

slowly, as if he were speaking of a matter of great consequence:

“If you please — draw me a sheep . . .”

When a mystery is too overpowering, one dare not disobey. Absurd as it might seem to me, a thousand miles from any human habitation and in danger of death, I took out of my pocket a sheet of paper and my fountain pen. But then I remembered how my studies had been concentrated on geography, history, arithmetic, and grammar, and I told the little chap (a little crossly, too) that I did not know how to draw. He

answered me:

“That doesn’t matter. Draw me a sheep . . .”



But I had never drawn a sheep. So I drew for him one of the two pictures I had drawn so often. It was that of the boa constrictor from the outside. And I was astounded to hear the little fellow greet it with,

“No, no, no! I do not want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. A boa constrictor is a very dangerous creature, and an elephant is very cumbersome. Where I live, everything is very small. What I need is a sheep. Draw me a sheep.”



So then I made a drawing. He looked at it carefully, then he said:

“No. This sheep is already very sickly. Make me another.”

So I made another drawing.

My friend smiled gently and indulgently.

“You see yourself,” he said, “that this is not a sheep. This is a ram. It has horns.”

So then I did my drawing over once more.

But it was rejected too, just like the others.

“This one is too old. I want a sheep that will live a long time.”



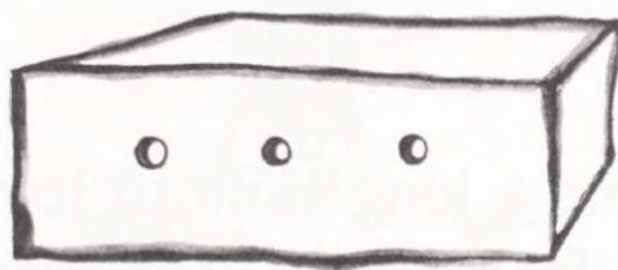
By this time my patience was exhausted, because I was in a hurry to start taking my engine apart. So I tossed off this drawing.

And I threw out an explanation with it.

“This is only his box. The sheep you asked for is inside.”

I was very surprised to see a light break over the face of my young judge:

“That is exactly the way I wanted it! Do you think that this sheep will



have to have a great deal of grass?”

“Why?”

“Because where I live everything is very small . . .”

“There will surely be enough grass for him,” I said. “It is a very small sheep that I have given you.”

He bent his head over the drawing:
“Not so small that — Look! He has
gone to sleep . . .”

And that is how I made the acquaintance of the little prince.

III

It took me a long time to learn where he came from. The little prince, who asked me so many questions, never seemed to hear the ones I asked him. It was from words dropped by chance that, little by little, everything was revealed to me.

The first time he saw my airplane, for instance (I shall not draw my airplane; that would be much too complicated for me), he asked me:

“What is that object?”

“That is not an object. It flies. It



is an airplane. It is my airplane.”

And I was proud to have him learn that I could fly.

He cried out, then:

“What! You dropped down from the sky?”

“Yes,” I answered, modestly.

“Oh! That is funny!”

And the little prince broke into a lovely peal of laughter, which irritated me very much. I like my misfortunes to be taken seriously.

Then he added:

“So you, too, come from the sky! Which is your planet?”

At that moment I caught a gleam of light in the impenetrable mystery of his presence; and I demanded, abruptly:

“Do you come from another planet?”

But he did not reply. He tossed his head gently, without taking his eyes from my plane:

“It is true that on that you can’t have come from very far away . . .”

And he sank into a reverie, which

lasted a long time. Then, taking my sheep out of his pocket, he buried himself in the contemplation of his treasure.

You can imagine how my curiosity was aroused by this half-confidence about the “other planets.” I made a great effort, therefore, to find out more on this subject.

“My little man, where do you come from? What is this ‘where I live,’ of which you speak? Where do you want to take your sheep?”

After a reflective silence he answered:

“The thing that is so good about the box you have given me is that at night he can use it as his house.”

“That is so. And if you are good I will give you a string, too, so that

you can tie him during the day, and a post to tie him to.”

But the little prince seemed shocked by this offer:

“Tie him! What a queer idea!”

“But if you don’t tie him,” I said, “he will wander off somewhere, and get lost.”

My friend broke into another peal of laughter:

“But where do you think he would go?”

“Anywhere. Straight ahead of him.”

Then the little prince said, earnestly:

“That doesn’t matter. Where I live, everything is so small!”

And, with perhaps a hint of sadness, he added:

“Straight ahead of him, nobody can go very far . . .”