

INTRODUCTION.

EUTHYPHRO.

THIS Dialogue is very closely connected with the trial and condemnation of Socrates himself. Socrates meets Euthyphro, and tells him that he is threatened with an indictment as an innovator in religion, and as corrupting the youth of Athens. On hearing from Euthyphro that he too is involved in legal business, he inquires further, and learns that he is about to prosecute his father for murder, being convinced that piety requires this at his hands. Socrates naturally assumes that the duties of piety, and its nature, are fully known to such a man; and Euthyphro acknowledges that they are. Socrates begs Euthyphro to instruct him, in order that he may appease his antagonist, and escape the threatened trial.

Euthyphro agrees readily enough, and states his views without hesitation or misgiving. The remainder of the Dialogue is an admirable example of the system of question and answer by which Socrates tested unsound opinions. Euthyphro tries statement after statement, but he has no power of argument, and is easily led on to contradict himself. Socrates, as usual, leaves the question unsolved. He raises difficulties but does not find an answer. 'His talent', as Mr Grote observes, 'consists in exposing bad definitions, not in providing good ones. This negative