
A VISIT TO AN IDEAL THESAURUS

I'd never forgive myself if I did not tell you of my greatest experience as Chief Seeker of the Supreme Council of the Intellectually Curious. However, before I start I hope you do not mind my personal way of telling it. What I mean is that I find it less cramped and awkward when I have free use of the first personal pronoun. Assuming that such phrases as, "the present writer" or "this scribe", appeal less to you than they do to me, I shall go on. However, you must not think me egotistical or selfish, for actually I am a very humble person whose sole purpose is now to relate a wondrous tale.

One day a junior member of the Supreme Council of the Intellectually Curious who had a flair for painting, wanted to do a portrait of what he called, "the product of a human mind causing the greatest misery to mankind." Immediately the Council set to work to determine what that product would be. The junior member himself suggested that it was the monstrous thought of Eve who believed she would be as God if she were to eat the forbidden fruit. Then was there an uproar! Most members clamoured that the junior was trying to impose in a subtle way the doctrine of Original Sin. "Why", one said, "in my opinion this tale itself is the most fantastic ever and I cast my vote for the fabricator of this ridiculous fable of Adam and Eve." Seeing that no good could come of this, as a result of previous experience, I called the discussion off and put up a practical suggestion. "Why not see the ideas themselves and judge on factual evidence?" All heads nodded in unison. Because I was Chief Seeker and because of my broad-mindedness (that's why I was Chief Seeker), I was appointed to undertake the greatest feat of the S.C.I.C. since it elected me as Chief Seeker.

Through a process of Stichomancy (that is, divination by passages in books), I discovered that I had to go to the "Ideal Thesarus" situated on the Plains of Logos where all thoughts of the human intellect are stored. That meant I had to take another trip to the Region of the Celesterial (commonly called the Region of Abstraction). Because of the nature of the institution, the Plains of Logos are a restricted area to travellers, so in all my ventures into the Celesterial I never once visited them. Constant precautions are taken to see that none but the most authorized even

approach its frontiers.

There is but one clearing station through which all traffic must pass and it is here one obtains the necessary documents. This port of entry is situated near the Astral Plateau (a bond of secrecy prevents further indication of the locality) and is most unique when compared with those clearing houses of our ordinary experience. No bureaucracy here! (This is one of the many ways in which the Region of Abstraction differs from the Region of Distraction: government is not the biggest employer). As there is no recognition of race, color, creed, wealth, nationality or education in Celestior, all formalities are dispensed with except two: the establishing of a sufficient reason for entering and two injections, which can't seem to be avoided anywhere! Having established one's purpose in entering (mine was intellectual curiosity—intellectual, mark you!), an attendant was on hand with his needles. One needle contained an amount of Docility varying according to the condition of the individual, while the other an unusually large dose of anto-Touristitis serum given to all alike to curb the contagion of idle curiosity (nosiness to the vulgar), which is often caught by the visitors to the Plains of Logos. Actually these needles were immaterial and hurt nothing but one's pride, which, having been soothed by the medicated words of the chief officer, I felt the greatest calm ever. It's easy enough to see his point too, for as he explained, it would wreak havoc back in the Region of Distraction should a visitor to the Ideal Thesaurus, return with a detailed list of all the ghastly products from the minds of some of our leading citizens for instance. That is why, he continued, the Security Staff had to guard against the plague of Touristitis by making visitors immune to idle curiosity. The injection of Docility, he promised, would be very helpful in overcoming many of the effects of the Region of Distraction which make a visitor to the Region of Abstraction so helpless and foreign. He then bowed me on with the information: "We provide you with the only piece of luggage needed on this short trip—an open mind. By the way our name is not displayed all over the side so it will be good for indefinite use. Good morning."

The Department of Communications of the Region maintains a shuttle carrier service and I was given a place in the observation car, which was the only provision for passengers on this line used solely for the transportation of thoughts to the Thesaurus. Nothing is ever taken out

from the Plains of Logos so all out-going traffic is lighter and faster. The entry and exit lines are quite far apart but every time we passed an out-going train, the whole plain seemed to vibrate. The only time the two lines come very close is at Medulla Junction just at the edge of the Plains, from where various freight-lines branch senseward to the Region of Distraction.

There's something about the scenery of the Plains of Logos that makes it quite unique in anyone's experience. Come to think of it, though, it has two claims to distinction. The most interesting feature at first is the fact one can see the scenery — and that without having to look around a monstrous billboard announcing a new cereal that not only talks but talks back. The greatest source of bewilderment came however from my growing sense of introspection. At first it was like the uneasy fear which grips one slipping from consciousness under the influence of ether; that dread uncertainty wherein his every sense reaches out in futile clutches for something not moving in the same current as his being, and finding none, suddenly he turns in upon himself to trust in the mystery of the spirit. It was in this unconscious and inevitable adoration of God that I found myself; that adoration implicit in every recognition of insufficiency. Not despair where the unknown quantity is also regarded as insufficient, but hope in the knowledge that the unknown does exist, not so much as unknown but as a quantity, the source of all quantities, of space, time, power and knowledge.

