Before Darwin various important biological ideas and discoveries connected with the names of Oken, Schleiden, Schwann, Kölliker, Milne-Edwards, and others had completely revolutionised the earlier biology of Bichat; but there remained the perplexing problem of the different types or classes in the living creation and their origin. Darwin not only solved this by his idea of natural selection, but through it brought natural things and events into connection with each other in a way which had not been attempted before. This broadening of the basis of research was increased by the study of environment. Thus individual things and events were brought together and connected both in their temporal and spatial existence. No idea could be a more suitable example of Comte's *esprit d'ensemble* nor more welcome to the student of society, who had before that been troubled how to find the transition from the individual to the social unit. Accordingly we find a whole school taking up with more hope of success the idea, familiar already to Comte, that society is an organism, and we have the counterpart of this idea in Virchow's conception of the animal organism as a society of cells.

62. Society as an Organism.

No thinker has done more to urge this analogy between the individual animal organism and society as the collective organism than Spencer himself,[1] whose earlier

[1] An elaborate and very interesting exposition and criticism of this portion of Spencer's Sociology will be found in Dr Barth's work, pp. 100-115. In following up the rudiments laid down by Comte for a methodical study of social phenomena Dr Barth deals first with what he terms the classifying sociology represented in Comte's system by the hierarchical principle in the development of the sciences, and then proceeds to show how the other side of Comte's sociology, the biological conception of Society, was taken up and further developed. But he significantly remarks that Spencer, the most prominent