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[G. Misels, The greco-roman world, Aristide - suite]

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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)
† *τὸ τε σώμα . . . καὶ τῆ γνάμνη*, 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.¹⁰⁸

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

