

**FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH,
SELECTIONS FROM THE
POEMS OF MRS. WILLIAM
LAWSON, (M. J. K. L.)**

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Frankincense and Myrrh, Selections from the Poems of Mrs. William Lawson, (M. J. K. L.) by
William Lawson & Harry Piers

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WILLIAM LAWSON & HARRY PIERS

**FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH,
SELECTIONS FROM THE
POEMS OF MRS. WILLIAM
LAWSON, (M. J. K. L.)**



Lawson, Mary Jane (Katzmann)

FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH,

SELECTIONS FROM THE POEMS

OF THE LATE

MRS. WILLIAM LAWSON, (M. J. K. L.)

SELECTED AND EDITED BY

HARRY PIERS AND CONSTANCE FAIRBANKS.

"I lay before your feet
My gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, gifts that are bitter-sweet.
Their bitterness is all mine own, from memory's leaves distilled,
With the full sweetness of the draught your cup of life be filled!"
M. J. K. L.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE following verses are published in compliance with the wish of many friends, as a loving memorial of Mary Lawson, who during her lifetime won for herself the affection and respect of all who knew her. The present generation needs no such memento to keep her memory green, but in after years the little volume may serve to perpetuate the remembrance of one whose ability, usefulness, influence, and poetic talent were always employed on the side of those things which are "pure, honest, and of good report." The collection is laid before the public without a demand for recognition, and the critic is left unchallenged. It may be that the poems will not appeal to all, but there are doubtless those to whom this native frankincense will have a sweet savour, and who will, through the grace of sympathizing natures, find therein some of that loving kindness with which the author was imbued. For such, and such alone, this volume is intended.

Owing to the limitations of the book, a few poems have necessarily been omitted, which would otherwise have appeared.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MARY JANE KATZMANN, the second daughter of Christian Conrad Katzmann and Martha Prescott, was born at "Maroon Hall," Preston, about five miles from Dartmouth, N. S. Her father, who was a native of Hanover, came to Nova Scotia with H. M. 60th Regiment, or King's German Legion, in which he was a Lieutenant. When he left the regiment about 1822 he settled in Preston, where he resided until his death on 15th December, 1843. Her mother was a Nova Scotian, a granddaughter of Dr. Jonathan Prescott, of Massachusetts, who came to Nova Scotia and settled there with other New England Loyalists. Through him the family claims relationship with the historian Prescott.

From a very early age, Mary Katzmann showed unusual intelligence and signs of that love for literature which always characterized her. She could read at the age of three, and from that time devoured eagerly the limited number of books which were at her disposal in Maroon Hall. Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* and *Chambers's Journal* were her especial favourites. Owing to the remoteness of the country district in which she lived, educational advantages were few; and, save for the help given by her own family, she was almost entirely self-taught. Her quickness of perception and wonderful memory no doubt compensated to a great extent for the lack of other advantages.

As she advanced in years, she published short poems from time to time, and afterwards became a regular contributor to various periodicals and newspapers, including the *Colonist*, the *Record*, and the *Guardian*. For two years she edited the *Provincial Magazine*, one of the earliest of its kind published in Halifax. For this she wrote "Tales of our

Village,"—sketches of the early history of Dartmouth and Preston interwoven with local traditions. She invariably signed all she wrote with her initials, M. J. K., and by this sobriquet became well known to all her friends.

She was married in 1869 to William Lawson, Esq., of Halifax, in which town she was then living. After her marriage, her time was largely given to work among the poor, and to social and benevolent schemes, particularly those connected with the Church of England, of which she was a devoted member. She preserved to the end of her life that love for literary work which she had early displayed, and any event of interest in the community was sure to call forth sympathetic lines which were now signed with the initials M. J. K. L. In 1887, she obtained the Akins Historical Prize of King's College, Windsor, for her *History of the Townships of Dartmouth, Preston, and Lawrencetown*, which shall come from the press immediately. She died at Halifax, on Sunday, 23rd March, 1890, after several weeks of painful illness, leaving one child, a daughter.

She was a most valuable friend, ready always with sympathy and practical help in time of trouble, and grudging neither time nor strength when needed. The following remarks, made, after her death, at a meeting of the Church-women's Missionary Association in Halifax, well express the loving appreciation of her many friends:—

"She was so quick to please, so courageous to execute, so full of expedients, and so undaunted in difficulties, that we all naturally looked to her for guidance when our way seemed dark and our plans threatened with failure; and we never looked in vain. While full health was granted to her, she never tired in doing with all her might all the good which her busy hands found to do; and even in the days of waning strength, her willing spirit seemed to conquer bodily weakness, and up to the last she worked with an energy that astonished all who knew how greatly illness had undermined her bodily force. By her death many a poor member of the church has lost an open handed friend, many a sick member will miss a loving comforter, and many a good work be deprived of powerful support."