

# Crawford, Davin, and Riel: Text and Intertext in *Hugh and Ion*

by Robert Alan Burns

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Renata R. Mautner Wasserman has commented recently that intertextuality occurs "when literary texts connect with other literary texts, with nonliterary texts, and with broadly conceived cultural contexts." Wasserman continues by pointing out that intertextuality "can be conscious, as a text parodies, imitates, or improves on another, or unconscious, as a text . . . develops in a context that its will or even its keenest analytic faculty cannot touch" (460). Wasserman's remarks provide a helpful framework within which to examine the intertextual character of Isabella Valancy Crawford's texts, which are often consciously parodic, subverting not only the texts she parodies, but also the cultural paradigms they evoke and, by evoking, presumably validate.

An excellent and amusing example of Crawford's skill in parody—with what might be characterized as mildly subversive effect—is her precise parody of a poetic attack by Tennyson on Gladstone for falsely attributing unreadiness to the British fleet as an excuse to avoid war with Russia. Crawford's parody, "To Gladstone," appeared in the Toronto *Evening Telegram* on 4 May 1885, eleven days after Tennyson's original, "The Fleet—On Its Reported Inefficiency," had been printed in the *Evening Telegram* and the London (England) *Times*.<sup>1</sup> Crawford, who despised war and strongly supported Gladstone's attempts to bring peace and self-rule to England's colonial possessions, used the exact form of the poet laureate's "war ode"—including all but one of his rhymes—to "talk back" to Tennyson, countering his attack on Gladstone with praise and support for the G.O.M.<sup>2</sup>

Only recently has critical opinion begun to shift away from the sentimental sexist view of Crawford as a shy, retiring, unconscious genius toward recognition of the incisively ironic critical intelligence revealed in an expanded examination of her texts (Relke 51). Among the critical approaches that have been particularly productive in assessing Crawford's accomplishment has been and continues to be the examination of intertextuality, especially the conscious manipulation of literary and nonliterary intertexts, in her writing.

For over 85 years discussions of Crawford's "sources" have focused on "Malcolm's Katie" and its literary forebears, primarily the works of Tennyson, Longfellow, and, more recently, the Brownings (Bentley, "Introduction" xii-xxii, xliii-xlvii; Burns, "Crawford" 1, 28; Campbell 25; Warkentin 22-23).<sup>3</sup> This persistence of scholarly and critical attention to a narrow range of predominantly literary intertexts in a small portion of Crawford's canon represents a two-fold failure on the part of her critics: first, a failure to recognize the intertextual richness and variety in the bulk of her work; second, a failure to examine her deep engagement with the political, economic, philosophical and religious currents of her time as reflected in her unrelenting wide-ranging examination of the social, political, and economic issues of the 1880s (Burns, "The Poet" 51).

Nonliterary intertexts inform the narrative segments of the fragmentary long poem published in 1977 under the title *Hugh and Ion*, the text of which examines the effects of oppression resulting from the ruthless expansion of commerce and industry in nineteenth-century North America. On the surface, *Hugh and Ion* seems to present a more equivocal view of the world than that reflected in "Malcolm's Katie," and this apparent divergence has led critics such as Catherine Ross and James Johnson to conclude that *Hugh and Ion*, together with poems such as "The Pessimist," represent the late emergence of a sense of futility and despair in Crawford's poetry (Johnson 56; Ross 107-108). While there is no question as to Crawford's deep involvement

with the theme of despair, there is no reliable evidence to support the view that "Malcolm' s Katie" and *Hugh and Ion* are the respective productions of Crawford' s optimistic youth and disillusioned maturity. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that "Malcolm' s Katie" was finished *after* October 1883, less than two months before the publication of "The Dark Stag," one of the lyrics later incorporated into the text of *Hugh and Ion* (Burns, "Crawford" 6). It is likely, then, that both "Malcolm' s Katie" and *Hugh and Ion* are productions of Crawford' s maturity, and the seemingly more "troubled" quality of *Hugh and Ion* may be attributed to structural differences rather than thematic variance between the poems.

