme qui s'est sacrifié pour le bien ou le vrai doit le quitter content et absoudre les dieux, cela est trop naïf. Non, il a droit de les blasphémer. . . . Toute la vie se passa pour lui dans cette noble hésitation. S'il pécha, ce fut par trop de piété. Moins résigné il eût été plus juste; car, sûrement, demander qu'il y ait un spectateur intime et sympathique des luttes que nous livrons pour le bien et le vrai, ce n'est pas trop demander.'

The religious temper, the *naïveté* of Marcus, if that is the right word, appears in his combination of words that recall the old Roman religious language of covenant and contract with phrases that imply man's communion with God. He does the same in ch. 14, and again in what he implies in xii. 36 about propitiation. When therefore he speaks of men who have made contracts with God (that seems the literal sense), and have had communion by acts of piety and religious observances, we are reminded of the solemn dedication by Quintus Fabius Maximus, at the height of the Second Carthaginian War, of a *Sacred Spring*. Warde

Fowler^[5] says of this solemn ritual act: 'This is not an address to Jupiter, nor is there any sign in it that the god was considered as bound to perform his part as in a contract; the covenant is a one-sided one, the people undertaking an act of self-renunciation, if the god be gracious to them.'

Marcus' devotion to religious observance, which the Roman populace ridiculed, followed scrupulously the ritual forms and language of the religion of his fathers, but was interpreted in the light of his own spiritual belief.

Ch. 6. The writer returns from larger issues to brief practical maxims, continuing in this vein till the end of ch. 13.

He first illustrates from the two hands the effect of habituation in moral progress. (The further question of the effect of natural left-handedness on mental development has been much studied in recent years, and the results applied to education.)

Plato observes that a child is born nearly ambidextrous, becoming right-handed by habituation. Aristotle twice says that man is the only ambidextrous animal, but normally he asserts the natural superiority of the right limbs to the left.

Ch. 7. Four memoranda, jotted down roughly, of points already often emphasized.

Ch. 8. The important relation of clear understanding and correct imagination to moral conduct (iv. 21. 2; vii. 29) and the value of analysis (xii. 10, 18, 29) are now very familiar. Here the points seem to be that if we analyse pains and pleasures, &c., we realize that their causes lie outside our will and so that they are indifferent in a moral view; that the wrong of another cannot injure our own will, which depends upon right judgement.

Ch. 9. An illustration, from the boxer and the armed combatant, to show that moral precepts are to become the habitual possession of the moral self, not taken up and put down at will.

Ch. 10. A mere note on the division of the objects of intelligence (xii. 20, 29).

Ch. 11. A vigorous assertion of moral liberty, a truth often pushed to paradox in his school. Notice also the realization of a personal relation to God (xii. 2, 31, 36).

Ch. 12. Find fault neither with gods nor men. Marcus' charity to all men, and resignation towards the heavenly powers increases with each Book. The former virtue is treated more fully in ch. 16.

Ch. 13. The man who is imbued with true principles is never taken by surprise, he is familiar with the universal laws, he is no stranger in the Eternal City.

Chs. 14–15. Even in this last Book, Marcus keeps his mind open in regard to the three solutions offered by thinkers to the problem of Universal law: the Stoic alternatives Fate and Providence, the Epicurean view of Chance concourse of atoms. Man's concern, whichever of the three solutions he may provisionally adopt, is with the right attitude to practice.

The expression 'a Providence which admits intercession' is remarkable. Marcus cannot mean the propitiation of a god who is angry with human offences, for the gods of Stoicism are as free from anger as those of Epicurus. Neither can he mean that prayer might change the settled progress of the Universe, an order which is independent of man's desires or will and cannot be turned aside by prayer. He must mean that God is ready to accept man's service, his offering, and his supplication.

What a good man's prayers should be he has spoken of in ix. 40: not for material blessings, not even to preserve the life of his child, but for right understanding and right impulses. The worshipper can, if there is a Providence, establish a right relation between himself, as he endeavours to preserve his own integrity, to perform his social and religious service, and the Divine will, which is the reason of all that befalls him. The Reason of the Whole will then be propitious to him, as he too will be in a propitious habit of heart and mind (xii. 36).

Should he, however, embrace the Epicurean view, a world of Natural law, then he can rely upon the entire freedom of the human spirit, a freedom in which both Stoic and Epicurean believed.

