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A HISTORY OF
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
IN ANTIQUITY

VOLUME II

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A HISTORY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN ANTIQUITY

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VOLUME II

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PART II (continued)
AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE HELLENISTIC AND
GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

The spiritual movement that changed the character of ancient autobiography will now become our more immediate concern. Our attention will be focused on the relations of the idea of personality to the ultimate problems of life as revealed in the philosophic meditation, the criticism of society, and the religious impulses that found their way into literature. No autobiographies in the proper sense of the word are available here—if we had a continuous sequence of them, how much clearer a view could we gain of the complicated development of moral and religious life at the outset of the Christian era ! For that development does indeed form the living background of the political forms of organization both in the Hellenistic states and in the Roman empire, even though in the latter its forces were temporarily prevented from attaining full growth by the Augustan Restoration.

In Hellenistic literature there were a number of literary *genres* in which an individual attitude to life could find adequate expression. The various forms of the diatribe, the moral and philosophical discourse, the Roman satire, the epistle, even the prelude (*prolalia*) which served as introduction to didactic lectures, took over that function, side by side, as we shall see, with other *genres* of a more strongly marked rhetorical character. But literary distinctions must here give place to the historical and psychological interest : we are trying to understand, as items of a coherent development, the inner multiplicity, the transitions, the germ-like forms which the individual's reflection on his own self assumed. The available material gives us scope for such an attempt. For there is a definite starting-point : Cicero, especially in his letters, is a fully authoritative witness to the level which individual consciousness of the self and the world had attained in his time, at the decisive turning-point of the period marked by the downfall of the Roman Republic. And there is a unifying feature that connects the various directions in which autobiographical introspection proceeded. It became increasingly clear

with the chronological process of history. We might characterize it as the transition from the age of science to a new religious epoch ; but this could not cover the whole field. The comprehensive movement then going on aimed at opening new paths of experience to satisfy the new spiritual needs of men.

In those centuries philosophy still remained the leading spiritual force, but took a new turn : it was in the very heyday of the natural science derived from philosophy that philosophic thought, stimulated by the growing sceptical tendencies, produced a critical realization of the limits set to scientific investigation and the vastness of what remains beyond its reach. Life itself could not but gain in profundity when man's confidence in scientific and technical civilization was shattered by the destruction of the security of life in the national political order.* In face of the press and turmoil of that world, increasing reflection, together with the intercourse between individuals who had to live under manifold forms of political and spiritual anxiety, must have made it unmistakably plain to all men of clear vision that, in spite of all that reason and logic could do, the fundamental mystery of human existence would remain. Thus the search began for an immediate hold on life—a hold that should enable man to elicit a response to the needs of the mind from the universe, the enigmatic character of which had become apparent. Man was trying to get into touch with the inner life-springs of the world, in order to free himself from the pressure of physical necessity, and to regain the harmony and inner tranquillity of his existence. Knowledge was still the catchword for this liberating contact; but the meaning of the words " knowledge " and " reason " was changing : man's actual personal experience became their driving-power, and it led to an insight into those deep layers of human existence in which passion and suffering and the feeling for the infinite obtained the character of positive values.

Objectively considered, this change, which we may regard as a deepening of the spiritual life of the ancients, had, it is true, another side : the characteristic self-confidence of the Hellenic man was finally lost in those depths, and the liberation of the spiritual self could, it seemed, no longer be effected entirely from within, but needed help from above, through the power of the godhead. Accordingly philosophy, instead of maintaining itself

* Cf. especially Seneca, *Epistola Morales*, 90, attacking Posidonius, who after turning to religion did not cease to accept that intellectual type of civilization.

† See above, p. 173.

as the free interpreter of life, was put on a level with religious revelation, indeed with theological dogma, so that it very soon became its servant. But this was a result of the conditions of the times in which the typical process of the inward turning of the mind took place ; the limitations of the scientific spirit of the ancients and of their consciousness of reality, which had to be overcome,* intensified the tendency toward transcendentalism. In fact, a new metaphysical feeling for life was in the making, and this is the point to which we must direct our attention : it is in metaphysical experience that the new, in a sense " modern ", type of autobiography had its roots—autobiography that dared to portray a soul in its journey through life.

The question now is, to what extent could the new enterprise of spiritual autobiography succeed even within the ancient forms of self-scrutiny, especially those of the Stoic school of thought, which was moving toward Neoplatonic religion ? and where, within the religious movements themselves, were the forces that intensified the tendency towards autobiography ? The great work of Saint Augustine was the complex product of an over-ripe civilization, and in the first centuries of the Christian era the scope of autobiography was even wider than that work might seem to suggest.

I. THE DISCLOSURE OF PERSONALITY IN CICERO'S LETTERS

At various turning-points in the development of autobiography in the Greco-Roman world we have come again and again upon Cicero. Often he is simply a witness to the existence in his time of branches of literature of which we no longer have any specimen ; often his words are mere vanity and self-praise, which give no indication of personality and were intended merely to make up for his lack of blue blood. Thus in his public speeches as elsewhere he speaks of himself at every opportunity, exaggerating his services, making much of his claims to moral and political worth, and also giving anecdotes from his career : it proved possible to compile from his autobiographical passages a *Vita Ciceronis* that runs to six hundred pages.¹ The very multiplicity of the forms of his self-portrayals—epic, *hypomnema*, political missive, story of his career, story of his writings, story of his development—shows an analytical consciousness of personality ; we find this sort of independent portrayal of various sides of a career elsewhere only

* See above, pp. 191 *sqq.*, and below, introduction to Part III.

in the Italian Renaissance, in Cardano, who, indeed, came in the end to a profound and comprehensive self-analysis. And at important points we saw Cicero, who also resuscitated the old Roman autobiographies, go, beyond the typical literary forms used by the autobiographers before him. His attempt to have his deeds recorded by a historian, with their emotional significance as details of a human life brought out; his embarking on an analytical explanation of his art of oratory, are enterprises such as we know of in no one else among the ancients. They point at the same time to the main directions in which his more intimate reflection upon himself moved. These first become apparent in the attitude he adopted in his philosophical writings. In the conversational setting of these works he liked to revive the historic time in which he had lived in imagination, the great period of the Scipios; in doing so he did not set his actual ego in the foreground, but the ideals in which he could see the perfection at which he had aimed in his endeavours; by recalling the experiences of his moral efforts he brought himself into a personal relationship with the Greek philosophy of those great days of Rome, a philosophy which he wanted to make his own and his nation's own. Thus he made the morally educative force of philosophy shine through his theoretical expositions as the *magistra vita*.

This influence of philosophy on life and purpose, which was the basis of the power of Cicero's writings; over Christian ethics from Ambrose to Petrarch and from Petrarch to Luther and Melancthon, was mentioned by Cicero himself, in a work devoted to the subject, as an influence he himself felt. In his sorrow at the death of his daughter Tullia (46 B.C.), the deepest emotion, he himself said, of his whole life, he withdrew into complete isolation, occupied only with his own work and seeking consolation only in the study of Philosophy; and he found comfort: in the writing of a *Consolatio*; this he dedicated to himself; in the midst of his grief he pointed out that this was something that no one had done before him.* This book² has not come down to us; nor has his other religiously tinged exhortation to guidance by philosophy, the *Hortensius*, which also probably fully reflected his deeper personal life; we can only note the effect these two works of Cicero had down to the last days of the

* Cicero, *ad Atticum*, X I I, 14, 3: *Omnem consolationem vincit dolor. Quin etiam feci quod profecto ante me nemo, ut ipse me per litteras consolaretur* ("My grief is beyond any consolation. Why, I have even done what surely no one has ever done before, tried to write one for myself!").

ancient world, when spiritual autobiography came to birth from philosophical and religious self-communion. In the *Hortensius* Cicero copied a work of Aristotle,³ so that it shows the influence of the Socratic and Platonic movement in philosophy ; it roused the young Augustine to a higher life, and even after his conversion, in Cassiciacum, the saint philosophized in Ciceronian forms ; and the idea of procuring for oneself the " consolation of philosophy " was taken up again by Boethius in his work with that title, the last, important self-portrayal of any eminent personality of ancient times.

We do, however, possess the most inestimable document in evidence of Cicero's capacity for revealing his personality—the letters to his intimate friend T. Pomponius Atticus. It is thanks to these that we are able to see how far a fundamentally genuine and intellectually eminent man, who had absorbed the culture of his age, was able to go in that age in self-disclosure.⁴

Private letters cannot, of course, be accepted uncritically as the expression of a man's personality. While in our groping for reality we try to draw as near as possible to the rough material of life, even the life of the soul being sought by preference in diaries and letters, our modern striving for the vividly presented leads us into an unfruitful intimacy as soon as we fasten on the small incidental human details in order to discover the actual reality of a life. The historian who sets out to give vividly the true content of a historic human life is fortunate in not being burdened with particulars which time has swept away, and in being able to throw aside the petty and all too ordinary details if he has had to investigate them. Such an ethical attitude to the story of a life was ensured by Goethe and Hegel; and not only Burckhardt but Taine, in reaction against the modern vice, forbade any publication of intimate private letters of his : " Above all," wrote Taine, " I desire that my ego, the living person with his tone of voice, his gestures, his household effects, shall escape from the public."*

Cicero is the first person, and the only one in ancient times, from whom we have an account of his intimate life in a correspondence which, published against his will and without discrimination, brought to light the really important in day-to-day association with his weak sides, his vanities, his social and political gossip, and his family troubles—so that in his case the

* *Vie et correspondance*, I, p. 2. " Je souhaite avant tout que le moi, la personne vivante avec son ton de voix, ses gestes, ses meubles, échappe au public."

process could set in that gives access to the character by way of trivialities and, if sufficient material could be got together, would degrade most men to the common level and allow only a few to stand out from their age as great figures. It is strange that Cicero of all men, who did everything he could to lay emphasis, in accordance with his Roman ideal, on the commendable things in his life, in pursuit of immortality, should have had to come down to posterity with all the miscellaneous episodic and psychological details of his existence. And yet the editors, with all their lack of respect, must be thanked for the preservation of these letters. For Cicero had more to offer than mere stuff for the curious. He gave no form, it is true, to this essential contribution. But this formlessness of the material was due mainly to a general limitation that was characteristic also of the position of autobiography in that transition period—to the discrepancy between the individualized sense of the self that had developed in Hellenistic spirituality, and the traditional conceptions of ideal worth with which a self-portrayal had to appear. In Cicero the differentiated content of mental life out of which autobiography was to renew itself was present in such a degree that it made a continual extensive expression of personal reactions to men and events a necessity to him, and he was able to draw the means for this from colloquial language ; but as it was not yet recognized as material of permanent value, its highly personal content was not so set out as to develop forms of its own and so to find its way into literature.

It is just on this, however, that is based our interest in these private letters : in them we have before us a sort of intimate diary in which a famous man, a historic personality of the highest order, gives us a direct revelation of himself, free from all artificiality—an unusual thing in any man of antiquity, and unexampled in a politician who was a master of oratory. The letters are full of the same political atmosphere which we found in the autobiographies of the last period of the Roman Republic ; the atmosphere is so unmistakable that a modern commentator, who was both a poet and a historian, found the chief significance of this human document in the fact that in it we

recognize all the frightful material of high political life—the acting against conviction, the leaguings with the powerful, the self-reproach, the self-indicting irony, the vain efforts to construct a philosophy out of all this inconsistency and deception—the bitterness, outward and inward, the awareness of being on the wrong path and unable to leave it, the bad conscience, the humiliations, the change of course too late and in vain • . .

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who gives this picture of the impression which Cicero's correspondence with his friend made on him: thus sums up his judgment on the much-discussed man :

He was a man of letters, a philosopher, an orator, plunged into an epoch of the utmost violence. His destiny involved him in fearful things, and he was not equal to them : his epoch hurled him to and fro like an ill-rigged ship in a storm—and he passed out of it with immense fame. His fame lived after him ; his association with such great events, with the last convulsions of such an institution as the Roman Republic, brought him immortality. The *Senatus populusque Romanns*, the lictors, the blare of the trumpets, the vast territories whose governorships were distributed after a banquet, the association with such figures as Caesar, Pompey, Antony, Cleopatra, all this throws on his memory shafts of fiery light. Whether we are personally concerned or not remains uncertain, but we follow the course of his life, fascinated by the stage on which his figure moves to and fro, by the gigantic and true dimensions of that age and none since it.

We are not concerned here with the great stage and the world-shaking actions, in which Cicero played a highly ambiguous part, but with his statements to his trusted friend in the midst of that insecurity of existence, statements that reveal him unmasked as the man he was. Instead of the rhetorical elaboration of which prose speech made use, even in autobiography, for the sake of artistic formation of sentences, and which found its way even into the actually unliterary *genre* of *hypomnemata*, these letters have a directness and truthfulness in (which the words are the simple expression of intimate things. Thus we find in these private letters for the first time the attitude to the actual ego that is the first condition for a more intimate treatment of autobiography ; this found its way only painfully and at a late period into literary self-portrayal, where it had to struggle up through the rhetoric. And Cicero shows the gift, so rare in men, of speaking his mind freely and without restraint in letters. The thing we see exemplified before Cicero's time only in the finest art of Hellenistic poetry, in the epigram⁵ (apart from the letters of Epicurus, of which we have too little to be able to judge), the capacity for reflecting the intimate, for full self-expression in a sudden flash, appears here in the natural flow of speech, spread over the whole succession of matters great and small, through twenty years of life, from the end of his thirties (68 B.C.).

Friendship between men, the element in which personal touch,

* Hugo v. Hofmannsthal in an article, " Biographic ", in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Vienna, December, 25, 1926.

in intellectual comradeship, was most naturally found in ancient times, here removes the insincerities with which social conventions cover the true nature of the individual, and permits a self-disclosure which was later to be effected amid deeper stirring of the spirit by the soul's intercourse with God. The more intimate, at times almost sentimental, quality which the ancients⁵ cult of friendship assumes in Cicero remains, it is true, bound up with his intercourse with his friend Atticus, and is not accorded elevation to the ethical ideal of friendship as envisaged and actually pictured by Cicero. The picture he gave in the *Lelius*,* a year before his death, as a fitting testimony to his bond with Atticus, a picture originating in a modified form of the Stoic philosophy, shows the main outlines of a friendship between outstanding men of Scipio's day,† rulers of the imperial republic, who were distinguished by their sincerity.

In contrast with this lofty ideal is the sort of friendship which Cicero actually enjoyed in his intercourse with Atticus : characteristic of it was his need to talk to a sympathetic hearer. To this he gives expression in one of the letters to his friend (I, 18). The letter dates from the time when Caesar, together with Crassus, joined Pompey in the so-called First Triumvirate, a coalition of despots that represented to Cicero the end of his hopes of the preservation and stabilization of the old Republic. He wrote at this time (January, 60 B.C.) :

Believe me, there is nothing I want so much at the present time as a person with whom I can share anything that causes me the least anxiety, a man who likes me, who *understands*, to whom I can speak without affectation, reserve, or concealment . . . and you whose conversation and advice have so often lightened my load of care and anxiety, who have aided me in my political life, been my confidant in my family affairs, and shared my conversations and projects—where are you ?⁶

He describes to his friend the desolation he feels when he finds among the crowd who wait for him daily and accompany him to the Forum no one to whom " an informal jest or a confidential

* Cicero, *Lelius*, *de amicitia*, I, 4,

† Note especially the treatment of the sentence " in amicitia nil fictum nil simulatum ", *ibid.*, VIII, 26; XVIII, 66; XXV, 92, 97 (the reference to unity and constancy of character, etc.) ; also the criticism of the *desiderium absentis amici*, " the longing for the absent friend ", as sign of a human being who is *infirmus mollisou natura et ob earn causam in amicitia parum Justus* (" weak and soft by nature, and for that reason not quite just in friendship "), XX, 75 ; on the need for communication only generalizations, *ibid.*, XXIII,

sigh " can be tendered, no relief from eternal political ambition and social formality, nothing of more than surface significance. So he exclaims to his Atticus that if they could have just one stroll together he would " be able to pour out to you all the things that disturb and oppress me ". The Stoic rule was that the true friend should be a second self, and here a subjective need for constantly pouring out his true feelings attached his actual self to his friend, so that the letter could fulfil the function of a monologue : *ego tecum tamquam mecum loquor*—" in talking to you I am virtually talking to myself" (VIII, 14). Here and there Cicero himself says that correspondence serves to relieve a man's heart simply by opening it to another person, even if he has nothing particular to say : he excuses himself to his friend, as he made excuse to the Roman world for his occupation with philosophy, by saying that he " began to write without knowing what", without anything that needed writing about or any thoughts worth passing on, simply because writing to his friend made him feel at peace and fairly cheerful.*

The content of these letters, too, offers a criterion for the development of self-scrutiny. The element that forms the general characteristic in the later examples of the autobiographical *genre*, the description no longer of the objective existence, to be captured in facts or types of character, but of the subjective reflection of events in the feelings, makes an early appearance here. A consciousness of this is found again in Cicero : he expresses it with significant particularity at the beginning of a letter from Rome (IV, 3 ; November, 57 B.C.) : " I am sure you are wanting to know what is going on here, and to know it from me too, not that there is any more certainty about events which take place before the eyes of the whole world, if I write to you about them, than if others either write or tell you of them ; but in order that you may see from my letters how I am taking events and what are my feelings and how I am getting on."

This implies that the traditional rigid conception of man's character as an ideal, unchangeable element in him, was no longer true to life, and that the individual had to take a larger view in the search for his own self. In Cicero we see the conflict of the opposed conceptions, the monumental and the dynamic idea of the true self; hence his unrest. The world-wide political upheavals amid which, without the needed portion of iron in his

* Cicero, *a Atticum*, IX, 10, 1 ; VIII, 14, 1 ; cf. IX, 4, 1 ; XII, 38, 3 ; and elsewhere.

spirit, he tried to assert his independent personality, had such an effect on him that self-scrutiny, far from resulting in the desired composure, revealed the vacillations of a shaken self-confidence, with outlines and shadows enlarged out of proportion. His soul had been filled by the national history with an ideal of personality that associated the true greatness to which he aspired with statesmanship, and at the same time with simple moral firmness of character, such as had been possible in the sound established order of the Republic. Thus he based his self-esteem on an illusion, so that it turned into vainglory, and the inner freedom of an independent mind which he really possessed was not appreciated by him as what it was, the fulfilment of his individual existence. But the basic sense which he always had of his personal significance was genuine ; he was too fond of regarding himself as the representative of the old Roman traditions to admit himself openly and deliberately to be the individual living person Cicero. His true self lies open to view in his letters, the living and sensitive human being that can be seen not only in high spirits but in perplexity, impotence, and despair. *Ex epistularum mearum inconstantia puto te mentis meae motum videre* (" From these inconsequent letters of mine I think you will see my disturbed state of mind ")—these are his own words (III, 8 ; written in exile in Thessalonica, May, 58 E.G.).

Expression is given to a surprising variety of feelings in these letters ; the range seems small only when the misleading measure of modernity is applied to it. Cicero can gossip and jest minteruptedly, make himself understood by means of allusions or between the lines, put his report on everyday matters and public events into the form of the conversation of a man of the world ; never does he become boring or long-winded ; often he is sarcastic ; he lets himself go so naturally, with such attractive because unusual freshness, that no fear of dropping into triviality disturbs or destroys his simplicity and genuineness. Keen thumbnail sketches sum up the political personages at work and the situations ; in conflicts or disagreements the feelings of friends are discussed with an eye to their character, and the attitude of persons spying on him is calculated. The points made in Greek so scintillate that one seems to breathe the air of humanism ; in thanking Atticus for his letters he wittily praises his friend's epistolary style. The literary man's existence finds expression in varying pictures : his Tusculum with the Greek statues is " my Academy " ; the library, more precious to him than all

other treasures, is what really gives his home " a soul " ; work as a sedative, the satisfaction of productiveness, the not unmixed comfort of giving vent with the stilus to repressed political passion, the pleasure in his own writings, with something to say about the place of each in his life—these and other things find expression.

But above all come the outpourings of his heart, especially in times of depression. Pompey's alliance with Caesar had made Cicero's position in Rome untenable ; he found himself isolated, and exposed to the attacks of his enemies, and escaped persecution by flight from Rome (58 B.C.). In the letters written in exile his lamentations are altogether unrestrained ; there is talk of tears as in the sentimentality of the eighteenth century. Hopes rise and fall ; he rails against the thankless world, against false friends, against himself ; he thinks how different all might have been ; he justifies his complainings on the ground of his immeasurable sufferings—" don't try to console me, above all don't reproach me, now when I so miss your love and your sympathy ! " (III, 11). So he writes in short notes, written more and more erratically, often with declarations that he is tired of life ; the sententiousness is gone and all is spontaneous and self-revealing ; constantly he plays with the thought of suicide : " O that the day may come when I shall feel able to thank you for making me go on living. At present I am truly sorry to have to " (III, 3). Then the political mood returns : " Be idle and flee to the haven of leisure—might not that tempt ? It would do so in vain. No ! into the fight, on to the field ! " He writes hotly in hatred or contempt or indignation ; now in confidence, now tortured by anxiety. In whole passages of daily outpourings we may observe his alternations of view in critical times, his indecision, his search for any indications of change in the political constellation, his attention to gossip, his expressions of feeling in the midst of weighing chances or considering duties. He thinks things over but reaches no conclusion, and at times he has no patience with reflections or theories ; he wants only facts and news from his friend. Or he watches himself: even the longing with which he awaits letters from Atticus becomes less marked.

Different from all the rest is the expression of emotion in the letters of the year in which his daughter died ; this one emotion reduces all the rest to a uniform undercurrent. Here Cicero lives through his sorrow with the consciousness of justification, whereas at other times when he gives way to a mood he feels that he is lacking in self-control; the feeling for children is in his view,

as he wrote to his friend on one occasion (VI, 2, 2), the deepest of natural emotions, the denial of which would mean the collapse of the whole system of human morality. He asks himself whether it is not wrong for him to seek relief in philosophical sources of consolation ; sometimes it seems wrong to him when he ceases to do so ; he talks of the solitude that he loves best after his friend, and mentions that he plunges from early morning to evening into " the thickly overgrown forest " ; the country house by the sea to which he has retired " is in harmony with my grief " ; we can see the passion subside, as he mentions it perhaps twenty times in gradually changing mood, speaking of the acuteness and the extent of the pain, its effect on his appearance, the healing influence of peaceful natural surroundings and of literary production—until he can note that he is once more master of his emotions but has lost his cheerfulness for ever. He cannot conceive what quarrel the world can have with his behaviour ; he plunges into the irrational, " *ἄλογως* fortasse ", and he dwells on the idea of an " apotheosis " of his daughter, for whom he has vowed to endow an eternal sanctuary, a chapel in a great park.

Into this mixture of self-observation and surrender to the impulse of the moment there then enters philosophical self-communion. In all the changing conditions Cicero seeks to sustain his moral consciousness ; this, together with his conceptions of his political destiny and the greatness involved in it, is always present in his mind as the criterion for his self-judgment. This is so instructive here because in these genuinely private letters the writer's actual experiences are discussed, so that in the midst of them their moral implication is reflected upon, unlike the forms of Stoic self-study, in which the moral ideas form the basic element, with which the things experienced are harmonized. Thus we are able to observe in Cicero's confessions various attitudes to moral reflection. The key-words are predominantly Greek, just as the most intimate elements and also the emphasis are expressed in Greek : similarly the emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote his soliloquies in Greek. So long as his position was unshaken, Cicero was able simply to declare his " greatness of soul " to his friend as in his public speeches—a greatness due to the " immortal fame " of his consulate, and he can be convinced by the simple statement of his present political measures that in them he makes visible " a more or less definite indication of my way of thinking and living ". He states that the supreme law of his activity is the establishment of the value of his personality beyond any

question : he will always have to maintain such a standard that his deeds in the past cannot be regarded as chance achievements.* To be true to himself, or, as he also expresses it, *se tueri*, to watch himself, remains his standard, dictating matters of conscience, which he places before himself and answers not with " yes " or " no " but according to the political situation at the time. This may be exemplified by a statement on his attitude at the turning-point in his political career* in the period following his consulate. In 60 B.C. Caesar invited him to join the coalition, but he declined the invitation—a refusal that was followed by the creation of the Triumvirate, with all its evil consequences for the supporter of the Republican ideals.

Now I come to my political attitude ; and I shall follow the fashion of the Socratic schools in giving both sides of the question, ending, however, as they do, with the one I prefer. It really is a point that requires much consideration. For either I have got to resist the agrarian measure † strongly, which would mean something of a fight, though I should gain prestige by it ; or I must hold my peace, which is equivalent to retiring to Solonium or Antium ; or else I must assist the measure, and that is what they say Caesar expects me to do beyond doubt. For Cornelius paid me a visit—I mean Balbus, Caesar's great friend. He assured me that Caesar will take my own and Pompey's opinion on everything, and that he will make an effort to reconcile Pompey and Crassus. On this side of the sheet may be placed an intimate connexion with Pompey and, if I like, with Caesar too, reconciliation with my enemies, peace with the populace, and ease in my old age. But my blood is still stirred by *the finale* I laid down for myself in the third book of my poem : J

Meantime the course you chose in youth's first spring,
And held to, heart and soul, 'mid civic strife,
Keep still, with growing fame and good report.

Since Calliope herself dictated those verses to me in a book full of passages in lordly vein, I ought not to have the least hesitation in holding

No omen better than to right one's country's wrongs. §

But this point must be reserved for our strolls at the Compitalia (the festival of the country cross-roads).

Even in his complaining letters from exile this purpose may be seen— "I have remained the same : my enemies have taken my possessions, not myself" ; " I miss not only my possessions and my family, but myself". He expresses the same idea in other forms. As he gives literary expression to his ideal in life, he likes

* Cicero, *ad Atticum*, I, 19, 6, 8 ; 20, 3.

† An agrarian law carried by Caesar, which provided for the distribution of the rich lands of Campania.

‡ On his consulate.

§ Iliad, XII, 243.

to think in proud or hesitant moments of the demands which the attitude of such writings as his epic on his consulate or the work on the State impose on him. And in deciding he puts himself the question what will be the judgment of history on him in centuries to come.*

We can see a deeper effect on his mind from the philosophic principles that are to give him firmness. After his political débâcle he found himself confined to literary production, but philosophy enabled him to make the best of his resignation, maintaining the attitude of the sage who has seen through the vanity of outward magnificence and can practise "indifference", especially in regard to politics. He compares the conflict he has undergone to the struggle for rank between the practical and the theoretical *bios*, and awards the crown to the latter.

Political activity or literary leisure—out of such fundamental questioning developed again in modern times the self-communion among the humanists, whose activities were directed toward the great field of politics, in association with Roman and Stoic ideas. In those unhappy years in which he found himself thrust out of political action by Caesar's rise, Cicero declared, with more justification than he was really ready to admit, that he had found in literary and philosophical activity the "life most in tune with my nature".† But he felt himself a philosopher also in the time of the break-up of the Triumvirate, when he was compelled by Pompey to leave Rome for a year in order to govern Cilicia (51 B.C.). From the provincial administration forced on him he drew an inward profit through regarding it as an opportunity to test the moral character formed by philosophy. From the "exile" which he felt his official service in that province of Asia Minor to be, he writes to Atticus :

Your friend Cicero has won all hearts by his justice and self-restraint and clemency . . . You shall marvel at my mental discipline when I safely return home. I have so much practice in that virtue . . . I am not going to tell of continence, a quality connoting resistance to pleasure ; for nothing in my life has given me more pleasure than my rectitude. And it is not so much the enhancement of my reputation, though that is important, as the matter itself that delights me. I can tell you my exile has been worth while, for I did not understand myself or realize how far I could go in this direction. I may well be puffed up.‡

* *Ad Atticum*, I I, 4, 2 ; 24, 4; and elsewhere ; I I, 18, 3 ; III, 5 ; 15, 2 ; II, 3, 3 ; V, 3, 4 ; II, 5, 1 ; VII, 11, 1 ; IX, 18.

† *Ibid.*, I I, 5, 2 ; 17, 2 ; 16, 3 ; IV, 16, 10 (18, 2).

‡ *Ibid.*, V, 10, 3 ; 16, 3 ; 20, 6 (recte *πεφυσίωμαι*, cf. Paul in 1 Cor. iv. 6).

Then, however, we see—and it is the rule—how the continual self-observation and effort at self-justification result in loss of confidence and sweep him off his feet. Watching himself in the light of his moral aspirations, he feels afraid that he may do something unworthy of himself, and finds relief in reflecting on his unblemished character, but is unable to rest content with that reflection. When a decision becomes urgent, he not only burdens himself with advice from his friends but considers every possible person in Roman and Greek history who in a similar situation pursued a path recognized as meritorious or reprehensible. He provides a basis for his unsettled intentions in the form of "political theses", eleven in number, formulated in Greek: in this way he tries to bring home to himself the range of his duties; and by turning them over and over in Greek or Latin wherever he goes he tries to "become clear as to what must be done", finding relaxation at the same time in the exercise of his intelligence. Arriving at an impasse, he takes his friend's letters for the last couple of months, looks through each one for the advice it gives, and comes to the conclusion that, having had good occasion for his irresolute behaviour, he can rest satisfied with it: he has done his best to deal justly. He gives the reason himself for his indecision: "I talk with you as I talk with myself; and does not anyone, in settling things of this sort, weigh the pros and cons over and over again?" *

To this mood belongs self-reproach after the event. In the most varied situations of misfortune, in exile or after the battle of Pharsalus, and just as much after his daughter's misalliance, he suffers mental tortures: "Chance is responsible for nothing that I regret: it has all been my fault." f So he gives vent to penitence, or to scruples—not moved by religious humility, but nevertheless showing, however much he may throw blame on external influences, the guidance of conscience.

What, then, was the effect of these documents, with their revelation of the life of a man who was regarded by the generations that immediately followed him as the representative of Greco-Roman culture and the perfecter of Latin prose? Such effect as is visible throws a strong light on the general condition of self-portrayal in that period. Again and again we see that only the supremely cultured were capable of expressing the growing inwardness in autobiographical writings, before mediaeval

**Ibid.*, IX, 10; VIII, 3, 3; 12, 1; IX, 4; 9, 1; VIII, 14, 2.

†*Ibid.*, XI, 9; III, 8, 4; 20, 1 (*cf. Ep. ad Fam.*, XIV, 3); XI, 17, 1; 23, 1; ‡, 8, 6; IX, 6; and elsewhere.

Christianity made the requisite psychological condition common property, and virtually a component of human nature. In general the attitude to Cicero's self-revelations is similar to that with which we are familiar in ancient autobiography in regard to the things experienced ; the formal rhetorical attitude that regards even such intimate letters only superficially, paying attention to their literary art and collecting gems of wisdom, and accordingly preferring, simply for their rhetorical style, the less personal letters *ad familiares*—to his friends,—a collection usable as a model of style.⁷ If ever attention is paid to the content, the interest is that of curiosity, as with court memoirs. Thus Cornelius Nepos, who was personally acquainted with Atticus, was permitted to see the holograph letters, and is able to tell us that in them a true history of those days is to be found, with all the changes in the State and with the secret views and the secret vices of the leading persons, all made entirely clear and manifest with acuteness, or, rather, with a prophetic gift.⁸ And even Seneca, in mentioning these letters (Ep. 118, 2), dwells only on the political gossip—in order to express, with a gesture of superiority, his contempt for such trifles and to contrast with them the moral content of his own volumes of letters :

I shall not do as the eloquent Cicero bids Atticus do : " Even if nothing enters your head to write about, write nevertheless." For there will always be something for me to write about, even omitting all the kinds of news with which Cicero fills his correspondence : what candidate is in difficulties, who is struggling on borrowed resources and who using his own ; who is a candidate relying for the consulship on Caesar, or on Pompey, or on his own strong-box ; what a merciless usurer is Caecilius, out of whom his friends cannot screw a penny for less than one per cent a month. It is preferable to deal with one's own ills rather than with another's.⁹

Was Seneca, and were others from whom we have no expressions of opinion, really unmoved by the personal element in these documents ? When Seneca, a philosophic writer who played an important part in the gradual establishment of the dignity of individuality, can dismiss the content of the letters so casually, it is because of the influence of the attitude of his own Epistles, in which he displayed in his own person the ideal type of man's moral personality with ideal openness. When, at the dawn of a later age, Petrarch made acquaintance with his Cicero as a human being¹⁰ through the rediscovery of the letters (1345), a similar relationship, only more deeply felt, was given expression. For Petrarch the reading of the letters destroyed an illusion : in place

of the ancient sage he found an "eternally restless, eternally worried" being, who "forgot his own salutary teachings"; who, "like a wanderer by night, bears his torch, and plunges into the darkness", himself stumbling as he lights the way for others. It was not to his taste that Cicero's life lacked "the constancy of nature befitting a sage"—and yet he himself had made the subject of his own writings the full life of a human soul amid its changing impulses, and to him the ideal attitude of a sage had been only one of many forms in which he felt his boundlessly excitable self. We first find the modern viewpoint expressed on this, as so often in the attitude to historic figures, by Montaïgne. In a chapter of his *Essays* dealing with books and authors he says:

As for Cicero, those of his works that can serve my purpose are the ones that treat of philosophy, especially moral. But, boldly to confess the truth, . . . his style of writing seems tiresome to me . . . I like to look at the epistles *ad Atticum* not only because they contain very ample instruction on the history and the affairs of his time; but still more to discover in them his private humours; for I have a singular curiosity, as I have said elsewhere, to know the soul and the naive judgments of my authors.¹¹

11. SELF-PORTRAYAL IN REALISTIC LITERATURE

There are two main directions in which the individualization proceeding from intellectual activity can find expression. One is that of the self-scrutiny we have seen developing in the philosophical movement from Socrates and Plato onward. The immersion of the thinking subject in itself enables the increasing value of inner experience to be realized by the individual directly in his feelings: here the moral activity is transferred to a man's own interior; the problem is to find and hold on to one's true self, and in the effort to do so the energy and the wealth of the inner life increase with the degree of the individual's awareness of it. Thus the limits of self-revelation are widened stage by stage. In tracing the intellectual movement that led to this result, we have seen in Cicero the personal sense of life breaking through the ancient barriers as he gave vent to it in his intimate letters, and we shall see in the Stoic works of self-scrutiny how far that sort of analysis of the personality which proceeds from moral philosophy could go in ancient times.

But it would be a curtailing of historic reality to regard the formation of personality, bound up, as we have seen, with the

awareness and evaluation of it, as coming simply from these sources. Such changes cannot be reduced to a straight line of development as can the progress in natural science. There is, in a sense, a direct path leading from the Stoic conception of the free personality to Marcus Aurelius' book "To Myself" and to the Neoplatonic life of seclusion, and thence through the Christian experience to Augustine's "Soliloquies", a work of self-scrutiny preceding his "Confessions". But this path, along which the critical turn in ancient autobiography lies, does not exhaust every possibility of its development in ancient times. Even in Augustine's "Confessions" the author is not concerned exclusively with his inner life, but also pays attention to the world man lives in; this tendency seems all the more important since it conflicted with the general attitude of this converted rhetorician in confessing his sins. Saint Augustine would have been able to write a romance of social life.

In ancient literature there was a connexion between autobiography and realistic creative writing. The writer's individuality had become strong enough and self-assured enough to allow him to see the varied and complicated doings of men with his own eyes, so that, without elaboration in accordance with a preconceived ideal, he formed a picture of human life. This kind of picturing of reality by a detached intelligence shows the other tendency by which self-portrayal was guided in the philosophico-literary movement of the Hellenistic epoch.

Once more there is only an isolated and late testimony that gives us information about an autobiographer of this type. In his history of Christian literature entitled "Famous Men", compiled on the Hellenistic model, Saint Jerome mentions a certain Acilius Severus, who died in Spain in 370, and states, as Severus' one title to fame, that he wrote the story of his life in a book partly in prose and partly in verse. This baroque form was characteristic of the realistic or humorous description of life which was created as an independent literary *genre* by Menippus, the eminent Greek writer of Phoenician origin, a follower of the Cynics (about 300 B.C.)—the Menippean satire, as this Hellenistic *genre*, particularly cultivated in the literature of Rome, is generally called: the Latin title *Satura* simply means "Miscellany".

There is nothing much that can be said about that autobiographical work, since we have only the one mention of it; we shall return to it later. But the association of autobiography

with the satirical form of literature, thus indicated to us, is of real importance to us, and we should like to try to show that in Hellenistic-Roman literature autobiographical writings of this type were possible. For here, unlike the so-called Hellenistic love-story, which made use of first-personal narrative only in order to deceive the reader as to the remoteness of the romance from reality, there is an actual inter-relationship with biography, confirmed again and again by the history of the realistic novel in modern times in the great Spanish novelists of the time of the late Renaissance, and, indeed, from the Middle Ages onward. This relationship rests upon an attitude towards existence common to the realistic novel and biography, in which there is a philosophic tendency at work, even though some authors of this school, and not the worst, disclaim philosophy as in their view merely the stuff of schoolbooks.

This attitude to existence, influenced by philosophy, finds expression in a definite way of conceiving reality, which grows, with the growing intellectuality of the sense of self, into a power in literature. Man here faces life as the intelligence, aware of its power, faces an unfamiliar fact in nature ; the intelligence can no longer naively accept the enigmas of this world ; it wants to observe, analyse, and master them. Man here faces life objectively as if it were something unfamiliar to him, like a strange fact in nature. Assured of his power to explain everything, he simply can no longer accept the turmoil of this human world, but wants to master it with his intellect by observing its actualities and dispassionately analysing them. In the judgment of these novelists, the merit of the writer resides, therefore, in his keen eye for human realities, human characters, and typical situations showing the human animal beneath the social conventions. Anxious not to impair the true picture of life as actually lived, he should refrain from completing his work as a whole formed from within ; its artistic unity, as far as it is attained, is transferred from the subject-matter of the narrative to the intellectual activity of the narrator, who introduces himself as a detached observer exhibiting his view of the narrated facts and action.

Presenting himself in this way as he looks at life and the world, he succeeds, owing to his detachment, in conveying to the reader the impression of factual truth while by means of wit and humour he makes even the smallest detail precious in the light of higher standards held against the disenchanting picture of men and manners presented in the novel. These standards

range, according to the intellectual calibre of the writer and the healthiness or over-ripeness of the civilization to which he belongs, from the mother wit of the normal human understanding to the superior scepticism of the man of the world.

To this attitude to reality belongs a sort of biography in the widest sense of the word as the faithful portrait of an individual, or, rather, a typical man in his adventures in life. In the literary carrying out of this conception it makes no substantial difference whether the varied details of adventure, which rebel against any regular form, are obtained from a man's own life, as in autobiography, or from other sources, as in a novel ; the field of a man's own experience can only become of more and more importance in proportion as observation becomes psychologically profounder. Biographical treatment is here so natural because the intellect is entirely right in holding that it will never know a man in his " essence " and from within and must therefore try to collect all possible sorts of relationships and situations in life in order to show him in real action ; for which a biography or parts of one are admirably suited, like descriptions of travel ; and humour and irony, which obviously have their existence only in the artistic pleasure of working up the material, can be directed equally well upon a man's own person and upon the world, because it is not the whole self but its facets and corners that come under the lens.

The type of realistic literature thus outlined is sharply distinguished from other types of description of the varied realities of life with which we also meet in the history of autobiography. When the autobiographer so penetrates with his personality the adventurous episodes of his life of which he tells that his whole self is visible in every scene, a dramatic form, one might say a heroic one, comes into existence : in primitive strength and with the totality-creating plasticity of an artist's imagination, Benvenuto Cellini shows in his *Vita*, and Cardinal de Retz in his political memoirs, in emulation of Corneille and Molière, this form of autobiography, which developed in the Renaissance in various individual portrayals. Of the possibility of such pictures in ancient times we know nothing. There is also no trace of any person having simply narrated his own life-story out of pure joy in the communication of the true details without any ulterior motive. On the other hand, the possibility of an autobiography in the " satirical " style in ancient times is offered by the simple fact that the autobiographer's attitude to his

subject did not differ greatly from that of the heterobiographer, as we have already emphasized.

The realistic novel has a special affinity not only to biography but to the literary form of first-personal narrative. In the *Satyricon* of Petronius (about A.D. 60), a Latin masterpiece of the genre, of which at least part has come down to us in considerable fragments, we meet with that form as an established technique. The speaker tells of his own and his companions' adventures in the luxurious towns of southern Italy. We meet with it also in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius (about A.D. 160), or "The Golden Ass", as that Latin collection of stories and its Greek model are generally called, because the main feature is that the young hero goes through all his adventures in the form of an ass. The first-personal narrative of the biographical sort, which came into existence in this humorous type, was not yet an autobiography, but was nearer to it than other applications of this primitive form of story.* For the narrator is introduced in this sort of story not simply as its hero or a fellow-actor or sufferer, and thus as speaking from his own experience, but also as an observer of himself and of the world. Accordingly his person is so chosen in the type of romance here in question that it is able to live itself and to watch in others the true life of the natural man in every situation, freed from all social and conventional restrictions; thanks, however, to the first-personal narrative the possibility always remains of transition between fiction and actual experience.—These important relationships call here only for mention; they will be dealt with more fully at a later stage.

In spite of all research, the origin of this realistic art ¹² in Hellenistic-Roman literature, an art that had received so different an outlook from that of the classical forms, lies in almost unbroken obscurity, as does, indeed, in modern times the origin of the realistic novel or novel of manners in Spain. The philosophic spirit that guided it cannot be confined to a definite school, though the philosophic tendency of the Cynics predominates, with its contempt of social conventions, its break with the aristocratic social order, and its ideal of the return to nature. After all, the distinctions so sharply drawn in the schools had to disappear when life became the thinker's problem. It was not a question of a first discovery of the substance of reality, which had a firm traditional place outside literature in the mimic shows alike of the Italian people and of the ' Hellenistic

* Cf. Introduction, pp.

society,¹⁸ but of the coming into existence of a mental outlook that sought to extract from such material the truth of the world of men : thus this process necessarily ran parallel with the deepening of the consciousness of personality.

In this epoch of radical transformations in the broad field of general civilization, it was the task of philosophy to maintain the leadership, and so to influence large numbers of people. Out of this task literary forms came into prominence in Hellenism, in which the description of life was practised in short and vivid sketches with a moral tendency. Consequently, with the other literature concerning man and his moods and duties (a literature rooted in self-communion), these forms preceded the realistic novel, just as in seventeenth-century France the literary forms of maxims and character-studies preceded the adaptation of picaresque romance by Lesage, or a century later the moralizing weekly journals preceded Fielding and Sterne. In the ancient world those literary forms received characteristic shape through the public demonstration and the predominance of speech-making, as is evident in the principal form of these works of popular philosophy, the diatribe.¹⁴ Here the exposition does not give a clear and finished statement of the thoughts, but aims at creating the impression of a process of thought going on in the narrator's mind, a process partly determined by the assumed opinions of the public : the speaker or writer interrupts himself with objections and doubts of his own, which seem to be forced on him at the moment by the matter itself. We find the diatribe defined in this sense by the famous Greek treatise on style, or, as its title reads, " On Great Writing ",* in which the unknown author (about A.D. 50), like a modern romanticist, advocates a creative art liberated from the fetters of traditional rules. He deals with that form of writing in a separate chapter,¹⁵ and contends that a vivid and impressive effect, and above all the stamp of sincerity so essential for every subjective narrative, is thus secured. Similarly the other, even looser form, which came into autobiography from this popular philosophical literature, the mixture of verse and prose (and verse not merely by way of digression or quotation but as a part of the story, serving like the prose to carry it on), may have appeared then to the realistic writers as natural or true to life because an irrationally mixed reality was reflected in this mixed, or rather formless, literary form.

* This is the more accurate rendering of the title *Περὶ ὑψους*, usually translated " On the Sublime ". See E. E. Sykes, *The Greek view of Poetry*, 1931, p. 209.

While these works came from the Cynics with their downright contempt for all conventions, there was nevertheless room here for a more positive interpretation of life, which a philosophical writer aiming at popularization set out to provide for the crowd in free personal narrative, unhampered by theoretical ballast. We know of a popular satirical poetry produced by the Stoics, and in the earlier *Sermones* (satires) of Horace we see the diatribe turned into an elegant and flexible medium for his description of the Epicurean art of living.¹⁶ In any case, it was not the disintegrating elements of parody and wit but a consistent and comprehensive view of the world that was at work when the attempt could be made to disclose the authentic self, if only in part.

We may also, perhaps, safely assume that the sceptical way of thinking represented since the third century B.C. by the Platonic Academy (which, in spite of all its struggle against dogmas as well as against the deceptiveness of perception by the senses, always had a positive mainstay in the idea of truth) had an important share in this as well as in the gradual revelation of inner experience. In one of Plutarch's essays there is a remark about mankind, drawn from that sphere, which plainly expresses a fundamental sense of this realism, which we have already seen in Polybius. Plutarch there develops the phrase of Heraclitus, " universal flux ", in a sense similar to that given to it in Plato's *Theatetus* by Protagoras, the leader of the original Sophist movement, with reference to human life. The view of an unstable, manifold, irrational nature of the individual, never leading on to firm soil, appears here as a popular philosophical teaching in opposition to the conception of the unity of the person, and this teaching serves as a springboard for the ascent to the idea of absolute existence, indicated by the address to the godhead, " Thou art " :¹⁷

The man in his prime passes away when the old man comes into existence ; the young man passes away into the man in his prime ; the child into the young man, and the babe into the child. Dead is the man of yesterday, for he has passed into the man of today ; and the man of today is dying as he passes into the man of tomorrow. Nobody remains what he is, nobody is one person ; but we become many persons, even as matter is drawn about some one semblance and common mould with imperceptible movement. Else how is it that, if we remain in the same persons, we take delight in some things now, whereas earlier we took delight in different things ; that we love or hate opposite things, and so too with our admirations and

our disapprovals, and that we use other words and feel other emotions and have no longer the same personal appearance, the same personal form, or the same purposes in mind? For without change it is not reasonable that a person should have different experiences and emotions; and if he changes, he is not the same person; and if he is not the same person, he has no permanent being, but changes his very nature as one person in him succeeds to another . . . In fact, each of us may be regarded, in view of the thousands of changes suffered, as a mixed heap of humanity such as assembles at festivals.

The sceptical spirit that befits a man of the world was present in Lucilius (c. 150-103 B.C.), the first great satirist of Italian blood, who impressed on the *genre* with its Latin name the peculiar Roman stamp. At the centre of Hellenistic-Roman civilization, in the company of the younger Scipio, he was able to acquire the Greek freedom and mobility of the personality, and at that turning-point of Roman intellectual life he stood, with the aggressiveness Archilochus had shown in the past, in the midst of the political movement—the movement that led to the revolution brought about by the Gracchi. Like Archilochus he stood ready to observe without restraint, and to pillory within the limits set to his art, all that called for rough handling by the new spirit, or was actively hostile to it, together with the eternally present meannesses and stupidities of everyday life.

It was the type of personal poetry that was the product of an intelligence that dominated the imagination; Horace, who must have been the best qualified to appreciate these descriptions of life (lost to us), because he himself pursued the same path, and went farther along it, as an artist, characterized them from points of view akin to autobiography:

ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
credebat libris, neque si male cesserat, usquam
decurrrens alio, neque si bene; quo fit ut omnis
votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
vita senis.*

"As if painted on a votive tablet"—meticulously, with every detail, as in the painted descriptions, put up in a temple under an endowment, of some dangerous situation in life from which there had been a fortunate escape.¹³

* He in olden days would trust his secrets to his books,
as if to faithful friends, never turning elsewhere
for resource, whether things went well with him or ill.
So it comes that the old poet's whole life is open to view,
as if painted on a votive tablet.

—Horace, *Satires*, I I, 1, 30. Translated by H. R. Fairclough (as also is the following quotation), in the Loeb Classical Library.

Horace and Varro then show us various sorts of the humorous attitude to the self, which is of importance to the realistic branch of autobiography. Marcus Varro, whose intellectual stature was probably not particularly exalted, took as the subject of one of his many lively satires, which he wrote in a mixed style, a direct account of his intellectual and probably also his soldierly adventures : the title itself (*Sesculixes*—"Ulysses and a half") suggests the excessively robust pleasure in self-caricature, observable also in the fragments in parody of the scholar and the moralist and in many lapses from respectability. This comic story has been claimed as a " model for the further development of the Menippean Satire into the first-personal novel." ¹⁹ It may also be that in another satire, the " Double Marcus " (*Bimarcus*), Marcus Varro made humorous use of the incompatibilities of various sides of his character in order to illustrate, in a burlesque monologue, the variegated nature of his bright writing. ²⁰

In Horace, on the contrary, there is a harmonious outlook on the world, the refined culture of an aristocratic society of the Augustan monarchy ; the poet's artistic taste tones down the glaring colours generally used in the description of realities, and what he says of himself and of others comes as if from a world of his own. The liveliness has turned here from the superficiality of the diatribe style to the sense of personality, through which, amid all the inherited stock of literary figures and philosophic rules for the conduct of life, he places trust only in his own conscience, and accordingly possesses a cheerful sureness, which dismisses with lofty unconcern his own share of human weaknesses or conceals the satisfaction of his personal peculiarities beneath an ironical phrase. As one such idiosyncrasy he mentions the autobiographical element of his satires; the verses just quoted, in which he mentioned this element in Lucilius, he wants to be understood as referring also to himself:

quot capitum vivunt, totidem studiorum
milia : me pedibus delectat claudere verba
Lucili ritu . . .
Sequor hunc, Lucanus an Apulus anceps . . .
Ne longum faciam : seu me tranquilla senectus
expectat seu mors atris circumvolat alis,
dives, inops, Romae, seu fors ita iusserit, exsul,
quisquis erit vita scribam color.*

The genuinely personal poetry he wrote is a work *sui generis*,

* See next page, 380

giving a complete picture of life. From a modern point of view it may be regarded as the revelation of the poet's subjective existence, and may accordingly be described, in the words of classical scholars, as fragments of autobiography or of a "general confession"²¹—a confession, it is true, without penitence.

The development of a true autobiography in this variable style, satirical or realistic, is full of problems. An eminent student of Hellenistic literature speaks, with reference to the stories of marvels then fashionable, of the "intermingling and exchanging of the experiencing and the writing ego".²² This also holds true of the humorous story-telling or "romance of manners" that reveals a realistic quality in contrast with that fictional *genre*. In spite of this contrast, the two different kinds of novel agree in the use of first-personal narrative. This agreement is very reminiscent of what we observed in the ancient Egyptian art of story-telling. † One may surmise, therefore, that oriental influences may have promoted the mingling of fiction and actuality in popular Hellenistic writings. Whatever may have been the case in regard to this, in genuine Latin literature we have a definite historical indication in the masterly satirical romance of Petronius, of which at least one substantial fragment is extant, "Trimalchio's Feast". When, in the frivolity-laden air of the court of Nero, Petronius with his magic wand rounded up the figures from the street and the tavern, Rome's pleasures and her semi-Greek cosmopolitanism, into a human comedy, and his supreme genius found scope in an aesthetic treatment of existence, with satire which cut so deep that, without moralizing, it dissected and painted the true human animal with unemotional exactitude—then a work of art was created which made visible to all men the importance of such fields of experience to the realization of what life is. That was capable of encouraging others to disclose similar episodes of their own lives, as, in seventeenth-century Spain, after the creation of the *novela picaresca* many an autobiographer introduced himself as a new Lazarillo de Tormes.

* Satires, I I, i, 27-9, 34, 57-9.

"For every thousand living souls there are a thousand tastes.

My own delight is to shut up words in feet, as did

Lucilius . . .

He it is that I follow, I, a Lucanian or an Apulian, I know not which . . .

To be brief—whether peaceful age awaits me or Death hovers round with sable wings,

rich or poor, in Rome, or, if chance so bid, in exile,

whatever the colour of my life, write I must."

† See above, Introduction, pp. 46-7, 55-6.

The social sphere in which the moral adventurousness of living necessary for this sort of autobiography was combined with intellectual interests seems to have lain mainly in the field of the rhetoric saturated with religious excitement and the imagination of the abnormal—or of the "Sophists", as the *literati* working through the spoken word were called after the so-called second sophistic movement in the Augustan epoch—a school of thought filled with the love of self-revelation, from which we shall see other autobiographical writings come. Naturalism was able to ally itself with a religiosity which, like it, did not shape man from within; this is shown not only by the Spanish art of the baroque period but by the development of not a few modern French writers.

An indication is given by the way *Apuleius* made use of autobiography in his romance of manners, the "Metamorphoses". Lucius Apuleius, who was born in Madaura, in Numidia, represents for us the Hellenistic type of "Sophist" among the Latin writers of the middle of the second century after Christ. The "Metamorphoses", stories translated by him from Greek, as he himself states, "of the forms and fortunes of men transformed into different shapes, and then restored again in due sequence back into their own persons", show in the virtuosity of the highly-coloured literary expression, with the marked African dialect, the use of the naturalistic style in the full splendour of the baroque.

The autobiographical element has its place here at the beginning and the end of the work. At the beginning the narrator, before he presents himself in the form of an ass, introduces himself as the author of the marvellous stories, with wittily invented data :²³

Hymettus of Athens, the Isthmus of Corinth, Taenarus of Sparta, being famous lands . . . be places where my ancient progeny and lineage did sometime flourish : there when I was young I went first to school and learned the Attic speech. Soon after (as a stranger) I arrived at Rome, where by great industry, and without any school-master, I arrived at the full perfection of the Latin tongue : behold, I first crave and beg your pardon, lest I should happen to displease or offend any of you by the rude and rustic utterance of this strange and foreign language. And verily this change of speech doth correspond to the enterprise and matter whereof I purpose to treat.

In this foreward there is little of note beyond the pleasure in literary parody, while the author's introduction of himself is a simple following of a convention. Similarly in one of the "Sophist" romances of that period we find a bit of the author's

own life-story inserted in the middle of the work.* The first Italian translator of the " *Metamorphoses* " was able in the sixteenth century to make use of that self-introduction to incorporate his own autobiography, expanding the ten lines to a page and a half.†

The other autobiographical passage put at the end of the romance allows us to see into the attitude of mind underlying the self-portrayal and its characteristic style. At the end of the adventures, when the ass, not merely a comic figure but one that pictures the amoral attitude of the hero of a comic romance, has returned to human shape, Apuleius does really bring himself into the story, departing from his Greek exemplar²⁴ in order to confess in a loud voice his own religious awakening, like a picaroon turned monk. This final section of the romance (Book XI) begins with a long rhetorical prayer which the ass, awakening suddenly at midnight from a sweet, sound sleep on the bosom of the sand at a secret place on the sea-shore, addresses joyfully, though in tears, to the goddess who will redeem him :

O blessed queen of heaven, whether thou be the Dame Ceres . . . or the celestial Venus . . . or the terrible Proserpine . . . : by whatsoever name or fashion or shape it is lawful to call upon thee, I pray thee to end my great travail and misery and raise up my fallen hopes, and deliver me from the wretched fortune which so long time pursued me. Grant peace and rest to my adversities, for I have endured enough labour and peril. Remove from me the hateful shape of mine ass, and render me to my kindred and to mine own self Lucius : and if I have offended in any point thy divine majesty, let me rather die if I may not live.²⁵

There follows a vision that gives the rhetorician the opportunity to display all his art in the description of the divine semblance of the redeemer Isis. After his prayer the ass is restored to human shape by her high priest during a solemn procession of the initiates, and ultimately he himself becomes a priest in her service. The main part of this section is occupied by his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. To this we shall return later, in connexion with religious self-portrayal and soul-history. ;£

*In Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca*, in connexion with a digression on magic. Cf Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*, pp. 361 and 371. More or less comparable is Cervantes' introduction into " *Don Quixote* " of an account of his own captivity in Africa.

† Agnoli Firenzuola (born 1493), *L'Asino d'Orb* (Venezia, 1550). Lorenzo Scala states in the dedication that the translator did here what he had done in no other book, *fare memoria delta vita sua*, " made a memoir of his own life ". Reprinted in *Bibliotheca rara*, XXIV (Milano, 1863).

‡ See below, pp. 520-1.

Romantic as are the complications in which the ass is involved, Apuleius felt them to be not so abnormal that they could not be presented as a picture of real life- This he did with such thoroughness that he made the picture the broad basis of his exposition of the religious end and aim of human life, which he interpreted as man's deliverance from the toils of this world. Accordingly he went straight on from the "pleasant Grecian jest-", told in a very different spirit, to tell of his own initiation into the mysteries as a "triumph over destiny".²⁶ This combination of a humorous element belonging to the romance of manners with a serious one related to religion was not merely an artificial device but was characteristic of the intellectual outlook of the time ; it corresponds to the actual careers described in the autobiographies of adventurous Spaniards of the seventeenth century, and it corresponds also to the nature of the realistic novel. For this kind of novel does not come to an end of its own accord, since the hero's adventures are used to depict social manners, which can be made fun of without end, so that a real conclusion, not an arbitrary one, is effected only through negation of the whole sphere of existence, through a break with Fortuna, which is secured most easily by means of religion. From its religious ending Apuleius' whole book came to be misinterpreted. Later generations regarded the "Metamorphoses" as the confessions of a magician, and even Augustine was not ready to decide definitely whether his fellow-countryman's work was truth or invention.²⁷

LUCIAN

To the African Apuleius the religious revival that inspired the autobiographical conclusion of his romance was a sacred reality. Different was the case of *Lucian*, who was a contemporary of Apuleius, living from about A.D. 120 to after 180, and was probably the most famous of all the Hellenistic Sophists. His mockery stopped short at nothing, however sacred, whether in religion or in philosophy. In his writings humorous self-portrayal appears from a new angle—new, perhaps, only for us ; for Lucian was one of the chief representatives of the archaizing tendency that became dominant in Greek literature. He came from Samosata, on the Euphrates, but through his study of the classical authors he gained a purity of Attic Greek in writing and speaking for which he became famous. He made a position for

himself in the literature of his time by "excavating" Menippus, as he put it. He made use of the art of satire which Menippus had created five centuries earlier, and applied it to the criticism of the culture of his day—if the irresponsible mockery of human follies, pride of purse, intellectual arrogance, superstition, credulity in matters of religion, and the like can be called cultural criticism. His amusing writings became so popular that eighty of them have come down to us, most of them short works in the form of lectures or dialogues (or, what amounts to the same thing in the Menippean dialogue, virtual scenes of comedy), which he used to read to the public, probably with appropriate mimicry.

Five of these works are autobiographical in content and aim. In many others he tells in the first person of interesting experiences, actual or invented. He tells, for instance, of a wedding feast to which representatives of the various schools of philosophy were invited as guests of honour, and he describes their bad behaviour, their greed for money, their garrulity, their gluttony—while he looks on with such shame that he wishes the earth would swallow him up.²⁸ This is one of his many caricatures that turn upon the difference between precept and practice. Another sketch deals with a real occurrence. In A.D. 165 he visited Olympia, and just after the games he was present when the Cynic philosopher Peregrinus cremated himself in the fashion of Indian ascetics. Lucian wrote of this remarkable incident in the form of a letter to a Platonist, in order to stigmatize the exhibition of religious enthusiasm and to point out its very human motives. In such a sacrifice of life he could see only a vain pursuit of celebrity.

In the autobiographical works he writes of critical turns in his life, which was that of a rather shifty man of letters. No less numerous than these changes—or, as he calls them, conversions—are the names under which he appears, where he does not simply write in the first person. As one of the speakers in a dialogue he often calls himself Lycinus (*Λυκῖνος*), following a literary fashion in putting his name into a Greek form. He also calls himself "the Syrian", or "Candour", with reference to his mission as satirist. The varied collection begins with a first-personal narrative, entitled "The Dream, or Lucian's Life" (*bios* in the usual sense of career, not in the sense used in philosophical biography of the manner of life, revealing the *ethos*). The subject referred to by both titles is the youth's choice of profession. Lucian deals with it with reference to the difference of outlook between the educated and the uneducated, a fundamental difference **that had**

formed the main social distinction between freeborn men since the dissolution of the national communities. We learn from this story, that he was born of uneducated parents, manual workers. When still a boy he ran away from home, and managed to get to Ionian Asia Minor, where he was admitted to a school of rhetoric. His career as lawyer and public speaker took him to Athens and Rome and on into Gaul, where he gained fame and prosperity. The " Dream " was written after the end of his wanderings, about his fortieth year, when he had gone back for a time to his homeland. He used this autobiographical narrative as an introduction or opening speech for his lectures to his fellow-countrymen. It was the custom at that time " to introduce a formal piece of rhetorical fireworks with an informal talk, usually more or less personal ".²⁹ What interests us is the way he describes his choice of profession, which brought him social advancement. He gives first with humorous realism an account of the low-class surroundings in which he grew up ; he tells how his father discussed with his friends what he should teach the boy when he left school :

Most of them thought that higher education required great labour, much time, considerable expense, and conspicuous social position, while our circumstances were but moderate and demanded speedy relief; but if I were to learn one of the handicrafts, in the first place I should myself receive support from the trade instead of continuing to share the family table at my age; besides, at no distant day I should delight my father by regularly bringing home my earnings.

The next question was which of the trades was best and easiest to learn, suitable for a man of free birth, requiring an outfit that was easy to come by, and offering a sufficient income.³⁰

But the decision was prompted, as is evident from the course of the discussion, by family tradition : his mother's father and her brothers had followed the profession of " stone-cutter, mason, and sculptor."⁵¹ He was apprenticed to one of his uncles, who was regarded as an excellent sculptor. In this his own talent was also considered. He was fond of playing with wax, scraping it from his writing tablets and modelling cattle or horses and men : " I had had many thrashings from my teachers on account of them, but at this time they brought me praise for my cleverness." He hoped to be able to go on playing with wax in his uncle's workshop, and " even turn out to be carving gods ". Instead he had " the usual experience of the beginner ". He was clumsy

with the chisel, did damage, was beaten for it, and ran away howling to his mother, who tried to soothe him.

After his humorous account of this he changes his tone, and says he is doing so. For he has now to describe how, in spite of his mean origin, he rose to distinction. Artistically he places the decisive turn in the period of which he has just been telling, and attributes it to his own initiative, as a decision about his profession which he had himself to make. The style becomes highly rhetorical. To show his own thoughts he makes use of allegory and half imitates, half parodies the famous masterpiece of the Sophist Prodicus, "The Choice of Heracles". He invents a dream he had had at night, when he still felt sore from his beating. Two women appeared to him, one, representing sculpture, in dirty working clothes like his uncle's, and the other, noble to look upon, *Paideia* or Culture in person. They literally fought for him, and "nearly pulled me to pieces in their contest". Finally they left the choice to him, making long speeches to win him over, as Vice and Virtue did to Heracles. But he did not make the choice a matter of morals; he used the allegory to show the advantage of the orator's career over that of the craftsman in respect of social standing, distinction, influence, and fame, and also in development of personality. Sculpture, too, could tempt him with a great prospect:

"Do not be disgusted at my humble figure and my soiled clothing, for in this way began Pheidias, who revealed Zeus, and Polyclethus, who made Hera, Myron, whom men praise, and Praxiteles, at whom they marvel. Indeed, these men receive homage second only to the gods. If you become one of them, will you not yourself be famous in the sight of all mankind, make your father envied, and cause your native land to be admired?"

But Culture replies :

"Even if you should become a Pheidias or a Polyclethus and should create marvellous works, everyone would praise your craftsmanship, but none of those who saw you, if he were sensible, would pray to be like you; for no matter what you might be, you would be considered a mere artificer, a man who lives by his hands . . . Although you will plan to make your works well-balanced and well-shaped, you will not show any concern to make yourself well-balanced and sightly . . ."

And that is just what Culture promised him—comprehensive knowledge united with the "noble ornaments of the soul, temperance, justice, piety, kindliness, reasonableness, understanding,

steadfastness, love of all that is beautiful, ardour towards all that is sublime ".

But he sustains neither this rhetorical tone nor the moral attitude, but in his account of his decision he shows himself the mocker he was : " Abandoning the ugly woman, I went over to *Paideia* with a right good will, especially when the stick came into my mind and the fact that it had laid many a blow upon me at the very outset of the day before." ³¹

He betrays, indeed, the truly petty nature of his ambition : as one of the great advantages of the career he has chosen he mentions that it will " inspire envy and jealousy in all men". ³²

This short autobiographical sketch is probably the best-known of all Lucian's writings. It is so well and amusingly written that it was put into the Greek school reading books. It was not put in, however, for its own sake, but because of the concluding moral which Lucian draws : " I have told you this dream in order that those who are young may take the better course and cleave to education, especially if poverty is making any of them faint-hearted and inclining him toward the worse, to the detriment of a noble nature. He will be strengthened, I am very sure, by hearing the tale, if he takes me as an adequate exemplar." ³³

In his next autobiographical work Lucian occupied himself with the peculiar direction he had taken at the height of his literary career. He had left forensic oratory behind him, as Isocrates had done in the past, but he had also given up the traditional occupation of the publicist, " accusations of tyrants and laudation of princes " ³⁴ were not enough for him : he found the career that suited him in satirical authorship, renewing the Menippean form of satire. This literary event he made, as soon as it had happened, the subject of a work, " Twice Accused ", which shows the characteristic form of a comedy-like dialogue. Once more we have here the setting of an apologia in the form of a lawsuit, as we saw done in the classical period by Isocrates. Lucian brings forward Oratory in person, with a complaint of ill-treatment by him, from which it is jestingly inferred that he has married her, or, rather, she him. But Dialogue, too, on whom he has expended his affection, comes forward with a complaint—of violence ; he sues him in the name of Philosophy, whose son he is by Plato. To that extent the old classical controversy between philosophy and rhetoric is brought into play here. But as Lucian represents himself as sued by both, he rests content with his intermediate position between the two ; and he

could claim that position, because he was not concerned with the educational ideal, in which there is an irreconcilable disagreement between Philosophy and Rhetoric, but mainly with the literary form of authorship. He enters into this point with the expertise of the connoisseur and artist, so that we gain here further evidence of the self-knowledge of the ancient author in the field of literary criticism. He makes Oratory give this account of his desertion of her :

He has curtailed the freedom and the range of my speeches, and has confined himself to brief disjointed questions : and instead of saying whatever he wishes in a powerful voice, he fits together and spells out short paragraphs, for which he cannot get hearty praise or great applause from his hearers, but only a smile or a restrained gesture of the hand, an inclination of the head, or a sigh to point his periods.

Dialogue feels ill-treated by him because he had shut him off from philosophical speculation. He makes him say, using the Platonic picture of the fall of the soul:

" He has dragged me down when I was soaring above the zenith . . . Moreover, he took away from me the respectable tragic mask that I had, and put another on me that is comic, satyr-like, and almost ridiculous. Then he unceremoniously penned me up with Jest and Satire and Cynicism and Eupolis and Aristophanes, terrible men for mocking all that is holy and scoffing at all that is right. At last he even dug up and thrust upon me Menippus, a primeval dog * with a very loud bark, it seems, and sharp fangs . . . What is most monstrous of all, I have been turned into a surprising blend, for I am neither afoot nor a-horseback, neither prose nor verse, but seem to my hearers a strange phenomenon made up of different elements, like a Centaur,"³⁵

Speaking in his own person, as if defending himself against the plaintiffs' charges, Lucian rounds off this characterization of his literary achievement by considering it from a historical point of view. He deserted Oratory, he explains, because she was no longer what she was in the time of Demosthenes. She had lost her independence, and, indeed, her chastity and respectability, and had become, like a harlot, at every man's service, for any political or other employment. On the other hand, his account of the philosophic Dialogue is that in the hands of the epigoni he had become dour and almost a skeleton.

" In that guise he seemed awe-inspiring, to be sure, but not in any way attractive or agreeable to the public. So first of all

Menippus was a Cynic; the name was derived from , " dog ".

I got him into the way of walking on the ground like a human being . . ." ³⁶

The last thing, and not the least important, that he has to say about his literary output has reference to the Greek written by " the Syrian ", as he calls himself in this work. Dialogue, he concludes, " cannot complain that I have stripped him of that Greek mantle and shifted him into a foreign one, even though I -myself am considered foreign ".

Of that, in reality, he is proud. He is indebted to Oratory because she " gave him an education and went abroad with him and had him enfranchised as a Greek ". ³⁷ On this point he is so sure of himself that he can even regard his own person with humour. He does that in a sketch which he puts into Oratory's mouth. She opens her complaint with these words :

" When this man was a mere boy, gentlemen of the jury, still speaking with a foreign accent, and I might almost say wearing a caftan in the Syrian style, I found him still wandering about in Ionia, not knowing what to do with himself; so I took him in hand and gave him an education." ³⁸

This picture of the start of his career is obviously truer than the one he gave in his " Dream ".

He has not the same sureness in his attitude to Philosophy. He would like to give the new direction of his literary output the aspect of a transition from rhetoric to philosophy made in his ripe manhood :

" It was proper that I, a man already about forty years of age, should take my leave of those stormy scenes and lawsuits . . . and should betake myself to the Academy or the Lyceum to walk about with this excellent person Dialogue, while we conversed quietly without feeling any need of praise and applause . . ." ³⁹

This enlightenment will scarcely be taken seriously. It does not fit the type of literary man which Lucian's works continued to reveal, ⁴⁰ and which he himself elaborately displayed in his assessment of his work, as we saw. On the other hand, the comic figure of the philosophizing satirist fits in with the mockery of philosophers that fills this as so many of Lucian's works. In it he does not deal only with himself; the title " Twice Accused " refers only to the second part of the work. In the first part he put a collection of " accusations " against famous men who had occupied themselves with philosophy ; his point is to illustrate the instability of character that corresponds to the fluctuation of philosophical opinions and valuations. In one case the Stoa

comes forward as plaintiff, alleging that one of its followers had become an Epicurean ; in another the Platonic Academy is sued because under the influence of its well-balanced teachings an unbridled youth has become a sensible man—and so on.

His problematic relation to philosophy is revealed in two further small autobiographical works, in opposite ways. In one he depicts the enthusiasm aroused in him by a philosopher of the Platonic school named Nigrinus, whom he had visited in Rome. The story is cleverly told : not only is the naive reader likely to be imposed on, but even critical ones regard it as evidence of the strong impression which the teaching and the personality of this otherwise unknown Platonist made, at least for a time, on Lucian in his younger days*⁴¹ The only objection then made is that the philosophic teachings which Lucian claims to have received from Nigrinus (and which, he adds, he used to repeat two or three times over every day) are so banal that they could not really arouse enthusiasm. According to Lucian, Nigrinus expatiated on the immorality in Rome, which he contrasted with the refined culture of Athens : " He went on to praise philosophy and the freedom it gives, and to ridicule the things that are popularly considered blessings—wealth and recreation, dominion and honour, yes, and purple and gold—things accounted very desirable by most men, and till then by me also." After this " siren song ", as he calls the philosopher's sermon, he sets him talking like a satirist ; the Platonist finds that " there is food for laughter and amusement in what is happening on the stage of life "—" a play with many characters, in which one man enters first as servant, then as master ; another first as rich, then as poor ; another now as beggar, now as nabob or king ; another as So-and-so's friend, another as his enemy or as an exile".⁴²

The contrast between the soberly reported commonplaces that fill the middle section of the work and the exalted tones of the beginning and end is striking and might seem an incongruity. But Lucian explains in a letter of dedication to Nigrinus, with which, in due form, he prefaced the work, that he had no intention of presenting the philosopher's teaching—that would have been " carrying owls to Athens "—but to make a confession : " It is only my state of mind that I wish to reveal to you, how I feel now, and how deeply I have been moved by your discourse."

He makes this self-revelation through the resources of comedy. He shows himself in conversation with a friend, who is full of astonishment at the complete change in him on his return from

his journey : he no longer mixes with his old friends, but seems to be living in another world, and looks down upon ordinary men and things. Lucian Explains the change : he has received the greatest good fortune that can happen to any man. " Once a slave, I am now free ! Once poor, now rich indeed ; once witless and befogged, now saner." ⁴³

This blessing has come from philosophy. He had gone to Rome, he says jestingly, to consult an optician ; but Nigrinus had opened his eyes to his true condition : * " I grew sharper-sighted in my soul ; which, all unawares, I had been carrying about until then in a purblind condition . . . and I was glad to be looking up, as it were, out of the murky atmosphere of my past life to a clear sky and a great light." ⁴⁴ So, floating between heaven and earth, enraptured, he was in a state of frenzy—the frenzy that is a special grace bestowed on the elect; for " not all who listen to philosophers go away enraptured and wounded, † but only those who previously had in their nature some secret bond of kinship with philosophy". ⁴⁵

Thus he says in jest what Plato said in the simile of the cave about the upward path to knowledge, and in the *Phædrus* about the divine frenzy of the philosopher. As a final thrust Lucian brings in a less familiar passage from the " Symposium ". There Alcibiades, in telling of his intercourse with Socrates, said that " by his discourses I had been stricken and stung in my heart, or my soul, or whatever one is to call it " ; and he compared the philosophic frenzy into which he was thus brought with the wild words and actions of one who has been bitten by a snake. ⁴⁶

To the friend to whom he recapitulates the words of Nigrinus, Lucian seems like " one who has been bitten by a mad dog ". Rabies is contagious : the friend, too, " feels something like a change of heart". He seeks salvation. Lucian has counsel to offer, the counsel which Telephus, the hero grievously wounded by Achilles, received from the oracle at Delphi : " He who hurt you will heal you." What he tells of the moral teaching of the Platonic philosopher does indeed seem calculated to sober the most enthusiastic disciple of philosophy.

The other work is an apologia which once more is staged as a court hearing. All the famous Greek philosophers of the classical period are brought together on the stage ; the work is entitled

* Some philologists see in this jest a biographical datum.

† That is, deeply stirred. As to the " sudden change ", see below, p. 413.

" The Dead come to Life " (*ἀναβιοῦντες*). They have come up from the nether world, a whole army, enraged, led by Socrates, to punish Lucian, their common enemy, who had heaped scorn upon them all without distinction ; they have tracked him down in Athens and are on the point of stoning him. He succeeds in calming them enough to give him a hearing. " This ", he says, " was once a trait of yours, not to govern by force and superior strength but to settle all differences by process of law, according, a hearing and in your turn receiving one." In the trial the judge is Philosophy in person.

Here Lucian is genuinely concerned with self-justification. The work refers to an earlier one in which, again in the manner of the Menippean satire, he had mocked philosophy. In that work, under the ironical title " Ideals of Life for Sale ", he introduced the classical representatives of philosophy from Pythagoras to Epicurus and Chrysippus, the founder of the Stoa, in an effectively arranged succession of caricatures. He said nothing about their doctrines that was untrue, indeed, nothing that was not familiar to any educated person from the philosophic tradition, but he made use of the familiar teachings in order to make each system ridiculous by means of cheap jokes. He selected, for instance, from the Pythagorean philosophy its belief in the transmigration of souls and its prohibition of the eating of beans ; from Plato's ideal State he took the detail of the sharing of wives. His chief joke was to express the various estimates of the many philosophical schools in terms of the prices realized at auction, and of the buyers. Thus, the Socratic *bios* brought in two talents, roughly £500 in gold, paid by Dion ; for the Stoic *bios*, which realized 12 minse (about £50 in gold), there was a large crowd of buyers, while Diogenes, who described himself as " liberator of men and physician to their ills ", was bought for only two obols or threepence, and Heraclitus and Democritus found no buyers.

These insults he now, in " The Dead come to Life ", withdraws. He states that he had not meant to attack philosophy, or the teaching and the way of living of the philosophers of the past, but only the self-styled philosophers of his own time, whose life was a contradiction of the ethical doctrines they taught. This explanation is accepted in his story both by Philosophy, the judge in the case, and by the philosophers from the nether world, who had pursued him only because false rumours about his intention had reached them. They solemnly confirm him in his office, and

recognize the philosophic worth of his profession of satirist. "From now on," is Philosophy's final remark in concluding the hearing, "you may count yourself one of us" (39).

In the following scenes he shows in the form of an allegory how he carries on his mission of exposing impostors. He represents himself as an angler with gold and figs as his bait. The fishes who bite symbolize the various philosophic schools. Investigation, one of Philosophy's comrades, who helps Lucian in his fishing, names the schools to which the carp, pike, and so on belong, while the founders of the schools, who are watching, declare that "we have nothing in common with that sort". The work is entitled "The Fisherman".

Into this framework, borrowed from the comedy of Aristophanes, Lucian fits a number of autobiographical passages, which are of two sorts, objective and subjective, following the splitting up of the self-portrayal into the statements about him which he puts into the mouths of his accusers or judges, and the defence he himself offers in the form of a first-personal narrative. Here again the main point is his questionable transfer from rhetoric to philosophy. His accusers charge him with having abandoned the law courts and the reputation to be gained therein in order to concentrate his art of oratory on mockery of the philosophers, in imitation of Aristophanes, "who brought Socrates on to the stage and concocted monstrous farces about him". They insist that Lucian "delights in ridiculing all that is most holy". A further point made in this "objective" view of his literary development is that his use of the dialogue for satire and his imitation of Menippus are regarded by the classics of philosophy as unfair competition with them (25-7). In the evidence he tenders about himself, he describes this development of his as it were from within, but from changing viewpoints, in the succession of which the writer of comedy again shows himself.

In the first scene, in which Lucian is described by Plato as "an orator and a lawyer and a wizard at making speeches" (9), he himself claims to be a seeker after the truth, indeed, a Sceptic of the Academic type, occupied with the question "Where is Philosophy to be found?" and who, finding his search among her supposed followers to be vain, became a satirist: "For my part, I do not know where she lives. Yet I wandered very long in search of her dwelling, that I might study with her. Then I met men with short cloaks and long beards who professed to come straight from her; and thinking that they knew, I questioned

them. But they were far more at a loss than I . . . To this very day I have been unable to find her house " (11).

In his earlier apologia he had declare that Oratory had lost her respectability, and here he says of the contemporary philosophy : "Its talk was quite that of a courtesan " (12). In the next scene, in spite of this, he brings Philosophy in person on to the stage, in order to declare her approval of his profession. He now indicates at once his kinship with her through the name he gives himself—Candour, Son of Truthful, Son of Renowned Investigator ; * Candour and Investigator are among the followers of Truth, who is herself one of the companions of Philosophy, and the least prepossessing of them—" naked, always shrinking into the background and slipping away" (16).

We shall meet again with these allegorical figures and their use in self-characterization in the autobiographical literature of the Catholic Middle Ages. There this literary form belongs to the world of imagination in which the poets lived. For the Hellenistic satirist it was no more than a rhetorical device. In this way he claimed for himself the credit which he had given elsewhere to the true Cynics such as Diogenes or Menippus, of being " a proclaimer of truth and candour ".† He attributed his writings to a philosophic impulse, in order to make it credible that he was pursuing a positive ethical aim. " I am a bluff-hater, a cheat-hater, a liar-hater, a vanity-hater," he says, and adds :

I am well up in the opposite art too—I mean the one with love for a base ; for I am a truth-lover, a beauty-lover, a simplicity-lover . . . But there are very few who deserve to have this art practised upon them, while those who come under the other one number untold thousands. So the chances are that by this time I have lost my skill in the one art for lack of practice, but have become very expert in the other (20).

That may have been said only half seriously, but he is quite serious in attributing his alleged turn from rhetoric to philosophy to an ethical motive :

As soon as I perceived how many disagreeable attributes a public speaker must needs require, such as chicanery, lying, impudence, loudness of mouth, sharpness of elbow, and what not else, I fled from all that ilk, as was reasonable, and set out to attain your noble qualities, Philosophy, expecting to sail, as it were, out of stormy waters into a peaceful haven, and to live out the rest of my life under your protection (29).

* *Piscator*, 19: *Παρρησιᾶς Αληθίανος τοῦ Ελεγκτικέου*.

† *Vitarum auctio*, 8.

This motivation is of typical significance ; it recalls to us the statements of Latin authors on their turning away from politics or from the Forum, which we found among **the** autobiographies of writers from the time of the ending of the Roman Republic. In his defence speech before Judge Philosophy, Lucian continues :

Hardly had I caught a glimpse of your realm when I conceived admiration for you, as was inevitable, and for all these men, who are the lawgivers of the higher life " (30). Thus it was moral indignation at the activities of the pseudo-philosophers, the impostors and pretenders, who " sullied the dignity of the profession ", that turned the fighter for truth into the satirist : " I could not endure this spectacle, and set about exposing **them** and distinguishing them from you "(33).

He closes his speech with a comprehensive description of that unworthy spectacle, and brings in Truth herself to testify to the veracity of his portrayal. " In fact," she says, " as I listened I recognized each of the men who act in that way and applied his remarks to them : " That refers to that man ; so-and-so does this.' Indeed, he portrayed the gentlemen to the life, as in painting, with likenesses accurate in every respect, depicting not only their persons, but their very souls as faithfully as could be" (38). This description of his art of caricature is more convincing than his declaration of a philosophic purpose.

Here we see once more that the self-portrayal of the ancient writer is most sincere and most instructive when he offers a literary or aesthetic judgment on his work. This is true also of Lucian's relation to philosophy and his consciousness of that relation. He does not deny his indebtedness to Menippus, and he knows also what he gained as an author from the study of the Greek philosophers, and acknowledges it in his address to them at the beginning of the work (6) :

I have always consistently admired philosophy and extolled you and have lived on intimate terms with the writings you left to posterity. These very phrases that I utter—where else but from you did I get them ? Culling them like a bee, I make my display with them before men, who applaud, recognizing where and from whom and how I have gathered each flower ; and although ostensibly it is I whom they admire for the bouquet, as a matter of fact it is you and your garden, because you put forth these blossoms, so gay and so varied in hue—if one but knows how to select and interweave and combine them so that they shall not be out of harmony with one another.

Genuine, too, is what he says in this connexion **about his**

indebtedness to Hellenic culture, in view of his oriental origin. He does not deny his origin (a snobbish habit against which Nicolaus Damascenus had inveighed, as we saw),* but makes his judge put a direct question to him about it, so that she may admit in comment on his reply : " It was a needless question indeed." His reply was (19) :

I am a Syrian, Philosophy, from the banks of the Euphrates. But what of that ? I know that some of my opponents here are just as foreign-born as I am ; but in their manners and culture (*paideia*) they are not like men of Soli or Cyprus or Babylon or Stageira.† Yet, as far as you are concerned, it would make no difference even if a man's speech were foreign, if only his way of thinking were manifestly right and just.

One more autobiographical work by Lucian which has come down to us has the title " Apology for those who give their services for hire ". ‡ In it he deals, with reference to himself, with the point round which his attacks on the pseudo-philosophers revolved—the contrast between teaching and life. In this connexion much might be said in moral judgment on this public speaker himself. He condemned flattery, for instance, root and branch ; but he wrote an *enkomion* on Panthea, the woman of Smyrna who became mistress of the emperor Verus ; in doing so he followed the rules elaborated for that art by the " Sophists ". Among the virtues he praised in that lovely and influential woman was piety. He had also said with reference to an atheist that it would serve him right if he had to do penance for his hardihood.⁴⁷ These things came strangely from the freethinker whose mockeries of the gods of Olympus had contributed not a little to the break-up of the old faith, and who, indeed, because of his efforts against false religion and superstition has been compared with Voltaire.⁴⁸

Any serious self-criticism, however, directed against such real inconsistencies, is not to be expected from Lucian. In this apologia he deals with an inconsistency of less moment, occasioned by a change in his circumstances. In his later years he filled a public office, that of treasurer to the governor of Egypt, which since the days of the emperor Augustus had been a province of the Roman Empire. Outstanding culture and the gift of

Sec above, p. 310-11.

t Chrysippus was born at Soli, in Cilicia ; Aristotle at Stageira, a Greek colonial town on the north-western shore of the Ægean ; Zeno at Citium, the principal Phœnician city of Cyprus ; Posidonius in Seleucia, on the Tigris.