As several critics have noted, "Malcolm' s Katie" seems to be articulated simultaneously on the levels of a surface text and a contradictory subtext, presented through the juxtaposition of countervailing elements (Bentley, "Letters" 454; Burns, "Crawford" 5; Daniells 424). The surface text takes the form of what several of Crawford' s modernist critics characterize as a highly improbable popular romance, the absurdity of which is heightened by contrast with the bleak and compelling subtext of the poem. *Hugh and Ion* may seem more stark than "Malcolm' s Katie" because in her last long poem Crawford abandons the device of the illusory surface-plot to foreground the textual opposition of hope and despair in a continuing debate, providing a dialectical structure to elaborate thematic foci in the poem. The evidence strongly suggests not only that Crawford completed "Malcolm' s Katie" after October 1883, but also that she was working on *Hugh and Ion* in November 1885, for the narrative sequences of the unfinished poem indicate familiarity with material published in Toronto newspapers, notably the *Globe*, between late May and 16 November 1885, the period spanning the surrender, incarceration, trial, and execution of Louis Riel.

Crawford' s only known reference to Riel by name occurs in a parodic fragment to be found among her papers in the Lorne Pierce Collection. The main subject of this lampoon is Nicholas Flood Davin, a colorful, Conservative politician and author of a long narrative poem called *Eos: A Prairie Dream*, dedicated to Lady MacDonald and published in Ottawa in 1884, the year *Old Spookses' Pass* was published. Like Crawford, Davin was an Irish immigrant, but the flamboyant poet-politician had been born a Roman Catholic. Orphaned as a child, he had been converted to the Anglican Church by Protestant foster parents. Davin grew to maturity in Britain, gaining education and experience in journalism and law (Koester 37). In 1872, when he was 32, he emigrated to Toronto and went to work as an editorial writer, first at the *Globe* and then at the *Mail*. He must have felt more at home politically in the latter position (Lyne v). A popular orator, Davin later dazzled the Canadian public with his brilliant courtroom defence of George Brown' s assassin (Koester 43-51). It is unlikely that Crawford had an opportunity to meet Davin, as he had not yet associated himself with the *Mail* during the time that her poems were appearing in that paper. Nevertheless, Crawford knew of Davin, both as a poet and as a politician, and she may have followed his career closely, for there is evidence from her text that she was aware of his move to Regina to publish the *Regina Leader*, his subsequent appointment to a government post that kept him away from Regina in 1884, and his hasty return to the prairies in 1885 to cover the Northwest Rebellion for the *Leader* (Koester 7). Crawford may also have been aware of Davin' s self-appointed role as champion of the immigrant Irish, a calling that was probably undertaken to counteract the notorious anti-Irish prejudice promulgated by men such as Goldwin Smith (Windsor 254).

In *Eos: A Prairie Dream*, Davin' s persona is pictured sleeping on the open prairie—apparently oversleeping—under "a sunny sky of blue":

. . . I slept

And dreamt the goddess bent above me there  
On a wide treeless plain, and made my heart  
Distend with dumb, bewildering, dreadful joy;  
Near mine the snowy forehead isled in gold,  
Near mine the eyes of blue, ineffable, sweet,  
And on my mouth the dewy rose of hers.  
She rose and bared her milk-white arm, and drew  
Me near her; then there flash' d a blinding light . . .

After having received this explosive kiss, the speaker rises to circumnavigate the globe in the blazing chariot of his new companion. The remainder of the poem catalogues their journey.