The image of the Lamp illustrates the light-bearing, life-giving function of the Spirit in the vessel of the body. This is the vital fluid, informing all parts of the animated organism; it is spent and renewed every day. As the Norwich physician^[6] writes: 'though the radical humour contain in it sufficient oil for seventy, yet in some I perceive it gives no light past thirty.' Again the lamp sheds the light of Reason, enlightening the understanding and throwing its little ray upon the darkness:

Shine, lantern, shine and be silent
Never dies down the radiance of the stars.^[7]

Ch. 16. Now he resumes from ch. 12 the subject of how to treat a wrongdoer. My fancied injury may be erroneous or, if wrong has been done to me, I cannot be sure that my fellow man has not defaced his own image by his act. Moreover, it is madness to expect other fruit from such a tree. My duty is to attempt a remedy.

This truly Christian forbearance has been sometimes censured. It is condemned by Renan,^[8] who calls the

reflection 'une des pensées où la bonté est exagérée jusqu'à la fausseté'. He discovers the disastrous results of a father's leniency in the character of his brutalized son and successor Commodus. Yet Commodus began his reign well; only, after a while, he was corrupted, like Nero, by absolute power and evil counsellors.

Chs. 17–20. Four brief chapters which appear to be closely connected, and which summarize what is handled more largely in iii. 11. Action or intent arise from a change in consciousness. Some experience awakens an imagination, what we call an impression. The remedy (ch. 18) is to discover what the thing which prompts the impression is in reality. Distinguish its material aspect from the form which gives it individuality; this is a necessity whether it is of speculative or practical moment. Consider it also in connexion with its purpose; see whether, for example, it is conceived with a selfish or a social end in view (ch. 20).

He adds that the duration of the object, its place in the time-series, must also be weighed (iii. 11. 2). He may intend merely to remind himself that all human experience is transient (xi. 18, subsection vi), or the pain-pleasure aspect of consciousness may be before him, and considerations such as Epicurus suggested in reference to pain-pleasure (vii. 64).

This analysis of a state of consciousness (ch. 19) will exhibit a conflict between the ideal self (reason) and the self

of passions and wrong impulses, which tend to make the better self their plaything. He hints that if the governing self loses control, the psychical centre becomes the seat of passions, which usurp the seat of reason; in this way degeneration of the psychical unity ensues, a kind of moral insanity. Turn back the leaves to the sad summaries of degeneracy in iv. 28, v. 11, and ix. 39.

Here he may have in mind the besetting sins of the absolute ruler; his envy and duplicity (i. 11); the crimson infection of the imperial robe (vi. 30. 1); a Tiberius in the gloomy and suspicious retirement of Capri (xii. 27); the pitiable declension of a Nero (iii. 16); the ruling passion, the vanity, of lesser men (xii. 27).

The remedy for diseased egoism in all its forms is to correct the imagination as soon as it crosses the threshold (vii. 17), to substitute for selfish impulse action and purpose steadily bent upon common good (ch. 20, viii. 22).

Chs. 21–3. At first sight ch. 22, of which ch. 25 is a brief replica, appears to interrupt the sequence of ch. 21 and ch. 23, both of which dwell on the law of change. Perhaps, however, the implied connexion is that if change, and death, which is a form of change, trouble you, you are to correct your judgement by the considerations of ch. 23. Thus you may attain the calm which follows the storm, presage of the quiet rest which death itself will bring to close your allotted span.

The beautiful simile of doubling the cape and winning the desired haven has been supposed to come from an unknown poet. Marcus may, however, have fallen into the cadence of poetry; he is writing carefully, as may be seen in the alliteration of ch. 23, followed by its arresting climax. 'Thou must not be dejected nor despair, but stand with equanimity to God's will . . . because after winter follows summer, after night comes back the day, and after the tempest a great calm.'^[9]

Ch. 23. A more careful and complete statement of the fundamental belief that individual death is a good thing because it closes a process which is subordinate to the Whole; by the passing away of its parts the Universe renews its youth.

St. Augustine^[10] has stated the identical law: 'They rise and they set, and by rising they commence a kind of being; they grow up that they may become mature; when mature they wax old and pass away; and some there be that wax not, yet they all pass away. This is the law of their nature. Thus much Thou hast allotted to them, because they are parts of things which exist not all together but, by passing away and succeeding, all of them perfect that Universe, whereof they are parts.' . . . 'The Word itself calleth thee to return to that place of rest imperturbable, where love is not forsaken, if itself do not forsake.'

