

## INTRODUCTION

cern itself with is the value of the poetic work put forth—but the age of miracles is past.

Let us to the work of this divinely dowered Isabella—this angelic mendicant, craving nothing of life but its finer gifts—this blessed gypsy of Canadian woods and streams. What a royal life she led! No pose to take, no reputation to sustain, no poetic attitudes studied from those of other poets, no tendency to routine thinking or lassitude of the imaginative faculty to be struggled with, no half-penny worth of sack to an intolerable deal of bread, not a single syllable outbreathing the “vulgar luxury of despair.” Happy, happy poet! She, like every other genius, found in the ecstasy of expression at the full height of her nature a compensation that turned all outward trials into details not worth speaking of.

The high gifts of her spirit are of the quality which thrive best when strongly separated from “the forms and shows of worldly respectabilities.” She is purely a genius, not a craftswoman, and a genius who has patience enough to be an artist. She has in abundant measure that power of youth which persists in poets of every age—that capacity of seeing things for the first time, and with the rose and pearl of dawn upon them—and, as a part of this endowment, the poet’s essential lightheartedness and good sense. Perhaps the most satisfying allurements in her poetry is its directness. It is as if she spoke to us face to face, and we gain the instant impression of a vigorous and striking personality, arresting our attention and “crying into us with a mighty directness and distinctness, in words that could not be more forcibly ordered,” the athletic imagery that crowded her brain.

In “Old Spookses’ Pass” her grasp on character and situation is passionately firm and strong. The verses are