

## WHY THE SENSES ARE FIRST OPENED

But for what end, it is asked, are the hinges of our life so completely inverted, that the last things should play the first part, or that the bodily senses should inaugurate the mind, their mistress, into the sciences? and why should we not see from the beginning, by thoroughly prepared and finished organs, with the utmost acuteness, the perfect truth in everything? Assuredly the Supreme Mind, under whose auspices we live, never puts the least cause in operation excepting for the sake of an end; the series of causes and effects involves a corresponding series of ends; ultimate uses themselves declare to us the end intended by the effect; the rest is hidden from our view. But since ends, as well as causes, describe progressively a certain entire revolution and circle, hence there are proximate ends, remote ends, and ultimate ends. It is evident from a rational view of effects, that the proximate ends are, *Firstly*: That we may inhabit the earth, the ultimate region of the world, or the floor of heaven, from which we are designed to emerge; and so may be subjects that can make use of all the plenty and the wealth with which that world and its three kingdoms are furnished and adorned; and that we may be essences and powers, that can convert these great possibilities to our own and the general weal. Therefore are we introduced, in the body first, into this world as a theatre, and its curtains rise by degrees; and thus these ultimate effects, like scenic shows, strike and fascinate with delight, our senses first, then the animal mind, and at last even the rational mind; and are a profit and use to us, mingled with sweet entertainment. Such could not have been the case had we commenced our lives with knowledge and wisdom; we should then have looked upon these shows as theatrical illusions, or laughing-stocks of our high faculties; we should have contemplated them, not as infants, but as aged fathers, with no pleasure of the senses. *Secondly*, that we may institute a kind of terrestrial society, in which these delights may increase by the communication of man with man, and in which the uses of things may be augmented by the aid of numbers, and those proper to the individual may go forth by determinate channels to the community. Then a still more extensive field of uses is opened, into which we are led as members of society; and which consists in living for the human race by the mutual interchange of works of duty. This is the moral field, world, or estate, into which we can-

not rise unless we have passed through the former, or through our corporeal and natural estate; this supplies the means to the moral estate as the end immediately above it: what results to the community from the administration of the means, is so far moral, as the intelligence and the will to which we attain, conspire to it. In order to the actual establishment of such a society, it is necessary that a diversity of manners should prevail, consequently a diversity of inclinations, affections, desires, ends, and principles; which could not possibly be brought to pass without an inverted state of life. *Thirdly*, that in this ultimate circle of nature, we may receive the wonders of the world, and as we ascend the steps and ladders of intelligence, receive still greater wonders, in all their significance, and with full vision; and that at length we may comprehend by faith those profound miracles that cannot be comprehended by the intellect: and from all these things, in the deep hush of awe and amazement, venerate and adore the omnipotence and providence of the Supreme Creator; and thus, in the contemplation of Him, regard as vanity everything that we leave behind us (*A.K.* II, n. 464).

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All new arts and sciences, at their first appearance on the world's theater, and all parts of such, require a new wardrobe of terms; only let them not be barbarous but as far as possible akin to those already in use (*A. K.* Pt. I, n. 201d).