III.—ALCHEMY AND THE ABSOLUTE.

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THE more one studies any branch of natural science the more one realises that all scientific knowledge is inside experience. But there have been times in the history of the sciences when those who sought knowledge of natural events were sure that the only way to attain that knowledge was to pass outside experience, to lay hold of ultimate reality, and to return with that talisman into experience.

The pragmatic philosopher is convinced that, as William James says: "Though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing". But the absolutist philosophers are quite certain that external events are but bubbles and froth on the stream of truth, are only the "accidental and confused setting" of genuine knowledge, which ought to be concerned solely with *The Truth*.

The alchemists were the most patient and thorough-going pursuers of absolute truth who have appeared among those who profess themselves scientific investigators. It cannot but be interesting to compare the aim, the method, and the phraseology of the alchemists, with the aim, the method, and certain technical expressions of the absolutist philosophers.

The alchemists asserted that the nature of ultimate reality could be found by the human mind. They began by claiming a knowledge of the degrees of nobleness, and the degrees of degradation, in the scale of being. They said that everything has a natural or proper form which essentially belongs to it, and that when anything is taken out of its proper form, it is in a violent or non-natural state. They declared that everything which has been taken away from its natural state tries to return to that state. Metals are found in the earth; they rust when brought above the ground. Hence, the alchemist said, metals are corrupted, degraded in the scale of being, when they are taken out of the earth. But some metals, notably gold, do not rust in the air; therefore, the alchemical

argument ran, these metals are more noble than the baser metals which rust in the air. The alchemists were very jealous protectors of the nobility of metals; they would not allow them to be thought inferior to plants. Noticing that plants perpetuate themselves by seeds, the alchemists concluded that metals too are endowed with this power, that metals grow from their own seed which they sow in the earth. An alchemical writer indignantly protests: "What prerogative have vegetables above metals, that God should give seed to the one and withhold it from the other? Are not metals as much in His sight as trees?"

Knowing, as they assumed they knew, that gold is nobler than iron, and knowing also that iron, like other metals, is trying to attain its natural, proper place, is trying to become gold, the alchemist made it his business to help iron, and the other base metals, in their praiseworthy efforts to raise themselves from a more degraded to a less degraded position in the scale of being. They said that there is a something in every base metal which may be educated, developed, strengthened, by alchemic art, until the transmutation is finished. This something was often spoken of by the alchemists as "the Mercury of the base metals," sometimes as "the golden nature which the baser metals possess". By calling it Mercury, the adepts led astray the feeble, matter-of-fact seekers of alchemical truth; for these men wasted their energy on vain endeavours to compel the ordinary, material mercury to become gold; whereas the initiated meant by Mercury a semi-spiritual, indefinable essence which could be reached only by tearing away the outer coverings of gross, material substance that hid the essence from the view of the vulgar.

So far the alchemists were working with intellectual concepts: the concept that everything has a natural state which it strives to retain, and to return to if it be removed therefrom; the concept that all things are ordered in a definite hierarchy of nobleness, arranged to give satisfaction to the intellect of the alchemist; the concept that this hierarchy is ordered and maintained by the presence in the members of it of different degrees of the binding unity called by alchemists *The Universal Essence*; and the concept that many of the things which are lower in the scale of nobleness can be raised by alchemical art, working in conformity with the design of nature, which design was known to the alchemists. Not one of these concepts was derived from, or rested on, perceptual experience.

The alchemist was always a practical man as well as a dreamer. It was imperative that he should use his con-

cepts in the laboratory. He was obliged to work under the conditions imposed on him by the resources of his workshop. But before entering his laboratory he had formed his plan of action, a plan which merely tried to translate his concepts into sensible experiences—for his concepts were more real to him than the experiences of the laboratory—not a plan that began with sensible experiences and symbolised and correlated these by conceptions arising from the study of the related experiences. The alchemist sought laboratory methods which were at once natural and transcending nature; for he was trying to pass outside human experience, and at the same time trying to bring the results of his adventure back with him into human experience. The alchemist was saved from becoming merely an absolutist philosopher by his endeavours to translate his intellectual concepts into the terms of sensible experience. Alchemical experiments brought to light many physical and chemical facts which have been of service in the advancement of natural science, and have led to discoveries of much importance to the chemical arts. But these experiments did little to strengthen the alchemical conceptions which it was hoped they would make more convincing. Finding that the results of their experiments refused to agree with their mentally constructed scheme, the alchemists put ever more stress on their ideal order of nature, and forced their experimental results to conform to that order. They sank deeper and deeper into the morass of vicious intellectualism. They used their sensible experiences as symbols of, and guides to, hazy conceptual experiences. They placed reality in the mind, and tested the truth of experimentally determined facts by the slightness of the resistance which they offered to the filling in of the details of the mental picture which had been formed before appeal was made to the laboratory. The alchemists tried to let down their intellectual conception of an order-seeking world on to a foundation of sensible experiences. As the building wobbled, the foundation was rebuilt; the sensible experiences were forced to fit into the intellectual conception, and were then treated as supporters of that conception.

