

**THE COLLECTED POEMS  
OF ISABELLA  
VALANCY CRAWFORD.  
[TORONTO-1905]**

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The Collected Poems of Isabella Valancy Crawford. [Toronto-1905] by Isabella Valancy Crawford & J. W. Garvin & Ethelwyn Wetherald

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W. GARVIN & ETHELWYN WETHERALD**

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ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD

**The Collected Poems**  
*of*  
**Isabella Valancy Crawford**

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Edited by  
**J. W. GARVIN, B.A.**



With Introduction by  
**ETHELWYN WETHERALD**  
Author of "The House of the Trees,"  
"Tangled in Stars," "The Radiant Road,"  
etc., etc.



TORONTO  
**WILLIAM BRIGGS**  
1905

## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR.

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A GREAT poet dwelt among us and we scarce knew her. Hers was a master muse which illumined with imagination, emotion and originality the noblest and most profound thoughts of her time, and wove them with the skill of an artist into divine melodies.

Isabella Valancy Crawford had barely completed her thirty-sixth year when she suddenly and prematurely passed away, yet the spirit of her brilliant genius must ever remain.

The more we study these children of her brain the more we marvel at what she accomplished. What other poem in the language more powerfully and nobly expresses the divine right of man to freedom from slavery than "The Helot"? What other dialect poem surpasses in conception, in humour, and in heart-reaching philosophy, "Old Spookses' Pass"? What other epic of its kind excels "Malcolm's Katie" in picturesque description, in brave-hearted purpose, and in tender, constant passion? What other Canadian patriotic poem exceeds in nobility and grandeur of expression "Canada to England"? As for Miss Crawford's shorter rhyming verse, such poems as "Love's Forget-me-not," "Said

### A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

the Daisy," "A Harvest Song," "A Perfect Strain," "The Rose," "The King's Kiss," "The Rose of a Nation's Thanks," "Fairy Toil," "The Camp of Souls," "The City Tree," "Said the Skylark," etc., are exquisitely beautiful.

This volume contains eighty-six poems of superior merit, of which fifty-two appear for the first time in book form; the remainder appeared originally in a collection entitled "Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems," published by James Bain & Son, Toronto, in 1884. This unassuming volume, issued at the author's special request in cheap paper covers, attracted but little general interest, and, strange as it seems in view of the worth of its contents, had so meagre a sale as to entail financial loss. And yet the unpretentious little book won praise in high quarters. The London *Athenæum* compared certain of the poems with the work of standard English poets; the *Spectator* referred to Miss Crawford's blank verse as "indeed of no ordinary kind—vigorous, powerful"; the *Illustrated London News* described her verse as "abounding in noble sentiments, picturesque narration, glowing language and pathetic touches, combined with simple, impressive dignity"; the *Graphic* declared the humorous poems "equal to anything Colonel Hay had ever published," and characterized the book as "throughout a delightful one." Lord Dufferin's kindly tribute, in a letter written from the British Embassy at Constantinople, is reproduced in facsimile in the present volume.



## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Miss Crawford preserved few of her poetic compositions in the original manuscript. Most of the poems in this volume, other than those printed in the early collection, were preserved in the form of clippings from the newspapers in which they originally appeared, and with few corrections, even of obvious errors, by the author's hand. Some of the finest poems herein contained, such as "The Rose of a Nation's Thanks," "Peace," "His Clay," "The Rose," "Fairy Toil," and "The Christmas Baby," were discovered in files of the Toronto *Evening Telegram* of the years 1884 to 1887.

The task of collecting and editing the poems of this gifted Canadian singer was undertaken with the desire that her work should be given that place in literature to which, by its high merit, it is amply entitled. While the Editor has sought throughout to present the poems as he conceived their author intended—his principal labour being to correct the errors of the printers in punctuation, etc.—he is profoundly conscious that much would have been gained had she herself lived to revise them.

For the convenience of the reader, the contents have been divided into four books, the first containing forty-seven shorter and simpler poems of rarely beautiful quality; the second, fifteen poems of greater length and stronger fibre; the third, fifteen poems in blank verse of remarkable range, power and originality; and the fourth, nine poems of dialect verse—philosophic, humorous and pathetic. Throughout, the poetry is characterized by vital strength and splendid spontaneity.

### A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Miss Crawford left behind her much manuscript in prose (fiction), which may be published subsequently in book form.

Miss Wetherald, whose Introduction is worthy of her distinguished reputation, has referred to Miss Crawford as "Canada's first woman poet." This tribute and a careful study of her verse suggest the inquiry whether she may not with equal truth be called the first poet of Canada.

To Mrs. Charles J. Stuart, of Toronto, with whom Miss Crawford and her mother spent the closing years of their lives, and to Mr. Stephen Walter Crawford, the surviving brother, the Editor is much indebted for interesting information concerning the poet and her work.

*J. W. Garvin*

PETERSBOROUGH, ONTARIO,  
November, 1905.

FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM LORD DUFFERIN.

British Embassy.  
Constantinople  
June 21: '84

My dear Miss Crawford

It is really too good  
of you to have thought  
of sending me your  
book. It has just  
arrived, and I have  
already read several  
of the beautiful poems  
it contains with very  
great pleasure. Yours,