‡ *Apologia pro mercede conductis*.

oratory gave access in those days to office and dignities, as we saw in the case of Nicolaus Damascenus. Lucian felt called upon to justify his acceptance of the post, in view of the conception of the free man introduced by the Greek philosophers ; a free man served no one for reward. Plato's aristocratic criticism of the Sophists for taking payment for their teaching may have been in Lucian's mind. He himself had made merry in one of his caricatures of philosophers over the *græculi* whom it was the custom to have in the houses of the wealthy, living in apparent comfort and on good pay, but in reality leading a despised existence : nothing, in his judgment, was more evil or a greater indignity than such dependence ! To this work, " On those who keep company with the great for hire ",* he refers in the *apologia*, which he put into the form of a letter to a friend. The friend, who had laughed heartily at that description of the typical domestic philosopher, must be wondering, the epistle begins, at Lucian's sacrifice in his old age, with one foot already in the grave, of the independence he had praised as the best of all things and had enjoyed from his youth up as a freeborn man, and at his voluntarily " bending my neck beneath the yoke "—obviously for the sake of the salary.

But Lucian reveals this inconsistency only in order to show his life in a new aspect, or to show himself as representative of a new type of Sophist, the type of the paid administrative official, who seems to have been at that time something new in the Hellenistic-Roman civilization. In any case, he argues (with a particularity that might seem strange to us), it makes a decided difference " whether a man serves for payment in the house of some rich private person, or administers part of the business of State to the best of his power and receives payment for doing so from the Emperor " (*Apologia*, XI). He enumerates the items of his official business—the initiation of lawsuits, the carrying out of the administrative regulations, the supervision of the State archives, and so on ; he speaks with pride of the big salary (" many talents ") he receives and of the prospect of promotion : he may later be entrusted with " the whole administration of the province or some other imperial office " (12). In so doing he also makes a graceful obeisance to the Roman governor under whom he was serving. One of the main motives, he declares, for his entry into the State service was his " admiration of the superior understanding, integrity, and magnanimity of this man ". But, he adds, nothing

* *De mercede conductis potentium familiaribus.*

will induce him to advance this reason, for it might be interpreted as flattery, and that would be even worse than to be reproached for inconsistency; for "sycophancy is the most slavish of knaveries" (9).

Here again we find the philosophic touch. Lucian makes use in self-justification of the doctrine advanced by the popular philosophers of the merit of an active mind. "A true man", he urges, "must act," and that means that he "must collaborate with friends for the supreme good, and must publicly, so to say in the open air, put himself to the test, showing the extent of his trustworthiness, zeal, and goodwill toward the common undertakings, so that he shall not be, as Homer put it,* 'a profitless burden upon the earth'" (14).

We observe here once more that the "Sophists" or rhetoricians, as was to be observed in their forefather Isocrates,† represented the good citizen's ordinary outlook on life, and had nothing special to say except within their own aesthetic or intellectual field. An eminent student has insisted that Lucian, whose satire is generally supposed to have ranged "over the whole life of his time",⁴⁹ did not venture to attack the institutions of the Roman State.⁶⁰ How could he do so? He himself brings forward the essential point at the end of the apologia (15). When, he says, his "present *bios*" is criticized, he must not be measured by the ideal of the sage; he has made no attempt to attain it, and to his knowledge nobody has done so; he must be taken as "a man from the broad mass of the people, though, it is true, one who has practised the art of oratory and attained a certain fame in it"—and also "very high payment" in a sort of public office, so that in the past he was "counted among the best-paid of the Sophists".

If we survey the various autobiographical passages which we have collected from Lucian's writings, beginning with the scenes from his youth—the family council, the beating in the mason's workshop, and the picture of the runaway boy in the Syrian caftan,—we may regard them as fragments of biography in the realistic sense of the word, in which biography has been defined as "the faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life"⁵¹—except that we must not take the satirist's story too seriously. This view is strengthened when we consider the influence

* Achilles' words in *Iliad*, XVIII, 104.

† See above, p. 162.

Lucian exercised on the creators of the modern humorous or realistic novel, on Cervantes and Quevedo, on Rabelais, on Swift and Sterne.⁵² But Lucian himself had no idea of collecting the various passages into a story of his life. And the critical turns in his life, which he described in the style of comedy, were mainly adventures of the intellect. The pleasure taken in the adventurous course of their lives, and the intention of having an artistic record made of them, was common among men of that time.

We have witnesses to the use of painting for that purpose. Particularly characteristic is a description by Petronius in "Trimalchio's Feast", the fragment that has come down to us from his great satirical novel, from which we drew on an earlier page a reference to the vulgarized custom of autobiographical monumental inscriptions. Trimalchio, the newly enriched freedman, a representative of the type of provincial moneyed Philistine, had as the vestibule of his house a gigantic pillared hall, in which the cabinet containing the Lares stood, and in this hall he had placed a series of frescoes with scenes from the Iliad and the Odyssey—and from his own past. There was the slave market in Rome, to which he had been brought as a curly-haired boy; already, though a slave, he carried the wand of Mercury, the god of commerce, and was preceded by Minerva, who had a good head to lend—an allegorical foreshadowing such as was popular in satire. Then came his career—how he learned accounting and finally gained a post as cashier, the highest position of trust allowed to a slave, "all of which the conscientious artist had painted meticulously, with explanatory captions". At the end of this frescoed biography of the master of the house came another allegory: Fortuna and the Fates floated aloft in readiness to receive Trimalchio, whom Mercury was driving up to them; Fortuna had her overflowing cornucopia, and the three sisters were spinning golden threads.⁵³ In harmony with this was an incident that bears witness to the total degradation of manners to the animal level. When Elagabalus, the Syrian priest of **Baal**, dwelt in Rome as emperor, with his regime of eunuchs and courtesans and circuses (about A.D. 225), he betrayed in a grotesque way the characteristic attitude to existence of an Oriental placed in the midst of civilization: he drew his **own** portrait as a dealer in salves and spices, an eating-house keeper, a wine-seller, and a procurer.

In this connexion another tomb inscription in Latin verse, also dating from the later imperial epoch, is of importance to us.

It was provided for himself by a mimic actor named Vitalis.⁵⁴ He belonged to the vulgar category of players known as *biologos*, one who represents to the life, or *ethologos*, a character-painter, because they not only played parts in the farces but came on to the stage alone to give farcical mimicry of real events or persons. In fourteen of the twenty-four lines of the inscription Vitalis describes this art of his, and the laughter produced by his mimicry of the speech and expression and gestures and posturings of well-known personalities in his city. He speaks proudly of the fame and wealth his art brought him, and no less proudly, though in sorrow, of his body, the vehicle of his art, the body that lies dead :

Ergo quot in nostro videantur corporc formae,
tot mecum raptas abstulit atra dies.*

But still more revealing in regard to the attitude to life of the Roman people is the praise of clowning on his epitaph. The inscription begins :

Quid tibi, mors, faciam, quae nulli parcere nosti ?
Nescis laetitiam, nescis amare iocos.
Hic ego praevalui, toto notissimus orbe,
hinc mihi larga domus, hinc mihi census erat.
Gaudebam semper. Quid enim, si gaudia desint,
hic vagus et fallax utile mundus habet ?
Me viso rabidi subito cecidere furores,
ridebat summus me veniente dolor.
Non licuit quemquam mordacibus urere curis,
nee rerum incerta mobilitate trahi.
Vincebat cunctos praesentia nostra timores,
et mecum felix quaelibet hora fuit.†

In this epitaph for an entertainer, a man of the people who addressed the common people of Rome, the capital of the world, we feel first of all the pagan attitude to life and death in its contrast to the Christian attitude, but the verses also illuminate the fundamental feeling, common to Christians and pagans, of the

* " All the figures I impersonated have been carried off by a black day "—that is, into his grave.

| What shall I say to thee, Death, who showest compassion to no one ?

Naught dost thou care for our joys, naught for our laughter and jokes.

That's where I was supreme, where I gathered the whole world's plaudits,

Also a fine big house, also a fortune to match.

Always I brought with me mirth. And indeed, if laughter be absent,

What is the virtue of this quite undependable world ?

Just the sight of me quenched, presto ! the most fiery tempers,

None so glum but to see me made him break into smiles.

Never a soul was permitted to ruminate over his worries,

Never a grumbler to grieve over the hazards of life.

Once I appeared, bang, fizz ! went everyone's troubles, and so, sir,

Every minute with me made sixty seconds of joy !

insecurity and peacelessness of the world, a feeling that had spread in those times, so that men sought to escape, if only for an hour, from the pressure of want and anxiety.

If we consider all the rather few autobiographical works of a humorous nature preserved to us from the later period of the Hellenistic civilization, it seems entirely likely that in that period a full-length autobiography, even, perhaps, a Christian story of conversion, may have been written in the style of the novel of social life. This brings us back to the lost autobiography of the Spaniard Acilius Severus, with which we started in this section; we have the feeling that in it that possibility may have been realized.

As already mentioned, we know of that autobiography only through the mention of it in the history of early Christian literature written by Saint Jerome, with the Hellenistic title "Famous Men". The thing that is striking in Jerome's mention of this autobiography is the indication that it was written partly in prose and partly in verse; in the time of Acilius Severus, the latter part of the fourth century after Christ, autobiographies were no longer a rarity as they had been earlier.

About its author, who made a name in literature through this autobiography, we know only that he came from a family living in Spain, belonging to the higher (and highly educated) class of society in the Roman Empire, and that he went over to Christianity, the new State religion, a not uncommon thing in that social class at that time. Saint Jerome gives us only scanty details of the book itself, but perhaps enough to determine at least the literary whereabouts of this autobiography. Jerome mentions not only the mixture of prose and verse, but the mixed title of the Latin work, a double title, deliberately enigmatic, in Greek, *καταστροφή σive πείρα*, and the subject, amounting to "The Wayfarer's Temptation", for St. Jerome adds that the work was "a sort of travel description" that "embraced all the situations of his life".*

The mixed style, prose and verse, would in itself convey

* *Hieronymus de viris illustribus, sive de scriptoribus ecclesiastkis*, c. C X I: "Acilius Severus in Hispania de genere illius Severi ad quem Lactantii duo epistularum scribuntur libri, composuit volumen quasi *ἡδοιπορικόν* totius vitæ suæ statum continens tarn prosa quam versibus, quod vocavit *καταστροφή σive πείρα* et sub Valentiniano principe obiit."—Valentinian ruled from 364 to 375. Acilius' father, with whom Lactantius (? c. 260-330), the so-called "Christian Cicero", corresponded, can be traced in the years 322-5 as *praefectus praetorio Galliarum*, then *consul ordinarius*, then *praefectus urbis Romae*. Cf. Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie* (2nd series), III (1921), col. 2003.

nothing definite about this notable work ; it must have become normal and characterless at the end of this ancient era in consequence of the transformation, or, regarded from the classic viewpoint, the destruction of aesthetic feeling that had kept pace with the general intellectual changes, and at the same time through the predominance of the mimic or satirical descriptions of life, which specially cultivated this deliberate formlessness. How else would Boethius, in his *Consolatio* (about 524), have been able to make use of that mixed form for the exposition of Neoplatonism as a philosophy that had shaped his life ? * But the same indication as the mixed style is given by the mention of the autobiography as a travel description. This simile may be variously interpreted. It may refer in general to the passing through various situations in life, here conceived as stations on the way to the end and not as stages of development, as, for instance, in the Platonic type of soul-history. In this general sense we found the picture of the journey in the autobiography of Nicolaus Damascenus referring to the process of education, so that the various fields of study formed the various stages of the journey and Philosophy its end.† Thus the life-story of Acilius may have led through various moral and intellectual regions and have found its end in his conversion to Christianity.

But probably Jerome, in using for " travel description " the word *ὁδοιπορικόν*, had in view a Hellenistic literary form familiar to us in Latin poetry, especially satirical poetry ; in these works, such as Lucilius' journey to Sicily ⁵⁵ and especially Horace's to Brindisi (Sat., I, 5), the story of the journey serves as the framework for personal experiences, objective and subjective, and observations on men and things in their moods and vicissitudes. ‡ The striking Greek double title of the autobiography, which reminds us of similarly formed titles in Varro's and Lucian's satirical works, also fits in with this interpretation. The word " *katastrophe* " in the title has the sense of " sudden turn ", such

* See below, at the end of this volume.

† See above, p. 314.

‡ Of a description of travel in the literal and not the metaphorical sense of the word, Jerome writes in his review of the writings of Lactantius : " Scripsit . . . *odoiporicon de Africa usque ad Nicomediam hexametris versibus* " ; " he wrote in hexameters a description of travel from Africa to Nicomedia "—from his African home to the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, to which he had been summoned by the emperor Diocletian as a Latin tutor, shortly before the persecution of the Christians in A.D. 303 (Hieronymus, *op. cit.*, c. LXXX). This work, which would have been of interest on account of the literary and personal relationship of the author with the father of Acilius Severus, is lost, as well as the letters of the famous writer, who went over to Christianity.

as the *denouement* of a play or novel, where we expect to hear of conversion (*epistrophe*). But a joke is intended, and a very daring one, a pun such as was much in vogue in the Menippean satire. For it is certainly not just a coincidence that the Greek word *kata-strophe* is an exact rendering of the Latin word *deversorium*, an inn or lodging. The sense of "conversion" is thus mixed up with that of putting up at an inn. The other part of the title also has a double meaning: "temptation" suggests an adventure such as a man may meet with in an inn when travelling, as well as the critical testing in the struggle with the seductive powers of this world, the subject of religious stories of the soul. These two double meanings, subtly combined in the title, seem to be another indication that Acilius Severus was inspired by a pagan rather than a Christian view of life when he wrote his autobiography, some decades before Augustine's Confessions.

If this placing of the work is right, the picture of the development of autobiography in ancient times is broadened. It is impossible, however, to establish this wider view in the absence of detailed knowledge or records of this satirical or realistic type of autobiography, and we must rest content with interpreting the literary note handed down to us about it by Saint Jerome, where a real insight into the subject might lead to new conclusions on the position of realism and autobiography in late antiquity. Thus we merely see once more that the process of development of autobiography was more complex than is commonly supposed. In our effort to present its framework in its actual historical context, we are, however, bound to set this lost work in its place alongside the great products of self-scrutiny which, regarded from the perfection of the type reached in Augustine, form, after all, the central event in this complicated development.

III. THE PORTRAYAL OF INDIVIDUALITY IN PHILOSOPHIC SELF-SCRUTINY

After Socrates had based the formation of personality on the autonomous rule of Practical Reason, and after the doctrine had been elaborated in the Stoa, following him, of the freedom of man that enables him to take the shaping of his life into his own hands,* the emergence of a literary *genre* expressive of the act of self-scrutiny, in such works as Seneca's *Epistles* and Marcus' "To Myself", could only be a question of time. For it is under an inner urge, confirmed by the part autobiography played in the literature of more modern times, that in a ripened civilization, when the individual man discovers himself as an independent and responsible person, self-scrutiny becomes an integral part of his personal life, because it helps him to become conscious of his own powers and purposes. Man is driven to make visible to himself the unity of his own life, which threatens, with the rapid growth of external civilization and with the distribution of the activities of the self among all the particular aims of private and communal existence, to go to pieces ; and self-scrutiny performs this liberating task, adapting itself, like any good method, to the material ; it is not merely the gloomy brooding over the self which is all too easily led astray by the feelings, but also springs from the will of the firm soul that demands clearness; and even men who possess spontaneous creative power may thus undergo the "Calvary of self-recognition", and thereby attain to an assured certainty in regard to their life and work.

Yet how difficult was the actual course by which this inner urge became effective for the first time in the creation of a great spiritual autobiography ! As regards its psychological requisites, the specific condition in which the individual discovers that he is a separate entity apart from his fellows, had been appreciated as early as in Socrates' time as something essentially philosophical. One of Socrates' own pupils, Antisthenes, the founder of the school of the Cynics, † is said to have been asked what he regarded as the outcome of philosophy, and to have replied : "The capacity of self-communion."^{5,56} In this saying the inward turning of the mind is represented as implied in the radical emancipation of the individual which the Cynics advocated, and

* See above, p. 179, 182-3.

† Through his pupil Diogenes, See above, pp. 104, 191-2,

is formulated as a peculiar sort of intercourse—much as the process of spiritual reflection was described as "the soul's conversation with itself" At the time of the decay of Attic democracy, when Plato declared the founding of the true State to be the nation's, and, indeed, mankind's, only path to salvation, Antisthenes saw salvation in the emancipation of the individual from the bonds of society, bonds which, in common with the Sophists, he regarded as conventions, as something artificial and in conflict with the natural. A follower, as Plato had been, of Socrates, he believed in the fundamental importance of understanding for an upright life ; but he condemned the belief in the need for seeking universally valid instruction in order to give our lives a firm support : in his view the only support to rely on was to be found in the citadel of the person, and the only understanding that mattered was the realization of the self-sufficiency of moral strength as the basis of the individual's independent existence : it makes the beggar into a king. Left to themselves, individuals would be capable of becoming the pillars of a world State free from the aristocratic orders of society, and, indeed, from the aristocracy of culture, which set one class of men above the rest.

Regarded from the classical Greek point of view, this individualism of the Cynics, and with it the valuation set on the independence of each separate individual by the "beggar philosophers", as they were called, might be regarded as a "slave revolt against the moral code", to apply the formula coined by Nietzsche in regard to Christianity. Antisthenes was, in point of fact, a bastard, as was Archilochus, to whom we referred when dealing with the discovery of individuality in pre-classic Hellas. The father of Antisthenes was an Athenian, but his mother was a Thracian slave. On the other hand, it has often been pointed out, in view of the striking similarities between the Cynics' way of life and Christian monasticism, and also the indigenous Hindu asceticism, that many eminent representatives of that philosophical school came not from Greece but from the eastern periphery of the Hellenistic civilized world, from Pontus, Thrace, and Phoenicia. The same observation has been made in regard to the representatives of the Stoic philosophy, which developed out of Cynicism under the influence of Heraclitus' metaphysics and ethics.

We regard neither of these modern points of view as authoritative, as we proceed from the more comprehensive observation

that the inwardness of individual life increased step by step with the universalization of the intellectual horizon in political respects shown by Antisthenes' conception of the world State. But in view of that resemblance we are all the more surprised that the Cynics, who produced an extensive and manifold popular philosophical literature, did not, so far as we know, make use of any literary form expressive of self-scrutiny. Nor have we knowledge of any works of this type from the Stoics of the first three centuries after the founding of the school by Zeno (about 300 B.C.) and Chrysippus (about 250 B.C.), although in their leader Heraclitus they could find the saying "I sought myself". Not until the age of imperial Rome have we any documents of this type, and already they are influenced by the growing religious movement. They cannot be regarded as evidence of lost works of similar type from earlier times, for in them the personal is the essential element both in form and in content, and in regard to their personal character these works form a progressive series; in them we can follow a historical development that led finally in Marcus Aurelius' book "To Myself" to the rise of a new type of autobiography.

This strange situation is explained by the dominant conception of personality.* The ancient Socratic self-knowledge did not at first serve to reveal to men their individual character; according to the characteristic outlook of any age of enlightenment, personality meant something general, even rational, namely Man as a reflective being responsible for his acts, and as such the subject and the source of moral action. Thus the idea that philosophy helps men to be capable of self-communion furnished them as yet with no incentive to concern themselves with their own individuality. In the second epoch of the Stoic school, resulting from the acceptance of that philosophy by the Roman aristocracy under the leadership of Scipio the younger, Panaetius, who had founded (about 140 B.C.) that so-called Roman or intermediate Stoa, advanced to a more substantial conception of personality and admitted individual differences into the moral ideal as something of value, † As we saw, ‡ the appearance of autobiography among the Romans was connected with that extraordinarily significant intellectual movement. But the conception of individual personality then acquired was governed by the association of the Greek mind with the force of Roman realities,

* See above, pp. 102 sqq.

†

See above, p. 195.

‡ See above, pp. 242 sqq.

and the autobiographies that proceeded from that association were of corresponding type : they dealt with political activities.

It was not in connexion with this more concrete conception of personality, but precisely in a return to the old and rigorous Stoa, with its abstract conception of personality as embodied reason, that the philosophic and religious movement ran its literary course, in which self-scrutiny took shape. The individual who devoted thought to his own character held fast to general ideas, and philosophy itself, with its mission of guidance in life, did not grow out of personal experience but was a sort of dogma ; accordingly self-scrutiny took place not through an urge to make individual depths visible, but in consequence of a changed, increasingly individual attitude to the ideas that existed independently of the particular life-story.

This personal attitude was the central element. It was a change of universal significance : it contained in itself the transition from a philosophic to a religious attitude to existence. The religious twist given to a philosophic body of thought seems to be characteristic of that critical state of the human mind which arises when an age of enlightenment comes to its end ; the development of Buddhism out of the Sankhya philosophy,⁵⁷ and the metaphysical or religious urge of our own time, may be compared with the turn to religion that took place in the Stoa in the last century B.C. under Posidonius (c. 130-r. 50), the last great systematizer before Plotinus (c. A.D. 205-70). There were, however, also going on in the Hellenistic world genuine religious movements which, originating independently of philosophy, preceded * and influenced the religious turn taken by the Greek and Roman thinkers. (In Posidonius the influence at work was that of the oriental religions of redemption; in the Roman moralists we can already see broad currents of religious life spread over the whole empire.) We may, therefore, more accurately say that what was in progress here was the effort, in the midst of the extravagances and the hybridizations of religious fancy, to reach a new religion on the basis of philosophy. In any case, the origin of the new autobiography is to be sought in this change. Here we are on firm ground ; for in the works of moral philosophy

* That they preceded the change is shown in detail in the religious imagery—e.g., in Epictetus in the pictures of man's sonship of God, of the philosophers as prophets, and so on ; and also especially in the fact that Marcus Aurelius describes the process of man's " liberation " ; for the Stoa in no way irrational, as " rebirth " ; see below.

of the imperial age we possess documents into the spirit of which we can enter, so that their message is plain to us.

Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius are historic personalities who still live in our day. We discourse with them as with contemporaries, we listen to them not merely with historical interest; they still serve as our moral teachers as they served their own times. This influence is due to the personal form in which they were able to give life to their philosophical teaching. By so doing they lifted themselves out of the mass of the literature of moral philosophy that spread in the centuries after Christ in association with the Hellenistic forms of philosophical propaganda.⁶⁸

We have already mentioned this literature in so far as it attained its moral purpose by means of criticism of social life and civilization and by descriptions of men and manners; now it is its inward aspect that interests us, the aspect directly concerned with the will of man and the reformation of moral life. It did not exhaust itself in the popularization of ethical demands, but in its prime it gave expression to the altered position of philosophy summed up in the conception of a philosophy of life.⁵⁹ The description of philosophy as a teaching, or as the rule or the art, of life, already frequent in Cicero and Seneca, goes back at least to Posidonius.* How prominent this tendency was is shown by the criticism directed against it by the Sceptics. In their polemics against normative ethics they especially attacked the view that the art of living could be taught: they declared that it was an illusion, that the achievements of that sort of "philosophy" did not differ from the unreflecting everyday moral assumptions that are common property; that the principle of remaining true to oneself, that criterion of the conception of a life based on principle, could, in the nature of things, never be carried into practice, and that if men must be guided by ethical principles that sort of art of living did not lead to peace of mind but destroyed self-confidence, †

Yet it was a powerful movement, and its power came straight from the impulse to make thought and maxims into impressive factors in living, fruitful for every individual. Here personal persuasion and conversation were of more importance than the

* See especially Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* go, 26, and the way these expressions are there used.

† Arguments of the later so-called Sceptical school from the first century B.C., recorded by Sextus Empiricus, *Hypotyposes Pyrrhonicae*, I I I, c. 25, 239 sqq.

written word. The personal element was bound up, however, with the systematized form of philosophizing, proceeding not from personal experience but from the existing stock of ideas, and basing on that stock the relation of the personal element with the realities of human life. Typical is the expression of this on one occasion by Seneca. The wisdom of the past is a heritage, he says, at everybody's service ; it should be added to as far as possible : " Much still remains to do, and much will always remain, and he who shall be born a thousand ages hence will not be barred from his opportunity of adding something further. But even if the old masters have discovered everything, one thing will be always new, the application and the study and management of the discoveries made by others." As a stock of medicaments—such is the usual comparison—has to be used for the various illnesses with adjustment for time and circumstances, so " the cures of the spirit have been discovered by the ancients ; but it is our task to learn the method and the time of treatment ".*

This function of philosophy, which looks so like the product of a dogma of belief, was already so specialized in Hellenism that its representatives, like a priestly caste, served others who did not keep themselves in perpetual consciousness of the eternal truths, and primarily princes and noble families, as wielders of the powers of philosophy ; amid the strokes of destiny beneath which men habitually turn to the Deity, in mishap, sickness, death, they came into action as counsellors and ministers offering comfort in speech or writing, † For the awakening of the masses there developed the picturesque class of wandering preachers, drawing alike upon philosophy and upon rhetoric. We have a glimpse of a well-systematized professional activity in the production of edifying forms of address and tract, the various technical names of which strike us as strange.⁶⁰

Here, especially in the exhortatory speeches and writings, there was an opportunity for paradigmatic reference to a man's

* Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 64, 7-8. This and most of the following quotations from the " Moral Epistles " are taken from the translation by Richard M. Gummere, in the Loeb Classical Library.

† Philosophers at Macedonian and Hellenistic courts, and later among the Romans, not only as teachers or as princes' tutors but in the cure of souls—Diels, *Doxographi*, pp. 82-3. Tacitus thought it strange that the dying Petronius had no philosopher at his side—H. Peter, *Der Brief in der rom. Lit.*, pp. 19, 229. The philosopher on his death-bed, Dio Chrys. *Or.*, XXVII, 9 ; cf. P. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-rom. Litteratur. On the consolations*, cf. Buresch, *Leipz.-Stud. zur klass. Phil.*, IX. On rejections of intrusive ministrations, Epictetus, *Diss.*, I I, 12, near the end. Cf. also Seneca, *Ep.* 94, 50 sqq. : Stet ad latus monitor et contra laudatorea .. . laudet.

own past life. We find this first in an address delivered in a philosophical lecture hall,* and shall find such autobiographical sketches continuing into Christian literature, † But real progress, leading to spiritual autobiography, began only when the formation of the moral personality became the object of regular training. Here self-portrayal from within began to advance : the philosophic work was concentrated on communicating a method of self-education that made men live through the moral process laid down by the Stoa, the raising of the will to dominance over the passions and to firmness and freedom, as a kind of pilgrimage of the soul, subject to regulation.

This Stoic type of history of the inner life differs from the Platonic type, with which we met in the first part of this work. ‡ It was not born of a religious or metaphysical urge, so as to call from the first for artistic presentation. It is rather to be described as a natural history of the soul, availing itself of the psychological analysis that originated with Aristotle. Its basic idea was the pantheistic belief that man attains constancy and freedom of personality by recognizing the true order of the universe of which he is part, and by willingly accepting it.

To see things as they are, to get rid of their apparent confusion, *demere rebus tumultum*, and to will everything as it actually happens, are other expressions for the fundamental formula " to live in accordance with nature ". An objective decision as to what is in accordance with nature is possible, because the world, just like the microcosm man, in spite of the flux of all things possesses a unitary nature that remains constant through the vicissitudes of life, as Heraclitus first expressed it. The Stoics had re-defined the great metaphysician's vision of the divine Reason immanent in the world and binding all change to a fixed " measure " or law ; they had re-defined it in terms of the natural science of the new age, and had so developed the doctrines of the purposeful or teleological ordering of the divine cosmos, even self-preservation, that basic urge of all animals, being credited with fulfilling a specific purpose. Philosophy could claim, in their view, to provide men with " natural " or primary concepts of life and the world ; derived both from the human reason and from the Reason immanent in the universe, these notions were considered capable of guiding men's actions in this world. This is not the

* Attalus in Seneca, *Ep.* 110, 14-20.

† Dio Chrysostom and others; see below, pp. 487 *sqq.*

‡ See above, pp. 106 *sqq.*

place to attack the difficult problem of deciding how the idea of moral freedom, that supreme achievement of Stoic ethics, was attainable from that scientific process of thought. In the coming together of these two, pantheistic determinism and the Socratic conception of personality, lay the motive force that brought about the forms of self-portrayal in the Stoa.

According to those principles the raising of man to freedom was considered an organic process—not an inner revolution and a break with nature, but its development. "No man finds it difficult to return to nature, except the man who has deserted nature." * To gain awareness of this basic relationship between man and nature is the moral task—to build the world in the consciousness of the individual as the world really is ; the moral will is inseparable from insight. That is the faculty of the "active principle" or "force" of reason, and all human dignity and all freedom is owed to that safest of possessions, that divine possession, the reason.

In the Stoic notions of "reason" and "living in harmony with nature" were bound up with each other what we like to contrast with each other as the "subjective" and the "objective". The individual consciousness was credited with measuring reality—a rather subjective view, though this measuring was regarded as an intellectual process and there was much blindness to the emotional origin of judgments of value. "Everybody is as unhappy as he thinks he is." "It is not the thing in itself, but what we think of it, that upsets us." "Regard your friend as loyal, and you will make him loyal." "Do not tell yourself it is necessary, and it will not be." To the common contention that what the Stoics demanded went beyond human powers, Seneca gave this answer: "We cannot do it? Why not? Because we do not assume that we can." To make right notions our own, as it is given to our reason to enable us to do—that is Marcus Aurelius' definition of the process described by the religious metaphor of "rebirth", in which the character attains by its own strength to steadfastness in the true life.† Summing up, Seneca describes the "doctrine" he wants to impress on his

* *Nemo difficulter ad naturam reducitur nisi qui ab illa defecit.* Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 50, 5 ; cf. 52, 3. Cicero, for example in *Or. pro Archia*, 15 : *ego multos homines excellenti animo ac virtute fuisse sine doctrina et naturae ipsius habitu prope divino per se ipsos et moderatos et graves exstitisse fateor.* On the Stoic assumption of the "possibility in principle of a sinless development", cf. Bonhoffer, *Epiktei u. die Stoa*, pp. 303-4.

† Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 78, 13 ; 3, 3 ; 116, 7 ; 84, 26 ; 74, 31 ; 9, 19. Epictetus, *Diss.*, IV, 1 ; III, 16, 7, and elsewhere. Marc. Aur., , VII, 2 ; V, 26. H.A. P

reader as a "belief which will apply to life as a whole", and gives this interpretation of it: "As this belief is, so will be our acts and our thoughts. As our acts and our thoughts are, so will our lives be." *

By his own initiative, simply by means of intellectual processes, independently of actual conditions and material experiences in the course of his career, the reasoning creature man is to attain the happiness of personality, and yet not to become isolated and empty. He is able to do this because the "conviction applied to life" which man must acquire in order to be at rest within himself is nothing merely subjective, but springs necessarily and inevitably from the true ordering of all nature, of which man is a component; there is a universally valid body of philosophical doctrines on the strength of which it must be objectively determined which of the events of life are truly real and of value: then there remains the practical task of education in grading, regulating, and training the impulses in accordance with the values of things. Success in this brings inner harmony, so that a man's whole personality is stamped on every aspect of his activities. He will "will always the same thing"—a possibility only if he "wills what is true": it is the sign of a perverted will to be unstable, full of inconsistencies, and a slave to the continually fluctuating passions.†

Thus the method of education is built up on the conception of the soul-history. "The soul carries within itself the seed of everything that is honourable" (Ep. 94, 29). "For you are mistaken if you suppose that our faults are inborn in us; they have come from without, have been heaped upon us. . . . Nature does not ally us with any vice; she produced us in health and freedom⁵⁵ (94, 55-6). The eternal truths that can light us through life as a natural illumination are given to us only in the form of "germinating reason": that is why man must go to work upon himself, to raise them up into clear consciousness. They are generally obscured and overlaid by prejudices arising from caprice, habits caught from others, family conventions, deceptive appearances; that is why methodical education is necessary—not to prescribe or substitute anything new, but to work purifyingly and stimulatingly on the will, so that the will shall become the instrument of the better self, which is the only true self.

* Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 95, 44: *Ergo infigi debet persuasio ad totam pertinens vitam: hoc est quod decretum voco. Qualis hæc persuasio fuerit, talis erunt quæ agentur, quæ cogitabuntur. Qualis autem hæc fuerint, talis vita erit.*

† Seneca, *Ep.* 89, 14; 95, 57. Cf. Bonhoffer, *Dis Ethik des Stoikers Epiktst*, p. 10.

That which is dormant within and " ready to come into activity " must be liberated, roused, helped, and strengthened, " as a spark, when blown on, develops the flame out of itself".

With penetrating intelligence the later Stoics analysed this process of education and isolated its essential elements, which formed themselves into a series of stages. Seneca and Epictetus are rich in such observations. And although the intellectualization of the spiritual process leads, especially in Seneca, to unrealistic fixations of fluctuating elements, there remain nevertheless the main outlines of a natural development into the moral personality ; this intention finds deeper expression than in the current comparisons with the healing of the sick in the picture of the grain of corn, buried and hidden for a time, that sprouts and gradually adds node to node as the blades grow, until the ripened fruit breaks open, able now to bear the fresh air.*

For man, caught in the whirl of passions of social life, moral education begins with the recognition of his own imperfection ; in this the Stoics agree with Epicurus' technique of personal preparation for happiness, † So far as philosophy and rule of life are interchangeable conceptions, the later Stoics are able to express this in quite general terms : the beginning of philosophy is the consciousness of one's own badness and weakness in what requires to be done.⁶¹ This dictum recalls the Socratic realization that the knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of wisdom, but when this is said of moral instead of intellectual development, it approaches the recommendation of humility, though not in the specifically Christian sense of the word. It was known, too, that that heart-searching was a spontaneous act, a " sudden change ".‡ But men did not remain in the feeling of misery and ignorance, so as to make the inner change, which was the beginning of the soul's history, also its central point; self-portrayal did not become the story of conversion on the initiative of the Stoa. The soul sought solitary self-communion, not in order to dwell with itself, but to gain clearness in quiet and, when it had attained clearness and firmness, to open itself again to the world in freedom. The feelings of revulsion at the outset were regarded as relatively

* Epictetus, IV, 8. Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 38.

† Epicurus, fr. 522 (Usener) : *initium est salutis notitia pccati*. Seneca, *Ep.* 28, 9.

‡ *Cuperem itaque tecum communicare tarn subitam mutationem mei*. Seneca, *Ep.* 6, 2. These statements by Seneca on his *transfiguratio* through the recognition of his *vitia* should not be taken, as in Zeller, *op. cit.*, p. 722, n. 4, simply as confessions, but at the same time as a description in his personal case of this moment, known to be typical, in the history of the soul. See below.

justified incidentals, in contrast with the Christian view of the productive value of the sorrow for sin. Put away pride, but at the same time have confidence in the adequacy of reason, and " a sort of superstitious worship of virtue " *—these were the necessary conditions to be secured in this first stage.

There followed the long labours and struggles to assimilate the principles of reason and possess them as a principle of living. That was a period of diffidence to be compared with the pangs of birth ; the will did not yet know what it wanted. Here the pedagogical art had in readiness a whole series of means of education, resources for the overcoming of passions, all relying on the efficacy of practice and accustoming and example ; emphasis was also laid on the negative factors of self-education—refraining from doing this or that, shunning of past associations and of temptations that were still dangerous. This called for perpetual attentiveness to the state of the soul ; its product in the capacity for self-portrayal will be visible in the embryos of the new kind of autobiography.

If finally the system of rational principles and standards is instilled into the mind of the individual, then the stage of his purposeful " advance ", in virtue of the free pursuit of the good, is reached, the actual epoch in which man first becomes moral. Continually to watch himself, always to keep accurately before himself the truths that shape his life, is regarded here, too, as an indispensable practice, and in proportion as the standard of life aimed at, perfection of virtue together with wisdom and peace of mind, is approached, further stages in liberation from passions can be distinguished.⁶²

This Greco-Roman philosophy of life laid down that constancy and firmness of principle are the qualities in which our moral energies attain concentration and efficacy. Even the " ascetic " trait impressed upon the Stoic training of men in personality was of lasting importance ; to it may be applied what Kant says of his moral teaching : " Ethical gymnastics is not monastic asceticism, but consists only in the combating of the natural instincts, which produces the ability to master them when cases occur that threaten to endanger morality and makes a man upright and cheerful in the consciousness of his recovered freedom."

Under this relationship between teaching and life, the personality of the teacher, always an important matter in philo-

**Superstitio virtutis*. Seneca, *Ep.* 95, 35.

sophy, was bound to gain special importance. For a conviction in regard to the way of life and ethical gymnastics cannot be communicated and absorbed in a purely intellectual manner, like mathematical demonstrations, principles of physics, or historical data, but must be passed from person to person as vital energy and be assimilated by the whole man. This is also the principal aspect from which these practical Roman philosophers of the first and second centuries after Christ were characterized by their disciples—that there proceeded from their living words a power that stirred and carried away their hearers.* In that highly literary period there were famous teachers who, like Socrates, wrote nothing. The purpose of gaining a wider influence through the written word is revealed, however, in the care for literary form.

After Panaetius had broken with the old Stoic austerity, the Stoic philosophers themselves worked to become great writers ; the declamatory element of the rhetorical school was made use of⁶³ in order to "strike at the passions themselves", as Seneca wrote. In Seneca, whose "Moral Epistles" were the chief reading matter for the Roman youth of his day, it will be possible to show in detail the psychological art with which the epistolary style was used as a means of producing from the friendly association with the teacher the individual appeal arising from educative intercourse.

The personality of the philosopher working as educator had a school-forming power even if the content of his teaching did not show a line of its own ; so it was with Sextius, who founded in Augustan Rome a school of philosophy that was named after him. As a Roman he was "born", as Seneca pointed out, "with an obligation to take part in public affairs", but he rejected the honours of office, although Julius Caesar offered him membership of the Senate.⁶⁴ Instead of this, he preferred to preserve his Roman character as a teacher of philosophy : the school he had founded was to be *Romani roboris secta*, a school of Roman sturdiness. From the matter of his teaching he can only be described as an eclectic (he united Platonic and Pythagorean teachings with the Stoic ethics), but his originality lay in the way he carried his teaching into practice, as "a keen man, *Gracis verbis, Romanis moribus philosophans*", talking philosophy in Greek but living it as a Roman. Seneca, who thus described him, quoted by way of illustration a comparison made by Sextius

* Seneca on Sextius, Attalus, Fabianus, and others—see below ; Epictetus on Musonius, *Diss.*, III, 25, 29 ; Arrianus on Epictetus, *Diss.*, *præf.* 5.

that particularly struck him, that of an army marching in a hollow square, ready for battle, in a place where the enemy might be expected to appear from any quarter.

" This", said Sextius as recorded by Seneca, " is just what the wise man ought to do ; he should have all his fighting qualities deployed on every side, so that wherever the attack threatens, there his supports may be ready to hand and may obey the captain's command without confusion . . . , The wise man is alert ; he will not retreat before the attack of poverty, or of sorrow, or of disgrace, or of pain. He will walk undaunted both against them and among them." ⁶⁵

Thus a false picture is given when in the usual accounts of the history of philosophy the old demarcations of schools are preserved. Collaborators from all sides joined in the effort to make available the yield of the great past, the permanent asset of idealistic philosophy, for new usefulness among the seekers of their own day. This began with the revival of Plato and of the Pythagorean teachings of the last century before Christ; these remained under the dominance of Stoic ethics, which placed all speculation in the service of the independent shaping of life, until Platonism was elaborated into a new religious system. Within this enduring movement the differentiation was determined by the various groups of men to whom philosophy appealed, and by the character of the philosophers.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the outstanding personalities of this movement, which continued through two centuries, were closely associated together ; Seneca (4 B.C.-A.D. 65), who united in himself the teachings of various schools, was associated through his teacher Sotion with the followers of Sextius ; his contemporary Musonius was the teacher of Epictetus (c. A.D. 100), and Epictetus' *Sermones*, collected and published by one of his disciples, influenced the emperor Marcus Aurelius (126-180).

Here, therefore, we come to the point at which the special interest that we take, in connexion with the history of autobiography, in the representatives of philosophy in the Roman Empire coincides with the universal and essential importance attributed to them in the history of the European mind ; for this generally recognized importance of these ancient representatives of a philosophy of life depends not so much on the doctrines they transmitted as on the development of the awareness of personality which they furthered. Only in Musonius, from whom we have recorded conversations, is the learned, juristic element

of such central importance that his work cannot be classified with the self-portrayals. On the other hand, Seneca, Epictetus, and above all Marcus Aurelius, can only be understood with reference to their method of assimilating and espousing philosophy ; their best cannot be comprehended if they are regarded merely from the point of view of their Stoic doctrine ; it is just through their personal attitude to it that that doctrine underwent a change, observable stage by stage, and we have to try to separate this new element from what they inherited,

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The picture which Seneca has drawn of himself as a philosopher is intended to be viewed against the background of the fearful epoch in which he was born and in which he had played a leading part, both as philosopher and as politician, until he withdrew from the imperial court, probably not of his own will but under duress. To us his name is associated with that of Nero. He had been Nero's tutor, counsellor, and Minister ; indeed, since Nero was under seventeen when he came to the throne, for a time (A.D. 54-62) Seneca was his regent, supported by the armed force of the Prefect of the Praetorian Guards, but at first in association with the emperor's mother Agrippina, to whom Nero owed his elevation to the status of heir to the throne and Seneca himself owed his position of influence.

Born in Cordoba in Spain, Seneca was already famous as an orator and a writer when Agrippina chose him as tutor for her son and induced her husband, the emperor Claudius, to recall the orator (A.D. 49) from Corsica, whither Seneca had been banished eight years earlier at the instigation of Messalina, as the victim of a court intrigue. As Nero's adviser, Seneca drafted the speech in which the emperor announced his programme of rule on his accession—the renewal of the old Roman traditions on the model of his great-great-grandfather Augustus, which should introduce a new era of peace, justice, and prosperity. Things turned out differently. Under Seneca's eyes there developed in Nero the Caesarian mania that blackened that emperor's name. Seneca remained nevertheless in office—undoubtedly not merely out of political ambition or for the sake of the immense wealth his post procured him, but because it enabled him to do some good and to prevent some evil. He remained even when Nero had committed the crime that made

his perversity notorious, the murder (A.D. 59) of his mother Agrippina, who had become a nuisance to him. Seneca parted from the emperor only when his own position was rendered precarious by the death of Burrus, his friend the Prefect of the Guards (A.D. 62), and when his enemies succeeded in arousing Nero's jealousy of his "pedagogue". Tacitus tells of their inquiry, "How long is everything brilliant in the State to be believed the invention of Seneca?" Now, in his sixty-sixth year, the time had come for him to choose the contemplative life in retirement, to which in his writings he had always given preference over the life of political activity. A few years later, however, he took part in a conspiracy that had united all the men in Rome who possessed uprightness and a sense of responsibility, to put an end to the insane and, indeed, criminal acts of the autocrat. The conspiracy was discovered. With many others, Seneca received the customary fatal order to end his life (A.D. 65). Tacitus has given a moving account of the Stoic spirit in which Seneca faced death. The tribune of a praetorian cohort, whom Nero had entrusted with the matter,

sent one of his centurions in to Seneca, to announce the last necessity. Seneca, nothing daunted, asked for tablets to make his will. The centurion refused this, and Seneca, turning to his friends, called them to witness that he was prevented from rewarding their services; but he would leave them, he said, the one thing, and, after all, the best thing he had to leave, the example of his life.*

From Nero's entourage, into the amoral life of which Petronius delved in order to study human nature in the raw, and from the sensational dangers of Seneca's own existence, which, in social prestige, in fall and exile, and in courtly, intellectual, and political eminence, had measured until the breach and the end the enormous tensions of that world of lust-ridden degenerates (and had not always endured it with perfect stoicism)—from that empirical reality Seneca had saved his personality as something of high quality, so that in the face of death he could express his conviction that "from the contemplation of my life lived in the strength of virtue" there was moral energy to be drawn.

The consciousness of this governed his self-portrayal. After leaving Nero he had had three more years of life; in those years of retirement (A.D. 62-5) he wrote his "Moral Epistles", in which, when nearly seventy years of age, and still the most

* Tacitus, *Annals*, Book XV, 62-3: *conversus ad amicos, quando meritis eorum referre gratiam prohiberetur, quod unum iam et tamen pulcherrimum habeat, maginem vitae suae relinquere testatur.*

modern writer of his time, he collected his energies for a last urgent address to Roman society, in order to advocate, in the personal form that was within his reach, the humane development and the way of life which his own experience had taught him was the way of truth and freedom.

In that work we no longer find the ancient self-idealization, untouched by scepticism, that simply presented the perfection of virtue in the writer's own person : Seneca's was a less uncomplicated conception of the soul. He also had the psychological, rhetorical, and artistic equipment with which to bring life and movement into the abstract material which, under the Stoic rules, made up the picture of the personality. With the deliberation that marked everything he wrote, down to the last nuance of phrasing, he presented himself as a spiritual guide, and for that purpose he made use of the literary form of letters : all of them are addressed to the same person, his friend Lucilius, a man of his own age, whom he introduces in these letters as a young man striving after moral perfection.⁶⁷ Thus the philosopher's self-disclosure is related to a similarly aspiring soul—a relation that forms a typical element in works representative of moral idealism ; it reappears in Christian autobiographies, adapted to their deeper, truly historical interpretation of the pilgrimage of the soul.

In this form Seneca was able to give a detailed presentation of the course of moral education, leading away from the turmoil of passions to the equable, restful state of mind of the free man, without compromising his own moral dignity by the rather rhetorical description of states of mind pursued in that educational course. He had obviously made use of this method in one of his earlier moral treatises, the work on peace of mind ; in that work, with rhetorical technique, he placed at the outset an imaginary letter to himself, as a sort of confession, in which, with his subtle psychological resource, he painted the state of inward commotion, the " sea-sickness," in which a beginner, who knows what virtue is but does not find the strength to pursue it, is tossed about, and only after that introduction did he proceed at length, as if in a sermon, to a general description and explanation of that state of soul together with the rules for overcoming it. So now, in the " Moral Epistles ", he attaches the precepts and teachings of ethics encouragingly, critically, instructively to various typical experiences of the Stoic course of education through which Lucilius has to pass, gradually pushing ahead ; he introduces further variety with references to other persons, shown as at other

moral stages and with other elements of character, and adds as a further main element in the guidance of the soul a letter of sympathy which he had written on some occasion, in the style of the philosophic *consolatio* customary in cases of bereavement. Thus he follows the method of showing himself in action. In the same spirit he inserts here and there special letters treating of the literary forms and methods of education and also the teacher's pleasure at the success of his work.*

In this essential relationship in which the personality here finds itself, there lies a religious element that tends to give the philosopher's conception of Man a more individual character. Seneca points out again and again in exhortations to retreat, to introspection, and to examination of the conscience, that communion with an exemplary and venerated person is the surest of aids and affords a "criterion" of moral growth; and of such morally good men, who "teach through their lives" and not only by word, it will be "helpful not only to state their typical qualities, and to outline their figures and features, but to relate and set forth what kind of men they have actually been." † Here we realize the distance of Seneca's way of looking at men from the Hellenistic forms of biography, which proceeded from the typical man and not from the personal contact between individuals. Seneca has fine things to say of the happiness of such human contact.

The soul should have someone whom it can respect—one by whose authority it may make even its inner shrine more hallowed. Happy is the man who can make others better, not merely when he is in their company, but even when he is in their thoughts! And happy also is he who can so revere a man as to calm and regulate himself by calling him to mind! One who can so revere another will soon be himself worthy of reverence.

Then, when a man has learnt to honour himself, and has formed himself into a man "in whose presence even abandoned wretches would check their bad impulses", he has become mature and "can send away his attendant". ‡

* In this method lies, so far as we can see, the true importance attached here to the epistolary form, an importance that remains however the controversy as to the actual character—historical or invented—of the letters may be decided. Whether or not they are based on an actual private correspondence is irrelevant to the artistic form: occasional letters may have been utilized. Details can prove nothing here. But *cf.* for example, Ep. 28, 1: *hoc tibi soli putas accidisse* ("you think this has happened to you alone . . . ?").

† Seneca, Ep. 95, 72: *cf.* 52, 8,

‡ *Ibid.*, 11, 9; 25, 6. Translated by R. M. Gummere, in the Loeb Classical Library*

In regard to this attitude Seneca refers to Epicurus, whose precepts he likes to quote. We meet here, in fact, with a fundamental ethical principle that was not confined to the Socratic or the Stoic school. It was made a central point of ethics by Democritus, that great thinker who was a contemporary of Socrates, and who represented the highest point reached by the natural philosophy that originated in Ionia. Democritus developed individual ethics out of the free-thinking spirit of unbiased science, and declared self-esteem to be the nucleus of human dignity. One of the fragments of Democritus' ethical works runs : " Have not more shame before men than before thyself, and be not readier to do evil when none would know of it than when all men would learn of it ; but have most shame under thine own judgment and set up this law for the soul, so as to do nothing unbefitting." ⁶⁸ It was in harmony with this untheological basis for ethics that in the school of Epicurus the religious veneration of the master by the disciples had become even more marked than in that of Plato.*

As Seneca then describes himself, in the position of tutor to an aspiring youth, there enter into the artistic *mise en scene* expressions of true human feelings that spring from that vital relationship, and thus the writer reveals his personality more fully through bringing to light not only his aspirations but also his experience in the pursuit of the ideal aspired to.

And yet it is not the inner life alone that is thus brought to light; another attitude comes also into play. The self-portrayal retains some of the characteristics of its rhetorical origin, and the literary produce merging from self-scrutiny is at the same time intended for the public. When Seneca retreats into his solitary conscience, he reveals to others—as on the stage, for which he had written his celebrated tragedies—a spiritual act, which he would have them imitate ; and he directs the energy which he gains from introspection alike toward himself and his friend and toward the depraved world in general. This double aspect appears in his epistles for the first time as a characteristic of literary confessions ; it will reappear in Augustine's " Confessions " and, in modern times, especially in Rousseau.

Illustrative of that double aspect is the way Seneca here employs monologue. " As far as possible, prove yourself guilty ; hunt up charges against yourself ; play the part, first of accuser, then of judge, last of intercessor. At times be harsh with your-

* For this religious cult, see above, pp. 182-3, 193~4.

self." * Such is the practice he wants his friend to follow ; he follows it himself as an examination of conscience, and reproduces in that form momentary reflections and decisions, which he describes as making " trial of my spirit on a sudden ". He presents himself soliloquizing, for instance, in the face of death, a situation in which, as he emphasizes, a man's true character is brought to light more clearly than can be done by words or works, since his maintenance of his moral strength in that situation is a moral action in the highest sense. But such monologues are not altogether manifestations of his inner life ; he actually ends one with the remark, " This is what I say to myself, but I would have you think that I have said it to you also," and in an exhortation in the plural, " Avoid whatever pleases the throng," he can add : " If I speak so to myself, speak so to posterity." †

He knows that he " will find favour with posterity ", and while he tests on Lucilius the effect of moral education and urges this disciple to draw strength from the epistles, he uses the letter form at the same time as a dedication ⁶⁹ and promises his friend that the letters will bring him posthumous fame, such as Idomeneus owes to the epistles of Epicurus and Atticus to those of Cicero. " I shall find favour among later generations ; I can take with me names that will endure as long as mine." ‡

In this uniting of inner experience, described as it proceeds or should proceed under the rules of education given in the Stoa, with a self-portrayal that looks outward, Seneca reshapes the broad material of Stoic ethics into a many-sided picture of his personal way of life. He exercises the function of the moral preacher : " People may decide that I am too zealous and reckless in this particular ; but I shall never cease to hound wickedness, to check the most unbridled emotions, to soften the force of pleasures which will result in pain, and to cry down men's prayers " (Ep. 121,4). He pictures himself busied day and night far from the world, and, indeed, from his own affairs, working behind locked doors " for later generations ", to transmit to them " wholesome counsels, which may be compared to prescriptions of useful drugs. For I have found them helpful in ministering

* Seneca, Ep. 28, 10 ; cf. 58, 5 sqq.

† Ep. 123, 5 (*aliquid experimentum animi sumpsi subito*) ; 26, 5 sqq. ; cf. 27, 1 (*te adhibito mecum exigo*) ; 27, 2 sqq. (with " *pudebit eadem velle quae volueras puer* ", cf. 61, 1 : *Desinamus, quae voluimus velle. Ego certe id ago senex ne eadem velim, quae puer volui*) ; 8, 3 sqq. He calls meditation " soliloquy " (57, 3 ; cf c), as Plato had done before him.

‡ Seneca, Ep. 21, 5 : *Habebo apud posteros gratiam ; possum mecum duratura nomina educere.*

to my own sores, which, if not wholly cured, have at any rate ceased to spread. I point other men to the right path, which I have found late in life, when wearied with wandering " (8, 2-3). He feels himself to be functioning as " pedagogue ".

If the farmer is pleased when his tree develops so that it bears fruit, . . . if every man regards his pupil as though he discerned in him his own early manhood—what, then, do you think are the feelings of those who have trained a mind ? . . . I claim you for myself; you are my handiwork. When I saw your abilities, I laid my hand upon you, I exhorted you, I applied the goad . . . (34, 1-2). You cannot deceive me, for I am with you. Live just as if I were sure to get news of your doings, nay, as if I were sure to behold them (32, 1).

As Socrates, Zeno, Epicurus formed their disciples in personal intercourse, so he means to call his friend to him, to share his life ; for " long is the way through precept, short and efficacious through example ".

Then he sets up Lucilius as examiner, to ask Seneca himself whether he is so perfect that he can devote himself to the improvement of others : Seneca comes forward not as physician but as a patient like the others, not to teach but to give access to his inner nature and to communicate his own monologues.

I do not want you to praise me, to say : " What a great man ! He has learnt to despise all things ; condemning the madneses of man's life, he has made his escape ! " I have condemned nothing except myself. There is no reason why you should desire to come to me for the sake of making progress . . . I would rather have you say, on leaving my presence : " I used to think him a happy man and a learned one, and I had pricked up my ears to hear him ; but I have been defrauded. I have seen nothing, heard nothing that I craved, nothing that could tempt me to come back." If you feel this, and speak thus, some progress has been made (68, 9).

So he represents himself as a fellow-student in the course to be presented. The passage has reference in particular to the problematical point of moral education through the intellect, which, following an early Stoic formula, he defines thus : " One who has learnt and understood what he should do and avoid, is not a wise man until his mind is metamorphosed into the shape of that which he has learnt." * In distinguishing such intellectual transformation from the Christian type of conversion, we tend to attribute the Stoic method of mental or moral development

* *Ibid.*, 94, 48 : *Nam qui didicit et facienda ac vitanda percipit, nondum sapiens est, nisi in ea quae didicit animus eius transfiguratus est.* The formula comes from Aristo of Chios, a popularizing disciple of Zeno who concentrated the Stoic philosophy on ethics (see. below, pp. 447-8) •

to a man's quiet, steady work on himself: to Stoic rationalism that spiritual process was not conceivable as a steady development; the idea of continuity in the process of human change seems to be of modern origin, in spite of the Stoic conception of a natural history of the soul. That conception has reference to the "germinal reason" which, in the pantheistic view of nature, is innate in every being as "a spirit deeply interfused", developing as from a seed. Although bound up with their pantheistic view of the world, the moral ideas of the Stoics run counter to it. Accordingly, in the training of the aspiring man to be a "sage" or a "free man", the Stoic is not by any means so much concerned with the process as with the result; the ultimate character is the true self. Here in Seneca the autobiographical element enters. In order to convince his reader that moral education has the desired effect, transforming a man, he tells of the transformation which he himself experienced.

I feel, my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed . . . And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better,—that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant . . . I therefore wish to impart to you this sudden change in myself . . . You cannot conceive what distinct progress I notice that each day brings to me . . . I am anxious to heap all these privileges on you, and I am glad to learn in order that I may teach. Nothing will ever please me, no matter how excellent or beneficial, if I must retain the knowledge of it for myself. If wisdom were given me, under the express condition that it must be kept hidden and not uttered, I should refuse it (64).

Often he makes brief references to this exemplary activity. He mentions, for instance, the cardinal point that "a great part of progress is the determination to make progress", and he drives it home by adding: "This I know, that I am determined, and determined with my whole soul." Or he quotes the Stoic formula for the supreme good, conformity with nature (*vivere convenienter natura*), and proceeds from that to what he himself calls a "complete disclosure of my innermost feelings: in all that seems repellent and harsh I am formed in this way: I do not obey God, but agree with Him; I follow Him wholeheartedly, not because I must".

In the first of the 124 letters he exemplifies in his own case the most general principle of the rationalization of life by devoting time to taking account every now and then of one's objectives, of the "How and why" of its use; in a later letter he relates

that even in his old age he puts himself to school and goes to the lectures of another philosopher. Or he gets his friend to ask him, every single day, to give a full account of how he is passing the day : " You judge me to be in health if there seems to be nothing in my account that I had any need to hide." Then he gives a description of his daily life—how he passes the hours resting and reading, how he gets on with gymnastics, with bathing, how he eats and sleeps, how in his meditations he does not allow himself to be disturbed by the noise of the great city, and so on. The bulk of this letter is made up of a discussion of the value of dialectics ; he puts it into the shape of that day's meditation. " I intend to watch myself continually and, a thing that is particularly useful, to go over my day. What makes us so bad is that nobody reflects on his life." He also recalls past experiences that are of importance to the moral process ; he shows, for instance, the effect of philosophic addresses on unspoilt characters by recalling an experience of his youth—how, impressed by his teacher's declamations, he struggled hard and successfully to achieve asceticism.

In this way the self-disclosure proceeds again and again from within, from the personal element, though with the purpose of conveying what is of universal application in the formation of our will; and to that extent personal morality is seen to be the result of a process that consists in the discovery by the individual of his true self. The impression produced on the reader by the description he gives of his personality and his " freedom " is more vivid and more convincing than in the usual picture of the sage, though, following the Stoic tradition, he describes his personality as the embodiment of the moral will relying on the recognized " laws for the whole of life". In his magnificent language he depicts the enjoyment of that freedom : the tranquillity of the mind that has " true joy " in the contemplation of the well-ordered soul, that is ready by means of " long meditation and the paramount, omnipotent reason " to face any destiny, looking on death as the final test of virtue, and surrendering to the universal divine order of the cosmos not under compulsion but with free assent. *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt* (" The fates lead the willing, but drag along the reluctant"), †

Seneca has the most definite sense of the fact that the strength

Cf. Ep. 20, 1 ; 27, 1 *sqq.* ; 7, 10 ; 94, 48 ; 7, 8 ; 72, 36 ; 96, 2 ; 1, 4 ; 76, 1 ; 83 ; 108, 13-14.
† Ep. 107, ii.

of the personal life is the foundation of a writer's effectiveness. His best judgments on philosophical authors are built on that fact. "When you read Sextius, you will say: 'He is alive; he is strong; he is free; he is more than a man; he fills me with a mighty confidence'" (64, 3). Of another writer he says that he impresses us because he himself has something in him. In this he is attacking on two sides—against the rhetoric that sets out merely to appeal to the ear, and against the system of dialectic and mental training that "has turned philosophy into philology".* His philosophy aims at teaching a way of life; his purpose is "not to impose but to persuade".† Thus the element of vitality which he introduces into the form of self-portrayal is naturally found again in the quality of his style; he himself pointed to the Greek proverb "As is a man's quality, so is his speech", and developed it at length with reference to the habits of various individuals and times.‡

In accordance with this relationship, which reminds us of the modern phrase "*Le style c'est l'homme*", he repeatedly insists* that he is concerned just as much with a convincing expression of his feelings as with the exhibition of his rhetorical art. There must certainly be truth in this, and the powerful influence of his works confirms it; for that influence not only lasted through the Middle Ages but grew still greater in the Renaissance, a period in which an author was not valued simply for what he had to say. Seneca wanted to be an original writer,§ and to be seen to be free from every philosophical school, so much so that, though a Stoic, he regularly took the daily motto for his letters from Epicurus—to show that the philosophical teaching is not a matter for the specialist but something of universal human appeal, "dictated by nature itself". To us his literary aspirations are difficult to assess, because we can scarcely distinguish the individual nuance any longer from the typical element of this style. We detect, however, in the method of writing, as well as in the "inner form" which we sketched, a purpose of throwing into prominence changes and events, the becoming rather than the being. He himself expresses that intention in one of his letters. He adopts the phrase of one of his Stoic teachers, that it is more pleasant to make than to keep a friend, as it is more pleasant to the artist to

* Ep. 100, 2; 11 and elsewhere; 108, 24; cf. 114, 3; 82, 7, 20; 87, 41, etc.

† Ep. 82, 20, etc.

‡ Ep. 114 and 115. Cf. E. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, p. 306. On the extent of the acceptance of the proverb *ὅλος ὁ τρόπος, τοιοῦτός τε καὶ ὁ λόγος*, pp. 11-12,

§ See especially Ep. 33, 7-8; 45, 4-5; 64, 7.

paint than to have finished a picture, " When one is busy and absorbed in one's work, the very absorption affords great delight, but when one has withdrawn one's hand from the completed masterpiece, the pleasure is not so keen." In the latter case a man may enjoy " the fruits of his art ", but not " the art itself" (9, 7).

From that consideration Seneca chose the epistolary form for this work of moral philosophy, presenting himself as a teacher who assumes his pupil's, or rather his reader's, goodwill : to bring goodwill into existence would, he declares, require another form, to be learnt from the public speakers; these " moral epistles " are intended to make their way " gradually ", " intimately " into the soul, like seed, which, " if it has once found suitable soil, unfolds its strength and from an insignificant thing spreads to its greatest growth ". Heraclitus said : " Such is the *logos* of the soul, it increases itself." Seneca expounds in this sense the meaning of the letter form he chose : " Reason is not impressively big at first sight; but put it to work and it grows." *

This seems to conflict with the observation we made earlier, that the Stoic is more concerned with the result than with the process. There are, indeed, opposing tendencies here, one static, the other dynamic ; on the whole the former prevails. Regarded from the point of view of autobiography, that fact sets a limit to the philosophic attitude to life represented by Seneca ; close as he seems to us to come in his ideas to representing the raising of man to personality and freedom as a historic process that takes place in the individual through the passage of time, that idea remains nevertheless beyond his horizon. Again and again we may observe openings for such a development; for instance, with reference to the ethical topic of the overcoming of passions. At this important point Seneca actually carries his course of instruction back to the ordinary behaviour of men that forms the opposite pole to the Stoic rule of life. In one of the letters at the outset of the collection he advises his friend if he cannot " condemn fear with a resolute spirit " to " counter one weakness with another and temper your fear with hope ". " But," he goes on, " I am ashamed . . . to try to beguile you with such mild remedies " : it is " driving out one vice by means of another ", a process permis-

* Ep. 38, 2. (Verba) seminis modo spargenda sunt, quod quamvis sit exiguum, cum occupavit idoneum locum, vires suas explicat et ex minimo in maximos auctus diffunditur. Idem facit ratio ; non late patet, si aspicias ; in opere crescit.

sible only in the case of a strength of mind never yet attained. Soon after this an epistle begins, before indicating the normal "way to composure" through the reason, with the rejection of that un-Stoic resource.* But such distinctions, which might have been used for a gradual exposition of spiritual development, are purposely not taken as the basis of the composition, and there is only a loose development to be detected⁷⁰ in so far as in these epistles the first series are more exhortatory, directed to general inculcation in various ways of the philosophical way of life, and accordingly proceed in actual relation to the disciple envisaged in his friend, while later the self-portrayal of the Stoic personality assumes the character of meditations and essays; the constantly restarted procedure of a correspondence course in virtue takes the form, as the dogmatic material thrusts itself to the fore, of a thesis or a homiletic diatribe, so that the personal relationship is often no more than a rhetorical figure.

Thus in reality the letters are not a series but a collection: Seneca gives expression to his independent personality by building up on the Stoic ideas a personally formed view of the moral world in general, and, while passionately inveighing against the decay of morals, constantly pointing out in detail the way in which the rigid rational norm is modified in application to the practical conditions of life. This method of forming and presenting one's own personality is in no way special to Seneca, but is characteristic of Stoic personality in general—a personality so firmly assured of its equilibrium that the writer can replace the logical succession of problems by entertaining variety.

But although the static conception of personality holds the whole work together, Seneca has a sense of the dynamics of moral life, as is shown by his description of mental struggles:

I should deem more fortunate the man who has never had any trouble with himself; but the other, I feel, has deserved better of himself, who has won a victory over the defects of his own nature, and has not easily attained wisdom but has wrestled his way to it. You may be sure that this refractory nature, which demands much toil, has been implanted in us. There are obstacles in our path; so let us fight, and call to our assistance some helpers.

In a similar spirit he says in one place that he wants his works read "as though I were still seeking the truth, were not yet acquainted with it, and were seeking it unflinchingly".† When approaching

* Compare Ep. 13, 11 *sqq.*, with 24, 1. † Ep. 52, 7; *cf.* 45, 4,

his Moral Epistles from this point of view, we may detect variety and motion that give life to his picture of the monotonous Stoic practice of virtue, in accordance with which man, by means of continual reflection upon the one essential thing, which yet is "always new", in "daily contemplation" and "sustained effort" has to "impregnate" himself with the truth of divine and human things, by "always grasping them anew and often applying them to himself, although he knows them": thus should he, forming, accustoming, strengthening, raise "good will to good habit (*ethos*)" and "make destiny his personal property" (*privatam facere fortunam*).*

But this Stoic type of self-portrayal could not suffice for so sophisticated and experienced a man as Seneca. He adds another process, which here and there gives his letters an intimately personal character. He likes to begin a letter by showing himself in some situation of his daily life, on a stroll or a journey, at a spa, or talking to friends. That is not merely a search for the picturesque or striking or for a rhetorical setting :f Seneca watches himself in such situations and allows his moral reflections to proceed from the feelings of the moment. When passing, for instance, through a dirty and dusty tunnel, he notes a sudden change in his feelings ; this change, he points out, had nothing to do with fear, but it proved that even a sage is not immune from changes of mood due to physical conditions. Or he introduces a remark on the value of life in old age with a humorous scene, in which, in an old landed estate, men and things on all sides conspire to remind him of his frailty. In passages revealing admirably human feelings he shows his relations with his wife, and their fond care for each other, and so develops the humane teaching of the Stoic moral system concerning the permissibility of noble human feelings. Seneca's relations with his wife are, indeed, reminiscent of the deep love of husband and wife among the ancient Romans, to which witness is borne by the Latin inscriptions and poetry .‡ The figure of his wife belongs to the historic picture of Seneca's end, mentioned above, for she voluntarily followed him into the grave.

Other characteristic situations give us insight into the personal

* Ep. 16, 1 ; 118, 4-5 ; no, 8 ; 90, 45, etc.

† The rhetorical setting may be studied in its impersonal quality in the "Attic Nights" of Aulus Gellius (about A.D. 169) : he crowds a quantity of the fruits of reading into real or imagined events, in order to meet the contemporary demand for exciting as well as solid stuff.

‡ See above, pp. 219 sqq.

spiritual life of this highly-cultured man. We see him at study, or in philosophic discourse, the matter of which is thus introduced : " Never have I realized so well as today, when we were speaking. . ." perhaps of Plato. We hear that on this or the other day he was able to be alone and undisturbed. " I am writing this to you in the country house of Scipio Africanus, after showing respect to his *manes* and to the altar which I regard as the monument to that great man "—so begins a letter that measures the low moral level of his day against the picture of Scipio and his way of life.

Chrysippus was reported to have said that " those perpetual visitors " would soon bring a man to his death; Seneca, for his part, declares that he is ready for death if quiet is really as necessary for concentration on study as is generally assumed. He describes his stay in a secluded spot in the centre of Baiae ; he gives a humorous account of the uproar made by the bathers and the noises of the street, and gives a whole list of disturbances he has learnt to put up with—the rattle of coaches, carpenters in the house, sawing close by, pedlars of musical instruments who try their flutes and trumpets " not by blowing them but by making them shriek ", and so on ; he remarks incidentally that a continuous hubbub is less distracting than intermittent noises. The securing of solitude in the midst of the bustle of life is a subtle form of personal culture, and of much the same character is the way Seneca flees to nature, or, rather, shows the pursuit of nature in his life, half in earnest, half in jest. He paints the joys of a two-day journey on which he tasted to the full the charms of natural surroundings, without any luggage, with a peasant's cart for his coach, with plain food, and with a mattress for bed ; he has to confess that he blushed involuntarily at this " frugality " when a carriage came by, and that he is thus " not advanced enough " and his approval of the simple life has not yet become an unshakable conviction : the homily on their luxury which he ought to have delivered to the people who had driven past him he can only deliver now, after the event.* Apart from this moralizing conclusion, we have here the type of personal tone that developed freely in the letters of Petrarch and the essays of Montaigne.

Seen thus in perspective, Seneca's originality lies not in any newness of his ideal of the philosophic way of life, but in the free literary form given to his exposition of that ideal. But this itself

* Ep. 57, 12, 104, 83, 86, 56, 87 ; cf. 61, 64, 49, 53, 70, etc.; 25, 7.

is a work not only of art but of philosophy, which gave the personality a formative consciousness of itself. This personal grasp of the problems of life gives an altered character to the ideal conceptions ; philosophic meditation becomes religious contemplation through the emotional way *in* which the relation to the ideals is experienced and passed on. Re-lived in this way, the moral ideas themselves become living spiritual forces, and man can enter into intercourse with them, filling himself with the sense of their grandeur. This new attitude comes here to the fore in the midst of the intellectual effort that relates the fact of individual life to the firmly established system of moral ideas in order to deduce from that relation the right course of action.

In this changed attitude to the spiritual world the religious movement of the time finds characteristic expression, more characteristic than in Seneca's observations on the normal weakness of the moral will and the fatuity of this world. The transformation of Stoic metaphysics noticeable in him⁷¹ originated in that method, which had a fairly wide scope ; emerging from moral idealism, it was able to transcend it, thereby altering the idea of God itself. Thus Seneca's " Moral Epistles " show a deepening of self-portrayal that has an affinity with the great spiritual autobiography that arose in the fourth century of the Christian era, taking as its theme the religious, or metaphysical, meaning of human life. This fundamental importance to the progress of self-scrutiny remains in Seneca's work, though much of its content may be derived from the philosophical efforts of the preceding century, especially those of Posidonius. In his Epistles Seneca allows us to see in his own person this religious attitude with regard to the ideas of virtue, of the divine world, and of human greatness.

The combating of passions, and the analysis and testing of his own moral position, are not, in his view, the only task. Alongside them he places the contemplation of the " spectacle of nature " as another path of the spirit in raising itself from the earthly to the divine ; it is the eternal source of religiosity which Aristotle had saved in the scientific age.⁷² " That is the freedom of the spirit; that is its floating away " ; it is a comprehension of the " whole " in " all the manifold great, divine things " ; never is the sage " more active " than in such contemplation. So in modern times said Spinoza : " *Cum contemplamur, agimus*" Seneca expresses it as his experience that no weariness of life can come if philosophic contemplation gives life content. " The pure con-

templation of wisdom takes up much of my time : I contemplate it with astonishment, and the world itself at times in just the same spirit; often I become aware of the world, as it were, as a new observer," Then come the eternal questions about the reason for and the composition of this world and man's own existence. " Am I not to want to know whence I came ? Am I to see all this only once, or to be born again and again ? Whither will my way lead hence ? " In similar phrasing these questions appear as the motto for not a few spiritual autobiographies of later times.

Moral experience also becomes for Seneca a source of religion. The Stoic view of the world had based the conviction of man's kinship with God on the doctrine of natural philosophy that the reason in us is of the same nature as the divine Reason permeating the universe. Seneca formulated this pantheistic tenet in the acute saying that the sage, as in purity he represents human reason, " lives on the same level as God ; and in one respect he is ahead of Him : God owes His fearlessness to His nature, the sage to himself". In the same spirit he judged the state of nature, which he regarded as a Golden Age with men coming " straight from the gods " ; he did not consider it deserving of the attribution of wisdom and virtue, because its innocence was based, in his view, on ignorance. The conception of God was determined by this moral idealism ; the attribute " divine " became the highest moral attribute, and so could be employed in the description of the greatness of soul, extending beyond the normal human sphere, of the sage. As, then, this increased moral consciousness could be illuminated by the Platonic teachings of the transcendental origin of the human soul, the appearance of perfected morality in this world might be envisaged as the manifestation of something divine, and a romantic religiosity might revel in it and honour the godhead in a moral achievement just as in nature.⁷⁸ This is one of the finest passages in Seneca's work, filling almost an entire epistle (41), which has been given the title " On the God within us."

We do not need to lift up our hands to heaven, or to beg the keeper of a temple to let us approach his idol's ear, as if in this way our prayers were likelier to be heard. God is near you, is with you, He is within you. A holy spirit dwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian . . . No man can be good without the help of God . . . If ever you have come upon a grove that is full of ancient trees that have grown to an unusual height, shutting out the view of the sky by a veil of pleached and intertwining

branches, then the loftiness of the forest, the seclusion of the spot, and your wonder at the dense unbroken shade in the midst of the open spaces, will prove to you the presence of deity. Or if a cave, made by the deep crumbling of the rocks, holds up a mountain on its arch, a place not built by human hands but hollowed out into such spaciousness by natural causes, your soul will be deeply moved by a certain intimation of the existence of God. We worship the sources of mighty rivers . . . If you see a man who is undaunted in the midst of dangers, untouched by desires, happy in adversity, at peace amid the storm, a man who looks down upon men from a higher plane, and views the gods on a footing of equality—will not a feeling of reverence for him steal over you ? . . . Just as the rays of the sun do indeed touch the earth, but still abide at the source from which they are sent ; even so the great and hallowed soul, which has come down in order that we may have a nearer knowledge of divinity, does indeed associate with us but still cleaves to its origin ; on that source it depends, thither it turns its gaze and strives to go, and it concerns itself with our doings only as a being superior to ourselves. What, then, is such a soul? One which is resplendent with no external good, but only with its own.*

The ideal conception of virtue itself becomes a religious person, not in abstract allegory and not even in the actual picture of a sage, but integrated into the shape that would be its own " if it should ever come under a single view and show itself once in all its completeness ". " If we had the privilege of looking into a good man's soul, oh what a fair, holy, magnificent, gracious, and shining face should we behold—radiant on one side with justice and fortitude, on another with temperance and wisdom." So he enumerates the various virtues, thriftiness, moderation, endurance, refinement, affability, love of one's fellow-men ; forethought combined with elegance, and, above all, magnanimity.

If one might behold such a face, more exalted and more radiant than the mortal eye is wont to behold, would not one pause as if struck dumb by a visitation from above ? and utter a silent prayer, saying : " May it be lawful to have looked upon it ! " And then, led on by the encouraging kindliness of his expression, should we not bow down and worship ? . . . And such a vision will indeed be a present help and relief to us, if we are willing to worship it. But this worship does not consist in slaughtering fattened bulls, or in hanging up offerings of gold or silver, or in pouring coins into a temple treasury ; rather does it consist in a will that is reverent and upright.†

Finally, Seneca makes mention of one more thing as his experience. The time in which he was living, with his desire

* Ep. 41, 1-6. Translated by R. M. Gummere, in the Loeb Classical Library,

† Ep. 66, 6-7 ; 115, 3 sqq. Translated by R. M. Gummere.

for original productive achievement, was filled with the sense of dependence on a great historic past, in which all valuable intellectual work seemed completed. The oppressive effect so produced on literature and life is one of the most striking features in the picture of that ageing world. We modern Europeans are in a similar situation, our intellectual heritage having accumulated for more than a thousand years. But we have learnt how to draw strength from our consciousness of that essential historical relation of the present to the past, since we are assured of the future at the same time, owing to our belief in the progress of the human mind, or rather, since that eighteenth-century belief is losing ground, more generally speaking in the continuity of the creative process of life, underlying the ever-changing historical world. Thus we are alive to the expansion of the mind that may be gained from surveying the past while aware of the limits set to all creative work of men by its temporal condition.

In antiquity, however, this productive kind of historical consciousness did not emerge. For, owing to the enduring influence of the classic Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, there prevailed an attitude to all things temporal that was different from that developed by our modern vision of the historical world as a self-contained whole : wherever something appeared to have been attained, it had to be derived from, or set in its place within, the transcendental sphere of the true reality considered to be unchanging. In Seneca we see ancient thought drawing near, within set limits, to our modern historical view of the spiritual world we live in, and it is again through the religious attitude that he became alive to the expansion of the mind to be gained from historical contemplation. We saw that he introduced the great moral personalities as educative forces into his method of training : now, through the same change under which he found in natural philosophy a material for religious contemplation, they became for him a means of elevating his own existence. He who in striving after wisdom cultivates their society not only lives his own life, but gains the substance of the past as well. " No age is out of reach of great minds, no period inaccessible to thought " ; through the " comprehension of all times in one " our short life is made long, as we can " dispute with Socrates, doubt with Carneades, seek peace with Epicurus, join the Stoics in overcoming human nature, and the Cynics in striding beyond it ".

These " ancients ", whose heritage is always to be extended and, above all, made fruitful in life, " must be honoured and praised like the gods ".

Why should I not keep statues of great men to kindle my enthusiasm, and celebrate their birthdays? Why should I not continually greet them with respect and honour? The reverence which I owe to my teachers, I owe in like measure to those teachers of the human race, from whom the beginnings of such great blessings came . . . The two Catos, Laelius the Wise, Socrates together with Plato, and such men as Zeno and Cleanthes—shall I admit them into my soul with less than the deepest veneration? I do indeed venerate them, and always rise to do honour to such noble names.*

EPICTETUS

Very different, simple and firm, almost robust, is the character of Epictetus as teacher. We have a direct impression of it in copies of addresses he used to give, in plain colloquial Greek, to the young people who made pilgrimage to him in his province. Thus we have him in front of us, in the midst of his actual work. A freedman, without a name of his own (his traditional name is an appellation meaning " acquired "), born in Phrygia (A.D. 60) ; a pupil in Rome, before he had been set free, of the Stoic Musonius ; exiled from Rome under Domitian with other philosophers who had agitated against despotism (A.D. 90) ; not a writer but a powerful orator or, rather, lay preacher, he seems to us the embodiment of the common-sense morality that is free of all limitations of time and place and nation. Anyone who is inclined to doubt whether homely, sturdy common sense can suffice for the whole guidance of an active-minded man ought to draw from Epictetus a different estimate of the possibilities of the formation of personality. There is nothing decorative about him, no suggestion of emotion, nothing artificial, nothing sentimental ; he is able to put all life into the plain rules of common sense. Everything in life and the world becomes clear and sweet to him as he interprets it from the one Stoic thought that man is inwardly free if he confines himself to what is within the scope of his own free will, regarding all external good things with indifference, and thus fitting his rational will into the " natural ", that is reasonable, context of the divine universe. He has that simple and powerful conviction, and gives expression

* Ep. 102, 1 and 21 sqq. ; 64, 7 sqq. Cf. *De Brevitate Vitae*, 14 sqq. ; cf. Ep. 122, 3 ; *extendamus vitam ; huius et officium et argumentum actio est.*

to it as a faith that makes a man cheerful. From it springs a directness of his own which, although he had no wish to modify the rigidity of the Stoa in any way and had no ambition to be productive like Seneca, yet makes him so original and refreshing.

He expresses himself unreservedly, artlessly, on every question put to him in the lecture hall, and on every problem of life or occurrence of which he treats, but the picture we get of the man is not the result of an agility of mind through which his impetuous nature would gradually be revealed to the observer ; on the contrary, he is always the same ; what he pours forth comes always from the few maxims in which he sums up the whole art of living for any critical situation ; such personal elements as emerge reveal no secrets, for everything about the man is clear and open. He speaks of the most abstract demands of virtue as obvious things with which every man must be able to comply. There is something demagogic about him, and, indeed, he deals with elementary things : " Think of the salvation of your souls ! " He is radical, apparently of ruthless consistency, and simply cuts through every emotional human relationship when it seems to him to be a hindrance to the independence of the person ; this was made easier for him by his lack of commitments, as an ex-slave with neither wife nor child.

He maintains that it is humanly possible, and describes it as morally incumbent, that for the sake of independence a man with his feelings aroused should place himself coolly at a distance from himself, and that in the midst of the joys he does not want to deny himself he should always take thought for their consequences. " What is there wrong in whispering to yourself in the midst of kissing your child, ' Tomorrow you will be dead ' ? Or to your friend : ' Tomorrow you will be going away, or I shall, and we shall see each other no more ? ' " In all human relations, even in the relations between parents and children, only reason can be built upon ; egoism, man's basic impulse, must obviously destroy everything so long as it is " animal " ; only when it is guided by the recognition that no external benefits are of any value to men is it harmless, allowing the individual to make friendships ; for the evil or, as he puts it, the disease was not due to egoism but to false opinions leading it astray. It is equally obvious to Epictetus that he who pursues his own true happiness, best fulfils by that very course his obligations in human society.

So far as he is concerned . all this calls for no effort. He

never fusses, but always gets to work at once. He tackles everything as directly as he can, without psychological subtleties. In this freedom from all that is problematical he is the prototype of the cheerful courage in thought and living expressed in the autobiographies of the Enlightenment, and among the Puritans, with much the same means of presentation as came naturally to him. He came from a young country into that ageing world, effortlessly bringing "order into the most refractory material", and he preserved his natural equanimity though he was exceptionally lively and imaginative. He starts from immediately around him, with a thousand individual cases; reason must be applied to the events of everyday life, which become the "gateways" to tragedies and romances; we must see things as they are, and will them as they naturally happen, finally mastering the great nightmare, Death. He believed that life can at all times be systematically controlled by the will, and he shows a practical method of liberating oneself from passions, from gloom, from sudden anger: "Just keep quiet and count the days on which you were not angry; I used to get into a temper every day, then I did every other day, then every third, then every fourth . . ." Benjamin Franklin devised a similar technique for himself: in his eighties he declared that that sort of self-disciplining accounted for the achievement that his life and character had been.

