

terial means a constant risk of mistaking metaphors for scientific laws. To adapt a phrase of Bacon's, we might say that the conception of evolution which is adequate in the biological sphere, is nevertheless *subtilitati rerum humanarum longe impar*,—“no match for the subtility of human history.”*

(a) In looking to biology for hints as to the factors in social evolution, it is necessary to bear in mind the present security of biological conclusions on the problem of evolution (see Chap. XI), and the fact that the biologist has himself often followed the clue suggested by social processes. There is no small risk of a lamentably vicious circle. We would suggest that sociologists should, as far as possible focus their attention rather on the animal *social-group* (the herd, the flock, the bee-hive, the ant-hill, the beaver-village, the rookery) than on the individual organism, for in the latter case the analogy is more remote, and therefore more apt to be illusive. It should be evident that there is no strict analogy between struggle in non-social species and the competition of social groups. Among individual men it is, indeed, easy to find analogues of what occurs among animals, e.g., in the struggle with climate or with Bacteria; but in the distinctively social struggle it is a case of an organisation against another organisation, and physical victory over the component individual may mean victory for the organisation (as expressed in ideas) of the defeated.

Furthermore, in using the selection-formula, we must be careful to bear in mind that the selection in a progressive society is in part conscious, deliberate, and rational. Selection determined by

* *Social Evolution*, Internat. Journal Ethics, vi. (1896), p. 66.