

and, secondly, because the two earlier forms of practical politics named above had first to be tried and found to be wanting before the last stage became possible or practical. The first remark leads him to a doctrine which holds an important position in his system, and which has, by some of his followers, been considered to rank as an important discovery. It is his classification or his doctrine of the "hierarchy of the sciences."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These quotations are all taken from the reprint of the earlier Tract (1822), in the Appendix to the fourth volume (p. 547 *sqq.*) of the 'System of Positive Polity, or Treatise on Sociology.' (Eng. transl., London, 1875-77.) The object which Comte had in view in reprinting a collection of his earlier Tracts was, as he says, "to demonstrate the perfect harmony which exists between my youthful efforts and my matured conceptions" (General Appendix, p. 1) ". . . when reproducing . . . the third Essay, published in May 1822, . . . in 1824, . . . I thought it right to add to its special title that of 'System of Positive Polity,'—a title premature indeed, but rightly indicating the scope of my labours" (p. 3). This is important as bearing upon the question to what extent Comte modified his philosophical creed in the latter part of his career. Two extreme views exist on this point, represented among others by Littré and Robinet, of whom the former discards everything that Comte published after the year 1842, whereas the latter considers the principal merit of Comte to consist in the foundation of a new religion, the Religion of Humanity. In spite of the extravagances of the later doctrine, which drew from Mill a strong condemnation, we are bound

to look upon Comte's last practical effort as a highly instructive object-lesson. He recognised the necessity of establishing some authority or spiritual power which should guarantee a moral control, superior to the intellectual and practical spheres of social and political life and work, and which should keep in order the Intellectuals as well as the Industrials. It is well to note that the spiritual power is vested in those who have been drawn from the intellectual class, and who, as is more fully explained in the 'Politique Positive,' have learnt from history that the altruistic feelings more exactly defined as attachment or sympathy, reverence and benevolence, are on the way of gradually conquering the egoistic or animal tendencies inherent in human nature. With this is also connected the emphasis laid by Comte upon education, which he nowhere limits to instruction, as was at that time very common in his country. We may also note that he does not believe that the higher grades of positive knowledge can ever become general, and we infer that among the Industrials he also classes the Proletariat or the masses, of whom Mill complains that he does not take sufficient note in his political scheme.