

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

lem, and seek to answer the question as to how nearly we have approached that solution at the present day. What stage in the attainment of truth have we actually arrived at in this closing year of the nineteenth century? What progress have we really made during its course towards that immeasurably distant goal?

The answer which I give to these great questions must, naturally, be merely subjective and only partly correct; for my knowledge of nature and my ability to interpret its objective reality are limited, as are those of every man. The one point that I can claim for it, and which, indeed, I must ask of my strongest opponents, is that my Monistic Philosophy is sincere from beginning to end—it is the complete expression of the conviction that has come to me, after many years of ardent research into Nature and unceasing reflection, as to the true basis of its phenomena. For fully half a century has my mind's work proceeded, and I now, in my sixty-sixth year, may venture to claim that it is mature; I am fully convinced that this "ripe fruit" of the tree of knowledge will receive no important addition and suffer no substantial modification during the brief spell of life that remains to me.

I presented all the essential and distinctive elements of my monistic and genetic philosophy thirty-three years ago, in my *General Morphology of Organisms*, a large and laborious work, which has had but a limited circulation. It was the first attempt to apply in detail the newly established theory of evolution to the whole science of organic forms. In order to secure the acceptance of at least one part of the new thought which it contained, and to kindle a wider interest in the greatest advancement of knowledge that our century has witnessed, I published my *Natural History of Creation*