The alchemists were convinced that metals can be transmuted; it was, therefore, easy for them to transmute their particular sensible experiences into harmony with their intellectual scheme, and then to use these transmuted experiences as supporters of that scheme. It was this semi-material, semi-intellectual transmutation that gave to the alchemical experiments all the value that the makers of them thought they possessed. The experimental results were not exactly

falsified, nor were they ignored; they were constantly appealed to as supporters of the intellectual scheme. The most correct description of the process to which these sensible experiences were subjected is to call it a transmutation. For the alchemists insisted that the art of transmutation consists in removing the outer coverings which hide the inner Mercury or golden nature of metals, and stop its activity, and by so giving freedom to the proper nature of the metals, allowing them to reach their natural destination, that is, to become gold. The alchemists constantly asserted that every transmutation must begin in a destruction of what is unessential in the thing to be transmuted; they being the judges of what is essential and what is superficial. As the field of ripe corn is produced by burying the seed in the earth and there leaving it, apparently to die, and to be brought to life again under the influence of the sunshine and the rain; so must the outer husk of a transmutable thing be destroyed, and the inner essence must then be revived, and nourished to new life by the influence of the great agent of transmutation which the alchemists called the Philosopher's Stone, an agent which was able both to kill the husk and to vivify the kernel. It was thus that they transmuted the results they obtained in their laboratories. What their intellectual idea of an order-seeking world declared to be unessential in these results, to be only on the surface of them, was set aside; what remained was encouraged to grow strong by the nourishment given it by the alchemical conception of vivifying unity which acted through and by means of the Philosopher's Stone.

When the experiences of the laboratory had been thus transmuted they became valuable, they became supports, inside experience, of the conception which claimed to pass outside experience. The all-embracing conception must have the appearance of resting, primarily, in human experience. Experiences rebelled against acting as foundations for the conception of the *Universal Essence*; therefore experiences were changed; the transmutation was effected in the sphere embraced by the conception of *The One Thing*; and the transmuted experiences were now content to make believe they were acting as the foundation-stones of the intellectual edifice.

The nature of transmutation can be described only by using allegories, symbols, and parables; whether it be the transmutation of base metals into gold, or the change effected in laboratory experiences to make them into the gold used in adorning the alchemical temple dedicated to the Universal Essence. Similarly, the great instrument of transmutation, the Philosopher's Stone, is generally described by giving to

it contrary properties. "Our Stone may be compared to all things in the world. In its origin and sublimation, and in the conjunction of its elements, there are analogies to things heavenly, earthly and infernal, to the corporeal and the incorporeal, to things corruptible and incorruptible, visible and invisible, to spirit, soul and body, . . . to the creation of the world, . . . to all animals, vegetables and minerals, . . . to unity and multitude, . . . to actuality and potentiality, . . . to male and female, . . . to the vigorous and the weak, to peace and war, to white and red, and all colours, to the beauty of Paradise, to the terrors of the infernal abyss." The conception of *The Universal Essence*, transcending human experience, stretched into human experience this semi-conceptual, semi-perceptual instrument, hoping, by the changes which that instrument produced, to strengthen its own claim to be regarded as ultimate reality. The instrument, like the conception of the Universal Essence, owed whatever success attended its use to its extraordinary flexibility. No two alchemists agreed about its origin, use, or ways of working. It was all things to all men. It presented an aspect of itself to each who sought it which was enough to satisfy the intellect of the individual seeker.

Students of the natural sciences have wholly and utterly rejected the alchemists' claim that intellectually constructed concepts are ends in themselves, and the experiences of the laboratory and the field are instruments for producing results which may be transmuted so as to give support to concepts that, when untransmuted, they destroy.