The desultory style of address characteristic of the diatribe, in which the state of mind of the audience is referred to again and again, was also refashioned by Epictetus, so as to appear to be the most natural and most personal thing in the world. We see him with his lame leg in front of his disciples, not still for a moment, and yet so even-tempered and so masterly that no one can fail to take him seriously. He catechizes, applies the Socratic method, or shouts when he is making short work of Epicureanism, which he regards as immoral, or of scepticism, which he regards as simply an impossible attitude of mind; and he carries his audience with him when he makes use of plain arguments of ordinary common sense which would not be put up with from anybody else. On another occasion he begins with a clinching syllogism: "That man is free who lives as he wants to. Who wants to live and make a mess of it? Nobody. He who is bad is not living as he wants to. Hence no bad man is free." Then he castigates someone, or declaims dramatically, acting a part: "But am I to go about with a lame leg? Slave, are you blaming the world for just one little leg? Aren't you going to give

yourself to the community? Won't you do without the leg, cheerfully leave it to Him who gave it?" And if the concrete good things of life fall through the few wide meshes of his rules of life, he still brings up, with the drastic resources of the diatribe, his examples and comparisons and pictures from the most varied spheres of life and classes of society, and he himself makes out his case, although his speeches, judged by their content, have an element of unreality and of the doctrinaire. In his active moral consciousness he does not feel the rejection of externals and of a career as poverty, but as a positive demonstration and heightening of the value of this life on earth. He does not at times, like Seneca or Marcus Aurelius, look with wondering mind for paths along which, men can attain immortality; he has no sense at all of the need for it: let us be thankful and rejoice in the gift of life on earth; all men are born to happiness; just to live in this divine world is a feast.

In this confidence he is religious. Seneca rose to the statement that wisdom would lose all value for him if he were not allowed to pass it on to others; Epictetus, who has himself a full share of that sense of apostolate, declares: "But I should even wish, if it were true that man must be brought through fiction and deceit to learn that nothing external, nothing independent of our will, matters to us, I should even wish for that deception, through which I should come to live happily and at peace." * But if he rejects wisdom it is not because, like the Cynics, he contented himself with the sense of the sovereignty of the moral power of the separate individual, but because the body of "natural" conceptions, on which the Stoa based personal morality, had become in the course of time a secure possession maintained by that school of thought, and accordingly, in reliance on those conceptions, ethics would now be based on the direct cognition of the individual spontaneously awake to them.⁷⁴

Such are the simplest outlines of Moral Idealism as taught by Epictetus. They need no theoretical basis and can without change of substance, simply through the force of experience, be converted into religious symbols. Here again he has a firm hold. The moral ordering of the world, or divine providence, extends for him into the smallest perceptible things; an anthropocentric teleology, against the excesses of which under the Romans Cicero had turned, following Posidonius,⁷⁶ and which was no less powerful among Protestants in the age of the Enlightenment. And the contemplation of this divine order, into which man

* Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, I, 4, 27.

enters as a valuable member as soon as he bases his behaviour on it and accepts all that happens, without distinction, as in accordance with nature and good for the whole, is for Epictetus so vivid an experience that he introduces the attitude of person to person into the relationship of man to God, which was pantheistically interpreted by the Stoics as the dependence of the part on the divine whole.

This is a different method of religious personification to that of Seneca. Epictetus expresses the certainty of divine providence by means of the simplest image which religious language has for it : " If anyone is able to understand the organization of the world . . . why should he not call himself son of God ? . . . and to have God as Creator and Father and Guardian, should not that raise us out of misery and fear ? " * His conception of God gives us a glimpse of the change in the sense of life that was brought about by the religious movements of those days. For owing to that feeling of man's personal relationship to God he gained a sense of the individual's mental activity, and so ventured to distinguish the mental from the physical processes. This distinction had not yet been grasped by the Stoics ; for the notion of energy, which had been at work from of old in the Stoic conception of God as the soul of the world, as well as in the conception of the soul of man, referred to organic life, all matter being considered as living and all spirit as rarefied matter. Epictetus, owing to his religious attitude to the living body of the universe, was about to overcome that view, commonly called *hylozoism*, though theoretically he did not abandon it. Reflecting on the way in which the world-soul " feels all movements " of a living being " as its own ", he compares it to the mental activity by means of which, while the thousands of ideas of the most manifold things are in our memory, we give form from within to the sensuous impressions, the sense data needing the assent of our judgment, which is continually operative in us. Accordingly, as regards the all-pervading operation of the Divine, he points to the direct experience we have of it in the phenomenon of conscience. For conscience, regarded as the basis of human conduct, is, in his judgment, something empirical and divine as well ; it is a warrant of God's presence in our mind, just like a guardian appointed for each one of us.†

* Epict., *Diss.*, I, 9.

† *Ibid.*, I, 14 : Epictetus' reply when someone asked him how men could be convinced that all that they do is seen by God.

On such soil grew no speculative thought, no sense of the universe, with the exaltation it brings, but another personal attitude to the divine. Epictetus himself[†] says this, when talking of Providence, by making this statement about his calling :

If we had understanding, what else ought we to do, one and all, but sing praises of the Godhead and observe its good deeds ? . . . Because ye many are blind, ought there not to be one who has this function and sings the song of praise for all ? What better can a lame old man do than praise God ? If I were a nightingale, I should do what befits the nightingale, and if a swan what befits the swan. Since I am a being endowed with reason, I must praise God. That is my work, and I am carrying it out ; and I shall not leave this post so long as it is granted to me, and I shall invite you too to join in the song.*

With this assignment of his own mission, Epictetus comes close to the definite type of prophets then appearing in the Heilenized Orient. Even in the main centre of the actual religious movement, in the Christian communities, divine service consisted mainly in praises and thanksgiving to God, and the " prophets ", who in these communities stood out from the mass of believers, may be described as " virtuosi of thanksgiving ".† But Epictetus does not stop there : the highest task, in his view, is active labour in " setting out to the aid of my neighbour's soul ", as this stage was called among the preachers of the Middle Ages in Germany.‡ In Epictetus' description of this ideal § it becomes quite clear that the transition of philosophy to a religious attitude comes here not from any renunciation of knowledge but from the assured certainty of the possessor of the other sort of knowledge that comes from inner experience.

Epictetus describes the man who " is to show in practice that it is possible " to possess true happiness and yet to call none of the good things of the world his own, as prophet, servant, messenger, emissary of God. || But in this there is no element of mysticism or revelation, nothing of that urge of the elect to grasp at other-worldly power which is found so much among the religious prophets ; he sets everything on a purely moral basis, and it is precisely that basis that has now acquired religious

* Epict., *Diss.*, I, 16.

† A. Harnack, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, II, i, p. 119. Quoted in R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 220. On the phenomena of the order of prophets, see Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 204-5, 20 sqq.

‡ *Auskehr auf des Nächsten keilsame Hilfe*.

§ See especially Epict., *Diss.*, III, 22.

|| Epict., *Diss.*, III, 1, 36.

vitality.⁷⁶ In this moral order of the divine world the definite duty and mission of every living being are assigned : " Do you not know that the business of life is a campaign ? One man must mount guard, another go out on reconnaissance, and another out to fight " (III, 24, 31). He who has the mission to raise himself above others as "universal moulder and educator", or as " supervisor of men ", is not endowed with the " marks of captaincy " by nature like the bull or the queen bee, and cannot base his power on arms and bodyguards like the tyrants, but must be practically assured of his right by the strictest self-examination, by the self-knowledge that gives the moral measure.

. If he sees that he has watched and worked for men through the night and has laid himself down in purity, and arises from sleep yet purer, if he thinks what he thinks as friend and servant of the gods and partner in the rule of Zeus, if he has everywhere at call the saying of Cleanthes : " Guide me, Zeus, and thou, Necessity," and " If it is the will of the gods, so be it," why should he not take courage to speak freely to his brothers, to his sons, in short, to his blood relations ?

It is a dangerous decision ; for he who makes a false claim for himself is out to disturb the world order : " He who undertakes so great a matter without God is hated of God."

The substance of the teaching attributed by him to those prophets is the same as that of his own diatribes : that men should scrutinize themselves and grasp the primeval " natural notions " given to them in their immediate consciousness, in order to make these the maxims of their life. Seneca had shown the ideal of virtue in the picture of the soul radiant with beauty, like a god appearing on earth. Epictetus has in mind an actual man who proclaims the true nature of the Good, " not only by showing to the people the qualities of the soul", but also convincing them by his precept and practice of the value of a natural way of life, lifted above all conventions. So he calls him " the Cynic ", and in doing so he follows the popular tradition, without accepting, however, the general behaviour of the sect of Cynics: he presents even Socrates alongside Diogenes as a pattern of Cynicism.

The freedom of the sage whom no passion can affect, neither anger nor envy nor compassion nor fame nor women's beauty, is the first requisite for this true Cynic, who must allow himself to be beaten without turning to wrath, and must love his beater as his brother. His calling is not something of absolute value :

in a State of sages no one will want to make the Cynic as he has to be made in existing conditions, in which man " lives as in battle ". He must have an engaging personality, ready wit of course, a body that draws upon the benefits of life in free nature and lends impressiveness to his words, not dirty or ailing or pale. He must stand apart from all the bonds of human society, from marriage, from the business of State, not as an ascetic discipline but in order to avoid being involved in any ordinary duties and to be able to concentrate all his powers on his influence upon all around, which makes all people as children to him, just as the deeds of the army commander or the works of the poet are their true children.

Epictetus does, indeed, set limits to this uprooting individualism : the Cynic may choose marriage, if it is founded on love for a woman of his own stamp. But this he regards as an abnormal case—not only because he is aware of the morals of the age, but also because it is a limitation of this ethic and this conception of personality that, with its principle of the purely rational formation of the stuff of life, which must be ready for application at any moment and in any situation, it has no organ for the essential fruitful energy of the relationships of life, in which man's moral energies grow and which also bear in their concealed hands the works in which personality reveals itself to the world.

But it was just through this deliberate process of making and shaping man, this exclusive occupation with the soul of the single individual, that there was brought about the great concentration that revealed the purposeful element of moral life in all its purity. The man who is to become a personality must find his way amid the eternal necessities of our existence ; there is an inner regulation in moral growth, and the Stoic rules have in any case more truth in them than has ethical scepticism or modern subjectivism. We have, it is true, a different conception of the intellectual factor operative in the formation of the individual's personality, from that of the Stoics, who believed in universal reason ordering human life as well as the cosmic whole of which we are part; this rational order having a claim to be considered thoroughly perspicuous to the human intellect. They could, therefore, believe the realm of the soul, in which our innermost self forms and comes to be productive, to be entirely occupied by decisions arrived at deliberately. We see this school of thought putting the variety of moral phenomena on one and

the same level and applying to them clear-cut notions, whereas we look for subterranean passages traversed by the soul and see them disappear when we try to enter them. But however much more deeply a keen psychological vision may penetrate, we still appreciate as something intangibly great the ripened, finished shape of a moral personality formed by Stoic discipline.

THE MEDITATIONS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

In the book "To Myself" * by the emperor Marcus Antoninus, commonly called Marcus Aurelius, this mature beauty and goodness of soul shine out. Here is no longer a didactic address to another person, but in this product of entire absorption in inward contemplation the moral concern becomes evident—a self-communion that aims at nothing but helping the meditator to realize the nature of his true self. From this inward turning of the mind a new form of self-presentation of the individual took its origin, the most adequate form for the expression of inner experience created in the philosophy of life of the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is the equal of the highest products of the autobiographical *genre*, and represents for us the final point of the process in which self-portrayal among the ancients, influenced at first by rhetoric rather than by philosophy, disengaged itself from the relation to the public implied in its rhetorical character—if we may speak here of self-portrayal : for this work was not intended to be a presentation of the author's person for the public, but was the outcome of the practice of meditation carried through as a kind of private exercise concerning the meditator ; in short, of an event *in* life that only produced a literary publication because it happened to have been recorded in writing.

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At the summit of his career, in his fifties, about a decade after his accession, the emperor Marcus had begun the notes out of which the book came. It was a time of danger, when the northern frontier of the empire was threatened by Germanic invasion. The notes were written in camp at the front during the winter of A.D. 171-2, early in the war with the Marcomanni

* The work has come down to us under the title ' ', derived from that of a collection of poems of Solon—see above, p. 81. The traditional Latin title is *M. Antonini imperatoris Romani it philosophi de se ipso seu vita sua libri XII*.

(167-75 and 178-80). In midst of the noise of war, far from Rome, without the company of his beloved books of philosophy, he proposed by means of these notes to keep permanently before his mind the outlook on life which he had gained from his philosophic studies, in order to direct his daily life by that outlook. He kept up the habit of writing these diary-like notes through the period of nearly ten years that he had still to live—never tiring of the constant re-formulation of the simple principles of the Stoic philosophy, or of recalling old and impressive formulations of them. It appears that at one time, perhaps during his last stay in Rome, he collected into a book the notes that had then accumulated, so that they might be a source of strength to others as they had been for him. But they were not published until after his death in 180.

Of the circumstances of publication we know nothing. A certain analogy is offered by the posthumous publication of Cicero's letters, especially those to Atticus, arranged by Tiro, Atticus' freedman, who had served as his secretary. The comparison is natural on account of the intimately personal character of those private letters. But Cicero, who wrote to Atticus that he talked "with you as I talk with myself",[†] looked upon his letters, as on everything he wrote, with the eye of an author, and himself planned their collection and publication: he wrote about this plan both to Atticus and to Tiro⁷⁷ shortly before his assassination.

On the other hand, Marcus Aurelius, free as he was from all vanity of authorship, cannot have intended that his reflections and maxims should be elaborated into a literary work in the style of the writers who used note-books (*hypomnemata*) as material for the exercise of their art. All he can have intended must have been a selection and arrangement of the various sections,

* Only at two points are there indications of the time when the work was written. At the beginning of the section which in the traditional arrangement forms the second "book" are the words, "Written among the Quadi on the river Gran", and at the outset of Book I I I, "Written in Carnuntum". Carnuntum, in Moravia, was the imperial general headquarters from 171 to 173, during the war with the Germanic tribes of the Marcomanni and the Quadi. The river Gran is in southern Bohemia; there the emperor Marcus defeated the Quadi in the famous battle of the "thundering legion" (173 or 174). At another point in the work (X, 10) he alludes to his victory over the Sarmati (on the Danube and Theiss), which brought him the title of Sarmaticus, conferred in 175. Cf A. S. L. Farquharson, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus* (Oxford, 1944). See also G. Breithaupt, *De M. Aurelii Antonini Commentariis quæstiones selectæ*, *Göttinger philologische Disserta* 1913, in which the time when Books II and I I I were written is established by determining the places in which the emperor wrote them.

† Cicero, *ad Atticum*, VIII, 14; cf above, p. 363.

which, as they have come down to us, show no consistent plan of composition, and form a single whole only in so far as they all bear witness to their writer's spiritual life and to the single act of self-communion that governed it.

With that continued practice, which thus, here again, underlies the literary form, as is the rule with autobiography, we have already met several times as a substantial element of the philosophical art of teaching ; a component that may be briefly described as soliloquy. As that term indicates, the inner activity that goes on in the condition of seclusion required for self-scrutiny was conceived by the ancients not as a secret energy at work silently in the depth of the soul, but as a solitary conversation with the self; and it was regulated, together with the moral technique of which it was an instrument. This was in accord with the intellectuality that keeps the moral process under a clearly defined control ; but it also involved the ancient conception of talk with the self, which covered more than our modern notion of soliloquy, since it described various sorts of spiritual happenings. " Soliloquy " in the ancient sense covered not only monologue, which is familiar to us in life and in imaginative writing as an elementary form in which a man who has to decide what action he will take sets his conflicting impulses against each other, and not only the meditations concerning the meditator, such as we shall meet with later as a *genre* of their own in Augustine's " Soliloquies". In that philosophic work, earlier than his " Confessions " he represents himself as in conversation with " Reason", attaining through question and answer a clear consciousness of his most intimate self. " Soliloquy " also meant quite generally the reflective activity which we may describe as thinking or brooding. Similarly Plato had defined thought as " the talk the soul has with itself about any subject to which it gives consideration ", adding, in explanation, " Thought and speech are the same ; only the former, which is a silent inner conversation of the soul with itself, has been given the name of thought." * The notion of silent thought was first acquired by the Mystics, and the psychological illusion that every normal process of thought takes place in words was only destroyed by modern experimental psychology.

Such knowledge as we have of the literary shaping of soliloquy before Marcus Aurelius shows a certain variety, though it includes

* Plato, *Theatetus*, 189E ; *Sophistes*, 263E.

only a limited class of literature, the popular philosophic writings. It is impossible to trace the development of the form adopted by Marcus Aurelius from any one of these ;⁷⁸ we can only proceed from the method, common to all of them, of reflection on the self, and observe its varied workings. There must have been a fairly long development of soliloquy as a component literary form,⁷⁹ since we meet with it in Latin authors of the first imperial age, in Horace and Seneca and also, perhaps, in Varro.*

Horace introduced in this form the meditative habit which he regarded as the source of his satirical poetry. At the end of one of his first satires (I, 4), in which he speaks of his treatment of that literary *genre*, he describes in a soliloquy his way of watching the doings of men, and extracting from them a moral for guidance in life, as he reads, or goes for a walk " with sealed lips ". He gives this meditation also as his method of working at his own moral perfection, and as the basis of his poetry—" And if I find the time I write it down." In his later years, when Stoic self-discipline had become for him the central element in life, and he looked down on his lyrics as youthful follies, there appeared in the epistles (II, 2), which gave finished expression to that standpoint, another soliloquy, in a different form, as a means of vivid description : here it served to represent the change that had taken place in his philosophic views as something still present and active, as his own warning to himself to mend his ways : thus he gives emphasis to the " learn to live " that is the final expression of his wisdom. He uses soliloquy as an artistic resource, and in the course of this homily the " Thou " with which he addresses himself passes into the " Thou " of the diatribe in which he addresses his public.

Similarly Seneca used soliloquy to give a model for the performance of various typical acts of self-scrutiny. With him it was plain that the literary form of address to the self was not rooted purely in inwardness, and if we compare with it the way Epictetus in his monologues makes the moral of particular incidents stand out, and just after or before doing so addresses another person, it is reasonable to suppose that that literary form belonged to the many artistic resources of the Hellenistic diatribe. This brings the originality of Marcus Aurelius' " Meditations " into proper perspective : in them the matter of the soliloquy is entirely removed from the rhetorical pursuit of philosophy.

Original as it seems to us, this intellectual attitude came, as

* See above, p. 379.

it were, automatically to him after he had made the breach with rhetoric and decided in favour of philosophy. This had happened in his youth, in reaction against the rhetorical education he had had in accordance with the Roman tradition. This Latin education was added to the Greek which he had received at home through his mother's culture. Marcus Aurelius was not yet seventeen years of age when Antoninus Pius adopted him (A.D. 138), and so made him heir to the throne ; and the emperor chose as his tutor the most famous representative of forensic eloquence in Rome at the time, Fronto, an orator full of mannerisms. By a fortunate chance we possess among Fronto's writings his correspondence with Marcus, an active correspondence during the student years of the crown prince ; sometimes the two exchanged letters every day. From them we may see the literary education Marcus received for seven years ; it is thus described by the modern editor of this correspondence :

Fronto began by taking his pupil through a course of old farces, comedies, ancient orators, and poets, and Marcus was encouraged to make extracts from the authors that were read . . . Verse-making was regularly practised as an aid towards oratory . . . Similes formed an important part of his oratorical armoury . . . The next step was to use the " Commonplaces of Theodorus " (a rhetorician of Gadara) for the manufacture of maxims. One aphorism a day was the allotted task. The object was to strike out some neat epigrammatic *sententia*, such as are characteristic of Sallust . . . Translation from one language into another formed part of the curriculum. Original composition in history was also recommended by Fronto, and Marcus himself seems to have had some aspirations in that direction . . . Fronto's eyes, however, were not on the facts, but on the best way to show his rhetorical skill in commonplace or panegyric . . . Finally came the writing of themes and *controversiæ*, in which the pros and cons of any question, historical or fictitious, are discussed as by a forensic speaker.*

This was the old sophistical art, the rules of which had been laid down by Protagoras six hundred years earlier : " On every question there are two opposite lines of argument." At this point the young Marcus took a stand. " I can only write on one side or the other," he wrote to Fronto (about A.D. 146), " for as to my defending both sides of a question, Aristo will, I am sure, never allow me to do that! " †

Aristo of Chios, a disciple of Zeno, had made about 250 B.C.,

* C. R. Haines in his edition of *The Correspondence of M. Corn. Fronto*, in the Loeb Classical Library, I, xxxv sqq. † *Ibid*, I, 215.

when head of the Stoic school at Athens, the innovation which at the time of Marcus Aurelius had been revived—the concentration of philosophy on ethics, in which the Stoa enriched itself with the thought of other idealistic systems, notably that of Plato. From this philosophical revival, of which he had beyond doubt learnt at home, proceeded his resistance to rhetorical education, as expressed in that letter :

Aristo's books just now treat me well, and at the same time make me feel ill. When they teach me a better way, then, I need not say, they treat me well ; but when they show me how far short my character comes, of this better way, time and time again does your pupil blush and feel angry with himself, for that, twenty-five years old though I am, no draught has my soul yet drunk of nobler doctrines and purer principles. Therefore I do penance, I am wroth with myself, I am sad, *j'épreuve de Venule*, I feel starved.

Some thirty years later, in his "Meditations", he looked back on that moment, and his interpretation of the decision he had taken is characteristic of him : he thanked the gods for having so ordained that, as he expresses it, "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" (I, 17, 4).

That statement may serve as an example of the candid spirit in which he carried out his self-examination in his "Meditations". Here, too, he followed, in his own fashion, a philosophic tradition that can be traced further back, though we cannot elucidate this traditional practice of self-communion, like the literary form of soliloquy, by means of examples, but know of it only through anecdotes and precepts. We are reminded of the saying attributed to Antisthenes, that what philosophy intends to provide for men is the capacity "for intercourse with themselves".* Another story tells how a representative of the old Stoa, perhaps a disciple of Diogenes, met a solitary man who explained that he was soliloquizing ; he put to him the searching question whether he was not "keeping bad company".⁸⁰ Of more importance are the precepts that sought to regulate the work on the soul in self-communion. The main rule which we find here is Pythagorean. It is the famous injunction to examine the conscience every evening, contained in the "Golden Verses" (40-4), which were circulated in the name of Pythagoras and may have been written in the century before the birth of Christ, at

* See above, p. 404.

the time of the revival of the Pythagorean teaching in association with Stoic and Platonic ethics :⁸¹

" And do not go to sleep until you have considered all that you did, or failed to do in the course of the day. Censure yourself for the bad deeds, and rejoice in the good ones."

Precepts of this sort are hardly to be attributed to any definite philosophical school ; they belong to the stage of general spiritual development in which ethical values and moral action pass from man's relations with the world into the quiet of his own soul. Thus, in the transition from Indian philosophy to religious life effected by Buddha⁸² we find similar precepts inculcating " inner watchfulness, self-training, and self-purification " ; there we read: " Step by step, bit by bit, hour by hour, he who is wise should refine his self from all that is impure, as a silversmith refines silver ". " With thine ego spur on thine ego ; with thine ego search thine ego ; so wilt thou preserve thine ego and live watchfully in blessedness." ⁸³

From the Greco-Roman world we learn, in the last years before Christ, that the bidding to examine the conscience every night was obeyed in certain small groups, among the neo-Pythagoreans (Cicero adopted their practice himself" as practice for the memory ", he said),* and among the Scxtians, who were close in thought to them and to the Stoa. Seneca followed them in this practice ; we are familiar with his injunctions to bring himself into court in soliloquy ; he also, in one place, portrays himself as he used to undertake at dusk, in the Pythagorean hour, the close examination of his daily deeds and words, so that the soul, " watching over and guiding itself", might preserve and maintain its strength, † The " Golden Verses " are quoted word for word by Epictetus with the injunction not merely to repeat them but to keep them ready for application.‡

As a practical philosopher and teacher, Epictetus gives the most minute details of the practice of self-communion ; it is envisaged mainly in the form of question and answer, and as a method of education and a means of conscious moral guidance in life. Early in the morning, immediately on getting up, one must give account to oneself of the extent to which one has proceeded along the path of passionlessness, and must take thought for one's own nature, which is reason ; from morning

* Cicero, *Cato de senectute*, XI, 38. Cf. Ch. Martha, *Les moralistes sous l'empire Romain*, p. 197.

† Seneca, *De Ira*, III, 36-7. ‡ Epict., *Diss.*, III, 10 ; cf. IV, 6.

to evening, at every meeting or other incident, one must observe due measure and put the cardinal question whether the incident is one of the things placed within our control ; on a stroll one must soliloquize and ask oneself, " Who am I ? " More detailed questions are also enjoyed : " What is my attitude to philosophy ? Is it prompted by the will to follow the teaching of philosophy, or only by philological curiosity ? What is my behaviour to others, and to events, in comparison with past behaviour ? What is there that oppresses me, and how is it to be treated ? " When one has made such progress that one can converse with oneself, to be alone with oneself is no longer to be solitary, but is the attainment of the observation of the soul that rests within oneself like the Deity, and of the observation of the divine ordering of the world—the attainment of the state of wisdom which Seneca had painted in rich colouring.*

The emperor Marcus Antoninus adopted Epictetus' questions for the examination of conscience, and they formed an important element of his continuing work on himself, as his " Meditations " show. One of his addresses to himself begins : " How have you hitherto borne yourself in relation 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 ' ? " He proceeds :

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 already told and your service accomplished. How many beautiful things you have lived to see, how many pleasures and pains you have looked down upon, how many ambitions ignored, to how many unkind persons you have been kind (V, 31).

As with these questions before him he looked back upon his life, he wrote, with death before his eyes, though he was not yet an old man, an autobiographical Meditation, which forms a separate section of the work handed down to us. This section is of special interest for us ; we shall consider it closely. But even apart from this unique autobiographical product the meditations of this Roman emperor hold an eminent place in the history of autobiography. For in them the regularized moral practice of self-communion gains a life of its own, indeed, an immediacy rare in ancient literature—if they may be regarded in any way as literature ; for they seem to have been simply noted down as in

* Epict., *Diss.*, IV, 6 ; III, 3, 13 ; II, 21 ; IV, 14 ; cf. III, 8 ; IV, 4 ; III, 24, etc.

the old times silent thought was set down, to be read not quietly but aloud.

The strength of this whole philosophy of life, elaborated by the Stoics in Rome, which dispensed with the strict demonstrative force of a systematic process of reasoning, came, as was evident in Seneca and Epictetus, from the activity of the teaching personalities, who presented the completed body of thought at their disposal as carried into practice by themselves, with its truth thus put to the test; their purpose was in this way to "teach living", that is, to communicate their philosophic teaching to others as a conviction that was the basis of a way of life. This attitude of mind toward life was bound to lead to the most intensive interpenetration of thought and life attainable by the Stoa so soon as a man of high ethical character embraced this philosophy, as it were, at its naked root as a vital force. This attitude was adopted in the soliloquies of Marcus Aurelius: in them a new path of experience was entered upon, leading beyond the general conception of the rational will as the individual's true personality.

(2)

This character of the work is not easily inferred from its outward form. It seems to contain of necessity an element of the abstract: after the autobiographical meditation with which the book as handed down to us opens, there follow uniformly over a hundred pages of philosophic principles, reflections, maxims, sayings, some of them not even taken direct from the works of thinkers and poets but, as was already customary at that time (and not in the Middle Ages for the first time), from an anthology:⁸⁴ what we have here seems to be nothing more than a philosophic *repertorium* or commonplace-book—Stoic ethics in a series of single sentences, without the moving presentation of Seneca and Epictetus. Some modern judges have been deceived by this resemblance and have criticized the work of the royal philosopher as superficial argumentation or as dry.⁸⁵ How, we ask, does there enter into these day-to-day notes the personal element that reveals the momentary impulse and the experienced effect of the sentence in question, so that there goes out from the book a moral power that has been felt by everyone who has enjoyed long familiarity with it? The lasting content of Stoic moral teaching is certainly only the basis, and the obvious truthfulness of the self-revelation only an indication of the essence of the matter. We shall try to approach it step by step.

The sentences are frequently introduced by simple phrases corresponding to the rules for the practice of meditation. "Always bear in mind . . . in the morning to say to yourself in advance : I shall meet men who . . . You will have this consciousness more plainly if you often say to yourself: I am a part of the great divine whole. You will be more cheerful and more good-natured if you bear in mind . . ." Often he writes only the question what is the state of his "hegemonikon", his "governing" factor (that is to say, his reason-controlled will), and thinks it over in silence. "' 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 self*, 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 ? '" *

In moments of exaltation he addresses the soul by name ; as a rule he employs the direct address to himself in the second person:

Delve within ; within is the fountain of good, and it is always ready to bubble up, if you always delve (VII, 59). . . . Men look for retreats for themselves, the country, the seashore, the hills ; and you yourself, too, are peculiarly accustomed to feel the same want. Yet all this is very unlike a philosopher, when at any hour you please you may retreat into yourself For nowhere does a man retreat into more quiet or more privacy than into his own mind . . . 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.

At times he introduces a principle in the form of an observation, and then applies it to himself in the form of an address, also as a rule with alternating second and first person ; the clearest trace of the diatribe of Epictetus then becomes visible.⁸⁶ The basic truths which must always be kept ready for restatement, "as doctors have their instruments and scalpels always at hand to meet sudden demands for treatment", he produces, familiar to him as they are, indicating each with a demonstrative "go through that from the elements". This especially concerns the contemplation of the organization of the world, in which the individual finds himself associated with all rational beings. Then

* *Meditations*, V, ii. "Soul of a woman" seems an unnatural, far-fetched idea ; but it may have been a reaction to the taunts of the general Avidius Cassius in the military revolt of A.D. 175—see below. The translation here and in the following quotations is taken, with a few slight changes, from *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus*, edited by A. S. L. Farquharson (Oxford, 1944).

he makes use of logical distinctions to mark out the field of objects valuable to man and duties incumbent on him, or he recalls his points in turn, first, second, third. When he has exhausted all possibilities and has examined each of them, he may say to himself: " That's all there is. So be of good courage."

That is the uniform principle of the book—to collect one's thoughts and examine oneself and keep one's ends and aims in mind, and consider them in advance in face of typical problems such as recur in life and have to be solved by taking thought for man's position in the world as a part of the great whole of universal nature ; and continually to saturate oneself with the great simple ideas which are the first principles of moral life—truth, justice, fulfilment of duty, freedom, work in the assigned post, Roman virtue, beneficence, love of one's fellow-beings. To that extent we find here again the abstract idea of personality : the true self is the rational will. Marcus Aurelius expressly puts to himself the question " What am I ? " But this question of self-knowledge does not concern his own individuality, but has reference to man's nature, and finds its answer through the general distinction between the reason or the rational will, as the centre of the person, and both the body and the soul, the latter term taken in the sense of the principle of organic life, that is to say, as breath or *pneuma*.

This, whatever it is, that I am is flesh and vital spirit and the governing factor. Disdain the flesh : blood and bones and network, a twisted skein of nerves, veins, arteries. Consider also what the vital spirit (*pneuma*) is : a current of air, not even continuously the same, but every moment being breathed out and in again. There is then a third part, the governing factor (II, 2).

He adopts this psychological theory as an established doctrine, without reflecting upon it, so little is he interested in theoretical philosophy.*

In accordance with the practical tendency of the Roman philosophers of life he continues :

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

* Characteristic of this is his picture of Socrates. It does not matter, he declares (VII, 66), that Socrates " argued fluently with the Sophists " ; what matters is " what kind of soul he 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 ".

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."

Among these general exhortations and reflections which have to be repeated, there stands out the more intimate element—what Marcus Aurelius finds in self-communion is not always simply demands of morality (which he takes over mainly in the form in which he found them formulated, but often expresses clearly and powerfully in his own words), but also personal details. How often he asks himself whether he will not at last be for once no longer torn and soiled by the world and by passions, but good and innocent, dependable and good-natured and really unexacting, without desiring longer life and a more attractive place of residence and companions of his own way of thinking, satisfied and cheerfully accepting his lot ! He, the emperor, says to himself that his cleverness is not so particularly great, but adds that in moral matters there is no way of excusing oneself, unless one can be content to be insensible to the promptings of the *hegemonikon*. He has moments in which he doubts his own genuine will ; or, rather, his truthfulness toward himself brings to light these fits of vacillation, which are familiar to every man who strives after morality. " You yourself also often do wrong like others, and 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 " (XI, 18). Then again he powerfully sums up his consciousness of himself, and his ethical pantheism creates poetry : " I walk in Nature's way until I shall lie down and rest, breathing my last in this room 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 footsteps and my misusing it for so many purposes " (V, 4). In this way his mind often moves, as he assesses himself, confidently pressing forward from his vision of the divine whole, then stopping as he realizes the contrast between his moral state and the ideal aspired to. But he also firmly declares : " I do my duty ; nothing in the world deters me therefrom."

He is able to give expression in reasoned form to resolutions and inner struggles, indeed to momentary impulses, because in

his clear mind those struggles are elevated to distinct consciousness only when he has overcome the difficulties by action, so that he can impress the stamp of reason on them. " Be not ashamed to accept help. You have the task of really carrying out that which is incumbent on you, like a soldier at the storming. What, then, if you have a lame leg and so cannot alone climb to the summits, but can do it with another's aid ? " ⁸⁷ In some reflections the particular situation is mentioned, as in the much-quoted apophthegm : " 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?" (X, 10). This has reference to his victory in the wars against the barbarian tribes on the northern frontier of the empire, and to the honorific title Sarmaticus that had been conferred on him. Often he assesses the influence of the external conditions in which destiny has placed him on his conduct in life : he exhorts himself to permit no one, not even himself, to hear him inveigh against the life at Court ; humorously he proposes to treat philosophy and Court in the same way as mother and mother-in-law—that is, to take his ease with the former and so, by means of the resources of philosophy, to make himself endurable to the Court and the life at Court to himself. At one place he impresses on himself the fact that no one's situation in life is so " suited to philosophizing " as his own, or provides so much " material for duty " (in the Kantian phrase) ; if he is able to hold on to his true self in his imperial position he will be living as in the Isles of the Blest ; otherwise he must " courageously depart to some corner " or abandon life altogether, in order then at least to have taken action. " 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 " (X, 15).

In his solitude as ruler he feels the value of human relations. He has to convince himself again and again that all human opinions, men's praise and blame, are immaterial and valueless, that nothing can move the will that is steadfast; and we can see how when confronted with such opinions he tries with various successive considerations, rising from the personal point of view to abstract principles, to get rid of the " I am hurt." * He

* See especially IV, 6 sqq.

also gives direct expression from time to time to the feelings aroused in him by his situation among men, to the pleasure he takes in the thought of the fine qualities of others, or to the way he must restrain his desire for friendship in view of the way men behave around him. In these cases the form of maxim or exhortation, in which he sets down the moral of his inner experience to all appearance as something coolly observed from without, is but a traditional element of style which he imposes upon himself. " This alone could attach one to life, if it were granted to live with men of like mind. Now, however, you have to see what melancholy lies in the discord of life together, and can say : ' Come more quickly, Death, lest I, too, forget myself. ' " ³⁷ He pictures himself, as Seneca had done, at the point of death, but with what different feelings ! The people for whom he has cared and laboured will in most cases be glad to be freed from him as from a pedagogue. " Why, then, should we desire a longer stay here ? But do not part from them with less goodwill on that account, but be true to your own character, kindly, good-natured, conciliatory." ³⁷ " Ripeness is all"—ripeness for death " not out of sheer opposition like the Christians, but after reflection and with dignity, and so as to convince others, without histrionic display" (XI, 3).

He does not seek to give artistic expression to his feelings, and his ideas do not sparkle. But he has not forgotten the art of writing epigrammatical sentences, so highly valued by his teacher of rhetoric : while his aphorisms are free from rhetoric, he uses a very cultivated diction everywhere. " What does not benefit the hive is of no benefit to the bee." . . . " All is ephemeral, both what remembers and what is remembered." . . . " Whosoever does wrong, wrongs himself; whosoever does injustice, does it to himself, making himself evil." * As a rule he keeps to simple topical phrases and pictures ; to him they are not the expression merely of thoughts but of the actual reality of things ; the concrete provides the basis for generalization, and haziness vanishes as his mind is clarified by the influence of the intellectual world established by the Stoic philosophy. " Only a madman expects a fig in winter ; such is he who expects a child when it is no longer permitted." † At one place he quotes half a verse

* VI, 54 ; IV, 35 ; IX, 4 ; etc.

† Marcus Aurelius, XI, 33 : *Σύκον χειμῶνος ζητεῖν, μαυρομένου τοιοῦτος ὁ παῖδιον ζητῶν, οὐκ οὐκεία δίδοται.* e the allusion to Epictetus, and at the same time the difference in tone, is particularly plain. Epictetus, *Diss.*, III, 24, 86 : " In such fashion remind yourself that the object of your love is mortal; it is not one

of Homer : " And my dear heart laughed within." Here and there he strikes this note more distinctly : " 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 ' " (VII, 17).

Here more is going on than listening to reason and the procuring of comfort and strength from the principles of philosophy. The form of quasi-diary entries expresses something different from the daily exercises in moralizing underlying the epistles of Seneca or the addresses of Epictetus, which were similarly composed to the emperor's Meditations. It comes here to express the man's awareness of the unity of his personality, on which he relies at all times : the Socratic conception of personality is still dominant throughout, but at the same time the changed method of experience breaks through in its entirety, facilitated by the method of noting down. This inner unity of the person he finds in the uniform activity of the reasoning will, which does " everything, even the very smallest, as mindful of the bond which unites the divine and the human " ; in every moral act thus performed the whole life is summed up, so that life, fulfilled according to its ordering, " is never uncompleted, as one might say that the actor is leaving the stage before he has finished his part, before the play is over ".*

In the Stoic outlook on the world Marcus Aurelius found the doctrine of personality together with pantheism ; it was a double aspect full of inconsistency for the thought, but corresponding to what is true to life, that our confidence in the freedom of our will should be bound up with our feeling of dependence. As he confronted the Stoic principles again and again with his experiences and feelings, thereby ascertaining their truth, this personal sort of philosophizing resulted with him in an emotional attitude to the spiritual world, in which we can see reflected the general tendency developing in those days toward Neoplatonic religion.

* I I I , 13, 6 ; cf. I I , 14 ; I I I , 10 ; X I I , 26, etc. Cf Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 77, 20 : *Nihil ad rem pertinet quo loco (i.e. seu tabulae seu vitas) desinas.*

of your own possessions ; it has been given you for the present, not inseparably nor for ever, but like a fig, or a cluster of grapes, at a fixed season of the year, and if you hanker for that in the winter you are a fool. If in this way you long for your son, or your friend, at a time when he is not given to you, rest assured that you are hankering for a fig in winter-time. For as winter-time is for a fig, so is every state of affairs that arises out of the universe in relation to the things which are destroyed in accordance with that same state of affairs."

Marcus Aurelius sought to grasp the reality that remained to him as a fact to be experienced in all the change and decay, where the way through life, held together only by time, has no unity, and the progress through the ages of man means a dying of the youth in the man and of the man in the greybeard, the conception that passed from Heraclitus through the Stoa, through Scepticism, and through Platonism.

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 " (XI, 1).

In his words there is a foretaste of the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus. He continues :

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 (XI, 1,2).

Through such contemplation " you will make a large room at once for yourself " (IX, 32) ; " nothing is so likely to promote an elevation of mind " (X, 11).

Seneca, too, had said this in the same personal way. But Marcus Aurelius knew of yet another activity in the course of which the soul grows in stature, and in this experience he overcame from within the intellectual attitude to moral life that took it only as the material to be subdued by the moral law. " You should regard as an indulgence whatever you can achieve in accord with your own nature, and this you can achieve everywhere " (X, 33, 1). While the living beings not gifted with reason have no movement of their own on all sides, while the stone pushing down, the flame pushing up, show that when an obstacle comes in their way they suffer and become worse :

mind and reason are able to move through anything that opposes, as their nature and their will prescribe (X, 33, 2). . . . The sovereign power within . . . is like a fire, when it masters what falls into it, whereby a litde 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 (IV, 1), . . . If one may so put it, a man becomes better and more laudable by right use of circumstances (X, 33, 4).*

So the temporal existence received a meaning for **the** personality that rests in itself. When Marcus Aurelius says frequently to himself that at all times there is only life in the present, man's true self having to be brought out in actual life ever anew in the same way, this is for him only one side of the human condition ; this realization is at the same time a purposeful effort, stretching through the whole course of the temporal life. " He who has not one and the same aim in life is unable to remain one and the same through all his life " (XI, 21). There is such an aim, which is universally binding (the Stoa here received back in strengthened form the notions which it had given to the Romans of the Republic and to the best of the emperors) : it lies in life for the community and the State, in which reasoning beings live for one another.

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 (XI, 21). . . . 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 (IX, 23).

With this idea of the divine whole, resulting in life being considered as essentially relationship, Marcus Aurelius outgrows the traditional notion of rational will constituting the personality of the self-reliant individual, and outgrows it to such a degree that he regards a breach in the community knit by nature as irreparable by deliberate action. It is, he considers, a divine gift that a man who has cut himself off in disgust from his neighbour and so, without knowing it, has destroyed his own membership of the whole community, can re-enter the whole as a member, although the reunion becomes the more difficult the more often such a scission has taken place. " Generally speaking, the branch which originally grew on 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. The binding may hang together, but that is not fundamental **unity** " (XI, 8).

In **this** feeling he loses **the pride in his own moral energy** :

* Cf. VIII, 35; x, 31.

This also conduces to contempt of vainglory, 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 . . . Consider accordingly what your nature wills, 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 ? (VIII, 1).

He gives the old answer : in the possession of moral principles.

In doing what man's nature requires. How then will he do this ? If he hold fast to 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, grave, and free ; nothing evil which does not produce effects the opposite of these (VIII, 1). . . . 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 ? (XI, 5).

But this " reason and art of reason ", these " forces satisfied in themselves and their work ", descend to the bottom of the soul. It is not yet the infinite that is revealed there—" All that is beautiful, whatever its nature, is beautiful of itself and has its end in itself". But in this self-sufficing beauty there is an inner realm that lies deeper than thought, and this he approaches by means of symbols typical of mysticism. Marcus Aurelius looks at reason, as it exists purely for itself ; " 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 the surrounding whirl of the stormy life of physical indulgence and passion, " and make yourself like the sphere of Empedocles . . . 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" (XII, 3, 2).

Thus the symbol of the sphere, the Greek symbol for completed existence, which Empedocles applied to the divine universe, with reference to its primeval state, becomes a symbol for the divine entirety of the human soul. He says it yet more plainly : " The sphere of the soul is true to its own form, when it is never 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." *

*XI, 12; cf. III, 4; VIII, 41.

conceives the spiritual depth in man, in accordance with the traditional aspect derived from Plato, as something general and simple : a hidden entity to be extracted, as it were, from the daily husks that entangle it. We meet here again * with the idea of the god in us, which developed in mysticism ; how far removed it remained, in the ancient conception, from an ethical assessment of the individual character will become plain in Augustine. Marcus Aurelius calls it vaguely at times " that which is seated within ", as Augustine speaks of the *internum æternum* ; the pictorial expression which he likes to use for it is irrational, though he often uses it as equivalent to reason : it is " daemon ".

In the enlightened interpretation given to it by Seneca and Epictetus, this conception, with its many associations derived from its traditional origin, of the daemon of the individual person,⁸⁸ had lost the non-ethical sense that underlay the belief in the daemon so long as it indicated a unity of the course of life conceived as the substance of destiny or the guidance coming from without through the agency of a protective spirit as intermediary between gods and men. By " daemon " those Stoics expressed the ever mysterious element in man's moral consciousness, distinguished by Kant from our empirical character as its transcendental cause : ⁸⁹ the self-reliance of the moral personality in the midst of the universal causation of the physical world. We saw that Marcus Aurelius' self-communion started individually from that experience and combined moral idealism with the pantheistic view of the world, this combination being a living reality. In this the daemon was at work with which he habitually conversed in self-communion.

The relation of an I to a Thou in self-communion should not be exaggerated into a separation ; for the conversation is a method of representing spiritual happenings, and the advantage of that method is that it can dispense with divisions existing only in the abstract. In so addressing himself Marcus Aurelius makes plain the unified content of his inner life and, what amounts to the same thing, finds his daemon. With him the daemon came to acquire personal characteristics, because he conceived it not only in talking about it but in daily realizing that it was the most essential element in his moral consciousness. " To preserve one's daemon pure and upright "—in that he summed up all that philosophy had to offer him : " to live the good life, content both with present action in accord with Nature and with heroic

* See above, p. 432.

truth in what you mean and say " (II, 17 ; VIII, 45, etc.). He had demanded of himself that he should give up his imperial office, and, indeed, life itself, " simply and in freedom and reverence ", if he were unable to preserve himself unstained and were only to vegetate " 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 " (X, 8, 2). He would rather be killed than come down from " the life on a height " (X, 14, 15). But in cultivating his daemon not only in self-communion and solitude but in his relations with the world, he succeeded in maintaining the moral height to which he aspired, as a spiritual attitude which had become habitual with him. Thus the daemon reveals itself in his aliveness to human relationships while filled with a pantheistic sense of the universe. And here is to be found the most personal element in this truly human document.

Yet, how many problems lie in this man ! A man in that outward situation in which all the good things of this world, indeed, all the highest values of Roman existence, were present ; and who was not born as heir to the throne, but had been raised from middle-class circumstances, from the middle class that had become an aristocracy, to the throne. As a six-year-old boy he had been envisaged by Hadrian, that very active ruler, as heir to the throne—on account of his purity of character : he was the son of Lucius Verus, and the emperor jestingly called him *Verissimus* (" Most Truthful").

The Roman State was not at this time a hereditary monarchy. The succession to the throne was determined by the ruler's obligation to adopt as a son the " best " among the most suitable to inherit that state ; this principle involved the emperor's renunciation of a successor from his own family. Thus Hadrian had selected the young Marcus, as the " best ", to be a future ruler ; Hadrian had seen to the boy's education for that high state, and when he adopted Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138) as his successor he bound him to adopt Marcus, then seventeen years old, as his son. Thanks to this choice it could be hoped that the conditions were fulfilled which Plato postulated for the ending of political bankruptcy and therewith the salvation of mankind in this world—a philosopher on the imperial throne ! For the Roman Empire the rule of Marcus Antoninus did indeed bring a happy period ; but it was the end of the rare epoch of internal peace and prosperity, lasting nearly a century, which had begun

with Trajan. After the death of Marcus began the decline of the Roman Empire. The decline is associated with the name of Commodus, who was the son born of Marcus's marriage with Faustina, the daughter of his adoptive father Antoninus Pius. Marcus had considered him worthy of the succession. It was a fatal choice. No new era began in world history with this philosopher-king, as Plato had dreamt. Marcus Antoninus himself had no ambition to be a reformer of State and society. A Roman emperor with the boundless power of those rulers of the world, he found in the arena of world history not the heroism of the man of action, but the "heroic truth" of fulfilment of duty, which he pursued in his life with the energy of conviction. As a statesman and army commander he was successful, but he gained his successes slowly and with great effort, until, in the midst of his work for the safeguarding of the expansion of the empire, he was overtaken by death in Vienna, when not yet sixty years of age.

He had hated war, but had been compelled to spend fourteen out of the nineteen years of his rule at army headquarters, in Bohemia, on the northern frontier of the empire, owing to the dangerous incursions of the Germanic and Sarmatian barbarians. The danger was one which could only be averted at the cost of the utmost exertion of his own strength and of that of the empire. Earlier, in the very year of his accession, the Parthian war (161-6) had broken out; it had been pursued to a successful end by the commander of his armies, Avidius Cassius, but it had been followed by the spread of a frightful plague in Italy, which lasted for decades and decimated the population, and was one of the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire.

In addition to this came trouble in his immediate entourage. Lucius Aurelius Verus, his adoptive brother, whom he had made a partner in his rule, turned out a profligate. Commodus, his son (born in 161), on whom he so counted that he assured the succession to him when he was a youth of sixteen, was to become a second Nero. Was Marcus so biased in favour of his son that he secured his election by the Senate (in 177) instead of following the well-tried principle of the adoption of "the best"? Was he so mistaken in him that he thought him the best, or did he want, as some historians have thought, to establish the dynastic system and found a hereditary monarchy in the Roman Empire? Some modern writers have explained the fatal choice as due to his philosophic principles: as in his attitude to marriage he

followed the Stoic command, "Live in harmony with Nature", so in his faith in divine providence, based on Stoic determinism, he felt that he had no right to deprive his son of the claim to the succession arising from his birth. In any case, owing to his action he is not free from blame for the collapse of the empire. We can only say that even a man who is morally supreme, when called upon to deal with practical affairs, may become involved in guilt—it is the tragic point we reached once before, when we followed the career of Plato's friend Dion.

Shortly before the emperor raised his son Commodus to be joint ruler with himself, his general Avidius Cassius, a Syrian by birth, whom he had rewarded for his victory over the Parthians by appointing him governor of Syria, committed high treason. He made himself emperor in Antiochia (A.D. 175), and led mutinous troops against Marcus with the war-cry, "Against the philosophic old woman", until in the end he was lynched by his soldiers; they sent the traitor's head to the emperor. Faustina, his wife, daughter of Antoninus Pius, urged him to take vengeance on the accomplices of Cassius: "Spare not", she wrote to him, "men who have not spared you, and would have spared neither me nor your children had they succeeded." This he declined to do, giving these reasons: "For there is nothing that can commend an emperor to the world more than clemency. It was clemency that made Caesar into a god, that deified Augustus, that honoured your father with the distinctive title of Pius. Finally, if my wishes had been followed in respect to the war, not even Cassius would have been slain."⁹⁰

This was a succession of events such as might steel and deepen the character. But Marcus, who was a capable ruler, and who had also been active in social legislation, † stood at the loom of history as a philosophic observer. He says so himself: he exhorts himself to regard the tragedy of world history in the same spirit as a spectacle on the stage, and he also says how he would have that regarded:

* See above, Vol. I, pp. 114, 137, *sqq.*

† The question of Marcus Aurelius' capacity as a ruler, so important to the assessment of the man and of the virtue of his philosophy, may be given, according to Mommsen, an affirmative answer. Of importance is the judgment of another eminent German historian, who declares that the emperor Marcus' foreign policy was that of Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, the Flavians, and Trajan, and sums up: "He would have become the consummator and one of the greatest of Romans if death had not summoned him a year too soon. His son Commodus abandoned his father's work." Wilhelm Weber, "Das Römische Kaiserreich", etc., in *Knaurs Weltgeschkhte* (Berlin, 1935), p. 246.

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 riot 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 ! Githæron " (XI, 6).*

Moreover, he regarded all historical greatness not only sceptically, but with incredulity ; he reminded himself by means of one simile after another of the ephemeral nature shared by all, pointing out to himself how the various great rulers and courts and also the philosophically and ethically great of the past had their day and became as dust. " The court of Augustus, his wife, daughter, grandsons, stepsons, sister ; Agrippa, his kinsmen, his familiar friends, Arius,† Maecenas, doctors, sacrificial ministers,—a whole court dead. Next pass on to other courts . . . " He thinks of Pompey, Caesar's rival, whose immediate descendants all came to their end in the civil wars, and continues in this Meditation (VIII, 31) : " 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." With reference to the great army commanders among the rulers, he carries his thought still further : " Alexander, Pompey, 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 " (III, 3). Above the men of action he places the philosophers :

Alexander, Julius Caesar, and Pompey, what are they by comparison with Diogenes, Heraclitus, and Socrates ? For these men saw things as they are and their causal and material aspects, and their own governing parts were self-determined ; but as for the former, how much there was to provide for, and of how many things they were the servants (VIII, 3).

But this essential merit of the spirit in comparison with power does not prevent him from continuing his observation in regard to Death the Leveller : " Heraclitus, after many speculations about the fire which should consume the Universe, was water-logged by dropsy, poulticed himself with cow-dung, and died. Vermin killed Democritus ; another kind of vermin Socrates . . .

* In Sophocles' *CEdipus* the hero, pursued by fate, utters this cry. At his birth *CEdipus* had been exposed on Mount Cithæron, in Bceotia, and in his grief he laments that he had then been rescued.

† Arius of Alexandria, a Stoic who was the philosophic guide of Augustus.

Hippocrates, after curing many sicknesses, himself fell sick and died" (III, 3). Indeed, in the context of a reflection of this sort he speaks of the philosophers, and precisely of those who particularly influenced him, as if they were not individual personalities at all ; he uses their names in the plural : " How many a Chrysippus, a Socrates, and Epicurus has Eternity already sucked down ! Let the same thought strike you in the case of any single individual or object" (VII, 19).

Thus his consciousness of the ephemeral nature of man and of all human affairs was strengthened by his contemplation of the monotony of history, a contemplation which revealed the dissolution of historic happenings into the uniformity of Nature.* The energy of a man born to action must, it might be thought, be crippled by all this. Yet the emperor Marcus developed an assurance and a quiet greatness of character that made him one of the most perfect men who ever lived. Is resignation the complete solution of this enigma ?⁹¹

The emperor Marcus will have nothing to do with the planning of political Utopias.

Don't hope for Plato's Republic, but be content to make a very small step forward, and reflect that the result even of this is no trifle . . . 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 but 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 (IX, 29).

He had no illusions about the world and mankind. He wanted always to " see to the bottom ", so that " the true composition of nothing " should escape him. We can see how this road to reality led him through sufferings and disappointments ; the similes change and the words come more quickly and more excitedly when he speaks of " contemporary manners ". These experiences, together with the idea of the ephemeral nature of all the elements of fame, form the most subtly expressed part of his Meditations. He observes the " wolf's profession of friendship " in men ; he notes how they flatter one another and give way though they despise one another, and try to overreach one another : " even the most charming of them is hard to suffer,

* Cf. XI, 1 ; II, 14 ; VI, 46 ; VI, 37 ; IX, 35.

not to say it is hard for them to endure each other." (VII, 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" (VII, 3).

For his part he makes use of a naturalistic technique of dissection, in order "to see things naked in all life", to destroy pretty "fables" and the "senseless deception" that "is at its most fascinating when we imagine that we have attained something worth striving after". Water, dust, bones, dirt—that is the material of everything; heaped dishes are the corpses of fish, birds, pigs; purple dye is blood, marble is swollen earth, gold and silver but sediment: such ideas "are excellent imaginings, going to the heart of actual facts and penetrating them so as to see the kind of things they really are" (VI, 13). Or in song and dance, slit up the melody into its notes, the dance into its movements and poses, and then ask: are you above that? "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" (XI, 2).

It is difficult to conceive a more unbending determination to live in intellectual truth. Manifestly here, where the intellectual truth, carried to the extreme, turns into untruth, and loses real touch with human existence, there must be another positive relation to life. If the emperor Marcus had contented himself with resorting to the Stoic doctrine of man's freewill, which remained man's most assured certainty, whether it was a divine ordering or a mechanical necessity that ruled the world,* then he would have been the resigned Stoic so often pictured. But he went further, lived in an atmosphere of lucidity. The firm ground of which experience of the world and reflection robbed him, he found again in the universal life. That is the great step taken by his Stoic morality to religiousness. The tension of the autonomous personality, based on freewill, is resolved in the union of the soul with the divine universe, and from the Stoic teaching of universal sympathy, that is, of the affinity or intimate connexion of all parts of the universe or "members" of the "city of Zeus", comes kindness and gentleness and love of mankind. One has no desire to add anything to this; we will merely put together the individual notes in the book that appear to us as religious,

* XII, 14; cf. IX, 39.

(3)

The intellectual attitude that aims at rendering oneself capable of love on reasoned grounds is often enough to be found here, especially in the exhortations to love of the neighbour and love of the enemy ;⁹² there are a few regularly repeated reflections of Socratic and Stoic character : an evildoer can do no injury to your soul, and therefore you must not spurn him ; he does wrong only by mistake, and with his views he can do no other, as the sufferer from jaundice cannot taste the sweetness of honey ; thus you must have compassion on him and forgive him : he is your relative in God's State, a being akin to God, only without knowledge of what is in accordance with Nature ; thus you must love him ; evil, as Theodicea shows, is necessary in the organism of the world, and so you must accept it without ill-will ; only a tyrant can demand of the bad that they shall not act against him as they do against others.

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

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

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

† IV, 44. ‡ IV, 6 ; XI, 18, 6, etc.

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

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

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

If you could be suddenly caught up into the air and could look down upon human life and see all its variety, you would disdain it, seeing at the same time how great a company of beings, in the air and in the 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 (XII, 24).

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

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

He feels close to the spirits which, according to the pantheistic belief, wander through the upper regions of this world. From that position, and not from a wearied melancholy, springs what has been called Pessimism. It is nothing peculiar to him and nothing gloomy. In that time of religious excitement the feeling that, in his words, "human life is smoke and nothingness" (X, 31) passed like a wave that seized the most sensitive; and Stoic pantheism, which was still unaware of the creative nature of individuation and development, became all the more true to life through the sufferings of human existence being insisted on. They had been denied only intellectually, by force of the moral will declaring, for instance, that "no injury can be done to your soul". Recognized as human experiences, suffering and evil were religiously interpreted, and thereby justified, from the pantheistic basic relation of the parts to the divine whole of the universe, as the royal meditator puts it in a typical passage :

We commonly say : " Æsculapius 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." . . . Accordingly let us accept these orders as we accept what Æsculapius orders. Many of them, too, are assuredly severe, yet we welcome them in hope of health. Let the performance and completion of the pleasure of 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 (V, 8).

Thus Marcus Aurelius created equanimity in his soul with a deep feeling of the dissonances of this reality. Only if we take these pages of his book by themselves and not together with the other aspects of life with which they are associated in the structure, reflected in his sublime conduct, of his personality, can it seem as if he is tossed about by conflicting moods.⁹³ The function of a journal involves (and does so all the more under the Stoic requirement of moral perfection) a disproportionate mention of the unsatisfied states of mind occurring in life. We can draw from confessions inferences as to the true character of the person making them only if we base our judgment on the structure of the whole work. This structure, however, is hard to demonstrate in a work like that of the emperor Marcus which, from the very nature of a *journal intime*, is not, as regards its outward form, a consistent whole. In the twelve "books" of more or less elaborated reflections and maxims, quotations (or sayings) and

jottings, thrown together under no visible plan, there are considerable sections in which one or another mood predominates, the optimistic or the pessimistic mood, gloom or hope, anxiety or peace of mind. But this varying intonation of the "Meditations" is not explained, or at all events not entirely, by the various situations in which he wrote them down : at headquarters amid the chances of war, in intervals in the fighting, taking a breath after victory over the barbarians or startled by the revolt in Antiochia, or on a journey to the East that took him to Egypt and the Pyramids. The contrasting moods correspond rather to the characteristic and, as we emphasized, realistic two-sidedness of the Stoic outlook on the world : on the one hand pantheism, together with the realization of the ephemeral nature of all things human, leads to the individual feeling his own life with its duties as a burden from which he would be glad to get free in order to feel, like the spirits in the skies, a part of universal Nature ; on the other hand ethical idealism is a source of confidence and of the heroic will to take up the struggle of life, in spite of the awareness of the perishability of all things human. In this spirit Marcus Aurelius, in the reflection in which he exhorted himself to bear continually in mind "that man's life is smoke and nothingness", continues :

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 (X, 31).

So far we have here a philosophic sort of self-communion which, based on an already established doctrine or conviction, remains fundamentally the same amid the changes of situations and moods, and so re-traces its circles again and again through the whole work. For us the question remains how this, so to speak, timeless movement fits in with the biographical point of view from which the individual life with its ups and downs appears as a single whole, formed in the course of time. This question leads in turn to the two-sided outlook of the Stoic, but also leads beyond it.

In the midst of meditations on the passage of time, which might take the sting out of the thought of death, he recalls the course of his own life (IX, 21).

The ceasing of action, impulse, and judgment is a pause, as is death, and by no means an evil. Now pass to the ages of life, such as boyhood, youth, manhood, old age ; for each of them is a change, or a death—is there anything to be afraid of? Pass now to your *bios*, your manner of life, under your grandfather, then under your mother, then under your (adoptive) father, and observing many other instances of dissolution, change, and coming to an end, ask yourself: " Was it anything to be afraid of?" So, then, even the ending, pause, and change of your whole life is not.

Here he does not show us the pictures that may have risen before him at the thought of his youth ; he gives only the outline of his passage through life—how as a boy, after his father's premature death, he came under the guardianship of his father's father, Marcus Verus, then grew up in the house of his mother Lucilla, and then, after his adoption by Antoninus Pius, came to the imperial palace. The main point is the change in conditions of life. This change, he argues artificially enough, had nothing special about it ; it was merely an instance of the change that is universal, is the fundamental characteristic of reality. Heraclitus, the founder of the pantheism which the Stoics made a most effective spiritual agency in the ancient world, had expressed in this formula his vision of the living reality that is ever in transition : " The birth of one is the other's death." We came upon this formula and its effect in the popular philosophical literature of the Hellenistic period, when we were considering the development of the naturalistic conception of Man in that age. Thus Plutarch said that " the man in his prime passes away when the old man comes into existence, the young man passes into the man in his prime, the child into the young man, and the babe into the child ".* This view served to dispose of the common conception of the unity and constancy of the individual. Marcus Aurelius makes use of it to remove the significance which we men give to our lives and the events in them and their end in death, or to reason it away and so to be freed from the emotions arising out of that aspect, and especially out of the fear of death. We have here one more example of the naturalistic technique of dissection of the phenomenon of life which we have followed throughout his *Meditations*, a technique that consists of the dissolution by the intellect of the consciousness of value and significance bound up with the experience of life. Since he pursues this line of thought, which he compares with that of the natural philosopher, in looking back on his life, not a

* See above, pp. 377-B.

biographical but a " biological " aspect results from that looking back, and in the course of it there comes very clearly into view what we have already established in general, that the truth of the understanding, imposed in this way in regard to a man's own life, turns into untruth—the attribute " true " being taken in the sense of " true to life ".

But here, too, this dissolution, which leads to freedom only in the " negative " sense, that of freedom from emotions, is not his last word, but there rises over against it the positive attitude to life, based on the moral consciousness, which makes the will free for the doing of good and for its recognition in other people. So we meet here once more, where we are concerned with the biographical method of self-disclosure, with the ethic associated with Stoic pantheism, the profound religious truth of which we tried to show ; except that here we have not first to try, as in the religion of the philosophic emperor, to find the passages in which he seems to show us his truest self and to put them together. For he himself has collected a comprehensive survey of his life from the biographical point of view in a continuous series of passages, which fill a whole " book " of the work. It is an autobiographical product of a unique kind. For the history of the *genre* this is an invaluable document, in which the rise of the sap to a node of development may be observed.

In contemplating his passage through life Marcus Aurelius recalls the people who have influenced him, one after another. He does not show himself as a separate individual concerned with self-cultivation, but proceeds from the others, to whom he finds himself indebted throughout his life ; and as he recalls them, the critical details of his intellectual and moral development come back to him and find expression as exemplary traits of those people or as their teachings and direct services on his account. " From my grandfather Verus ", this book begins, and that " from " comes at the beginning of each of its seventeen sections. So he recalls the persons who influenced him in the course of his life. After his grandfather Verus comes his father, whom he lost when he was barely ten years old ; then his mother and her grandfather, Severus, to whom he felt indebted for " not having had to attend public schools but having enjoyed good teachers at home ". He devotes, however, only a few lines to his ancestors, and passes on quickly to his teachers and tutors. These, eleven in all, he recalls in a long series, from the sports master and the teacher of painting in his boyhood to his Roman and Greek teachers

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

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

The emperor Marcus has something good to say of each

* IX, 40. Cf. Seneca: "No man can be good without the help of God", above, p. 43a.

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

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

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

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

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

These notes show at once that the manner of judging men that distinguishes him, the mention only of their good qualities, does not lead, as might be supposed, to an empty idealization. He notes only what has really moved him, and accordingly does not merely give general indications of virtues such as love of truth

* Severus. He cannot be identified with certainty.

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

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

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

also see plainly the difference between the two, due to the emperor's predominant interest in the formation of character as compared with intellectual progress. We have here the first document of the ethical and political type of autobiography, which attained a sort of perfection in modern times in the *Life* of Lord Clarendon with its famous portraits of the friends of his youth, by whose company and conversation, as he declares, he "mended his understanding and formed his studies and manners."²⁴

Compared with that brilliant series of literary portraits of members of the English aristocracy of the seventeenth century, the character-sketches in the book which the Roman emperor addressed "to himself" are but small beginnings, with no literary pretensions, but for the very reason that they are free from elaboration their value as a human document is increased. We can see here actually at work the spiritual process of recollection that underlies autobiography as Marcus sets down one after the other, with no ulterior purpose and without any systematic arrangement, the various traits of the different persons he describes. He does it all in the most natural way. Thus, for instance, in his recollection of Rusticus he does not merely exhaust the theme offered by the Stoic concern with the formation of character and the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, but mentions in that connexion that he had learnt from Rusticus "to write letters in a simple manner", and adds, "Like his own from Sinuessa to my mother". Rusticus sent him to the "Dissertations" of Epictetus. He mentions that at the end, and adds that his friend passed to him his own copy of the book. On the other hand, he makes no mention of the fact that Rusticus held an important position in political life, had twice been Consul, and had been made by him, the emperor, Prefect of Rome. So entirely is the recollection concentrated on spiritual relations in life.

These reminiscences of teachers and friends retain the advantage of unelaborated testimony even when the sketches grow into a full picture, as in the case of the last of the series, the portrait of Antoninus Pius. In its outward form this consists of some 100 adjectives; there seems to be an inexhaustible flow of descriptions of the emperor's exemplary traits as man and ruler: the recollections extend to the smallest details of his habits in daily life, as though Marcus could not do enough in the praise of that "entire man".

The reminiscences begin :

From my father : gentleness and unshaken resolution in judgments 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 reward every man according to desert without partiality ; the experience that knew where to tighten the rein, where to relax.

This description of the ideal type of the enlightened monarch is followed by a sketch of court life, which Antoninus Pius reformed by relaxing the strict etiquette but introducing stern measures against perverted practices. Then the meditator returns to the picture of the ruler to add details of more concrete character :

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 of such conduct by individuals.

After this comes the emperor's enlightened religious attitude : " No superstitious fear of divine powers." That point was of importance at the time ; Marcus laid stress on it in his account of his own education ; he thanks one of his masters for teaching him in his youth " to disbelieve the professions of sorcerers and impostors about incantations and exorcism of spirits and the like " (I, 6). This is followed by the monarch's appearance in public : no angling for popular favour, no itch for innovation, but moderation ; and similarly in the enjoyment of the external benefits in life. His summing up is that the emperor was " a ripe man, an entire man, above flattery, able to preside over his own and his subjects' business ".

There follows—so far as the succession of reminiscences can be analysed—Antoninus' attitude to the contemporary representatives of cultural life, the philosophers, writers, and jurists ; Marcus emphasizes his predecessor's sound judgment in distinguishing the genuine from the false and his generous recognition of others' services. He recalls also the monarch's general human qualities, such as affability, and at the same time his sensible attitude in regard to the care of health. Then he dwells once more on the conservative tendency of the policy of Antoninus Pius and, the other main point, his sense of duty regardless of popularity. **Here** again comes an intimate personal trait;

" After acute attacks of headache, fresh and vigorous at once for his accustomed duties ; and ", the passage continues, " not to have many secrets, only very few and by way of exception, and those solely because of matters of State."⁵⁵ Thus the picture is set in relief through the contrast with the terrors of despotism.

The next paragraph begins : " 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." Here again there follow separate pictures, briefly indicated from memory, pictures of particular situations that seem to him characteristic of the way the late emperor had behaved in private life. Then he sums up :

Nowhere harsh, merciless, or blustering . . . but everything nicely calculated and divided into its times, as by a leisured man . . . 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 [he adds] of Maximus in his illness.

Claudius Maximus, a representative among the Roman dignitaries, like Junius Rusticus, of the Stoic philosophy, was, like Rusticus, among the men whom the emperor Marcus regarded as his teachers, friends, and advisers. In the sketch of Maximus* character he lays stress, alongside self-control and the uniting of mildness with dignity, on his " cheerfulness in all circumstances and especially in illness ". This high-minded attitude of the sage to existence Marcus finds also in Antoninus Pius. We see here how in regard even to those closest to him and most highly esteemed by him he is concerned not with their individual qualities but with the ideal they incorporate—in accordance with the point of view of the models that inspired this autobiographical meditation. To that extent he, too, remains within the limits of the classical conception of personality which we followed from Socrates onward. But in his picture of the man with whom he had lived in close touch for twenty years as joint emperor, although he keeps theoretically, so to speak, to that conception he departs from it in practice. Our analysis may have revealed that this is a supreme character-study in that ancient literature, rich as it was in such studies ; we have here, where the pen is guided by no literary purpose, the most unquestionable evidence of the development of psychological insight that accompanied

the practice of self-communion, and had been the condition for the inspired character-drawing of such a man as Tacitus. Marcus Aurelius was able to raise the technique of portraiture, the spread of which in that period we have indicated above,* to such perfection because he was able to make up for his lack of objective insight into the significance of individual peculiarities by a regard filled with veneration and love, which in connexion with every trait had the whole man before it, so that a fundamental sympathy harmonized all the details. He gave expression to this fundamental sympathy in another passage in his *Meditations*, where, in the midst of his daily work of moral self-training, he placed before himself the picture of his adoptive father as a guardian spirit that might preserve him from being perverted by the power of the ruler :

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 . . . in all things like a pupil of Antoninus ; his energy on behalf of what was done in accord with reason, his equability everywhere, his serenity, without vain conceit.

There follow over forty phrases, connected by " and ", in which, as in the more leisurely portrait, he enumerates the various characteristics of his model and visualizes him in this or the other particularly characteristic situation ; and he concludes : " So may your last hour find you, like him, with a conscience void of reproach " (VI, 30).

Here, once more, we note how far from the mind of the emperor Marcus was any literary purpose. He closes the character-sketch with his recollection of the dying moments of Antoninus, but it is only for his own sake that he recalls the emperor's last words to him, and so he misses the artistic effect which no writer with a reader in mind would allow to pass—the dying emperor's inculcation of the watchword *Equanimity*. Similarly the long character-sketch of his " father " leads up to no climax, but one senses the emotional relaxation in his final words, " like the spirit of Maximus in his illness ".

And now, at the end of this autobiographical meditation, Marcus Aurelius goes back from those figures of his parents, teachers, and friends, and that revelation of his inner life, to the essence of that life itself, summing up his career once more from

* See above, pp. 294, 336-7.

that profoundest point of view. He puts to himself the questions he had worked out for the assessment of the people round him, and the purpose that guides him in this is to display in his own life the surrounding goodness that enabled him to enjoy his own personality. Thus this modest final passage is the expression of his religious feeling—"From the gods : that my grandparents, my parents, my sister, my teachers, domestic companions, relatives, friends, almost the whole of my people were good people"—those are his opening words. He sees happy dispensations in the fact that he was preserved from an impure life, and so he makes mention here of intimate incidents from his youth : "That I preserved the flower of my youth and did not play the man before my time, but even delayed a little longer . . . That I did not touch *Benedicta* or *Theodotus*, and that even in later years when I experienced the passion of love I was cured." On his relations to wife and children he dwells once more without a word about all the delusion and anxiety he suffered ; he mentions that he lost his mother prematurely, but he is thankful that he had her with him in the last years of her life. He thanks the gods that he controlled himself, "that though I was often angry with *Rusticus* I never went to extremes for which I should have been sorry." When he recalls that he had in no way injured anyone close to him, he adds, "though I had the kind of disposition which might in some circumstances have led me to behave thus ; but it was through the goodness of the gods that no conjunction of events came about which was likely to expose my weakness".

Here is genuine humility without self-depreciation. The self-glorification with which we met again and again in ancient autobiography seems here to have changed into its opposite. In truth, however, the conception of humanity underlying it * remains unaltered, the conception that seeks the nature of the individual in a final beauty and perfection. As *Marcus*, full of gratitude, tries to see only the good in the men round him and in the events of his life, that classic type of conception of the self, freed from all external relationships, discloses here its pure moral essence. Profound as this view, which has nothing in common with ordinary optimism, is the way he holds it : to him, a Stoic, the happiness of possessing such men as friends is no less than that of having the consciousness of having kept himself free from lapses, and this self-assessment is made not with pride in his own moral achievement, but with the feeling of thankfulness for the "Lead us not

* See above, pp. 62-3, 174,

into temptation " : the independent moral will bows before the divine, without denying itself; it becomes only the more spiritually refined and gives up none of its own power, while remaining conscious of the limits set to man. Even for the apparently entirely rational labour of self-education—" to have pictured to myself clearly and repeatedly what life in conformity with Nature really means"—he refuses to thank only himself, but holds himself alone responsible if, in spite of divine guidance and aid, he still has not achieved perfection. " For all these things require the gods' help and Fortune's hand."

iv. RELIGIOUS SELF-PORTRAYAL AND THE LIFE-STORY
OF THE SOUL

Seen from the turning-point marked by the book "To Myself" of the emperor Marcus, the further development in ancient literature of the autobiographical *genre* seems to be a consistent historical process needing no explanation. Meditation disclosing the calm creative depths of the soul—so ended the Socratic-Stoic reflection on the self, transcending the limits imposed by its intellectual character. Metaphysical contemplation, imbuing every moment of the individual life with the feeling of its true connexion with life as a whole—thus was autobiography to develop in Christian Neoplatonism out of a subjective religious lyricism, as we shall see in the poems of Gregory of Nazianzus. While this poetry forms a link leading from the Meditations of the emperor Marcus to the Confessions of Augustine, in Augustine himself we can see this process starting afresh as regards his personal development. For in the time following his conversion he searched in ancient literature for a form of self-scrutiny, and represented himself, in his still mainly Neoplatonic occupation with the inward existence, as in conversation with Reason, before he had gained assurance in the new experience of faith and art of portrayal, thanks to which he then fashioned his life-story out of the mysterious relation of the soul to God.

What we are thus able to comprehend as a consistent process to be observed in the experience of those few great individuals was, however, woven in with a thousand threads of the general spiritual movement. As a rule, it is true, the actual advance of the human mind takes place only among small groups, and we should get a wrong picture if we looked for a comprehensive spiritual movement at a time when diverse civilizations met; but we can nevertheless envisage the heterogeneous works produced in that time of so-called syncretism from a comprehensive point of view, considering them as human potentialities coming to fruition in the course of history. To observe this play of possibilities is indeed attractive, and we are bound to bring it to notice so far as it is observable in autobiographical works, in order to be able to distinguish the original achievement in the output of those great autobiographers.

What happened in this general development was essentially a shattering of the classical conception of personality represented by

the ideas both of the *bios*, expressive of a man's character, and of his (*Lemon*, consisting of pure reason, a conception that had held its own in autobiography in spite of the ideas drawn from Heraclitus concerning the composite nature of man. Elements of this change were to be found already in the field of the romance of manners, and subsequently in the products of self-scrutiny which we followed from Seneca to Marcus Aurelius ; now, especially in the second century A.D., there comes a whole collection of self-portrayals of men of letters, which throw light on the process from other sides. Instead of the definitive picture of the individual there comes here into the foreground a process of gradual formation with the passage of time ; the pursuit of a higher life comes under discussion, and stories of conversion are common. The uneasy spirit of those days betrays itself in the expression of feelings that border on the pathological. At the same time we find in the making, as a sort of substratum of the individual autobiographical production, certain typical forms of life-histories of the soul. (We use this expression to cover the various productions for which the Germans use the term *Seelengeschichte* or "soul-history", meaning the personal religious history of an individual.) The autobiographical documents with which we are dealing in this section come from all over the vast territory of the empire in that time of peace, and in them the religious movements are reflected on however small a scale. Into these movements the Christian writers make their way, accommodating themselves to them or bringing new initiatives.

I. THE HELLENISTIC TYPE OF STORIES OF CONVERSION

A first series of autobiographical documents leads from the analysis of the individual's intellectual development, familiar to us from the autobiographies of writers, to a type of story of conversion that remains within the intellectualistic method of treatment. The real novelty here lies only in the dominant interest in the process of conversion, not the method of treatment, and in many cases the records closely follow the style of earlier Greek models. In this type are included rhetoricians, moral philosophers, and Christian apologists, in accordance with the mental attitude then prevalent, which almost ignored any dividing line between philosophy and religion. The promptings to self-portrayal come also once more from the pursuit of public teaching and speaking. In the case of the representatives of public life

who with their homilies met the general need for spiritual guidance, the person of the speaker was bound to come to the fore in consequence of his direct relations with the public, much as the highest form of the oratorical art, the set ovation on some great occasion, an art valued for its own sake, was to some extent a self-presentation by the virtuoso. Especially at the outset of a lecture or cycle of lectures, in the *prolalia*, personal histories were appropriate, and they played a part of their own as soon as they were employed to give the content of the speech an effective turn by introducing the speaker's own experience. We have seen that the growth of the philosophy of life based on the teacher's personal influence on his pupils involved the use of the moral drawn from the speaker's own history to exhort them. Seneca described how declamatory confessions of this sort on the part of his teacher Attalus roused him to emulation in asceticism.*

This tendency, too, in self-disclosure may be traced back to Socrates. This is quite evident in an evangelical talk by the best of the Cynic-Stoic peripatetic preachers of the first century A.D., Dio Chrysostom.²⁵ Dio had experienced more deeply than many others a transition typical of those times, leading the more reflective minds from rhetoric to practical philosophy. A decree issued by Domitian had robbed him of his place at court and exiled him, but he did not lose courage. Reduced to destitution and vagrancy, he realized the errors of his past and also the worthlessness of worldly advantage and the blessings of poverty. For fourteen years, as bath attendant or gardener's labourer or in other menial occupations, he lived the life of an apostle of Cynicism. After his return from exile he referred to these experiences in a lecture he gave in Athens "On Exile", in which he publicly expounded his Cynic or popularized Socratic system of morals. And this story of his conversion, which might have furnished him with the material for a romance of manners, characteristically takes quite a different direction. In his account of the way he became a philosopher Dio closely follows that of Socrates as described in Plato's "Apology", and he expressly bases his moral teaching not on his personal experience but on the older philosophers, on a "Socratic discourse". In his poverty, he says, he had turned to the oracle of Apollo (as Socrates had done in his surprise at being called the wisest of men); he had heard the god's command to continue in his course; and as the common people among whom he moved always addressed him as a philosopher

* See above, p. 425.

he had been bound to earn the right to that appellation by self-scrutiny, and freedom and *eudaimonia*, the happiness of a conscience at ease, had been his reward. It is the first time that we meet with this method, later so frequently found, of a man's elaboration of his experience on a literary model not only in style but in content, perhaps really understanding it in that conventional way.

In a profusion of brilliance come, a hundred years later, Lucian's autobiographical works. We have already made acquaintance with these narratives and dialogues, when we were in search of evidence of the relation between autobiography and the romance of manners.* In our present context they come under consideration from a more general point of view. Lucian was one of the most famous writers of the age of the Antonines, and was also very successful; we saw that he ended his literary career in a splendidly paid public office. But at the height of his success he did not represent himself as a perfect individual embodying a cultural ideal, as Isocrates and Nicolaus Damascenus had done in the past; his subject was the critical moments in his life, his turning to Hellenistic civilization, which had been an escape from the poor and uncultured population of the eastern provinces of the empire into a higher social class, and then, especially his abandonment of rhetoric for philosophy. He described this progress as an intellectual change or series of changes, which he depicted, under various disguises and with varying motivation, in the style of the Menippean satire—nothing was farther from the intention of this atheistic satirist than to tell a story of conversion. Instead he let his wit play on the inner unrest of the age and the vacillations and conversions of others; and he included himself in the satirical mockery that dominated all his work.

All he took seriously was the changes in his literary technique resulting from his claim to have gone over to philosophy. This was characteristic of the people of antiquity, † Cicero had been similarly concerned with the development of his literary style, which took him away from the so-called florid or Asiatic style of oratory with which he had begun his forensic career. With reference to the journey he made in pursuit of his studies, which had that result, he says that he came back "a changed man". That sort of "change" was in obvious contrast with Christian

* See above, pp. 383 *sqq.*

† Dio, too, accompanies his account of his passing over to philosophy with the description of a change in his method of teaching. Or. 13, pars. 12 and 28 *sqq.* Cf. von Arnim, *Leben und Works des Dio von Prusa*, p. 256.

conversion. Those who had been brought up in the Greek tradition of philosophy and who were converted to Christianity, lived up to it in a way that seemed strange to those who adhered to the old tradition. Even the emperor Marcus spoke of the Christians' vain recalcitrance and saw in their martyrdom nothing but histrionic display (XI, 3). So much the more notable is it that in the Christian literature that made its appearance in the Hellenistic civilization we find a whole series of autobiographical works of the second century and later, whose writers tell of their conversion to Christianity in just the same way as a "pagan" orator had spoken of his turning to philosophy. At the outset of their apologies or devotional or instructional works they tell how they themselves passed through what they ask of others. Many of these were writers of second-rate quality, and their story was mainly determined by their purpose. They were concerned with getting rid of the moral disintegration of their time, or with the typical⁹⁶ transition from pagan philosophy to Christianity as the true "philosophy", in which all problems were finally solved. In these works, which correspond to the Hellenizing process of the new religion, there is no discussion of the characteristic Christian experience. But the more important ones show further elaboration, especially in the technique of religious autobiography.

The earliest testimony of this sort, from the middle of the second century after Christ, comes from the Christian apologist Justin, called the Martyr because he was condemned to death by the Prefect of Rome (c. 165). He was born in Samaria, the Palestinian part of Syria, and after his conversion he settled in Rome as a sort of missionary. He was a man of education, and gave lectures on the truth of Christianity, trying to win over men of the educated classes. The Prefect who sentenced him was Rusticus, the teacher and friend of the emperor Marcus Antoninus. Justin Martyr is the first in the series of Hellenistic interpreters of the new religion, which they tried to recommend by likening it to philosophy; indeed, they conceived Greek philosophy as a stage on the path to Christianity, comparable with the Old Testament. From Justin comes the saying: "Is not Plato an Attic-speaking Moses?" That view was borne out by the story of his conversion, told by him in the introduction to one of his apologetic works.

In that work he used the conventional form of the dialogue, which had become modern again since the revival of Platonism in the first century of the Christian era, and especially through

Plutarch. He shows himself strolling in the markets in the philosopher's cloak, the distinctive badge of the wandering professional teacher of philosophy, as he tells his own story to the Jew Trypho, by way of illustration of the inadequacy of pagan philosophy for the acquisition of the knowledge of God and for blessedness. First comes the journey through the various philosophers' schools, until the solution sought seems to have been found among the Platonists. The progress from Neoplatonism to Christianity was a central issue in all soul-histories of that kind, but the distinction between the two doctrines was not clearly seen until Augustine showed it. In Justin it was but an unsupported contention. He tells us that he was just about to go into seclusion for the contemplation of God, in accordance with the Platonic method, when a wise old man came past, demonstrated to him the inefficacy of that philosophy as of the rest, and referred him in his helplessness and perplexity to the writings of the Israelite prophets, as documents of divine revelation attested by incomparable age and miraculous signs. Immediately he was filled with ardent longing for the prophets and friends of Christ. "In that way and through that I became a philosopher."

