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other; granted that this has not been achieved universally nor without some friction. The University of Ottawa contributes her share to all levels of government, including the ministerial level, and, we believe, holds especial importance for the future of Confederation.

EDWARD O. DODSON

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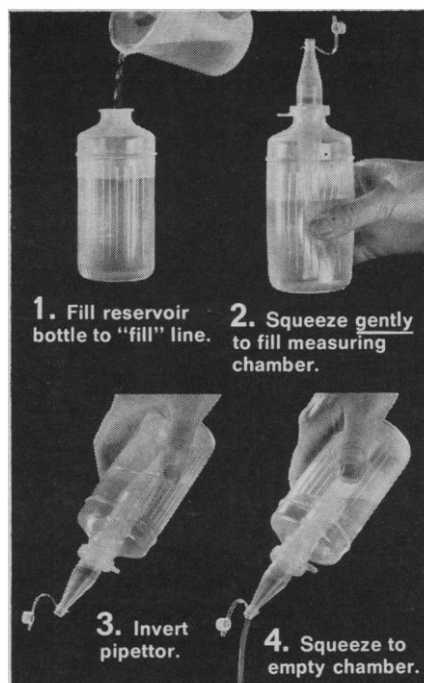
Parnassus Revisited

After self-administration of a drug, in the presence of a group of friends, a young English scientist reported:

... a thrilling, extending from the chest to the extremities was almost immediately produced. I felt a sense of tangible extension, highly pleasurable, in every limb; my visible impressions were dazzling, and apparently magnified; I heard distinctly every sound in the room, and was perfectly aware of my situation. By degrees, as the pleasurable sensations increased, I lost all connection with external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through my mind, and were connected with words in such a manner as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. I existed in a world of newly-connected and newly-modified ideas; I theorised, I imagined that I made discoveries. When I was awakened from this semi-delirious trance . . . indignation and pride were the first feelings produced by the sight of the persons about me. My emotions were enthusiastic and sublime, and for a minute I walked around the room, perfectly regardless of what was said to me. As I recovered my former state of mind, I felt an inclination to communicate the discoveries I had made during the experiment . . . with the most intense belief and prophetic manner, I exclaimed . . . "Nothing exists but thoughts! the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains."

"Wild enjoyment" persisted for more than 2 hours. Marihuana? LSD? Mescaline? No, the drug was nitrous oxide; the scientist was Humphry Davy; the time was 1799 (1). Southey and Coleridge are said to have been inspired more to laughter than to poetry at ensuing laughing-gas parties. These anticipated the "ether frolics" of the past century and the "pot parties" and "LDS-trips" of today.

The fact that simple N₂O can elicit subjective responses resembling those caused by complex molecules, like LSD and mescaline, should give added perspective on the action of hallucinogenic drugs. Researchers hampered by the



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current "shrouds around LSD" (Letters, 18 Nov.) may wish to reconsider nitrous oxide for provoking sensory perturbations. Nitrous oxide is not likely to compete with LSD or mescaline as an illegal chariot to Parnassus, because of its inconvenient form (compressed gas in cylinders), variability of action, and unpleasant side effects at times.

ARTHUR CHERKIN

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Reference

1. J. Davy, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy, Bart.* (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, London, 1836), pp. 98-99.

Save Enough Redwoods!

"Save-the-Redwoods" does not imply simply a need to preserve a species as interpreted by Fahnestock (Letters, 2 Dec.). The Save-the-Redwoods league was founded with the idea of purchasing and setting aside (by means of contributions from individual donors and matching funds from the state of California) remnants of the once extensive virgin redwood forest for the enjoyment of future generations. A single statistic does not tell the whole story: 50,000 acres (20,250 hectares) of virgin redwoods in existing state parks may appear to be a lot of acreage, but it is a pitifully small fraction (about 3 percent) of the existing coastal redwood stand in California and it is insufficient to absorb in reasonable fashion the hordes of people who visit the groves in increasing numbers each year. A visit to a redwood forest is, after all, meant to be a unique and vital experience, not the museum experience which Fahnestock advocates by preserving isolated groves.

The redwood is remarkably viable, it is true. However, its vaunted ability to survive storm, fire, and flood has not yet met its full measure in the locust-like depredations of man. Unfortunately, California's existing Forest Practices Act still lacks the teeth required to make operators comply with a minimum of good logging practices. The tendency today to log on ever steeper slopes with heavy tractors and machinery can only lead to a decrease in slope stability and accelerated erosion and runoff.

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