

## PREFACE.

---

"Virtus nemo sine nascitur : optimus ille  
Qui minimis urgetur."

HOR. I Sat. ii, 68.

"We have all our vices and the best  
is he who with the fewest is opprest."

FRANCIS.

HERE I am again, gentle reader (at least I trust that you will be gentle), standing upon the threshold of public opinion, with my little essay in hand, like another *Linkum Fidelis*, without any of the stoical indifference of that gentleman in black, awaiting, like a pendulum between a hope and a fear, the decision of the aggregate of intelligent criticism. For moral support, however, I lean, more or less, upon the above citation from the author of the "*Ars poetica*," which means, in effect, that no one is perfect—hence I say "let him who is free from sin throw the first stone." I don't mean by this to escape legitimate criticism: but, all I ask is, that if there be anything in this little poetic effusion to redeem it from condemnation, let it be taken into consideration with as much generosity as its faults may be mercilessly chastised.

I may be permitted to say that there are always a few, who make it a studied point to search for nothing but faults in their neighbours, and, consequently, are very apt to throw the doubt, which should be in my favour, against me.