Even where conversion is described in a more religious way, and attributed to the effect of divine grace and to rebirth through the sacrament of baptism, as among the writers of the next century, when the Church was already becoming firmly established, there is still no more than the simple statement of beginning and end, error and vice, and then truth and virtue. Similar to Justin's was the case of Saint Cyprian, who also suffered a martyr's death (in 258). He came from a wealthy patrician family of Carthage, and there became a teacher of rhetoric, as did his fellow-countryman Augustine a hundred years later. About 248, a few years after his conversion, he was elected bishop of Carthage. He tells of his conversion in the introduction to his work "On the Grace of God". In that work he gives a highly-coloured picture of the moral corruption of pagan society, and contrasts with it the regenerated life of the Christians. To him the essential means of rebirth is baptism, the sacramental character of which he maintains as a theologian. In accordance with this view he inserts in the autobiographical passage a confession that with baptism he suddenly reached the goal that had seemed to him so difficult to attain, that of becoming a new man, so that "in a wonderful way the doubtful suddenly became certain, the sealed open, the

dark light, and what had been thought impossible became possible " :

Commodianus, a Latin poet of the same period, probably also from the Roman province of North Africa, expresses himself similarly in the autobiographical passage at the outset of the two works of his that have come down to us. One of these is a collection of poems designed to instruct pagans and Jews in " the Truth " ; in the second, a longer work, *Carmen Apologeticum* (A.D. 259), he called mankind to repentance because the end of the world was near. He bases his claim to warn the unbelieving on the fact that in his youth he himself had been entangled in " loathsome error " : " Ego similiter erravi tempore multo." His hexameters, in which quantity is replaced by accent, already show strong traces of " Church Latin ", and the same is true of the contents of his work. He depicts his unredeemed state in youth : ignorant and in the toils of vain hopes, " lighter than chaff ", " as though there were a hundred heads on my shoulders ", he had drifted aimlessly until the knowledge of God had been disclosed to him in His sacred book of laws.⁹⁷

Of more importance is the autobiography of Hilarius, bishop of Poitiers (c. 350), placed at the beginning of his work on the Trinity, f It approaches the ancient style, and shows the influence of classic writers, its prose being modelled on that of Sallust. Hilarius' narrative of his philosophic and religious advance thus exhibits the type of intellectual development, proceeding stage by stage, which we met with in the Hellenistic *genre* of autobiographies of writers. He starts from the failure of philosophy to satisfy the desire for knowledge, describing his tentative search and hesitant reflections upon God and the meaning of human life ; then the study of the Old Testament brings him the realization of the incomprehensible nature of God—the notable theological interpretation of the name of God, *Jahve* (Exodus iii, 14), as " I am that I am " brought him this enlightenment; the last stage is his reading of the gospel of St. John ; there he found the true apprehension, surpassing the human intellect, of the divine mysteries, and thus gained certainty in the Christian faith and the hope of immortal blessedness.

In this sphere of literature the story of conversion could even receive artistic treatment. Thus it makes its appearance in Greek Christian fiction, in a second-century compilation⁹⁸ of the group of legends that had formed round St. Clement, one of the

Cyprian ad Donatum (De gratia Dei), c. 2-4 † *Hilarius, De Trinitate*, c. 1-15.

" Apostolic Fathers ", early regarded as a disciple of St. Peter, and one of the first bishops of Rome (c. 96). In this romance-like work the apocryphal books of St. Peter are recast into a first-personal narrative of Clement the Roman, who tells in the introduction of his conversion to Christianity." Clement gives here a full description of the state of his soul, the anxious unrest, the conflicting thoughts, the torturing fear of what might happen to him after death ; at the same time he gives a preliminary indication of the source of future blessedness ; and in lively succession are then pictured the way the news of the promise of the kingdom of God penetrated to Rome, how Clement was led by a Christian sermon to go to Judaea to learn the truth, how in Alexandria he met a disciple of one of the Apostles and, in a dramatic scene, took his part against the arrogant dialectic of the philosophers, and how finally, coming to St. Peter himself, he found entire release from his doubts in the revelation of Christ proved by miracles, and became the Apostle's disciple and companion. It is worth mention that out of the romance *Clementina*, introduced into Latin literature by the ecclesiastical writer Rufinus, a contemporary of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, came in the later Middle Ages the legend of Faust.

Finally, we have from the centre of Christian Gnosticism, from the school of Origen, a literary work whose autobiographical part is of special value. It gives us a glimpse of the extent to which the method of explaining the spiritual history of the individual from the formative influences exerted upon him had advanced in this group of Hellenistic autobiographies. In 233 a young man of twenty, Gregory, who is included among the saints of the Roman Catholic Church as St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (" the miracle-worker "), gave on the occasion of his departure from the academy at Caesarea (Palestine) a speech before Origen in which he returned thanks and told his own story.* The outward artistic form was determined by rhetoric—an introduction with the usual hyperboles concerning the greatness of its subject and the speaker's inability to do him justice ; then the actual returning of thanks with emphasis on the teacher's services to his pupils (here was the opportunity for the autobiographical element) ; and by way of conclusion the outlook on the future, the promise to treasure the master's teachings, and the appeal

* Τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θαυματουργοῦ εἰς Ὀριγένην προσφωνητικός, " Public address of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus to Origen " (described by Gregory himself as λόγος χαριστήριος, " a speech returning thanks "), ed. P. Kötchau, *Kirchengeschichtl. und dogmengesch. Quellschriften*, IX.

for his blessing and his recommendation. But here the rhetorical art is given philosophic and religious content. The Platonic spirit that influenced Origen, the powerful influence of the teacher's personality, and the disciple's enthusiastic devotion, are united with the Stoic-Christian doctrine of Providence to give unity to the speaker's life-story.

In the first section Gregory describes his path in life, from his pagan origin and his professional training in rhetoric to the decisive turn in his career that brought him to Origen and so to Christianity. Here teleological interpretation prevails. Gregory sets out to show how " God's holy angel, who was my instructor from youth up, arranged that blessed meeting, preparing for it from my birth and education onward". The technique of premonitory indications may be seen here in full development, but still confined almost entirely to external facts. Gregory mentions the first contact he had made with Christianity in his childhood ; he gives no details, but starts from this to show the intervention in his life of the divine *logos*, which thereafter remained close to him. Then Gregory shows the wonderful work, both lengthening and shortening his studies, of Providence in a series of apparently chance circumstances : behind the simple events, conceived by him and his associates as merely natural incidents of the regular course of instruction, he suggests a true and higher meaning, through which they acquire the character of consistent planning—a sort of application of Stoic literary exegesis to life. For this he makes use of the terms " symbol " and " prophecy ", pointing out that " the divine guide did not sleep ", but loosened the fetters on his spirit without his realizing it.

Now the figure of Origen comes into the foreground, and in spite of the rhetorical language we realize the truth of what the author tells of his personal experience. The youth had intended to follow the legal profession, but an address by Origen captivated him, revealing to him the higher life : this was his " first, truly my first day, the most momentous of all days, the first dawning of the true sun ". Artistically Gregory leads up to his climax, showing how at first, like a wild animal in captivity, he tried to shake off his chains, but the " sweet grace and persuasiveness and convincing force " of Origen's message fascinated him and he vacillated, with his mind half made up, until " the barb of friendship " and love sank into his heart and " Jonathan's soul was linked to the soul of David ".

From this point starts the description of the course of instruc-

tion, which led to the consummation of faith in knowledge. Gregory sets out to "confess without rhetorical similes and artifices that which I have learnt" : he gives a full and comprehensive recapitulation of the methodical series of studies pursued under Origen ; here, too, however, the feeling of gratitude to his teacher gives life and individuality to the story. Summing up, he declares his adherence to Platonic Christianity : though he may not yet possess such virtues as justice and prudence, he is nevertheless filled with " the most piercing love " of them ; but " the last aim of all is, I think, nothing else but through purity of mind to become similar to God, and so to reach Him and rest in Him ".

2. THE " SACRED DISCOURSES " OF AELIUS ARISTIDES

Another group of self-portrayals leads us into the deeper layers of the spiritual ferment of that time, out of which dark and sensuously religious powers, nurtured by the prevalent oriental conceptions of faith, rise to determine the general type of religious attitude. We shall not enter into this fluctuation. For the process in which the representative form of religious autobiography was elaborated by Augustine is not, like the corresponding development in the mysticism of the Christian Middle Ages, conditioned by an existing type of soul-history, developed in the communal life, but has its significance in the very fact that the autobiographer was a man of genius who had himself created the conception, or rather the reality, of the inner process which he describes in writing of his life. In the construction of such a comprehensive survey of a life as was produced by St. Augustine in the fourth century, much was certainly rejected and various fruitful elements which later gained strength were curtailed. But we are unable to re-live the vague and confused religious movements scattered through the first centuries after Christ, so far as they were mass movements, clearly or fully enough to recognize their interconnexion in the general conditions; and this interconnexion alone would enable us to understand their importance to the crisis of autobiography from the time in which that crisis was present, and not only from the later development, that is to say, from the result. Thus we can proceed here only empirically, stating as facts the autobiographical productions of which we happen to have knowledge. The real problem remains—how did the spiritual change take

place which we can see in them, and which then entered into the new and complex form of Augustine's *Confessions* ; and what was its origin ? For the word " oriental ", with its many potential meanings, offers no adequate explanation, even if the historic forces really at work could be attributed entirely to the East : in the normal course of the history of the human mind such mixed states of feeling, vague, exalted, made up of emotion and intellectuality and reflective imagination, make their appearance in civilizations that have become over-civilized. They may overwhelm all the spiritual forces operative in society, but they may also be mere transitional states ; on this alternative depends the ending or the reshaping of the life of a people.

Since Seneca it had been plain that the traditional reserve of the ancients in giving public expression to subjective religious feelings no longer existed. Thus the tendency inherent in religious experience to disclose the mainsprings of emotional life could find realization in self-portrayal, and religious autobiography could attain the psychological significance which it preserved throughout the subsequent history of the *genre*. We meet with beginnings of this in various quarters. Philo of Alexandria, that remarkable Jewish theologian, whose adaptation of the Stoic system of Posidonius and of Hellenistic mysticism,¹⁰⁰ about the time of the birth of Christ, brought him enduring fame, is the first to give us evidence of literary concern with the irrational elements of his own religious attitude. He likes to depict himself in ecstasy, a state of emotional exaltation which for him means religious rapture as well as artistic inspiration ; in this way he gives an appearance of originality both to the very indefinite and in reality unoriginal thought in his allegorical biblical exegesis and to the rather trivial ideas occurring in it ; his theological treatises are full of a solemn and mysterious atmosphere of prophecy.

Here again the mental attitude of a period beyond maturity, in which reflection prevailed over original creation, resulted in the elaboration of the record of inner experience in accordance with general ideas already current. Such were a certain idea, both oriental and Hellenistic, of the mission of the prophet, and with it the Platonic conception of enthusiasm, which had resulted from the " divine philosopher's " deep metaphysical experience,* but had been reduced in the tradition of the school to an aesthetic theory. These two conceptions, amalgamated as they were in

* See above, Part I, pp. 108-9.

a typical form of literary exposition of supernatural events, provided the autobiographer with a definite method of presenting his experience of the divine. What Philo describes as the supreme moment in his life is the gnosis that claims to bring the individual soul into direct contact with God, but really consists in the exposition of indefinite feelings typical of an ecstatic seizure. To make credible to himself his plunge into the infinite, Philo resorts to reminiscences of Plato's dialogues.

In the course of this over-charged exposition of his emotions Philo writes of his changing moods when at work, normal experiences of a writer which, however, are here displayed, so far as we know, for the first time. Such statements are found, for instance, in a treatise entitled " On the Migration of Abraham ", in which he uses the allegorical method to give to God's words to Abraham (Genesis xii. 1-4) the interpretation that " country " and " kindred ", from which Abraham is commanded to depart, have the spiritual meaning of body and senses, and the departure means the turning of the soul to higher realities. Before he enters in this way into the various promises to Abraham, he takes God's words " I will bless thee " as the text for a long exposition of the nature of the divine presence and inspiration :

" Then are all forms of studying, toiling, practising at rest; and without interference of art, by contrivance of Nature, there come forth all things in one outburst charged with benefit for all. And the harvest of spontaneous things good is called Release." He says further : " I feel no shame in recording my own experience, a thing I know from its having happened to me a thousand times." This experience, or, more precisely, this state of feeling, to which he was subject, he describes thus :

On some occasions, after making up my mind to follow the usual course of writing on philosophical tenets, and knowing definitely the substance of what I was to set down, I have found my understanding incapable of giving birth to a single idea, and have given up without accomplishing anything, reviling my understanding for its self-conceit . . . On other occasions I have approached my work empty and suddenly become full, the ideas falling in a shower from above and being sown invisibly, so that under the influence of Divine possession I have been filled with corybantic frenzy and been unconscious of everything, place, persons present, myself, words spoken, lines written. For I obtained language, ideas, an enjoyment of light, keenest vision, pellucid distinctness of objects, such as might be received through the eyes as the result of clearest showing.

The most astonishing thing, he writes, about these states, is " the

might of Him that Is "—to whom is due " the opening and closing of the soul-wombs ".* c

In the second century there are many testimonies to experiences of this sort. The principal document is the " Sacred Discourses " of the rhetorician and " Sophist " Ælius Aristides, surnamed Theodoras, of Smyrna, perhaps the strangest autobiographical work in Greek literature. He writes in a clear, simple classic Greek, artistically produced by the technique of imitation ; for his literary skill Aristides was admired for centuries, even more than his contemporary Lucian, as a master and exemplar. In this classic language he wrote, strange to say, " Discourses ", telling of states of sickness, describing adventures of the nerves, and telling of dream-states in an intercourse with a god that is a revelry of mind and senses. How vast a change must have come over the ancient spirit for such disharmony to be bearable, even to give aesthetic pleasure, and, as a self-portrayal, to be in accordance with the taste of a supreme literary artist !

These six Discourses enable us to see how the sense of reality became transcendental, as generally happened in those days, and to see this significant change taking place in the most earthly sphere of a human existence. The concrete facts in these testimonies are, in our judgment, quite simple and not difficult to define. In his thirties Aristides suffered incessantly from one ailment after another, rheumatism, asthma, facial neuralgia, debility, inflammation of every organ capable of it, and nervous complaints such as were nothing abnormal at that time in the learned professions.¹⁰¹ He turned from secular physicians to the healing art of the god Æsculapius. The therapy of the gods of healing was widespread from of old in the Hellenistic world, and maintained itself with the tenacity of such religious beliefs in nature-cures in spite of all enlightenment; we have another document of that same century, showing that the cures indicated by dreams to the sick man slumbering in faith in the temple were not mere swindling or cures by suggestion, but depended also on medical treatment on the principle of natural healing.

In addition to the temple treatment Aristides profited by his other dreams, interpreting them by means of a partly allegorical, partly rational, method, and so deducing from them medical prescriptions which were attributed to Æsculapius ; this, too, was a general custom at the time and in no way indicated special

* Philo, *De migratione Abrahami*, 31, 34-5. Translated by F. H. Colson, in the Loeb Classical Library.

piety : his contemporary the emperor Marcus thanked the gods for having granted him " assistance in dreams ", showing him " especially how to avoid spitting blood and fits of giddiness ", and for " the answer of the oracle of Caieta " (I, 17, 9). Some of the cures to which, if his report is to be believed, Aristides submitted were appallingly drastic, but, apart from their violent nature and excessive strength, many of them are traditional and sensible prescriptions—cold baths, mud baths, dieting, abstinence, and the like ; also psychotherapy, such as the expulsion of nervous pains by music, pleasing fancies, and brain work.

Aristides kept a diary of his dream transactions, on rolls of parchment, giving just the details of the dreams, and he lost it ; he estimated its length at 30,000 lines.* This is no more than an extension of a practice traditionally followed in the temples, with which we are familiar through the similar practices in Roman Catholic places of pilgrimage. Public records of cases of sickness, kept for the edifying purpose of proving the god's wonderful healing power, and dating from the Hellenistic period, are still extant; they come from Epidaurus, the centre of the worship of Esculapius ; at the temples of the healing gods there was a regular profession of certificate-writing to attest miraculous cures or to record dreams and visions for those concerned ; we have a long temple document of the middle of this second century, over thirty lines on a stone tablet, on which the progress of a cure was inscribed, as in Aristides' case, by the cured person at the god's command.¹⁰² And in Aristides' work we have glimpses of customs in private life that served the daily communication and discussion of these marvels. Friends meet in the presence of the sick man, and he places before them for interpretation or for wonderment his dreams of the previous night ; he regularly tells the keeper of the temple of Esculapius of his experiences ; in the temple sit resident devotees, three abreast, and the question is asked, " Has the god made known anything new? " Often at the god's appearances in his dreams Aristides sees other persons present as witnesses ; and for his enjoyment of the lasting favour of the god he can appeal to the testimony of those who were present, or of " all who know anything about me ".† Such practices originate as a rule in times of religious excitement, since the cultivation of emotional states of mind naturally leads

* Ael Arist., (ed. B. Keil, vol. I I , pp. 376-7), I I , 1 *sqq.*; I, 3 ; I I I , 30 ; IV, 15 ; III, 26.

† Acl. Arist., *op. cit.*, I 9; II 35, 73 ; IV, 16 ; I I , 41 ; I, 49, etc.; I I , 37, 56 ; *cf.* 30,

to the formation of societies for mutual edification. We shall see this rule operative again and again in the origins of religious autobiographies.

Urged on by his friends, Aristides, now famous, boldly took these personal matters as the theme of his oratory. This, too, he did under divine inspiration—as is also the usual feeling in such cases among Roman Catholic mystics. He began to write his " Sacred Discourses " in his forties (about 170), when he had been more or less cured, and continued them later until his death (c. 179) ; he described their subject as " The exertions of the Saviour, by which I have benefited to this day ". He was not entitled to claim, as he did, to be the inventor of this type of religious discourse : it had developed out of rhetorical practice at festivals ; ¹⁰³ his original contribution was to change the central feature, the glorification of the god (which could draw its miracle stories either from the lives of others or from the writer's own life), to the emotional presentation of his own ego.* He thus prepared the way for the further development of autobiography in a particular direction.

In taking it as the subject of his rhetorical art he set out to treat his miracle-story differently from the diary entries : he filled it with accounts of the subtle changes in his physical condition and his consequent emotions, and the traditional story of sickness became his starting-point for tracing and presenting the workings of divine providence in his life throughout that decade, in outward events, in travel incidents, and especially in the field of his oratory. For he felt that it was this art of his that had lifted him out of the " swinish " pleasures of the masses to " truly human " enjoyment, and he considered that it would have been absurd to tell of the medical treatment of the body and to say nothing about " what set up the body and at the same time strengthened the soul and imparted eminent greatness to the discourses " (I, 19 ; V, 36).

But he has little to say about his actual achievements, his declamations and the enthusiastic public : † "I convinced myself and many others that no human affairs ever puffed me up " ; his vanity was too fastidious to allow him to dwell on visible successes and honours. ‡ Here, too, his interest lies in the " honours received from the god ", that is to say, first of all, in

* In I I, 13, he himself says this.

† These are described once in V, 32. The contrast may be seen in Libanius—see below, Part III, chap. I. ‡ V, 37, 16 ; IV, 67 ; VI, 1, etc.

his dreams ; on these he bases his attempt to understand and even to live his life as a series of spiritual adventures. It has been suggested that his case was one of somnambulism.¹⁰⁴ Actually this pathological concept is no more than a catchword covering a spiritual condition which, in spite of its morbidity, was typical of that time. Aristides found in his dreams oracles by which he directed his path in daily life ; he even carried the aesthetic theory of inspiration into practice by means of productive dreams, which helped him in semi-consciousness to conceive verses, hymns, the beginnings of speeches, and compositions. As he could think of no natural explanation of these psychic phenomena, which recurred with abnormal regularity, he saw in them proof of his association with a transcendental world, the sense of whose reality had become overpowering in the religious movements of those days. From it came all real causation. In one place where he adduces simple human motives for a decision, desire for fame and the like, inducing him to return to his homeland, he adds : " I reflected upon this, as is only human, but I was well aware that everything is but babbling in face of the surrender to guidance by God " (V, 56).

If religion has a value of its own, independent of its substance, if absolute obedience to a power believed to be divine and a blind trust in providential guidance can be accounted a mark of religious feeling, Aristides was certainly a very religious man. Much of his stories may be exaggerated or concocted for edification ; he had only part of his diary left, and memory can play many tricks with a decade ; there remains nevertheless a great courage, building purely on fictions of fancy and leading him to brave the most senseless treatment in everyday matters affecting his body, to brave them not under excitement but coolly and with his eyes open, because the god commanded it.* He himself bases his piety on this fearlessness with which he carried out the " paradoxical " in spite of all warnings. In those days Tertullian (160-220) coined the phrase " It is certain because it is impossible "—the phrase from which the *credo quia absurdum est* originated. Aristides, who was an older contemporary of Tertullian, reminds us of this paradox by his religious principle of living. This cult of miracles has, however, a rational basis, and the morbidity and unctuousness of his piety brings him, if we regard it simply from the psychological aspect, close to the late representatives of pietism.¹⁰⁵ His self-portrayal, too, recalls pietistic

* See especially I I, 52 ; I I I, 38 sqq; I, 68.

autobiographies, the latter parts, for instance, of Jung Stilling's story of his life.

Aristides proclaims his belief in a special personal relationship in which he was associated with Æsculapius and other gods as their chosen favourite ; in his confidence in this he emphasizes the uniqueness of his blessings ; he compares them with similar experiences of others, and finds that even the " most paradoxical " thing that ever happened is outdone in his case. He thinks more of the honour of such workings of divine " power and providence " than of the benefits they bring him, and is sure that anyone who considers all the sufferings and crises amid which he was wonderfully protected will " rejoice with me over the honour accorded me, and will have no more need than I have to be downcast because of his weaknesses " (IV, 39 ; II, 59).

He is aware of the religious element in the suspension or suppression of the will; he speaks of the satisfaction and the ease with which he follows the divine pronouncements, and of the deep reluctance that overcomes him before a journey when, leaving the temple, he feels that he is " without a protector and dependent on myself". What a strange sound the word " autarky " has here, the word he likes to use for a state of undisturbed comfort ! And even theological pragmatism makes its appearance so soon as external events intrude in the story of sickness ; when things happen on a journey, or in embarrassment over legal or communal matters, the remedy is attributed to divine intervention : Aristides knows the divine purposes, so that he can even count on them on occasion. In these pious dealings those unconnected with them appear only as lay figures, at most with indications of their occupation, not with any special characterization,* and even invective against rival orators and the envious is absent save for a few touches of lofty irony.

So the ego is introverted, in enjoyment of feelings that are both religious and sensuous. These confessions are oases in a dismal desert of hypochondriacal self-regard. The analysis goes so far that at times the states of feeling are expressly distinguished from bodily sensations, † Thus, for instance, he describes his sensations after a river bathe in winter ; they lasted all day and through the night, the skin " glowing " and a " radiant warmth " passing through the whole body—a warmth not to be attained by human means, but lasting from the preceding dream, a vision

* The only characterization he gives is that of the Proconsul Severus (IV, 71)

† *Τό τε σῶμα . . . καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ*, V, 3 ; cf. II, 22 ; IV, 7.

of Æsculapius, " and inwardly it was much the same. For it was neither a definite feeling of pleasure, nor such that it could have been described as a human sort of joy, but it was an unspeakable sense of wellbeing, which made everything fade in face of the present, so that even when I awoke I seemed to see nothing else, so entirely was I with the god " (II, 22, 23). With the sensitiveness of the invalid, he reacts especially to the weather, and he notes the fact; when he dreams of Athens he feels the rarefied air and gulps it in. He notes very mixed feelings. For him they are " wonderful owing to the unaccustomed experience ", and delight him accordingly, as do his visions, which are " so divine and paradoxical that they resemble an initiation ". " There were at the same time a cheerfulness, a sense of pleasure and satisfaction in body and soul " (a dream had promised him recovery), " and a sort of incredulity, of doubt whether one could ever be allowed to see that day, and also fear that something from the past might come and frustrate all the hopes " (IV, 7).

Aristides knows himself to be " practised in divine promptings ", and he is so much so that the religious interpretation of his sensations no longer leads him into exaggerations of them. A divine hint to return home, for instance, reaches him simply through his feeling in a dream the difference between the air of Athens and the more settled climate of his homeland. He gives precise indications of circumstances, of the time when the dreams used to come, or of the weakening of his sense of reality when he is wavering between belief and disbelief in his strange visions. He gives, for instance, a striking description of his inward state during ecstasy.¹⁰⁶

It was a sort of sense of contact and a clear realization that the god himself had come ; an intermediate state between sleeping and waking, a desire to look and at the same time a fear that he would go away first; a listening and hearing half in dream, half awake ; the hair on end and tears of joy and an inward swelling with delight—what human being could find words to describe it? Those who are of the initiated will understand and recognize it.

Aristides also had more special sensations, such as the sense of floating, which he shares with various Roman Catholic saints. He is a virtuoso in the interweaving of dreams ; he dreams that he is dreaming and that he is telling of what he has just dreamt.

Here was the opportunity for a psychological autobiography, were it not that he lacked the power of comprehensive survey

and of selection, without which no literary or artistic form is attainable. His account, sober, sometimes commercial in spirit, much of it day-to-day, gives a mass of details and often a miscellaneous collection of impressions, one thing suggesting another. It all seems confused, even absurd, to those in search of anything of human significance—a category which cannot be applied here, for any continuity that may exist in the kaleidoscopic succession of external or inward events is purely subjective, for the author, to whose life they belong. Thus little things and big are of equal import to the pious egoism of his belief in his enjoyment of divine grace, which nevertheless corresponded to a universal instinct, so that these " Sacred Discourses " aroused widespread contemporary interest.

In outward events the reporting achieves picturesqueness ; parts of the self-portrayal might be pages of a novel. Aristides tells, for instance, of his travels to and fro between temple and temple, a story of god-ordained psychopathic excitement with carriage-journeys by night and camping in the open in front of an unlighted hostelry, in a folding chair, wearing his dusty travelling clothes. And even apart from his dreams he approaches at times the style of the Hellenistic stories of magic. In the temple of Isis at Smyrna two sacred geese waddle ahead of him and show him plainly the way he is to go : " Depart," he says, " you have done all you need," and they waddle back again—a " fearful " sign of divine power (III, 48-9 ; *cf.* 40 *sqq.*).

He himself defines the literary sphere of his imaginary experiences when he says in one place that what he now has to tell surpasses the " Alkinou Apologoi ", the fables which Odysseus related in the hall of the king of the Phaeacians.* In this intellectual fantasy the boundaries between miracle and reality do not exist, † But the imagination, which in this dream-biography should be the basis of everything, is dull and restricted, at most erudite—and formless like his own soul. We might expect that in that self-centred state the gift of imaginative vision would wither ; even so it is surprising that he shows no sense of the beauty of Greek art where its creations, gods and great men, appear in his dreams. The best he can do is to write that the goddess Athena appeared to him " in the shape of the Athena of Pheidias in Athens " ; never does he see a picture,

* See above, Introduction, p. 51.

† II, 60. But the stories from the *Odyssey* are not to be taken as mythical; a dream of Athena expressly contradicts that: they are to be taken as true. II, 42.

everywhere only the barest indication is given of the appearance of gods or historic persons, and where their features emerge from esoteric doctrine all is dissolved in a mysterious haze.

So also with the literary atmosphere. Plato appears once, and asks whether his epistles are worse written than those of the emperor's secretary. The interpretations are often comically trite. Aristides dreams that he is reading Aristophanes' "The Clouds"; in this way the god tells him it is going to rain, and next day there really are clouds in the sky. He is being quite vivid when the appearance of maidens in white garments indicates that letters are on the way to him.

Instead of a literary form originally produced from within, another sort of composition is at work here, which will soon reveal itself to us more plainly among the conditions under which records of the inner life come into existence. These "Sacred Discourses" give us fragmentary glimpses of the ordering of the supernatural world in which this devotee gains a footing through his dream-life. There there is a magical state of things in which souls are united without any action of their own. If two persons have a similar dream, that, to Aristides, is no mere coincidence but an objectively based relation: one dream is looked upon by two persons, or one of them sees the vision which the other had, and this nexus between twin visions reveals the divine will appearing from the Beyond more plainly than a single dream. This conception became important to the building up of later autobiographies; they assigned to dream visions the function of expressing the linking of the writer's story with the world as a whole, regarded animistically as possessing life or being endowed with a soul.

Aristides also believed that by the involuntary death of another person one's own life may be prolonged beyond the predestined time—a superstition that throws light on the religious feeling of those days. He tells of two such cases of "exchange", in which a youth and a girl, brother and sister, had given up for him, one after the other, "soul for soul and body for body". This superstition was based mainly on a coincidence in time: the death of the brother and sister occurred simultaneously with an improvement in his health, or was announced in a dream to one of those concerned when Aristides himself dreamed of the process of salvation by the god called the "Saviour". Further inter-relationships in dream are added, morbid notions such as that in the sick girl's intestines, as in a sacrificial animal, the name *Mlius*

Aristides could be read, and that this miracle was recorded by her father in a book.*

What fearfully real power must sacrificial superstition have had in that age (and that simply through the belief in supersensual forces at work in life and the world, not by any supporting doctrine) when a man of the highest culture, who was accorded an audience by the emperor Marcus, and who enjoyed general recognition, and that not merely as a virtuoso,¹⁰⁷ could publish such stuff! Darkly this sort of belief accompanied the dominant astrological religion; out of this determinist delusion came the "natural" explanation Aristides gave of his endowment with "dreams and manifest divine protection" (IV, 57-8).

But though this psychological make-up, drawn from an "animistic" or astrological or other such outlook on the world, inspires the self-disclosure, nothing of the nature of a life-history of the soul comes here; its unfolding is prevented by the half-heartedness of the religious attitude. In the iridescent earthbound supersensuousness the ego could feel spiritualized without wishing to be absorbed in God; the individual's awareness of his own worth was aroused with his religious emotions. And this brings us to the real source of the half other-worldly, half this-worldly religious productions of that time.

Aristides' sense of his own individuality was thoroughly mundane. He was well aware of his intellectual eminence; he had a firm conviction justified by contemporary standards of his great gifts as an orator. From him comes the saying that it was characteristic of the Hellenes to have a good opinion of themselves and to make no secret of it. † He had turned against the according of divine honour to great figures, his own included; they should not be honoured by means of temples: their books are their monuments, and it is those that should be held in high esteem. ‡ In these "Sacred Discourses" self-glorification and the praise of his own art are allowed full play. In one place—quite unintentionally exposing himself—he quotes a genuine prayer uttered while setting down his dreams: "Lord Æsculapius, if I am really eminent, supremely eminent in oratory, grant me health, but may my traducers be exploded" (IV, 69). He is a first-class subject for the study of vanity; he writes down his uninhibited fancies and desires as they reveal themselves in

* II, 35-6; cf. III, 22; IV, 23; II, 44, 38; V, 20-5.

† See above, p. 174. ‡ V, 63 (quoted above, p. 186, n.).

dreams, because they were simply dreams. Gods and emperors and eminent authors and especially the old enemies of the rhetoricians, the philosophers, whom he had himself annihilated in a special oration, laud him in his dreams as the unique, the unequalled artist.

But though the self-glorification exists, and the subjection of his life to the divine powers has nothing to do with humility, his self-importance is substantially modified : instead of the assured certainty of the man who simply says " That is what I am ", there is a pious self-satisfaction that calls upon the gods to give weight to this self-praise. The traditional theory of the poet's divine inspiration provides the writer with a convenient ground for regarding his productive work as an emanation from a higher life, a life caught up into divine grace. In this way the events in his inner life are seen apart from their psychological motivation ; yet he makes every effort to present them to his readers as something of specific value expressive of his membership of the elect. Here we have an attitude that entails the presentation of the writer's spiritual history, if he has one, as a kind of religious romance.

Aristides did in fact experience something like a real inner development during his long years of illness ; he feels sure that in those years he raised himself to a higher level in his art, and he makes another person bear witness that " the illness seems to have attacked me under a divine dispensation ", so that he might make " such progress in my art " through his intercourse with the god. He himself declares that the divine recognition of his superiority both to Demosthenes and to the philosophers started " all my subsequent ambition ", so that he could never again rest content with his achievements as a rhetorician. His story of his elevation he then tells in a long connected narrative (IV, 14-55) ; he describes his experiences as a rhetorician in the spirit in which at that time the story might be told of an initiation into the mysteries. Divine powers penetrated him from without and took possession of him in a methodical advance of his own and other people's dreams, which drove him, as if by a conversion, to renewed interest in his art. New artistic devices and new sayings were lavishly communicated to him ; thus he was raised to the height of his earthly fame, and at the same time he was granted the blessedness of union with the godhead. He has a vision of his crowning as a poet; an inspired votive epigram gives him the assurance that his name will live always among men ; he sees himself alongside Alexander the Great, and

compared with him, " because both of us had attained the highest eminence, he in the force of arms, I in the power of speech ". At the same time he sees his god Æsculapius place him " alone " on an equality with him ; from this, energy and determination flow to him. He hears, as a " pronouncement concerning the art of oratory and intercourse with the god ", the watchword of seclusion from the world and union with the god in elevation above human limitations, and, as with many mediaeval mystics, the nearness to the god is turned into a vision that confers sainthood on him. He hears himself greeted as " Theodorus " in token that " all that is mine is the gift of the god ".

Here again we seem close to the appearance of a record of the inner life ; all that was needed was the one step in which the author would conceive his visions psychologically as adventures of the soul in its journey through life, and arrange them accordingly in a single whole. But so far as we know, the ancient autobiographers did not pursue that path at all ; they made use of visions only as one component among others ; they were able, indeed, to express the metaphysical meaning of human life without resorting to the picturesqueness of a soul's visionary pilgrimages in the realms of heaven and hell : these journeys remained a medium for impersonal revelations of the things that await men after death. The visionary habit that confronts us in Aristides' Discourses was part of a state of mind typical of the bulk of the manifestations of religious feeling in that period, but he made use of it to give expression to his highly cultivated subjectivity, contemplating his feelings in his extraordinary experiences and making them the subject of rhetorical compositions. To that extent even this strangely " modern " self-portrayal is obviously a genuine Greek product.

But we can also see from the example of Aristides how development was to take place in various directions. From the introspective tendency that gave this rhetorical work of art its novel content, certain literary influences proceeded, which led to the appearance of a regular autobiography by Libanius, Aristides' most important successor in the art of oratory. This, however, did not happen until two centuries later. At first it was apparently just the subjective element in this self-portrayal that was not appreciated. There was a critic of the " Sacred Discourses " who was almost a contemporary of Aristides, Philostratus, who wrote a book on " Neosophism ", as the literary school to which both Lucian and Aristides belonged was called.

In Aristides' kind of oratory Philostratus found nothing in any way peculiar ; he neerely drew attention to the good classic style of writing, adding that " the diaries are good tutors in fine speaking on every subject" ¹⁰⁸—a final confirmation of the ancient formalistic conception, which was quite incompatible with the acceptance of autobiography as a special *genre*.

That criticism was in harmony with the contemporary use of first-personal writing as a mere literary form for material without individuality, which predominated in fictional and edifying literature to an extent that seems strange to us. And the extent to which the rhetorical ideal of talking well on all subjects was supreme at that time, even in the religious sphere for autobiography, is shown by another self-portrayal dating from the second century, the work of Apuleius entitled " Apologia ; or concerning Magic". ¹⁰⁹

Apuleius, the author of the famous Latin version of the Greek novel known under the title of " The Golden Ass ", was a man of wealth, thanks to his marriage with a rich widow whom he had met in a Tripolitan village. The lady's relatives, who disapproved of the marriage, accused him of having won her affection by magic arts. Against this charge he had brilliantly defended himself—and, he contended, " philosophy ", meaning the Platonic philosophy—and he then published a long and lively version of his speech in court, as had been usual in the Attic epoch so much emulated in his time. But he did not use the opportunity to turn his apologia into an autobiography, but elaborated only the philosophic and religious material, giving an exhibition of his literary skill, his erudition, and especially his agile wit. There is certainly plenty of the personal element, but he digresses into general talk and invective, writing of such things as a pretty figure or toothpowder or the scientific interest in fishes (he was alleged to have used these in lovespells) ; or of the delicate question whether a philosopher needs a mirror for other than mystical purposes. A romantic complication is introduced with the story of his marriage with the rich elderly widow, and the plot then thickens, but of the thing one might expect to learn from a book dealing with magic, the personal religious feeling of the " priest-philosopher ", there is scarcely any mention. Apuleius carefully avoids the essence of the affair, by means of high-sounding argumentation, where he might have given details of his experiences ; he hides behind Plato and

wisdom and virtue : "To you whom I honour as ' king ', I give no answer ; even if the Proconsul were to ask me what my god is, I should give no answer " (*Apologia*, XLV).

This is not mere prudery ; we may hear this author tell in his romance of manners of the delights of his experience of the mysteries. But that in a work that manifestly sets out to be a public self-portrayal he should make such play with reticence shows how strong was the influence of the demands of style : to make his subjective experiences to such an extent the matter of a literary work as Aristides did in the " Sacred Discourses ", to concentrate so on the ego, was an unusual proceeding, though it may have been partly accounted for in Aristides⁵ case by the effect of his illness.

Not until the fourth century, with its changed conditions, was Aristides' intention taken up again. Then, still before the great biographical records of the Christian writers, there came a true rhetorician's or virtuoso's autobiography, with all the petty details of his private existence that are commonly supposed * to belong properly to autobiography. Libanius, who produced this declamation upon his own life, once more with a religious tinge, took as his model the " Sacred Discourses " of his famous precursor, whose bust stood on Libanius' writing-desk. About the same time Synesius (c. 400), an eloquent Neoplatonic writer, who later became a Christian bishop, published a book " On Dreams ", in which, with express reference to the judgment on Aristides pronounced by Philostratus, he expressed his opinion on the general significance of such records. He pointed out their value to self-knowledge and self-portrayal and the way they could serve the revival of rhetorical literature, †

Much deeper, however, goes the more general influence that found partial expression in the " Sacred Discourses ", giving rise to the question what is implied in the fact that in this religious sphere of Hellenistic literature we find beginnings of spiritual autobiography. To understand this we must extend the range of our investigation.

3. THE HISTORY OF THE SOUL IN HELLENISTIC MYSTICISM

The state of mind of which Aristides gave a highly cultured but vain and egoistical presentation was capable of being treated

*See above, Introduction, p. 1.

† *Synesius De Insomniis*, 12 and 13. Migne, *Patrol. Græca*, I, 66, pp. 1315 sqq. See below, Part III, Introduction, toward the end.

very differently. This is clearly shown *in* Christian literature. Here, as in the Greco Roman civilized world and probably under the influence of its customs,¹¹⁰ there were also unliterary records of dream incidents and revelations about the Beyond. This type reappears in early mediaeval mysticism—at the beginning of a development that led to narratives of the life of the soul. Here, in the second century, such records came from the martyrs, and when the genuine shines through the elaboration with the legendary they are full of the wild enthusiasm which was so repugnant to the ancient world that Marcus Aurelius turned contemptuously away from it.*

In Carthage in 202, at the time of the persecution of the Christians under Septimius Severus, Vibia Perpetua, a young married woman of noble birth, was condemned by the Roman procurator, together with her brother Saturus, two slaves of hers, and two other adherents of the new religion, to a most horrible death, by "fighting" wild beasts in the arena. In the Acts of the Martyrs that have come down to us in Latin and Greek are stories of St. Perpetua, which in the view of experts are based on records made by Perpetua herself, probably in the Phoenician language.¹¹¹ In them the young mother, twenty-two years old, gives a moving story of her experiences from the beginning of her imprisonment to the day before her martyrdom: the horrors of the dark dungeon, the anxiety for her baby—he was brought to her in prison to be fed—the efforts of her father, who had remained a pagan, to induce her to recant, and especially the visions that came to her and to her brother. Her martyrdom was foretold to her in a dream: she saw herself ascending a ladder leading to green meadows, where a flock of sheep were browsing. Saturus saw his sister and himself carried by four angels toward the East to a beautiful garden, where they met four other martyrs known to them. But their visions were not only of angels. Perpetua saw herself fighting with a savage Ethiopian and conquering him—thus it was revealed to her that the struggle with the wild beasts that faced her would really be a struggle with the Devil. These records are full of the ardour of feverish emotions; the passion, too, for God and for sacrifice induces here, amid physical sensations and convulsions of the soul, a mystical devotion of the inner being, and a concern to deliver to the community a written testimony of courage in faith and of beatitude.

* Marcus Aurelius,

, II, 3. See above, p. 456.

Of another sort is a literary work of the early Christian time which similarly contains a series of visions held together by a first-personal narrative, the " Shepherd " (*Pastor*) of Hermas (c. 145), a work that stood so high in the regard of the early Church, with almost canonical authority, that it was read at services like a text from the Scriptures. Here the vision is mainly a device for the delivery of a moral and religious lesson. The author, a lay preacher who hides his identity under the name Hermas (probably a brother of Pius I, bishop of Rome, c. 139-54), warns the faithful to repent of the worldly, sinful life into which he finds that they have fallen. This warning is wrapped up in an allegorical form borrowed from Hellenistic moralizing literature.¹¹² In visions and parables the author symbolizes the destiny of the Church, its building up like a tower, whose stones are the saints, and its final tribulation, its present downfall and future revival. His main purpose, however, is in this way to introduce the moral commands whose observance by repentant sinners will bring about the Church's revival. The personified virtues make their appearance—Faith, the mother of them all, Self-mastery, her first-born daughter, Charity, Humility, and others, including Good Desire, from whom the " spirits " of the rest are descended. This revelation of Christian ethics is made by the " Angel of Repentance ", who appears to Hermas in the guise of a shepherd. At the command of this angel Hermas had written down his visions, in order to spread the Shepherd's teaching.

But at the same time the work deals with Hermas' personal religious history. It begins : " He who brought me up sold me to a certain Rhoda, who was at Rome. After many years I met her again, and began to love her as a sister." This brotherly love contained, in fact, within itself the germ of a sin, though only a sin in thought. This we learn from the first vision ; in it Rhoda appears to him, to tell him that she has complained of him in Heaven because of his impure thought about her, momentary though it was ; and she warns him to ask God for forgiveness. The following visions are introduced as divine comfort accorded to him in his sinner's grief, until at last he is confirmed by the Shepherd in his " ministry " in order to call sinners to repentance and to teach true righteousness.

The theologians, to whom this work is precious because it throws light on Christian life in the primitive Church, are at issue over the question " whether the writer has given us a

genuine fragment of autobiography and a true account of visions which he saw or imagined that he saw, or whether the entire work is fictitious both in form and in setting".¹¹³ This choice of alternatives can scarcely fit the mental outlook of the writer (if there was only one author) and his public. We have here an example, the first in Christian literature, of a characteristic type of presentation of religious experiences, in which the individual and the typical proceed together without distinction; we are familiar with this type in mediaeval Roman Catholicism—for instance, that great allegorical work of fourteenth century England, the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Here we approach from a new angle the complex phenomenon termed the life-story of the soul.

In order to see more clearly here, we must try to grasp the whole field of the mysticism pervading Hellenism, with its literary atmosphere, the exaltation of the experiences of life into passionate emotions, and the union of rhetorical and insincere fancifulness with the popular legends that turn history into romance, reducing the individual element to the level of the collective, these mystics being unable to perceive the supernatural except through magic and miracles. When dealing with Apuleius' "Metamorphoses" in connexion with naturalism in Hellenistic literature, we saw that it was there that the relationship between the romance of social life and religious autobiography began.* And now we find a profounder type of that religious literature, where the story is not concerned with adventures on earth and no longer with particular marvels of the upper world, but the inner religious process becomes the subject of the freely roaming imagination. The result was the expression in dramatic and romantic forms of the religious and philosophic teachings of the soul's paths to God.

These religious tales of the journeyings of the soul did not come into literature from the individual experience of a great personality; a common vital urge, passing through the various competing (and in some cases associating) religions of the early Christian era, found expression in manifold forms, which made publicly known a typical eternal life-story of the human soul for religious practice or for purposes of edification. The emergence from the domination of the passions into inner freedom and stability in a form of existence that has its ultimate meaning in itself—this moral and religious process had found its consum-

* See above, pp. 381 sqq.

mation for the Hellenistic philosophy of life in the formation of personality : now it changed its course *in* order to penetrate further into the supernatural world, the end and aim of man's life being no longer determined by the moral reason but becoming manifest to the soul only in the course of its journey to God. It was the transition from the philosophic to the religious attitude to existence, the immense importance of which for the growth of spiritual autobiography we indicated at the beginning of this section.* The "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius gave us a glimpse of this transition as experienced by a man of unquestionable intellectual honesty. In him pantheism, far from the phantasmagoria of oriental mysteries revelling in the wealth of heaven, remained in equilibrium with the consciousness of man's free will, so that the personality retained self-determination while alive to its dependence on the divine whole of which we are a part. But the general outcome was a new stage in the awareness of the self and of the world.

It is as if the restlessness of those days affected the still depths of the soul, religious longings deep down within himself replacing the individual's belief in the self-contained whole of pure reason and the reason-bound will. Thrown upon his own resources as the individual had been since the building up of the universal Hellenistic civilization, he could not fail, when trying to respond to the metaphysical or religious needs of the spirit, to realize the limitations imposed on him by that separateness. In his dealings with the world around him he found himself, according to the predominant conception of the physical world, † delivered up to the dark dominance of invisible mundane and supermundane powers, since the scientific recognition of the causes of empirical reality had not yet advanced to the clear conception of a natural order subject to law. The Socratic-Platonic belief that Reason, *nous*, was the divine bond of the universe, "king over heaven and earth", had been tested for centuries and found to be unsatisfying, and yet man's inner life, transcending reason, had not yet grown so strong and comprehensive that he could venture to regard individuality as embodying the Infinite, as did the men of later times, realizing that "the divine whole shines out of every individual part of it".‡ Thus men desired to win freedom from the shackles of the person and to find their way back into the boundlessness of the universe from which all things sprang.

* See above, pp. 179, 356. † See above, pp. 192-3.

‡ *In omnibus partibus relucet totum* (Cusanus).

The stages of individuation through which men had passed in ancient times had now brought them to the opposite pole to that from which they had started. At one time, in the pre-Socratic epoch, when man became aware of the worth of individuality, or, rather, of what the personality of the individual means, self-awareness and world-awareness had been set free together as a totality of existence, man finding himself akin to the divine powers operating in the universe.* Now a great mass of culture and reflection, accumulated in the course of history, lay between the individual person and the world he was to live in, and in order to bridge the distance between them the power of passion was called upon : it filled the Greek conception of the cosmos, which had become static, with the dynamics of life, replacing the idea of universal order and harmony by the vision of the Infinite, and again affected the individual's inner life, overcoming at least partly its separation from the external world by the religious longings for participation in the life of the divine universe. In many cases men submitted in resignation to the higher power, the force of causality, which determined human destinies from without, especially the power of the constellations : but this resignation, which we found in Seneca, and which had brought peace of mind to the Epicureans, concealed within itself an element of unrest since, under the astrological conception of nature, a dark daemonic vital force was at work in the mechanism of the universe. If it was desired to become free from those enslaving natural forces and, what amounted to the same thing, to become free from the nature-controlled individual existence, then, in accordance with the irrational character of this metaphysical and religious urge, access must be found to a higher power that could destroy the dominance of the cosmos over man. The religious movements down to Neoplatonism were absorbed in the task of showing the believer a path to such emergence above the oppressive dictates of the temporal world by union with the godhead.

A further circumstance now played a decisive part in the elaboration of the life-story of the soul, and remained effectively at work in the most personal form of that story, in Augustine's " Confessions " : the lifting up of the psyche to union with God was not a purely psychological process ; it did not take place simply within the individual soul, but at the same time in the world, which was itself considered a living being, and one with a

See above, pp. 72-3.

soul. The turning away from the transient world of the senses revealed to man a metaphysical basis of life deep down in his soul, but this immersion of man in himself, in which the divine depths of the soul were disclosed, was at the same time an objective happening in the all-embracing cosmical order of things in which the godhead lived and worked. The objective reality of the spiritual was a Platonic doctrine : Hellenistic mysticism made it a generally accepted part of the religious outlook, and determined the conception of natural reality that remained dominant down to the Middle Ages.

This conception of reality was in accordance with the natural philosophy of those times, which established the new doctrine of the spiritual texture of the universe, considered as an organism, and thus it secured the standing of a scientific truth independent of the metaphysical feeling of life from which it had originated. It was all the more powerful because the oriental religions, by means of their doctrines of the astral spheres with their souls, joined the Platonic and Stoic metaphysic at this point in their progress towards a picture of the world. The religious process by means of which the soul is brought to God in its home in the Beyond was considered to be carried out through the hierarchy of the spirits ruling in the cosmos, and so the inward life came to be represented as something objective.

This characteristic view of the world is illustrated by the pantheistic system of Posidonius, the great religious teacher among the Stoics, whose theology was probably influenced by oriental thought.¹¹⁴ He deprived the belief in a better world, into which men entered at death to live for ever, of its other-worldly character by giving those theological ideas their place within the picture of the world formed by natural philosophy : in the universe there were supposed to be regions of spirits above the world that reached, as the be-souled matter was gradually rarefied and the soul accordingly became more god-like, up to the purest ether and so to the highest god. There was no longer a gulf between this world and the Beyond ; a continuous order of forms of existence led by stages in the cosmic organism from the earth to the highest of the many heavens that were counted ; by these stages the human soul, after a worthy life on earth, could rise and purify itself as it had descended in the past into bodily form through its fall from its heavenly home.¹¹⁶ This view of **the** structure of the cosmos ruled in the philosophic-religious systems of the period that followed. In the words of a modern

scholar to whom we are indebted for a comprehensive description of these religious movements, " the conceptions of the Beyond were projected, as it were, into the cosmic spheres ".¹¹⁶

Thus the raising of the soul up to God was here both a moral and a cosmic event, and not based on the direct experience of something metaphysical or transcendental in a man's own interior. And when in the revolutionizing of values at the end of the ancient world men ceased to believe that this human life was really worth living, the predominant religious urge could work itself out during the existence in this world, as it were without any radical breach with it, along the very paths which were to be trodden after death : the rise of the soul, not in conflict with the conditions of organic life as visualized in those days, only demanding a release from the senses, seemed a process that could be carried out in advance, during the earthly existence, in ecstasy and in worship or even in a dream.

This was no longer the upward path of the soul into knowledge, pictured by Plato in the simile of the cave in which the men of this earth live, but a real ascent of the soul to heaven, such as made its appearance in primitive societies as a mystery of the medicine-men of religion, and now, at the end of the development of one of the highest of civilizations, once more dominated religious life. On its consummation depended men's practical interest in becoming free from the control of the astral spirits and from the evil passions with which they enveloped the soul, and at the same time man's theoretical interest, true knowledge being considered to be attainable only by participating in the life of the divine universe. For there proceeded through the regions of the cosmos, well defined as they were, an eternal movement downward from above and upward from below, continually flowing like standing waves, a movement in which the divine creation of the universe was revealed. In this movement every human spirit, when it had been prepared in the right way, could take part, in the progress of visions through the cosmic spheres to direct touch with the supermundane god, and so to " rebirth ".

What might appear, however, to be a relapse into a primitive stage of religion has a profound meaning, based on philosophic speculation : in the last resort the objective manifestation of the divine in the stages of the universe was only a reflection of the life of the soul, as Plato had disclosed it, its divinely noble origin, its infinite efforts, its errors and miseries in its earthbound remoteness from God, its endless longing for the highest good,

and its salvation and blessedness : the events of this world were a religious drama—they yielded " the plan for the most effective pantheistic works : the emergence of the manifold world, the beauty and strength in it, and at the same time the suffering of finiteness and separation and return to divine unity".¹¹⁷

That was the common ground on which life-stories of the soul grew in Hellenistic mysticism. They are as various as the mixtures of traditional religious and philosophic material, Greek, Christian, and oriental, in these almost inextricably intermingled religious movements.¹¹⁸

The dominant naturalistic mysticism provided for the journeyings of the soul a rational frame with the conception of the structure of the cosmos, either in Stoic natural philosophy or in the religions of the stars ; the idea of the cosmic structure with its stages was here carried into religious life and action by means of personification ; imaginary figures of spirits peopled, in hostility or helpfulness, the spheres through which the way to God led. The process of purification was dissociated from the moral activity of the individual ; the liberation stage by stage from earthly passions might be represented as a casting off of " clothes " put on men by the stars. But the moral tendency remained predominant and was identified with the structure of the world ; the various bad qualities symbolized as the motley " clothes ", arrogance, greed, envy, and so on, appeared as stations in the soul's journeying. As the soul in its upward path proceeded past these stations, it overcame egoism step by step and therewith the limitations of individual existence. Psychologically considered, we have here a characteristic procedure that reunited the elements of the general spiritual course through the arrangement in " stations " or stages of progress. This procedure is widely found in mystical literature ; it seems to indicate a very intellectual analysis of the inner life, but that analytical tendency could go hand in hand with passionate expression of the religious experience, and we meet this again in the spiritual autobiographies of mediaeval Catholicism.

The other types of cosmic journeyings of the soul which are met with in autobiographies are not easy to describe in general terms; it must suffice here to illustrate them by means of examples in the form of first-personal narratives drawn from the various cults of mysteries. They are not merely literary products, but reflect religious practice : the whole varied output is characterized by the aim of this type of religion to assure salvation to the

believer ; even Augustine's " Confessions " are half-way between a literary work and a religious act performed in connexion with the life of the community. The Hellenistic belief (or, more correctly, the belief which the Greek philosophers shared with the Indian metaphysicians) that the soul could be saved without expedients and sacraments by pure knowledge, the knowledge of the divine order of the universe, was held " only on the top-most peaks of Gnosticism, and only on a few of those ".¹¹⁹

Magic and a symbolic treatment of the cult of mysteries came into play in order to accomplish the ascent of the psyche in the stages of cosmic visions : the overcoming of the sensuousness attached to that visionary ascent was a moral effort for those who had not grown up in the traditions of the ancient philosophy but had still to gain contact with philosophic culture ; as Augustine confessed, this had been the hardest task he had had to accomplish in his spiritual development. Inward experience and the contemplation of the spirits in the spheres of the cosmos passed into each other and were only beginning to be distinguished.

This distinction, which might seem obvious to us, we find consummated in autobiography as it made its appearance in the fourth century, renewed in the bright light of individual literary productions. This new spiritual autobiography is directly connected by its method of expression of inner experience with the philosophic self-communion which we have followed from Socrates onward ; and the vigorous religious experience by means of which Augustine arrived at his exemplary personal shaping of the pilgrimage of the soul belongs not to mysticism but to a different religious attitude, to Christian monotheism relying on the individual's awareness of his strong free will. Augustine's autobiographical writings, which, beginning with his " Soliloquies", culminated in the " Confessions", must be viewed, like the other outstanding product of spiritual autobiography, the metaphysical poetry of Gregory of Nazianzus, against the background of Hellenistic mysticism in order to be fully appreciated. And if these two great religious thinkers among the Christian autobiographers have stood out against that common background, that background nevertheless endured ; it will make its appearance plainly again in mediaeval autobiography.

If we are right in stressing this interconnexion, certain literary relationships between the new autobiography and Hellenistic mysticism also become of importance. The use of the first person is one of the means of presentation of the literature of

revelation and of edification ; it is so not as an element of individualization but as an artistic means, of long-proved worth,* of giving plausibility to stories of marvels, whether religious happenings or adventures of romance. Narratives presenting the ascent of the soul not didactically but directly as a story of the mystic's own exemplary experience, or as a revelation of the way to make the journey to heaven, such as we have in the " Liturgy of Mithras ",¹²⁰ must have been fairly common : Plotinus writes ironically about these productions, with their dramatization of the sayings and doings and miracle-workings of the soul on its way past the various superhuman powers operating in the Beyond.¹²¹ In a section of the spiritual treatise called " Against the Gnostics " that great religious thinker, who gave to Platonism the interpretation accepted down to the nineteenth century, writes :

In the sacred formulas which they inscribe, purporting to address the Supernal Beings, they are simply uttering spells and appeasements and evocations in the idea that these Powers will obey a call and be led about by a word of any of us who is in some degree trained to use the appropriate forms in the appropriate way—certain melodies, certain sounds, specially directed breathings, sibilant cries, and all else to which is ascribed magic potency upon the Supreme.

It was permissible in that time of religious propaganda to place before the world in a literary work the secret cult that held out the promise of rebirth and eternal blessedness. Apuleius did this in the new conclusion he added to his Latin rendering of the romance of the Golden Ass, concerning which Augustine himself was not sure that the story of marvels did not contain a kernel of truth, † The hero tells in the first person of his travels through the labyrinth of the world, in the shape of an ass. He is chased through all sorts of predicaments until in the end he is changed back into human form through the intervention of " Queen Isis," and secures liberation from the power of Fortuna and the stars ; Apuleius then represents this redemption, the nature of which was rebirth into lasting union with the god-head, as happening to himself, through his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. After colourless dream visions, in which the goddess appears to him in order to fix the time and the details of the religious ceremony, and after the preparatory mortification, the rebirth itself is indicated only by means of deliberately mysterious allusions :

* See above, Introduction, pp. 50 *sqq.* † See above, p. 383.

The priest took my hand and brought me to the most secret and sacred place in the temple. Thou wouldst peradventure demand, thou studious reader, what was said and done there : verily I would tell thee if it were lawful for me to tell, thou wouldst know if it were convenient for thee to hear ; but both thy ears and my tongue should incur the like pain of rash curiosity. Howbeit I will not long torment thy mind, which peradventure is somewhat religious and given to some devotion ; listen, therefore, and believe it to be true.¹²²

The mystic had to pass through death to reach the ethereal regions ; this was effected in the sanctuary, with emblems and effects for the methodically excited imagination, in symbolic treatment as continuing visions of the gods of the twelve hours of the night and of the zones up to the supreme redeeming revelation. Apuleius gives only the formulas : "I approached near unto hell, to the gates of Proserpine ; and after that I was ravished throughout all the elements, I returned to my proper place ; about midnight I saw the sun brightly shine ; I saw likewise the gods celestial and the gods infernal, before whom I presented myself and worshipped them from face to face." He then gives a full description of the imposing final act, in which he presents himself to the community of the mystics as a god, a living divine form with the heavenly garb of the elect and sun symbols.

In my right hand I carried a lighted torch, and a garland of flowers was upon my head, with white palm-leaves sprouting out on every side like rays ; thus I was adorned like unto the sun, and made in fashion of an image, when the curtains were drawn aside and all the people compassed about to behold me. Then they began to solemnize the feast, the nativity of a holy order, with sumptuous banquets.

There follows a long outpouring of praise and thanksgiving to Isis, with the concluding vow : " My spirit is not able to give Thee sufficient praise . . . Howbeit as a good religious person, and according to my poor estate, I will do what I may : I will always keep Thy divine appearance in remembrance, and close the imagination of Thy most holy godhead within my breast."

Deeper goes another document that has come down to us from this period, a half didactic, half descriptive account of the birth of God in the human soul, directed mainly to the inner action, to the process of gnosis : it is the secret doctrine, dating at latest from the third century, of a religious fraternity living in the Egyptian province of the Hellenistic civilized world.¹²³ This

document has come down to us in the so-called *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of " sacred books " of anonymous authorship belonging to the borderland between philosophy and religion that is commonly called mysticism—more precisely, " speculative mysticism ", in distinction from the sacramental type of the mystery-cults, of which Apuleius furnished an example. These sacred books were attributed in Egypt to the god of wisdom, Thoth, with whom we have already met as author of a book of magic*. The Greeks called him Hermes Trismegistos (" thrice greatest"). In the part of this collection that concerns us, Hermes enters into conversation with his son Tat—not as a god but as a teacher of wisdom, indeed, as Wisdom or Philosophy itself, personified as in soliloquies the meditator may show himself in conversation with Reason. Thus there is nothing specially Egyptian in the subject of the work, and no particular association of any sort : the subject is the central theme of mysticism in all countries and at all times, man's aspiration towards union with God—what Plato, with reference to the spiritual realm and the soul's vision of Ideas or Forms, described as the aspiration " to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods and thereby to become like God, so far as that is possible " ; it is akin to what the ancient Indian metaphysicians declared to be the redeeming truth, that our true self is identical with the infinite Divine Spirit that embraces all things.

In the dialogue between Hermes and Tat this so-called *unio mystica* is described by the specifically religious term " rebirth " ; thus the theme is defined at the outset, where Tat says :

In your general discourses, father, you spoke in riddles . . . when you were discussing the divinity of man. You said that no one can be saved until he has been born again ; you did not make known to me what you meant by this . . . I besought you to let me learn the doctrine of Rebirth . . . but you did not think fit to transmit it to me at that time ; you said, " When you are ready to alienate yourself from the world, then I will teach you." I am now prepared to receive it.

This introduction is more reminiscent of the compositions of the ancient Indian metaphysicians, the masters of the so-called *Upanishads*, than of Plato. Actually the art form of the dialogue serves here not, as in Plato, to give life to the philosophic search for truth, but, as was the case from of old with the speculation of the eastern mystics, to allow the teacher to unfold a secret

* See above, Introduction (the tale of Ahuri), p. 52.

stock of knowledge in his possession, the privilege of a few elect. In accordance with this, Tat proceeds : "I have alienated my thoughts from the world's deceptions ; and I entreat you to supply what is yet lacking to me, as you said you would, when you promised to transmit the Rebirth to me. I know not, thrice greatest one, from what womb a man can be born again, nor from what seed."

Hermes replies in much the same way as in the *Upanishads* a Brahmin instructs his son : " My son, the womb is Wisdom, conceiving in silence ; and the seed is the true God . . . The will of God, my son, is the begetter."

But the dialogue is used here not only in the usual way to introduce the reader into the mystery by means of the disciple's gradual penetration into the understanding of the doctrine ; the performance of the mystery itself is artistically described in this form : the escape from this world into the world of essential being, the ascent of the soul, and its gradual advance to a truer vision of the transcendental, which, through an influence from above, is completed as the birth of God in the soul. It is a continuous process with definite beginning and end ; into this process the succession stage by stage of the states of the mind is introduced : they are not dogmatically defined, but make their appearance step by step in the disciple's statements concerning the state of his soul ; retarding factors strengthen the impression of a gradual process, and Hermes, who conducts the inner action in the dialogue like a guide of souls, shows the disciple amid explanations, encouragement, and exhortations the more or less distant goal of his journey.

At first Tat, although estranged from the material world and ready to receive the doctrine, is in a state typical of the attitude of ordinary men to a " mystical " revelation, as described long before by Heraclitus : " Void of understanding, though hearing, they are like the deaf." Thus he says in despair : " Your words are riddles, father . . . what you say is impossible." Hermes replies with the paradox that he wants to convey knowledge that " cannot be told ". " It is not possible for you to see it with your organs of sight, which are fashioned out of material elements." The next step is the overcoming of that difficulty. Tat represents it as overcome by declaring : " I see that by God's mercy there has come to be in me a form which is not fashioned out of matter, and I have passed forth out of myself and entered into an immortal body. I am not now the man I was." But he is himself

unable to comprehend the change ; he can no longer see himself or his father in bodily shape : so he feels himself " driven to raving madness ". No, says the teacher, the opposite is the case : it is the emergence from the dream or sleep that life in this world is, an awakening. At the same time he reveals himself, now that the consummation of the rebirth is near, to the disciple as a " man who is the son of God, working in subordination to God's will ". That further deepens the mystery. " Now indeed, father, you have reduced me to speechless amazement. Why, I see you, father, with your stature unchanged and your characteristic appearance."

This objection leads to the last step in the mystical process : all that appears to the senses is pure illusion ; the truly real is " not limited by boundaries, it has no colour and no shape . . . it is apprehended by itself alone, it is changeless and unalterable, it is the Good ". In face of this conception of the Absolute, even the absolutely Infinite, the adept loses courage : " I have lost the wits I had. I thought your teaching had made me wise ; but when you put this thought before me, my senses cease to function." But it is not beyond a man's power to grasp the incomprehensible, as man is akin to God : " Draw it unto you, and it will come ; will it, and it comes to be. Stop the working of your bodily senses, and then will deity be born in you."

At this point the intellectual unites with the ethical process. " If you would be born again," proceeds Hermes, " you must cleanse yourself from the irrational torment of matter." Among these torments of man the foremost is ignorance, which is the root of all evil according to Plato as well as to the ancient Indian metaphysicians.* Once more the edifying description of the impending purification precedes the pupil's experience of it. The educative conceptions by means of which Hermes explains the approaching transformation can only indicate the typical moral process by the equally typical method of analysis, the liberation from vices and passions which, according to the astrological faith, appears to be bound up with the passage of the soul through the astral zones. The various fundamental evil passions in man—twelve in number, not for the purpose of analysis but with reference to the twelve signs of the zodiac—are distinguished, though taken together they are regarded as a consistent whole ; they make up the old Adam, who is to be replaced by the new ego ; this regeneration is considered as consisting in the implanting of

* See above, p. 138.

a hierarchy of powers of virtue and knowledge,* which in the renewed man are to be united into the self-contained whole of the divine Reason (*Logos*) of man. This inner change is not the result of human exertion, whether of contemplation or will, but of divine grace, which is to be awaited in silent prayer. Thus there comes a pause after the teaching : " Now, my son, speak not, but keep solemn silence ; so will the grace come down on us from God."

There follows the central act of the drama, the Rebirth, as achieved and experienced. The *event* itself is only indicated so that it may be sensed that something indescribable is happening, a floating down of cosmic-ethical divine powers and at the same time an ascent of the soul to union with the cosmic spirit. The notions are only cues in this drama : Hermes, the initiating guide of souls, indicates them as he awaits the gradual approach of the *Logos*, announcing and welcoming it ; and in the midst of this action the " I " of the initiator unites with that of the adept into a " We " :

Rejoice now, my son ; you are being cleansed by the Powers of God ; for they have come to build up in you the spiritual body. The knowledge of God has come to us ; and at its coming ignorance has been driven out.

Joy has come to us ; and at her coming, my son, Grief will fly away . . .

And after Joy I summon Continence, the third Power. O sweetest Power ! Let us receive her, my son, most gladly. See how, at the instant of her coming, she has pushed Incontinence away.

And now I summon Abstinence, the opposite of Desire . . .

And this, my son, is the tribunal on which Justice is enthroned. See how she has driven out Injustice.

So it continues, up to the highest elements of the godhead : " Truth has come to us, and on it has followed the Good with Life and Light."

We see here how the naturalistic pantheism of the Stoa has been transformed, under the influence of Platonism, into mystical pantheism, for which life and spirit are one and the same. Indeed, Tat expresses his experience of rebirth in a way that is reminiscent of the bold, extravagant ejaculations of the ancient Indian pantheists ; he sums up : " Father, now that I see in

* The twelve torments are : ignorance, incontinence, desire, injustice, covetousness, deceitfulness, envy, fraud, anger, rashness, vice, malice. The ten divine powers are : knowledge of God, of Joy, continence, endurance, justice, truth, reality and, added to these seven, the notions of the nature of God as the Good, Life, and Light. Cf. *Poimandres*, XIII, 7 sqq. Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 231 sqq.

mind, I see myself to be the All I am in heaven and earth, in water and in air ; I am in beasts and plants ; I am a babe in the womb, and one that is not yet conceived, and one that has been born ; I am present everywhere." *

In harmony with this extravagance of fancy the whole work comes to a lyrical conclusion with pantheistic poetry. Hermes sings the hymn of praise which " I heard the Powers sing when I ascended the eighth sphere of Heaven " ; he sings, or, rather, " the Powers " sing within him :

" Let every bar of the universe be flung open to me ;
and let all nature receive the sound of my hymn.

Be thou opened, O earth, and ye trees, wave not your boughs ;

I am about to sing the praise of Him who is both the All and the One.

" It is He that is the eye of my mind ;

may He accept the praise sung by my Powers.

Ye Powers that are within me, praise ye the One and All ;

sing ye in concord with my will, all ye Powers that are within me.

" O holy Knowledge, by thee am I illuminated,

and through thee do I sing praise to the Incorporeal Light."

So they all ring out in their differentiated unity, each one praising itself, Justice justness, Truth truth, the Good goodness, Life and Light their own life, thank-offerings to Him " from whom the All is and to whom the All returns", and at the same time rejoicings in the fulfilment of the soul's longing : " I have seen that which I sought."

The artistic form in which the typical journeying of the seeking and searching soul is pictured as a continuous inner activity will confront us, freed from the element of fantasy, in Augustine's Confessions as an element of form that entered that complex work from Neoplatonism, and will then make its appearance again in the Middle Ages in the spiritual autobiographies written under the influence of Neoplatonic Christianity.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY AND ITS HISTORIC BACKGROUND

At the end of this survey we are faced with the question of the relationship of autobiography to the distinctive forces that entered the Western civilized world through Christianity. This question, however, is bound up with spiritual factors which had

* *Poimandres*, XIII, 11 and 12. Cf. for instance, Yājñavalkya's teachings on the various conditions of man's soul : " When, imagining that he is a god, that he is a king, he thinks 'I am this world-all,' that is his highest path." *Bṛhad-Araṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4, 3, 20.

a decisive effect on all later development of the autobiographical *genre*, themselves changing in the course of time, so that **the** question can be answered only by this history itself. The various stages through which Christianity passed, as the religion that arrived at sovereignty over our Western civilization, are accompanied at all times by various autobiographical forms ; the development of those forms cannot be deduced from Christian experience ; as Christianity itself has its history in association with the development of European civilization, that sequence must also be shown step by step in the forms of autobiographical writing in that interweaving and change.

From the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the lives of the martyrs, and monks' narratives onward, hundreds of lives of the saints bear witness to the tendency of the early Christians to represent to themselves through living figures their consciousness of community, and in this connexion the first-personal narrative remained, in dependence on Hellenistic traditions, a favourite form.* This probably points to a general characteristic of records of religious life. This type of life could not be given an abstract presentation, and that is the explanation of the mass of autobiographies produced in the Christian communities everywhere. Each section of this output, however, bears the traces of the situation at the time ; although Christian self-portrayal in the realm of the Roman Catholic Church received a firm tradition from the paramount example of Augustine, we may observe in it again and again the influence of the varying ways of looking at the world which were also to be found in the secular literature of this period. On the other hand, even in early times the writers of the Hellenistic stories of conversion composed by Christians of the second and third centuries all showed, in entire agreement with the literature of legend influenced by Hellenistic elements, how little of the distinctive Christian experience needed to enter into the elaboration of their own story. Even for Augustine the distinction between Christianity and Neoplatonism offered such difficulty that he had to thank divine providence

* Concerning narrative in the first person plural in the Acts of the **Apostles** (and the writings of St. John), recalling the style of the *hypomnemata*, see **R. Reitzenstein**, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, p. 54. The " way, noticeable **everywhere**, in which the manifold stories and sayings in the lives of **the** Fathers are **reported by them** in their own words " is summed up in those words by the Bollandists : *Acta Sanctorum*, February 1, p. 49. The legends as a reflection of the lifelong habit of hermits (**the** appetite for story-telling—Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 79) of making the main **business** of their mutual visits the request for and eager acceptance of " anecdotes of saintly **old** men ", H. Usener, *Der heilige Theodosius*, pp. xxi-xxii.

for the fact that he read the New Testament after and not before the Neoplatonic writings, so that he could gain from a fresh impression positive experience of the difference between the two and convince himself of it.

No straight and distinctive course leads from primitive Christianity to the compilation of the great spiritual autobiographies of the Fathers of the Church in the fourth century. Such more or less original tendencies as were shown by followers of the new religion in the preceding centuries, in addition to those in the works we have considered, must be seen in the context of the manifold development of the epoch which we tried to follow. For in our view, the spiritual movements of the first centuries of the Christian era must be regarded as in essentials a revolution within the ancient spirit—a revolution to which Christianity applied the final impulse, opening new fields to seekers—and not as a crushing of classical antiquity by the superior power of Christianity. That power remains enigmatic to this day. If it is conceived as the spread of an absolute force that had entered history in the course of time, all further developments can appear only as a stunting of the life won by Christ, the perfect being placed at the beginning, so that the origin cannot but be superior in all respects to what followed upon it. To take that view of those developments would amount to an abandonment of the effort to understand them and to the curtailing of the historic truth concerning Christianity itself.

Thus in this part, too, of the extraordinarily complex course of events in which the new autobiography came into existence, only the visibly present can be dealt with until the connexion of the various elements reveals itself in typical works from the fourth century onward. The teaching of Christ, as it is to be lived from the Gospels, is reflected ever anew and in all sorts of ways in different times and different individuals. This much may be said, that the way the new inner life is present in it is altogether different from the intellectual attitude that impelled Christians in antiquity to give expression to their lives in the literary form of confessions. Those simple images drawn from nature, the comparison, for instance, of human life to the lilies of the field, the attitude towards our fellow-men that prevents us from judging them or calculating or comparing or setting up distinctions of rank, the ability to radiate abounding love, "abandoning that which another approaches in hostility, ceasing to claim what another lays hands on", the blessedness of unspoilt, unsophisti-

cated nature ("Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child . . ."), the unhesitating sureness of decision, in which "a whole nature has sympathetically penetrated another in a moment"* ("Thy sins be forgiven thee")—how far removed from this is the path of reflection and brooding along which the "new self-sureness of faith and of the heart" entered into the self-disclosure of European man! No doubt there passed through the ancient world a strong desire for simplicity and naturalness, the recovery or the first acquisition of which is in fact a typical aspiration of the man of later civilizations; but that desire was satisfied with fanciful ideals, the intellect trying in vain to get rid of the limitations set to its reflective tendencies, and only quite exceptional individuals were able to discover a means of emergence out of that uncertainty of existence. Jesus possessed original sources of new life. But this new element, in order to become effective through all history, had to be brought into relationship with the great traditions of Hellenistic culture. And Paul, who carried out that task, gained his position in world history by the very fact that he united the religious forces that filled the oriental and Hellenistic world with the gospel, in the definite type of Christianity which is associated with his name.¹²⁴

While through the body of theological notions which Paul assembled he turned the religious interpretation of human life into a consistent whole, at the same time, owing to his mystical vision of Christ, he imparted boundless emotional substance to the life lived in God through the endeavours of the convert to emulate in faith and love the life and death and resurrection of the God who had become man. In this way the individual existence was given a transcendental structure proceeding not from a cosmic natural order but from experiences of faith and the heart. In this inward other-worldliness lay a constructive force that enabled the convert to comprehend all contrasts involved in the opposition of heaven and earth, the whole Christian dualism, in a personal religious history, because the freedom and completeness of the Christian man or woman sprang from pain and death re-lived in the *imitatio Christi*. In Augustine's autobiography this interpretation of life is combined with Neoplatonic spirituality, and the mystics of the Middle Ages developed out of that combination a new type of record of the inner life.

* Hegel, "Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal". *Hegels theolog. Jugendschriften*, hrsg. von H. Nohl (1907), pp. 285, 290, 315.

In his antithetical style Paul disclosed none too clearly a sort of inner happening that differed fundamentally from the plain intellectual advance through stages and progress in practice characteristic of the Greek formation of personality. The process of inner conversion to which the Stoic moralists could only give expression as a completed outcome, he was able to reveal as the experiencing of the change itself, the emergence from one attitude to life into another opposed to it. For he experienced an overpowering influence of God creating a change of life as the foundation of his own will ; the more clearly he understood the various states of soul in their typical nature, and reduced them to antithetical notions, which excluded every obliteration of boundaries, the more powerfully was the religious basis revealed on which the essential change came about. In the national annals of his people, thanks to the monotheism of the prophets, there was worked out from the historic vicissitudes a religious meaning in and behind them which taught men to understand the terrible course of events as a connected whole, created by the will of God in a continuity of actions ; from this conviction came the idea of God's revelation in history.¹²⁵ And when in Paul (as Dilthey wrote)¹²⁶

in the struggles of conscience the Jewish law, the pagan contemplation of the universe, and the Christian faith came into collision, when through his experience belief in the law and faith in Christ were brought into association in his innermost understanding as two vital teachings, and that by the teaching of the living God—there emerged the full consciousness of a historic development of the whole life of the soul . . . The mutual struggle of the religions in the life, filled with historic reality, of the Christian soul, had produced the historic consciousness of a development of the whole life of the soul.

Thus in the story of the apostle's conversion, although he himself only touches briefly and incidentally on it,* there is contained a new starting-point for self-disclosure. Vision, ecstasy, ascent to the highest heaven, this sensuousness of oriental and Hellenistic mysticism, which broke out on that day at Damascus, contained as its true kernel the immediate, overwhelming experience of the sure knowledge of God ; the creative element in the event, in which the soul attained union with the Highest, was brought to clear realization as a sudden inner revolution through revelation, as mankind will one day be redeemed by the revelation of God's judgment. The notion of conversion here gained its most powerful religious substance, protecting it

* Gal. i. 11 *sqq.*; 1 Cor. xv. 8; Phil. iii. 7 *sqq.*

from any disintegration by conceptions of organic or intellectual development—the breaking through of a new active lifelong conviction, conceived as a shock in which the will was reversed by a power traced back to God. Paul expressly asserts that his unique experience, which resulted in faith, had nothing to do with instruction : " For neither did I receive (the gospel) from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i, 12). And in clearly presenting that spontaneous act he brings to notice a true characteristic of religious experience—the inner vividness with which a great decision comes upon us as a mystery.¹⁸⁷

Considered with regard to his method, Paul's story of his conversion was the first imposing specimen of a definite type of life-history of the soul, a type which, in a sense, has continued to be produced down to the present day. In this type there is no way to be seen leading to the end through states of vacillation and depression, but the fullness of the inner life at last attained, once it is there, destroys every bond with earlier stages, and just as the preparations were not consciously made, the whole past life plunges into the moral night of abandonment by God. Paul himself, while setting sharply against each other the clearly marked differences of beginning and end, the zealous belief in the law and the divinely blessed freedom of the Christian, gives only indications of his vision of Christ during his inner crisis—statements suggesting hallucination, such as are particularly characteristic of that type of soul-history. In the Acts of the Apostles * we find the fuller description of the event elaborated as the apostle's speech in his defence, using virtually rhetorical means of vivid presentation of the appearance of Christ and the impression made on Paul and his companions. This provided the starting-point for the dramatic narrative in which Augustine manifested the entry of grace into the struggling will. A form was here found for the convincing and vivid description of an experience that gripped the whole man. It was used later by Rousseau with the inspiration of genius set in the place of revelation.

Another element of the new spiritual autobiography influenced by Christianity lay in the tendency to confession of the contrite conscience that makes a man throw himself on God's mercy. Here began one of the most profound changes in European

* Acts xxii. and xxvi.; *ef.* ix.

self-disclosure. Out of the self-glorification, found first in the documents of the ancient East, which appeared to us so strange a method of showing oneself before gods and men, the Greeks had independently developed an ethical attitude of man toward himself that rested firmly on this world. " Their great men ", wrote Winckelmann,¹²⁸ " tell of the good in themselves with the same confidence with which they tell of the good in others, because they believed that a man needs to be aware of his own value in order to protect himself from baseness." With the dissolution of this-worldliness this self-confidence did not collapse, but simply turned, on the whole, inwards.* And when among the later Stoics, who sought a personal religious relationship to moral ideals and to the universe, and still more among the Neoplatonists, a feeling of the inadequacy of human nature gained the upper hand, it was a metaphysical consciousness that had nothing to do with sinfulness and contrition : the human soul, born of the divine unity, was from the nature of things dependent on the all-determining divine whole, and as in its wilful separation from this whole it was delivered up to the pressure and defilement of material alien to it, it needed the divine strength that works in all things, in order to regain its own purity : this dependence was based on an essential union, and the type of prayer in which it finds that personal expression has nothing to do with the wail of an unhappy soul.† " Of Christian humility", to quote Winckelmann again, " the ancients had even less comprehension because this consists in self-surrender and therefore self-imposed constraint."

Paul, the " world-traveller ", brought the conflict of conceptions at once into clear view, and discussed it in all its depth. " If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness . . . Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. ii. 30; xii. 9~10). This " folly " of glorying in weakness became a fundamental element in Christian self-scrutiny, which thus, in contrast with the pagan tendency to seek to shine before the world, was regarded as essentially an act of humility, and the apostle's confessions served as a model that provided the Christian autobiographers

* See above, Marcus Aurelius, p. 484.

† See below, Part III, toward the end of chap. I, for the Neoplatonic prayer,

with authority for refusing to accept the blame which they might otherwise have incurred for lack of reticence.*

Knowing himself to be seen through by God, submitting unreservedly to His inscrutable will, in a fear of Him and a doubt of himself that gave a clearer vision of the darkness in the soul, the man ready for penitence was able to learn the psychological technique which had been worked out by the ancients for the revelation of those dark depths. As early as in the fourth century various methods of self-analysis were established in this way, as we shall see; the practice of confession, which had already passed in several cases into the literary form of Confessions, is one of them. Another is the painful cultivation of penitence running in a long, dismal, shrill procession through the history of autobiography, partly as an incidental *motif*, partly as the principal theme.

This may be accounted for not only by Jewish piety with its fear of the law, but by the East in general, whose penitential psalms reveal the unhappy consciousness of sin, even of sins " of which I know not " : a contrition increasing in face of the manifest anger of the gods, but decreasing again as these people return, under the soothing influence of penitence, to the sensuous enjoyment of life from which they had been frightened.¹²⁹ In the Middle East the expression of the consciousness of sin belonged to the first great epoch in which religion was transformed by the inward turning of the mind, the monistic movement that had spread since the end of the second millennium before Christ,† and had already at that time reached the Greeks (who acquired a clear consciousness of personality and of the forms of its free expression), and on the other hand led, within the region of the Semitic culture, to the individualization which found expression in the Hebrew Psalms. Here there took place on the soil of monotheistic religion the separation of penitential poetry from forms and purposes of worship, and as the individual acquired a sphere of his own in the religious life the great art form was created which in its sensuous power of appeal, in the cry of

* This special effect of the passages in St. Paul may be observed in autobiography from the fourth to the seventeenth century. Galatians i. 15 played a part in the origin of Augustine's Confessions. Patrick's *Confessio* (fifth century) was materially influenced by Paul. Ennodius makes 2 Corinthians ii. 30 his " peg ". Various texts are availed of in the Middle Ages, for instance in the Book of the Five Men (Schmidt, *Nikolaus von Basel*, p. m), and in Seusc's autobiography, chap. 54; a seventeenth-century instance is Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Preface.

† See above, pp. 28-9, 33, 82-3.

anguish of the troubled soul, and its joy at being heard, and in the passionate outpouring of prayer, set man alone with his suffering before the face of almighty God.