Crawford's parody is apparently written as a sequel to *Eos*, employing two narrators, an anonymous speaker and the goddess herself, to dramatize Davin's return to the prairies in 1885. *Eos*, who speaks to Davin in an Irish brogue, notices "the bald bard" snoozing again in the buffalo grass:

I marvel much what lur' d the bald bard back  
 From the "at homes" of dear old Lady Mack  
 I' ll down and see—she wheel' d her steeds of flame  
 And, rose bespatter' d, o' er the prairie came  
 She stooped (' twas blushing Davin told me this)  
 And wak' d the bard from slumber with a kiss  
 And saw in leaning down  
 Her eyes like stars shine in his polish' d crown  
 Now, Davin be aisy, my bald headed daisy  
 Don' t thrimble an' stare in commotion  
 My darlin' , my elf, shure ' tis Eos herself  
 Just dhrippin' from out of the ocean  
 Mywourneen, ' tis swate ' tis to leather the metis  
 To riddle ould Riel wid bullets  
 To chase Crowfoot and crees as if they wor flees  
 An' shoot down the rebels like pullets.  
 It shackles me heart, an' it makes me soul smart  
 To see ye laid out on the prairie....

(LPC)

Here, the fragment breaks off. It seems unlikely that Crawford seriously considered publishing so libellous a broadside, and so one must ask why a poet who wrote in order to eat would waste precious time assailing such an obviously mediocre poetic talent as Davin's. Perhaps she wrote to vent justifiable resentment at the apparent ease with which Davin, a male journalist among male publishers and printers, was able to publish his obviously inferior work in an attractive format free of the sort of printer's errors that appeared on nearly every page of *Old Spookses' Pass*. Whatever the reason, the fragment illustrates the poet's contempt for Davin and Lady Macdonald, both of whom were political conservatives. Crawford's interest in Davin may have motivated her to follow his colorful accounts of Riel's rebellion, trial and execution, which were reprinted from the *Leader* in newspapers throughout the Dominion. It was Davin who, after having gained entrance to the condemned cell disguised as a French priest, interviewed Riel on the night before his execution. In the resulting news feature, Davin described Riel as a "genius manqu" (Koester 67).

Crawford's comic treatment of Riel indicates that at the time the text was drafted, she probably did not take the rebellion very seriously and that initially her contempt for Davin may have extended to the rebels. That she was not particularly well-informed about the rebellion at this time is suggested by her ignorance that Crowfoot was neutral during the insurgence and that he was a Blackfeet leader, not a Cree. It should be remembered, however, that it is *Eos*, not Crawford's persona, who derides Riel, the Métis, and the Native peoples. Moreover, as F.W. Watt has suggested, *Eos* acts as an apologist for Macdonald in Davin's text (22-23), and so Crawford's parodic text is consistent with Davin's original in its use of the goddess as a Conservative mouthpiece, an effect that seems intentionally trivialized by Crawford's stereotyped stage-Irish characterization of *Eos*.

Whatever Crawford's initial view of Riel and the Northwest Rebellion may have been, it seems clear that by the time of Riel's execution, her attitude, as reflected directly in the

poem "All Men Are Born Free And Equal" and indirectly in *Hugh and Ion*, had changed to sympathy for the man if not for his cause (Burns, "The Poet" 52).<sup>4</sup> If Crawford's manuscript fragment parodying Davin's poem may be said to reflect the popular Upper Canadian opinion of Riel, it may be argued that the more sympathetic treatment of the condemned criminal in "All Men Are Born Free and Equal" diverges toward French-Canadian sentiment as it emerged following Riel's execution. The disparity between these extremes strongly suggests a change of viewpoint in Crawford, occurring during the months following the battle of Batoche when newspapers published interviews with Riel, biographical sketches, and excerpts from his diary.