Why the Plains of Logos should have caused this sensation I do not know. Perhaps all creation was meant to be this way, but for some reason or other we have developed a great facility for not being able to see the wood for the trees. On the Plains, everything was as a mirror. Not a mirror wherein appeared the reflection of self, but rather what was beyond self, yet through the medium of self.

After a time I noticed that the other man in the car with me never said a word. He was in charge of operations and cargo of the train and known in Logos as an engineuron. Whether he did not wish to disturb my wonderment or he was too busy sorting his bills of lading I was not sure, but all he did was noiselessly flip paper in a most routine way muttering what sounded like car numbers and their destination.

As we progressed I suddenly became aware of an increasing brightness which although evidently coming from one general area ahead, was yet all-pervading to the extent of being equally strong no matter what direction one turned to. Although it grew in intensity with our advance, my companion did not raise his head, but as if preparing to debark, tidied up his papers. Lost again in uncertain anticipation of what was to come, I would not have noticed his departure were it not for a blinking sign which he illuminated on leaving. Before this there was nothing whatsoever in the car to make one lose the soul-absorbing contact with the Plain, as the sign blended perfectly with the dull finish of the interior, where no shapes, forms or colors were distinguishable. The sign blinked: "Passengers will please debark at Pineal", and I was ready as the car eased to a stop.

I fear the welcoming party for a minute doubted the efficacy of the anti-Touristitis serum, for I was lost in wonder of what lay in the near distance and did not pay much attention to them. In every way the massive structure was mystifying, especially in luminescence.

It was really shapeless, yet had the most pleasing symmetry and aesthetic qualities of proportion. Situated on the highest elevation on the Plains, it had the general appearance of three convoluted half-spheres, the two larger of equal size half enveloping one another and situated behind the smaller one which had a low entrance concealing the huge lobby within. The most striking feature of the structure itself was the curious intermingling of successive bands of the finest spiritual gold, silver and platinum. It was this spiritual quality of the substance which at times made the building so shapeless, yet of the most exquisite form, and made the gold, silver and platinum so blend as to be singly distinguishable at once, yet lost in their combined radiance almost unbearable to the eyes.

When I passed through the entrance, my attention was caught by an intricately inlaid inscription above the archway to which my guides also looked and bowed their heads in salute. The inscription read: "God made all things well and He was pleased." Pondering the deep significance of this, I was unimpressed as one of the guides whispered behind his hand (as if to settle my seeming curiosity) that

the substance of the in-lay work of the inscription, was an alloy of Light. No a very high percentage, he added matter-of-factly, for it would then detract from the entry-way itself which was a masterly piece of work having the appearance of what is usually called a square circle in the Region of Abstraction

The corridor to the centre of the structure where we first had to go, was long, very straight and narrow, and for some reason or other progress through it was slow and laborious. It did not have a conveyor-carpet as is often found in halls of similar length and was finished in a very sombre stucco-like substance so dull that illumination was required to brighten it. This was more for the sake of propriety than safety however, as the corridor was without any obstacles. There were no doors nor objects to deter one's progress in reaching the end where a strong illumination was evident. Apparently the passage was below the floor-level of the building, for we had to ascend a short stairs to reach the Supreme Senate Chamber where I was to meet the top officials of the Thesaurus and be briefed before going on an inspection tour.

The Chamber of the Supreme Senate was round and had a corridor surrounding it unbroken except for the stair-way through which I ascended to its level. Leading into the corridor from the outside were three doors: one on either side about half-way around the other slightly to my right opening behind me as I stood at the top of the stairs. Ahead was the main door of the Chamber upon which I gazed while an attendant announced my arrival. In recessed letters upon a large glass-like panel, was etched: "Supreme Senate. Chairman: His Excellent Power Mr. Reason". Previous to this, the protocol officer instructed me that all executive members on the staff had the title, His Power, while the Chairman was addressed as His Excellent Power.

Entering the Chamber I was saluted by a venerable and placid old gentleman who greeted me warmly and with a generous bow of his heavily bearded head, bade me be seated. His desk was opposite the door I had entered so my chair was approximately in the centre of the room. The Chamber was very conservative and orderly. A stern precision was evident in all room appointments as well as in the movements of the of the clerical staff whose operations had the regularity and smoothness of a machine.

Above the Chairman's desk was an abstract three-dimensional painting entitled: "Order", which gave one a feeling of finality and determination implied in the title. Other than this painting the only items in the line of furniture were four desks, two on either side of the Chairman's, which I was soon to find out were occupied during a Senate meeting by His Excellent Power's four subordinates. These things I noted throughout the course of the evening for at first I was wholly absorbed by the remarks of the Chairman.

(To be concluded in May issue)

—J. G. S. '54.

"Nor does this work (of education) interfere in the least with the regulations of the State, because the Church in her motherly prudence is not unwilling that her schools and institutions for the education of the laity be in keeping with the legitimate requirements of civil authority."

—Pope Pius XI "Christian Education of Youth."

"The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to a strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the state, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth."

—Pope Pius XII "Christian Education of Youth."

"Consequently, education which is concerned with man as a whole, individually and socially, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies (the family, civil society and the Church), in due proportion, corresponding to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the co-ordination of their respective ends."

—Pope Pius XI in "Christian Education of Youth."

"Hence the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason, illuminated by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ."

—Pope Pius XI in "Christian Education of Youth."