Unique as was this form of expression of the inner life was also the process of individualization from which it sprang. That process began with the great prophets of Israel, and thanks to their genius it did not come to rest through the long centuries, though it did not spread over the specifically religious sphere. It was owing to this individualistic tendency that the religious movement inaugurated by the prophets could get into contact with Hellenistic culture,¹³⁰ and in a strange way the tendency of the Hebrew poetry, which gave the ego its freedom only in order that it might lean upon God, corresponded to the state of mind that was establishing itself in the Hellenistic world, which demanded the liberation of the spirit from the limitations of individual life.* In this connexion there must have been reason for the Psalmist's religious poetry being able to play a part in the renewal of the ancient autobiography. For that influence did not rest upon an expression of the individual content of the life of the soul; it is a feature of the style of the Psalms that "in them the concrete things happening to this one person (i.e. the particular Psalmist) alone are kept rigidly in the background".†

With reference to their tradition, Augustine's Confessions have been called one great penitential psalm.¹³¹ This, in spite of the three hundred quotations from the Psalms in that book of confessions, is, we insist, a misinterpretation of the work. If we try to derive that great spiritual autobiography from Israelite literature, we become aware of its difference from it rather than its similarity to it, as regards the particular type of man's attitude to God. For in Israelite poetry man appears as the creature that flees into **the** shadow of the Lord with the trust that frees from fear; and it was in sharp contrast with that religious attitude that Christianity exerted its influence and developed within the Greco-Roman world. In Augustine's Confessions we find the task of reconciling that contrast accomplished.

When we approach his work from this point of view we cannot **but** admire his ability to admit the shattering outbursts of the language of the Psalms into the new form of his own creation, which, seen as a single whole, succeeded in expressing

* See above, pp. 514-5.

† Gunkel, "Die israel. Uteratur", loc. cit., I, 7, p. 89; and Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (1903), pp. 44, 227, 241-2, and elsewhere.

the soul's finding of itself in its essential communion with God. It is a perversion of the facts to treat the entry of the Psalms into European literature as the beginning of the development of literary forms of personal expression of inner experience, instead of tracing the origins of spiritual autobiography, as we tried to do, to the history of ancient Greek and Roman thought. The religious power of the Old Testament entered the old type of self-scrutiny and autobiography as one stream enters another, just as the Bible nourished European literature as a whole ; the epochs are distinguished plainly just by their attitude to the Old Testament, and only in quite definite periods, to which late antiquity does not belong, could a personal religious history be presented virtually as a re-living of the Bible, in the struggle for the understanding of the united writings of the Old and New Testaments.

The influence exerted, however, upon the European mind by those grand poetical works, in a special sense religious, of the prophets of Israel was, beyond question, deeper than that, for instance, of the figurative language of the Song of Songs, of which the mediaeval mystics made use, as did the minstrels of their day. As regards this essential nexus, one point, which may be explained in quite general terms, may be made at once.

It concerns the profound tendency in the religion of the prophets that united religious inwardness with individualization in such a way that man fought his way out of sorrow and defeat to a higher and individual sense of life in God.¹³² It is not, in our view, a law of the formation of religious life that man needs distress in order to turn to God, that, as one of the best modern interpreters of the Old Testament has expressed it, " the soil of religion is made fruitful by tears and blood ".¹³³ On the other hand, while the feeling for the sufferings of existence accompanies the emancipation of the " inner man ", it does not necessarily lead to individualization : this is shown by the development of Buddhism in India ; Buddhism quite radically laid down the doctrine that suffering is the essence of empirical reality, and for Buddhism the evaluation of personality lies yet, as for all Indian metaphysical thinking, outside its horizon. This association came into existence in a peculiar way in the history of Israel : there was at work here another, an earthbound, sort of suffering, which did not broaden to a metaphysical sense of the universe, but took to God, as it were, the material reality, unmodified and, indeed, entirely unidealized, of a life of suffering.

Among the prophets Jeremiah—at the turn of the seventh century B.C.—was here the greatest creative personality. He stood in the midst of national disaster on the battlefield, with no illusion as to the inevitability of foreign domination, in spite of the patriots' desperate hopes of the intervention of Jehovah ; and while he gave up the national existence as lost he did not lose faith, but found a new way of becoming sure of his God : he threw himself into the threatened future of humiliation, and built up on the catastrophe a hope for the future in an inward piety in the community of Jehovah ; this conviction he proclaimed as God's revelation to him. And while he lived in his own person through this inner history, which, he was convinced, was the way to his people's reformation willed by God ; while, amid the contempt and persecution he suffered as a blasphemer of God and a traitor to his people, amid controversies and struggles, he parted from his nation and from the world in exclusive devotion to the transcendental God, he could not but become conscious of his personal experiences as something of special value, and in the prophetic self-confidence that faced the world in the strength of God there arose his achievement, which was to give expression to his personal religious experiences, God revealing Himself in his servant's destiny.

Out of his mediation between Jehovah and Israel [writes Wellhausen],¹³⁴ since Israel would have nothing to do with it, there came an individual relationship between his person and Jehovah, in which Jehovah revealed Himself through him to the people, and in which he himself, in all his humanity, poured out his soul before Jehovah. He did not make his active intercourse with God the subject of his prophecy, he simply proclaimed the divine law and threatened divine punishment, like the other prophets. But as if he had sensed the significance of what had happened within him, he depicted some of it . . . He is the father of true prayer, in which the unhappy soul expresses at the same time its human misery and its superhuman trust.

Through these more personal passages in the prophet's writings the old tone, it is true, still runs ; wrath and vengeance, retribution and destruction ! " Let them be ashamed that persecute me, but let not me be ashamed. Let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed. . . Shall evil be recompensed for good ?.. . Remember how I stood before thee to speak good for them, to turn away fury from them. Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and give them over to the power of the

sword." * But out of this dark ground, which shows the traditional feeling, there now emerges in Jeremiah the new consciousness of God and the soul.

O Lord, Thou knowest : remember me, and visit me, and avenge me of my persecutors ; . . . know that for Thy sake I have suffered reproach. Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart . . . I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced : I sat alone because of Thy hand ; for Thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed ? Wilt Thou indeed be unto me as a deceitful brook, as waters that fail ? . . . O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived ; Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed : I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out ; I cry, Violence and spoil . . . And if I say, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain . . . But the Lord is with me as a mighty one and a terrible : therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail . . . Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord : for He hath delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evil-doers,†

The type of literature that in Israel mainly served the expression of personal experience was the plaint: ‡ from a song of the sick in worship it became the actual vehicle of religious individualism in the Psalms.¹³⁵ And from the " Lamentations of Jeremiah ", which gave the Roman Church a text for Passion Week, there rings out through the autobiography of the Middle Ages, in Abelard, in Dante, and in their successors: " Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow,"

* Jer. xvii. 18 ; xviii. 20-1 ; and elsewhere.

† Jer. xv. 15-20 ; xx. 7-13.

‡ There may also have been memoir-like self-portrayals. As for the book of Nehemiah, the only work of memoirs in the Old Testament of which long fragments are extant, cf. above, pp. 43 sqq. That book stands alone for us in Israelite literature, as the case of Ezra is doubtful. The writing of these memoirs, which give a factual report of the steps taken to restore the rule of the priests (middle of the fifth century), is probably to be accounted for by the traditions of the Persian court, at which Nehemiah had become a dignitary. But owing to the pious regard for the law entertained by this hero in the service of the church the book has a national tinge. Hermann Gunkel, the eminent student of Israelite literature, whom we have quoted more than once, considers that the partly first-personal narrative in Ecclesiastes and in Tobit points to a widespread practice of diary-keeping. This seems, however, not clear on the face of it, in view of the manifold use of the first person from of old—see above, pp. 46 sqq.

PART III
THE FLOWERING OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN LATE
ANTIQUITY

In the fourth and fifth centuries, as the career of the ancient peoples came to its end, autobiography experienced its first period of flowering. Slowly advancing, in a history lasting for centuries, it had freed itself from the ties of external aims and of schematic forms of presentation : now it was aware of its true nature and emerged as an independent type of literature with its specific subject, the self-experienced reality of a human life. And on taking up this position, which it held from now on, it appeared at once at its highest level. It received the book of confessions of a man of genius, presenting in broad outlines himself and his time, which he had helped to form, and bringing into philosophic consciousness permanently valuable realities of human life. So autobiography gained a form in which it could take its place on an equal footing with the other types of great works of art.

There had already been autobiographical works of absolute value in ancient times : Demosthenes' speech " On the Crown ", the *res gestæ* of Augustus, the autobiographical passages of Marcus Aurelius ; and who can say what Hellenistic works have been lost ? But their importance did not spring from the special faculty of autobiography of bringing to light new material resulting from the writer's own experience, and accessible to no one else. A first step into the authentic territory of autobiography had been taken by the emperor Marcus, and religious experience ploughed up, most thoroughly in Christianity, the soil that was to nourish the seeds of spiritual autobiography ; in the Hellenistic differentiation the autobiographical *genre* had spread over so many spheres of life that it seemed able to grow from varied roots : now it collected itself and advanced in the realm of the inner life to a great pattern of human self-portrayal.

This consummation is bound up with the personal genius of Augustine, with the passionate energy with which he had lived, rising from the abysses of existence through his eminent mental and literary capacity, thanks to which he made the meaning of his life philosophically clear to himself and found a new form for

its exposition. He gave shape to autobiography under the inner urge to comprehend the religious and metaphysical content of human life. And so his *Confessions* not only became a work of art that has intimately revealed to us the imperishable element in the existence of a great man, but gave to autobiography an importance that extended beyond the personal element: through Augustine, the portrayal of a life-story attained the poetic and philosophic dignity of serving as a reflection of a view of the world, and the development of autobiography among modern peoples which Augustine helped to initiate carried that movement toward the philosophic understanding of human life into general literature, and above all into the psychological novel.

This emergence in autobiography of a new and important element took place at a time when all other branches of literature were moving in conventional channels, and when victorious Christianity had long grown used to pouring its new wine into the old skins. It was the time when the mental and physical power of production of the classical peoples was approaching exhaustion, giving place to the Teuton barbarians, and making the civilized world ripe for the despotic rule of Diocletian and for the Church of the Council of Nicaea. In that age, down to A.D. 400 or so, after the exhausting wars of the third century, literary life flourished for the last time in late antiquity ; and its literature has a strange charm, alien to Hellenism, the charm of a mixture of forms becoming rigid with those rapidly expanding, dissolving, and undergoing transformation. The heterogeneous cultural elements to which Hellenism had allowed free play were now, amidst a glowing heat that melted all differences together, conveyed into the mould that was to give them permanent shape for the new peoples.

The heritage of ancient literature was still safe, and in spite of the protest of Christian orthodoxy and the arrival on the scene of the hermits, Hellenistic culture formed a common atmosphere for all the better classes, even though these leading lights were no longer, as a rule, Greeks or Romans by birth, but came mainly from the African shores of the Mediterranean world and from the hinterland of Asia Minor. Where a world-civilization still existed, with no tradition of national links as a source of strength, a civilization that held together in spite of the division into the Roman West and the Greek East, the origin of the individual who assimilated that civilization mattered relatively little, and no one would regard the new autobiography as an oriental growth

because its representatives came from oriental provinces and showed marked oriental traits. The adoption of classical and Hellenistic literary forms by the writers and preachers who, even if they were Christians or orientals, belonged to the ancient world, gives this very unclassical period of the fourth and fifth centuries a claim to be regarded as a "Golden Age";* in that age the Christian Church was endowed with its great literature, by virtue of which it preserved a certain continuity with ancient culture throughout the Middle Ages.

The great literary personalities, who are now found almost exclusively among the princes of the Church, have essentially this historic function of mediation and assimilation; their greatness lies more in their effectiveness in compilation, to which they devoted all their energy, than in any originality of their outlook on the world. The more thoroughly we become acquainted with the Hellenistic developments, the clearer it will become that even Augustine's intellect was not so independent as is generally assumed; he was by no means "the first modern man", as he is often called.

Creativeness was certainly not absent from the life of this epoch. Creative work was done especially in the social, political, and legal organizations, and in the impersonal depths in which the aspect of space or perspective, music, rhythm of speech, the structure of language, and even the rules of grammar were changing, already breaking through in new forms here and there, and as a whole preparing the art of the Middle Ages.¹ The over-civilized epoch, packed though it was with culture, had not yet been able to develop art forms of its own out of the variety of actual life. Christianity, then no longer an unambiguous term, did not show in its spread through the ancient world any power to produce new types of literature,² and even Augustine did not manage to bring out his profoundest conceptions fully and objectively, apart from personal experience. Only autobiography sent out new blossoms.

Thus the relation between autobiography and general literature had now been entirely reversed. A shifting had taken place in the relation of the branches of literature to one another; it could be seen in gradual process during the earlier centuries; now it showed itself as a completed fact. And here the point is

* The term comes from Villemain, *Tableau de l'éloquence chrétienne*, 1827; but that eminent historian of literature applied it specially to the literature of the Christian Church, a literature which he regarded as an original creation, as Hellenism was unknown in Villemain's day.

to be found at which Augustine's achievement fits into the historical context, so that we can appreciate the heightened level of the autobiographical *genre* resulting from his "Confessions". That level seems at first sight to be separated by a gulf from the preceding level of the *genre*, but this may be explained without resorting to the pretty phrase describing the "Confessions" as the unique creation of a religious genius. The new position of autobiography was not an isolated phenomenon : there became manifest in it the changed character of literature : this found in the subjectively conceived context of personal circumstances the soil now to be tilled for a narrative prose *genre*, not merely an epigrammatical or rhetorical or inventive one. Augustine's Confessions corresponded in this sense to the psychological novel which as a rule dominates the prose literature of later times when, in man's relation to life and the world, the subjective attitude of the individual comes to prevail not only in some outstanding works but also in the general aspect of the literature of those times.

Autobiography was now based on a literary tendency of that sort rather than on the writer's consciousness of his individuality. Even apart from Augustine's incomparable work, that age showed an autobiographical production not to be despised. That production not only imitated Hellenistic works or continued Hellenistic beginnings, but also showed something new in some characteristic works. In the century and a half from about 360 we have more autobiographical works than in all the preceding epochs of Greek and Latin literature, leaving political autobiography out of account. In contrast to earlier times, the intellectually eminent were now represented, and in a relatively large number. There are comprehensive autobiographies in the strict sense of the term, many of them with a form suited to the material and a large part of them of varied character ; and they did not achieve this variety, as in Hellenism, through differentiation of subject according to spheres of life and through taking over various types of literature, but, however different, stand together in a single sphere, that of subjective existence, now religious in character or at least in colour. By that very fact they confirm the view that Augustine's Confessions represented a literary type advancing to pre-eminence.

We shall mention the principal works in chronological order. About A.D. 360 comes the remarkable autobiography, unfortunately no longer extant, of Acilius of Spain, which gained for its author a place in St. Jerome's book on famous men. All we know

of it is what has already been mentioned, that it had a curious title suggesting "The Wayfarer's Temptation", and was composed in the mixture of prose and verse derived from the Menippean Satire.* About the same time Ephraim the Syrian (d. 373), who was prominent in the Greek Orthodox Church as theologian and hymn-writer, wrote a series of autobiographical works that have come down to us, entitled "Confessoin" or "Self-accusation". Of the last important representative of pure rhetoric, the "pagan" Libanius, among whose pupils was one of the greatest Christian preachers in the Greek language, John Chrysostom, we have a long autobiography, "*Bios*, or of my own *tyche*" (374); this too is not without religious elements. His friend and reverer the emperor Julian the Apostate (c. 331-63), who carried on active and imposing propaganda with his pen for his own policy and personal attitude and views, would almost certainly have given an independent record of his own life if he had not been prevented by his premature death.³ Then in Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-c. 389), the poet among the Fathers of the Church, the new epoch in autobiography impressively announced itself; his great autobiographical poems, written in the seventies and eighties of the century, the product of ecclesiastical struggles as well as of solitary contemplation, have characteristic form and attractive beauty, and his subjective religious poems, nourished by metaphysical speculation, stand over against the historic part of Augustine's Confessions as another typical form of expression of the personal religious life.

About the year 400 came Augustine's work. It marked an epoch, but only in the West, as Western culture alone had the capacity to assimilate Augustine's spirit and gain enrichment from it. In the East development went on in the autobiographical branch as elsewhere along the ancient paths, and for the very reason that the influence of Augustine's genius was shut out there the further autobiographical works of that time, which still belonged to the main current of the literature of Greece and Rome, go to show that there was something inevitable at work in the development that produced the flowering of autobiography in late antiquity.

In addition to Gregory there appeared in the Greek Church the Neoplatonic Christian bishop Synesius of Cyrene; he, too, formed a personal religious work of imagination out of metaphysics, and, in a special work, "*Dio*, or of my own *Bios*" (c. 406),

* *Καρατοροπή σὺν πείρᾳ*. See above, pp. 372, 401 sqq.

he described his way of life. On the other hand, the struggle for power and the doctrinal controversies aroused a passionate reaction not only in Gregory but in others as well. This is evidenced by the title *Tragoedia* under which Nestorius, the Syrian monk who from 428 to 431 was Patriarch of Constantinople, and who gave his name to the Nestorian heresy, or, rather, the Nestorian Churches of the East, related the history of his sufferings—an autobiographical work which, like that of Acilius Severus, is no longer extant.⁴ But in Latin Christianity, too, Augustine's Confessions were not the end of the development in antiquity of the autobiographical *genre*; in addition to direct imitations of that work, autobiographies of individual character were written in the fifth century in South Gaul and in Ireland; among them the *Confessio* of Saint Patrick (c. 389-461).

As regards the Hellenistic traditions, the definite type we termed autobiographies of writers continued to be followed, especially in introductions to collections of poems; Augustine himself produced a novelty in that literary field in his *Retractions* (427), as he called his critical survey of his writings. And finally the Greco-Roman spirit summoned up its energies for a last great work of self-portrayal, the "Consolation of Philosophy" of Boethius (524).

To this picture belongs also the active cultivation of biography in the many funeral sermons of the Fathers and in the biographies of monks which Athanasius compiled together with his life of Antonius; here, too, active literary production still continued amid the general poverty and the horrors of the barbarian invasions, which were making an end of the enfeebled empire. In the sixth century the deeds and miracles of a saint named Severin were told in the traditional form by one of his younger companions, from personal contact and information gathered, and told so naturally and brightly that we see a living picture of that angel of compassion among the savage Teuton believers.*

Evidence of the value set on the personal element in literature by the educated class, whether pagan or Christian, is given to us by a book of travels, written in verse, by a Roman aristocrat of the beginning of the fifth century, Rutilius Claudius Namatianus.† In his youth Rutilius had gone from Gaul, where his family had their estate, to Rome to study jurisprudence, and in a successful

* Eugippius, *Vita Severini* (511).

† *De itinert suo, or Iter Gauicum* (the title is not certain), edited by Vessereau with French translation, 1904.

career he had advanced to the dignity of Prefect of the capital (414), an office his father had filled in the past. Two years later (416) he returned to Gaul to look after his properties, which had suffered severely at the hands of the Goths, and also, he adds, to live in peace in his father's homestead.* He describes in verse this journey home, by sea and land, beginning with the farewell from his friends in Rome ; himself a finely cultured dilettante, he made use of the literary form of which models had been given by Horace and Ovid, to give expression to matters that lay close to his heart. Chance has preserved for us a considerable part, over 700 lines, of this long poem. We have here before us a man of the world who has still the feeling of being a thorough Roman of the old style. But Rutilius gives not only curiosities and legends but emotions, moods, impressions ; observations suggested by a historic place, or one rendered sacred by personal memories or by friendships made ; and occasional mention, or an impressionist sketch, of beauties of landscape.

The uncritical reader might imagine that we have here genuine occasional poetry, in which feelings and observations proceed from actual experiences. Rutilius tells, for instance, of one of his acquaintances among the Roman aristocracy who, following the current of asceticism, withdrew from the world, and his lament over this folly leads him to an outburst against the monks. He has an equally violent outburst against the Jews, arising out of an incident on a journey to Faleria, where a Jewish tenant of fisheries treated him with great inhospitality.† The modern French editor of the poem describes it as virtually a diary in verse. All this looks like personal poetry, merely prevented by a rhetorical habit of declamation from being given free scope. But the classical philologists have studied the poet and demonstrated the conventional character of his reflections and emotions ; his outbursts have been taken, for instance, from books.⁵ So much the more characteristic is it of both the man and the period that he tries to give his conventional matter the attractiveness of personal impressions. J

The idea, indeed, of a literary *journal intime* was at that time no

* Ibid. I, 19-34 ; 161 : patriis vitam componere terris.

† Ibid., I, 440-52 and 517-26 ; 383-98.

‡ Comparable with this is the so-called *Peregrinatio Silviae* (*Corpus script, eccles.*, vol. 39), an account, in the form of a letter, of a journey to the Holy Land, probably written by the Spanish abbess Ætheria (385). It stands out above the usual dull compilations. The authoress gives vivid descriptions at times, as of an ascent of Sinai, but can also just say that she thought a road pretty ; she describes herself as "satis curiosa", rather inquisitive.

longer remote from men's thoughts. When dealing with Libanius we shall see that the autobiography of this oratorical virtuoso is so filled with petty personal details that it reads like a diary. This may be explained as an unintentional collapse of the rhetorical form of art. But there is a post-Augustinian autobiography in Latin in the title of which the Greek word for "diary" appears—"Poem of thanksgiving to God from the text of my diary",*—and the author, another Christian landowner from southern Gaul, similarly brought up in the classical tradition and with no originality in him, summarized the autobiographies of famous men of the past under the title "Diary of their Deeds".† And we can still see what was expected of a diary: a man of distinguished mind, eminent in his day, the Neoplatonist Synesius, wrote about it.

He came to do so in circumstances that seem to us strange but characteristic of the whole trend of development which we have followed here—in a treatise on dreams, *Synesius de insomniis*. His leaning to daily self-scrutiny came originally from his interest in the art of soothsaying, which, like astrology, played a part in individualization as a science of practical importance that had to distinguish men's characters. Dreams in his view were an excellent means of divination, which was founded on the prevalent view that the cosmos was peopled with souls; but for dreams, he explains, there is no general science, as for the phenomena of the physical world, that could establish the connexion of certain incidents appearing in sleep with certain ensuing events alike for all men, so that general rules for dream interpretation could be deduced therefrom; for the spiritual make-up of men differs from individual to individual. This diversity he considers to be natural, because the souls have lost their original pure and uniform nature through their pre-mundane fall, one soul falling to a greater depth than another; but in his view it is also a moral individuation, in so far as the purity of the soul, and therewith its rank in the cosmic hierarchy of spirits, can be restored within set limits by a virtuous course in life that divests the individual of passions. This status of the individual soul manifests itself in dreams, where the fancy moves in freedom from the influences of the external world. Hence everyone should collect his own experiences and

* Paulini Pellæi, "Eucharisticos Deo sub ephemeridis mem textu" (that "sub" is not to be understood here in the sense of position is clear from the autobiography itself—see below, chap. IV). It is improbable that Paulinus was a grandson of Ausonius, who published a collection of poems called *Ephemeris*; see the literature quoted below, chap. IV. If he was his grandson it would explain the title,

† *Ibid.*, præfatio: *Ephemeris gestorum suorum*.

" make himself the object of the practice of the art " that enables him to interpret his dreams on the basis of the observation of regularities :

It would be a wise proceeding even to publish our waking and sleeping visions and their attendant circumstances ; a wise thing to do, I say, unless the culture of the city is like to be too rustic for so novel an enterprise. We shall therefore see fit to add to what are called " day books " what we term " night books ", so as to have records (*hypomnemata*) to remind us of the character of each of the two lives concerned.

This idea led Synesius to a general valuation of such diaries, and in the course of this we see him playfully carrying the romantic style of treatment of political events developed by the Hellenistic historians into men's intimate feelings. " If nothing slips our memory, the result will also be a refined pastime ; it will be paying oneself the compliment of a history of one's waking and sleeping moments," Dreams are a specially gratifying material for noting down because of the passions that have their life in them and of the adventures that carry us in sleep even into heaven ; with the wonderful confusion of these creations of the imagination one may gain practice in the art of narrative ; " if a man were to utter no lifeless words . . . he would need stirring language to put his auditor into the same condition and amid the same thoughts as himself ". Everyone who lives in comfort and leisure should undertake the compilation of day and night books. Those who can give them literary shape will not only lead the art of oratory from its existing emptiness up to a new height, but will " take delight in themselves ", and live on in posterity with all their sorrows and joys, as Archilochus and Alcæus have done in their lyrics.

They have not produced words hanging in the void on artificial themes, like this young and wise generation. Nor have they accorded their own proper virtue to others, as did Homer and Stesichorus, who made the heroic race more glorious by their poems (and we have profited by their zeal for virtue), but have been so completely neglected in themselves that we are unable to say anything about them except that they were great poets. Whosoever therefore aspires to be spoken of by men in the future, and is conscious of the power to create immortal works on the tablets, let him courageously follow our lawless style of composition. Then let him commend himself to time : it is a noble guardian whenever anything divine is entrusted to it.*

* Synesius, *De insomniis*, 6, 11-13. Migne, *Patrol. Greca*, vol. 66, pp. 1300-1 and 1313-20. Translation by Augustine Fitzgerald, *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene*, II (1930), pp. 354-5.

The path was not so unprecedented as he imagined it to be. Synesius himself, who where actual life demanded it showed himself possessed of a manly and energetic character,⁶ was almost certainly led, as already mentioned, to his strangely sensational development of the idea of diaries by a literary influence—that of the reading of the " Sacred Discourses " of Ælius Aristides.* At that time second-rate Latin rhetoricians had been descending to utter trivialities in trying to produce literary effects with the aid of the diary, and the literary level was such that even one of the emptiest but cleverest rhetoricians of the time, Ausonius (c. 310-95), rose now and then by this device above the vacuous inanities that made up the great mass of his versification. One of his books of verse actually has the tide *Ephemeris* (diary), with the explanatory addition, " The occupations of a day ". It begins with Sapphic strophes in which the author shouts from his bed to wake his personal slave, running on in constantly changing metres as he gets dressed and washes ; he prays through a hundred hexameters, and, after " praying enough to God ", calls for his outdoor coat, gives an invitation to lunch, and dictates the menu to the cook. In another series of poems this versifier, after the usual introductory autobiographical poem, describes his thirty associates, and also, in a similar series, his teachers and colleagues, the professors at the college at Bordeaux, his native town.†

But even the original element in the recommendations put forward by Synesius, the idea of regenerating literature by means of the intimate diary, was probably only a concession to the times. If we are not mistaken, the clichés he uses bear witness to a widespread appreciation of strange subjective conditions as such, whatever their content. The feeling for the mysterious and the language to express it, which had long emerged from the mysteries and penetrated the general philosophical and religious language,⁷ now end their exclusive relationship to things divine,

* See above, p. 510. Synesius does not mention Aristides' work, but only the sentences from Philostratus (written with reference to the " Sacred Discourses ") advocating the keeping of a diary for practice in the art of talking well. But the picture Synesius gives of the confusion of dreams corresponds exactly with Aristides' testimony, while Synesius was probably too healthy to have such dreams ; and Synesius, according to his own account in his *bios* (see below, pp. 598-9), was an imitator of such virtuosity that he could write in the style of any author whom he had just been reading. This very gift of aesthetic receptivity enabled him to realize the meaning of such obscure phenomena and to give expression to it in general terms.

† Ausoni opera, rec. Peiper. The autobiography as *prefatio*, c. 381, with the visual details, only not precise, of self-portraiture. (" Ausonius lectori salutem ", 20 distichs.) *Parentalia*. *Commemoratio Professortum Burdigalensium*. *Ephemeris id est totius diei negotium* (only the beginning and end of this **are extant**).

and not only the Neoplatonists and Augustine but also quite undistinguished minds, with very little of the recondite in them, talk blithely of the *recondita cordis*, the things buried in the heart.* We shall find much the same sort of thing in the autobiography of Libanius. This learned rhetorician was able to set his highbrow inclinations—his tenderness, for instance, for a particularly fine copy of Thucydides—against the feelings of the unlettered crowd, as from Heraclitus and Plato onward men spoke of the laughter of the uncultured at the hidden depths after which the philosopher dug.

Where the attempt was made to communicate the "mysteries of the heart", the credibility of an autobiography necessarily became a psychological problem. Augustine put this new question in connexion with his Confessions, which he offered "to the human race":

"How do you know, when you hear me talk about myself, that I am telling the truth, considering that no man knows what is true of a man, save his own soul?"

He replied:

"But because love 'believeth all things' (I Cor. xiii, 7), at least as regards those who, being united by it, have become one, therefore shall I confess to Thee, O Lord, that the man may listen to whom I cannot prove that I wish to confess the truth; but those believe me whose ears are opened to me by love."†

This, then, is the true state of the case: ancient literature did not end, as is generally assumed, in a sudden collapse while a Christian art blossomed on its ruins, but a new type of literature arose, and this process was quite generally based on the course of development of ancient intellectual life, even if its true shaping with genuine and lasting material was attainable only by Christians. But what was the meaning of this changed direction at the end of an epoch of unexampled length filled with the most

* This will be noticed again and again in what follows. Significant, because late (c. 460) and unimportant and not specifically Christian, is Paulinus Pellæus, who in his *Eucharisticos* declares before telling of *external* events: "In lucem proferre recondita corde" ("To bring to light things hidden in the heart") (v. 263), and at the beginning of the story of his life says at length (vv. 17 sqq.):

Sit mihi fas igitur . . . pandere grates
quas equidem et clausas scimus tibi corde patere,
ultra sed abruptens tacitæ penetralia mentis
fontem exudantis voti vox conscia prodit.

("May I therefore . . . publish the thanks which we know to be manifest to you even when hidden in our heart", etc.).

† Aug., *Conf.*, X, 3, 3; cf. I I, 3, 5.

manifold creativeness ? Was it one of the symptoms of decay of a civilization of whose great age men were already accustomed to speaking—*senuisse iam mundum* *—so that the inward turning of the mind was the last resource of a dying world ? Or was there positive power in it, and was the renewal of autobiography an essential element of advance in an intellectual development that was never at a standstill?

The comparison is forced on us with our own time, in which, in spite of everything, we live in confidence that we shall emerge with deeper and freer energies from the labyrinth of subjectivity. In the ancient world the stage of spiritual development in which the interest in the individual's inner life comes to prevail coincided with the downfall of that civilization ; but it remains an open question whether that coincidence was a coincidence and nothing more, so that it was not based on an inner necessity. For external historical conditioning factors had much to do with the decay of the classic peoples who had built up the Greco-Roman world civilization : the peoples were dying out, and their downfall was not merely a natural decay such as we must accept as the common fate of men and peoples ; we can show concrete causes of that decay, civil wars, proscriptions, epidemics, and other elements of destruction that had for centuries been producing a " depopulation of the empire " and an " extermination of the best", so that the Teuton barbarians were no longer absorbed by the ancient population.⁸

But even in the biological causes of which we can plainly see the effects, there remains an element of the inexplicable. And if we turn to the supreme religious forces, we find ourselves faced here again with an enigma, in view of the new life which Jesus brought into the world. We can understand that in a civilization that was not formed by the active interlinking of independent nationalities, and was wholly bound up with slavery, the ruling class was so isolated in its magnificence from the interests of the common people that the intellectual life of the European peoples had to be reorganized from the very base before the heritage of the Greeks and Romans could again resume full activity. And yet it is to the ancients that the modern nations owe the possibility of their different way of attaining the unity of their moral and religious culture ; the ancients—including the early Christians—created common foundations on which the various nations

* Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200-58) in his epistle *Ad Donation (De gratia Dei)*, to which we have referred on account of its autobiographical introduction.

originating in modern times could build themselves up with their own States and cultures, in freedom and independence, without becoming isolated. We cannot help admitting, it is true, the brutal fact that the productivity even of the most productive nations naturally comes to an end. But as our modern Western civilization is linked with the ancients, both pagan and Christian, we are here confronted with the comprehensive whole of the historical world in which the spiritual values produced by the ancients have been preserved. This universal process opens precisely at the dissolution of the ancient world, with which mediaeval developments begin : from it the historic situation in which the inward turning of the mind took place must be made comprehensible.

This subjective process came, it is true, in an epoch of literary as well as of political and social dissolution, and the autobiographical works bear various marks of it. There is nothing simple in them : if here and there a lesser author seems to write simply, this, from the ancient viewpoint, was a slackening of form, and just the most vivid literary elements seem to be entangled in subtlety and decadence ; even Augustine's *Confessions* cannot claim pure, bright beauty : it was that autobiography that introduced into European literature the violent play of personal passions that were regarded as typical of all people, and the utter penitence and self-abandonment of confession. But this fact, that the breaking through of subjectivity was bound up with phenomena of decay, does not permit any conclusion as to the intrinsic relationship of the two processes. For just as there is an immeasurable distance between Libanius and Augustine, both occupied with the task of autobiography, which had not yet become conventionalized, so the subjectivity of the time was of many sorts. In that rhetorician it was the expression of narrow egoism and a petty outlook on life, of which we shall certainly find a sufficient explanation in the ageing and ossification of the rhetorical art. But within the field of the Christian life the inspiring power of the new conceptions, and the habit of introspection, produced values that proved genuine and fruitful, both in the lasting literary works of the period and in the new impulse given to the striving after self-knowledge ; here the change in literature was part of the universal course of history ; to this historical development of the human mind the notions of old age, death, and decay are not applicable, and it is in this development that Man's new attitude toward himself must

have its foundation with regard both to its positive significance and to the limits set to its growth by the intellectual conditions of that time.

We have seen with what difficulty and slowness the independent inner life fought its way in antiquity, and we have seen the power of the objective outlook on the world that opposed that process, pushing even the spiritual out into the cosmos. Even at this time that power was not yet wholly broken, and now that the inner reality was at last attaining dominance in men's awareness of life, this mysterious reality deep down in the soul appeared to be implanted in the religion-bound vision of another world. The fundamental relationship, physical and spiritual, between man and the world into which he was born was reduced to the single essential relationship of the soul to the transcendental God. The life of the monks entered the Greco-Roman world as the clearest sign of that concern with the Beyond.

We do not want to give this revolution in the feeling for life a purely negative assessment. It is an element of greatness in man that he can tear himself from the world. On this human capacity depends the existence of the philosopher who is able to stand aloof from the common life which he cannot help sharing—the ideal of Plato and Heraclitus, which was made by the Stoa into a generally accessible form of life of the "free man". In this sense Marcus Aurelius, in whom we were able to study the turning to religion, was a philosopher. But the leading spirits among the Christians no longer had this freedom—unless they remained Christian Platonists. The relating of the religious life to the invisible world controlling men obviously had a narrowing effect, because of its claim to exclusive domination of the individual : inwardness made its appearance not as a clear, free, self-confident force, rejoicing in itself as personality : in order to deal with this world, the inner man needed an external support, which was given by the hierarchical organization of the spiritual life.

In the case of Augustine this instability of the inner life, which amid all its wealth was never at peace but tried to establish itself by means of dogma, authority, Church, has an element of the appalling to anyone who realizes the way he, the most energetic man of his day, had so to fetter himself after a freer youth. And yet it was necessary that the field of the invisible should be explored, in order to be taken into man's possession ; and by the paths into the Beyond, along which it seemed to lose itself,

personality approached a new and fuller existence. This sinking of man into himself became possible in the ancient world only at a late stage, but the " barbarian " peoples, to whom religious inwardness was now presented by the ancient world as a task, were able to complete this task without being exhausted by it.

Thus the epoch of downfall was at the same time a period of new decisions. And in these events lay the main reason why autobiography now attained a leading position in literature. While the plastic art of late antiquity, which demonstrably reveals a change of style of similar significance, a " growing etherealization of the figure ", repels us and is repugnant to us just because of that intrusion of a flickering life into the harmonious beauty of the ancient forms,⁹ literature now preserves its advantage in the ability to give a generally comprehensible picture of the complicated spiritual processes at work. Certain outstanding literary works, in whose style the sense of life characteristic of those days is objectified, come now into the foreground of our history. And while Gregory of Nazianzus made use of outlived forms that had become artificial, and charmed new melodies out of them, Augustine's creation has full originality. In order to make it understood, let us show how Augustine's greatness is associated with the contemporary tendencies and how it rises above them.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL TENDENCIES OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY NEAR THE END OF THE FOURTH CENTURY

We have not a full knowledge of the autobiographical literature that appeared in the latter half of the fourth century A.D. In that epoch, again, the forms adopted in self-portrayal were more manifold than those that we now have before us. In spite of this, the autobiographical works still present a remarkably varied picture. We have already seen that the variety at this time was not due to the same causes as in Hellenism, in which autobiography first fulfilled a variety of functions. The difference becomes plain as soon as we search in other periods of the history of the European mind for autobiographical works comparable with those which we find in the fourth and fifth centuries ; for such works are not to be found only in one definite period. Now we seem to be dealing with a monk or a feudal lord of the Middle Ages, now with a late humanist, now we hear sounds of romantic poetry, and Augustine's work, with its trend toward philosophical investigation of all life, corresponds to the modern type of autobiography since Rousseau. And while a new sense of life has developed, long to prevail in Western Christendom, obsolescent ideas continue to loom up.

I. LIBANIUS

Seven hundred years earlier, Isocrates had discovered autobiography as a vehicle for his art of prose writing. Now Libanius, the last eminent rhetorician of the dying pagan world, a friend of the emperor Julian the Apostate, produced the first of the extant autobiographies of this late flowering of the *genre*. He had been living for twenty years in his native city of Antioch since his retirement from Constantinople, the Eastern capital, and had been occupied with his declamations on great public occasions and his teaching of the comprehensive technique of oratory, and also with advocacy before the authorities on behalf of the unjustly persecuted ; and it was certainly a sensation in other places besides the sensation-loving Antioch when in 374 the world-famous old virtuoso pronounced in that city a declama-

tion concerning his life.* The public was given the most intimate details of his life-story, and in addition the enjoyment of exquisite oratory.

Here we have once more the full rhetorical conception of an autobiography. The style is the main thing : a cultivated Attic speech, the product of strenuous study of the classics, but, as in Libanius⁵ forerunner Ælius Aristides of Smyrna, in painful contrast with the subject-matter. The external form is that of oratory, and the speech is so phrased by Libanius that one has the impression that the public that knows him, and has done in many cases from youth onward, is seated in front of him.† Such a speech demanded a general subject, and while Aristides had sung the praises of the benefits conferred on him by his saviour Æsculapius, Libanius talked, though only in abstract terms, of " my own *tyche* ".

This choice of theme had literary precursors, just as in the past the form of autobiography had depended on earlier models ; in the Hellenistic period there had been declamations and essays on the *tyche*,¹ which, in a way comparable with the biographical accounts of good and evil fortune of the later humanists,² described the irrational activity of that daemon or, pointing out its blindness and arbitrariness, expounded the principle of Providence and illustrated the subject with historical examples, drawn chiefly from political history. And in Hellenistic autobiographies we have caught sight of the personal goddess Tyche from various aspects, varied as is the conception of chance, destiny, and fortune. In Libanius the presentation, seemingly religious in feeling, of his *tyche* gives expression to the tritest subjective interpretation of life : joy and sorrow, in continual alternation, make up life ; whether it offered more happiness or unhappiness, whether it was not as well that things happened so and not otherwise, that is the question ; this incalculable course of individual life is the " work of the gods "—an indefinite conception of cause—and, of course, of certain gods named, but chiefly " of her under whom are all others, Tyche "‡

* *Bíos ἡ περὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τύχης*. *Libanii opera*, rec. R. Foerster, I, pp. 79–206. The portion published in 374, when Libanius was sixty years of age, ends at page 156 ; the rest of the speech, more in the form of a diary, was issued sixteen years later.

† In addition to the repeated address ὦ ἄνδρες, p. 16, 1 ; 95, 9 (Reiske), see especially pp. 11, 13 : ζώντων ἐτι μαρτύρων οἱ βουλομένων ὑμῶν ἀναστάντες μαρτυρήσουσιν, ὁρῶ γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ὀλίγους ἐνταυθοῖ καθημένους. (" Let those of you who are ready to bear witness do so by standing up, for I see not a few of them seated here.")

‡ Libanius, *Op.* I, pp. 159, 4 (Reiske), and elsewhere.

Libanius believes that, so far as he is concerned, Tyche acts justly and wisely, avenging wrongdoing and conducting his life past apparent hindrances to a happy issue, "through rough paths to pleasant stages". This belief determines the way he treats his given theme; the autobiographer has the task of the religious pragmatist, that of tracing this divine direction down to the smallest incidents of individual life. Libanius knows the secret intentions of his Tyche; she reveals herself in the final outcome. The outlook is that of the average optimist, that "suffering is of little account owing to the quantity of joys; or rather, there is no occasion for discontent, as, indeed, to heroes all blows seem light owing to the greatness of their deeds". And the spoiled darling of the public can make plain to the world "how I was watched over by divine providence",* though he does not want to go so far as to sing his own praises as the darling of the gods, as Sulla had done: the men of his day had become too thoughtful for that, or too superstitious.

He gives at the outset this statement of his theme:

My fate is not rightly judged either by those who say I am the most fortunate of men because of this applause for my speeches, or by those who declare that I am the most unfortunate because of my continual labour and pains. Both views are remote from the truth. I shall try to set them right by telling of the share allotted to me and of my present fate, so that all may know that the gods have given me good and evil fortune intermingled, and I am neither the most nor the least fortunate of men—may Nemesis' bolt fail to strike us.

This outlook on life determines the rhetorical form. The story, covering seventy years and extending to 150 pages, is told chronologically and divided into a number of sections, which every now and then raise the question of Tyche, as a summing up or a refrain or a transitional interpolation: "Well, that business with Sabinus, was it not a good thing? So Tyche might ask. However——" "Tyche was determined to show that the speeches of the envious Sophists were idle talk, and so she made me ask for four months' leave." In Libanius' autobiography there appears for the first time the obvious building up of the whole out of separate elements, with clear delimitation of subjects, a plan typical of an age of enlightenment, and accordingly found in the autobiographies of the eighteenth century which preceded the Confessions of Rousseau, as Libanius' work preceded those of Augustine.

* Pp. 42, 8; 20, 15; 155, 3 (Reiske), and elsewhere.

Often the sections are themselves divided ; each piece of good fortune is followed by misfortunes by way of contrast, or vice versa, and in this style of composition the most heterogeneous material may be thrown together—the death of his favourite brother, then the decay of the art of oratory, then a collision in the street that very nearly cost Libanius an eye. Thus the speech, considered as a whole and, what was not, of course, intended, regarded from within, is a veritable model of formlessness—nothing but an unending series of mostly quite petty climaxes of good and evil fortune. The connexion with the gods supplies only a uniformity in the rhythm of the declamation ; the " settlement with Tyche "—so he calls it himself in one place—gives the narrative a formal balance, as if he intended to furnish an example of the rhetorical rule that the style of treatment does not depend on the subject matter.

But, after all, the rhetorical form is not everything. His self-reliance is too robust to be abandoned for belief in divine interventions. At bottom Libanius regards Tyche merely as the great provider of opportunities, clearing obstacles from her darling's path or " with supreme wisdom " turning his steps in the right direction. In relation to the one thing that matters to him, his art of oratory, the gods receive but faint mention : for he owed that to himself, his talent and industry, and Tyche merely provided him with favourable circumstances in which he could display his gifts to the world.

His immense self-confidence made its appearance in Libanius from his youth onward. He tells (5, 22) how at fifteen years of age he was filled with such love of *littera* (*logoi*) that he threw himself entirely into the reading of the classics, and gave up all the childish pleasures with which, as the pampered son of a rich and distinguished family in Antioch, he had occupied himself for a time—gladiatorial fights, horse-racing, sight-seeing, and pigeon-racing during his frequent stays in the countryside. He learned classical texts by heart, and strictly forbade himself all declamation and writing, in order to concentrate on memorizing ; he continued this for five years, and so acquired his astonishingly wide range of reading. He was self-taught up to the age of twenty, when he went to Athens to continue his studies. During this period, too, he insists, he held aloof from the general activities of the students, the drinking bouts, the fights, and the association with courtesans. The young pagan could stand comparison in moral conduct with such Christians as Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, who were

also students in Athens and who later became bishops and were ultimately canonized.

Libanius' was the academic career of the public professor of rhetoric, but in that profession he felt himself to be the representative of the ancient Greek culture. Thus it was a great piece of good fortune for him when Julian came to the throne (361). From Libanius' autobiography we gain the impression, which the correspondence between the two men confirms, that, vanity apart, the two were united by pure and undisturbed friendship. We learn that at their first meeting after Julian's accession to the throne the emperor asked Libanius, "When shall we listen to you?" The emperor desired to have him with him as much as possible, but Libanius held back: "I loved the man, but did not flatter the ruler." Julian felt the affection of this man, who was his senior by nearly twenty years, as the love of a mother. The zenith of Libanius' career was marked by a speech he made before Julian at Antioch, shortly before the emperor left the palace for a campaign against the Persians. Julian in thanking him remarked: "Your words seem to me to place you among the orators, but your deeds place you among the philosophers." *

. Libanius dwells with pleasure on this friendship, and with equal pleasure on the time when as orator he enjoyed a succession of triumphs and was acclaimed as an Orpheus. At these points of climax the rhetorical declamation gives place to expressions of genuine feeling; then he devotes pages to unbroken narrative, and only when his zest abates does he remember that the assessment of good and evil fortune has to be made. At such moments comes full expression of what he regards as happiness. "Victory, victory in everything, in bodily health and in the soul's comfort; to outdo everyone in frequent speeches on great occasions, with loud applause at each; in crowds of youths, increase of pupils, night work, sweating by day, honours, appreciation, love"—so at one place he sums up; these are for him "the good things of the soul", in contrast with the sensual existence in "eating and drinking", and he describes the fifteen years during which the enjoyment of that eminence was granted him as "the spring or the blossoming of my whole life".†

Here we see in late antiquity the spirit of emulation of the ancient Greek arena in a rhetorician's autobiography. Com-

* Libanius, *Op.* I, pp. 120-1, 125, 129, 131. † *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9; cf. p. 54.

petitions with other Sophists, public oratorical triumphs, always presented with entire indifference to the content of the speeches ; delight in the impotent envy and the vain competition of rivals, unbounded abuse of them and of unfriendly officials, who are always just stupid, uneducated, and bad ; vengeful revelling in their fall—all this, together with pride in the great demand for his works and in his influence for a time with the authorities, is the uniform tenor of the story of his life, and the only real defeats are the times without applause and pupils. Libanius takes pains to produce this atmosphere of struggle by means of allusions to or quotations from Homer.

He is well aware of the virtues of gentle mildness, and very ready to display them. He says he has no quarrel with the view of the judge who advised him to show compassion to a repentant enemy ; it would be " like a wild beast " to set out to destroy a man who was ashamed of his offences ; if he asks for pardon, that is enough ; it must not be forgotten that one may oneself, like any human being, get into a similar predicament. And he has no intention of " going against what Homer says—that it is not permissible to gloat over the slain " : it is only because it is one of the gifts of Tyche that the downfall of his enemies must not be left without mention.* His biting and pushing is, indeed, a strong point in his story ; it becomes entertaining at times when he laughs at the behaviour of a rival. He is not afraid of openly invoking the principle of retribution, and one wonders whether the Semitic race of Antioch is revealing itself or we are witnessing a further step in the process of introversion. Revenge is a considerable satisfaction to him, but only because the gods helped him to it.

'At seventy-six years of age the old gentleman still draws upon such feelings for the finale of his autobiography. He has told of his last great misfortune, which made him weep till he was almost blind, the fatal accident to his illegitimate son, who was in a city of Thrace at the time. He shows himself at the end entering the circle of his friends amid deathly silence, and exclaiming : " No more mourning ! We have something that makes an end of suffering." And he finds such satisfaction in fortune's gift that he scarcely dares to mention it—that city in Thrace has been punished with famine. The *Iliad*, he adds, begins with the story of the plague which Apollo, in response to the prayer of his priest Chryses, sends down on the Achæans,

* 45, 98. (*Od.* X 412).

and Chryses was happy to be honoured by so great an evil. Here we have now another priest of the gods honoured by a great famine. It is the work of Demeter, I think, and without any curse being pronounced upon the city such as set Apollo to work. And that plague lasted only nine days, but already the city has been suffering for four months. If the punishment of one man is a great comfort to his victim, how much more so must be that of a whole city, and so great a city ! *

With such thoughts is the story of an individual life brought to a close. All else that happens in the wide world fails to move the rhetorician, can hardly ruffle him ; nothing can induce him to mention anything that goes beyond the narrowest limits of his own life-story. The question whether a subject is of a petty personal nature or of general human interest is immaterial ; he is entirely absorbed in his studies, his teaching, his controversies, and in his anxious concern for the maintenance of his position and prosperity. From this autobiography we learn nothing of the fact that there was a Christendom and a Christian Church, that Antioch, where Libanius lived, was the centre from which the evangelization of the empire had begun, that Libanius himself, in his elegant letters, congratulated the adherents of the new religion when they were able to come into the open and show their art from the pulpit ; and when he comes to his sorest point, that he is unable to take pride in any true disciples who might continue his work, his only explanation of this infertility is that the circumstances were unfavourable—there is not a word about his pupil John Chrysostom disappointing him by going over to the enemy, the Christians. Often, too, in dealing with his private affairs, there is not one note of true humanity ; he brings the death of his father and of his guardian into his story only by describing it as a piece of good fortune without which the rhetorician's career would have been denied to him.

Narrow as his life is, it has nevertheless as its background his rhetorical profession, which was not so empty a thing in the general contemporary view as it seems to us ; and here we have a small crevice through which we may gain a glimpse of the objective world—the art of oratory and the cult of the classic Greek language. That is the sole overriding concern ; but he holds faithfully to it, with more than rhetorical interest ; for him his art incorporates the essence of Hellenism, and when he comes

* P. 169, and a similar passage on page 12.

to the time when his friend the emperor Julian tried to revive that ideal, he gives himself for a moment a background on a grand scale.

And I laughed and leaped high for joy and composed in cheerful courage and declaimed speeches, when the altars once more received blood, and smoke carried the aroma of the sacrifices up to heaven, when the gods were honoured by festivals of which only a few remaining old people knew anything, when divination was carried on freely and eloquence flourished marvellously ; when the Romans were full of courage and the barbarians partly conquered, partly near to subjection.

But here, too, he does not look out for long, but quickly draws back into his shell. The downfall of the art of oratory, and the predominance of the practice of Roman law, which alone was still the path to office and distinction, was a national misfortune which he laments again and again, but the real misfortune is that he must " sit impotently in the professorial chair while the studies are dishonoured and vilified, because the prospects lie elsewhere ". Yet in the end the calculation of good and evil finds a good side even for that misfortune : Tyche—so ends the main section first completed—was entitled, as she might appear to him in person " as on the stage ", to point out to him that she had given him a thing that outweighed many others, the fame of his voluminous literary production, so valued while he was yet alive that his speeches were continually being copied and were in the hands of every teacher and pupil (103, 118).

No less selfish is his reaction to Julian's death :

I looked at once at my sword, for more bitter than any murder must be the life ahead of me. Then, however, I remembered Plato's law, that we are not entitled to find relief in such a way ; and I remembered that if I were in Hades and met Julian, I should be held to blame for such a death ; for he would regard it as entirely wrong not to await the divine disposition. I considered, too, that I had to do honour to the deceased in a funeral oration (92).

In the expression of that subjectivity the change derived from Hellenism, the dwelling less on things and events than on the personal reactions to them, could set in without restriction and, indeed, be carried to extremes. For the vanity of the virtuoso could count on the public's interest in every personal detail, and so the public is informed in this work of proposals of marriage, family incidents, illnesses of all sorts, street accidents through horses taking fright, stones thrown by a madman, and the like,

with the amusement or annoyance they caused. Astrological mysteries, divine apparitions in dreams, sorceries with which his rivals pursued him in his professorship, all are included here, and they were brought in again by a humanist imitator of this autobiography.⁸ But especially the book gives descriptions of subtle emotions. A model of subtlety is the way Libanius, in a situation in which he felt that he was being neglected by the emperor Julian, praises his own worldly-wise, reserved behaviour, insisting with manly pride on equality whenever the two were together—an equality he could claim as a disinterested friend. Then there is a story of his copy of Thueydides, "with small, delicate letters, so light to carry that I always took it myself and the burden of it was a pleasure to me", He studies the Peloponnesian War in it, and will not read any other book on that subject. The book is stolen from him, and now all Thucydides is poisoned for him; he gets the book back and it is as if he had recovered a lost child: "Laugh who will at my making much of a small matter. I am not disturbed by the laughter of the uncultured" (100-1).

A detailed picture of situations and emotions might have given this autobiography lasting interest. But like his model Ælius Aristides, with all his details he does no more than give a bare report; indeed, often he does not even report the facts, only alluding to them, whether because he assumed his public to be aware of the facts (he was not writing for posterity) or because he was so wrapped up in himself that the facts were overborne by the emotional reflexes. The real interest lies only in the language, whose apparent simplicity was a consummate artifice. Nowhere is there the pleasure in giving realistic details. Even in his youth he was old. Industry, reputation, and earned distinctions were his aim from the first, and he tells how, like other young students, he had pictured student life in Athens as something splendid, in which one must be among the foremost as in the fight for one's country, but by a fortunate dispensation he was preserved from being drawn into that "depravity" and into the wild living. The lack of picturesque narrative, together with the allusiveness, makes it difficult at times to understand what is going on. Scarcely ever is there a lively passage. Then there is the formless assembly of a thousand petty climaxes of good or evil fortune: the book is soporific. In the many descriptions of feelings *ethopæia*, methodical but usually cut short, predominates: farewell to home, homesickness, first impressions

in Athens, and so on. But for the happiness of friendship even he has eloquent words. And then one finds here and there an effective and convincing scene. On his anxiety, for instance, over his brother's illness :

Silently I waited in tears in the temple, for I could neither gaze at the statues of the gods nor address them. With my hands on my knees and my head in my hands, I soaked my garment with my tears. To see my brother and not to see him were alike unendurable, so much did the sight of him affect me, and so much the longing to see him. One evening, with my books close by me and an old physician at my side, I asked—I had heard it—whether my brother had been blinded ; then I lost consciousness, and knew no longer what I had known so long, where I was, what I was saying, what I had to do and what not.

Finally, here is one of his supreme moments, his first public appearance in his native city :

I asked the slave whether there were any people there ; he replied that many people had been all night in the hall. So my uncle, trembling, brought me in ; I followed him with a smile, for Tyche gave me confidence. I glanced over the crowd, and like Achilles when the weapons were brought to him, I drank in the picture of them. In that way, before I had spoken a word, I filled them with the utmost admiration. How could I find fitting words about their tears over the prologue ? Many learned it by heart—and then the enthusiasm over what followed ! No one was too old, too slow, too weak to jump up, even those whose bad legs made it difficult for them to stand had done so, and while I sat down they said that they could not possibly do so during my speech, and they interrupted me with requests that I should present myself to my fellow-citizens asking. . . . No more glorious for Agamemnon was the day on which he took Troy than was for me this day on which I received this. And when I went to the baths they accompanied me, and everyone wanted to touch me.*

II. PRELATES' APOLOGIAS : PRISGILLIAN ; NESTORIUS

Rhetoric, and the Hellenic culture it represented, was still a power. And not only with the diminishing supporters of the old ideals, but also, and especially, with the leading personages of the Christian world. It had its share in the great autobiographies of that period, in Augustine's even more than in that of Gregory of Nazianzus. The preachers of asceticism, which had now established itself as the higher way of life, beyond comparison with any other, might all, like their predecessors the Cynics, reject

civilization and set up as a model the "fishermen's language" of the Holy Scriptures, as the only literature left,⁴ but they themselves had passed in their youth through the schools of rhetoric. Augustine was not the only one who had had a pre-Christian period in which he had been a professional orator; one may try to ignore his youth, but it cannot be denied; the resources of a thousand-year-old civilization remained an essential of existence,⁵ and a shout of indignation went through Christendom when Julian set to in earnest and, in a more effectual method of persecution, tried to prevent the study of Greek by the "Galileans", as "barbarians", through an education law, promulgated in 362, which aimed at excluding Christians from the professorial chairs for classical studies.⁶

The desire for an alternative to the over-refined life of the great cities, the urge to take drastic steps to escape from the trying confusion of old and new in thought and faith and morality—these contributed to driving thousands to take their spiritual struggles into the wilderness, and tempted great pulpit orators to withdraw for a time from their nerve-wearing activities to quiet contemplation. The very co-existence of the incompatible, and the necessity for seeking protection against backsliding by resort to monastic asceticism with its loss of freedom, show how much more the renunciation of the ancient culture was a counsel of despair than a matter of taste. Athanasius (c. 298-373), the great ecclesiastic who championed the faith of Nicæa, and who in his "Life of Antonius" did honour to a hero of asceticism who could neither read nor write, nevertheless used Hellenistic resources in his artistic presentation of that very effective hagiological work, and in the *Antonius* he set out to pursue ecclesiastical policy by his literary account of the ideal of asceticism⁷—to say nothing of the others who, without so radical a rejection of European conditions of existence as that of the monks, sought to secure admittance into Heaven by literary services to God in their retreat.

But while among the pagan rhetoricians the inherited art of oratory secured a merely material existence, among the Christian bishops who might also be orators there existed a real resource of faith and emotion which, even if it was generally unable to create a fundamentally new art, was at least able to assure to the moribund forms taken over a life that can be felt to this day. These leading spirits, who produced the "Golden Age" of a Christian literature in Greek and Latin, especially Basil,

Gregory, and John Chrysostom in the East, and Ambrose and Augustine in the West, appear as the heads of an intellectual aristocracy, working together and here and there maintaining intercourse between the two parts of the politically divided world empire.

Gibbon has shown how among the princes of the Church the pursuit of power politics was mingled with religious motives. And the development of their personalities should not be attributed entirely to the superiority of the Christian religion. For the consciousness of the value of personality was a common possession of all Hellenism, and Christendom, when it attained dominance in the Mediterranean civilized world, was no longer a simple unit. At that time of heretical movements which the Church, to its lasting loss, was unable to retain within itself but could only suppress, Christendom was filled with stronger differences than existed between the faith of not a few holy Fathers of the Church and Neoplatonism. This religion based on philosophy still produced men of high character at that time, before its degeneration into divination and theurgy.

An important element that promoted personality among the Christians was the organization of the Church. It offered men of outstanding talent an opportunity of activity altogether different from the literary occupations of the artist in words, the teacher, and the preacher. The ideal of life of Cicero and the Attic democracy, an ideal to which autobiography was so deeply indebted, that of the eloquent politician, made its appearance here in a new and more intimate form, given by the association of intellectual eminence, occupied in the exercise of personal influence over the minds of the community, with the hierarchical position which was now strong enough to defy even the State, of which Athanasius in the East and in the West about the same time Ambrose (c. 340-97), the great bishop of Milan, were the first to give evidence. The association was so general that as early as the beginning of the fifth century the bishop of Ptolemais, Synesius, demanded the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers as a system necessary to the fulfilment of the spiritual calling within normal human limitations.³ This division of life between contemplation and the passion for dominance will show itself in the poems of Gregory as a dividing-point in autobiography—a symbol of its transition from public activities into the solitary inner life.

At that time self-portrayal had traditional function in public

once more—in the bishop's intercourse with the community, in so far as that took place in the form of the elaborated speech, in ecclesiastical party struggles, and in the "parliamentary life" of the Councils. It is especially marked among the Greek preachers. The rhetoricians' habit of speaking of themselves gave place now to the justification of theological dogmas and the depicting of personal states of feeling or the explanation of the reasons for particular actions; especially after a temporary absence from office, voluntary or involuntary, there was occasion for it. Gregory gives us detailed explanations of the circumstances of such acts of his as his flight from his office; the scale of his confessions of this sort may have been due to his impulsive nature. But a safe witness is Synesius, owing to the aristocratic, reserved manner characteristic of that "Hellene".

In the preamble to a decree in which he excommunicated a recalcitrant governor and at the same time announced his own intention to retire (410), he introduced, "in order to make it easier to understand my action", an entirely intimate survey of his life—the quiet happiness of his earlier existence, which was an "eternal festival", divided between prayer, philosophy, leisured occupations, reading, and hunting; the reluctance and apprehensions with which he accepted the dignity of bishop; then his present state of mind: the feeling of incapacity in political affairs, the pride in his very ancient Doric ancestry, his over-sensitive and at times hardly reasonable reactions in personal relations, the general principles of his philosophic way of life, and the torture of the destruction of his contemplative existence, in which he needed to have intercourse only with a few people of like mind, and of his "suffocation" by official business: "I no longer enjoy prayer as I used to, my prayer is no longer single-minded, I am torn by pain and anger, all passions are fighting for my heart."⁹ From this aspect it becomes intelligible that such a work as Augustine's *Confessions* may have had an external motive in the author's desire to defend himself from personal accusations brought against him at the time of his appointment as bishop.

In the apologias of ecclesiastics attacked by their spiritual brethren or rivals for heretical opinions and teaching, the dogmatic element naturally predominates, but they had room also for historical or biographical matter. Two such works by heresiarchs, themselves convinced of their orthodoxy, have recently been discovered and may serve as examples, one

from the West, by Priscillian, the other from the East by Nestorius.*

Priscillian, a Spanish grandee who had been converted to an ascetic and mystical Christianity, was elevated by his supporters among the Spanish bishops to the bishopric of Avila, although he had been excommunicated by a Council in Saragossa in 380. His enemies secured his deposition on the charge of pursuing occult studies, magic, the cult of Mithras, Manichaeism, and, incidentally, immorality. He was handed over to the secular courts, and at Treves in 385, with six other leaders of his sect, he was beheaded. He wrote his *apologia* before his appointment as bishop ; in it he appealed to the " saintly priests " (*beatissimi sacerdotes*), in order to render an account to them of his credo, as he called it, with an allusion to Saint Paul (*Rom. x. 10*), *quin ostenderemus ore quod credebamus in corde* (" that we might confess with the mouth what we believed with the heart"). This he did in detail in over eighty pages of manuscript, condemning all the various heresies with which he was charged and producing a great array of quotations from the Bible (the editor counted them and made the total 370) in proof of his orthodoxy. We shall meet with this element of form in Augustine's *Confessions* ; it is clear that this mass of quotations from the Scriptures was customary at the time and was not mere literary tastelessness but an expression of consciousness of membership of the Christian community, which was held together by faith in the revelation of the Bible.

The apologist was not concerned merely with securing recognition of his orthodoxy by the ecclesiastical authorities, which might be a religious need, but also with his reputation in the Christian community. Priscillian gives expression to this purpose of his work in a striking passage : " The fruit a man's life should bear is approval by those who seek for the true faith, not of those who under pretext of piety pursue their private feuds." ‡ In this connexion he refers incidentally to biographical details. He points out the distinguished position in the world which he had held before his acceptance of Christianity, and describes his conversion with the characteristic statement that he

* See also Athanasius' three apologies against the Arians, to Constantius, and with reference to his flight in 359 ; John Chrysostom, *Homelie post reditum*, delivered before the first Council, etc.

† Priscillianus, *Liber apologeticus*, in *Corpus scriptorum eccles. Latinorum*, ed. Acad. Vindobonensis, vol. 18 (1889), 1-33. Cf. also 6. Scheps, *Priscillian*, 1886.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 40 : *quoniam fructus vitæ est probari ab his qui fidem verî expetunt, non qui sub nomine religiosorum domesticas inimicitias persequuntur.*

had now reached " the safe port of the faith " and had said *valet* to his past life. This last statement has reference to his past reading of the pagan classics, which had been alleged against him as a sin—a delicate point for cultured Christians; we meet with this sin in Saint Jerome and then again and again in mediaeval autobiographies.

Priscillian honourably acknowledges that sin—not hypocritically. He says with reference to " the heathens' gold " that he had read those books for his " spiritual instruction " (*tamquam ad ingenii instructionem*), but had recognized that it was worthless, indeed inimical to his faith; and " Worldly Wisdom " had pleased him at first, but he had learnt to despise it as " worldly folly " (*stultitia sæcularis*).*

Nestorius' apologia has a much stronger personal note, although it is ten times as long as that of Priscillian; and he treats in it of a definite theological subject, Christology. The dogmatic discussion became for this fighter for God a polemic, and the defence of his theological position a stream of invective against his victorious enemy, Cyril, the powerful bishop of Alexandria, who had branded him as a heretic; the work has a further human interest in that it is a preacher in the wilderness—in the literal sense of the phrase—who is speaking to us. Nestorius represented the school of Antioch, and Cyril, representing the rival school of Alexandria, had pursued him since his nomination in 428 as Patriarch of Constantinople by the emperor Theodosius I I, who had acted because the ecclesiastics were unable to agree about the appointment to the see. Cyril induced the Pope to turn against Nestorius; in 431 the Council of Ephesus condemned him unheard, deposed him, and excommunicated him, and finally the emperor abandoned him, banishing him in 435 from his old monastery near Antioch, to which he had retired, to the desert of Upper Egypt. From there, after a considerable interval, Nestorius sent out into the world (about 451) his apologia—under a pseudonym, because otherwise no one would have read it, so execrated was his name: his works had been condemned to be burnt.

This work was recently discovered in a Syriac translation; his autobiographical work with the title " Tragedy " seems to be definitely lost.†

* Priscillianus, *Uber apologeticus*, in *Corpus scriptorum eccles. Latinorum*, ed. Acad. Vindobonensis, vol. 18 (1889), p. 15.

† Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, newly translated from the Syriac by G. R. Driver and L. Hodgson (Oxford, 1995). The strange title by which the work is

It is almost impossible for any reader today, even a trained theologian, to find out in what Nestorius' heresy consisted. But the principal point of his Christologia was that the difference between God and man is an absolute one, a difference of essence and " nature ", and that the union of these two opposite natures in Christ was to be accepted as a unique and miraculous fact. The mystery lay in the " person " of Christ, which united both, the divine and the human. For it was unthinkable to any Christian that God should turn himself into a man or that a man should be able to become God ; to believe that would mean an introduction of paganism into the midst of Christianity—so he insisted in his apologia. And in this he was justified, in so far as the Jewish and Christian conception of man as one of God's creatures was opposed to the Greek belief that " man is akin to Zeus ". Relying on this orthodox doctrine, Nestorius felt that he had a mission to correct the notions concerning the dogma of the Saviour's birth. He considered it misleading to call the Virgin Mary " Mother of God " instead of " Mother of Christ ", because as he insisted again and again in his apologia, it was absurd, indeed blasphemous, to believe that God, whose attribute is immortality, was born, was suckled at his mother's breast, and died. Death came not to the divine but to the human nature of Christ.

To us the subtle distinction between the expressions " Mother of God " and " Mother of Christ " seems no more than a theological technicality ; but it had a deeper significance. In making it Nestorius set himself against the peculiar tendency of Christian piety which had begun at that time to develop within the Byzantine Church ; the epithet *Theotokos* (God-bearer) for the Virgin Mary was the source of Mariolatry. Cyril defended the epithet against the consistent advocate of the orthodox doctrine, and in doing so he was ruthless in the use of his influence. In the words of a modern interpreter, " he was defending the deepest religious instincts and convictions of the people against a merely rationalistic mode of thought ".¹⁰ From this point of view Nestorius' apologia, which was mainly directed against Cyril or his memory (he had died in 444), has a more general interest.

This heresiarch regarded himself as a consistent champion of orthodoxy, as indeed he was.

known is explained as follows : " The original Greek word seems to have been *πραγματεία*, which connotes both ' business ' and ' treatise ' and the Syrian translator rendered it by the word meaning *merchandise '." *Ibid.*, p. xii.

sickness and danger. Now he came " at God's command " to warn the emperor not to intervene in the ecclesiastical prerogative.

In reply Nestorius puts a full-page speech into the emperor's mouth, to set the ecclesiastical controversy in its true light and to justify Nestorius' induction into the bishopric :

What, then, ought I to have done that I did not do? You, the monks, did not agree with the clergy ; the clergy were not of one mind ; the bishops were divided ; and the people in like manner disagreed. . . . Since you were all hating one another, I wanted a stranger who was not known by those here and knew them not, one who was famous for his preaching and for his manner of life. For people had informed me that there was such a one in Antioch. Him I sent for and took.

Once more there comes the reproach that the Council condemned him unheard : " I find no impiety", the emperor continues, " in this man, nor any just cause for his deposition." He would not commit the sin of deposing an innocent man.

Then, however, he weakly gave way when the holy man declared that he would take responsibility for everything upon himself.

Thus was I judged, and thus was the examination. And after the things were finished which were wrought against me by them, the impious band went forth from His Majesty, and they carried Dalmatius around, reclining on a couch that was spread with coverlets, and mules bare him in the midst of the streets of the city, in such wise that it was made known to all men that a victory had been gained over the purpose of the Emperor, amid great assemblages of the people and of the monks who were dancing and clapping their hands and crying out the things that can be said against one who has been deposed for iniquity. . . . And all with one voice were alike proclaiming me anathema, taking courage from anything that had taken place in any part of the city, but especially in the parts by the sanctuary, in such wise as to add unto themselves crowds of the people, clapping their hands and saying naught else except " God the Word died ".*

In this final scene we can detect the defeated theologian's scorn of the victorious populace. But in his exile Nestorius not only preserved his intellectual arrogance but entertained feelings of vengefulness. At this point the Christian monk's apologia shows much the same attitude which we found expressed in Libanius' autobiography, except that he leaves the vengeance on his enemies to the Lord God, insulted by the heresies which

* " The Bazaar," pp. 270-9.

Nestorius is combating. In the last section of the work there is a passage entitled "Enumeration of some part of the ills which happened in the world because of the transgression against the true faith of God impassible." Here he adduces not only the incursions of the barbarians into the Roman Empire but earthquakes and marvels, for instance, in the Forum of Theodosius the Great in Rome : " even the stones which were bound with iron and lead had been torn up, being carried into the air and remaining suspended awhile and then falling ". In another passage he attributes to God's punishment of the " Pharaonic struggle against Him " fatalities in the emperor's family, sickness, death, and divorce, and he prophesies (obviously after the event) :

There will be . . . ere long a second coming of the barbarian against Rome itself, during which Leo, who has indeed held well to the faith but has agreed to the things which they have unjustly committed against me without examination, will with his own hands deliver up the divine vessels of the sanctuary into the hands of the barbarians, and will see with his own eyes the daughters of the Emperor led into captivity.*

In strange contrast to this prophecy he continues : " As for me, I have borne the sufferings of my life and all that has befallen me in this world as the suffering of a single day, and lo ! I am already on the point of departure, and daily I pray to God to dismiss me—me, whose eyes have seen His salvation." The contrast is found throughout the work, and is especially marked in the latter part, which was probably written much later than the rest. He gives a graphic account of his sufferings, but does not want to dwell on his personal fate—" For who is Nestorius ? Or what is his life ? Or what is his death in the world ? " His personal prestige, he says to himself, does not matter ; what matters is the acceptance of the doctrine for which he fought, and this aim, he believes, has been attained through the outcome of the further controversies within the Church, with which he deals in the last section of his apologia. There he states that Pope Leo has given full recognition to his own view, by choosing, in a document that decided the issue of the definition of the Faith, the expression " Mother of the Lord " instead of " Mother of God ", so that peace seems to have been restored in the Church. Not to disturb that peace, for which he had always worked, he says he will not press his claim (though he does so in this apologia)

* *Ibid.*, pp. 362-5, 379. Attila's threatened advance was averted in 452 by Pope Leo's embassy and gifts.

to have been vindicated by the papal decision. " May Nestorius be anathematized ; but may they say what I pray them to say concerning God." So he emphasizes that the work has not been written with a view to his being " accepted and helped by men " —" for I neglect for my part all human things, since I have died unto the world and I am living unto whom I am living ".*

This is not hypocrisy or self-deception ; the self-presentation of the ascetic who has withdrawn from the world is as genuine as that of the fighter for the faith who hates his, that is to say God's, enemies. We can see this from the last passage in the work, in which the peace of the monk's soul finds unique expression : " Rejoice for me, desert, my beloved and my foster-parent and the home of my habitation, and my mother the land of my exile, who even after my death will guard my body until the resurrection by the will of God. Amen."

III. ASCETIC LITERATURE AND PUBLIC CONFESSION

Among the literary forms used in the intercourse of the ecclesiastics and monks with one another and with their flocks, the epistle played a special part. If what their writers say about them can be trusted, these epistles seem to have been a chief means of development of the personal life of their flocks. Gregory of Nazianzus, like Jerome, issued a collection of his letters, and he accompanied them with a commentary in which he said that " in literary works, as in noble children, the father always puts in an appearance, no less than the parent does as a rule in physical characteristics ".† Synesius writes to a friend that the friend's letters, although they lack lively and graceful expression, give so full a picture of his personality that all readers feel drawn to the writer ; and in comment on a speech by a Sophist on letter-writing he speaks of that " divine gift " of being able to chat with absent friends, to live with them, and to enjoy their love. ‡ And we know of particular letters from men of widely different type, Julian or Gregory or Synesius, in which the writers, with no apparent ulterior motive, simply in order to convey their thoughts, permit themselves a certain measure of intimate approach.

But however much those ecclesiastics may have appreciated

* " The Bazaar." pp. 374, 322, 370, 325 ; cf. 361. † Greg. Naz., ep. 52.

‡ Synesius, ep. 137, 141. (A.D. 395.) Cf. also the reference to individual differences in the work " On Dreams", 23-4, and at the outset of the " Dio ". Cf. above, p. 546, and also Ambrosius, op. 45.

the value of intimate correspondence,¹¹ **their** claim that **their** personality is revealed in their letters merely asserts the fulfilment of what rhetorical theory required of them,^{1*} and in this connexion "personal" has reference only to the typifying of characters and situations; entirely conventional letters of the fifth century, made up of borrowed phrases, are described by their writers as a "reflection of their soul".¹³ It seems to be agreed that men must reveal their souls, and the only question is how to do it. In point of fact the letter was largely still a form of rhetorical writing, and it remained so longer than did autobiography; it might contain either the usual social courtesies, which were regarded as a serious subject for letters, or the learned discussion of a particular problem, or official instructions or a diplomatic communication, or matter for the edification of considerable groups; and so far as we can see,* the expression of subjective moods was no more usual in this form than in that of the public speech. In any case it may be said that at that time the specific function of private letters was no better appreciated than in the time of Cicero; it was not realized that they liberate the inner man from the social conventions through the feeling of the presence of an individual friend, so that the writer, whether informally or in a deliberate pose, at least gives a true presentation of himself.

Similarly the communication of biographical sketches in letters, familiar especially in the writings of Jerome, is an offshoot from a Hellenistic branch of rhetoric. The spread of this custom was due to the general desire to study exemplary lives, together with the general eagerness for personal details. Augustine's phrase about the generation "that is greedy for knowledge of the life of other men and lax in the improvement of its own life"† has a broad background in literary customs. His *Confessions* were partly the outcome of a suggestion in a letter from the poet Paulinus of Nola, who was living as a hermit in southern Italy. Paulinus had written to Augustine's friend Alypius, with whom he was not acquainted,‡ to ask him§ to send him an autobiographical epistle on the "whole history of your Holiness"; Augustine replied for his friend, who, for the

* The mass of letters of the fourth century, especially among the Greek Fathers, still calls for psychological investigation.

† Aug., *Conf.*, X, 3. Cf. ep. 24, 5; 25, 2 (ed. Vindob.). See also above, pp. 490, 527, and the details of sources in lives of the saints, for instance Paulinus Nol. *viia Ambrosii* (written at Augustine's suggestion), c. 1.

‡ Aug., ep. 27, 1. Paulinus Noh, ep. 6, 2; 3, 2; 4, 5.

§ Aug., cp. 24, 4. A.D. 395.

very reason of the obvious publicity of such an epistle, wanted to escape from the "duty of that fraternal communication": "When I saw how he (Alypius) was torn between sympathy and reluctance, I relieved him of the burden, as he himself suggested in a letter. So I shall plant the whole of Alypius in your heart without delay."* Augustine then inserted the story of his friend in his own *Confessions*. And it is characteristic of the period that Paulinus in his letter bracketed the apostle to the Gentiles with Virgil: "Tell me in full what is your family and home (*Aeneid*, viii, 114), and from what beginnings you, 'called through his grace, even from your mother's womb' (*Gal.* i. 15), came over to the Mother of the children of God."

As the epistles were intended to be read in public, the writers, when revealing their souls, adopted an attitude intended to impress the public, and thus there arises a doubt how far the apparent intimacy was merely a pose. In Saint Jerome we feel that doubt in a much more subtle form than in Seneca's *Moral Epistles*, because in Jerome there is also humility, so that that rhetorical play with truth turns into falsehood or hypocrisy. Jerome makes much use of the epistle in order to disclose his states of soul to the world in a characteristic mixture of the typical and the individual.¹⁴ Particularly impressive were the confessions he made to his disciple Eustochia in a famous letter sent from Rome (A.D. 384) to that wealthy Roman lady, who under his influence had vowed to live a celibate life. In this "letter", which fills some forty printed pages, he gives her a picture of the monastic life to which he had turned ten years earlier in Syria, and an account of the motives, demands, and temptations of that life; two of the principal temptations are illustrated by autobiographical details: †

How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! I used to sit alone because I was filled with bitterness. Sackcloth disfigured my unshapely limbs, and my skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian's. Tears and groans were every day my portion . . . Of my food and drink I say nothing . . . Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often

* Aug., cp. 27, 5.

† Hieronymus, ep. 22, 7 and 30. Translated by W. H. Fremantle, in *A Select Library of the Fathers*, second series, vol. VI.

found myself amid bevvies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting ; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair ; and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence. I do not blush to avow my abject misery ; rather I lament that I am not now what once I was. . . . When I had shed copious tears and had strained my eyes towards heaven, I sometimes felt myself among angelic hosts, and for joy and gladness sang : " Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance ; . . . we will run after thee " (Song of Songs, i. 3).

The other great temptation of which he could speak from his own experience was the study of the literature of pagan Rome. This, too, is typical, although it might seem characteristic of that writer, famed for his vast scholarship. We have seen how at about this time Priscillian set down his study of the classics, which was accounted a sin, as a youthful folly he had overcome. When Jerome wrote that letter he was already occupied with his Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate, but he was also a graceful writer of stories of the ascetic life. He describes that sin as " an adultery of the tongue ", and relates " the story of my own miserable experience " as follows :

Many years ago, when for the kingdom of heaven's sake I had cut myself off from home, parents, sister, relations, and—harder still—from the dainty food to which I had been accustomed, and when I was on my way to Jerusalem to wage my warfare, I still could not bring myself to forego the library which I had formed for myself at Rome with great care and toil. And so, miserable man that I was, I would fast only that I might afterwards read Cicero. After many nights spent in vigil, after floods of tears called from my inmost heart, after the recollection of my past sins, I would once more take up Plautus. And when at times I returned to my right mind, and began to re-read the prophets, their style seemed rude and repellent. . . . While the serpent old was thus making me his plaything, about the middle of Lent a deep-seated fever fell upon my weakened body . . . Meantime preparations for my funeral went on ; my body grew gradually colder. . . . Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the judgment seat of the Judge ; and here the light was so bright, and those who stood around were so radiant, that I cast myself upon the ground and did not dare to look up. Asked who and what I was, I replied : " I am a Christian." But He who presided said : " Thou liest, thou art a follower of Cicero and not of Christ. For ' where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also '." Instantly I became dumb, and amid the strokes of the lash—for He had ordered me to be scourged—I was tortured more severely still by the fire of conscience, considering with myself that verse, " In Sheol who shall give thee thanks ? " Yet for aill that I began

to cry and bewail myself, saying, " Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me." Amid the sound of the scourges this cry still made itself heard. At last the bystanders, falling down before the knees of Him who presided, prayed that He would have pity on my youth. . . . He might still, they urged, inflict torture on me, should I ever again read the works of the Gentiles. Under the stress of that awful moment I should have been ready to make even larger promises than these.

Accordingly, I made oath, saying : " Lord, if ever again I possess worldly books, or if ever again I read such, I have denied Thee."¹⁵ Dismissed then, on taking this oath, I returned to the upper world. . . . And that this was not sleep or idle dream, I call to witness the tribunal before which I lay, and the terrible judgment which I feared. May it never, hereafter, be my lot to fall under such an inquisition ! I profess that my shoulders were black and blue, and that thenceforth I read the books of God with a zeal greater than I had previously given to the books of men.

It was scarcely too severe a judgment when it was said of that story of the saint's conversion that it was " one of the worst masterpieces of mendacious rhetoric, laboriously contrived enthusiasm, and spurious piety".¹⁵ It is usual to bracket Jerome's letters with those of Cicero as having inspired Petrarch, the founder of the humanism of the Italian Renaissance, the " first of the moderns ", as historians generally call him. But the historical sphere in which that famous letter of the saint's, with his vision of his scourging for his literary strayings, developed its influence is to be sought rather in the monastic literature of the early Middle Ages. In that literature, and not in Petrarch, the actual effect of that vision, and of all the other wild sophistries that gained a footing through Jerome, is to be found in autobiography as elsewhere.

But Jerome also regarded his translation of the Bible, a great work both as literature and theologically, from the point of view of asceticism. He had discovered from his own experience that intellectual labour helps a man to escape from the thralldom of the senses, and the confessions he makes in regard to this seem to us more convincing and more sincere than those " confidential " communications, although he brings them forward partly for a didactic purpose, in a letter addressed to a friend but obviously intended for publication. In this letter he gives a description of the monastic life of which he had found a model among the saints of the Egyptian desert, and in that connexion he emphasizes the importance of labour, both intellectual and manual : " Never let the Devil find you unoccupied"

In connexion with this advice, which reminds us of the rules of the Benedictines,* he comes to the subject of his study of Hebrew, writing once more in depreciation of pagan literature, but now tells also of the benefit it has brought him alike in his life and in his work : f

In my youth, when I had taken shelter in the solitude of the desert, I was scarcely able to resist the temptation of vice and the natural fire ; I tried to tame it by frequent fasting, but the thoughts flowed in my mind. In order to master them, I went to study with one of the brethren, who had been converted from Judaism ; instead of the acuteness of Quintilian, the fluency of Cicero, the pomp of Fronto, and the pleasantness of Pliny, I learned the (Hebrew) alphabet and practised the sibilants and breathings. The labour I devoted to this, the difficulties I had to overcome, the frequent despair and abandonment of the work, followed by recommencement under the urge to learn, all this is testified to me by my conscience and can be attested by those who were living with me. But now I thank my Lord for it ; for from the bitter seed of study I am reaping sweet fruits.

Finally the most authoritative biography of a monk that appeared at this time, Athanasius' Life of Saint Anthony, shows that in the monastic practice of self-analysis not only was the relation of the soul to God kept in mind, but that of the analyst to other men, or, in literature, to the public. This relation was so usual that it was possible for the thought of publicity to be brought into the technique of the training of the soul. In this book, which Athanasius addressed from Alexandria to the monks of the West (and the reading of which played a decisive part in the conversion of Saint Augustine), he makes the great hermit deliver long speeches to his monks in the Egyptian desert, instructing them in the way to combat devils and temptations. He gives the well-known rule of the Stoa as to daily examination of the conscience, but he changes the method : for safety everyone should note down every day his acts and his soul's promptings as if he meant to communicate them to other people ; the fear, he explains, of being found out is the most effectual means of overcoming sin and sinful desire and devils ; for men would rather lie than endure such disgrace. The ascetic's diary should take the place of the lacking publicity, should serve instead of " the eyes of fellow-ascetics ".

