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The Provision made by Mathematics for the Needs 
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Mathematics beyond the merest elements has been regarded by some as an 
excessive malady of the human spirit, generated like the pearl in an abnormal and 
morbid way and representing a non-living embedment in the active tissue of the or-
goism of society; by others it has been 
supposed to exhibit the highest intellectual 
reach of mankind, being in itself the most 
powerful tool yet devised for the interpre-
tation of natural phenomena, while at the 
same time it affords a satisfying expression 
of the farthest esthetic attainment. 
On the one hand, it is considered a piece of 
jugglery in which it is the joy of the pro-
ficient to produce more and more compli-
cated entanglements to astonish the be-
holder and overwhelm him with the sense of 
mystery; on the other hand, it is seen to 
be the systematic unfolding of remarkable 
and important properties of a highly fasci-
nating creation or construction of the hu-
man spirit by means of which it has at 
least once its most intellectual delight and the 
best means of understanding its environment. Some workers seem to resent the 
interference of mathematics with their com-
fort in the conclusions of descriptive sci-
ence and its demands that observation shall 
be reduced to measurable elements and the 
laws of nature be expressed in mathemat-
ical formulas; other thinkers believe that 
natural science is real science only in so 
far as it is mathematical, that it is only 
through mathematics that true science can

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