

PREFACE.

its use as a mode of expression, and, with scrupulous regard to the best usage and custom, to offer some contributions to our Canadian literature.

Those who are at all acquainted with the rules governing and limiting the composing of sonnets, cannot but appreciate the labor and talents expended in the writing and preparation for publication of this attractive booklet. "The number of ill-written books," writes Lord Bacon, "is not to be diminished by ceasing to write, but by writing others which, like Aaron's serpent, shall swallow up the spurious." The author has aimed at that kind and degree of originality which are to be commended in a work of this kind; he has borrowed no more from others than did the most gifted and popular of his predecessors. The art of writing sonnets approvingly may only be achieved after long and serious practice. It is an art that can no more be acquired without practice than that of the orator or the successful public reader.

Circumstances and an aptitude for the difficult having favored this bent of his genius, our author has voluntarily pursued the writing of sonnets with an assiduity which few may imitate and none surpass. Yet, he who devotes himself to the writing of sonnets cannot, in this age of commercialism, aspire to high praise nor stipulate for a large reward. However, the approving decision of those best qualified to judge of the inspirations of genius tenders him an adequate motive for his diligence and application.

Ambitious of making not a large but an acceptable book, the author has compressed into a hundred pages a few selections from a mass of material from which