So even the solitary existence that had become the regular

* Cf. *S. Benedicti regula monachorum*, cap. XLVIII.

† Hieronymus, ep. 125, 12, ad Rusticum monachum (Migne, Patrol. Lat. t. XXII, 1078).

and exclusive way of life of monachism contained within itself very mixed spiritual elements, although the ascetic ideal of life may have had a purer development within early Christianity before it mingled with the similar currents in the Hellenistic civilized world.¹⁶ Only among the peoples of later ages did monachism work its way out of that Hellenistic and oriental atmosphere. In this connexion a refined technique of self-analysis had been developed in the fourth century, and it had been possible at the same time for penitential practice to pass from Christian congregational worship into Christian literature, which had borrowed the forms of Greek and Roman rhetoric.

Christ's preaching of God's redeeming love of the sinner, that profound comprehension that blessed Mary Magdalene, had been infinitely remote from the conception that bound up salvation with the inspection and analysis of the inner life. Only if Christianity is reduced to ethicism in the sense of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, can continual self-scrutiny in the fear of the Lord be considered as an essential trait in the teaching of Jesus. Such penitential elements as are contained in the gospel are remnants of the traditions of exhibition of the consciousness of sin and redemption which were cultivated by the oriental priests, who did not rely on the genuineness of the individual's feeling that his will and heart had been entirely renewed. But Saint Paul himself exhorted men to keep constant watch on themselves and examine themselves ; ¹⁷ he assigned special occasions for doing so, such as the Lord's Supper. The idea of the community in which each one must bear another's burdens gave a practical purpose and value to public confession ; in the " two ways " of the apostle's doctrine, and similarly in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, the practice is normalized. Often we hear of the confession of sins of a convert and future martyr, of a catechumen before baptism, or of one who has fallen and seeks readmittance; with the " establishment of the Christian congregations as communities of an unbounded remission of sins ", confession became a formal sacrament.¹⁸

As in this type of confession men were bound to bring to light particular elements of their inner life for public judgment, this religious practice of the Christian community presupposed a technique of introspection or self-analysis, which had been developed only in highly cultured societies. When dealing with the Hellenistic type of philosophico-religious self-examination, we saw the individual's anxious reflection on his moral status taking

that analytical line without impairing his fundamental self-confidence. By now becoming, in the scruples leading to penance and humility, something valuable and pleasing to God, self-analysis grew into a method of brooding on sins. Augustine made plentiful use of it in his autobiography, but in this his analysis is only of an average type. Even in the fourth century Christian asceticism possessed an ample narrative and didactic literature, which as an "inward discipline" handed down that psychological type of self-dissection to the Middle Ages for further elaboration.

The technique was extraordinarily effectual, and in some cases proved fruitful. It celebrated its triumphs in the most subtle observations, mainly of sexual matters and the pleasures of eating—less often of drinking—but also of finer things. Thus, for instance, in the monastic rules of Basil there is this question, typical of the whole of this sort of conception of the self: "If in the delivery of a sermon we detect pleasure in the success we have achieved, is that to be attributed to the feeling of good done, or to an excess of pride?"* Complex states of mind, too, are similarly described by means of analysis into components and the placing of these alongside each other. Thus in Athanasius' work Saint Anthony, in his great speech to the monks, teaches a method of distinguishing between spirits; the urgent problem, to determine whether a vision is the work of angels or devils, should become possible for the monks to solve if they are provided with recognizable descriptions of the corresponding states of soul. For appearances of devils these are fear, distress, confusion of thoughts, depression, hatred of asceticism, laziness, sadness at the recollection of past life in the society of fellow-beings, and then especially lust for evil, distaste for virtue, and moral instability.

Congregational confession, as practised in those days, was also to be found among a highly cultured society. In the fourth century it was already being publicly urged, while recognizing the actual psychological and social conditions, that there were immoral and scandalous features in the public admission of sins, or at all events features that ran counter to the tendency to improvement; and John Chrysostom, as one with a knowledge of men and a sound moralist, wanted confession to be made only

* Basil., *Regula concisius disputata*, 195. Cf. L. Thamin, *St Ambroise*, p. 379. Also, for instance, Hieronymus, ep. 125, 7, on the danger of fasting, because at the end of it eating is a heightened pleasure.

we meet first with the essential work he did in his solitary self-communion, but also with his rhetorical training and his study of ancient literature, and especially of the histories of Tacitus and Sallust, written under the influence of the Stoa. And we meet especially with the preaching of Ambrose, who had mastered through Cicero the Roman Stoic doctrine of personality and who, by superposing the love of Christ on that doctrine, had created a deeply moving eloquence : in Ambrose the Milanese rhetorician Augustine not only found an impressive personal example of ecclesiastical authority, but also the psychological cultivation of the sermon, dealing with the Christian's inner struggles with such a wealth of experience that his hearers felt themselves to be directly affected ; to this day one has the feeling, in reading these sermons of Ambrose, that they must have been delivered actually for Augustine.²³

IV. NEOPLATONIC SELF-COMMUNION AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

The essential thing, however, was the solitary occupation with the life of the soul. It had yet another centre, far from public activities and official relations, in the highly spiritual Neoplatonic religion. Through Plotinus, Neoplatonism had become one of the three great world-religions of that time, with Christianity and Manichaeism.²⁴ That "mystical pantheism" maintained itself through the whole development of Christianity down to the Renaissance as a strong undercurrent, which often tried to break through into freedom ; and where it was still present in its pure form in the fourth century it exercised even then the most intimate influence over Christianity. It was a decisive element in the progress of self-communion, which from its Stoic to its Christian type was continuously associated with figures and literary forms representative of the Hellenic spirit. When in silent and solitary self-communion, suppressing the senses to get rid both of the awareness of the world around him and of his empirical individuality, in his retreat relying alone on the divine power operative in him, man listens to the sounds deep down in his soul, where there rings out that which, beyond all reflective consciousness, gives life out of infinite fullness to all that is, then, akin as he is to God, he can unite with the divine spirit pervading the universe. From that flight, as we have already seen,* the poetic imagination returned with more

* See above, pp, 521 sqq.

powerful wings, which did not again lose the shimmer of the supersensual.

Plotinus himself had no desire to develop the metaphysical poetry of his doctrine into a form of art : every literary resource, like the actual empirical ego, was alien to that intellectual realm in which the soul thoughtfully searched and silently waited for the " sunrise " of self-recognition to approach through the " holy glance " of the godhead. In the supreme moments of the feeling of full and blessed union, however, personal experience called even in him for direct expression :

Many times it has happened. Lifted out of the body into myself; becoming external to all other things and self-encentred, I am beholding a marvellous beauty ; then, more than ever, I am assured of community with the loftiest order and enact the noblest life, acquiring identity with the divine ; stationing within It by having attained that activity ; poised above whatsoever within the Intellectual is less than the Supreme : yet, there comes the moment of descent from intellection to reasoning, and after that sojourn in the divine I ask myself how it happens that I am now descending and how did the soul ever enter into my body.*

Marcus Aurelius had found the highest happiness in the harmony of the personal life with the divine symphony of the universe : Plotinus found it in liberation from the fetters of the personal existence, the soul's longing for its divine home being fulfilled in ecstasy, which he is said to have experienced four times in his life—so overpowering was the metaphysical or religious trend in the revival of the Platonic philosophy, a revival that took place not in Athens but in Alexandria, the eastern centre of the Hellenistic civilization.

But here too the Greek view of the universe as a cosmos, a multiform whole, conceived as obedient to rule, and of noble beauty in its wonderful orderliness, held its ground. This world of our sense-bound experience, from which the thoughtful seeker after God must turn away his gaze in order to concentrate on spiritual contemplation, is nevertheless the first and nearest object of philosophic wonderment, and provides an indication of the infinitely greater marvel of the spiritual realm into which the soul enters through the inward turning of the mind. This dual attitude to the world was based on Plato himself. For the Platonic Ideas, those eternally clear Forms conceivable only by pure reason, those exemplary patterns of the earthly things

* Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV, 8, 1 ; cf. VI, 9, 10 ; I, 6, 7, and elsewhere. Translated by Stephen Mackenna, *Plotinus*, III.

modelled on them, throw on those changing, transient things a gleam of their divine radiance, and on the other hand they attract the human soul that turns to them, drawing it away from perishable things to contemplate the eternal. Derived from Plato, this duality was first taken as a fundamental characteristic of the view of the world by Neoplatonism, which made Plato's philosophy, that supreme intellectual creation of the Greek mind, a counterpart of the Christian religion, and which, indeed, if we consider its historical influence, incorporated that philosophy in Christianity.

We must keep in view this dual attitude to the world in order to do justice to a conception of Plotinus' that particularly concerns us, as it had relevance to the problem of individuality. Plotinus, so far as we know alone among the ancient thinkers, attempted to provide a metaphysical explanation of the existence of a multiplicity of qualitatively different individuals. This problem runs through his various treatises, which seem to us like the meditations of a solitary thinker ; and it forms the subject of one treatise, compressed into a few pages, which has the characteristic title " Is there an ideal Archetype of Particular Beings ? " *—even of these and not only of genera and species, which have an element of the general.

When dealing with the Stoic concept of man's personality, we saw that in the philosophy of life of the Romans, influenced by the Stoics, the " immeasurable variety " of human individuals was brought to light in regard not only to the " person " in a much-used sense of that word of many meanings, that is to say the outward appearance, but to nature and character, individuality being given a positive significance in practical ethics; but we missed any profound explanation of that phenomenon, so significant in the social life of humanity. † Now, three centuries later, we meet with an attempt to furnish an explanation, from a thinker who represented a religious, metaphysical tendency in philosophy, poles apart from that philosophy of life. Plotinus, a deeply spiritual man who, an Egyptian by birth, lived the life of an ascetic in the highly cultivated society of Alexandria and then in imperial Rome, showed a very un-Hellenic contempt for the bodily frame that is the outward aspect of the human individual, and so primarily in view when we speak of the " person " ; he refused on principle

* Plotinus, *Enneads*, V, 7. Translated by Stephen Mackenna and B. S. Page.

† See above, Part I I, Introduction, pp. 195 sqq.

to have his portrait made : he is said to have declared that the painter or sculptor makes only " a shadow-picture of the shadow-picture in which Nature has wrapped us ". When in spite of this he regarded the individual variety of men as a thing that mattered, he must have had a conception of individuality as something not concerned with the visible existence of the separate person but related to the intellectual unity of the ego. It was, indeed, Plotinus who introduced the term " the ego " into philosophy, and we can hardly be in error when we place his conception of " individual Ideas " alongside the Christian view of the absolute value of the individual soul.

He sees in individuality something primeval, sprung from the divine ordering of the world. He speaks of the " Idea of the individual " as the characteristic original model on which the individual man, with a name of his own, is formed. In this way he tries to establish the enigmatical unity of the individual, with the assistance of the Platonic notion of " Ideas " : to establish that, as an individual marked off from all other individuals by its uniqueness, it is a complete whole with its own centre. He is concerned with the spiritual character of this individual unity and wholeness ; the treatise begins : " We have to examine the question whether there exists an ideal archetype of individuals, in other words whether I and every other human being go back to the intellectual, every (living) thing having origin and principle there.⁵⁵ * Plato had based the difference between man and animal on the capacity of the human soul to contemplate eternity ; Plotinus sees in this act of the mind the origin of the ego.

He develops his conception, combating the opposed materialistic explanation of individual differences which was dominant in the tradition of the schools of philosophy, derived both from Aristotle and from the Stoics. Although, as we saw, the Greek art of biography and of analysis of character began with Aristotle, in his system of philosophical principles he had not seriously attacked the problem of individuality. The question Plotinus asks in his title goes back to Aristotle, but Aristotle asked that question—whether there were Ideas not merely of genera and species, the so-called universals, but also of individuals—only to deny the existence of the latter sort; he was mainly concerned

* *Enneads*, V, 7. Translated by Stephen Mackenna. The Greek text may alternatively be rendered : " Since, like every individual, I lift myself up to the intellectual." etc. Cf. E. Brehier, *Plotin, Enneades*, V (1931), p. 123,

to expose the difficulties of the so-called doctrine of Ideas even more plainly than Plato himself had done in the most powerfully reasoned of the dialogues of his old age, the *Parmenides*.* In his "realistic" redrafting of Plato's doctrine he carried the subdivision of living beings into genera and species, which he had made the basis of natural philosophy, only to the point at which Man is included as a particular species in the rational system of organic nature. He regarded the variety of human individuals as a mere accident, due to the fact that the universal "form" characteristic of the human genus needs "matter" in order that it may exist, and the particular piece of matter is different for each individual human being. Thus from his biological point of view he reduced the individuals to mere specimens of a universal thing: he did not shrink from maintaining that two human beings—and as an instance he chose historical personalities, Socrates and Callias—differed from each other only because one had different "flesh and bone" from the other. Plotinus does not discuss this contention of the great philosopher's. He concerns himself instead with the Stoic explanation, and mentions a special case of the problem, in which the scientific element in that explanation comes into prominence, the differences between the children of the same parents. In accordance with their naturalistic pantheism, the Stoics worked not with the notion of form but with that of force, which penetrates matter as a soul-like element; † they sought to account for the individual differences in "nature and character", which, as already mentioned, they regarded as intrinsic and not accidental, by assuming qualitative differences in the "forces" collaborating in procreation. But here, too, if we are not mistaken, the explanation of these differences proceeded from the varying tension between force and matter. In any case, Plotinus defines the assumption which he questions as that "matter (*ὕλη*) produces differences in so far as it is not dominated in like fashion" (II, 7).

He attacks that assumption through its consequence: "Then all individuals but one would be against nature," the exception being the one in which the matter was entirely "dominated" by the life force, or in which the typical human being, the generic "form", is shaped in the greatest purity. And against this he points out that "multiple difference is something beautiful", and therefore cannot be "against nature". We will dwell on this great dictum. It recalls to us one from the Italian

* Cf. Brehier, *Plotin*, V, 158, 119. † See above, pp. 192-3, 516-7,

Renaissance, in which the laudation of individuality characteristic of that epoch finds very similar expression : " *La natura per variar e bella* " (the beauty of Nature lies in her variety).

From his dictum Plotinus infers that " there cannot be only one ' Idea ' for the various examples of a species " (II, 7) : " Individuals do not correspond to their archetype as images of Socrates do to the original, but one must attribute the difference between them to the difference of their primitive forms " (I, 4). To this we can hardly agree. We wonder whether the particular character of the individual can be explained from his " primitive form ", that is to say from a standpoint apart from his empirical existence, even a standpoint attached to the Idea-Heaven. And we absolutely revolt when Plotinus uses here the famous Platonic phrase " things in themselves " and, for instance, in the same way as Plato contrasts the " State in itself " with the actual States in the world, writes of " the authentic Socrates ", or of " Socratesity ".* But we must not take these phrases too seriously. Plotinus himself does not insist on them.

This is noticeable in another argument which he uses against the traditional explanation of individuality. In opposition to the Aristotelian doctrine of the one and only type of human being, or the universal human form of being, he contends that " individual human beings are distinguished not merely by the matter of which they are composed, but also by countless differences of nature of a general sort ".† He gives no more than an indication of the argument here, but in another work he expounds it at length, adding examples of such general differences—artistic or intellectual gifts, and also physical differences which have an element of the typical, such as colour of skin or shape of nose ; here the typical element, such as the flatness or curve of the nose, belongs to the class of eternal forms, while the degree of the impress of the typical element is determined by material causes.

In this other treatise he introduces the argument with a statement that is radically opposed to his contention of the existence of individual Ideas. " We are bound to observe that Ideas of the general alone exist; for instance, there is not an Idea of Socrates but only that of the human being. But the question is whether there are also Ideas of the details of the human being."‡ The contradiction is undeniable. But it seems to us

* *ἀποσκευαίτης*, *ibid.*, I, 1.

† *εἰδητικαῖς διαφαιραῖς μυσταῖς*

I, 4.

‡ *Enneads*, V, 9, On Mind, Ideas, and Being; 12 (45-46).

that it does not concern the very conception underlying his former statement of the existence of individual Ideas, but only the phrasing of that conception. For Plotinus does not go a single step along the path he here indicates, that of differential psychology, to investigate by isolation and comparison the "countless differences" between human beings. Here again he is concerned with the unity and completeness of the individual, whose individuality can probably be split up by analysis into a mass of more or less general qualities, but cannot be synthesized by means of them. This individual unity, however, he does not now apply to the individual human being, but to the individual soul, which, in his view, is something higher than the human being : for in the Platonic dogma the soul of man is not bound to the body but tends directly, by its own nature, to the contemplation of the eternal, to which man can turn only by diverting his gaze from the physical to the spiritual. With reference to the soul, however, there is no need for the assumption of an "Idea" of the individual in distinction from his earthly existence, because the soul has its living and being outside the sphere in which this distinction has a meaning. For the individual soul there is no archetype, because it is itself something original. Thus in this other tractate, in which, following the traditional view, he denies the existence of such a thing as an Idea of the individual, Plotinus proceeds as follows :

We cannot take all that is here to be image of archetype, or Soul to be an image of Absolute-Soul : one soul, doubtless, ranks higher than another, but here too, though perhaps not as identified with this realm, is the Absolute-Soul. Every soul, authentically a soul, has some form of Tightness and moral wisdom ; in the souls within ourselves there is true knowing : and these attributes are no images or copies from the Supreme.*

The contrast between the physical and the transcendental, between this world and the Beyond, loses its meaning with reference to the soul, which is something unspatial, present everywhere, indeed, embracing the universe thanks to the knowledge it has of itself and of the universe, but which also has the capacity, indeed, the destiny, of immersing itself, in the beatifying contemplation in which all difference vanishes, in the ever-present source of life permeating the universe, †

We will not discuss this turn to mysticism, for in it individu-

* *Enneads*, V, 9, 13 (49). He speaks here of *αὐτοφυχή* as above of *αὐτοσωκράτης*.

† Ibid., V, 9, 13 (50) ; V, 7, 2 (5), and 3 (11).

ality loses the basis which Plotinus had provided for it within Platonic philosophy. What interests us is the way he proceeds here from the denial of the existence of an "Idea" of **the** individual to the assertion of the ideal reality of the individual soul. In it we see that his conception of spiritual individuality lies elsewhere, on a plane leading to a mystical pantheism, a higher plane than that of the abstract and universal notion of the individual that was predominant in the Aristotelian school.

The Aristotelians regarded the individual human being as a mere instance of a generality—of the uniform nature of Man, and sought to resolve Man's individual character into a combination, varying from case to case, of universal qualities, or "elements of form", possessed by him in common with other individuals. In such an approach there is necessarily left an insoluble remainder, proving that the actually individual belongs to another sphere of existence, different from the ideal one occupied by those "innumerable" elements of form the combination of which was supposed to explain the phenomenon of individuality; in order to make plain that we meant this individual man who existed or still exists, his name must be given or he must be pointed out as the person in question. The rationally incomprehensible element of the individual remains concealed in this indication, and was ultimately discovered in it by a great thinker: Aristotle's term for the individual, "that there" (*τὸ ὅτι ἐστι*), was raised at the zenith of scholasticism in the Middle Ages to the category of individuality under the name *haecceitas* ("thisness").

The opposite extreme to this empirical, and at the same time rational, method of approach is seen in the profound conception of individuality formed by Plotinus out of the Platonic philosophy, in a state of intellectual life entirely different to that of Plato's and Aristotle's time. The manifest inconsistency of denying in one treatise what is admitted in another, is psychologically intelligible if we assign the two works to different stages in the development of Plotinus' system. But at the back of the two mutually inconsistent replies to the question of the schools* concerning the existence of "Ideas" of individuals, lies **the** productive conflict of two different standpoints in regard to **the** problem of individuality, which are by no means mutually

* On this school tradition cf. Albinus' statement in Brehier, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 119 and 168.

exclusive, since intuition into the spiritual unity of the human individual leaves room for the analysis of human characteristics, which had been methodically elaborated in the Aristotelian school.

Plotinus' productive contribution did not receive recognition in late antiquity. The Christian conception of the individual soul, which stands directly face to face with its God as I and Thou, stood in its way. Accordingly, until the end of the Middle Ages the theologians held to the doctrine, rather strange to us, that in God's intellect, to which the Platonic "Ideas" had then been transferred, there existed only the general notion of mankind, while God's will and providence were directed to the individual human being. Only in a late epoch in modern times, in which the individual elaboration of personality took place simultaneously with the systematic study of individuality, an epoch of revival of Platonism, do we find dicta of German thinkers and poets that remind us of Plotinus' conception and may serve to illustrate its lasting importance. Goethe summed up his view of the primeval and unchanging unity of the "individuality of the person" in the famous couplet in the poem with the mysterious title *Urworte. Orphisch* ("Primeval Dicta. Orphic") :

Und keine Zeit und keine Macht zerstückelt
Geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt.

("Nor time nor any power can break into fragments the impressed form that lives and, living, grows.") Friedrich Schlegel, who, we believe, introduced the term "individuality" into the modern science of literature,* of which he was one of the founders, described what Plotinus had in mind when he spoke of a "Socrates in himself" as "a conception of the spirit of an individual life".† And we seem to see full justice done to Plotinus' conception when we read Wilhelm von Humboldt's words :

Every human individuality is an Idea rooted in the visible world, and from some individuals this idea shines forth so brightly that it seems to have assumed the form of the individual in order to

* F. Schlegel, "Kritische Fragmente," in the *Lyceum der schönen Künste*, I (1791) no. 46, and elsewhere. Cf. Minor, *Fr. Schlegels Prosaische Jugendschriften*, I I, pp. 190, 382, 291, 296.

† F. Schlegel, *loc. cit.*, in his review of F. H. Jacobi's novel *Woldemar*, where he says shrewdly of the characters in the novel that "they do not reveal, as Jacobi claims, 'mankind as it is', but Friedrich-Heinrich-Jacobiness". The philosopher Georg Simmel used a similar phrase in his book on Goethe, published in 1913 : he set himself the task of "comprehending the spiritual significance of Goethe's existence" and discovering "the Goethe Idea" (Preface, p. vi).

reveal itself in it. When we analyse human activity, after removing all determining causes there remains behind in it something original which, instead of being overpowered by their influence, is more likely to transform them.*

It is by no mere chance that the voices we have here heard came mainly from the Romantic epoch. There is a kinship between the representatives of that modern intellectual movement and Plotinus, proceeding not only from the common nearness to Plato, but also from a similar intellectual position of their times. This leads us to the subject of the influence of Neoplatonism on the general literature of the epoch of antiquity in which autobiography achieved a late flowering. In late antiquity, as in the modern Romantic epoch, there was formed out of Neoplatonism a metaphysical, religious poetry, in which self-communion found expression in lyrical forms. Villemain has pointed out the kinship of the "Hymns" of Synesius with Lamartine's *Meditations*:²⁵ it consists in the common dependence on the Platonic heritage of religiousness. In the fourth and fifth centuries meditation, prayer, hymn in verse form or in rhythmical prose were literary media through which a Christian metaphysician and a Neoplatonic philosopher could alike give expression to the soul's longing for purity and repose in God.²⁶ It has been shown how pantheistic poetry made its appearance in the intellectualized Hellenistic mysticism. Prayer was an element of the Neoplatonic method of uplifting the soul; it stimulated and accompanied religious intercourse in turning away from the pleasures of the senses and from the outer world to the divine: "As we are parts of the universe it is fitting that we should be in want of the universe. For to turn to the whole brings salvation to every part of it." "Prayer especially pertains to worthy men, because it is a contact with divinity. The similar loves to be conjoined to the similar: and the worthy man is most similar to the gods".† But just as everything has proceeded from the divine foundation and strains back towards it, so "all things pray except the First One"‡ Thus not he who is impure but just he who pursues philosophy and purifies himself is bound to and entitled to

* W. von Humboldt, *Werke*, I, p. 22. Suggested by Schelling, who wrote "The real, empirical human being, in whom body and soul are opposed to each other, is only a manifestation of the Man-Idea, in which [Idea] body and soul are identical." Cf W. Dilthey, *Ideen zu einer beschreibenden und zergliedernden Psychologies* in *Ges. Schriften*, V, pp. 227-8.

† Porphyry in *Proclus in Timaeum*, I, 208. Translated by Thomas Taylor, *The Commentaries of Proclus on Timaeus* (1820), I, pp. 175-6.

‡ Dictum of the "great Theodorus", in Proclus, *ibid.*

pray. Stages were distinguished in the course of prayer, according to the depth and fullness of the union between soul and God.

In the last place, union succeeds in establishing *the one* of the soul in *the one* of the gods, and causing our energy to become one with divine energy; according to which we are no longer ourselves, but are absorbed as it were in the gods, abiding in divine light, and circularly comprehended by it. And this is the best end of true prayer, in order that the conversion of the soul may be conjoined with its permanency, and that everything which proceeds from *the one* of the gods may be established in the One, and the light which is in us may be comprehended in the light of the gods.*

Thus prayer also appears in Neoplatonic works, as introduction to philosophic inquiry or exhortation, and especially at the beginning of the actual teaching of the paths of the soul: ²⁷ Augustine and Boethius used it in much the same way in their meditations.²⁸ Quite different from its position in the Psalms, which could be recited in solitude with emotional expression of moods, † is that of the soul in these prayers and hymns in relation to divinity : it does not ask to set the godhead in motion or call down its powers, but it asks to be lifted into the universal urge toward the highest good, which eternally permeates the world and the innermost individual soul from God. ‡

From this vision of the spirit, poetry might try to draw life : the hymns of Synesius are the sublime expression of that interweaving of the feelings in a supersensual light; and yet they seem like a dance of shadows, a bloodless surge of abstractions. There seems to be much the same relationship at work here between thought and life as at the coming into existence of self-scrutiny in the Stoic philosophy of personality. The religious meditation does not proceed from the individual inwardness, but plunges into the evenly flowing aether of the spiritual world, so that the soul, fanned by the air of its heavenly home, returns to its origin, and it is this act of feeling its way back and of surrender that recast in poetry the vision of the spiritual world which at that time had in men's minds the character of religious dogma.

The spiritual energy of the poet may appear to us to be waning when in this atmosphere of prayer he gives expression to other

* *Proclus in Tun.*, 64 and 65, I, p. 209. Translated by Thomas Taylor, *ibid.*, p. 178.

† See the description of such a recitation in Aug., *Conf.*, ix, 4, 8 sqq.

‡ On this the Neoplatonic theorists of prayer laid great emphasis. Cf. Koch, *op. cit.*, pp. 180, 184, 189.

desires than that for illumination and elevation above the vortex of the material; yet once again it is a personal attitude to God (attained also in a similar way by Marcus Aurelius) when in a hymn Synesius asks for the simplest earthly benefits, health in body and soul and the life and love of his family.* He also sometimes attains a more personal note for his metaphysical hymns by using as an element of the mental atmosphere surrounding his poems the conditions of his own life in which they originated. Thus he depicts himself as collecting his thoughts for prayer when, liberated from political responsibilities, he is living in the quiet seclusion of his farm home, where "no profane townsman" disturbs the peace, † But the account of his experiences in the world which he then inserts ‡ has the effect of an unshed remnant of mundane reality out of which the song soars aloft. Deeper •motional experiences and a genuine poetic talent, such as Gregory of Nazianzus possessed, were needed to produce a work embracing in consistent religious feeling both the individual biographical data and the metaphysical meaning of human existence. Synesius found for himself a compromise between mystical contemplation and an existence open to the world : this art of living he depicted as his *bios*.

That work, "Dio, or concerning my own way of life", written a few years before his appointment as bishop in 410, gives remarkable evidence of the variety of inducements to autobiography in his time. In the sphere of Neoplatonic religious life, the same writer who composed those speculative hymns could produce a self-portrayal cast in the light tone of intellectual table-talk on rhetoric and philosophy—Dio Chrysostum is regarded as the typical representative of the union of the two. Synesius here passes in review the various ways of living which he has found among literary and religious people, and sets against them his personal ideal of a philosopher's way of life, based on the doctrine of the uplifting of the soul. Toning down the Platonic conception of Eros, he passes pleasantly from the idea of the contemplative life of the philosopher to the life he actually led in intercourse with the Muses—in occupation with poetry and history, together with science and the art of oratory, which confer a gracious humanity even on those who aspire no higher. In this way he hopes to do justice to the twofold nature of man ;

* Synes., *Hymn.*, VIII, 12 sqq. Migne, *Patrol.*, vol. 66, p. 1612.

† *Hymn.*, III, 48 sqq. Migne, *loc. cit.*, 1594.

‡ *Hymn.*, III, 428-548., *loc. cit.*, pp. 1599-1600.

for man, he thinks, is no god, he cannot spend all his life in mystical contemplation, he needs the joys of this world in order that the soul may endure its imprisonment in the body ; and it is a fine thing that when the tension of contemplation abates we need not fall back upon the pleasures of the senses, but have the pure joys of the mind, which at the same time exercise and strengthen the divine power of reason in us for a new ascent into the spiritual world.* He sets this view and practice, in which measure and order prevail, as something "truly Hellenic" against the "barbaric" asceticism of the monks, and also against the vulgar ecstasies, who with no fixed path and no mental training imagine that they can attain the highest flight of the spirit by means of convulsions.

And in cheerful self-confidence he rejects the argument that literary culture should be eschewed as a beautiful game but beneath the dignity of a philosopher. To the philosopher, as he understands him—*ὁ καθ' ἑμᾶς φιλόσοφος*—no knowledge and no field of the Muses is alien. "On this principle we should define as an artist and an expert the man who selects for himself any one branch of knowledge, one such man belonging to one divinity (Muse), another to another ; but we should call philosopher the man who has been fitted together from the harmony of all, and has made the multitude of arts into one." He continues : "Or, rather, he will not have attained this rank yet, for this must be added to him also, namely, that he shall have a task of his own superior to that of his company." The task is to pursue to the end the upward path to knowledge which Plato showed. There the vision of the divine beckons, the vision which the Christian Neoplatonist describes as "a sacred matter", as revelation. But unlike the ecstasies, for whom the methodical ascent by the intellect is merely a means for the mind's passionate flight to union with the One, Synesius lays emphasis on the "intervening process" :

Our philosopher has prepared himself a road ; and ascends it as if it were a ladder, so that the ascent is in some degree his own achievement, since as he advances he will probably encounter somewhere his soul's desire. And even if he does not encounter it, at all events he has advanced on his road ; and this is no small matter ; even thus he would differ from the bulk of mankind as much as they do from the beasts of the field.†

* *Synes., Dion*, 6, 7-8. *Migne, loc. cit.*, pp. 1129, 1133 sqq.

† *Ibid.*, 3-4, 8. *Migne, pp.* 1125, 1136-7. Translated by Augustine FitzGerald, *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius*, I (1930), pp. 157 sqq.

With this consciousness of his superiority **he goes about among** men, instead of fleeing from social life.

Just as God has conceived clear images of his secret powers, tangible bodies of the Ideal-Forms of things, thus a soul possessing beauty, and fruitful of the noblest things, possesses the force which is transmissible even to things outside, for no one of the divine agencies is willing to be the last removed. . . . So our philosopher will commune now with himself and now with the god through philosophy, but he will commune with men by the subordinate powers of speech. He will possess knowledge indeed as a lover of literature, whereas he will pass judgment on each and every thing as a philosopher. . . . It is really a gift divine to suffice for all men in the degree to which each is able to profit thereby.*

In so shining before the world he enjoys his own personality. So he depicts his attitude in society, in reading, in authorship : everywhere he feels himself to be an independent mind, not sparing with his gifts, and ready to give them graceful play, because he has no desire and no need to display his highest ideals, which have reference to the Beyond, at every moment and before every man and woman. " God has accorded me this lot, to be without a master and free to range." He also preserved this personal freedom when, at thirty-five years of age, he was elected bishop (of Ptolemais), and after long hesitation accepted the office (in 409). He made it a condition that he should not be required to subscribe to certain doctrines, such as the creation of the soul and the resurrection of the body, and for the rest he wished to mention the religious " myths " (as he expressed it, being a Platonist) in his public teaching without identifying himself with them—to be in private a philosopher, in public a symbolist, †

In humorous pictures he compares with his own way of life the unfreedom of other professions, of that of the advocate whose time for his pleading is limited and measured by the water-clock ; he must go on even if the judge goes to sleep ; of that of the Sophist, who makes himself the slave of the public and racks his brains over his work in constant fear of boring ; of that of the schoolmaster, who must take account of the wishes of his pupils and their parents and is a victim of the meanest of passions, envy of his rivals. He himself can rest content, like anyone " who has not given himself over to that multiform wild beast, notoriety,

* *Ibid.*, 5, 6 ; pp. 1125C, 1128A, 1129A.

† *Tὰ μὲν οἴκοι φιλοσοφῶν τὰ δὲ ἔξω φιλομυθῶν* (" **Philosophic at home, philomythic abroad** ").

but who lives to please himself and God, who wishes to live with men like a man, and knows how to do so ". He does not tie himself down to any definite date in his writings :

I sing by myself; I sing to these cypresses as this rivulet of water before me rushes along its course, not measured nor husbanded according to the water clock. . . . If I am not yet coming to the end of my song, I shall certainly do so presently. . . . Why, then, should I be the slave of a fixed period of time, when I have the power to be completely independent, and to conduct my words where it seems to me that they should be led, not at the mercy of supercilious hearers' judgment, but using myself as a measure. . . . As matters are, I converse with as many as I please, on as many topics as I please ; I choose the topics, the times, the places, and the manner. My interlocutor confers a benefit, but he also receives it; for my part I should prefer to listen to those who have anything worth saying, rather than to talk myself. To every man it is in every way happier to fall in with his betters than with his inferiors.

The same rule of wise living was expressed by Lord Clarendon in modern times in his autobiography ; looking back on his youth, he declares that " he never was so proud, or thought himself so good a man, as when he was the worst man in the company ". Synesius is not, like the English statesman, desirous of friendship with men who are his superiors for the sake of its educative value, but for the sake of the finest sort of personal existence. He preserves his independence also in relation to books. In reading, he says, it would " cut off a great part of my freedom " if he had to " make a minute study of a book ", like the grammarians who will approach even philosophical works with their scalpels. For his library, which he is leaving to his son as his finest inheritance, he wants no critical editions ; in his view the purpose of reading is to stimulate one's own thinking, and imperfect texts are useful for that purpose : they emancipate the reason soonest from the authors, so that it gets used to depending on itself.*

What he attained through that art of living was not the free movement of a lively individual intelligence, productively at work on whatever he read, as in Montaigne in a similar form of *catiserie*. It is one of the most striking indications of the intellectual attitude of that time that with his demand for independence Synesius only shows once more, in a freer form, the current state of feeling with regard to the ancients, which gave the exegetists and the compilers their dominant position in literature. This is his characterization of himself: the style and thought of authors

* Synes., *Dion*, 1156B, 1149, 1152. Translated by FitzGerald, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 172-6.

were impressed on his mind as on soft wax. **And at the** end of his *bios* he depicts his virtuosity in imitation : he was invited **at a** meeting to read from an author ; he did so for **a while, and then** continued with an improvisation in the author's style, **with** such success that the applause that followed was given not to **him but** to the author. He made a practice of this method, and in the midst of reading a book he would lay it aside to see how closely he could follow the rest of the argument by his own invention.

Many times I have forced the note in this way in reading tragedy, for its music has often added a tragic note to the drama ; and I rival comedies in nonsense in response to the labour of each writer. You would say that I was the friend of Gratinus and of Crates, * and at another time of Diphilus and Philemon, † There is no form, in fine, of metrical conceit or poetry in the presence of which I am not exalted, none whose practice I do not carry out, now making whole works to compare with whole works, and now titbits with titbits. And so many forms of literary style as exist, in every one of my imitations of these my own personal note must needs be added. It is thus that the highest string, itself awaiting the rhythm, re-echoes it to the melody that is being played. ‡

He was not troubled by the riddles of existence ! But that period, so full of alarms, so electrical, demanded combatant natures, which had to purchase peace of mind with painful struggles if they attained it at all : from these natures self-portrayal gained a profounder basis.

* **Authors of the Old Comedy, rivalling Aristophanes.**

† **Authors of the New Comedy, contemporaries of Menander.**

‡ *Ibid.*, c. 16, p. 1161C.

CHAPTER II

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEMS OF GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-c. 389) had for many years served as a priest in his native city in Asia Minor when, coming to Constantinople as protagonist against the Arians, he brought about the victory of the Christian creed established in the faith of Nicaea. In 381, after presiding over the second Council of Constantinople, he was enthroned as Metropolitan in Saint Sophia. Two centuries after his death he was already regarded by the Catholic Church as "the theologian" among the Fathers, a title gained by him alone of all Christian teachers, except the apostle Saint John.

But all the pictures that might be suggested by these categories of holiness fade before the living breath of this man. Others had been great Fathers of the Church, others had been profound theological thinkers ; he spent his life as others had done in ecclesiastical struggles and achievements, in preaching and in religious meditation ; but he had the subjective nature of a poet, with the passionate impressionability under outward and inward experiences that ensured the artistic quality of his presentation of his life.

Gregory himself often referred to his inner urge to literary production, sometimes with the proud consciousness of his artistry, sometimes with mixed feelings, sensing that under the provocation of hard realities his unrestrained diction might go beyond the bounds of discretion.

I began to live as soon as I could speak . . . Writing is as natural to me as flowing to water and heat to fire . . . Whatever my heart moves me to say I shall say aloud, involuntarily : I shall find my speech break forth from my soul, just as a welling spring, set in motion underground by a violent wind, rushes along invisibly in its buried course and somewhere breaks through and up to the surface . . . So it is with me. I cannot contain my passion within me. So, let it pass if I say even a wounding thing, the offspring of grief. It is one of the remedies for trouble to give vent to one's feelings.

He wrote a poem on his verses, and said his first purpose in versifying was to " set shackles on my exuberance " by working within the limits of metre. As self-discipline he once, at fifty-two

years of age, imposed complete silence on himself during a fast, and then he devoted a poem to the " dear tongue ", the most corrupting of all human influences, powerful above all else, free of all hindrance ; it unleashes the feelings of the heart " in its native wickedness, as it furiously boils over " ; it is " an eternally forward-plunging charger " ; it is " a weapon always ready " which, the moment it has been unsheathed, " flashes incessantly and never withdraws " ; " he who can tame it carries off the prize of wisdom ". And he laid it down as a " law " to " hold back the parturient word when thy heart would unburden itself ; for if the word is tamed, tamed will also be the wave of passion —not, it is true, with ease, but nevertheless it can be done ".*

Since Solon's elegies, poetry, which might have been regarded! as a permanent medium for autobiography, had had no substantial connexion with it; the autobiographies of poets were shaped by literary habits and forms which did not themselves proceed from poetic production, and though at times we were brought into the artist's studio, as in the precious fragment of Callimachus and in the personal poetry of Horace, these were not actual autobiographies. In Gregory autobiography makes its first appearance as the outcome of a whole life's versifying and authorship, and so falls naturally into verse. The rhetoricians' habit of self-portrayal and the motive of self-justification were but secondary influences.

His life was spent amid the ups and downs of such sensitive souls. He was born of a family with large estates. His father was a bishop who was not strong in the orthodox faith : he had belonged to a sect of Jewish pagans before his conversion to Christianity. He was then elected bishop of Nazianzus, where his property lay. Gregory was baptized at birth by his mother,, who had converted his father. In one of his poems he tells of a dream he had in childhood, which kindled " a spark of heavenly fire " in him : Charity and Temperance (Sophrosyne) appeared.† to him in the form of virgins in white garments, each with head and face concealed by a veil; they kissed him and called to him,, " Come, child, unite thy mind to our mind, thy light to our light ; so shall we carry thee aloft in all brightness through the air, and place thee in the radiance of the immortal Trinity ".†

*Greg. Naz., *Carm. de se ipso*. Opera ed. Benedict. (Paris, 1790), vol. I I . . *Carm. de se ipso*, XXXIV, 125 (A.D. 382) ; XI, 55 ; XII, 18-19 (A.D. 381) ; XXXIX, 33 ; XXXIV, XL, 46 ; XXXIV, 25, 46, 118, 130-1.

† *Ibid.*, Carmen XLV, 230-79. Translated in part by Cardinal Newman, *Historical Sketches*, vol. 2, p. 55.

From another autobiographical poem we learn that on his way from Alexandria (where he had been studying rhetoric) to continue his studies at Athens he renewed his mother's vow. He was in danger of death during a storm at sea, which he depicts with rhetorical art:

Loud roared the thunder, while the lightning blazed ;
 The swelling sails were filled ; the cordage cracked ;
 The mast gave way, and from the pilot's hand
 The rudder flew, in quiv'ring fragments riven.
 High o'er the deck the sweeping billows rolled . . .
 While all the rest one common danger feared,
 A thought more dreadful chilled my fainting soul.
 For me no wave baptismal yet had flowed,
 Me, now encompassed by the waves of death.
 This, this was ruin, this to me was shipwreck ;
 At this I wept; for this I wrung my hands,
 In mournful concert with the deep below ;
 Rending my garments, prostrate, comfortless . . .

He owed his escape to his prayer, after which the tempest suddenly ceased :

Thine have I been, O Lord, and yet am thine :
 May'st Thou receive me twice, an honoured gift,
 Of earth and sea the offering, rendered pure
 Both by my Mother's vow, and chastening fear.
 O, should I now escape, to Thee I'll live ;
 If Thou reject me, Thou wilt lose a votary.*

In his aspiration to quit the world for the service of God alone, he was strengthened by his friend Basil, the future founder of monastic institutions ; he lived with him almost throughout the six years of his student life in Athens, Their friendship decisively influenced his life, though, as we shall see, it was not lifelong. On his return home he carried into practice, together with Basil, who had preceded him, the new ideal of monastic life, based, in contrast to the existing eremitical asceticism, on the realization of the value of life and labour in common, labour both of hand and brain. In the pleasant two or three years which the two, both about thirty years of age, spent together in retirement in the district of Pontus, they worked together on a sort of chrestomathy drawn from the works of Origen, the representative of Neoplatonic Christianity. This was a productive sort of intellectual life, not very different, celibacy apart, from that which Synesius described. We shall find the young Augustine pursuing a similar path, after his conversion, in the pleasant period he spent, in

* *Ibid.*, Carmen X I, 130-203, Translated by H. S. Boyd, *Select Poems of Synesius and Gregory Nazianan* (1814), pp. 14-18.

preparation for baptism, on an estate near Milan among a select company of friends. But unlike the great Latin Father, Gregory held fast to the intellectual (not specifically spiritual) life which he had entered in his student years, to "philosophy." * as he called it,* the cultivation of the gifts of thought and speech, or, as he expresses it in a single word, indicating at the same time the religious connotation, the *Logos*. He referred to it in an oration which he delivered after his period of retirement at Nazianzus. In this he also gave a picture of the ideal monastic life as he envisaged it :

This I offer to God, this I dedicate, which alone I have left myself, in which alone I am rich. For all other things I have surrendered to the commandment and the Spirit. . . . Discourse (*logoi*) alone I retain, as being the servant of the Word (*Logos*) ; nor should I ever willingly neglect this possession ; rather I honour and embrace it, and take more pleasure in it than in all other things, in which the many take pleasure ; and I make it my life's companion, and good counsellor, and associate, and guide heavenward, and real comrade. I have said to Wisdom, 'Thou art my sister,' . . . With this I bridle my impetuous anger, with this I appease wasting envy, with this I lull to rest sorrow, the chain of the heart."†

He had returned to Nazianzus to help his father, who had got into trouble through a deviation from orthodoxy. His father now urged him to decide on a clerical career and to accept ordination. Gregory gave way, though shrinking from the priesthood ; but he answered the pressure put on him by fleeing once more into an idyllic solitude, to Basil. Then, however, after a few weeks he returned and appeared before the congregation in Nazianzus. He began his priesthood by delivering an *oratio apologetic*, in which he defined his personal attitude, explained his flight and return, and delivered a treatise on the priestly office (c. 361).

In one of his autobiographical poems, in which he looks back upon that time, he gives this account of the decision he then took :

Fierce was the whirlwind of my storm-toss'd mind,
Searching, 'mid holiest ways, a holier still.
Long had I nerved me, in the depths to sink
Thoughts of the flesh, and then more strenuously.
Yet, while I gazed upon diviner aims,
I had not wit to single out the best:
For, as is aye the wont in things of earth,
Each has its evil, each its nobleness.

* Carmen XI, 270.

† Oratio VI (*De Pace*, c. 362), 5-6. Translated by Cardinal Newman, "The Rise and Fall of Gregory", p. 81.

I was the pilgrim of a toilsome course,
 Who had o'erpast the waves, and now looked round,
 With anxious eye, to track his road by land . . .
 Long was the inward strife, till ended thus :—
 I saw, when men lived in the fretful world,
 They vantaged other men, but risked the while
 The calmness and the pureness of their hearts.
 They who retired held an uprighter port,
 And raised their eyes with quiet strength towards heaven ;
 Yet served self only, unfraternally.
 And so, 'twixt these and those, I struck my path,
 To meditate with the free solitary,
 Yet to live secular, and serve mankind.*

But this well-argued decision was followed by new conflicts. There was nothing unusual at that time in the combination of clerical duties with monastic renunciation of the world ; indeed, it was typical of the period. But with Gregory's disposition the "middle way," as he called it, did not lead to a harmonious reconciliation of differences ; his adult years, in which he tried to pursue this path, show an unrest that was accentuated by the incompatibility of his Christian and ascetic ideals with his pursuit of fame and hierarchical success.

The next conflict arose out of his relations with Basil. In 370 that great organizer of the monasteries was elected bishop of Caesarea, an eminent post much sought after, because it made him Metropolitan of the whole province of Cappadocia. A rival, Anthimus, bishop of Tyana, had the support of the emperor Valens, the protector of the Arians, and Basil needed help to maintain his position. Anthimus actually took up arms against Basil, who, in order to defend himself, created new sees in the province and placéd his friends in them. In 372 he made Gregory bishop of Sasima, an unimportant place near Mount Taurus. Gregory did not want the post, and felt deeply offended by the appointment to it. He wrote to Basil :

Do leave off speaking of me as an ill-educated and uncouth and unfriendly man, not even worthy to live, because I have ventured to be conscious of the way in which I have been treated. You yourself would admit that I have not done wrong in any other respect . . . I only know that I saw that I have been deceived—too late, indeed, but I saw it—and I throw the blame on your throne, as having on a sudden lifted you above yourself. . . . Now I will plainly speak out the state of my mind, and you must not be angry with me. I will not take up arms, nor shall I learn tactics, which I did not learn in former times, nor will I face the martial Anthimus, though he be an

* Carmen X I, 280-315. Translated by Cardinal Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-7.

untimely warrior, being myself unarmed and unwarlike, and thus the more exposed to wounds. Fight with him yourself if you wish, or look out for someone to fight when he seizes your mules. . . . Give me before all things quiet. Why should I be fighting for sucklings and birds, which are not mine, as if in a matter of souls and canons ?

Well, play the man, be strong, turn everything to your glory, as rivers suck up the mountain torrents, thinking little of friendship and intimacy compared with high aims and piety, and disregarding what the world will think of you for all this, being the property of the Spirit alone ; while, for my part, so much shall I gain from this your friendship, not to trust in friends, nor to put anything above God.*

The result was a permanent estrangement between the two, Gregory gave way on his father's urgent advice, and submitted to the Metropolitan's authority, but he resigned at once and returned from the diocese to Nazianzus to help his ageing father as his coadjutor-bishop. After his father's death in 374 he administered the see for a time, but declined elevation to the bishopric. He gave his great inherited estates in trust for the poor, retaining for himself only a property in the neighbourhood of Nazianzus ; in the following year he withdrew to a monastery at Seleucia in Isauria.

After years of this retirement he allowed himself to be torn away from it by a summons to the capital, on the death of Basil in 379. The Arians had been dominant in Constantinople for thirty years. The Catholic party that had sent for him was small and without a church. He began his mission in a private house, but his preaching, in which he proclaimed the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, was extraordinarily successful, and he gained the upper hand against enmity and persecution from the Arians and the mob of the great city. He now gave full play to his arresting eloquence, his wealth of theological speculation, his mystical songs of praise, his power of moral edification, and to the most passionate polemics. Victory was won for the orthodox party, and was sealed when the emperor Theodosius, an enemy of the Arians, made his entry into Constantinople. Gregory was then elevated to the bishopric. But at the height of his power, in the midst of the tumultuous ecclesiastical struggles, he made the hard decision to sacrifice his office to the cause, and withdrew, at fifty years of age, to his native town in Cappadocia, and soon after to permanent retirement as a hermit on his estate.

All these and other incidents and changes of fortune found

* Greg., ep. 48. Translated by Ch. G. Browne, in *Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. V I I , p. 453. Cf Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

their way into his orations or his poems. He places at length before the congregation at Nazianzus his motives for his actions, his spiritual struggles, and his ideal in life, so that on one occasion he even has to remind himself that he is speaking at a festival and not in a law-court. The inroads into his peace when he has to help his parents in the domestic routine, or his prayer on leaving for the capital, all turn into poems. After a period of retirement he preaches on " what in my peaceful retreat I culled from philosophy " (or. 26). Measuring his spiritual state against the ideal of the sage, he runs through various incidents of his life and records his satisfaction that he is beyond reach of all aspersions because, though vulnerable and easily wounded in some respects, " I know that I, too, have God's spirit within me." In a sermon delivered in the presence of the emperor Theodosius, he refers with pride to his episcopal office, telling " the secret of the honour done me " by the orthodox community, justifying his maligned oratorical art, and showing the philosophical worth of his way of life (or. 36).

The struggles in the Council of Constantinople (381), which ended in his official appointment as Metropolitan, but at the same time determined him to retire, produced a regular flood of iambics. In his farewell sermon he sums up the results of his hieratic eloquence, and of his labours and sufferings and struggles, contrasting the intrigues of his enemies in the priesthood with his own way of living ; and his words acquire poetic fervour in this last farewell to all the places and people he has so loved and is now leaving (or. 42). In the solitude of his last years his need to communicate his thoughts had to find an outlet: his poems of that period resemble a journal.

Ten of his 45 extant orations are sermons with purely personal subjects ; and the funeral orations in which he does honour from the depth of his heart to his father, his brother and sister, and his friend Basil, deal mainly with his personal relations with them. Of his 19,000 lines of poetry, much of which is mere versification and a great deal liturgical or didactic, the editors included more than a third under the title " To Myself ", the title used by Solon and by Marcus Aurelius.

The poems in this collection* that make up an independent autobiography do not aim at an exhaustive account of his whole life ; his feeling from time to time gives considerable freedom of

* In many places they include phrases taken bodily from earlier orations and poems.

choice of subject. Thus the division between the ecclesiastical and the contemplative element in his life finds expression in his autobiographical works ; one of them, of about 2000 iambic trimeters, " On my life ",* is devoted mainly to a description of his dealings with the world, while two other lengthy poems, one of 600 hexameters " On my own affairs " and a " Lamentation " of about 200 distichs " On the Afflictions of my Soul ",† reveal the religious man in the solitude of his inner life.

Common to these poetic works is a new artistic attitude to the task of autobiography. The remoteness from humdrum realities that was needed for a work of art had been secured in the earlier Greek autobiographies, in so far as they aimed at literary quality, by the easy device of idealization, where it was not simply aimed at by the display of oratorical art. This made way in Gregory for a more reflective and sensitive attitude, maintained in the matter of form by the poetic clothing, and then through association with general ideas on life and the world, in a liberating, cheerful aloofness from his own experiences. But again and again he gives up that lofty, light-hearted attitude and enters fully into remembered passions, heightened by imagination, so as to give them a quality of immediacy. Thus artistic capital is made of the position of the autobiography midway between the seriousness of life and the cheerful sphere of imaginative writing. Gregory is aware of that position and speaks of it. In the proem to " On my Life ", in indicating the purpose of the work, he says : " The metre plays and heals the pain " (XI, 6). Another poem, entitled " To Himself and against his Envyers ", bears the subtitle " Gregory the Priest's Playing and Groaning " (XIV) ; and finally (XII, 700) there is the pregnant phrase, " and laugh amid tears ".

I. THE PRELATE

The long autobiography dealing with Gregory's secular experiences is a product of the ecclesiastical struggles, and he completed it in 382 in the seclusion of his home, shortly after his resignation. In the magnificent farewell sermon which he delivered in Saint Sophia during the Council, in the presence of the 150 bishops of the Eastern Church, he had announced his resignation : " Clap your hands, shout aloud, extol your orator to the skies. This pestilent and garrulous tongue has ceased to

* *Greg., Cam. de se ipso*, XI. † *Ibid.*, I and XLV.

speak to you. Though it will not utterly cease to speak : for it will fight with hand and ink ".* In a series of poems which served as a sort of prelude to the autobiography,† he gave voice to the feelings aroused in him by the " tragedy "‡ of his life. In these he depicts his " daily longing " for the community, and he conveys his proud self-confidence in expressing his unsatisfied ambition to continue his holy labours and his defence of the true faith. He tells of a dream in which he enjoyed once more the brilliance and the effectiveness of his preaching ; on waking he felt redoubled pain and resentment. He turns with unrestrained invective and bitter satire against his enemies, the envious, ignorant, hypocritical " falsifiers of the faith", the self-seeking clowns in bishops' palaces ; he brings his significance to their notice, and threatens them with the penalties of the Day of Judgment. He buries himself in his grief, describes himself as a quarry pursued by friend and foe alike, and tortures himself with the thought of the malicious pleasure of his triumphant adversaries and of the unworthy man who now holds his see. Or he again declares his pride in the course he took, and, while revelling in his remoteness from the ill-starred capital, makes much of his voluntary sacrifice in resigning. He assures himself of the immortality of his orations, and dwells on the magnitude of his suffering.

So, looking back on the still recent disasters, he seems to be full of moody thoughts ; but even here there is a sense of superiority to suffering given him by both religion and art, and from all these outpourings of a human heart wounded by the world there rises the transfiguring consciousness of a Christian soul that it is near to its God.

All these strains are to be heard, elevated above the ephemeral, in Gregory's great poem on his life. " All lies low, all that is noble has been broken down by the times ; what remains is of poor quality, nothing worth. . . So I have been driven to lift my voice. Give heed, all ye of today, and ye who come later."

The intention to defend himself publicly against injustice suffered, which was so often the controlling motive in ancient self-portrayal and which Plutarch raised to a principal reason for justified self-praise, seems to be the immediate point of depar-

* Or. XLII, 26. Translated by Ch. G. Browne, *loc. cit.*, vol. VII, p. 394.

† *Carm. de se ipso*, V, XVII, XII, IX, X, XVIII.

‡ *Epist.* 193 (A.D. 384).

ture for Gregory too. He feels morally bound to leave for his community and for posterity a true picture of his life, " so that calumnies may not gain power against me " and " so that men who no longer have me with them may at least possess this work, balm for grief, for the disgrace of my enemies and for a testimony to my friends of the injustice I have suffered without ever having done wrong ".*

He sets out to show that in conquering Constantinople for the orthodox faith he achieved a difficult and a great task, and that his attitude on the Council, resulting in his resignation, had been guided by far-seeing and selfless aims in church policy ; and in order to counter the contention that his episcopate was illegal, since he had already been bishop of another diocese, he dealt with the vain efforts of his father, his friend, and the community of his native town, to force a bishopric on him. And he proudly claims that his ascetic and contemplative ideal of living preserved him from all ambitious pursuit of ecclesiastical dignities and led him to give up with joy the office he had accepted with a heavy heart. Thus the great bulk of the autobiography is concerned with only three years, the years of his activities in the capital, † Since in his account Gregory indulges in unrestrained polemic, and since he describes his subject as in general an account of his good and evil fortune, ‡ there seems to be a superficial resemblance to the Tyche oration of Libanius, then not ten years old. But then we see the whole gulf that divides the virtuoso of oratory, with his subtle and pervasive egoism, from the man who merely cannot do without oratory : for Gregory, in his acute sensitiveness, every event arouses passionate feeling and every blow of fate is a catastrophe that has wrecked his relations with other men.

Here instead of meticulous calculation of fortune we have artistic form. The story of Gregory's life may be summed up as the tragedy of a sensitive man who entered the arena of world affairs. This tragedy he does not understand psychologically as a conflict arising in himself from his attitude to the world, but he re-lives it, recalling his passionate feelings of love and hatred and heightening them in retrospect. His religious and moral ideal, however, gives him an opportunity to show in the personal friction with the world the typical conflict between an idealistic effort and the actual triumph everywhere of selfishness, and to

* *Carmina de vita sua*, X I, 20-1, 45-6, 557~8

† *Ibid.*, 556 sqq. ‡ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

form the succession of incidents into a completed whole, the crisis with the retirement from the world bringing at the same time the return to a pure life in God. The course of this story, leading from that pure endeavour in youth through conflicts and periods of calm to that end, corresponds to a definite type of life-story, drawn from reality in imaginative works : thus Gregory's autobiography, in spite of all its rhetorical and ecclesiastical incidentals, reaches the high level of poetic truth.

The story of an author's youth is here, for the first time, given the function of presenting the aspirations born in him and quietly developed as the basis of his life. Although the narrative pushes quickly forward, the poet dwells on these peaceful conditions of his happy childhood. He gives an edifying picture of his pious parents, and tells in a way reminiscent of the Bible of his mother's vow to consecrate to God the son whom she had asked God to send her : that was a "pledge of all that is noble". His continual advance in spiritual life and in desire for the good is the fundamental condition on which he looks back with nostalgia ; then he describes in more rhetorical terms, as we saw, the hour of peril at sea in which he consecrated himself anew to God. Then came the happiness of the student years in Athens, filled with the Christian youth's sense of what gives life true worth, and heightened by the spiritual friendship with Basil ; in their faith and the lofty aims they shared he saw, like Plato, the beneficent foundation of that friendship.

Athens and letters followed on my stage ;
 Others may tell how I encountered them ;
 How in the fear of God, and foremost found
 Of those who knew a more than mortal love ;—
 And how, amid the venture and the rush
 Of maddened youth with youth in rivalry,
 My tranquil course ran like some wayward spring
 Which bubbles fresh beneath the turbid brine ;
 Not drawn away by those who lure to ill,
 But drawing dear ones to the better part.
 There, too, I gained a further gift of God,
 Who made me friends with one of wisdom high,
 Without compeer in learning and in life.
 Ask me his name?—in sooth, 'twas Basil, since
 My life's great gain,—and then my fellow dear
 In home, and studious search, and knowledge earned.
 May I not boast how in our day we moved
 A truest pair, not without name in Greece ;
 Had all things common, and one only soul
 In lodgment of a double outward frame ?
 Our special bond, the thought of God above,
 And the high longing after holy things.

And each of us was bold to trust in each,
 Unto the emptying of our deepest hearts ;
 And then we loved the more, for sympathy
 Pleaded in each, and knit the twain in one.*

Finally, by way of transition from this prolude, as he calls it, † and in order to give a criterion for what was to come, he describes the fundamental principle on which his way of life was built up ; it was the mark of his coming of age. Here come the verses we have already quoted, in which he describes how he discussed with Basil the " best and smoothest way " to carry into practice the ascetic ideal without disregarding fundamental human relations. Strengthened by his philosophic consciousness, which had no need for the outward forms of the Church, he arrived, he says, at the decision to unite an inner life in God with practical usefulness, and so to satisfy the needs of his aged parents.

" Give not facile expression to a lofty aspiration, merely human as thou art. Envy is always eager to defeat a man's sublime effort." So he introduces the main section of his story, dealing with worldly activities and counter-activities. Here Gregory indulges to the full in his pugnacious, passionate language ; but his main interest is in emotional and moral relations between man and man. His artistic intelligence makes the emotional situations into climaxes of his narrative. His moods colour not only the other persons involved but places : in ten verses he heaps every belittling adjective on the poor bishopric to which Basil wanted to send him :

There is a little station on a high road in Cappadocia, situated where the road divides into three ; without water, without grass, with nothing of freedom about it : a frightfully depressing, congested little village ; everywhere dust and noise and carts, wailing and shouting, lictors and chains. The people are all foreigners and vagabonds. Such is my church of Sasima, to which I was presented by a man who is not content with fifty suffragans. What munificence ! %

He has no reticence in the expression of his feelings. His father wanted to chain him to the priesthood, and while recognizing his father's good intention he finds it " tyranny ", adding : " For I can call it nothing else, may the Holy Ghost forgive me ". §

*Carmen XI, 211-30. Translated by Cardinal Newman, *Historic Sketches*, vol. 2, pp. 52-3.

† *Ibid.*, 275.

‡ *Ibid.*, 439-48. Translated by Browne, in *A Select Library*, etc., *loc. cit.*, P. 195-

§. *Ibid.*, 345-6.

H.A.

In the most heated passages the narrative, helped by the first personal form, attains a dramatic character ; the story becomes a speech for the plaintiff; the facts are caught up in the impetuous torrent of his comment; Gregory sits in judgment on his own actions and those of others ; he appeals to the reader's sympathy and attributes to him his own excitement: " Don't go mad before you have heard it all." He heightens the effect by a device used by many great poets, giving expression to the mood aroused in him by recollected incidents : " Why are you indignant, heart? Contain your anger by main force ! " "I bite my lips in shame at the past, though it was to me that wrong was done," Such phrases as " That was play-acting ! What historian could cope with that?" are frequent: they point to the influence of the romantic type of Hellenistic historians.*

These emotional elements, from which the structure of the autobiography is derived, are subordinated to the contemplative tendency which is also characteristic of the work. Gregory likes to begin the various parts of his narrative with a description of their historical setting, and this involves entering into questions of dogma. He also describes his way of life in periods of calm, and states the principles underlying his dealings with the world, † Accordingly he gives in his prelude to this autobiography this expression of his intention : " Both edification and pleasant enjoyment for youth, cheerful exhortation. . . Listen to a man without deceit, who suffered many trials in many situations and so has a wealth of experience of life." ‡

But these thoughts do not go very deep ; they deal with the corrupting influence of sensuality, of habit, of money, of the lust for power, and of ill-will; with the incalculability of wickedness and the way the wicked triumph ever over the guilelessness of the good ; or he observes the violent way simple people give expression to their feelings, and the part played by fear among most people, whereas only free and unconstrained activity is effectual. He finds a principal explanation of the workings of fate in the ancient conception, frequently quoted by him and especially in his epitaphs on friends who had died prematurely, of " envy, which moves faster than the good ".§ At times he gives expression to his detached view of his own emotions ; he compares, for

* Cf. above, pp. 189-90 and 250 sqq. † Greg., ep. 52.

‡ *Cam. de vita sua*, XI, 7-8, 17.

§ Cf. Greg., *Epitaphia*, XXX, VI, XI, XXI, XXXIII, and *Carmina moralia*, IX, 30-31.

instance, his flight from the priestly office in Nazianzus to the stampede of a bull stung by a gadfly.

The finest revelation of his feelings is the outpouring of his heart in this poem about his relations with Basil, where Gregory writes of the "false friend" who wanted to make him bishop of Sasima. In the eulogy pronounced earlier over the grave of Basil, in the style of an idealization, he had explained that "infringement of the obligations of friendship" as due to Basil's concern for God's service,* by which his friend was guided without regard to persons; now he begins with an energetic personal argument, as in a dialogue with the deceased. He denounces Basil's arrogance and domineering nature; he discovers other petty elements and he sets against these his own consciousness of his essential equality with Basil, not to be overborne by any difference of rank. Into this, sharpening his pain, enters his regard for the "best of men, who was false to me, but still the purest of men"; and now his sense of injury is poured out: †

Such friendship, honouring the friend so little,
May it vanish from the world. But yesterday
A lion, just an ape am I to you
Today—and even lions you belittle!
And though that be your view of all your friends,
You once held me more in regard than all,
Ere you looked down from cloud-encircled heights
On all the world . . . ‡

Was this the fruit of Athens? this the fruit
Of mutual toils in learning's boundless field;
The life we lived together; the abode
Beneath whose genial and sequestered roof
Both dwelt; the soul which animated both,
The theme, the wonder of admiring Greece;
Our plighted vows to flee a world we prized not,
To lead one common life for God alone,
And bid our talents crouch to do Him service?
All, all are vanished: in the dust they perish:
The winds disperse my past, my blighted hopes.
Where shall I wander? Will the ruthless lion
Or rabid wolf receive me in his lair?
Yes, in a savage breast irrational
More faith abides than in the breast of man! §

Gibbon, who in his history made use of Gregory's "Poem on his own Life" as a chief source for his chapter on the ruin of Arianism in the East, quotes these verses as "some beautiful

* Greg., or. 43 (August-September, 381). † Carm. XI, 406-7, 474-65.

‡ Retranslated from the German version.

§ Translated by H. S. Boyd, *Select Poems*, p. 21.

lines which burst from the heart, and speak the pangs of injured and lost friendship ". He adds : " In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Helena addresses the same pathetic complaint to her friend Hermia :

**Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sister's vows, etc.**

Shakespeare had never read the poems of Gregory Nazianzen. He was ignorant of the Greek language ; but his mother-tongue, the language of Nature, is the same in Cappadocia and in Britain.* We should like to ask whether the common element was the language of Nature or the rhetorical tradition, in the best sense of the word.

In his account of the years at Constantinople, Gregory finds room for discussions of ecclesiastical politics (which he puts into the form of speeches he made as president of the Council) and especially for polemics and invective. Among the enemies he attacks in addition to prelates and the mob of the great city, incited by Arian monks, there stands out the strange figure of a Cynic named Maximus. The account seems to us like a caricature, but the man played an important part in the unhappy ending of Gregory's ecclesiastical career. Maximus appeared in the garb of a wandering Cynic preacher, coming to Constantinople from Alexandria. He declared that he was a Christian convert, and by this story and by the admiration he expressed for Gregory's sermons he gained his confidence and respect—so much so that Bishop Gregory delivered an oration in the man's honour. After that Maximus disgracefully tricked Gregory. He got secretly into communication with some bishops of Egypt, with the purpose of getting rid of Gregory. He was so successful in his adventurous enterprise that one night, when Gregory lay ill in bed, he was secretly consecrated bishop in his place, though he was then compelled to make a hurried exit from the scene. The episode was characteristic of Gregory's trustfulness, but it was a blow at his credit of which his enemies took full advantage. He revenged himself by making the man, who in his eyes was an " eternal pillar of my misfortune ", a subject for his satire. He commented on the Cynic's habits, laughed at his ineffective consecration as the clipping of a dog in a barber-surgeon's shop, and pursued his enemy, in his further career of shame, though always directing his scorn only against the one individual and expressly denying any hostility to true Cynicism.

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. 27, n. 20,

This main section of the autobiography is comparable with the narrative parts of Nestorius⁵ apologia, which appeared some seventy years later. Among the clerical autobiographers there are at all times great polemical writers, as, for instance, Giraldus Cambrensis in the Middle Ages. But Gregory was a poet. Between the polemical sections he inserts, with both artistic and religious intent, meditative verses that produce a gentler impression. In these he describes the successes of his preaching, and the principles of his method of teaching and speaking, of his episcopal administration, and of his way of life in general. He follows the technique adopted long earlier by Isocrates of rounding off his self-portrayal with a description of his principles and maxims. Gregory made use of it to throw into prominence his moral superiority and his conciliatory attitude by giving examples of his "philosophical" way of life.

His main purpose, however, is to recall his dealings with the political world, and a climax of the poem is reached with his account of his enthronement in the basilica of Saint Sophia. He was indebted for this success to the emperor Theodosius, who took action against the Arians as soon as he had made his victorious entry into the capital at the head of his army. Gregory begins by reporting, not without pride, the honour the soldier-emperor paid him, crowning it with the declaration that he, the emperor,—or, rather, "God through him"—intended to place the magnificent church in Gregory's charge in reward for his labour for the true faith. Then he describes the great day *—not as a triumph but with a mixture of satisfaction and, as Gibbon puts it, "the mortifying consideration that his entrance into the fold was that of a wolf, rather than of a shepherd". He gives a graphic picture of the situation—the cathedral occupied by soldiers bristling with arms, and outside a vast crowd filling all the streets and squares, "like the waves of the sea", and looking down from every storey of the houses, men and women, children and the aged, in anger or appeal, "irate with me and appealing to the emperor", with cries of sorrow or fury, with tears of despair, "the image of a town captured by storm". . . . "I, however, entered like an army commander, between the emperor and the troops following him, while my weak and exhausted frame could hardly support me and I could scarcely breathe; but I held my head high, drawing strength from hope; finally, without knowing how, I found myself inside the church."

* *Ibid.*, XI, 1305-95.

Then came a miracle. On the morning on which the procession took place, it was as dark as night, and his enemies were rejoicing at this as a clear indication of God's displeasure at what had happened. But at the moment when he and the emperor passed together through the holy screen, and the praises of God rang out, the sun broke through the clouds, filling the whole building with its splendour. This picturesque touch gives him the key to the final scene. Serenity, confidence, and rejoicing spread through the festal congregation; the people and the dignitaries alike called eagerly for him to be given the capital as his see; and the congregation, especially the women, called still more eagerly for him to preach to them. He held back, however, and sent out word that the ceremony had come to its due end with the thanksgiving to God. The emperor praised his reticence, and the congregation, too, approved of it, since "moderation is a thing which all people value". But he confesses that he took that course not so much out of wisdom as out of fear, which had robbed him of his voice—fear of the sword he had seen unsheathed. The naked power with which the emperor had dealt with the Arians had appalled him, although for the moment he was drawing advantage from it.

Equally repugnant to him was the ecclesiastical wrangling at the Council summoned by Theodosius. After the death of the Patriarch of Antioch, Gregory assumed the presidency of the Council, and sought to bring peace, but without success, owing to the rivalries between the Eastern and the Western Church and between the Antioch party, the Egyptian prelates, and the other sects of the East. His judgment of the self-seeking motives of the princes of the Church is no less severe than that of Nestorius. Gregory, too, fell victim, as he relates, to the envy and hatred of his enemies. But he preserved an attitude of humanity, different from that of the heresiarch who was to greet the wilderness. The conclusion of Gregory's poem shows, like the epilogue to a tragedy, the hero emerging from apparent defeat to enter a higher life in which, as victor, he leaves behind him the vicissitudes of his earthly life.*

The long, the sad narration of my woes
Will soon have end. From proud Byzantium's walls,
A breathing corse, I bend my tottering steps,
Though mournful, joyous; though subdued, exulting.

* End of Carmen XI. Translated by H. S. Boyd, *Select Poems*, etc. (*op. cit.*), PP- 55~56.

O blest exchange ! O grateful recompense !
 No pomp prelatic swells my breast with pride,
 But meek humility finds harbour there.
 Ambition's storms no more invade my peace,
 But resignation points the path to Heaven.
 Like idle winds, in empty air that sport,
 The clamorous tongues of men my ears assail:
 Of praise, of censure, I have had my share ;
 Nor praise nor censure can affect me now.
 Where is that eloquence which Athens prized?
 'Tis gone, and not a trace is left behind . . .
 Fain would I seek some desert's still retreat,
 Where, in this pensive, solitary breast,
 Divine philosophy may hold her reign,
 And where sweet hope may soothe declining age,
 And these gray hairs console.—What gift of love
 Shall we bequeath the church? Our tears, our pity . . .
 Where will it end? Teach me, thou Word divine !
 O may I reach that blest abode of peace,
 Which no rude winds perturb, no storms annoy ;
 Where shines the lustre of the triune God,
 Beneath whose fostering shade we rest in hope !

II. THE NEOPLATONIC CHRISTIAN

Gregory's two other autobiographical poems were the product of a contemplative attitude of mind. They belong to the context of his lyric poetry, which in itself, as a new form of expression of inner experience, represents a further stage in the progress of the self-scrutiny that is the basis of spiritual autobiography.

This personal poetry has its background in the heightened awareness of the typical course of the contemplative life. The process of religious uplifting which Neoplatonist mysticism had developed had been repeatedly formulated by Gregory in his sermons.

Nothing seemed to me so desirable as to close the doors of my senses, and, escaping from the flesh and the world, collected within myself, having no further connexion than was absolutely necessary with human affairs, and speaking only to myself and God, to live superior to visible things, ever preserving in myself the divine impressions pure and unmixed with the erring tokens of this lower world, and both being, and constantly growing more and more to be, a real unspotted mirror of God and of divine things, as light was added to light, and what was still dark grew clearer, enjoying already by hope the blessings of the world to come.*

He has described the process more profoundly from the Christian relation of the soul to the personal God, and yet again in the spirit of the Platonic philosophy :

* Greg., or. 2, 6. (A.D. 363.) Elaborated a little in or. XX, a (c. 380). Translated by Browne in *A Select Library*, etc. (*op. cit.*), p. 206.

God always was, always is, and always will be. Or, rather, God always is. For Was and Will-be are fragments of our time, and of changeable nature, but He is Eternal Being. And this is the Name that He gives to Himself when giving the oracle to Moses in the Mount. For in Himself He sums up and contains all Being. . . . like some great Sea of Being, limitless and unbounded, transcending all conceptions of time and nature, . . . one image being God from one source and another from another, and combined into some sort of presentation of the truth, which escapes us before we have caught it, and takes to flight before we have conceived it, blazing forth upon our Masterpart, even when that is cleansed, as the lightning flash, which will not stay its course, does upon our sight . . . in order, as I conceive, by that part of It which we can comprehend to draw us to itself, and by that part of It which we cannot comprehend to move our wonder, and as an object of wonder to become more an object of desire, and being desired to purify, and by purifying to make us like God (John x. 15) ; so that when we have thus become like Himself, God may, to use a bold expression, hold converse with us as gods, being united to us.*

In these sentences a typical course is laid down for the emotional life, a course which is substantially found in religious autobiography in Augustine and then especially in mediaeval mysticism and its later outcome, and which possesses truth outside religious experience.

Gregory himself gave only a general description of this process ; not until the individual's emotional relation to God came to be combined with his experience of the critical importance of the moral and religious will—a combination which we shall find in Augustine's story of his conversion—was the definite structure provided which made an autobiographical form here possible. But Gregory's poetic gift and his speculative cast of mind enabled him to create a personal poetry that gave expression to the various religious states of mind for their own sake.† The artistic approach that was natural to him led him to take as an independent sphere of poetic treatment the most intimate religious experience, in which man finds himself facing God, as person to person, and he sought for his Christian life a purely contemplative expression, freed from all external considerations. In this respect Augustine is inferior to him : his Confessions are firmly rooted in the life of the community.

Regarded from the point of view of autobiography, the most

* Greg., or. XXXVIII, 7 (A.D. 381) ; cf XLV, 3. Trans., *ibid.*, p. 346.

† Concerning this poetry of Gregory's, cf. Villemain, *Tableau de Viloquence chrétienne*, and Villemain in the *Journal des savants*, 1857 ; also von Wilamowitz, *comment, gram.*, III (Göttinger Univ.-Programm) ; Benoit, *S. Grigore de Nazianz* (Paris, 1884).

outstanding of these verses of Gregory's, which, straining to the highest, present a picture of the mysteries of the Christian faith in hymns and visions, are the poems in which the new type of self-scrutiny makes its appearance. These poems set out to reveal the "mysteries of the heart"; one begins: "A task hast thou, O soul, a great task: search thyself, discover who thou art and whence, whither thy goal and what, and whether *this* is thy life." The general process of which the poems speak is the same as in the whole philosophy derived from Plato: * the lifting of the divine in man out of the toils of the senses. But the ancient sense of the "divinely noble origin" of the soul, as he calls it,† is united in him with the Christian experience of the inadequacy of the natural light of reason, and the divided nature of the sensual-spiritual man becomes "the great mystery" that conceals in itself God's inscrutable decree and introduces into the metaphysical feeling of the ego an unfathomable enigma. In reflecting on himself Gregory finds himself confronted with the contrasts of human nature; whence in the mixture of emotions due to the prompting of conscience and to prayer and meditation there comes into shape a sentimental self-portrayal that enjoys the measurelessness of subjective feelings and the delight of melancholy in the play of rhythms and of poetic self-contemplation. "I love this comfort in grief of holding silent converse with my heart" (XIV, 3).

Entering into the reasons for his sufferings, the poet reflects at length on the sad and unpredictable character of life and on man's difficult situation in the world; he indulges in tentative metaphysical speculation, rejects as unsatisfying the notion that life's imperfection makes for purification, and ends with pious uplifting of the heart. He depicts his inner struggles and temptations, tells of talks with his soul and with the "flesh, enemy and friend, sweet anxiety and faithless asset"; he allows himself the luxury of verse to tell of scruples of conscience and of weariness of the world: "My body is virgin; whether my soul is, I do not quite know." . . . "I do what I hate and rejoice in all evils and laugh in grim scorn at the fearful death within me, and even corruption is a satisfaction to me" (IX, 48, 39-40; cf. XII, 22.)

Then come again prayers, pleading for ultimate peace or for

* On Gregory and the Cynics, cf. Asmus, *TheoL Studien und Kritiken* 67 (1894) 5 p. 24.

† Greg., *cam. mor.*, X, 147,

a pure vision of God ; he describes his soul as lamenting that it does not attain its aim, and, vacillating between the hope of blessedness in the after life and fear of Judgment Day, he appeals for strength or release.

Ah, I am tired, my Jesus, thou Life of mortals, I am tired of the long exile and of inner and outer struggles that destroy the beauty of man who is made in Thine image. . . . Wherefore have I gone alone along a rough path everywhere, and never been able to take a single step lightly on earth? . . . How is it that care comes to the pious man and not to him that is lost? . . . Am I nothing, my Christ, why hast Thou created me? If I am worthy of Thee, wherefore the many sufferings that surround me? (XXXIII, XXXI, XL).

In one of these poems the feeling for nature enters into the picture of the soul; Gregory here contrasts with the idyllic landscape that surrounds the meditator the process of his philosophic-religious self-scrutiny :

Surcharged with care, with heaviest anguish fraught,
A deep sequestered grove I lately sought :
Panting to find in sweet retirement's calm
For every mental ill a lenient balm.
Vernal the air, and mild : the murmuring breeze,
And sprightly birds that warbled on the trees,
Seemed as they strove to charm away my woes,
And lull my wearied bosom to repose.
On every bough the grasshopper was seen,
Unfolding to the sun his robes of green :
Cheered by the blaze, he soon essayed to sing,
And bade the woods with merriest chirpings ring.
To lave my feet a gurgling fountain strove,
Whose stream meandered through the dewy grove
With gentle flow.—In vain all nature smiled :
My joyless heart no sounds of joy beguiled.
The feathered choir appeared to mock my woe :
T'insult my grief the fountain seemed to flow.
Life's gloomy scene I pondered in my mind,
And thus I poured my sorrows imconfined.

This is the introduction to the soliloquy. " What was I, what am I, what shall I become? "—thus, like Seneca or Petrarch, he formulates the question which he first asked of his senses and now asks of his soul : " Art thou of heavenly nature? What and whence? Inform my longing. If thou art really the breath of God and His share, as thou proudly supposest, then cast away wantonness and I shall believe it . . . but if thou art not of God, what is thy nature? In sooth, I am in great fear that I may be puffed up with baseless vainglory." He carries his doubt to the end, asking whether the Holy Trinity itself will endure amid the constant change of all things.

Whither art thou leading me, evil-imagining Care ? Stop ! God above all things ! God did not create me without a purpose. It is only the weakness of our intelligence that is to blame. Now there is darkness, but then comes the Logos, and thou wilt learn everything, gazing on God or consumed by fire . . . I came home at a late hour from the shady grove, now laughing at my heresy, now consuming my heart in the conflict of thoughts.*

These self-regarding spiritual poems developed into autobiography when the concern with particular events that is present in them was broadened and the poet made full use of the biographical material in depicting the state of his soul. There are two autobiographical poems by Gregory formed in this way, distinguished from each other only by the choice and arrangement of the material. He wrote them in his forties, at Nazianzus, before the events at Constantinople, †

One of the poems proceeds from a concrete situation in the poet's life. Gregory describes here how he suffers from everyday routine, and from the momentary excitement that breaks out ever and again he comes back to the eternal travail of human life. From a prayer for release from the medley of the world a consideration of the various paths of human existence leads to a description of Gregory's ascetic life ; he tells how he gave up to Christ all his worldly goods, and even his " only prized reputation ", that of his laboriously acquired art of oratory ; then he tells of his present situation, one of painful tension, the pressure of domestic cares, the grief at his brother's death—thus the narrative rises to the true theme, the inner conflict in his soul; and now are interwoven, in artistically natural contrasts with lament, prayer, and reflection upon his condition, nostalgic recollections of the blessed period of his hermit life and the secure and hopeful piety of his childhood. He illustrates the depth of his trouble by comparing it with all earlier perils " through which God called me, compelling me by His grace ", and the tension is only allayed in a prayer with which the poem ends. In the other poem he plunges at once into the dissension and " war " in his soul; the darkness lightens through the realization of the redeeming grace of Christ, and so, as a noble gift of God, there rises the picture of his youth, exhibiting his continuous progress from birth onward along the soul's path to God.

Thus the autobiography is here given an elegiac form : it

* Greg., *carm. mor.*, X I V . The translation in verse by H. S. Boyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 48~9.

† *Carm. de se ipso*, I and X L V , written about 371 and about 373, after the death of his brother and sister and before that of his father.

represents the process through which the poet in his present state of feeling recalls his past life; the recollections are not given chronologically in a continuous narrative, but as emerging from the various emotions and reflections that fill his mind as he writes in accord or contrast with them; as one fundamental feeling radiating over all of them distributes light and shade, throws up images of the past and suppresses others, the life-story is given an entirely inward unity: in recalling the incidents of his earlier life the meditator intends to assure himself of God's presence. The whole is framed in prayer, to Christ or to the triune God; the prayer leads to narrative and contemplation, or proceeds together with them and finally overcomes them, reconciling the contrasts in the recollected struggles and thereby uniting beginning and end in a vista of eternal bliss. Thus, in a form of which the use for autobiography goes back to early Greek lyrics,* Gregory approaches the rhythm of the style of prayer characteristic of Augustine.

The description of the inner struggle, which here as in the other contemplative poems of Gregory forms the heart of the self-revelation, does not reveal Augustine's psychological analysis, but is confined to general contrasts of feeling, and pictures the inner movement by means of the Platonic-poetic personification of the parts of the soul. These, as later with Dante, carry on a battle that sways hither and thither, while the ego of the self-observer prays to God for the decision of the struggle and the subjugation of the worse self. The presentation of the sensual impulses as temptations of the Devil, who lurks in the background in a glistening cloak, is also artistically effective here; and in not a few of Gregory's pictures there is depth in spite of all the rhetorical elaboration. "I bemoan my soul as a lovely, tall mistress, descended from noble kings, who languishes in heavy irremovable chains, a captive of enemies and in heavy bondage, with her eyes now sadly fixed on the ground. Such has been my experience. Such wounds do I carry in my heart" (I, 229-30). Thus we see described here the path of development that leads from Plato to Pascal.