Marcus is content, without drawing St. Augustine's conclusion, to state the law of transience. He follows in the path where God leads him. Who accepts the law of the Eternal City not only follows God, but is inspired by God, and carried by God. The language is unconsciously echoed by à Kempis:^[11] 'He rides pleasantly enough whom the grace of God carries. And what wonder if he feels no burden, who is carried by the Almighty, and led by the sovereign guide.'

Ch. 24. The first principle is a repetition of what was said in x. 11, to be satisfied with acting justly in what is done in the present and embracing gladly what is assigned to him in the present. The mention of Right relates to the passage of Plato, which he referred to in the last words of x. 11. He adds that to blame either a chance concourse of atoms or a wise providence is madness (viii. 17). The second principle is the recognition of the universal law (iv. 5; xii. 23) which governs the continuity and cessation of the life of the individual.

The third principle seems to be conceived as a corrective to pride; we are to rise above the earth's plane, in idea, and to look down on men's trivial engagements (vii. 48; ix. 30), comparing them with the cloud of unseen witnesses.

In this unique passage Marcus appears to adopt the common belief in the presence of unseen spirits in the atmosphere (he does not say that they walk the earth). This is a revival

or a survival of primitive animism, of which it has been said:^[12] 'To an early Greek, the earth, water and air were full of living eyes; of *theoi*, of *daimones*, of Keres. To Homer and Hesiod they are "myriads from whom there is no escape or hiding."

It is difficult now to realize that this was also the general belief in England in the seventeenth century, and was shared by writers like Milton and Sir Thomas Browne.

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen.^[13]

Sir Thomas Browne^[14] uses the Stoic doctrine of a scale of Nature to justify belief in these spirits, a higher order than man: 'therefore for Spirits, I am so far from denying their existence, that I could easily believe that not only whole countries, but particular persons have their tutelary and guardian angels'; and later we meet with 'the unquiet walks of Devils, prompting and suggesting us unto mischief, blood, and villainy'.

This may be one of the places to which Renan^[15] refers in the words: 'le surnaturel n'est dans les *Pensées* qu'une petite tache insignifiante, qui n'atteint pas la merveilleuse beauté du fond.'

Ch. 25. Judgement here must mean erroneous judgement, as in ch. 22 (iv. 7. 38).

Ch. 26. This chapter is a summary of much of Book ii: (a) the ordinance of Universal nature, ii. 3; (b) the evil not yours but the wrongdoer's, ii. 1; (c) generation and passing away, ii. 12; (d) mind, not blood or seed, is the bond of the human family, ii. 1; (e) the true Self comes from a spiritual source beyond the present, ii. 4 and 17; (f) nothing is your own, it is a loan from another world, ii. 4; (g) judgement is the determining power in morality, ii. 4; (h) the uniqueness and importance of the present moment, ii. 14.

Ch. 27. There is a colour and reality here, which is unfortunately rare in a writing which consists so much of generalized truths; there is also a touch of satire such as the Emperor rarely allows himself. Except the old age of Tiberius at Capri, which Tacitus has immortalized, nothing is known of the persons mentioned. Marcus' point is perhaps emphasized by the oblivion that now covers all but the names of these pursuers of baffled ambitions.

Marcus contrasts such lives with the simple service of God. Simplicity is the best of virtues in his eyes, just as affected simplicity is the worst of evils (xi. 15).

And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is pride that apes humility.^[16]

Ch. 28. The answer to the question of the sceptic about evidence for the existence of the gods is that there are visible gods, for instance the heavenly luminaries, and secondly that man may argue from effect to cause, from the phenomenal world to the unseen agency which sustains and directs it (x. 26).

This argument, in its general form, is reasoning from the evidence of design in the world, as Socrates did, to a wise creator. The special form used here is by analogy with the argument to man's soul, which is not visible, from his activities. This form of proof is very frequent in second-century literature, for example in the Christian apology of Minucius Felix, in Theophilus of Antioch, in Apuleius, and in the *De Mundo*. Galen's book *On the Use of the Parts* is a cumulative argument from the adaptation of the organism to its functional activities to the existence of a God who manifests himself even more perfectly in the order of the heavens. Of this book Sir Thomas Browne^[17] says: 'therefore, sometimes and in some things, there appears to me as much Divinity in Galen his Books *De usu partium* as in Suarez Metaphysics.' The Epicurean writings aimed at overthrowing this reasoning and substituting a scientific account based on atomism (x. 7. 2).

Ch. 29. The argument from effect to cause is an example of finding the form which underlies the material of experience. The duty of intellectual honesty corresponds with the practical duties of just dealing and truth speaking (ix. 1).

