

writings than that with which we are at present occupied: the cluster of sciences which from various points of view had approached the social problem in the larger sense of the word. Merely to enumerate them would be to give a long catalogue; for we have not only the various biological researches which deal in one way or another with man and humanity; we have likewise psychology, the science of language, the history of culture and civilisation, and on another side economics, jurisprudence, the science of religion and theology. As from one point of view we may maintain that all these various researches have, during the last fifty years, co-operated in laying the foundation for a philosophy of society, so we may, on the other hand, hold that this combined service has been amply repaid by the reaction of social interests and studies upon these different researches themselves. I can here merely attempt to point out a few general ideas or tendencies of thought which have during this period gained the upper hand, dispelling earlier lines of reasoning or imparting to them new life and vigour.

The first, and perhaps the most important, among these more recent conceptions, is what we may term the biological view of society. This dates back to the founder of sociology, Auguste Comte himself. But the biological conceptions at his disposal were crude compared with those which stood at the disposal of Darwin or were introduced by him. Nor did Comte show much sagacity in appreciating the enormous progress which biology made during his lifetime. And it is probably owing largely to this fact, pointed out, *e.g.*,