

PREFACE

DO not propose to introduce this little book with elaborate remarks on what I conceive to be its merits or defects. That task, I am quite willing to leave where it belongs, in more competent hands.

Neither shall I say anything of my hopes or fears concerning the treatment it may receive, should it ever come to the dignity of formal criticism. The usual comment on that head, prefixed to works of this nature, is always insipid, often unnecessary and sometimes worse than useless.

Every writer of verse, who deems his performances worthy of public regard, is justly supposed to put into them his best effort. They go forth to speak for themselves, in such spirit and voice as he has been able to throw them with. If they are found, by a fair audience, hopelessly dull or insufferably harsh, no preliminary flourish in prose can rescue them from that limbo which early swallows an enormous mass of futile literature.

Let me observe, however, in justice both to myself and to those who may honor with perusal the following collection, that it was too hastily prepared for publication to be free from certain faults, which would have been avoided had circumstances permitted me to bestow more care upon it. The pieces it contains, many of them the productions of extreme youth, had long lain in forgotten