There is a school of philosophers whose aim and method are very like the aim and the method of the alchemists. The intellectualistic, or absolutist philosophers do not use concepts as instruments for gaining knowledge about sensible experiences, but as realities, the knowledge of which is gained, in part, by transmuting sensible experiences, and is the only knowledge worth having.

Like the alchemists, the intellectualistic philosophers have an order of nobleness wherein they arrange the parts of experience. One of them assures us that: "Comparative ability to exist, individually and as such, within the sphere of sense, is a sign everywhere, so far as it goes, of degradation in the scale of being". The alchemists constantly expressed themselves to much the same effect as Mr. Bradley does in this sentence quoted from his book *Appearance and Reality*. Thus, an early alchemist said: "It is necessary to deprive matter of its qualities in order to draw out its soul". Paracelsus taught that: "Nothing of true value is located

in the body of a substance"—that is, its ability to exist, individually and as such, within the sphere of sense—"but in the virtue . . . the less there is of body the more in proportion is the virtue". Basil Valentine said: "Fire is the purest and noblest of all Elements".

The intellectualistic philosophers have a much lower opinion than the alchemists had of what one of the philosophers calls those "irrelevant appeals to practical results which are allowed to make themselves heard". The alchemists amassed many useful facts by working hard among sensible experiences. The philosophers of the intellectualistic school treat human experiences as unreal, as "the accidental and confused setting" in which truth is unfortunately encased, as "bubbles on the uniform and timeless stream of knowledge". Of all those foolish experiences, which create "a passing show of arbitrary variation," one of these philosophers (Mr. Joachim) says: "They themselves, and the manner of their connexion are excluded from the theory of knowledge". The alchemists tried to set free the Essence from the "corporeal poison" of particular qualities. Another philosopher of this school, recognising that a theory of human knowledge can hardly exclude from its survey all human experience, makes much use of the alchemical doctrine of transmutation. The alchemists spoke of their vision of intellectual harmony as *The One Thing*; the philosophers call their very similar vision *The Absolute*. As the alchemists taught that *The One Thing* was able to destroy particular kinds of substances, and then to "change the lifeless remains into a new and pure body," so Mr. Bradley affirms of *The Absolute*, that it is "the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally". This is the genuine alchemical voice. "The unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted," is the same concept as "the one Magistry of alchemy". In the unity "all things are changed alike, though not changed equally"; the "one Magistry," we are told, "hardens that which is soft, and softens that which is hard, fixes that which is fugitive, and glorifies them all with its own magnificent brilliancy and splendour". The Magistry changes all these things alike, though not equally. "Know, brother," an alchemist explains, "that our whole Magistry is one Stone, which becomes several things, and yet again is restored to its unity." Speaking again of the Absolute, Mr. Bradley tells us that it "has no assets beyond appearances; and again, with appearances only to its credit, the Absolute would be bankrupt. All of

these are worthless apart from transmutation." To transmute appearances, to remove from them what conceals their true meaning, and so to make them valuable, was declared by the alchemists to be the very essence of their art. Paracelsus said: "To grasp the invisible elements, to attract them by their material correspondences, to control, purify, and transform them by the living power of the Spirit—this is true Alchemy". The same alchemist declared that: "Destruction perfects that which is good; for the good cannot appear on account of that which conceals it". Another alchemist taught that in all substances is hidden "a central fire," which is "in a state of passivity during the life of the substances"; and that the business of alchemy is to kill the substances, because only thus can the "hidden central fire obtain the mastery, and attract to itself all the pure elements, which are thus separated from the impure, and form the nucleus of a far purer form of life". Another alchemist speaks of "That Spirit which permeates all creation—yet is everywhere bound up with the defilements and dross of matter". He assures us that, "if freed from this dross, it returns to the purity of its substance, in which it produces everything, and becomes everything in every form".

The alchemical conception of *The Universal Essence*, and that of the medium—the Philosopher's Stone—whereby that conception was brought into active, transmuting contact with the sensible experiences of the laboratory, were declared to satisfy the intellect of those who used them, and satisfaction of the intellect was accepted as synonymous with truth; for the alchemists asserted that they knew "simplicity to be the seal of truth," and therefore their system was true because it was simple. At the same time, although the general alchemical scheme satisfied the alchemical intellect, both the pure concept—the Essence—and the instrument—the Stone—which were in part conceptual and in part formed by transmuting experiences, presented many aspects, and appealed to the intellect of each individual in a different way. There was "no decisive consensus of opinion on any point of importance" regarding the exact nature of the Essence, or the particular ways of working of the instrument whereby the Essence was applied; as Dr. McTaggart tells us there is "no decisive consensus of opinion on any point of importance" in metaphysics. Nevertheless, the awful aloofness from human affairs of *The One Thing*, and the flexibility and readiness to adapt itself to circumstances of *The Philosopher's Stone* (provided you agreed that "all details are vulgar") so impressed the alchemists that they were able to proclaim

