

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

KANT'S A PRIORI ELEMENTS OF THE UNDER-
STANDING AS CONDITIONS OF EXPERIENCE.

THE heart of the critical philosophy is now bare before us. In the progress of answering the general problem of the *Critique*, Kant has been compelled to analyze the constitution of knowledge and to vindicate its *a priori* factors. This transcendental deduction, "which had never even occurred to anyone else was the most difficult task ever undertaken in aid of metaphysic."¹ It must, therefore, be most carefully examined by anyone who would estimate the actual worth of Kant's philosophy. And by way of preparation for this critical evaluation of the transcendental deduction, it will be advantageous to reflect for a moment upon the historical and psychological conditions of the genesis of the problem of which the deduction is the solution.

For Kant, at least, the problem was absolutely inevitable. The development of his philosophic thought, as culminating in the *Critique*, has been fully described in the preceding articles. Here it is only necessary to recall that, even in the so-called empirical period, that development never escaped the embrace of rationalism, which was the plastic principle throughout. But the rationalism of the *Nova Dilucidatio* of 1775 differs from that of the *Dissertation* of 1770, and still more from that of the *Critique* of 1781. In general, the essence of rationalism consists in the dogma that reason can give us real knowledge without the