He adds an injunction to joy, to which he too rarely allows expression. This is the point in which Spinoza's *Ethics* differ so markedly from the *Meditations*, a difference depending presumably on a divergence of temperament in the writers.

Ch. 30. The duty of unifying our life by a continuous series of good actions suggests to Marcus this little rhapsody on the unity and continuity of the Universe (iv. 27; vi. 10). The purport is to give a view of the world which is vitalistic, in opposition to physical mechanism, and which resembles broadly much recent speculation which is dissatisfied with the explanation of the Universe predominating in the nineteenth century. The reason is that the Stoics and the school of Medicine to which Galen belonged worked from the analogy of life and living processes, their opponents approached the problem from the mechanico-physical end.

He begins with light, which unites what it illuminates (viii. 57; ix. 8), but with no suggestion of that worship of the Sun-god which became so widespread in the next century, for example in the Emperor Julian. He then follows the favourite idea of the Scale of Nature, mounting from the inanimate to the animate and then. to reasonable beings (vi. 14). In all we see the tendency to unity, we come at length to the conscious union in human and divine fellowship, to what he calls the 'passion' or 'sentiment' of common ends.

Chs. 31–5. This group of aphorisms is united by the thought of preparation for death, leading up to the final chapter where Marcus contemplates his own discharge from life.

Ch. 31. The fear of death is the dread of a loss of our lower powers; to entertain this fear is to be diverted from our true end, the life of reason with God.

Ch. 32. Man's littleness contrasted with the grandeur of his true vocation.

Ch. 33. The true end is to cultivate the governing self, the reason imparted by God to man.

Chs. 34–5. We can learn to think Death a little thing from the example of the Hedonist, who puts away fear as an obstacle to happiness. The real triumph over the last enemy is won by realizing that our end comes in Nature's hour and must therefore be good (iv. 23; xii. 23); that moral life is a question of quality, not quantity; every good action is complete as the expression of a moralized will (x. 1; xi. 1). Death can close Life's drama but cannot make it incomplete. Solon's maxim, 'Count no man happy till he reach the end', reiterated by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, is contradicted by the moral consciousness, which affirms that the life of the shortest-lived, if good in quality, is equal to the years of Nestor (iv. 50; xi. 1).

Ch. 36. This Envoy to the *Meditations* is quiet, in the Attic manner, and full of reserved emotion. The imperial citizen leaves the great City, but his service is accomplished. Nature determines life's measure and the close. The little dialogue between the actor and the master of the ceremonies, the Roman praetor who gave his annual show, lends vigour to the truth which is to be conveyed. 'Remember that you are a player in a drama: the master of the chorus determines how long you are to play.' The words suggest the tragi-comedy of the masque of life and the irony of the last exit. [\[18\]](#)

The image changes in the last few words to the scene of worship and ceremony. He has done his part in the solemn Roman ritual; he is satisfied, and the master of his days is satisfied.

His servants He with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,
And calm of mind, all passion spent. [\[19\]](#)

1. [↑](#) St. Bernard, clxxxii, 965 Migne.
2. [↑](#) Pascal, *Pensées*, 404 Br.
3. [↑](#) à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, iv (iii), 58. 1; *Ps.* 118 (119), 137.
4. [↑](#) *Marc-Aurèle*, ch. xvi, p. 268.

5. ↑ Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman people*, p. 205.
6. ↑ Sir Thos. Browne, *Religio Medici*, i. 43.
7. ↑ Babrius, *Fable* 114.
8. ↑ Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, ch. xxvi, p. 472.
9. ↑ à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, ii. 8. 5. Notice the Stoic terms: 'ad voluntatem Dei aequanimiter stare et cuncta supervenientia tibi . . . perpeti.'
10. ↑ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, iv. 10 and 11.
11. ↑ à Kempis, *Imit. Christi*, ii. 9. 1.
12. ↑ Dr. Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, ch. 1 (slightly altered in 2nd edition, p. 50).
13. ↑ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 677.
14. ↑ Browne, *Religio Medici*, i. 33.
15. ↑ Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, ch. xvi, p. 272; Renan himself refers to i. 17; ix. 27; l.c. p. 16.
16. ↑ Coleridge, *The Devil's Thoughts*, vi.
17. ↑ Browne, *Religio Medici*, i. 14.
18. ↑ This passage is referred to by Bolingbroke: 'Whether the piece be of three or five acts, the part may be long', *Spirit of Patriotism*.
19. ↑ Milton, *Samson Agon*. 1755.

Footnotes

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