their intellectual satisfaction with both. Their satisfaction was proclaimed most loudly when they were driven almost to despair by the elusiveness of the quest of *The Essence*, and were exhausted by hunting *The Stone* from one hiding place to another. The author of *The Pearl of Great Price* admits that, "The expressions and equivocations, the allegories and metaphors, employed by the Sages create a most serious obstacle in the path of the student. . . . It is often all but impossible to do more than guess at the meaning of the Sages. At times it almost looks as if this Art could be acquired only by the living voice of the Master, or by direct Divine inspiration." Another weary seeker of the Stone exclaims: "This horrid beast has so many names, that unless God direct the searcher it is impossible to distinguish him". And yet, so satisfied were these men that they held the truth, that one of them says: "As for the work itself, it is no way troublesome; a lady may read the 'Arcadia' and at the same time attend this philosophy without disturbing her fancy".

It was necessary that the alchemists should declare their intellectual satisfaction with their conceptions of *The Essence* and *The Stone*, for their whole scheme of things depended on these conceptions. Their experimental results became valuable only when they had been transmuted by the power of these conceptions. Had they become dissatisfied with the conceptions, they would soon have been intellectual bankrupts; and moral and emotional bankrupts too, for their ethics and their æsthetics were indissolubly connected with their intellectual conception of the universe.

As did the alchemists, so do the intellectualistic philosophers. These philosophers proclaim their aim to be the knowledge of the ultimate nature of reality. They endeavour to pass outside human experience; and they hope to do this by using human thought. "The essence of philosophy must be confined to intellectual activity," Mr. Bradley says. *Their* Philosopher's Stone is that "intellectual activity" which, they say, brings their Universal Essence (called by them the Absolute) into transmuting contact with the illusory appearances that, when untransmuted, are valueless, because they refuse to bridge the gulf between themselves and the Universal Idea outside experience.

It would never have done for the alchemists to have ignored the experiences of their laboratories; for their aim was the preparation of an instrument which should transmute these into other experiences, more valuable for the purpose of confirming and controlling the action of the Universal

Essence. That Essence was the intellectual conception which supported them in their mechanical labours, and consoled them in their disappointments. When tempted to lose heart as they pored over their crucibles, that would boil over, and "put their fingers among coals, into clay and filth," that refused to be refined, they gained fresh courage to continue their experiments by saying, each in his own special language, what an intellectualistic philosopher (Mr. Joachim) has said, as he recognised that his theory of truth had suffered shipwreck: "That the truth itself is one and whole and complete, and that all thinking and all experience moves within its recognition and subject to its manifest authority; this I have never doubted".

The alchemical way of expressing this conviction varied; these are examples of it: "The substance of our Art is one, and admits of no variation or substitute". "Nature delights in the same nature, kind in kind, kind overcomes kind, kind contains kind, and yet they are not different kinds, or several, but only one kind, having within itself those properties by which it excels all other things." "In the books of the Sages the impression is conveyed as if there were many substances and many methods, but they only mean different aspects or stages of the same thing."

It would never do for the intellectualists utterly to deny the facts of experience; for their aim is to use these appearances—as they call them—as a bridge whereby they may pass securely over the gulf that separates them from the Absolute Reality outside all experience. They know, by a process which ordinary people cannot call knowledge, that The Reality is there. They have these unsuitable materials, and these only, wherewith to build their bridge. Recognising that there are no materials to be procured elsewhere—"The Absolute has no assets beyond appearances"—and recognising that the materials "as such" won't build the bridge—"With appearances only to its credit, the Absolute would be bankrupt"—the intellectualistic philosophers use the same device as the alchemical practitioners; both find refuge in the blessed word *transmutation*. Wonderful is the power of words. Solomon knew the names of the spirits, and by their names he controlled them. Alchemists and intellectualists know the name of the process, and by uttering the name they control the facts, untamable by all other incantations.

