



Noble L. Prentiss

A HISTORY OF KANSAS.

BY
NOBLE L. PRENTISS.

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HISTORY is a revelation, not a recital. It is more than a random record of facts, for facts are not derelicts floating hither and thither on an unknown sea. They are light-houses for the enlightenment and guidance of intelligent voyagers. And he who throws facts together as one throws dice is not a historian—he is a juggler in events, for so great an authority as Macaulay has said that "facts are the mere dross of history." "History is a divine poem," said President Garfield, "in which every nation is a canto and every man a word." Only those, therefore, who regard facts as milestones on the road or progress are capable of writing history. "The historian," said Schlegel, "is a prophet looking backwards."

Noble L. Prentis was such a seer. He gathered facts, not as a child gathers trinkets, but as a scientist gathers data. He saw significance, purpose, design, in events. He was an interpreter as well as collator of facts, and this work which bears his name has soul in it as well as facts in it—without which an alleged history is not worth the reading.

I knew this divinely gifted man intimately. A great soul was he. He was, perhaps, the most popular and prolific writer who ever touched pen to paper in this State. No subject was commonplace under the magic of his facile and versatile pen. His prodigious memory was a storehouse of history, and his analytical mind and great soul enabled him to place proper value upon occurrences, and to preserve in this concrete form the salient and essential facts in the evolution of the State. Into this garner a great and good man has put the ripened harvest of life rich in experience, in knowledge and in wisdom, and left it as a dower of wealth to the schools of Kansas.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, May 1-'05,

E. W. HOCH.