With this fundamental feeling colouring the reminiscences, the facts of the life-story are dissolved in spiritualized emotions. Thus the emotional value of childhood is here experienced afresh, and a spiritual account of that period of life, and of the attractively picturesque element in it, is the result. One has the feeling of

* See above, p. 78.

being able to sense the transitions, the soul's sublimer flight, when one compares these verses of Gregory with the autobiographical Meditation of Marcus Aurelius in the first part of his book "To Myself." Gregory in his picture of his youth refrains from striking any discordant note, and denies himself even his usual Cynic-Catholic reference to the impurity of procreation and birth. He speaks of the "tender childhood, in which the notion of good and evil is imprinted in the soul, which has not yet gained form through firm thinking or received its first impressions from the character of other persons". He describes how his mother, "sanctifying her hands with the divine books", told him "amid caresses" of her pious hopes and aspirations, so that "my tender soul received a new shape of piety". Here he relates the dream in which the two virgins Charity and Temperance appeared to him*—a "seal of Christ"—and how the divine seed then sprouted "as the consciousness of good and evil became firmly implanted in me", and he was led in loving intercourse with pious ascetics to the hope of heaven, despising all earthly goods as bitter food.†

As a poet, however, he also gives a vivid picture of external conditions, contrasting his sensitiveness with the busy life that brings him "down from heaven to earth" (I, 140 *sqq.*) :

First to give orders to the servants—what a sink of iniquity ! They always hate an alert master, and shamelessly vilify a pious one ; they can neither be made compliant by bad treatment nor be won over by kindness. . . . Then to watch over the estate, with state burdens always on one's shoulders and the tax-collector's dunning to be endured ; for taxes take away the honour of a free man. . . . And to busy oneself in the crowded Forum, amid the hubbub round the seat of judgment, with the cares of some ignoble lawsuit . . . where the bad triumph over the good and the counsel on both sides are venal. . . . Who could escape in all that from many lies and subterfuges, far from God and in the midst of such men ? One must either flee hastily and throw everything to the men of evil or soil one's soul with evil-doing.

Finally, we find in these personal poems statements that show that the poet was aware of the subjective character of his poetry. He says in one place :

He whom a poisonous snake has bitten with its fatal fang, says an old story, will tell of his mortal wound only to one on whom the venomous snake has similarly wreaked destruction with its fiery venom ; for he alone would understand his ominous pain. So I, too,

* See p. 601. † Carm. XLV, vv 205-8; I, 437 *sqq.*; XLV, 267, 282.

will speak of my distress only to those who are moved by a like love, a like ill-fortune, and a like pain. For they alone would be ready to hear my words in love and to penetrate entirely into the mysteries of my sad heart. . . . To the rest, as I prate of my grief, I may be a matter for laughter—to those for whom a facile faith has but scratched the surface of the heart and who have not been pierced through the entrails by the acute longing for the Lord.*

Here we see how fundamentally the position of autobiography has changed from the classic method, carried far into the Hellenistic epoch, in which the autobiographer had only to present a generally recognized cultural ideal in his own person. The new attitude is not peculiar to Gregory, but characteristic of his time. Augustine shared his feeling: in the consciousness of the subjective character of religious experience, that profound thinker grasped the psychological problem implicit in the task of making one's inner life intelligible and credible to other men.† At this turning-point, too, in the development of human self-knowledge the Greek spirit, apparently, preceded the Roman. ‡

* *Carm.* I, 235-43, 247-9.

† Augustine, *Confessiones*, X, 3, 3. See above, p. 549.

‡ Gregory's works quickly attained an extraordinarily wide circulation, in the Western as well as the Eastern Church. (Cf. A. Ludwich, *Rhein. Museum*, XLII, p. 233.) He himself says in one place that East and West were talking of him and his destinies. (*Carm. de se ipso*, XIX, 20.) It is not improbable that the effect of his autobiographical writings took an important place among the manifold secondary causes that contributed to the appearance of Augustine's *Confessions*.

Some of his sermons, including the autobiographical sermon of 361 in his own defence, were translated into Latin by Rufinus. Against the view that Augustine was unable to read Greek, cf. Hausleiter, *Gött. Gel. Anz.* (1898), I, p. 372. Augustine frequently quotes "the famous bishop"—cf. Migne, *Patrol.* X, 644, 677, 1024, and elsewhere. His influence on the *Confessions* is noted by Benoit, *St. Gregoire*, II, p. 345. Jerome heard Gregory preach at Constantinople about 380, and became his enthusiastic disciple, as he writes in a letter of 392.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

Augustine was oecumenical bishop of Hippo, in North Africa, from 396 to his death in 430. When, in his forties (he was born in 354), he launched his *Confessiones* into the world, nearly fifteen years had passed since the summer of 386 in which he had taken the crucial turn in his life that made his autobiography of lasting interest. Whatever may have been the actual circumstances in which his "conversion" took place, that Augustine then passed through an hour in which he felt himself carried beyond all natural conditions, and endowed with the strength and faith to carry out his highest aspiration—this, however problematic the nature of the spiritual change, remains as the unquestionable reality of a moral and religious experience that might give a man a metaphysical consciousness of his true self. The heightened awareness of the self from which his "Confessions" proceeded grew out of that experience.

The writing of an autobiography has not seldom resulted from crucial events in a life, which compelled the individual to depart from everyday routine : the sense of the contact of a man's own existence with that which transcends our petty personal life emerges and clamours for record by the reflective mind. But never again in the history of autobiography, so far as can be seen, was the necessity so profound as in Augustine. For his turning away in spirit from his past existence, from all the enjoyments and passions and aspirations that had held him so powerfully to the world, had been for his lofty intellect the point of departure of a self-scrutiny that remained at the centre of his life's work down to the period of his theological controversies, and was to achieve for him, in the solitary existence he had chosen, the understanding of his religious and moral experience and of the true content of his existence. "Truly, O Lord, I labour . . . in myself. I am become a troublesome soil that requires overmuch labour." *

This determining influence in the writing of his autobiography outweighed all the external influences, resulting from relations

* Aug., *Om.*, X, xvi, 25. Translated by J. G. Pilkington, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (New York, 1886), vol. I.

with his contemporaries, which had affected it in common with other autobiographies of the time. The importance of those influences was defined by Herder, who in this respect likened Augustine to Petrarch :

A slender vein of vanity runs through their whole lives. They would scarcely have been the men they were if that ferment had not stirred in them. . . . But both had made the world talk of them, in good and evil,—so long and so much, that it had become almost a moral necessity for them to inform themselves and others about the true state of their opinions, their hearts, their characters, f

I. THE "SOLILOQUIES"

The line leading from that event to his writing of the " Confessions " is visible in the works in which, just after his conversion, Augustine depicted himself in his concern with his inner experience. Those were the fruitful months which, in his retirement from Milanese society, after the resignation from his post of rhetorician by which he had announced his new course in life, Augustine spent in philosophic leisure at Gassiacum, a property near the city, in the company of his mother Monica, his friend Alypius, and his closest disciples. They had been won over to " philosophy " by Cicero's Platonizing exhortatory work *Hortensius* which had led Augustine to strive to get away from rhetoric when he was nineteen years old. ‡ The youthful glamour of the first pleasure in the newly discovered realm of free philosophic thinking lay over that period, which he himself described as " almost happy " §—for he reserved full happiness to " the sage ". " Since I am only thirty-three years old, I think I need not despair of one day gaining wisdom. Despising all other things which mortals call good, I intend to serve the search for truth." ||

He had good reason for expecting to become a sage, because he was sure that he had found the true way of life that must bring all that was highest within his reach. After exhausting

* See above, chap. I, pp. 575 *sqq.*

† Herder to Johann G. Muller, May 1790. In his letters Augustine often pooh-poohs the eulogies that praise him as a model man, " in whose heart the words of Christ overflow, in whose language the spirit of truth is poured out, fructifying God's State with a happy, powerful, heavenly flow ", " who sees, as it were, through God, and speaks to us in or from God " (Aug., ep. 94, 4 ; cf. 27, 4 ; Paulini Nolani, ep. 50, 14). See also the letter covering a copy of his autobiography (Aug., ep. 231, 6).

‡ Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, I, 4.

§ Aug., *epistulae* (ed. Acad. Vindobonensis) 3, 1 ; 4.

|| Aug., *Contra Acad.*, III, 43.

struggles he had attained the calmness of spirit that accompanied the conviction of being on the right road to the goal of blessedness, wisdom, and union with God, a conviction that only needed further clarification. And when one watches the course he pursued one seems to see something of the work not only of an individual but of history itself, which was associating the last results of ancient speculation with Western Christianity. In his youth Augustine had personally passed through the course of development which Hellenistic philosophy had pursued ; he had, as it were, recapitulated it. Now, in deciding his attitude to the great philosophic schools of thought, the scepticism of the Academy, Cicero, the Hellenistic-Roman Stoa, Neoplatonism, he was seeking to interpret the life within him.

Like the Roman philosophers we have dealt with, he declares that he entered into discussion " not for discussion's sake " :

Our very life is concerned, our way of life and our mind, which trusts that it will overcome maleficent errors and, gaining knowledge of the truth, returning, as it were, into the realm of its origin, will triumph over all passions, and so, in a sort of nuptial alliance with reflection, will exercise dominion, returning then more confidently and more cheerfully to Heaven.*

Thus for him the philosophical discussion with his friends, and his literary work presenting that philosophical life in the art-form of the dialogue, was the organ of his will to assure himself of his ends and aims, and, first of all, of his faith. In free talks with his friends while bathing or in the shade of trees he discussed fundamental questions—the refutation of Scepticism, the problem of evil and of the highest good—and so he made his newly acquired reliance on inner experience philosophically fruitful. From these discussions, taken down at once in shorthand, he turned in the Pythagorean hour to solitary self-scrutiny. He also advised his comrades " to leave their books and occupy themselves with themselves, and to accustom the mind to live with itself".^f For him it had become a rule, "through my loving desire to find the truth ", " to keep awake in silent thought" during the night. ‡ The letters presented as the outcome of such meditations show him immersed in the marvels of the life of the soul, such as recollection, dream, or imagination, and at the same time in the mysteries of the dogmas of the faith, such as the Trinity and the Word become flesh, which are

* Aug., *Contra Acad.*, I I, 22. Retranslated from the German version.

† Aug., *de Ordine*, I, 6. Ep. 10, 1. ‡ *Ibid.* Cf. Aug., ep. 3.

" grasped by a few happy sages " and reveal themselves to him who seeks the truth.

So originated the first form in which he depicted himself as becoming aware of himself, his " Soliloquies". In these Augustine shows himself in conversation with " Reason ". " My friend Nebridius," he says of them, " calls me happy. . . . What, then, would he have said if he had read my *Soliloquia* ! He would have rejoiced with much more exultation." †

This first self-portrayal of Augustine's reveals the measure of the inward labour that had to be accomplished before the later autobiography could appear. For here we see how slowly and with what difficulty even in his case the consciousness of the character of his religious experience made its way, and how at first he was satisfied with the conception offered by Neoplatonic speculation, and regarded an intellectual form as adequate for the expression of the life that was so powerfully at work in him. Thus these Soliloquies reveal an intermediate stage in the progress of the literary forms of expression of self-scrutiny from the Stoic practice to the poems of Gregory.

The general subject is here the same that was to give the Confessions their main theme ; and it was in agreement with Neoplatonic mysticism—the mystery of the union of the soul with God. But at the outset Augustine's interest was confined to one side of this inner process, the automatic God-illumined uplift of the spirit, and the most intimate element was still closed to him—the experiencing of God in mind and will.

" Henceforth Thee alone do I love, Thee alone I follow,"—thus he writes in the prayer which, in the Neoplatonic manner, ‡ opens the *Soliloquia*.

Thee alone I seek. . . . To Thee I feel I must return . . . teach me the way to Thee. . . . Nothing else have I than the will: nothing else do I know than that fleeting and falling things are to be spurned, fixed and everlasting things to be sought. This I do, Father, because this alone I know, but from what quarter to approach Thee I do not know. Do Thou instruct me, show me, give me provision for the way. If it is by faith that those find Thee, who take refuge with Thee, then grant faith : if by virtue, virtue. §

* Aug., cp. 3, 6, 7, 9, 11-15.

† Aug., cp. 3, 1. Translated by J. G. Cunningham. *Letters of Saint Augustine* (Edinburgh, 1872).

‡ See above, p. 594.

§ Aug., *Soliloq.*, I, 5-6. Translated by C. C. Starbuck, *A Select Library*, etc., vol. VII.

Turning from prayer to soliloquy, presented as his dialogue with Reason, he goes on to declare : " It is not belief but knowledge that I seek. For I have said not the things which I have comprehended with the intellect, but the things which I have collected whencesoever and committed to memory, and to which I have adjusted faith as far as I could. But knowledge is something different." He sums up : " God and the soul, that is what I long to know." * To leave no doubt that he regards this alone as worth knowing, and is uninterested in the knowledge of nature and human society, he makes Reason ask definitely : " Nothing more ? " and answers : " Nothing whatever." At the beginning of the second part of the Soliloquies, written some time later, he says the same thing again in the form of a prayer : " O God, who art ever the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee." f In these two conceptions of the aim of religious search we may observe the difference between the " objective " way, characteristic of ancient philosophy, of talking of God in the third person, and the " subjective " method introduced by Christianity, which produces the meditator's knowledge of the self and of God from the religious life-relationship between an " I " and a " Thou ". In Augustine's Soliloquies the former attitude still persists ; in the Confessions the latter had established itself.

Thus in these Soliloquies, in the form of a dialogue with the *ratio*, as in Marcus Aurelius, he presents himself as one who has turned away from the world to seek himself and God. He begins by the traditional method, examining the state of his soul : he asks whether the conditions for the success of his withdrawal into himself and finding his way to God are fulfilled ; in a free spirit, without the ascetic sense of sin that later came over him, Augustine here answers the questions of the purity of his love for truth and of his freedom from passions, from the desire for honours, wealth, and all the pleasures of the senses, from the desire, indeed, for life, leisure, and friendship, even as things good in themselves. ‡ In that state the soul can enter the path to God. And that the whole new experience of the inner reality, which rose above scepticism as to the possibility of true knowledge, was present in Augustine and called for self-expression, is evident

* Aug., *Soliloq.*, I, 4, 9 : *Dud enim non quae intellectu comprehend, sed quae undequamque collecta memoriae mandavi, et quibus accommodavi fidem. Scire autem aliud est.* I, 2, 7 : *Deum et animam scire cupio.*

† *Ibid.*, I, vii, 1 ; II, i, 12. Translated by C. C. Starbuck.

‡ *Ibid.*, I, 12-21.

here as he describes the reality of which we have direct consciousness. He does not find general principles of reason in his "soul", like the Stoics, and does not proceed like the Platonists from the relation between soul and Idea (or, speaking more generally, between vision and the thing seen), but describes the thinking subject as "aware of his being, living, and having intelligence", accepting this complete reality of the self we are aware of, as the only secure foundation for all philosophizing (II, 1) : in this he is the precursor and exemplar of Descartes.*

But Augustine's attempt to bring to light the reality of which he is certain through his inner experience, gets no farther than the traditional abstract investigation into criteria of truth : self-knowledge still means for him, too, reflection on the origin and the nature of the human soul ; its divine origin is supposed to be revealed through its possession of rational principles of knowledge and action and through the theoretical proof of its immortality. In the spirit of the Platonists he describes this as "exercises", intended to make the reason, the "mind's eye", fit for the contemplation of the spiritual world, † He left the description of the lifting of the soul up to God to be given later in a continuation of his Soliloquies. ‡

In that interruption he revealed his feeling of the inadequacy of the philosophic dialogue form for self-portrayal. That the task here left uncompleted continued to occupy him is shown by his later notes on the immortality of the soul, intended for his personal use, which were to "keep alive the idea of completing the Soliloquies".§ In his Confessions || he then found the form for the new and artistic presentation of the process, which he there described as "the path of the soul to God".

At first Augustine regarded his own spiritual development no differently from the general problem of self-knowledge. At

* On the philosophic significance of the passages quoted from the "Soliloquies" cf. Dilthey, *Einführung in d. Geisteswiss.* (1883), p. 327. Siebeck, "Der ältere Augustinismus", *Zeitschr. f. Philos. u. philos. Kritik*, vol. 93 (1888), p. 189. The important question of Augustine's Sceptic predecessors in this discovery of the "inner man" is still unanswered ; the direction in which the answer lies is shown by the circumstances of the development of Scepticism and the Stoa, described by A. Schmekel, *Philosophie der mittleren Stoa* (Berlin, 1892). On the compilation of the so-called *Metaphysics* of Herennius, in which the quoted passages recur in Greek, cf. Heitz, *S.-B. Berl. Akad.* (1889), pp. 1167-8 ; cf. also W. Windelband, *Gesch. der Philos.* (2nd ed.), p. 227, n. ("probably late Stoic source") ; H. Leder, "Unters. üb. Augustins Erkenntnistheorie", *Marburger Diss.* (1901), pp. 89 sqq. ; here it is suggested with probability that it is simply a case of translation from Augustine. (The objection that Augustine played no part in the Greek Church falls to the ground because the manuscripts date no earlier than the sixteenth century.)

† Aug., *Soliloq.*, II, 34.

‡ *Ibid.*, II, 36.

§ Aug., *Retract.*, II, 5, 1.

|| In Book X of the Confessions—see below.

the same time as the Soliloquies, and in the following years (386-91), he gave in the introduction or the dedication of his works, following the fashion of the Hellenistic speakers and writers,* or in other contexts, surveys of his youthful career, which had brought him to his present conviction. Here he depicted his history again and again—there are five different versions, in general agreement in principle †—as a peaceful process of steady effort; and the conception differs little from the philosophic narratives of conversion which we followed from the wandering orator Dio Chrysostom to the Christian bishop Hilarius. Of the struggle in the course of which he adopted the complete moral life, there is no more mention than in the contemporary letters.

His point of departure is the influence of Cicero's *Hortensius*, which had in truth awakened him to the higher life; and in regard to the years that followed, in which he had sought enlightenment from the Manichaeans who were dominant in cultured circles in his country, ‡ he declares that "there was no lack of obscurities that obstructed my course", but he points out that he remained uninfluenced by crude materialism, § and gives the simple psychological explanation of his turning to this speculative religion: "Whom, especially if he were a young man with a soul thirsting for truth, would it not tempt . . . to let himself be led to God by true and plain reason?" || There follows the stage of universal doubt, resulting from his realization of the emptiness of Manichaean speculation and from his approach to the Platonic Academy, or that section of the Platonic school which rejected every sort of dogmatic philosophy, in that condition of frustration of his striving after true knowledge. Accordingly he explains the decisive turn that led him eventually to a positive and enduring certainty as the direct completion, both in doctrine and in life, of his past efforts, effected mainly by his making acquaintance with Neoplatonic philosophy and subsequently by external circumstances.

His liberation from scepticism is deduced, in these narratives, from a theoretical reflection that recurs substantially in the Confessions. He is entirely ready to agree that a sufficient source of conviction lies in an authority of any sort. Scepticism did not

* See above, pp. 487 *sqq.*

† *Contra Acad.* (380), I I, c. 2, 3, 9; I I I, 14. *De vita beata*, dedication. *De ordine*, I, c. 3, 5. *De moribus ecclesiae* (388), I I, 19, 20. *De utilitate credendi* (391) I, 2; VIII, 20.

‡ Aug., *De beata vita*, I, 4. *Ibid.* || Aug., *De utilitate credendi*, I, 2.

build for him, as for Pascal, the bridge to the faith that in despair sacrifices the intellect; just because " the human reason is so lively, so acute, and so understanding ", he thinks, " the truth ", which has its eternal validity everywhere, cannot escape it ; man can arrive at truth by the path of faith because " faith " is a preliminary stage of rational understanding, and only from uncertainty amid the conflict of authorities as to the true authority to be clung to in " faith " does Augustine account for his being so long in doubt after his breach with the Manichaeans.¹

" I ceased not to strive after philosophy ; . . . and since the flame was not yet present, to carry me to the height, I felt the gentle to be the most violent." Then he found the Neoplatonic writings ; they " lighted an incredible fire, incredible to myself ".* He had until now been held back by " the charm of wife and honour " from the course he had long envisaged of " plunging quickly into the bosom of philosophy ", and now he was so inflamed that he " would have sundered all those chains " if he had not been " moved by concern for men's opinion ".†

There came, he says, " to my assistance " a severe bronchial complaint that " compelled me to abandon the rhetorician's office ", so that he could " throw everything overboard " and devote himself to " the longed for leisure ".‡ The Christian faith, or, as he expresses it, " the authority of the books handed down by the divine mysteries ", which, he points out, he read in succession to Neoplatonist literature, makes its appearance here only " in comparison " with the other, and owes its effect to its agreement with it.§ And when in one place he nevertheless lays more stress on the Christian books and especially on the impression received from the Pauline epistles, he still regards the philosophic *eros* as the force from which the conversion to the new way of life is to be explained :

I confess that I only looked back on my way, as it were, and that religion which was implanted in us in our childhood, and is stamped

* Aug., *Contra Acad.*, I I, 5.

† Aug., *De beata vita*, I, 4. See also the letter from Nebridius : " Is it true, my beloved Augustine, that you are spending your strength and patience on the affairs of your fellow-citizens and that the leisure from distraction which you so earnestly desired is still withheld from you ? . . . I believe that they do not know what you love most and long for. Have you no friend at hand to tell them what your heart is set upon ? . . . Let them hear me at all events. I will proclaim aloud and I will protest that God is the supreme object of your love, and that your heart's desire is to be His servant, and to cleave to Him. . . . I shall not be afraid of being denounced as a robber by those countrymen of yours, whom you love only too well, and by whom you are too warmly loved in return " (Aug., *Ep.* 5. Translated by J. G. Cunningham).

‡ Aug., *De beata vita*, I, 4. *De ordine*, I, 2, 5.

§ *De beata vita*, I, 4,

on our very marrow : but it drew me to itself without my knowing it. So hesitating, hastening, vacillating, I grasped hold of the Apostle Paul . . . I read him attentively and with caution throughout. There, faint though the gleam of light was, the beauty of philosophy appeared to me so great that not only one who was ever ardent in the pursuit of her when unknown, but even her bitterest enemy, could I but show her to him, . . . would cast away and abandon all that draws him powerfully to every sort of pleasure, and would hasten to her beauty, caressing her in holy love, admiring, thirsting, burning.*

II. THE " CONFESSIONS "

The way Augustine came from these first self-portrayals to the Confessions is illustrative not only of the history of the composition of the latter work but of the whole type of autobiographies to which it belongs. Only in the Renaissance did self-portrayal take place from the full sense of individuality that penetrates the reminiscences and reinforces them in the imagination, and so suffices to make every moment of life fully present, free from possibilities of varying conceptions, and varying only in the degree of vividness of realization by the *senses* and in increasing inventiveness. In contrast with this spontaneous and, in a sense, unreflective type of self-portrayal there are the Confessions of Augustine and also the great autobiographical documents of the eighteenth century, which, like the Confessions, belonged to an epoch in which the individual had lost that natural confidence in action and judgment, and could only attain it by an intellectual effort. In such epochs the making of an autobiography depends on how the autobiographer understands his life as a whole, inquiring into its direction, its ends and aims, its meaning. This tendency gives his autobiography a philosophical status : in dealing with his own experiences, on which his understanding of life is based, he brings into view the nature of human existence as he has learnt to fathom it in the course of his life's work.

In Augustine this law of formation of autobiography, which it will be possible to exemplify more fully in the eighteenth century, makes its first appearance. In the decade between those first works and the Confessions he assimilated to the full

* Aug., *Contra Acad.*, II, 5 and 6. Against the objection that " philosophy " here means the full Christian life, see Boissier (*Fin du paganisme*, I, 376, n.) ; but he is mistaken in regarding this passage as referring to the **impression made by Remans** xiii. 13-14, as described in *Conf.* VIII, 29 ; what is meant here is obviously the reading of St. Paul, referred to in *Conf.* VII, 27. For the assimilation of the heterogeneous powers, Christianity and Greek philosophy, cf. Justin Martyr, above, p. 490.

the Christian view of life through which he was to dominate Western Christendom, as the other great Catholic teacher alongside Aristotle, for many centuries. And his autobiography became the creative work in which he presented in his own life that Christian view of the metaphysical, even religious, meaning of human life while pouring into it "with assured, not with uncertain consciousness" * the whole vast wealth of his soul and his art of reading the human soul.

Now that meditation on the facts of the will had come into the centre of his philosophizing, the importance must have dawned on him of the experience in which he had struggled through to moral freedom : it is a fact demonstrable from everyone's self-examination that the full realization of the importance even of critical events is attained only gradually. And from this point his new autobiography may have taken shape as when a poet produces a work from a central scene. Since he gave a religious interpretation to that experience as an inflowing of grace, metaphysical mystery and even miracle came to illuminate his whole past life.

In place of Augustine's dialogue with the *ratio* came now the soul's call to its living God, who revealed Himself to it in the conversion of its will, and it became one of the greatest achievements of his autobiography that it gave artistic expression to this religious experience of the nearness and distance of God in the fate of a man with experience of all the passions. In the conceptions of human sin, of God's gracious pardon, and of the humility of the conscience, he had now found a distinction between the Christian experience and the Neoplatonic uplifting to the contemplation of the divine, and his will-power was able to draw from the Pauline conceptions the constructive and dramatic elements which the apostle had introduced into the new religious experience : the personal religious history had a fixed point of departure in the condition of sinfulness, it had steadiness of progress, because God is everywhere and even when the sinner is farthest from Him He is still present, and it had a fixed ending in conversion and union with God ; all spiritual advance that lay before that redemption, even the Neoplatonic vision, even the knowledge of the Christian doctrine, could be thrust aside as inadequate—"There is yet another kind of impious men, who 'when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful'. Into this also had I fallen. . . . But I had

* Aug.) *Con.*., X, vi, 8 : non dubia sed certa conscientia.

now found the goodly pearl, which, selling all that I had, I ought to have bought ; and I hesitated." *

In the great mental upheaval that made an end of hesitation, the whole development of Christian consciousness, to which he attained only in the course of the following ten years, was now artificially compressed as the product of the union with the supersensual that it was in truth. Thus it was possible for the description of the form of his current religious life to follow at once, in spite of the lapse of ten years, on the story of his conversion, giving the book its end and completion.

When, however, we state that Augustine's work was the first to give a metaphysical meaning to the life lived by an individual, we must stress that its composition differs in an essential point from that of the great spiritual autobiographies produced in modern times. For he did not, as the moderns do, find the truly essential element of life in a man's individuality and its stages of development. To illustrate the point, we may first state that there are some features in his work that have quite a modern appearance. Augustine, whose genius and intellectual vitality had faced the great spiritual forces that moved the society of his day, had given, it is true, with brilliant clarity his account of his spiritual development, and had worked out with unprecedented versatility the method of comprehending that development from the steps taken in it. He had seen, of course, as very few had done before him, the wealth and the enigmatic nature of the life of the soul, the " great deep " that man is, " the great and boundless power of memory : who hath plumbed the depths thereof? " . . . " a profound and infinite manifoldness . . . A life various and manifold, and exceeding vast. . . And men go out to wonder at the mountain heights, and the tides of the sea, the broad currents of rivers, and the vastness of the ocean and the courses of the stars, and ignore themselves and marvel not at themselves." †

While there was a frequent tendency to introspection in those days, Augustine was the first to perceive the concrete fullness of the inner life ; he did not merely subjectively accept the variety of mental processes, nor did he see in them merely elements of a systematic striving after a moral and religious aim, but

* *Aug., Con.*, VIII, 1, 2 (Rom. i. 21). Translated by J. G. Pilkington, *A Select Library*, etc., vol. I, p. 117.

† *Ibid.*, IV, xiv, 22 ; X, viii, 15 ; xvii, 26. Translated by J. G. Pilkington. Cf. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 76, 18 : " Thou seekest the depth of the sea ; what is deeper than the human conscience ? "

he regarded them as philosophically interesting processes : " I became a great question for myself." While reproducing, even re-living them, he subjected these processes to objective consideration, noting the type of event and the laws of association and succession, and coming up against problems everywhere : " What is the significance of the way our life is alternately inflated and deflated, proceeding in disagreements and reconciliations ? Is that its nature, its measure ? " And thoughtful observation was united in him both with the criticizing function of the conscience and with the epideictic tendency of the rhetorician, so that he boldly announced to God and the world secret impulses which until then had lain in obscurity. What he achieved in this way, analysing the various states of mind with the mind's unity in view, is generally recognized as marking an epoch in the history of psychology.* This applies mainly to his *Confessions*, though his other works also abound in psychological observations and reflections. Finally, Augustine makes us understand human life as relationship, supplying, so to speak, a phenomenology of the moral world, at times, indeed, elaborate descriptions of customs and pictures of the world around him. It is to these psychological and moral achievements that his *Confessions* owe the enduring significance of their contents and the influence exerted by them on modern literature from Petrarch onward. But all this was a free gift from his prolific nature, which mocked all the laws it imposed on itself and continually called for fullness and reality. If it is desired to understand the *Confessions* as a single whole, one must proceed from those laws, which determine the composition.

Here the psychological and even the human interest is not the unifying element. Augustine declared repeatedly that he found no entire satisfaction in seeking and searching ; to him the firm possession of absolute truth and blessedness was the condition and the fulfilment of all life. How could this idealistic requirement be harmonized with the reality in this life of the inner world, which lay before him in such wealth ? It was not only his sensuousness that strove after having and holding, and in the supersensual itself set out not to guess and explore but to live in plenty. The objective ancient view of reality, spiritualized though it was in Neoplatonism, determined the form in which he related to the Absolute the vital power of his indi-

* Dilthey, *Einleitung in d. Geisteswiss.*, pp. 335-6 ; Siebeck, " Zur Psychologie der Scholastik", *Zeitschr. f. Philos.*, vol. 93, pp. 170 sqq

viduality. The inner life had freed itself from dependence on Nature and the external world ; but it was not yet ready to rely on itself and try, in face of the dangerously rich flow of the psychic happenings, to attain the divine in the fullness of the soul, so that it might form itself freely out of its infinite potentialities ; but it was only emancipated in order to bind itself anew and to draw for its own experience from the transcendental divine nature not only a metaphysical foundation but the sense of its own actuality. As a man of the ancient world, Augustine regarded all the change and variety characteristic of this world as something inessential, and the true life which he had found in God remained for him with Platonic mysticism the inner transformation of the individual into the absolute One beyond time and space, which resides changelessly, as in all things, deep down in the soul. However, as a Christian thinker he adopted a different line of approach to the Timeless, relying not on intellectual insight alone but on what the heart feels and the will endeavours ; in this way he introduced into the objectivity of ancient metaphysics the relation of the individual to the personal God, a relation stirring the deepest emotions.

" Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart knows no rest until it may repose in Thee." " When I shall cleave unto Thee with all my being, then shall I in nothing have pain and labour ; and my life shall be a real life, being wholly full of Thee."* So Augustine writes at the beginning, and again at the end, of his autobiography : the work was intended to give expression to that blessedness, and so the literary work became at the same time an act of the religious life, a rejoicing and thanksgiving and praying and expiation and confession before God. His conscious purpose lay not in the narration of his individual experiences, but in the arousing of religious emotions and thoughts,† and he himself bore witness to this lasting effect of his work, which he experienced ever anew, alike in the writing and the reading of it. ‡ In the atmosphere of the Confessions there is a division that reaches still deeper into the inner form—the narrative moves to and fro between the observation of human realities and the pressing forward into the realm of eternal things : as he carries himself and his readers into the emotions that guided him through life, and makes all the force of his actual existence felt in retrospect, becoming thus a predecessor of

* *Aug., Conf.*, I, i; X, xxviii. Translated by J. G. Pilkington.

† *Ibid.*, XI, 1.

‡

Aug., Retract., II, 6, 1.

the great writers of psychological novels, Augustine yet makes the turmoil of this earthly life disappear again and again in face of the Eternal, all the emotions fading away in the great silence of the "Sabbath of Sabbaths".

In this way he also retained in his autobiography the practical association with the life of the community which had characterized the confessions written before him. He did so not only with a didactic and edifying intention ; " That I and all who read the same may reflect out of what depths we are to cry unto Thee . . . That (my heart) sleep not in despair and say, ' I cannot ' ; but that it may awake in the love of Thy mercy and the sweetness of Thy grace." * But Augustine gives direct expression to the real purpose : " For it is no small fruit, O Lord my God, that by many thanks should be given to Thee on our behalf, and that by many Thou shouldst be entreated for us.⁵⁵ And when he has to tell of his mother's death, he turns not only to God with prayer for the forgiveness of her sins, but also to the community with a request for its intercession for his parents, †

The independence of autobiography as a free type of interpretation of life was bound to be impaired by such relationships. The interest in the objective eternal ordering of the universe was for Augustine of the same importance as the idea of self-scrutiny : he not only interspersed the story of his life with philosophical speculations, in which the unfathomable problems are turned into questions to God, but added to it, as a final section that made up more than a quarter of the whole work, % purely didactic discussions based on the first chapter of Genesis and dealing in succession with God, the Trinity, and the creation of the world. They were intended to serve as a fragment of his teaching and to take the place of the story of his call to the priestly office and his service in it, for the telling of which " the drops of time " were " too precious to me ". These chapters are built up on the story of Genesis by means of allegorical interpretation, and they do not lack polemic ; the form of confession could only be artificially preserved here. The double sense of *confessio*—*confessio laudis* and *confessio peccati*, confession by way of praise and confession of sin—helped in this ; but we may suspect that the bishop who engaged himself so intensely in presenting the reality of human life, as lived by a full man, intended to

* Aug., *Conf.* I I, iii, 5 ; X, iii, 4. Translated by J. G. Pilkington. See above, pp. 581, *sqq.*

† *Ibid.*, X, 4, 5 ; 33, 50 ; 37, 62 ; IX, 13. Translated by J. G. Pilkington.

‡ Aug., *Conf.*, XI-XIII.

protect himself against the odium of vanity in the bold autobiographical undertaking, not being bold enough to affirm its creative intention.

The external association of this theological treatise with autobiography depended, however, on an inner connexion; this becomes visible as soon as the theology is carried on into meditations, of which the one on time is the most famous. In this Augustine finally expounded the basic religious inspiration of his Confessions, the divine "grace abounding to the chief of sinners", and the mystic's longing for the soul's union with God. Considered, however, from the point of view of its composition, there enters his work here, in our judgment, a heterogeneous exegetical form, which he himself regarded as an equally if not more important continuation of his self-portrayal, in which he went on to meditate on the Holy Scripture, or, in his words, on "God's Law", and to "confess what he knew and knew not about it".* Actual life and biblical revelation coalesce for him on the paths of the soul to God.

Thus Augustine's autobiography was guided by various motives. As these worked together, there came into existence so complicated and yet so unified a form as could be produced only in a man and an epoch possessed both of an old culture and of a new religious urge, the genuine ardour of which gave those cultural traditions fresh life. The continued influence, ever new and ever changing, which Augustine's book exerted through the Middle Ages in the most different epochs, was due to its many-sidedness. It shares this characteristic with Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, but does not owe it, like the poet's autobiography, to the author's contemplation of the infinitely complex reality, but to his powerful subjectivity, which gives expression to every reflection and every emotion aroused in him by recollection.

The predominant relation under which the Confessions were written, the hidden workings of God in human thought and effort, demanded a musical form such as was to appear in the great fourteenth-century mystics as a form of its own, sponta-

* Aug., *Conf.* XI, 1. Cf. also *Retract.*, II, vi, 1, where Augustine himself separates the parts: "A primo usque ad decimum (librum) de me scripti sunt. In tribus ceteris de scripturis Sanctis, ab eo quod scriptum est In principio fuit Deus . . . usque ad sabbati requiem". The "Sabbath rest", with which the theological part of the Confessions, and therefore the whole work, ends, corresponds to the famous phrase put at its beginning as well as at the end of the autobiographical part. "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart knows no rest until it may repose in Thee." In so far there is a unity between the two heterogeneous parts, but it has reference only to the religious feeling and is not expressed in the literary form.

neously emerging from an attitude of mind similar to that which we have observed in the mystical literature of the Hellenistic world ; here Augustine created from the Neoplatonic and Gnostic hymns a corresponding type of presentation of the " ascent in the heart " that means " advancing toward God ".* Different was the moral idealism which was to be garnered in the experience of conversion ; it demanded a dramatic form such as makes its appearance again in Rousseau united with the contemplative, lyrical expression of emotion. The conceptions of divine guidance, of the turning-point in his spiritual development, of his psychological motives and states, of the influence exerted upon him by the moral and social world around him, found expression in building up by stages, in analysis, pragmatic explanation, dialectic, speculation, dicta, description, narrative, and in poetic and rhetorical methods of vivid presentation. Augustine's handling of the Latin language was able to cope with this multiplicity in spite of the passionate eloquence maintained with astonishing command of breath throughout the work. He was one of the few eminent writers who have written their lives in their prime, while their impressions were still fresh, not looking back across a gulf of years.

In the whole work, however, there is a sensuousness, an abundance of feeling, that can absorb the hundreds of quotations from the Old Testament without stifling the personal note. Together with this orgy of prayer the pleasure of the ancient ear in the spoken word gives the eternally human book, which, at least in the great musical insets, can only be properly appreciated by means of declamation, an element that seems to us strange. The continual play on words, the symmetrically rhymed short sentences, which in emotional parts heap up five and six repetitions of the same sound, all this was enjoyed in his day as the visible play of culture. The literary culture becomes obtrusive : in the midst of a poetic section that describes the rise of meditation from the elements of the universe up to God, the air replies to the seeking soul : " Anaximenes is wrong. I am not God."† The true emotional energy that vibrates in the words is united with a mordant logical acuteness that is often sophistical. Augustine is eager to bring out the slightest emotional suggestiveness in words and thoughts by means of

* *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, CXXII, 3.

† Anaximenes of Miletus (r. 500 B.C.), one of the early Greek philosophers, held that air is the fundamental element of all that exists.

picturesque antitheses ; he follows a word with explanatory equivalents that force at once on the attention its religious meaning, distinct from the ordinary sense. But all these playings with antithesis only heighten the essential impressiveness of the work.

For this is the essence of its composition : its various components are not assembled in accordance with the rhetorical rule of pleasing alternation ; the method of association proceeds from a definite structure, and this fundamental form itself is not simple, but of the higher unity that embraces the contrasts which abound in it. God and man are contrasted in the phenomena of life and in their presentation, and yet remain always linked together ; in the songs of longing and love there rings out their complete union. The work does not aim at imitating the historically given reality of the life of this particular individual called Augustinus ; it aims at making felt what in truth—objectively, so to speak—happened in the course of the individual life on the basis of the sole real relation between God and the soul : this veritable event leads back to the Beyond—a Beyond of a metaphysical rather than specifically religious character, as God is considered the eternal Being self-contained while containing all other beings in Himself. " For what hath any being, save only because Thou art? " (XI, 5, 7).

Out of this metaphysical, indeed, spiritual Beyond comes the story like a variegated play of colours, without entirely separating from it : indeed, the reality of the Beyond does not float at a cosmical distance, but is religiously experienced as a permanent presence of the person of God, who surrounds even the erring soul with His love and is found by the soul that calls upon Him. It is through Christ that God " sought us when we sought Him not and did seek us that we might seek Him " (XI, 2, 4). So the personal religious history which the first ten books of the Confessions describe and explain is given its unified structure by a Neoplatonic-Christian outlook on life, which conceives the union of God with the soul both as a uniform presence of God deep down in the soul and as a historical process. The inner form is dual, comparable to the relation of two lines of which one, symbolizing God's existence, proceeds steadily and peacefully from infinity to infinity, while the other symbolizes in its broken and ultimately upward course the soul's striving and search after its divine origin and goal. The two lines, however near they may come to each other, can never naturally coincide until the

unfathomable experience of union with God overcomes their mutual opposition.

It was possible for the various artistic devices to be introduced into this unitary composition of the work from within to provide a vivid record of the fate of the individual in the religious-metaphysical order of the universe. The tirelessly executed movement of the prayers running through the whole work is not only an expression of the religious act of confession ; it also serves the metaphysical context, soaring ever anew to God and so making His omnipresence perceptible in the life-story related. Premonitions of poetical and pictorial nature, symmetries and accords, at the turning-points in the story and at its beginning and end, statements concerning the stages of the spiritual process according to its distance from or nearness to the goal, make it plain that steadiness in the story of the individual comes from the unceasing superabundance of grace. But the most essential thing is that Augustine no longer seeks the divine ordering merely in external acts of guidance, but finds it in the inner life of the soul itself, where God works " in wonderful and mysterious ways ".

Here there enters the conception of the bottom of the soul, which mediaeval mysticism developed in the direction of the idea of individuality. Augustine speaks of the " eternal in the depths of the internal" (*internum aeternum*) (IX, 10). The significance given to this concept in his Confessions is influenced by the ancient view that the individual's true self is something general and therefore accessible to rational comprehension. In this sense he declares with reference to the self-knowledge destined to reveal the divine element in the soul : " All that knows itself comprehends itself, and that which comprehends itself is limited in itself. The spirit knows itself; therefore it is limited in itself and it does not desire to be unlimited, although it could be, for it desires to know itself, because it loves itself."*

Here we see him keeping to the view that the individual soul is finite, in contrast with Heraclitus, who, in those early times when the value of individuality was disclosed, described the human soul as boundless, in view of the unfathomable depth of the *logos* in it.† Augustine similarly speaks of the eternal in the depths of the internal, but in his judgment the soul owes this mysterious depth only to its relation to God, a relation with a

* Aug., *De diversis quæstionibus* 83, Book I, question 15. Retranslated from the German version. † See above, p. 95.

claim to be considered the foundation of all existence. As this fundamental relation underlies the life-history of the individual, giving unity and direction to the historical sequence of events, Augustine has put at the beginning and end of his autobiography the famous phrase already quoted, "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart knows no rest until it may repose in Thee."

But here we come again to the essential element affecting Augustine's position at a turning-point in the history of the human mind. We moderns naturally look upon that inner unrest of the man in search of God as something purely subjective; Augustine has before his eyes a spiritual or soul-like movement that proceeds through the whole universe created by God. In this view there exists everywhere in the beautiful and mobile order of the universe a striving which, whether as a conscious search or merely as a need for completion, is like the Platonic *eros* in raising the living being to God. This view, of which we gave an account in our consideration of the life-history of the soul in Hellenistic mysticism,* is shared by Augustine; the Christian thinker draws from it evidence of God's hidden working within all creatures. All that is, even the striving after knowledge and happiness while still under the influence of the senses, exists, in Augustine's view, in active relationship to God. The life given to man has real content in all its manifestations because, as life, it contains in itself an inalienable attraction toward God. Augustine, as we shall see shortly, gave unambiguous expression to this view in his account of his childhood. But that is not all; even error in thought and evil in will, the hateful in general, are conceptions that have a meaning only in relation to God as truth and universal good: in themselves they are formless and therefore insubstantial, and yet they are related to the universal harmony, "as it were an exquisite poem set off with antitheses":

For as the beauty of a picture is increased by well-managed shadows, so, to the eye that has skill to discern it, the universe is beautified even by sinners, though, considered by themselves, their deformity is a sad blemish.†

Thus all pervertedly imitate Thee who separate themselves from Thee and raise themselves up against Thee. But even by thus imitating Thee they acknowledge Thee to be the Creator of all nature, and so that there is no place whither they can altogether retire from Thee.‡

* See above, pp. 518 sqq.

† Aug., *De civ. Dei*, XI, XVIII, XXIII. Translated by Marcus Dods, in *Select Library*, etc., vol. 2, pp. 215, 218. On Augustine's aesthetic, see A. Riegl, *op. cit.*, pp. 211 sqq. ‡ Aug., *Con.*, II, vi, 14. Translated by J. G. Pilkington. H.A. Y*

Thus Augustine, while condemning his errors and shortcomings as a sinful excursion into the paths of irregularity and creatureliness, can still treat them also as expressions of a real effort that will achieve its end ; God is present not only as a goal but as a permanent agent, as a person near to whom the soul can ascend in talk and prayer, and at the same time as something deep within that is mysteriously awakened.

That relationship, and not the dualism of the sinner and the Lord God, is the essence, in spite of the atmosphere of psalmody,² of the antitheses that run through the whole style, where it is not merely rhetorical conventionality. The story of the soul is not actually a process of development, but a continual effort to thrust out into the eternal, which yet is always present. This inner process is revealed through the description of the emotional reaction, the unsatisfied state resulting from worldly passions, the sense of something that sports, as it were, secretly in the soul; it is not merely indicated by comments after the event. " I searched about for something to love, in love with loving . . . ; for within me I had a dearth of that inward food, Thee Thyself, my God, though that dearth caused me no hunger ; but I remained without all desire for incorruptible food " (III, i, 1). The soul " tries to raise itself aloft", and as its search abroad is mistaken it is only " more severely beaten and repelled " from God, until it " tastes of death " ; it " hungers and thirsts for the changeless truth " and " eats phantasms ", taking them for the truth ; " yet not greedily", because they do not taste as good as the truth.

" Salvation is far from the wicked " : and yet I was drawing nearer gradually and unconsciously. . . . And my desire was before Thee, and the light of mine eyes was not with me ; for that was within, I without. . . . And I turned my attention to the nature of the mind, but the false opinions which I entertained of spiritual things prevented me from seeing the truth. Yet the very power of truth forced itself on my gaze.

This trend of the religious history culminates in the mystical ecstasy of the beatific moment when the soul attains to the vision of the Eternal, but amid this overwhelming bliss still shrinks, trembling, at the announcement of the mystery of the individual's transformation into God, " as if I heard this voice of Thine from on high : ⁱ I am the food of strong men ; grow, and thou shalt feed upon Me ; nor shalt thou convert Me, like the food of thy flesh, into thee, but thou shalt be converted into

Me.' " * Thus God himself points to Augustine's imminent conversion. That event having come to pass, the true life aspired to is gained for ever, and can now be described in its typical form.

Finally, the structure of this unique work which we have tried to analyse is to be found in the account Augustine gives of his intellectual development. This account seems to be of a different order from that of the other elements of his *Confessions* ; it is rather reminiscent of the type of Hellenistic self-portrayal which we termed writers' autobiographies. For Augustine explicitly deals with his rhetorical and philosophic studies, comprehending their sequence as a progress by stages towards a definite end, and so far he seems to follow, though on a larger scale, the method of educational history we observed in autobiographies of writers such as Cicero, Nicolaus Damascenus, or Galen. But again, this pragmatic element has become in his *Confessions* part of the characteristic structure of the work. For Augustine does not base his spiritual progress ultimately, as those writers did, on the nature of the human intellect or on the sequence of the problems that occupied his thoughts during the period of formation of his character ; as a rule he refers the stages he distinguishes in that formation to the plan of divine Providence, and deduces from it the firm though hidden direction which he afterwards recognized in the progress he unwittingly made. This applies to his inner struggles. He depicts them at each consecutive stage up to their climax, but does not attribute the removal of his doubts and anxieties to his own efforts and experiences but goes on, without further psychological explanation, to present the tension released by the working of divine grace as supervening in time, as it were, in an ever new creation. While thus breaking into life, God's action does not make its appearance abruptly in the life-story. For the gulf between the human and the divine is bridged, owing to the structure of the work, by the prayers permeating the narrative to such an extent that the autobiographer in reproducing his past adventures exhibits no less intensely his present way of life, the life in God.

The interpenetration of narrative and confession also allows the autobiographer to bring into play his superior understanding of the significance of the events narrated without directly intro-

* *Aug., Conf., V, xiii, 23 ; V I, i, 1 ; V I I, vii, 11 ; IV, xv, 24 and 26 ; V I I, x, 16.* This and most of the following quotations from the "*Confessions*" are taken from the translation by J. G. Pilkington, in *A Select Library*, etc., vol. I.

ducing his own point of view, passing judgment in special sections of the narrative, as was the practice of the pragmatic novels and biographies of the eighteenth century, but in such a way that he attributes his own interpretations to God as true causes and gives them with praise and thanksgiving as from God.

III. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE " CONFESSIONS "

Thus was a great autobiographical form first created from the author's original outlook on life and the world. There is a great deal of rhetoric, but the soul of the work is not rhetorical. This is shown in the construction of the ten books that form the autobiographical part of the Confessions.³ What is so alien to the rhetorical literature of the ancients, the suiting of the style to the matter, is here a fundamental characteristic of the composition. The typical form is modified here in accordance with the main sections into which the life-story is split up by the content and its treatment. The first section (Books I-IV) deals with childhood and youth, revealing a growing entanglement with the world ; the second (V-IX) leads up to his conversion ; this is the climax of the section, which closes with the results of the conversion. The final section (X) describes the author's current religious life.

The separation and interconnexion of these sections (the division into books is but a subordinate device for a writer like Augustine) are artistically effected, the main device being the parallel formation of the introductory and concluding parts of the different " books " or sections. This parallelism is carried through in the whole work in a way reminiscent of musical composition. Thus the Confessions begin with a long prayer that sounds like variations on a theme, the theme being the problem of the pilgrimage of the soul : " What place is there in me into which my God can come ? . . . Thou who art most hidden and yet most near " (I, ii, 2 ; iv, 4).

In raising this question and trying to answer it, the prayer, which is a religious act and a literary form as well, is given a further function ; it serves as preface and introduction to the work. The infinite longing, full of foreboding, for the highest good and for peace is placed here at the outset in a way that became a model for the spiritual autobiographies of later times. While thus giving expression to eternal human feelings, the introductory prayer also represents the philosophizing activity brought

into operation in connexion with the soul's search for God. In reflections running through his prayer Augustine gives its theme an intellectual turn suggested by the Sceptics, who disputed on the primacy of knowledge or belief.* Thus he puts here the theoretical question how it is that on man's way to God his faith in Him precedes all knowledge, although faith leading to full knowledge is itself started on its path by something like rudimentary knowledge. In contrast with these subtleties there rings out in the midst of the prayer the cry of the Psalmist, " Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation" (Ps. xxxv. 3). The same phrase recurs triumphantly after the account of the conversion, and the concluding book of the whole autobiographical work then takes up the theme : " Where, then, did I find Thee, so as to be able to learn Thee? "†

The second section of the autobiography is similarly introduced by a prayer in which what was to come is given in advance and raised into the sphere of the typical :

Let the restless and the unjust depart and flee from Thee. . . . Or where dost Thou not find them ? Thou alone art near even to those that remove far from Thee. Let them then be converted and seek Thee. . . . And behold, Thou art there in their hearts, in the hearts of those who confess to Thee, and cast themselves upon Thee, and weep on Thy bosom after their obdurate ways, . . . and they rejoice in weeping, since Thou, O Lord, who didst make, remakest them and comfortest them.

And again within this section the account of the conversion is marked in this way as something new and independent; it is framed in concordant prayers introducing and following it as a chorus of thanks and rejoicing. ‡

These two first sections are closely united in a composition complete in itself. Their subject is the unique event, to be narrated in what follows, in which Augustine gained the new life ; the concluding section aims at describing a lasting state of mind. In accordance with the author's subjective attitude to his subject, this story of his soul is not made up of broad situations seen as a totality ; and on the other hand Augustine's nature is too rich to embrace everything in a uniform feeling. Thus he proceeds from the religious significance of the various situations in life which he pictures in general descriptions or in scenes

* Cf. *Sextus Pyrrh. hyp.*, III, 174.

† *Aug., Conf.* I, ii, 2 ; VII, 27 ; X, 6 ; X, xxvi, 37.

‡ *Ibid.*, V, ii, 2 ; VIII, 1 ; IX, 1.

presented in detail, followed by moral or critical judgment or psychological explanation or analysis, or by a direct demonstration from them of his inner life, while pouring out his feelings, ascetically brooding over himself, writing long speculations on problems of life, or pointing out the universal human significance of a mood, as he appeals to the reader's own emotional experience. These heterogeneous elements all draw their unity from his individuality. They are joined together by means of contrast or correspondence with one another, and give the narrative a haphazard structure that results at times in the actual sequence of events being sacrificed to this rhetorical method of treatment*

Within this definite form much use is made of the technique of premonitory signs, based on the faith in election ;⁴ it serves to keep continually under notice his destination from birth to become a Christian. Alongside Augustine's own vain attempts to change his way of life, and the warnings of other persons, there appears here especially the figure of his mother Monica. In her the ascetic bishop has incorporated with art as well as with human feeling the growth of his Christian religiousness. With her tears and her prayers for the salvation of her son's soul, she passes like a guardian spirit through his story ; her visions of a happy future, recorded at critical points, balance the descriptions of his sins. Through the way in which he emphasized her Catholic piety, associating it with the outward divine guidance of his life, the religious world was about to be subjected to the magic power of grace, which then appeared again and again in mediaeval autobiography in imitation of that element of the Confessions. But the inwardness of Augustine's striving has an idealizing effect on the picture of his good mother ; while at the outset she is presented in sorrow and anxiety, as a woman with " Eve's inheritance ", her figure seems to grow, as her son comes nearer to her sphere of life in the Christian Church ; Ambrose himself, the great bishop of Milan, whose preaching contributed largely to Augustine's conversion, appears, says Augustine, to have been associated with Monica : he is full of her praises and congratulates his listener on such a mother. When the conversion is accomplished, the narrative rings out in her rejoicing over the fulfilment of her vision of salvation, and as the hour of her death approaches all that is earthly has entirely fallen away from her like a husk, and mother and son soar in

* Compare, for instance, *Conf.* IV, 12, with *Contra Acad.*, I I, 3.

unison to God in mystical vision, in a foretaste of eternal blessedness.

But it is not an idea of development, but the typical contrast between entanglement in the world and being lifted up to the true life, that is to say the life in God, that determines the way these nine books are distinguished and interconnected. A full half of the autobiography deals with a period of only four years, that in which the conversion took place ; the whole history of Augustine's youth up to his twenty-eighth year is compressed into a first short section. This first section contains the religious basis of the story of his life, in two respects. Augustine tells of his life from birth to the beginning of his conversion from the Christian, or, rather, the ascetic, viewpoint of the power of the passions that entangled him with the world, a man without peace, from the infant's impulses, regarded as " sinful ", past the boy's mischief to the pleasures of the senses, the joy in art and the theatre, and the intellectual and social life of the youth. Now and then there shines in the distance the final blessedness. This is the other aspect, which is also introduced from the beginning. All natural gifts, even the natural relationship of mother and child, even the infant's feeding at the breast, are regarded as proceeding from the superabundance of grace.

This is reminiscent of the " pragmatic " type of biography familiar, for instance, in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, in so far as the story of the individual life is pursued from the earliest possible moment, that of procreation ; but here the explanation is not drawn from natural descent but from the metaphysical obscurity that embraces birth and death alike. Thus the narrative can unfold itself from the introductory prayer without a break, turning, as it were, downward :

Still suffer me to speak before Thy mercy—me, " dust and ashes ". Suffer me to speak, for, behold, it is Thy mercy I address, and not derisive man. Yet perhaps even Thou deridest me ; but when Thou art turned to me Thou wilt have compassion on me. For what do I wish to say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came into this—shall I call it dying life or living death ? Yet as I have heard from my parents, from whose substance Thou didst form me,—for I myself cannot remember it,—Thy merciful comforts sustained me. Thus it was that the comforts of a woman's milk entertained me ; for neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts, but Thou by them didst give me the nourishment of infancy according to Thy ordinance and that bounty of Thine which underlieth all things.*

* Aug., Conf., I, 6, 7.

Only toward the end of the whole story, in the ninth book, in his funeral oration for his mother, did Augustine sketch a picture of his home surroundings, with the realism of which the rhetorician and the preacher had command, aiming here also at edification. He was Monica's son by her marriage with Patricius, a distinguished but not a wealthy member of the Roman colony at Tagaste in proconsular Numidia. In the description Augustine gives in that place of the narrow, philistine provincial town, there is no toning down of the coarse traits, the marital discord and unfaithfulness, the beatings of which the women bore visible traces, the malevolence and the drunkenness—and Augustine's pagan father was one of the most ill-conducted ; but the picture is brightened by Monica's exemplary patience and conciliatoriness : she is a pattern of domestic virtue and piety. This appears as an incidental addition to the autobiography, which is concerned only with the soul and God. Life begins not with father and mother but with God and sin.

But in spite of the emphasis on sinfulness Augustine at once notes the mystical element in the relation between soul and God, which was to unfold in time. Thus the book of early childhood ends :

For I existed even then ; I lived, and felt, and was solicitous about my own well-being,—a trace of that most mysterious unity from whence I had my being ; and kept watch by my inner sense over the wholeness of my senses, and in these insignificant pursuits, and also in my thoughts on things insignificant, I learned to take pleasure in truth. I was averse to being deceived, I had a vigorous memory, was provided with the power of speech, was softened by friendship, shunned sorrow, meanness, ignorance. In such a being what was not wonderful and praiseworthy ? But all these are gifts of my God ; I did not give them to myself ; and they are good, and all these constitute myself. . . . For in this lay my sin, that not in Him but in His creatures—myself and the rest—I sought for pleasures, honours, and truths, falling thereby into sorrows, troubles, and errors.*

Here he speaks of the existence man leads as a living and sentient being, in search of joy and satisfaction and prosperity ; he sees this natural existence as " a trace of the most mysterious unity ", of the divine origin of all things, in a philosophically speculative sense which elsewhere he thus explains :

To be is no other than to be one. In as far, therefore, as anything attains unity, in so far it " is ". For unity works congruity and

* Aug., Conf., I, xx, 31 ; X, 33.

harmony, whereby things composite are, in so far as they are (for things uncompounded are in themselves, because they are one) ; but things compounded imitate unity by the harmony of their parts, and, so far as they attain to unity, they are. Wherefore order and rule secure being, disorder tends to not-being.*

At the same time he associates the future salvation, in a specifically religious sense, historically with his early childhood, since he grew up under the care of Monica, the pious Christian woman, who later converted her husband : " From my tenderest infancy I had, in a manner, sucked with my mother's milk that name of my Saviour, Thy Son ; I kept it in the recesses of my heart ; and all that presented itself to me without that divine name, though it might be elegant, well written, and even replete with truth, did not altogether carry me away." f

The theme, however, of his youthful recollections is remoteness from God. In his story he appears tortured and fascinated by the typical spectacle of men's strayings in their natural attitude to this moral and social world. The ascetic bishop takes his stand on the high level of the observer of men who could have written a novel from his own experience. He gives penetrating analyses of the child's soul, the sensual impulses and the process through which he learned his mother-tongue ; he writes of the way the human being who does not rest in God depends on social connexions and conventional views ; or he bemoans the conventional literary education, which he describes now ironically and now with the rhetoric of the censor of morals ; when he comes to speak of his pleasure in art and the drama, he proceeds to a psychological analysis of aesthetic impressions with reference to Aristotle's " Poetics ", and on the other hand he offers reflections on the valuation of the good things of this world, on the charm of life in general, and on the " principal forms " of sin : this culminates in a great penitential sermon. So he draws attention to the transitoriness of human existence, tracing his own impulses to the promptings of universal human nature, and brings into the framework of the narrative, made up of prayer and acknowledgment of sin, a variegated picture of the life on earth. Human relationships in life, especially friendship, he describes with subtle interest ; he investigates its psychological basis in sympathy, or gives a straightforward picture of the emotions with which he devoted himself to a friend ; and now that he has shut out such emotions,

* *De Moribus Manichaorum*, VI ; cf. *Con.*', I, vi, 10.

† *Aug., Conf.*, III, iv, 8 ; cf I, xi, 17.

his rhetoric also becomes at times an artificial exaggeration which he later condemned as " superficial declamation and not serious confession "

His entire development proceeded in the midst of company ; even in moral and intellectual effort he had not been alone, but was decisively influenced by meetings, discussions, exemplars; this can be seen from his narrative, read together with his earlier autobiographical sketches. But he gives little individual treatment to these other persons, with the exception of his mother and his friend Alypius ; for he is unwilling to admit the formation and broadening of his own character by other persons : all is attributed to God : " Lest any man should attribute it to his own power if another, whom he wishes to be reformed, is so through a word of his." † A friend to whom Augustine had said, immediately after his conversion, that he owed to him the strength and the incentive to achieve all that was highest, found scarcely a mention anywhere in the autobiography ‡—" Friendship with this world is infidelity to God." §

Only one person who exerted decisive influence is given a detailed character-sketch, Faustus of Mileve, the celebrated Manichaean bishop to whom, since his adhesion to that sect in Carthage in 373, he had been continually referred as the man who could solve all the problems that disturbed him. When in the end Augustine went to Carthage he saw that omniscient philosopher, and set him down as a vainglorious prig. It was that that showed him the emptiness of the Manichaean philosophy and religion. But in his characterization, or, rather, his caricature, of Faustus Augustine makes no attack on the religious content of the esoteric doctrine of Manichaeism, but only on its claim to be accounted a body of science ; he deals only with the writer and teacher, and is full of mockery of the way this Manichaean bishop could cover up his intellectual nakedness with a flow of oratory whose flights were the product of " several of Cicero's orations, a very few books of Seneca, and a few works of poets and prettily written books of the Manichaean sect ". But he does not give his humour free play ; soon the bludgeon comes out, and we are told that misleading eloquence conceals the snares of Death and the Devil.

Carnal love, which is singled out for special condemnation

* Aug., *Retract.*, I I, 6.

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Aug., *Con.*., I X, 18.

‡ This was Romanianus, a friend of Augustine's father ; he had borne the expense of Augustine's training in the forensic art. See Aug., *Contra Acad.*, I I, 3, 4.

§ Aug., *Con.*., I, 21. James iv. 4.

throughout the work, is referred to only in general terms, without mentioning any women's names, but with the emphasis of an ascetic's imagination, so that passion is virtually exposed in its nakedness. In the Soliloquies Augustine had asked himself in a different spirit, " Are you not sometimes charmed by the image of a beautiful, modest, compliant maiden, well lettered, or of parts that can easily be trained by you, bringing you too (being a despiser of riches) just so large a dowry as will relieve your leisure of all burden on her account ? "

In this section he includes his intellectual effort among the temptations, thus belittling the thirteen years of his first youthful strivings after knowledge. In his account of his development, the influence of Cicero's philosophic-religious exhortatory work, deserved mention as epoch-making, and it was so described in Augustine's first self-portrayals ; here, too, that work is assessed as inwardly of crucial influence and a deterrent from " worldly nothingnesses " ; but it makes its appearance only episodically, to sink quickly in " that deep, bottomless mire and the darknesses of error ", furnished with the apostolic description of philosophy as base seduction, in accordance with the teaching of men and the ordinances of the world and not in accord with Christ. In the comprehensive view of the search for truth as an effort of value even if the wrong turn be taken, the emphasis lies here on shortcomings. Thus does Augustine pass judgment on his studies and his first literary efforts, works of an aesthetic and philosophic nature, which he had written in his Manichaean period ; he presents his ideas at that time mainly in contrast with his existing views, and he adds to his exposition of doctrines of the Manichaeans a polemic, embittered by the theological controversies which he was carrying on as bishop, against those " vain men and crazy ". During those nine years (373-82) he was not free from doubts of the Manichaean doctrine he had followed ; but these doubts, and the ideas that prepared the way for his later development, and in particular his opposition to the sect's materialistic picture of Nature, find mention only in the second section, which was to tell of the removal of all doubts ; he does this by a device employed also, but in an organic way, by Goethe.

This second part reveals a different composition in conformity with the much broader treatment of the four critical

* Aug., *Soliloq.* I, 17 ; cf. 25. Translated by C. C. Starbuck, in *A Select Library*, etc., vol. 7.

years 383-6. With the dramatic force given by a strong passion, and with a unique combination of subjective judgment and objective explanation, Augustine brings the comprehensive story of his inner development in continually heightened tension to its completion. He now multiplies the premonitory signs, and outward divine guidance also makes its appearance from now on in ample quantity; as the change in his surroundings becomes important, the scene shifting from Carthage to Rome and then to Milan and Ambrose; he reinforces the inserted rhythmical passages that sound like music—but all these are but emanations of the energy brought to the story itself from the approaching goal. The antithesis of divine influence and man's deviation from God now serves to produce, just at the deepest depths, where the hero seems to be much farther from God than in his youth, the anticipation that every human effort will fail, and that the decision can only come from a new sort of experience. Thus Augustine is able to place the account of his Epicurean ideas, in which he found himself prevented only by the fear of death from the enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses and from regarding them as an aim in life, in a conspicuous position at the end of a book, without the feeling of steady advance being disturbed. The tracing of sin no longer prevails, but, strictly as Augustine watches himself, regarding all that lay before his conversion as absolute error, he has in the two-sided structure a means of uniting heaven and hell and of illuminating even the subjective depth with the continually more visible approach of God.

At first the narrative continues to deal with intellectual development. This is presented with pragmatic technique by means of cross-sections, in which the various situations in his mental life are reduced to some few elements of importance to the further course of the story. In this connexion he is less concerned with visualizing the various stages in their own colourings than with the exposition of the interconnexion of problems and errors, which now gradually find their solution: philosophic scepticism, the erroneous conception of the Gospel and of the Old Testament, the astrological craziness, the view that the evil in the world is inexplicable, and, "the principal and almost the sole source of all my errors", the incapacity for purely intellectual thinking, for ridding his imagination from the constraint of sensations. The emphasis on this point may be explained by the African's sensuous nature, but the point is referable once again to

the Platonic tradition.* The process of intellectual development, as he interprets it, proceeds smoothly and visibly in its details, while the actual force at work, which lies in the Beyond, stands behind as something unfathomable. Thus, even in his picture of Ambrose he does not convey the impression of a powerful personality, as Gregory Thaumaturgus had once done in his thanks to his teacher Origen ; in that illustrious Doctor of the Church, no less eminent as statesman than as preacher, Augustine merely singles out particular elements such as his art of biblical exegesis or his evangelism, elements that opened his own way to the true faith.

The subordinating of the free philosophic interest shows itself more profoundly in the fact that the fundamental overcoming of scepticism is not here associated with his personal experience of the Christian faith and the confidence he drew from it, but this faith is deduced, as it were, from outside from the force of authority, while the inner process is attributed to divine intervention :

After that, O Lord, Thou by little and little, with most gentle and most merciful hand drawing and calming my heart, didst persuade me; . . . taking into consideration what a multiplicity of things I had never seen, nor was present when they were enacted, . . . taking into consideration all this, Thou persuadedst me that not they who believed Thy books (which, with so great authority, Thou hast established among nearly all nations), but those who believed them not were to be blamed, †

A limit to his appreciation of his inner experiences becomes visible when he details here the reasons which, in his judgment, made clear to him the necessity of faith in the Catholic doctrine. In doing so he draws evidence from the most various quarters, the belief in historical or geographical traditions, in his own origin from certain parents, and the like, as of equal value with the religious conviction.

The new life comes into its own only when the story turns to the struggles of the will. In his story of his youth, as was entirely in accordance with the plan of the work, he had not made clear that even then his main effort had been directed not only to the acquisition of true knowledge, but to right living. Now that salvation was to come, the centre of interest moves into the ethical field, in which the decision must be made, and once more the artistic presentation has the result that the reader is kept

* Compare the account of the birth of God in man in *Poimandres*, p. 523 above, and Plato's own teaching, p. 147.

† *Aug., Con.*, VI, 5,

in the feeling that the great event lies beyond the gaining of the assured philosophical conviction. It is a question of discovering his own self—as a mind and in sin. Here a new and dramatic form enters : effective scenes such as Augustine's meeting in a street in Milan with a beggar who leads his undistinguished everyday life, and is happier in it than the professor of rhetoric with his many worldly concerns, his ambitions, and the problems that distract him. Then comes the introduction of Alypius, his young friend and pupil, who with his mildness, gentleness, and devotion makes a contrasting figure. Augustine had a particular reason for dwelling upon the story of Alypius' life, but what he tells here of his friend's youth (VI, 8) fits in with the larger context of the story of his own conversion.

Alypius had been sent by his parents to Rome to study jurisprudence, but had succumbed to the temptations of the great city, although, or, according to Augustine's account, just because, he had imagined himself to be superior to them. He had gone to the Amphitheatre with some reluctance, merely to please his friends, and had been infected with the passion for the gladiatorial games. He had intended to prove to himself and the others that that vulgar craze could not affect him, and he had shut his eyes so that he should see nothing ; but he had involuntarily opened them when he heard " the tremendous shouting of the crowd "—and then he was lost : like the crowd, he was filled with the lust for blood. Augustine gives a dramatic and thrilling description of the incident, as a scene from life, but his purpose is to give an example of the undependability of the human will. Alypius, he comments, showed " more rashness than strength of mind ; his spirit was the weaker because he placed reliance on his own strength ", instead of building upon God alone.

But Augustine heightens the dramatic vividness of his description of his inner state especially now, when the time for decision approaches, in a series of monologues in which his will is seen vacillating between the world and God ; the whole course of life is surveyed in monologue, and in the accompanying prayer the future solution appears, a solution attainable only through grace. These descriptions of " misery " are the product of thoughtful contemplation, but not, as in Gregory of Nazianzus, accompanied by sentimental reflection upon the contrasts in human nature : the psychologist reveals the fruitful germs that grow from the inner ferment, and shows the obstacles still standing in his path.

" But this raised me toward Thy light, that I knew as well that I had a will as that I had life : when, therefore, I was willing or unwilling to do anything, I was most certain that it was none but myself that was willing and unwilling ; and immediately I perceived that there was the cause of my sin." * To recognize the cause of evil in his own will, and therefore to seek for strength to overcome the will's evil tendency—on that vital problem is concentrated the speculative question of the origin of evil in the world created by God ; and on the other hand man's search for himself means at the same time a search for God and for the knowledge of His essence. The prayer-form in which Augustine describes his spiritual state enables him to unite the various elements of development and to interweave them : the highest spiritual effort produces the greatest nearness to God. " Yet even there were Thine ears open, and I knew it not; and when in stillness I sought earnestly, those silent contritions of my soul were strong cries unto Thy mercy. . . . And by inward stings didst Thou disturb me, that I should be dissatisfied until Thou wert made sure to my inward sight" (VII, vii, 1 ; viii, 12).

The final aim had been the contemplation of God. Thus the climax would seem to be provided by Neoplatonic mysticism, of which the effect had now to be described. But here Augustine introduces the most critical tension into this mystical elevation, proceeding from his later experience : he permits the abyss that separates Neoplatonism from Christianity to yawn before and after that beatific vision, while yet using the form of prayer to produce the certainty of salvation by God's grace. Things that in those earlier self-portrayals counted as consummation are now pushed back into the state of sin.

To begin with, Augustine weakens the theoretical exposition of Neoplatonism with which the section begins, by intermingling the recollection of the enthusiasm with which that intellectual religion, founded on Plato's metaphysics, had filled him with the contrast of Christian humility, and he praises divine providence for leading him first to the " Platonic books " and then to the Bible, and so making possible for him the difficult realization of the distinctiveness of the Christian experience. Only after establishing this fact does he go fully into the philosophic life which he found among the Neoplatonists, to show its actual effect;

* Aug., *Conf.*, VII, 3.

artistically * he compresses everything into a single moment of experience, depicting himself in ecstatic contemplation :

And I entered my innermost being under Thy guidance, . . . entered and with the eye of my soul observed above my spirit an unchanging light, not that ordinary light, visible to all flesh, but different, quite different. . . . He who knows the truth, knows it, and he who knows it, knows the Eternal, . . . and I would rather doubt that I live than that the truth exists. For that truly is, which doth immutably remain. "It is good for me to draw near unto God." †

He makes the settlement of all the metaphysical problems that disturbed him proceed from that "tremulous moment of beatific vision" ; but he provides himself thereby with room to breathe only in order now to concentrate his gaze on his peaceless heart, to which God denies Himself as a secure possession. His anti-thetical style here reaches its peak : in the very possession of knowledge lurks the most fearful peril, pride in reason, which threatens to destroy the almost completed work of his religious education. But in recalling the conflict he presents it as solved in his assured certainty of salvation through faith. The confession becomes a sermon ; Augustine describes his first study of Paul, and while interchanging past and present in prayer he expounds the meaning of humility and grace and the life of Ghiist, to prepare the ground for the now approaching story of conversion.

All the resources of Augustine's art are summoned to develop out of the psychological process and at the same time to lift above it the event continually in mind, now that it approaches. The element of musical form now itself becomes dramatic. First a full preliminary blast—Joy, joy ! Then a crescendo, repeated in parallel and reinforced movement and carrying the struggling will in constant elevation into the sphere in which the downpouring grace reaches it, so that the heart may break out into jubilation over redemption. Before Augustine presents the picture of his own experience, he tells of other strange conversions, of which he was told at the time of his own, beginning with the conversion of the celebrated Neoplatonic rhetorician Victorinus, and leading

* That Augustine had not yet attained to the mystical vision of God is rendered probable by earlier self-portrayals, especially by the Soliloquies.

† Aug., *Conf.*, VII, c. 10. For the interpretation of the passage from the Psalms (73, 28), cf. *De diversis quest.* (A.D. 388-95), auestion 54 : "He who knows (*cognoscit*) God is joined (*junctus*) with Him . . . God is the essential truth, and inasmuch as the soul, if it knows the truth, is joined to it and the good of the soul consists therein, it follows that the phrase in the Psalm is to be understood in that sense : *mihi adharere Deo bonum est.*"

on to the effect of Athanasius' " Life of Anthony ", on its appearance, upon circles close to Augustine. It is a series of narratives that come more and more impressively, more and more physically close, inescapably in front of his soul, presenting to him the marvel of the change of will in a palpable form. Victorinus, with whose conversion this series begins, was a fellow-countryman of Augustine's, a generation his senior, who had become, like him, a famous teacher both of rhetoric and of philosophy in Rome ; intellectually Augustine was particularly in sympathy with him, for Victorinus was responsible for the Latin translation of the Neoplatonic works that introduced Augustine to Plato's philosophy. This eminent man's conversion to Christianity (A.D. 355) had aroused widespread interest, but Augustine professes to have learnt of it only at the time of his own conversion, thirty years later : an older Christian friend of his, concerned for the salvation of his soul, told him the story in order to " spur him to imitation ". As Augustine tells the story,* what is of interest in Victorinus' conversion is not so much the turning away from Neoplatonism to Christianity (which was virtually a spontaneous process) as the eminent man's decision, after his conversion had taken place, to proclaim it in public, a decision that was not only religious and an act of humility but also social, in view of the state of public opinion at the time of the decisive step. In this way the whole inward event which Augustine had to describe grew out of life itself, out of his relations with his fellow-men, and not only out of speculation, which is finished and put away, and the *leitmotiv* can break through anew from the beginning : " O Lord . . . by what means didst Thou convey Thyself into that bosom ? . . . Suddenly, being overwhelmed with a holy love and a sober sense of shame, in anger with himself . . . in the pangs of the travail of the new life, he was inwardly changed and his mind was divested of the world " (VIII, ii, 4 ; vi, 15).

Now he describes the impression made on him by these stories of conversion, his description again rising twice in parallel flights, and with the rhetorical technique of the picture of the soul, the technique he commands as a great writer, he leads straight into the subject of his excited feelings. Himself a man of eminent psychological insight, he analyses what he describes, isolating the elements in the play of his emotions, and so unravels the " mystery " of the inadequate will, coining phrases—" give me

* Aug., *Con.*., VIII, ii.

† Prodicus' story of Hercules' choice is quoted : VIII, 27.

modesty and sobriety " ; " strong be the will, and sincere ! " ; " cast thyself into God, fear not, He will not draw away from thee so that thou shouldst fall " : it is on that that the decision depends. Similes come here in unusual quantity ; the Pauline phrases about sin and the conflicting lusts of flesh and spirit serve as an explanation of the eternal human struggle ; the similarly striving Alypius at his side gives the measure of the individual power with which the typical process is carried through in Augustine.

The signs of emotion, gestures, exclamations, tears, have to be introduced where images no longer suffice to give an adequate idea of the turmoil of the whole man in his weakness and contrition : the psychological process that had been led with such persistent crescendo to the very threshold of resolution, now sinks into the depths where man dispenses with understanding of himself, with relying on himself, and surrenders to the Almighty, whose influence will unfailingly reach us as soon as He finds us ready : in the great and dramatic garden scene there takes place the miracle, the grand stroke of grace, the direct " divine command " from the mouths of children in the neighbourhood, " Take, read ! " He takes the Bible and silently reads the passage at which it opens, and so he sees the oracular writing (Rom. xiii. 13) : " Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." God has spoken to him, as He did in the past to Anthony, who, " accidentally coming in while the Gospel was being read, received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, and by such oracle was converted unto God." Suddenly the complete peace of the resolute will is produced : Paul's conversion in a more modern and more enlightened repetition. And in grateful bliss the antitheses of the prayer present the mystery as an experience (IX, i, 1) :

How evil have not my deeds been ; or, if not my deeds, my words ; or if not my words, my will ? But Thou, O Lord, art good and merciful, and Thy right hand had respect unto the profoundness of my death, and removed from the bottom of my heart that abyss of corruption. And this was the result, that I willed not to do what I willed, and willed to do what Thou willedst. But where during all those years, and out of what deep and secret retreat, was my free will summoned forth in a moment, whereby I gave my neck to Thy " easy yoke " and my shoulders to Thy " light burden ", O Christ Jesus, " my strength and my Redeemer " ? How sweet did it suddenly

become to me to be without the delights of trifles ! And what at one time I feared to lose, it was now a joy to me to put away. For Thou didst cast them away for me. Thou true and highest sweetness: Thou didst cast them away, and instead of them didst enter in Thyself,—sweeter than all pleasure, though not to flesh and blood ; brighter than all light, but more veiled than all mysteries.

After this inner revolution there was no further heightening : what could still come was fulfilment. Augustine concentrated strongly here again. The end of his story, telling of the giving up of his secular occupation, the receipt of baptism, and the return home, places in this one year the subsequent developments, which had gradually led the Christian Neoplatonist deeper and deeper into Pauline Christianity and at the same time into ecclesiasticism. " Pleasant is it to me, O Lord, to confess unto Thee, by what inward goads Thou didst subdue me, and how Thou didst make me low, bringing down the mountains and hills of my imaginations, and didst straighten my crookedness, and smooth my rough ways" (IX, iv, 7).

He employed his art to show how his conversion worked out immediately in this Christianization, and he was able to effect that change * without any sacrifice of inner consistency because in his Confessions he interpreted the event of his conversion in the light of his later views, and because that event had, in fact, been the source of the new outlook from which he interpreted it, some fourteen years later. The other side of this architectural method of giving unity to the story of his career was that the actual character of that stage of his development was lost to sight. And those for whom the earlier philosophic writer Augustine did not disappear in face of the ecclesiastic will regret that that period of his life is not adequately presented in the autobiography.

For it was a pleasant period of philosophic and literary leisure that he passed with his friends on the estate of Cassiciacum, near Milan, between conversion and baptism : it was the fulfilment of a long-nursed plan of a philosophic community remote from the

* On the change cf. Boissier, *Fin du Paganisme*, I, pp. 370 sqq. ; and Harnack, *Augustins Konfessionen*, pp. 29-30. Here, too, there becomes plain the difference in general conception between the works written immediately after the conversion and the Confessions, even in details of motives. In the former he gives his sensitiveness to the world's opinion as the obstacle to giving up his official position as rhetorician, and his illness (broncho-pneumonia) then " came to my aid ". In the Confessions (IX, ii, 4), he states that the necessity imposed on him by his illness of giving up or interrupting his activities was at first unpleasant to him, and that he was then, after his conversion had led to the decision, able to make the illness a convenient " and not disingenuous excuse " to the world, enabling him to retire from Milanese circles without creating a sensation.

world. Augustine throws his account of it into the form corresponding to the typical state of a Christian convert awaiting the sacrament of baptism. He passes quickly over the documents he had from that period,⁶ with a disapproval uttered rather rhetorically : " they served God, but breathed heavily as if for a rest, with the breath of the school of pomposity ". He sets out to describe the state of mind of the penitent, and he heightens the picture by direct imitation of an actual penitential hymn in variations on the fourth Psalm : he himself picks out in doing so the really expressive elements, such as that the emotions " broke out through eyes and voice " : fear and hope, humble contrition and self-accusation, uneasiness about the burden of sin not forgiven before the baptism, the high-minded yet painful sense of the elected of regretful sympathy for the " deaf dead ", to whom he, too, had belonged, the happy certainty of grace and of peace in God : *o in pace, o in id ipsum !* And now he deepens his quasi-Pauline account of his conversion with his mystical notion of the inner union (IX, 10) :

O that they could behold the internal Eternal, which having tasted I gnashed my teeth that I could not show It to them, while they brought me their heart in their eyes, roaming abroad from Thee, and said, " Who will show us any good ? " But there, where I was angry with myself in my chamber, when I was inwardly pricked, when I had offered my " sacrifice ", slaying my old man, and beginning the resolution of a new life, putting my trust in Thee,—there hadst Thou begun to grow sweet unto me, and to " put gladness in my heart! "

Then the Catholic and ecclesiastical element enters with power—edifying stories † of various sorts, also additional matter concerning cures by relics ; and the report of his baptism, which now " dismisses uneasiness about past life ", culminates in the " wonderful sweetness " of the sacrament : " How greatly did I weep in Thy hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voices of Thy sweet-speaking Church ! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the truth was poured forth into my heart, whence the agitation of my piety overflowed, and my tears ran over and blessed was I therein " (IX, vi, 14).

But the story ends in a human and beautiful digression with

* **Augustine speaks** in an earlier chapter—*Conf.*, VI, iv, 24—of this plan, **but only** of its falling through at that time ; its connexion with the months at Cassiciacum **was** prevented from being shown in the *Confessions* by the method of composition of that work ; it is evident in the youthful work *Contra Acad.*, II, 4-5.

† In addition to the entry of friends into the haven of the Church, *cf.* the divine **healing** of a toothache (IX, 12) ; the Soliloquies also report this, but without **the working of divine grace**.

the living picture of his mother, with her last, other-worldly days on earth and his own grief, which no asceticism could suppress, at her death. The climax in these chapters is the description of the ecstatic vision to which mother and son were unitedly lifted up, in the Neoplatonic method. This effective picture is at the same time used to artistic purpose for the composition as an essential means of progress. Augustine can now resume the description of the ecstasy, which he had placed before the conversion, with greater fullness in sign of consummation, and at the same time this picture leads on through its sound and its content into the concluding book which follows (IX, x, 23-5).

We opened wide the mouth of our heart, after those supernal streams of Thy fountain, "the fountain of life", which is with Thee. . . . And while we were thus speaking, and straining after her (Wisdom), we slightly touched her with the whole effort of our heart. . . . We were saying, then, if to any man the tumult of the flesh were silenced,—silenced the phantasies of earth, water and air—silenced, too, the poles; yea, the very soul be silenced to herself, and go beyond herself by not thinking of herself,—silenced fancies and imaginary revelations, every tongue, and every sign, and whatsoever exists by passing away,—if they should be silenced, having only quickened our ears to Him who created them, and He alone speak not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His word, not by fleshly tongue, nor angelic voice, nor sound of thunder, nor the obscurity of a similitude, but might hear Him—Him whom in these we love—without these, like as we two strained ourselves, and with rapid thought touched on that Eternal Wisdom which remaineth over all. If this could be sustained, and other visions of a far different kind be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and envelop its beholder amid these inward joys, so that this life could be eternally like that one moment of understanding which we now sighed after, were not this "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

"Thy Lord": involuntarily, as he uses the Gospel text (Matt, xxv., 21) and so no longer speaks of God objectively, in the third person, but cries out to Him, the Platonic vision has changed; the path of knowledge passes into the impending salvation: "And when? Then, when we all rise again . . ."