Were a worker in natural science to judge the method of "intellectual activity" by its results, forgetting for a moment that the philosophers deprecate "irrelevant appeals to practi-

cal results," he would be astonished. He would find one of the philosophers (Dr. McTaggart) declaring that, "Science advances by small and frequent additions to a body of generally accepted truths. Metaphysic, by the substitution of one complete system for another." He would find the same philosopher announcing that, "in Metaphysic there is no decisive consensus of opinion on any point of importance," and warning us against seeking help for the guidance of our lives from metaphysics, because if we insisted on having guidance "our moral life would become chaotic"; as an alchemist assures us—"In the books of the Sages the only method that prevails is that of chaos". He would find the same candid teacher asserting that—"in its essence, truth is a timeless, stable state". He would be told by another philosopher of the same school (Mr. Joachim) that: "the truth is—from the point of view of the human intelligence—an Ideal, and an Ideal which can never, *as such* or in its completeness, be actual in human experience". Before he had recovered from these shocks he would hear Mr. Bradley saying: "I have assumed that the object of metaphysics is to find a general view which will satisfy the intellect; and I have assumed that whatever succeeds in doing this is real and true, and that whatever fails is neither. This is a doctrine, which so far as I can see, can neither be proved nor questioned." If he were acquainted with alchemical writings he would find in Mr. Bradley's words an echo of such alchemical sayings as this: "The Divine Intelligence has subjected all natural and supernatural phenomena to the rule of certain laws, which laws our reason was created capable of apprehending, and this state of things is the preliminary condition of all Science whatsoever".

The student of natural science is so completely unused to the kind of "intellectual activity" practised by the absolutist philosophers, that for a time he is dumbfounded by sayings such as those I have quoted. He cannot form even the faintest mental picture of a changeless, stable truth, which can never be actual (even with the saving clause, *as such*) in human experience; which, nevertheless, satisfies the intellect, and is thereby proved to be real; which is gained, if it is ever gained, by the process of substituting one complete system for another; about no important portion of which is there any decisive consensus of opinion; which is so ultimate and so stable that the use of it, as it is known (if it is known at all), would make our moral lives chaotic; which would be degraded in the scale of being by the merely practical agreement of any of its devotees.

These are the very contradictions wherein the alchemists revelled.

When one inquires into the working of the one Magistry of the philosophers which they call *intellectual activity*, one finds that, like the one Magistry of the alchemists, it fails to make the transmutation when it is applied to real experiences, and succeeds only when success cannot be tested by any human touchstone. The intellectual activity of the modern alchemists is staggered by the assertion, "Sugar is hard, and white, and sweet". The only instrument they possess for transmuting this single, complex experience into a concept they can understand, insists on producing four concepts, none of which can be connected with any other, and declares that what it has separated no man is able to bring together. But, when the same instrument is applied to the series of concepts, "Truth is a timeless, changeless state," or "Knowledge is a uniform and timeless stream," it instantly transmutes these concepts into a single *view*, which so satisfies the philosopher that, for a time, he forgets the miserable breakdown of the same instrument when it was confronted with a piece of sugar. The philosopher who strains at a gnat, swallows a train of camels without a twinge.

As it is with the modern alchemist's *Stone of Wisdom*, so it was with the older alchemist's *Elixir*. The Elixir always failed to transmute iron, or lead, or silver into gold; but when the alchemist failed to maintain his laboratory fires at the proper temperature, the Elixir transmuted his querulous disappointment into the comforting *view*, that "Fire is the purest and noblest of all the Elements".

The alchemists never doubted the efficacy of their instrument of transmutation. At least one modern alchemist admits that his transmuting engine is imperfect. Mr. Bradley says that the conception of the Absolute, to which his intellectual activity leads him, may be "corrected by passing outside the intellect, by taking in the remaining aspects of experience". In this process, "the proper nature of truth is, of course, transformed and perishes". There speaks the genuine alchemist. He knows what is the "proper nature of truth". Why a man should trouble himself to search for truth, and to use an instrument which he tells us is afflicted with an incurable fault, when he starts with truth in his hand, is one of those delightful contradictions which give life its savour. When the alchemist thought he had made the Red Tincture, by applying his intellectual activity to some aspects of experience, and yet failed to effect the great transmutation, he always blamed "the remaining aspects of

experience" which would insist on having their say in the work. Some aspects of experience, outside the intellect, had interfered with the workings of the intellect. Of course, the proper nature of truth had been transformed by this mischievous, meddling experience; and, of course, truth had perished. Nevertheless, the philosophic alchemist was not dismayed, for he knew that he held the truth; nor is the alchemical philosopher disheartened, for he can easily form another view which shall satisfy his strangely working intellect, and, therefore, be true.

