

PREFACE.

The following poems will form portion of a volume soon to appear in England. I publish them here because they are Canadian in inspiration and aim, and though I am assured on all hands that criticism is in a low state amongst us, and that the market for native literary productions is small in Canada, I think it would be an insult to the Canadian people were I to publish the following poems first in another country.

My object in writing the principal one—"Eos—A Prairie Dream"—was to strike a true and high note in Canadian politics and literature, a note above and beyond anything to be found in or beneath the din of party life. When I conceived the idea of treating the myth of Eos and mingling the classical and the modern, my first question was—Can such a theme be treated artistically? Whether I have answered this in the affirmative it will be for the critics to judge. While seeking to make the poem a work of art, I aimed at indicating directly and allegorically what is our true position in Canada at this hour, and whence for whatever is discouraging in the present situation redemption must come. It was a prince who more than a generation ago said Parliamentary Government was on its trial. This is to-day by a man who wears the name and honours of the author of the reform bill. No man who was not a base flatterer—and he only when addressing on a hustings—would say the electors are using their power well. As dark as things are and gloomy as is the outlook, I have faith in free institutions, for these reasons:—I see the course of history has been one of progress and I believe "there is a hand that guides." The spark from a torch has set a whole forest in a blaze, and a few minds kindled by the true