We come now to the last part of this inexhaustible self-revelation. That which had occupied Augustine since the Soliloquies now answers to his ripened art and understanding. He adds to his narrative of the pilgrimage of his soul a description of his life of contemplation, and so the autobiography is rounded off to the comprehensive expression of Christian piety, which had received in Augustine its renewer.

He describes as his theme the statement who he is : " What am I myself inwardly ? " He speaks of his innermost self, but once more he is not concerned with his individuality, but with the typical course of that contemplative religious life, and, imaginatively using the first personal method, he describes that course as a single process going on in his soul, the spiritual movement being individualized only by his personal experiences permeating the elements of that process.

As the mystical element in the purity of its essence now gains the lead, the composition as a whole, and not merely in some inserted hymns, becomes like music. It begins with the exposition of questing love, prompted by the mystery of the union of God and the soul, which formed the main theme of the whole work. After a prelude and chorus in alternating strophes, " What do, I love when I love Thee ? " the soul, pressing from the external world into its own interior and upwards into the transcendental sphere, seeks its God with both understanding and will. Accordingly there follow two corresponding movements, one expressive of man's striving after true knowledge, the other of his longing for bliss. Both lead upward stage by stage, one directed toward God as Truth, the other toward the highest good. God being both truth and eternal bliss, the soul's double search becomes one as the goal draws near. At the same time Augustine brings in his particular experience, recalling the hour of his conversion ; with profound art he reproduces it in a beatific echo, pouring the recalled feelings with full rhythms into the present religious movement which now comes to its finale. Thus he makes clear the common meaning of this supratemporal process and that singular event: " Since the time I learned Thee, Thou abidest in my memory ; and there do I find Thee whensoever I call Thee to remembrance, and delight in Thee. These are my holy delights. • • Where then, did I find Thee, so as to be able to learn Thee ? "*

Seerety present in all creatures, God is manifest to his converted. But the *unio mystica* is nothing permanent: heavenly joy turns into earthly suffering : so an opposite movement starts, describing the sinking down of the soul. It finds itself entangled by the burden of nature and habit in the misery of sin. There follow lamentations about the Fall, presenting his mind absorbed in the sorrow of earthly existence, in anguished brooding over the consciousness of sin, and also offering an example, in homiletic fashion, of penitence in all its misery, though the soul draws

* Aug., CM., X, xxiv, 35 ; xxvi, 37.

comfort from its confidence in God's compassion, which will give it strength for progressive purification. And now, in a coda of rapid concords, comes a recapitulation of the whole proceeding, once more the description of the blessed union, which is experienced in a mood of "unspeakable sweetness", striding above all that is earthly, and at the end the certainty of faith and redemption through the life and sufferings of Christ: "Rightly do I set on Him my strong hopes that through Him Thou wilt heal all my infirmities . . . otherwise should I be in despair."

To go into details, this section is particularly illustrative of the psychological tendency that led Augustine to comprehend his inner experiences in their general significance. The description of the progressive understanding of God is thus given a scientific stamp; in the full sense of the richness of life his genius brings to light *in* incomplete and jerky description of the inner substance a wealth of spiritual contrasts, forms of progress, problems; realizations that belong to the permanent stock of descriptive psychology.*

But in addition to his characteristic faculty of vividly presenting particular states in the inner life, and of reviving traditional psychological notions (such as memory, will, and time) by reference to the full man, there stands out clearly here another sort of psychological vision. It is associated with the tracing of sin which was also at work throughout the autobiography but is consummated here at its end.† When showing in the lamentations of the fallen soul his own exemplary consciousness of sin, Augustine makes the different senses one after another systematically confess their sinful impulses, and especially the hidden ones: "I greatly fear that which has been hidden in me." ‡ He does not regard only sensual passion as sin, but the pleasure in the sunlight, or in church music instead of solely in the sacred "Word", or in the observation during a walk of the behaviour of animals, or in the carrying on of "idle" conversation.

The procedure Augustine here adopts is nothing peculiar to him; we saw that the technique of analysis of a man's own sins was generally followed in the penitential practice of the Christian communities, § and we can trace the characteristic attitude main-

* They are summarized by Siebeck, "Die Anfänge der neueren Psychologie in der Scholastik", *Zeitschr. f. Phibs.*, vol. 93, pp. 178 sqq.

† Aug., *Conf.*, X, xxx, 41 sqq.

‡ With this phrase compare the corresponding formulas in the Babylonian penitential psalms and in Ephraim, above, pp. 533 and 582 sqq.

§ See above, pp. 580 sqq.

tained in this section of the Confessions when we compare it with his self-scrutiny in the Soliloquies.* In that earlier document he employed the same category of questions as to purity as later, though in a different, much less rigid attitude, in accordance with his philosophic method of religious self-examination. Hence it becomes perfectly clear that he arrived at that microscopic technique not through his own sensuality torturing him but through his adoption of ascetic methods, whether actually or in writing. For his own part he now finds the worst source of sins in self-righteousness and in the demand for respect and recognition, f

Hath this third kind of temptation left me, or can it leave me during this life? The desire to be feared and loved of men, with no other view than that I may experience a joy therein which is no joy, is a miserable life, and unseemly ostentation. . . . The word which proceedeth out of the mouth, and actions known to men, have a most dangerous temptation from the love of praise, which, for the establishing of a certain excellency of our own, gathers together solicited suffrages. It tempts, even when within I reprove myself for it, on the very ground that it is reproved; and often man glories more vainly of the very scorn of vainglory; wherefore it is not any longer scorn of vainglory whereof he glories, for he does not truly condemn it when he inwardly glories. J

This, however, is but a dark shadow, as Augustine's aesthetics understood it, in the grand work of his Confessions—the ugly, which, in a general view from a distance, unites with the essentially beautiful in harmony. Thus the real inner completion of the composition lies in its centre; it is the artistic climax, uniting the whole work, of his description of the soul's search for God, where the eternal fire of love flamed up from the memory of his earlier experience of the first union.

"Where did I find Thee, O Lord, but in Thee above me? Place there is none; we go both 'backward' and 'forward', and there is no place. Everywhere, O Truth, dost Thou direct all who consult Thee, and dost at once answer all, though they consult Thee on divers things.⁵⁵

Too late did I love Thee,
O Fairness, so ancient, and yet so new!
Too late did I love Thee!
And behold, Thou wert within, and I without,
And there did I seek Thee;
I, unlovely, rushed heedlessly among
The things of beauty Thou madest.
Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee.

* Aug., *Solil.*, I, 16-17. † Aug., *Conf.* X, xxxvi, 59, to xxxix, 64.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxxvi, 58, 59; xxxviii, 63.

Those things kept me far from Thee,
Which, unless they were in Thee,
Would have no being at all.
Thou calledst, and criedst aloud,
And didst break through my deafness.
Thou didst gleam and shine,
And chase away my blindness.
Thou didst breathe Thy fragrance upon me,
And I drew in my breath, and do pant after Thee.
I tasted, and do hunger and thirst.
Thou didst touch me, and I burned for Thy peace.
When I shall cleave unto Thee with all my being,
Then shall I in nothing have pain and labour,
And my life shall be a real life,
Being wholly full of Thee.*

* Aug., *Conf.* X, xxv, 31, to xxviii, 35. Translated by J. G. Pilkington, with slight changes suggested in *An Augustine Synthesis*, arranged by E. Przywara, S.J. (1936), p. 75-

CHAPTER IV

LATE PRODUCTIONS OF ANCIENT AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A work of art with the religious and universal human appeal of Augustine's autobiography exists for all time. Each new century looks upon it with different eyes and discovers new aspects of it; it is able to distribute energy and yet retain its energy in its unique nature; thus it has a share in the existence of something eternal in human life. This sort, however, of eternal existence is in no way supratemporal; but it has a dynamic character. A man's unique creative work, through its acceptance in various epochs and its influence over the outlook then prevailing, may become the determining element in the development of a definite type of intellectual creation. Thus Augustine's Confessions passed into their age-long influence. They are one of the few books that have been widely read in every period in which there was intellectual life in the Western world; the phraseology of the inner life has been influenced down to our own day by Augustine.* He himself bore witness at the end of his life to the effect his autobiography had had on his contemporaries, and ascribed to all his other writings, extraordinary as their influence had been, less impressiveness than to that one work. "Not one of my works has been read more widely or with more pleasure than the books of my Confessions." * And in the decades that immediately followed that work it already found literary imitations; their production continued among the new nations, ultimately extending beyond the religious field and influencing the development of records of the inner life in profane literature. The continuity of the production of autobiographies was largely due to the effect of that one work.

In the changing situation from time to time the outward form and the definite religious tendency of the work, or the peculiar power which a work of art of this intellectual calibre exercises over the understanding and forming of life, had its effect. Earlier autobiographies had also had their relation to general literature, and this relation was an outcome of their character; the rule

* Augustine, *De dono perseverantia*, c. 20 (A.D. 429 or 428): *Frequentius et delectabilius innotescere potuit. Cf. Retract.*, I I, vi, 1: "Quid de illis alii sentiaat, ipsi viderint; raultis tamen fratribus eos multum placuisse et placere scio." Apparently opinions were divided.

here was the copying by the autobiographer of established literary forms. The actual influence of the Confessions was the result of dependence of a higher sort, not imitation but discipleship. Where Augustine's autobiography was fully understood, it inspired personal life. How else could a work of art which as a whole was inimitable, a work that drew from such depths of religious and philosophical life, be imitated than by regeneration? So its most important influences are to be found at the very climaxes of our history; again and again this book of confessions appears at such times, unfolding its wealth by the inspiration of original autobiographical works such as those of Suso, Petrarch, Saint Theresa, and Rousseau.

In the ancient world Augustine's Confessions could not yet exert this productive influence, which presupposed productivity in the writers concerned; narrow limits were set to the spread of spiritual autobiography. The importance of his work lay then in the fact that it showed those occupied in self-scrutiny an authoritatively assured method of satisfying their desire for subjective expression. Thus Augustine provided at first only a model for the tackling of autobiography as confession in the traditional senses both of penitence and "thankoffering", including appeals to God and usually a heaping up of Bible texts, especially from Saint Paul, which could relieve the individual from the expression of his own opinion. And as those who now came to the composition of autobiography were of no great stature and required the blows of fate to bring them to God, the mystical intercourse of the soul with God disappears again beneath the belief in outward guidance by Providence, a belief that was held to as a panacea for personal relief amid the terrors of the destruction of the Greco-Roman civilization.

Yet these last autobiographies of antiquity have an interest of their own. It is strange enough that right down to the sixth century such works were written, including a full autobiography in verse. And only some of these works are direct imitations of the Confessions. In them inner states are systematically described according to traditional rules, but the outward details of a life are more broadly handled, and this, together with the dissolution in that time of the classical literary forms, had the result that one or another of these works contains matter of relatively great importance to the history of social life. Traditions from Hellenistic autobiography were still present, and we see again that the repertory of autobiography is not completely

represented in the one super-eminent work, the Confessions. In Augustine himself autobiographical production was not exhausted by that document: a generation later, finishing his life's work, which lay in his writings, he published his *Retractations*, in which he transformed the traditional Hellenistic type of writers' autobiographies into a literary product of characteristic importance, 'expressive of the will-power that gave unity to his writings.

Thus we are able to take a broader view of ancient autobiography even in dealing with its late productions ; at the same time a trait becomes visible here and there of the national characters which were developing and differentiating, and which were to help to create a new civilization.

I. ENNODIUS, PAULINUS OF PELLA, PATRICK

The Confessions appeared about A.D. 400. We know no fewer than four autobiographical works written in the succeeding hundred years with the title *Confessio* or *Eucharisticum* ("Thanksgiving"). Three of the authors come from southern Gaul: there had long been active literary production there, and rhetorical education continued there undisturbed by Christendom until the time of the Eastern Goths, so that that province of the disintegrating Western Empire retained to the last the leadership in that empire's decaying literature.

We come first to the colourless reproductions of Augustine's work. A first slight specimen comes as early as 410.* An unnamed man, who became a prisoner of the Goths and so turned to contemplation, tells briefly, on no more than two sheets, perhaps for the purpose of public penance, of his conversion out of his state of sin. Providence led him to God by way of misfortune. His presentation of the inner process shows the influence of his model : a search of the Holy Scriptures, in order to gain knowledge of the hope still at hand ; a " river of tears " ; concentration, in soliloquy, on his sinful state of mind, the knowledge of God's hidden presence, and the assurance of being heard.

One may then study the turning of the Confessions into **the** vilest of rhetoric by a distinguished intellectual among **the** " last Romans ", who restored their studies **under the** peaceful **dominion** of Theodoric—Magnus Felix Ennodius. Ennodius rose to be a

* *Confessio*, author unknown ; formerly attributed to St. Prosper of Aquitania. Migne, *Patrol Script. Lat.*, vol. 51, p. 609. Cf. *Hist. litter. de la France*, II, p. 77.

bishop (511), and in his own day, and in the Church after his death, he was regarded as an exemplary stylist, especially in the important practical craft of letter-writing. For Ennodius * the divinely-ordained path to conversion was by way of sickness and the fear of death ; in his distress he vowed that if he recovered he would not only mend his ways but publish a literary penance : " I promised also that if He would grant me by His grace the mood for more honourable effort, this *Confessio* should proceed from my hand, a fat sacrifice from the gifts of my poor intellect." And when, on his recovery, he proceeded to carry out his promise—he covers only eight printed pages—he emulated Augustine's form. But the work falls to pieces in his hands, and is only held together by verbosity, although he gives it a ritualistic beginning and end—" Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost".

Augustine's *Confessions* began with a prayer expressive of the soul's search for God ; Ennodius begins with the " oracle of the wisest teacher of the peoples ", Paul's " I will not glory, save in my weaknesses " : this he twists into the finding of God through weakness, that is to say through his sickness. After that argument, which takes the place of the artistic raising of the particular into the general, there follows his own special case with an *ecce ego*. Even in his praying he is incoherent : his " Thou " is addressed now in thanks to God, now ingeniously to the sickness overcome as the immediate cause of salvation, and now to the sinning ego in an access of penitence.

The story of his life had to proceed, as in his model, from an emotional situation : Ennodius explains that he intended to give the substance of the prayer he offered during his sickness to his patron and guardian, Saint Victor, for his intercession with God ; as soon, he thought, as it was represented to God from what depths the saint had already raised the penitent, God's mercy would come into play. But this technical dodge for introducing the story of his youth has to give way to the concrete reminiscences of Augustine's work. Thus the narrative changes into the form of the appeal to God : He is to be given a " sample " of " what He knows already". This does not provide a simple and straightforward story held together by indications of the working of Providence ; the author weaves its facts—the mercy of a rich marriage, and promotion in the priestly career—into the

* *Magni Felicis Ennodii Opera*, rec. G. Hartel, *Corp. Script. Eccl.*, V I, pp. 393-401. The author calls his work *Confessio* (p. 998, 4). The title " *Eucharisticum de vita sua* " on p. 393 was given by a later editor, Sirmond, to assimilate it to that of the autobiography of Paulinus (see below), in harmony with the double sense of *confessio*.

antitheses of his un-Christian life and the "concealed paths" of divine "compassion". Here and there come stereotyped elements of an inner development, such as reflection in the feeling that God is far away: "I heard a voice, 'Adam, where art thou?'" A good many of Augustine's turns of phrase are taken over with variations: "But Thou who residest in Heaven dost laugh at me," But the main point is the renunciation of worldly rhetoric, "versification", and the poet's fame; Ennodius, who in his office and dignities could now give up his exercises in style,² represents this as redemption from arrogance, insanity, lying, blindness, and death, with a stridency that recalls Jerome.

These artifices reveal the state of soul that is content with the heaping up of generalities in the confession of sin and the thanksgiving for mercy, in the manner of Ephraim but with borrowings from the language of Augustine. Such comprehensive general confessions, in literary form, verse or prose, with hundreds of antitheses, soon made their appearance, ready for recitation by everyone for penitential purposes.* They formed the ritual basis of the autobiographical books of confessions of the Middle Ages.

Where the autobiographers were not so overwhelmed by Augustine's eminence and were also less under the influence of the art of rhetoric, they were still able to give personal expression to their feelings even in the fifth century. We have such documents from two persons, differing greatly from each other—Patrick, the so-called Apostle to the Irish, and Paulinus of Pella. Patrick wrote a *Confessio* when over seventy, about A.D. 459. At about the same time Paulinus, a landowner of southern Gaul who when over eighty had been reduced to poverty by the Germanic invasion and had turned to piety, wrote an autobiography in 616 hexameters.†

Though without any sort of greatness or passion, the figure of Paulinus is unusually attractive in this period of the barbarian invasion.⁸ The old gendeman's verses, his only literary work, are as a rule thoroughly pedestrian and often prosaic; but, taken as a whole, his poem shows clear traces of a good ancient

* There is a typical document among the writings of Isidore of Seville (d. 636), Migne, *Patrol. Script. Lat.*, vol. 83, pp. 1262 sqq. For the controversy as to its authorship and for the extent of the practice, see the remarks in vol. 81, pp. 586 sqq.

† *Paulini Pellaei Eucharisticos*, edited by G. Brandes, *Corpus Script. Eccl.*, 16, 1, pp. 289-314. The autobiography was begun when he was eighty-three years old, and its completion (verses 563 sqq.) were added later. See Brandes, *loc. cit.*, p. 276.

tradition, and the unpretentious sincerity with which he offers facts instead of rhetoric gives an insight into the life of an* average man of the prosperous and cultured classes of Roman society in that transition period, in which ancient and Christian ways of feeling existed harmoniously together. In considering his autobiography he thought neither of Augustine nor of Paul, but of the " distinguished men " who " in the splendour of their eminence and for the perpetuation of their fame have given to posterity *ephemirides* of their deeds, written by themselves ". Thus we have testimony to the survival of Roman political autobiography down to that late period. But he himself—so we read further in his prose foreword—felt remote from those men of an earlier age, and while he had written " a little book with much the same subject ", his motive was different : " For neither have I such brilliant deeds to relate as could win substantial fame, nor is my faith in my eloquence so great that I could venture to compete with the works of an author." His autobiography was to be a simple little meditation, *meditatuncula*, " appropriate to old age that recognizes itself as what it is, and at the same time to the religious attitude to life ". He wanted to seek comfort in the thought of troubles lived through, and to thank God, to whom man owes his very existence, for all that was good, and especially for misfortune that led to good.

There was, indeed, nothing of the hero or the political man about him, although when mentioning his birthplace, Pella in Macedonia, where his parents were still living (his father was a Roman official), he does not omit to mention that Alexander was born in that town, and although, as a descendant of one of the most exalted families of the empire, and himself loaded with dignities and wealth, he must have played a part in the wars. He was of Greek descent on his mother's side and Aquitanian on his father's ; he had settled in Bordeaux. He lived the gay and worldly life that had been natural for him, until, in his thirties, the Goths and Alans came. He admits in his verses without great disapproval, indeed with resignation, that the " peaceful private life ", without ambition but without excess, of a *grand seigneur* " suited my nature ".* He tried to escape with his family from the plundering Germanic hordes by entering into relations with their kings, and in his opportunist policy, dictated by fear, he did not shrink from treason—he tells this without hesitation. As his existence nevertheless grew more and more precarious, he

* *Ibid.*, W. 203 *sqq.*

found support, as so many others did, in the Church, to which for a long time he had belonged only nominally.

His report of his conversion is again of the average type ; he made a confession of his past life, learned that the doctrines (probably Pelagian) which he had accepted were loathsomely heretical, and set the seal on his orthodoxy by receiving the holy sacrament; he marks the importance of that event by dating it : " I t was in my forty-fifth year, at Easter, thirty-eight years ago now." He gives thanks to divine Providence for preventing him from trying to carry out a plan " too bold for my powers " because it " knew me and my ways " better than he did : his first idea had been " to live just as the monks live "—at that time, about 420, oriental monasticism had been spreading in Gaul for more than a generation, and the first great monasteries had been founded. He avoided so great a departure as this from his way of life, especially as his home was " full of dear affections " in the shape of " children, mother, mother-in-law, wife, together with the great company of their handmaidens ". After further misfortunes he retired, homeless and alone, to a small property he still owned in Marseilles, and there he lived in the neighbourhood of the monastery of St. Victor, which already housed thousands of monks. In the end he had to forgo his pride in the material independence which he had tried to maintain by farming with the help of his slaves ; and in his old age he was obliged to accept outside support.

In that situation he came to the arrangement and versification of his diary entries in an account of his " life of trouble ", or, to quote his own title, his " Thanksgiving to God according to the text of my diary ".* On this task he concentrated in pious humility, not fleeing to the Beyond even in misery; and he offered this moral of his story of his life :

I know in truth that it was a gift of kindly compassion that in my young days I was not bereft of the temporal pleasures that are permitted to the human race, and it was also a helpful care of Providence that it visited me with lasting misfortune but not beyond measure, and so offered me the illuminating lesson that I should not give myself up entirely to a present happiness, since I might lose it again, and I must not be too downcast through ill-fortune, since I had found by experience that God's loving-kindness may bring help in it.

* *Eucharisticos Deo sub ephemeridis meat textu*—cf. pref., p. 290, 1 : Eucharisticum opusculum sub ephemeridis meae relatione contexere. Cf. verse 2 : In seriem deducere gesta dierum. In considering the sense of "sub" it must be borne in mind that this was an independent, relatively long, "little book", with a **prose** foreword, and was the author's only literary work.

No less modest than his moral is his narrative. After a few literary flourishes at the outset he just lets the simple story tell itself, with thanksgivings at its beginning and end and occasionally in the middle of it. Reminiscences of Virgil frequently come to his aid in versification, but as a rule he lets his ideas follow their natural course, and the involuntarily prosaic language, sparing in decorative elements, gives the poem still more the artless appearance that to us seems fitting in an autobiography but was rarely found in antiquity. Things seen are depicted by means of concrete traits, and if, as for instance in writing of the aspect of Rome, he has to rely on hearsay for the characteristics he notes, he mentions the fact.

The common outlook, chiefly concerned with good and evil fortune, here again offers the main point of view, but does not lead to calculations and comparisons as it had done in Libanius' book on his fortunes : recollections run straight along the thread of time, burdened only with pious thanksgivings and with none but familiar feelings ; he is glad to dwell on pictures of good times, scarcely disturbed by any access of an asceticism that might wish to see the joys more Christian, and with little inclination to reflection, except when this venerator of *Romana vetustas*, of the old Roman ways, contrasts his careful bring up with the contemporary decay of culture.

After the coming of ill-fortune the telling grows less placid : he recalls his irresolution, his unexecuted plans, the conflicts of interest. The dry narrative becomes a full and thrilling story when the critical period is reached during which he was " negotiating while exposed to the barbarian peoples ", leading up to the most dangerous action of his life. His home town Bazas was besieged by the Goths and Alans ; within the town the slaves were in revolt ; and Paulinus secretly visited Goar, the king of the Alans, to ask for a free exit for himself and his family ; the result of the negotiation was an alliance between the town and Goar, who broke faith with the Goths. Here the author, praising God for the unexpectedly happy result secured, pictures the enemy streaming into the town at night as its protectors, " the whole crowd of Alan women accompanying their armed men " ; " wonderful was the aspect of the town, with a great unarmed crowd of both sexes encamped within and without the walls ; for the protection of our walls barbarian troops were entrenched behind waggons and weapons ".*

* V, 330-405-

The contents are what matters, and as they are of value as history • the autobiography becomes of greater importance than its author. We have details of the education at home of the young patrician, for Paulinus regards it as " more acceptable and worthier " to tell of his parents' care than of " the freedom of boyhood, games and fun ". His parents taught him the A B C and good manhers and the way to speak properly ; in his sixth year came the elements of morality—he calls them *dogmata Socratis*—and at the same time the Odyssey ; then came Virgil. He still winced at the thought of that bilingual education : it was too much for his young head. But he is in his element when he has to tell how, with his study of rhetoric interrupted by illness, he had to be cured by being occupied " with uninterrupted amusement and purely pleasant things ", and how his father revived his knowledge of sport with him when he was sixteen. Paulinus then enumerates his pleasures, and we seem to be reading of a feudal lord of the Middle Ages : hunting and breakneck riding, " a fine, handsome horse, a slender page, a fast-running hound, a seemly falcon ; a gilded ball, the latest novelty from Rome, to play with ; a rich cloak, very often a new one fragrant with Arabian scents ". He gives a similar description of the tastes he was able to indulge when he came to live on the estates gained by marriage :

A comfortable, roomy house, habitable in all seasons, a rich and well-filled table, many young servants, quantities of pleasing domestic utensils for various purposes, silver of value not only for its weight ; craftsmen skilled in various arts and quick to fulfil every order ; the stables full of well-fed horses, and also stately coaches for safe journeys.*

So he confesses that he was a *sectator deliciarum*, a pursuer of delights. But this does not complete his picture of the manner of life of a Christian landowner of the period in which Augustine wrote his Confessions ; to it must be added the need for society, especially that of women : *affectibus plena domus*, *affectuum expers*, " a house full of affections, " " destitute of affections " are characteristic phrases with which Paulinus sums up situations. Above all these enjoyments he places the " dutifulness to my parents " on which he set great store. And he describes the way he used to spend the greater part of the year with his father and mother, " to serve them and to enjoy the mutual satisfaction of our similarity of tastes ", and especially to secure advice and example and instruction from his father, † His tone is warmer here than

* V, 140-51, 202-12.

†

V, 220-31 ; cf. 89, 122, 178, etc.

anywhere else, even when he is writing of his wife and children. He regards the latter as the means of securing his personal interests, and when they fail him he is indignant; he does not hesitate to give expression to such feelings even in the case of a death.

This is in harmony with a certain bourgeois element that may be observed also in other places in the moral ideas of this pious Christian. His parents had trained him to avoid scandal and to preserve decorum, and he is more or less reconciled to the sins of his youth because he is able to say that they amounted only to *culpa*, not *crimen*; for he had held aloof from professional loose women and had contented himself with the charms of his parents' slave-girls.* But on essential points he is guided by Christian doctrine. Thus, when near relations take part in robbery of his estates, his only retort is to tell them that they have forfeited his love, and he hastens to add: "I know that even though he offend me I owe true love to my neighbour, and it would be a sin to withhold this from you." And he avails himself of the Christian conception of property to brush away the discomfort of his dependence in his old age:

I owe Thee, O God, unmeasured gratitude for my lot in life, that I know; but for myself I do not know whether I can entirely rejoice in it with honour—had I not the help of our faith, which teaches us that nothing is anyone's property, and that we may regard other people's properties as our own just as certainly as we must convey a share in our property to others, †

After this expression of resignation, however, he had the pleasure of receiving an unexpected remittance that saved him from "fresh injuries to my treasured sense of honour"; this he regards as a gift from God, which made him "young again". Now he was able to bring his poem wholeheartedly to its conclusion: "Behold, I owe Thee fresh gratitude, almighty God, thanks that outdo almost all the earlier thanksgivings in these pages and lead to the peak. . . . I can find no end to giving Thee all the honour that is Thy due, Christ. This is the one good thing, to praise Thee aloud everywhere and at all times and to have Thee silently in my mind." ‡ He ends with a prayer: May God make him dauntless and steadfast "against all that is sad", so that

* V, 163 sqq. Cf. 85 sqq. † V, 428 sqq.; 554 sqq.

‡ V, 58a sqq. There is a fine thanksgiving also in vv. 443 sqq., with the Augustinian *Sero quidem, sed nil unquam deus est tibi serum* ("It is late, but in nothing is God ever late for thee"). For other echoes of Augustine's Confessions, see Rocafort, *Paulin de Pella*, pp. 99-105.

the fear of death may not awaken in him with the nearness of **the** grave, but all uneasiness may vanish before the certainty of salvation, before the assurance of belonging to God and of rising again in blessedness.

Very different is the glow of faith in the *Confessio* of Saint Patrick.* Here we have the clumsy strength of the inner life pushing its way out through a narrow intellect, guided by an overwhelming illusion; saintly arrogance, voices and cloudy visions which compel the man to give expression to his altogether exceptional confidence. Here is sturdy life in spite of the disintegration of the time, and we seem to see already something of the spirit of George Fox and John Bunyan. Patrick, whose British name was Sucat, came from an inland British hamlet where Latin and Welsh were spoken, and belonged to a prosperous family that for generations had been Christian. He had the slowness of those who are backward in intellectual development until their own essential nature breaks through; to his regret he never overcame his lack of literary education. In addition he was a man of uncontrollable passions: in his fifteenth year he had to do penance for sinning against the sixth commandment.

He was kidnapped and taken to Ireland by a band of marauders who sold him as a slave to a chieftain in Dalaradia, and for six years, from his sixteenth to the twenty-second year (402-8), he was employed as shepherd and swineherd. In this period of solitude and meditation he became converted. He then ran away; his path was directed by divine indications, and heathen pirates gave him help. He returned to his home and became a priest; his further meditations alternated between visions of redemption and temptations. Finally he became convinced that he was called to be the Apostle to Ireland. In a dream at midnight he had seen a man who seemed to have come from Ireland

with innumerable letters, and he gave one of them to me. And I read the beginning, containing "The Voice of the Irish". And while I was reading aloud the beginning of the letter, I myself thought indeed in my mind that I heard the voice of those who were near the wood of Foclut, which is close by the Western Sea. And they cried out to me: "O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once

* *Libri Sancti Patricii Episcopi*. In *The Tripartite Life of Patrick*, ed. Whitley Stokes. Part II (London, 1887), the *Confessio*, pp. 357-75. Translated by Charles H. H. Wright, *The Writings of Saint Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland*, in *Christian Classics Series*, vol. 6. Religious Tract Society. On the genuineness of the *Confessio*, its tradition, and the historic figure of Patrick as compared with legend, see H. Zimmer, article "Keltische Kirche", in *Herzogs Real-Encykl.* (3rd ed.), vol. X, pp. 308 sqq.

more amongst us." And I was deeply moved and could read no further. . . .

He was not the founder of the Church in Ireland, as is declared by the later legend that makes him the Apostle to the heathen Irish in connexion with Romish efforts, on the model of Columban or Boniface. Christianity had been spreading from Britain into Ireland since the fourth century. He secured consecration as Bishop of Ireland from Rome in 432, in his forties, together with the title of nobility Patricius ; * he had then been abroad for several years : at home there had been objection to accepting this uneducated preacher. Nor did he succeed in Ireland in gaining full recognition of his office as bishop or the belief in his divine mission. He worked in Ireland for three decades after his consecration, mainly, it seems, as a missionary in the regions that had remained unconverted.

His autobiographical work, long planned but not written until shortly before his death in 461, has always in view not only God and the confidants for whom it was destined, but also the enemies who mocked at his *rusticitas*. It is not only *confessio* but missive and polemic. He was impelled to genuine confession by "fear and trembling" at the thought of Judgment Day. The Bible † requires us to publish God's marvellous works to all the world ; and thanksgiving is due to God whatever happens, good or evil, and it is right "that by confessing I should offer sacrifice today, a living Host, my soul for my lord Christ, who has delivered me from all evils". "To my comrades who have believed in me, . . . to my brothers and relatives, I want to reveal my character, that they may see the desire of my soul"—these various motives are mingled as an unanalysed feeling ‡ with his main purpose: he intends once more to demonstrate at length that as the chosen of the Lord he is, after all, something more than the arrogant intriguers who oppose him and despise him.

Be astonished, ye great and insignificant who fear your God ; and ye godless *rhetorici*, hear and inquire who has awakened the simple from the midst of those who seem wise and learned in the law and powerful in speech and in all things. Me, the loathed of this world, God has chosen before the others and has breathed His spirit into me, so that with fear and reverence and without complaint I have served the people to whom the love of Christ brought me hither (360, 24 *sqq.*).

* See Zimmer, *he. cit.*, p. 217.

† He quotes Tobit xii. 7 ; Psalm xlix. 15.

‡ *Patr., Conf., op. cit.*, pp. 359, 19 ; 358, 8, 30 ; 367, 4 ; 361, 9 ; 366, 30 ; 359, 1 ; 371, 19 ; 361, 13.

The acute discomfort which his lack of education nevertheless caused him enables us to assess the sincerity of the desire expressed by the great preachers of the century to speak the " language of fishermen".

For Patrick had never had the courage—so he declares—to write this manifesto, on which his heart was set, because of the crippling consciousness of his lack of learning (359, 14-15) ; and he confesses : " I blush today and am intensely afraid of exposing my ignorance, because with my incapacity to set words to paper I cannot express myself briefly" (360, 2). And it is indeed appalling to see how he can maltreat Latin, especially everything that is inflected. In spite of this, he has style, though neither form nor order. He starts with difficulty, but gets ahead a bit, then gets stuck again because everything wants to be said at once and for this the music in the soul is lacking ; a heap of Bible texts has to come to his aid.

I, Patricius, the roughest and least of all the faithful, and I am despised by most of them, I had for father the deacon Galpornus, son of Petitus, who was the son of the presbyter Odysseus ; he lived in the spot called Bannavente. His little house was in the neighbourhood of where I was taken captive. Sixteen years old I was then. But God knew I not and was taken as a prisoner to Ireland, with so many thousand people. We had earned that, because we had fallen away from God and did not observe His commandments and did not obey our priests. And God brought down on us the anger of His love.

So he begins, and at once becomes involved in the effort to explain the motives that led him to write his confessions. After a few pages he comes back to his story.

But after I had been brought to Ireland, took the cattle every day to pasture and frequently prayed by day, the love of God grew more and more and the fear of Him, and the faith grew greater and the spirit moved, so that one day it came to a hundred prayers and during the night almost as many ; so that I also remained in the forest and on the mountain, and was awakened before daybreak to prayer by snow and cold and rain ; and there was no evil in my mind and there was no idleness in me—as I now know : because at that time the spirit was stirring in me. And there one night I heard in sleep a voice which spake to me. . . .

What Patrick thinks, he has always been told word for word by God : God tells him that he will find a ship for his passage, or that what he hears groaning violently and praying—" as it were in my body and over me, that is over my inner man"—is the Holy Ghost. Faces and phrases and outward marvels follow

closely on one another, briefly, in *oratio recta*—and . . . and . . . and . . . with a "Gratias ago" or "I know not, **God** knows", *Nescio : Deus scit*; or he may simply annex a phrase from a prophet or from Paul, or an echo of it. In the climax of his divine summons to be a bishop he is concerned to maintain his position on several fronts at once, and can only move from one to another ; he falls into inconsistencies, and when he sets out to talk of his "long labour at the end of the earth" as bishop in Ireland, the narrative is enmeshed in a tangle of justification, accusation, exhortation, and confession of his own sinfulness. But the basic feeling finds effective expression :

I felt no small power (*virtutem*) in me, and my faith has been tested before God and men. I speak boldly, but my conscience does not prick me, either now or in future. . . . I must not hide God's gift, which he bestowed on me in the land of my captivity, because at that time I sought Him eagerly, and I found Him and He has delivered me out of all evils and my faith is : on account of His indwelling spirit, which has worked in me down to this day. Bold again. But God knows whether a man would have said that about me—perhaps I should have been silent for the love of Christ (366, 5-6, 20-1).

Here Paul * is at his back : it was Paul who probably determined him to write this missive, though there are plenty of echoes of Augustine f to be found in this *Confessio*. It ends with an appeal to God to give him a martyr's death, even if he were to "remain unburied and my corpse to be miserably dismembered by dogs or wild beasts, and the birds of the heavens to pick its bones. I surely believe that if that should happen to me I have won my soul with my body." ‡

11. AUGUSTINE'S "RETRACTATIONS"

This was the first wave of "Confessions" that passed over the West, carrying with it even an unliterary man in the distant north. The man who had started it was a great writer, unrivalled in the Latin tongue since Cicero and Tacitus. Augustine had brought all his art to the telling of the history of his soul to the

* 2 Cor. xi. 16 *sqq.* P. 360, 12, is characteristic of the way he converts Paul to his use : *Nos qui sumus nos epistula Christi in salutem usque ad ultimum terrae et si non diserta sed ratum et fortissimum scripta in cordibus vestris non atramento sed spiritu Dei vivi.* Compare this with 2 Cor. iii. 2 and 3 : *Epistula nostra vos estis, scripta in cordibus nostris, quae scitur, et legitur ab omnibus hominibus ; manifestati, quod epistula estis Christi, ministrata a nobis, et scripta non atramento, sed spiritu Dei vivi.*

† See especially 357, 12 ; 360, 20 ; 367, 24 ; 370, 29. ‡ 274, 8 *sqq.*

human race; his spiritual development had attained its goal with his conversion, and the autobiography ended with the question "What am I now?" and its answer, which gave an artistic description of his religious life, a life now complete in itself for all time. His time, he declared in the *Confessions*, was too precious for an account of his further career, his administration as bishop and his ecclesiastical controversies, which might have seemed the natural conclusion of the autobiography. What remained was his writings: in these was comprised, in his view, his work for God and the world. They provided him with the material for a special autobiographical work which, proceeding from another attitude to life, illustrates the status reached by the autobiographical *genre* in late antiquity.

Almost thirty years had passed since the publication of the *Confessions* when, in his seventies and near the end of his life, he felt that he "dared not put off any longer" the work he "had long contemplated and prepared"—the reconsideration of the whole of his writings since his conversion, an uninterrupted stream from that fresh source. So, by strenuous labour extending far into the nights, he completed the first part of his "Retractations". In this work, as he himself states in a postscript, he dealt with 93 works totalling 232 "books". After these works he proposed to deal with the epistles and sermons, but this continuation was never completed. While at work on it he yielded to "the appeal of the brethren" and in 427 published the completed part separately. Thus we have a third autobiographical document of his, in addition to the *Confessions* and the *Soliloquies*.⁴

Nothing could be simpler or more unpretentious than the form of this work: form in the aesthetic sense it has none; it is just a succession of notes in chronological order. And yet it is no more simple in character than the *Confessions*. It mainly follows the guidance of the conscience, but is also influenced by literary considerations, and free play is allowed to both tendencies; they are not synthesized as in the great autobiography into an individual artistic form, but they unite in Augustine's spirit, now purely practical, to form a conception of his progress in knowledge of God, which gives these *Retractations* a unity and a peculiarly astringent originality.

How vast is the undertaking of a leading intellect to treat its own productions as fresh material, and to comprehend them in a final synthesis! One thinks of Goethe, induced by the publication of his collected works to write a history of his works, and so

led to the great initiative of a biographical account of his development, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Or of Vico's *Vita*, written with the narrower purpose of explaining his life's work, and for the first time making the conception of a natural development fruitful for biography. Augustine did not regard his works as essentially documents revealing his personality ; or rather, that which seemed to him to be the true essence of personal life gave a direction of its own to his idea of the history of his writings, of necessity shifting the centre of gravity away from the human and individual. Characteristic of this tendency is the answer he gave, ten years after his conversion, to a fulsome letter from an admirer who praised him as the dispeller of heretical darkness and a source of the living water that leaps into eternal life :

If you read my writings, you must not be betrayed by what is declared through my poverty by Truth into overlooking what I myself say, lest you should omit to pray for the faults and errors I commit. In what, if you read attentively, will rightly displease you, you see *me* ; and in everything in my books that pleases you through the gift of the spirit which you have received, you must love Him, praise Him, in whom is the source of life, and in whose light we shall see the light.

At the same time he asked his friend to correct anything in his writings that might seem to him to be open to objection : " I myself start up in pain when I recognize, in reading, how much of my old leaven I have given out." *

He did not want his writings thought of as expressions of his individuality ; for him they had the terribly grave task of teaching the very truth that is the foundation of all true life, in the individual who preaches those doctrines as in others. The belief in ecclesiastical authority that steadily grew upon him as he grew older confirmed that attitude, but did not originate it.

In the preface to the *Retractations* he gives a general formulation of that attitude. This formulation reveals the motive he gives for undertaking a critical survey of all his writings as a Christian revision of the typical motive of the Hellenistic species of " writers' autobiographies". He bases the ethical-philosophical tendency to self-criticism on the words of the Apostles with regard to Judgment Day : " But if we discerned ourselves we should not be judged " (1 Cor. xi. 31). Similarly, in place of the demand of scientific or literary conscientiousness that nothing superfluous or inessential shall be said or written, he

* Aug., cp. 27, 4, 6, and Paulinus Nolensis, cp. 4, 1, 2. Cf. Aug., ep. 231, 6.

quotes the saying of Christ which, as he says, " must appal every believer," : " And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. xii. 36). And he gives a similar biblical interpretation of the ancient principle of the valuelessness of all multiformity. He points in support of this to the Epistle of James (iii. 1) : "Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." This, he explains, is a warning against the danger of varied or contradictory opinions gaining currency in the community. And differences come in teachings and writings if the individual adds anything of his own to them : then men fail and fall into falsehood : " If, on the other hand, all proclaim only the *idipsum*, the one thing itself, and so proclaim the truth, then they do not stray from the teachings of the one true teacher." *

Even now in his old age, Augustine modestly denies all claim to any such ideal perfection and impeccability of the true teacher, and even more emphatically for his youthful writings. But that he had found and possessed " the truth ", the *internum* (*eternum*, as his true being, since his will had turned to God, he knew. The Confessions had made that clear. In their last part they consistently set out to show no further development, but only the standpoint the author had then gained, his " knowledge and ignorance " in the principal field of the theology of the Scriptures ; this undertaking was frustrated by the form of confession, and the autobiography ended as virtually a didactic work. In the Retractations he approached his task on new lines, and it was simplified for him by the dogmatic establishment of his doctrine.

Dispensing with every artistic resource, he examined his works one after another, measuring them by the strict standard of his theological knowledge, or rather of his doctrine. He sternly exposed and corrected errors or oversights, cleared up misunderstandings or disowned responsibility for them, and dwelt on the idea and the purpose of each work, sometimes with a further polemical thrust. In all this he served a double purpose. As though preparing a final edition of the products of his forty years of literary work, he clarified their teaching, making of them an impeccable unity ; this unity he represented not as an achievement to be subsequently recognized in the course of the survey of his writings, but as the original tendency of all his theological work and so of his individuality ; and at the same time he showed,

* Aug., *Retract.*, prologus, 2. Cf. Joscphus, above, p. 324.

through indication and retractation of the erroneous and through reiteration and defence of the true, that he had progressively perfected himself in the propagation of this one true doctrine. " May then all those ", concludes his preface, " who read my earlier writings imitate me, not in my errors but in my progress ! That I made mistakes in my works, and how they occurred, anyone will be convinced, I think, who reads my books in the order in which they were written. To make that possible, I have done my best in this work to make their order clear." *

If the Retractations had been written simply as a matter of conscience, to fulfil the moral duty of admitting his own errors, noting them " with the severity of a judge acting as censor ", and by this public correction to make them harmless to the faithful who formed themselves on the works of this religious teacher, they would hardly have assumed the shape they did ; and that practical purpose would hardly have sufficed for the wresting from the heretics of the weapons they forged against him from his earlier writings.

Here again Augustine was able to take his external form, as in the Confessions, from the literature of the past. We have met in Hellenistic literature † with independent works on a writer's own books, and it is probably merely a matter of chance that only isolated specimens of this type of autobiographical literature, works of Cicero and Galen, have come down to us. Hellenistic traditions were still at work in Augustine's day ; this is evident especially in the less important varieties of the autobiographies of writers. The autobiographical opening poem, for instance, appeared not only in Ausonius but in the hymn writer Prudentius, who anticipated a reward in the Beyond for his pious verses, and accordingly turned the traditional autobiographical pride in fame into a hope of Heaven. ‡ The biographical *prolalia* in didactic writings served Hilarius and the young Augustine for the exposition of the author's intellectual development, and Saint Jerome did not fail to end his book on Famous Men with his own name and descent and a list of his works.§ Finally we have in the sixth century an example of the author's inclusion of a brief

* *Ibid.*, 3. † See above, pp. 326 sqq.

‡ Prudentius (348-410), *Carmina*, ed. Dresse!. The autobiographical poem as Pnefatio, 45 lines with details of his life, and also with religious self-scrutiny : Qjiid nos utile tanti spatio temporis egimus ?—ending with : peccatrix anima . . . saltern voce Deum celebret, si meritis nequit.

§ Jerome was copied by Gennadius of Marseilles (c. 480) : *De viris illustribus*; c. 100 : " Ego Gennadius scripsi . . ." (Six lines. Jerome has 48, but they are a later addition—see *Herzogs Real-Encykl.* (3rd ed.), vol. VI, p. 514.)

summary of his career in his work, in which there was little room for it, at an arbitrarily chosen place.* That Hellenistic type of account of a writer's own works gave the opportunity of not only systematically grouping them from an educational point of view but of giving a list in order of date and information about the occasion, the circumstances, the contents, and the purpose of each work. The more ample these details were, the more the interest shifted from the works to the author's life, so that the list of books with its literary details turned into his biographical memoir. In Galen this autobiographical matter included an account of the author's education.

Augustine's *Retractations* was arranged in chronological order, though a collection of the passages most open to objection from the orthodox point of view and a *catalogue raisonné* of his writings were probably made use of.⁶ In this work the same external form is found, with the biographical and technical literary notes that were usual in such works. Here and there are notes on length, usefulness, and clearness or difficulty of particular works.

When I had abandoned all the things with which the appetites of this world held me fast in possession and desire, and when I had turned to the Christian life, I wrote in the leisure before my baptism *Contra Academicos* ("Against the Academic School"), in order to remove their propositions, which evoke in many people a despair of the possibility of knowing what is true, from my mind by means of the most cogent arguments, since those propositions still had an influence on me. In this, thanks to the compassion and the help of the Lord, I succeeded.

So opens the first chapter of the *Retractations*, and as a rule the other chapters, each of which deals with one work, begin with such details, generally of outward circumstances, so that the whole could be united into a partial summary of his life. More rarely the title is introduced with a mere indication of date or place.

In this form Augustine found room, regardless of his literary or aesthetic reputation, for the theological self-criticism that was his actual motive in compiling it. Thus the chapters in which this motive has full play have a dual character ; at the outset we

* Johannes Lydus, author of a work on the theory of Roman official practice (*De magistratibus ni publics Romans*), written in Greek about 550. In this learned work he inserted (vol. H I, c. 25-30) a summary of his career, in which he complained that he had no income proportionate to his services ; as a bitter consolation he pointed to the honour and fame he had won.

hear the writer telling us, for instance, that the work in question arose out of a discussion between friends, occasioned by his birthday, on the subject of the happy life ; this exordium is followed by a summary and criticism, short or long, of the book—ecclesiastical authority, for instance, with an exposition of the right view concerning particular passages of the work that have been the subject of controversy. And as this self-censorship finds actual matter for criticism only in the earlier works, which showed a philosophic and religious effort still uninfluenced by orthodox dogma, and Augustine continues to include the later works in their due place even if he has nothing but biographical or literary details to give about them, the duality continues : the rest of the *Retractations*, especially the second part, which deals with the works written during his episcopacy, looks almost exactly like one of the Hellenistic works " on my own books ". It is difficult to decide whether this should be regarded as merely a consequence of the given form, which, once adopted, is bound to influence the contents, or whether the attitude to his works which Augustine was publicly to adopt was dual from the first, giving the literary interests an independent right alongside the main concern of clearly displaying his theological teaching, the embodiment of his religious individuality.* The combination of the two elements resulted, however, not in a mere maladjustment in the form, but in a substantial gain in the work as a whole : the chronological arrangement used in the Hellenistic type of writers' autobiographies became in his use of it a means of making visible the author's inner progress.

This idea of inner perfection, which for Augustine was confined to progress in the right dogma, was not further elaborated by him ; he left it to his readers to gather together his various details into a view of the course of development he had traversed. Only rarely does he directly refer from an inadequate statement to a more complete one in a later work, and this entirely unemotionally, with reference to the problems, † Only once, in a fragment not published at his instance, does he point out that that was an imperfect work, replaced by a later treatment, " not to be compared with it ", of the same subject, and that he intended to destroy it but has decided to let it stand " since in my view it is a document not without value as showing my first attempts

* In his preface Augustine mentions only his purpose of self-criticism, and this only vaguely.

† *Retract.*, I, 14, 1 ; 15, 7, 19, 6 ; 26, 7 ; and elsewhere.

(*index rudimentorum meorum*) in the interpreting of the Holy Scriptures " * His pride in the contemplation of his life's work is based not on his tireless effort but on his continual approach to the possession of the complete doctrine, and this was obvious without any commentary through the rapid fall in the number of the passages open to objection as the survey of his writings proceeded. " A man has good hope ", he declares with reference to the *Retractations*, " if the last day of his life on earth finds him so progressing that he need simply be given what is still lacking in his progress, and that he faces judgment as one who is to be assigned rather to perfecting than to punishment." †

He was not concerned to understand what belonged to the past: such looking backward, applied in the *Confessions* to the contemplation of his general spiritual development, would have made necessary a different form, based on the interconnexion of the problems he had dealt with. It was his ultimately clarified will, assured of possessing the Truth, that induced him to write his *Retractations*; stern and resolute, that work gave his earlier writings a completed unity. And if we conceive it as a historic necessity of ancient times that Augustine could attain the steadfastness of his personality only through submission to divine authority, yet, in spite of all fettering of the living spirit by ecclesiastical orthodoxy, leading to painfully meticulous criticism, harsh rejection of pagan learning, and also to self-deception, there still remains a moral attitude that truly commands reverence. Without self-depreciation and without bombast, with the simple unanswerability of a fact, he brings forward his life's work; in the midst of the adulation which, expressed in theological terms, surrounded the famous doctor of the Church, he feels only the weight of the responsibility which every sentence he has written, indeed, every single word, has to bear; he stands up courageously for controversial utterances that seem to him to be impregnable, and with ruthless consistency, but weighing every judgment closely and cautiously, he cuts off the crooked limbs that disturb him in his work, permitting no freer movement even in jest. One has to go to Roman Catholic theologians to see the deep respect given to these *Retractations* as a book " of such great authority ": then one has the right sense of the will-power of this great writer.

No other man has stood in judgment in this way over his life's work. The class of writings " on my own books " continued,

* *Retract.*, I, 17.

†

Augustine, *De dono perseverantiæ*, 21.

even where it was influenced by Augustine's *Retractations*, along the paths laid down by Hellenism, and only far later, not before the seventeenth century, did it make use of new intellectual resources in its approach to the indication of the writer's progress in his works.

III. BOETHIUS

The heritage which ancient literature passed down to the Middle Ages in the form of self-portrayal is not exhausted by the great and lesser figures of fourth and fifth century autobiography. The *enkomion*, the portrait, and the *aretalogia* that was continued in the lives of the saints, persisted in general literature but were gained for autobiography only when spiritual life stirred more independently among the newer races. But the self-portrayal of late antiquity has still one more instance of human significance and rare literary influence, with which to end in the quiet strength of reconciliation—Boethius* *De Consolatione Philosophic*.

This work of "the last Roman philosopher", which kept alive in the Middle Ages some sense of ancient wisdom, and which to this day, translated into every language of Western civilization, was a book of edification in the lives of not a few, comes at the end of any account of ancient cultural history that avoids meandering into the lowlands into which that history must otherwise debouch. And it is something of a symbol of the standing of autobiography in that epoch that this last ancient witness to the power of Greco-Roman philosophy has the form of a self-portrayal.

Boethius, one of the foremost men in the Roman empire of Theodoric the Goth, started this work when he had fallen into disgrace with the emperor and had been condemned unheard on the suspicion of having treasonable relations with the eastern empire, then free of the barbarians. At forty-four years of age, in the year 524, he lay in prison with death very near. That situation has not seldom produced apologies, but he made no attempt at writing a political justification; nor did he turn to the secret offices of the Christian church, to which he belonged. The Roman aristocrats of olden times had turned in misfortune and in the shadow of death to their philosophers for counsel, had sought edification in their speeches and consolatory writings; and, like them, Boethius sought to rise above his fate with the aid of philosophy.

No spiritually productive self-scrutiny here gives a personal

stamp to philosophic thought applied to life. The doctrines which Boethius took over in their abstract form from the great idealistic tradition of the ancients, flowed to him from Aristotle, whose exhortation to the study of philosophy—the work from which Cicero drew his *Horlensius*—now once more inspired a life through its inexhaustible energy ; and from Neoplatonism the doctrines of the true good and happiness, of God's rational ordering of the world, of the nothingness of evil, and of man's freedom amid the causal complex of the universe. He makes the old ideas his own, bringing them together in relation to his situation and putting them into verse with his lamentations. Thus verses are mixed with the prose of his book, without the *Consolatio* thereby gaining the character of the realistic type of literature from which that mixed style had come. It is not a deliberately irrational miscellany ; there are no witticisms : the poems are complete in themselves, usually insertions and rarely indispensable components of the continuous argument ; they give here and there a more personal expression of the author's feelings, and serve as a rule as pleasing interludes, to provide a rest with *musici carminis* the music of song,* from the severity of the process of demonstration. The true mixture of styles is unintentional, and so much the more characteristic of the period : the versified sections repeat or vary, in the language of the sixth century, what the prose exposition has drawn from the treasury of greater days.⁶

In spite of everything, the work is the product of the experience of the workings of philosophy in a life, and that could not fail to give it a character of its own, so far as the age still permitted characteristic qualities to be shown by a writer. Boethius addressed his consolatory writing to himself: there was certainly nothing unusual in that since Cicero had initiated it.^f And it had already become a customary element of style for compilations, which were regarded by the unproductive race engaged in " fine

* Boethius, *De cons. phil.*, ed. Peiper, VI, 6, 17, 196. Cf. II, 23 : cum hac musica laris nostri vernacula nunc leviores nunc graviore modis succinat. On the mixture of styles, see above, pp. 376, 402.

† See above, p. 358. Cf. the two books of Ambrose, *De excessu fratris Satyri* (A.D. 379. Migne, *Patrol.*, vol. 16, pp. 1290-1354), which are described by Ambrose as "libri consolationis et resurrectionis" (*Enarr. in Psalmos*, I, no. 51). They are laudatio funebris, consolatio, and sermon ; the address is now to the dead, now to the self, now to the audience or to the Thou of the diatribe. Petrarch grouped them with the *Consolatio* of Cicero—Petrarca, *Epistulae de rebus familiaribus*, IV, 10, ed. Fracassetti, I, p. 221. Cf also Julian, or. 8, *Ἰλαπὴν Λυβανίου* de 4aur6v (inl T8 i(iitg rod dyaBandrov ZaXoxrriov), where the Thou of the oration is addressed to the friend from whom he was separated.

writing " ⁷ as a supreme element of literature, to be published not simply as that which they were, but beneath a literary mask, by means of local colour and introductory narrative on ancient models. To make palatable a learned argument in this way with action, conversation, and narrative, so that the traditional ways of thought in their rigid existence were brought closer to the feelings, was a device of the allegorical personification that had long belonged to the technique of the diatribe, but was now used, as was the mixture of prose and verse, for any serious subject, whether for the struggle of the passions in the soul or for such abstract things as the branches of fine culture, which, in the *De Nuptiis Philologiae* of Martianus Capella, give their readings in Olympus. Boethius works with these resources. But he is able to make use of them to present the process that had actually gone on in his soul. Thus the self-scrutiny that could no longer frame the noble material as an expression of a personal view of the world is nevertheless seen at work here in the subjective application of philosophic thought.

Philosophy comes forward to raise up the despairing man so that he " may be freed from the darkness of deceptive emotions and enabled to recognize the true light in its splendour ". He describes his suffering to her, his disappointments and his past happiness, and she confirms the injustice of his fate and raises it to something of general human importance : Socrates and Zeno and Seneca experienced like him the ingratitude of the world to the philosopher ; thus a full apologia, in which he tells the story of his persecution, is bound up with his laments. Philosophy seeks to liberate him from the grief he suffers ; she tries to heal him like a sick person, and she does so by asking what is his outlook on life and the world. That is to say, Boethius himself tries to raise his philosophical convictions, Stoic and Neoplatonic, into clear consciousness, in order to find consolation in his suffering, and strength to bear it. So he makes Philosophy exhort him to " know himself " : his despair, she tells him, is a sign of weakness due to the fact that he does not know what he himself is.

In the great philosophical tradition we have followed from Socrates to Marcus Aurelius we have seen that the nature of the self was found in the consciousness of the eternal truths. In accordance with this Boethius achieves self-knowledge by impressing on his mind the teachings he has imbibed from the idealistic heritage of philosophy : his ill-fortune, like all the evil in the world, is a fiction that is disposed of by insight into the nothingness

of material good and the true blessedness that lies in the vision of God ; .to turn to God is the first necessity of the free will.

Boethius does not, like the Neoplatonists who came before him, describe this process as the satisfaction of the soul's longing on the upward path into knowledge ; he, too, sees, of course, in philosophy a ladder that leads from entanglement in the world up to the blessed vision, but he has not pursued that path to the end. He contents himself with interrupting the arguments he recalls with statements of the effect they had on him, the way they clarified his soul and strengthened his heart, until, having exhausted his artistic resources, he yields to the overwhelming power of philosophic thought. It has filled his last days, giving them a content that assures permanent life to his work.

Philosophy appeared to him in person. She looked infinitely old ; her garment, of her own weaving, was shot through, covered with dust, and in rags, but an inexhaustible youthful power and shining eyes lit up her venerable features. She approached him in human form, but as they talked she grew far beyond human dimensions, so that he saw with his eyes that her head touched the heavens. Once, in her freedom, she had shown the Greeks the way to discover man in his personality ; she had still been able, when she had become the hand-maiden of religion, to give the best an awareness of themselves. Autobiography is as much indebted to her as to the Christian religion, which found the divine essence in man as " life ". And the *Consolatio philosophic* is included with Augustine's *Confessiones* among the foundations of Dante's *Vita Nuova*.

NOTES

PART II : CHAPTER III

1. *M. Tulli Ciceronis Vita : Ex orator is scriptis excerptis, verba ipsa retinuit, et ad consulum seriem digessit* J. H. L. Meierotto, Berolini (1783).

2. Cf. C. Buresch, " Consolationum a Græcis Romanisque scriptarum historia critica ", *Leipziger Studien der klass. Phil.*, IX, 94 sqq.

3. Cf. Hartlich, " De exhortationum a Graecis Romanisque scriptarum historia ", *Leipziger Studien*, XI, 248 sqq.

4. Hermann Peter, " Der Brief in der röm. Lit. ", *Abhandlungen der Kgl. Sachs. Ges. der Wiss., philol.-histor. Kl.*, XX, 3 (1901), pp. 7-8, 38 sqq. (Ed. Schwartz, *Charakterköpfe aus der antiken Lit.* (1903), pp. 96 sqq.) Compare the particularly fine assessment of Cicero in F. Leo's " Römische Lit. ", *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 8, pp. 332 sqq.

5. Cf. von Wilamowitz, " Die griech. Lit. ", *Kultur d. Ggw.*, I, 8, p. 142.

6. The translation here and in the following quotations is taken, with slight deviations, from that by E. O. Winstedt in *Cicero, Letters to Atticus*, in the Loeb Classical Library.

7. Cf. H. Peter, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 50 sqq., 125.

8. Nepos, *Vita Att.*, 16, 3 ; cf. H. Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

9. Seneca, *Ep. Mor.*, 118, 1-2. Translated by R. M. Gummere in the Loeb Classical Library.

10. Cf. Zielinski, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte*, pp. 28 sqq.

11. Montaigne, *Essays*, Book II, chap. 10.

12. Cf. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*, 1876, pp. 247 sqq. ; E. Schwartz, *Fünf Vorträge über den griech. Roman*, pp. 4-5, 130 sqq. ; Von Wilamowitz, *loc. cit.*, pp. 98-9, 122 sqq.

13. Cf. H. Reich, *Der Mimos*, 1903.

14. Cf. P. Wendland, " Die philosoph. Propaganda und die Diatribe ", *Die hellenistisch-röm. Kultur*, chap. 5, pp. 40 sqq.

15. *Πέρι Ψυχῆς*, c. 18.

16. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, pp. 22 sqq.

17. Plutarch, "The (inscription) EI at Delphi", c. 18-19; 392~393B. Quoted with slight deviations from the translation by Frank Cole Babbitt, in the Loeb Classical Library (*Plutarch's Moralia*, V).

18. Cf. L. Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte Roms*, vol. III (6th ed.), pp. 234-5.

19. W. Schmid, " Der griech. Roman ", *Neue Jahrb.für das klass. Altertum*, XIII (1904), p. 476.

20. R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog*, I, 445-6.

21. R. Hirzel, *op. cit.*, II, p. 36. Gaston Paris, *Francois Villon* (1901), p. 149.

22. Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

23. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, I, i. Translated by W. Adlington (1566), in the Loeb Classical Library,

24. Rohde, *Kleine Schriften*, II, p. 54.

25. *Metamorphoses*, XI, 2. Translated by Adlington.

26. With Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 34, cf. C. Diltthey's analysis of the romance, *Akademische Festrede* (Göttingen, 1879).

27. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 18, 18. Cf. Zinzow, *Psyche u. Eros* (1881), pp. 59 sqq. ; Monceaux, *Les Africains* (1894), P. 326.

28. Lucian, *Convivium*, c. 28.

29. Cf A. Stock, *De prolaliarum usu rhetorico* (Königsberg, 1911), and A. M. Harmon, in the edition of Lucian in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. I, p. 47.

30. Lucian, *Somnium*, 1. The translation here and in the following quotations is taken, with slight changes, from that of A. M. Harmon in the Loeb Classical Library.

31. *Ibid.*, 8-10, 13-14.

32. *Ibid.*, 9, 11, 7.

33. *Ibid.*, end.

34. Lucian, *Bis accusatus*, 32.

35. *Ibid.*, 28, 33.

36. *Ibid.*, 31, 34.

37. *Ibid.*, 30.

38. *Ibid.*, 27.

39. *Ibid.*, 32.

40. Cf. Helm's article on Lucian in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie*, xxv (1926), especially cols. 1726 and 1767-8.

41. Cf Helm, *loc. cit.*, cols. 1725-6, 1752-3.

42. Lucian, *Nigrinus*, 3-4, 20. Translated by A. M. Harmon, *loc. cit.*

43. Lucian, *Nigrinus*, 1.

44. *Ibid.*, 4.

45. *Ibid.*, 37.

46. Plato, *Symposium*, 217e; cf Helm, *loc. cit.*, col. 1752.

47. *Imagines. Pro imaginibus*, 17. *De morte Peregrini*, 21. Cf. Helm, *loc. cit.*, col. 1772.

48. Cf A *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, by K. O. Müller, continued by J. W. Donaldson, vol. III, pp. 214-15.

49. R. C. Jebb, *Essays*, p. 165 (Lucian).

50. Bernays, *Lukian u. die Kyniker*, p. 44. Cf Helm, *loc. cit.*, col. 1772.

51. George Sampson, article "Biography" in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (14th ed.), III, p. 594.

52. Cf K. O. Müller's *History of Ancient Greek Literature*, *op. cit.*, III, p. 225.

53. *Petronii Satyra*, c. 29. Cf L. Friedländer in his edition of the *Cena Trimalchionis* and in his *Sittengeschichte Roms*, III, p. 235.

54. From *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, in Meyer, *Anthologie*, II, no. 1173. Cf. H. Reich, *Der Mimus*, p. 599.

55. Cf O. Ribbeck, *Geschichte der röm. Dichtung*, I, p. 233.

56. *Laert. Diog.*, VI, 6 : 'Ερωτηθεὶς τί αὐτῷ περιγίγονεν ἐκ φιλοσοφίας, ἔφη τὸ δύνασθαι ἐαντῷ ὁμιλεῖν. Cf. Dümmler, *Academica*, p. 64 ; Hirzel, *Dialog*, II, p. 46.

57. R. Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 1906.

58. Cf P. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-röm. Kultur*, etc., chap. 5, "Die philos. Propaganda und die Diatribe" ; also the bibliography in that work.

59. Cf W. Dilthey, "Das Wesen der Philosophie", *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 6 (1907), pp. 12-13. *Ges. Schriften*, V, pp. 351-2.

60. See especially Seneca, *Ep.* 94, 19-20, 39-40 ; 95, 65 ; and Wendland's remarks, *op. cit.*

61. The passages in Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen*, III, i (3rd ed.), pp. 722 and 740.

62. This progress by stages is described in full detail and illustrated with passages from Seneca and Epictetus in A. Bonhöffer, *Epiktet und die Stoa*, pp. 4 sqq. *Die Ethik des Stoikers Epiktet*, pp. 129-30, 146 sqq., 187.

63. Cf Norden, *Kunstprosa*, p. 309.

64. Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 98, 13.

65. *Ibid.*, 59, 7-8. Translated by Richard M. Gummere, in the Loeb Classical Library.

66. Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 45 : " Such Stoic, Cynic, neo-Pythagorean moral treatises as we have are similar both in their choice of subject and in their tendency and attitude ; they differ only in tone and nuance." Cf also Hense, *Musonii reliq.*, pref., p. xviii.

67. Cf H. Peter, *Der Brief op. cit.*, pp. 227-8.

68. Democritus, fr. 261 in Diels, *Fragments der Vorsokratiker*.

69. Cf H. Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

70. Cf Peter, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-7.

71. Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, I I I , i (3rd ed.), pp. 704 sqq. ; I I I , ii (4th ed.), p. 255.

72. Arist., fr. 10, Rose. Cf. Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen*, I I , 2, pp. 793 sqq. Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.*, I I , 37 (Aristotle) ; 5, 15 (Cleanthes) ; 6, 17 (Chrysippus) ; 41, 127 : Est enim animorum ingeniorumque naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturae, etc.

73. On the feeling for nature, cf A. Biese, *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls bei den Römern* (1884), pp. 127 sqq.

74. Zeller, *op. cit.*, I I I , i (3rd ed.), pp. 747 sqq., associates Epictetus too closely with the Cynics. See, in opposition to his view, Bonhtiffer, *Epiktet und die Stoa*, pp. 10 sqq.

75. Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, I I , 66, 167. Magna dii curant, parva neglegunt.

76. This must be emphasized in opposition to Zeller, I I I , ii (4th ed.), pp. 256-7.

77. Cicero *ad Atticum*, X V I , 5 ; *ad familiares*, X V I , 17.

78. There is especially no direct development to be traced from Varro's problematic *Bimarcus* to Marcus Aurelius or to Augustine's " Soliloquies " as is suggested in Hirzel, *op. cit.*, I, p. 447, n. 2.

79. Comparison may be made with the dialogue between Reason and Passion, *Xdyot*; and *ov. U6Q*, by Cleanthes, from the time of the old Stoa (cf Zeller, *op. cit.*, I I I , i, p. 199, n. 3), which according to von Wilamowitz, *Die griech. Lit.*, p. 99, is to be regarded as a fragment of a diatribe.

80. This story about philosophers, of the sort invented in such profusion by Greek wits, was told of Cleanthes and Crates. Diog. Laert., V I I , 174. Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 10, 1. Cf. R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog*, I I , p. 265, n. 1. To be able to engage in prolonged meditation in solitude, it is, of course, necessary to have had a thorough training in philosophy.

81. Cf. Zeller, I I I , 2 (4th ed.), p. 115, n. 3.

82. R. Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, 1906, p. 63.

83. H. Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 350 sqq.

84. Cf A. Elter, *De gnomologiorum græcorum historia*, Part I I I , 19. Bonner, *Index scholarum*, 1893.

85. Such is the judgment, for instance, of Bernhardt, *Griech. Lit. Geschichte*, I, p. 617 : " Sentences fairly substantial but unconnected, anaemic formulae," etc. How strong this impression can be is shown by Harnack's judgment : " superficial argumentation and unctuous self-display". A. Harnack, *Augustins Konfessionen* (Giessen, 1895), p. 9.

86. See especially Marc. Aurel., *elg iavrdv*, IV, 3 ; X I , 13.

87. Retranslated from the German versions.

88. On the daemon see Rohde, *Psyche*, p. 606 ; Usener, *GoßUrnamen*, PP- 292, 395 sqq.

89. Cf. Bonhöffer, *Epiktet und die Stoa*, pp. 84 sqq.

90. Faustina to Marcus and his answer, in *The Correspondence of M. Cornelius Pronto*, *op. cit.*, vol. I I , pp. 317-18.

91. With this, Renan's conception, compare Maeterlinck, *Wisdom and Destiny* (translated by Alfred Sutro), § 54.

oft. Cf. Zeller. *ob. cit.* I I I . i. 00. 762-3.

93. Thus even R. Eucken, *Die Lebensanschauungen der grossen Denker* (1902), p. 101. Wendland, too, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 137, finds in Marcus Aurelius a witness to the broken spirit of the men of those days.
94. *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon* (Oxford, 1760), I, p. 23.
95. Dion Prus. or. 13, *περὶ πνεύματος* (*Op. ed. J. de Arnim*, I, pp. 179-180). Cf. von Arnim, *Leben und Werke des Dia v. Prusa*, pp. 226 sqq.
96. Cf. Wendland, *Die Kultur der hellenist.-rom. Zeit*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
97. Commodianus, *Carmen apology* 1-15. Cf. *Instructions*, præf. (*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latin. Vindobonense* XV). The autobiographical matter is different in *Instruct.*, II, 20, 1—there we find the penitent's self-accusation; see below, Part III, chap. I.
98. Usener, *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, I, pp. 10-11.
99. *Clementina*, ed. Lagarde.
100. Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, pp. 115 sqq., and the literature there quoted.
101. Cf. von Wilamowitz, "Isyllos von Epidauros", *Philol. Unters.*, IX, p. 124.
102. Von Wilamowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-7, 116 sqq. R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenist. Wundererzählungen*, pp. 63-4.
103. Cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 202 sqq.
104. In a medical dissertation at the university of Jena in the eighteenth century. Quoted by H. Baumgart, *Ælius Aristides*, 1874.
105. This is shown in Welcker, *Kleine Schriften*, III, p. 124.
106. II, 32. Cf. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, p. 12, n.
107. Cf. von Wilamowitz, *Die griech. Lit.*, p. 165, and especially Aristides, *legol Myot*, IV, 78.
108. Philostratus, *Vita Soph.*, II, 9.
109. *L. Apuleii Madaurensis Apologia sive de magia liber*, rec. van der Vliet. Cf. Zinzow, *Psyche und Eros* (1881), pp. 46 sqq.
110. Cf. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, p. 64. A different view is taken by Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (1905), pp. 172-3.
111. *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina* (ed. Bollandists), II, 1. A. Robinson, "The Passion of S. Perpetua", in *Texts and Studies*, I, 2 (Cambridge, 1891). Cf. F. Görres in *Real-Encycl. f. Protestant. Theologie*.
112. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, pp. 11, 126, 152, and *Poimandres*, pp. 230-1, 360-1.
113. John Chapman, art. "Hermas", in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910.
114. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
115. Cf. Dietrich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, pp. 78-9; 192-3. Wendland, *op. cit.* Chap. VII, 1, and chap. X.
116. Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 166, n. 3.
117. W. Dilthey, "Das Wesen der Philosophic", *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 6, p. 49. *Gesammelte Schriften*, V, 391.
118. Cf. Wendland's analysis of the doctrine of the ascent of the soul, *op. cit.*, pp. 165 sqq. Anz, "Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung des Gnosticismus", *Texte u. Unters.*, XV, 4 (1897). W. Bousset, "Die Himmelsreise der Seele", *Archiv f. Religionswiss.*, IV (1901); but with this should be compared Dietrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 180 sqq.
119. Anz, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-2.
120. Dietrich, *op. cit.* On the literary character of the document, see Cumont, *Revue de l'instruction publique en Belgique*, 47, pp. 1 sqq. Reitzenstein, in *Neues Jahrb. f. d. klass. Alt.*, XIII (1904), p. 192, n. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 168, n.
121. Plotinus, *Enn.*, II, 9. *πρὸς Γνωστικούς*, 37, quoted in Anz, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Compare the first-personal narrative of the soul's journey in the Genza, the sacred book of the Mandaeans, in Anz, pp. 71-2. Translated by Stephen Mackenna, in the Library of Philosophical Translations, 1921.

122. Apul. *Metam.*, XI, 19-25. Translated by Adlington (1566), in the Loeb Classical Library.

123. "A secret discourse of Hermes Trismegistus to his son Tat, concerning Rebirth," Libellus !XIII of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. English translation in *Hermetica*, ed. by Walter Scott, vol. I (Oxford, 1924). In what follows use has been made generally of this translation.

124. Cf. W. Dilthey, "Die Glaubenslehre der Reformatoren", *Preuss. Jahrb.*, 1894, pp. 46 sqq. P. Wendland, *op. cit.* pp. 138 sqq., 178-9.

125. Cf. H. Gunkel, "Die israel. Literatur", *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 7, pp. 96, 86-7.

126. Dilthey, *Einl. in die Geistesw.*, pp. 320-1. *Ges. Schriften*, I, 254.

127. Cf. W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 226 sqq. Cf. also Kierkegaard, in H. Hdlfding, *Gesch. der neueren Philosophie*, II, p. 319.

128. Winckelmann, *Versuch einer Allegorie* (1766).

129. Cf. H. Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, 1885; F. Jeremias, "Hymnen und Gebete in der babylon.-assy. Religion," in Saussaye's *Lehrbuch der Religionsgesch.*, I (2nd ed.), pp. 198 sqq. For the so-called penitentiary psalms "for comforting the heart," cf. Bezold, "Die babylon.-assy. Literatur," *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 7, p. 46.

130. Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Gesch. des Altertums*, III, p. 230.

131. M. Plath, "Der Stil von Augustins Bekenntnissen", *Protestant. Monatshefte*, 1900.

132. Cf. Gunkel, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

133. *Ibid.*

134. Wellhausen, "Die israel.-jüdische Religion", *Kult. der Gegenwart* I, 4, p. 28.

135. Gunkel, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

PART III : INTRODUCTION

1. Cf. A. Riegl, *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, 1900. (Strzygowski differs.) W. Meyer, *Fragmenta Burana*, 1901. K. Krumbacher, "Die griech. Literatur des Mittelalters", *Kultur der Gegenwart*, I, 8, p. 259.

2. Where it leads to when "Christianity" is isolated in those centuries, and described as in youthful development in late antiquity, is shown by K. Krumbacher, who sees in the "classic age" of Christian literature in the fourth century not only wealth and originality but the breath of spring—*loc. cit.*, p. 255. In the same volume E. Norden gives a correct judgment—"Die latein. Literatur im Uebergang vom Altertum zum Mittelalter", p. 393.

3. Cf. Peter, *Die geschichtl. Lit. der Kaiserzeit*, I, pp. 307, 377.

4. On Nestorius' *Liber Tragoedue*, cf. *Nestoriana*, ed. Fr. Loofs (Halle, 1905), pp. 18-19, 87-8, 181-2, 203 sqq.

5. H. Schenkel, *Rheinisches Museum*, LXVI (1911) 9 pp. 393-416. Cf. Vollmer, article "Rutilius" in Pauly-Wissowa (1914), cols. 1251-2.

6. Cf. von Wilamowitz, "Die Hymnen des Proklos und Synesios", *S.-B. Berl. Akad. Wiss.*, 1907, esp. 287-8.

7. Cf. H. Koch, "Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita". *Forschungen zur Christi. Lit.-Gesch.*, I, 2 (1900), pp. 94, 108 sqq., and the further literature there quoted.

8. Cf. O. Seeck, *Gesch. des Untergangs der alten Welt*, I.

9. See the profound analyses by A. Riegl in *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie in Oesterreich-Ungarn*.

PART III : CHAPTER I

1. Rohde, *Der griech. Roman* (2nd ed.), p. 302, n.
2. Cf. Burckhardt, *Kultur der Renaissance*, p. 402.
3. Hieronymus Wolf.
4. Cf. E. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa*, pp. 514 sqq.
5. Cf. Boissier, *La fin du paganisme*, I I, 177, 395 ; I, 117, and elsewhere ; A. Puech, *Prudence*, pp. 37-8.
6. Cf. Greg. Naz. or. in Jul, i,c. 100 sqq. (quoted in Norden, *op. cit.*), and Julian., ep. 42.
7. Cf. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, pp. 55 sqq. ; K. Holl, " Die schriftstellerische Form des griech. Heiligenlebens ", *N. Jahrb. Kloss. Alt.*, XV (1912).
8. Synesius, " Against Andronicus ", 9 (A.D. 406). Cf. *Philologus*, 52, p. 480.
9. *Synesius contra Andronicum*, 4-11.
10. Nestorius and his Teaching, by J. F. Bethune-Baker (1908) p. 15.
11. H. Peter, *Der Brief in der rom. Lit.*, p. 241.
12. Pseudodemetrius, *περὶ ἐρμηνείας*, pars. 223-35 (first century A.D.) ; Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
13. Sidonius Apollinaris, V I I, 18, 2, and Ennodius in Peter, *op. cit.*, pp. 152, 166.
14. Cf. Grützmacher, *Hieronymus*, I, pp. 6 sqq.
15. Schöne, *Eusebius*, p. 240.
16. Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, pp. 136 sqq.
17. Gal. vi. 4 ; iv. 2 ; 1 Cor. xi. 28 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.
18. Harnack, *Die Mission des Christentums*, p. 159. Klieforth, *Liturg. Abhandlungen*, II (1856), pp. 6-7, 15-16. Probst, *Lehre vom Gebet in den drei ersten Jahrh.* (1871), p. 160. And with reference to Augustine, M. Wundt, " Augustins Confessionen ", *Zeitschr. f. neutestam. Wiss.*, (1923), pp. 179-180.
19. Commodianus, *Instruct.*, I I, 20, 1.
20. On the double meaning of *confessio* established in the Christian exegesis of the Psalms—*confessio peccati* and *confessio laudis*—cf. Böhmer, " Die Lobpreisungen Augustins ", *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* (1915).
21. Th. Zahn, *Cyprian von Antiochien und die deutsche Faustsage* (1882), pp. 105-6.
22. Böhmer, *op. cit.*, defines the work as praise and thanksgiving, Wundt as *confessio Jidei*, from the practice of the Catechism, *Zeitschr. f. neutestam. Wiss.* (1923) ; Williger, *ibid.*, 1929, contests these views and gives edification as the " true purpose ".
23. On Ambrose see Harnack, *Dogmengesch.*, III (2nd ed.), pp. 40 sqq. ; his *Augustins Confessionen* (Giessen, 1888), p. 11 ; L. Thamin, *St. Ambroise* (1895), p. 45 (from Baunard, *Histoire de St. Ambroise*, V, 4).
24. Cf. Harnack, *Dogmengesch.*, I (3rd ed.), pp. 766 sqq., 785 sqq.
25. Villemain, *Tableau de l'éloquence chrétienne au IV^e siècle*. See the further exposition in H. Druon, *Oeuvres de Synesius* (1878), pp. 181 sqq.
26. Cf. von Wilamowitz, " Die Hymnen des Proklos und Synesios ", *S.-B. Bert. Akad. Wiss.* (1907), pp. 272 sqq. ; H. Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*. pp. 11-12, 28 sqq., 178 sqq.
27. Cf. Koch, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 178 ; and especially Jamblich, *Protrept.*, C. 3, pp. 14-15.
28. Aug. *Soliloq.*, I, 1. Boethius, *Consol. philos.*, I I I, 8, p. 90 Peip., where appeal is made to the authority of Plato, *Timaeus*, 27c, 48d, in laying down that everything, however unimportant, and especially divine things, must begin with God.

PART III : CHAPTER III

1. Cf Leder, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
2. But see Williger, "Augs. Confess.", *Zeitschr. f. Neutest. Wiss.*, 1929, pp. 85 sqq.
3. A detailed analysis of the inner form of Augustine's Confessions has been made, from the point of view here put forward, in a Göttingen Dissertation—Use Freyer, "Erlebte und systematische Gestaltung in Augustins Konfessionen", *Neue Deutsche Forschungen, Abteilung Religions- und Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 4 (Berlin, 1937), 238 pp.
4. M. Wundt, "Augs. Konf.", *be. cit.*, p. 202 ; Zepf, "Augs. Konf.", *Heidelb. Abh. z. Ph.*, 1926.
5. The use of those writings, characteristic of the deliberate literary shaping of the autobiography, can be demonstrated by some significant phrases that recur in the Confessions with slight variations at critical transitions. For example, with *Conf*, III, vi, 10 (Manichaeans) : Itaque incidi in homines, compare *De beata vita*, I, 4 : incidi in homines . . . With *Conf*, V, xiv, 25 : Statui ergo tamdiu esse catechumenus in catholica ecclesia mihi a parentibus commendata, donec aliquid certi eluceret, quo cursum derigerem, compare *De util. cred.*, I, 20 : Decreveram tamdiu esse catechumenus in ecclesia, cui traditus a parentibus eram, donec aut invenirem quod vellem aut mihi persuaderem non esse qucerendum . . . With *Con.*, VII, xx, 26 : Sed tunc lectis Platoniorum illis libris, compare *De beata vita* I, 4 : Lectis autem Platonis paucissimis libris . . . With *Con.*, VII, xxi, 27 : Itaque avidissime arripui venerabilem stilum spiritus tui et prae ceteris apostolum Paulum, compare *Contra Acad.*, I I, 25 : Itaque titubans, properans, haesitans, arripui apostolum Paulum.

PART III : CHAPTER IV

1. Cf. A. Harnack, *Augustins Konfessionen*, p. 8.
2. Cf. Usener, *Anecdoton Holderi*, 1877, p. 12.
3. A good deal has been written about this poem : see Ebert, *op. cit.*, vol. I (2nd ed.), p. 405 ; also Rocafort, *De Paul. Pell. vita et carmine* (Bordeaux, 1890), and the same author's *Un type Gallo-Romain, Paulin de Pella* (with French translation of the text), 1896. Niedermeier, *Die antike poetische Autobiographie*, 1919.
4. The Retractations formed the subject of an article by Harnack, "Die Retrakt. Aug.", in the *Sitzungs-Berichte der Preuss. Akad. der Wiss.* (1905), pp. 1096-1131. Beyond this account, which is here followed, no further discussion is here needed. Only on the single point of the form does it seem possible to add to what Harnack says. He rightly points out that though Augustine still had full command of literary resources, the literary simplicity of the work was deliberate ; he attributes it to the practical purpose prompted by Augustine's design and his advanced age, and to Augustine's own avoidance, under the influence of the Bible, of every unnecessary word (pp. 1104-5). It seems, however, that the existing form for works on a writer's own books exerted an influence. The justice of this view is shown by the fact that it explains the insertion of literary details that are not actually relevant to the Retractations (Harnack, p. 1103).
5. Cf. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 1098, n. 1 ; p. 1127, n. 3.
6. Cf. H. Usener, *Anecdoton Holderi*, p. 51.
7. Τακάλλιστα (παιδεία and λόγοι) compared with Τὰ πολιτικά πράγματα in a decree quoted by Johannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*, etc., III, 30.

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