As the older alchemist, when baffled in his endeavours to turn lead into gold, found rest and refreshment in visions of the Divine Water, the Carbuncle of the Sun, the Heavenly Phoenix; so the modern alchemist consoles himself for his failure to get any real knowledge about hard, sweet, white sugar, by floating on the timeless, changeless, ever-resting, ever-flowing stream of truth, until some untransmuted snag of experience knocks a hole in his frail craft.

The alchemist was happier than the philosopher. He never supposed that the instrument whereby he hoped to attain his heart's desire required correction. His instrument was *the truth* itself. If it did not work, the fault was in the hand that used it. Despite his protestations, the alchemical philosopher is never quite convinced of his ability to turn intellectual activity into a mechanical tool, nor of the complete reasonableness of treating human life as a series of mechanically locked doors which can be opened by his machine-made key.

I suppose he has suspicions, at times, that his attempt to treat the protean facts of life as mechanically threaded, lifeless beads, is, at bottom, profoundly comical. If an intellectualistic philosopher has any dim stirring within him of the sense of humour, he ought to cherish and encourage it. Some day, it may become his saviour. The alchemist's want of the sense of humour hastened the destruction of alchemy.

Intellectualistic philosophers and alchemists follow the same road. Both treat concepts as the great realities, and the realities of experience as transmutable appearances. Both start with a general view of things as they *must* be. But the philosophers go further than the alchemists. Cutting themselves off from human experience, they discover the apparent unreality of conceptual thinking; but they go boldly on, and find unity in the maximum diversity, and order in a very orgy of disorder. The alchemists used their concepts more humanly; because they were constantly in their laboratories, and there at least they could not escape the trammels

of experience. Their workshops obliged them to come back into experience. They stretched their concepts, and brought them nearer to being instruments for examining realities than the philosophers bring their imaginings. Nevertheless, the alchemical concepts differed radically from those used by men of science; they were treated as more real than sensible realities; they were explained by realities, instead of being used to explain sensible experiences.

The endeavour of students of the natural sciences is "to liken their imaginings to the facts which they observe". The alchemists worked hard in their laboratories, "sweating whole days and nights by their furnaces," as Paracelsus says, in order that they might observe facts which they could liken to their imaginings. The intellectualistic philosophers "diligently follow their labours" (to quote Paracelsus again) of likening their thoughts about unreal "relations of isolation and hostility" to their imaginings of an Ultimate Reality wherein all these relations "are affirmed and absorbed".

Men of science and humanists begin by carefully examining particular sensible experiences; passing to the examination of groups of sensible experiences, they formulate laws, frame hypotheses and theories, and use these as instruments for furthering their purpose, which is to gain knowledge about perceptual and conceptual experience. Alchemists began with a general view that satisfied their intellect; they examined those parts of particular sensible experiences, and of groups of these experiences, which their intellectual attitude selected as important, and used the results as an instrument for advancing their purpose, which was to strengthen their intellect-satisfying conception, and, by projecting that conception outside experience to find that "heavenly and spiritual pattern," whereof, they declared, "this natural world is only an image and material copy".

Philosophers of the absolutely intellectualistic school begin by declaring the worthlessness of sensible experiences, except as material which can be transmuted by the touch of their concept-made talisman, trans-empirical reality, into evidence of the abiding reality of the instrument which transmutes it. Each philosopher uses transmuted experience as a means for furthering his purpose, which is to escape from the illusions of sense, from what is "degraded in the scale of being," to restfulness in those aspects of truth which most strongly command themselves to his conception of The Truth, and give him a foundation whereon to construct a complete system which he substitutes for the complete systems of other philosophers.

From the monstrous height of Ultimate Reality, the philosopher looks down, with a fine scorn, at the "merely practical," the "irrelevant" truths of natural science, which give real men intense intellectual satisfaction, fill them with noble curiosity, will not suffer them to rest contented with the truths they have, make them rejoice that "man is hurled from change to change unceasingly, his soul's wings never furled," open paths that lead to wider truths, "do not affirm the limitation of knowledge as a bar to inquiry, but as a bar to finality," widen their imagination, stir their emotions, and enable them to control, to some extent, the relations between themselves and their environment.