

in the progress of biological and philosophical thought since the time of Comte. The superior definiteness of conception also in the sciences capable of mathematical analysis is clearly pointed out by Comte, though he suggestively refuses to identify definiteness with certainty of knowledge: a difference which has since been more clearly brought out.

Further, in dwelling upon the necessity of getting hold of the natural co-ordination of biological as well as political phenomena through observation rather than by submitting them to mathematical analysis, he has anticipated the more recent reaction against the purely atomising tendency of thought. To this, which reigned supreme, notably in French science, under the influence of the school of Laplace, he opposes, or rather adds, the *esprit d'ensemble* as indicative of the right line of reasoning in the biological and social sciences. Laplace, as before him Condorcet, fancied he had found in the calculus of probabilities a valuable instrument for dealing, *inter alia*, with social phenomena. Whilst he condemns this we must note that Comte adopts and perpetuates Montesquieu's identification of the laws of nature with those of society, and that he commends Condorcet for his attempt to foretell the march of civilisation and give a picture of the future, and this in spite of his contention that it is impossible to give a definition of goodness.

Thinkers who belong to a different school consider that incalculable harm has been done by obliterating the essential difference that exists between natural laws as mere statements of existing actual regularities, and