

of the wide survival of primitive corpse-worship down to our own times in civilised Europe. I could largely increase this rapid list of what I believe to be the new contributions here made to the philosophy of religious evolution ; but I purposely refrain. I think it will be allowed that if even a few of these ideas turn out on examination to be both new and true, my book will have succeeded in justifying its existence.

I put forth this work with the utmost diffidence. The harvest is vast and the labourers are few. I have been engaged upon collecting and comparing materials for more than twenty years. I have been engaged in writing my book for more than ten. As I explain in the last chapter, the present first sketch of the conclusions at which I have at last arrived is little more than provisional. I desire in my present essay merely to lay down the lines of the general theory which after so many years of study I incline to accept. If my attempt succeeds in attracting public attention, I hope to follow it up by several other volumes in which the main opinions or suggestions here set forth may be reinforced and expanded by copious collections of evidence and illustrations. If it fails to arouse public attention, however, I must perforce be satisfied with this very inadequate preliminary statement. I should also like to add here, what I point out at greater length in the body of the work, that I do not hold dogmatically to all or to a single one of the ideas I have now expressed. They are merely conceptions forced upon my mind by the present state of the evidence ; and I recognise the fact that in so vast and varied a province, where almost encyclopædic knowledge would be necessary in order to enable one to reach a decided conclusion, every single one or all together of these conceptions are liable to be upset by further research. I merely say, "This is how

been propounded by Mr. Flinders Petrie in an article on "Eaten with Honour," in which he reviews briefly the evidence for the custom in Egypt and elsewhere.