Crawford may have become seriously interested in Riel as early as May 27, 1885 when an interview appeared in the *Globe* in which the Métis leader described his heterodox religious views. It seems unlikely that the poet could have failed to notice that, like her cowboy narrator in "Old Spookses' Pass," Riel believed in "the final salvation of all men" (2). In subsequent *Globe* articles Riel's story continued to unfold, providing what must have been a strong stimulus to Crawford's powerful imagination. Her response to that stimulus is, I believe, to be found in the unfinished draft of the long narrative poem, edited and published as *Hugh and Ion* by Glenn Clever in 1977. Because of its fragmentary, unfinished nature, any critical examination of the text must be tentative, suggestive, and speculative.<sup>5</sup>

The similarities between Louis Riel and Crawford's Métis protagonist Hugh are numerous and striking. Both are intensely religious, idealistic Métis with messianic ambitions to establish utopian communities in the Canadian wilderness.<sup>6</sup> The central importance of religion in their respective utopian schemes is indicated in their speech habits. Riel, described by one interviewer as having "talked in a very religious strain," uses two distinctive rhetorical devices in his diary. One is a formulaic repetition of the phrase "O, my God" to introduce sequences of prayer, and the other is the repeated attribution, also formulaic, of Riel's every action and perception to the influence of "the Spirit of God" ("Riel's Diary," *Globe*, 27 May 1885, 2). The form taken by Riel's "spirit" varies from a general sense of the invisible power of the Holy Spirit to the palpable shape of a man eight feet tall ("Interview," *Globe*, 11 Nov. 1885, 2). In December of 1874, while he was "seated on top of a mountain near Washington," Riel claimed to have experienced a vision in which

the same spirit who showed himself to Moses in the midst of the burning cloud appeared to me in the same manner. I was stupefied. I was confused. He [the spirit] said to me "Rise up, Louis David Riel, you have a mission to fulfill."

A similar event takes place in Part Five of *Hugh and Ion* when, stricken by despair over the sufferings of the starving urban poor, Hugh apparently attempts to commit suicide:

. . . the giant in him hurl' d the clay  
He groan' d in, blindly up against the rocks,  
. . . and the poor ghost  
Of flesh and blood lay at the strong soul' s feet  
Trembling to dust, and smitten with despair.

(8)

In Crawford's text Riel's hallucinatory eight-foot man is internalized to become a "giant" within Hugh, his "poor ghost of flesh and blood," and "strong soul"; hence Crawford's text transforms a symptom of Riel's pathological state into a metaphor for Hugh's inner struggle for spiritual renewal. The exhortation by Hugh's "soul" to his "poor ghost of flesh and blood" parallels in structure and content the exhortation by the "spirit" in Riel's messianic vision:

"Up, up thou weakling. Wouldst thou lay thy palms  
Against a stubborn world, to hurl it fair  
Into a truer orbit—up, up and forge  
Strong sinews for the deed . . .

As Riel had compared himself with Moses, so Hugh "feels a Samson soul" within him. Both are referred to as "prophet," Riel by his followers and by himself, Hugh in a remark by Ion (12). Like Riel's, Hugh's speech is garnished with references to God. As Hugh's despairing spirit heals and his mission becomes more clear in his mind, he prays for strength: "I'll have them out!—a saviour of their flesh— / God, knit my sinews up" (10). Later in conversation with Ion, Hugh refers to "Hope" as "god's [sic] own very breath" and as "Pythia to the God I know" (13, 25). Hugh's religion is a faith of action, conflict, and struggle in which "God's moulding place / is full of riot . . . smoke, violence, and strife—but ever tends . . . the strife to peace" (25). He disparages those who lack courage and "sheer strength / to clamber up God's breast" to survey the expanse of the divine purpose (13-14). "God is God," says Hugh to Ion, echoing *The Koran*, "and Hope His chiefest prophet!"

"Prove that!" said Ion,  
"I'll be your pupil then—yes, faith, I will."

Hugh responds to this remark by urging Ion to abandon his intellectual imperatives for the "passionate plain pang / Of adoration paining all your soul / And hear 'Tis well to worship!" from her lips. / Then seek my God, and you shall find his Hope . . ." (26). It seems reasonable to conjecture that if Crawford had been able to continue writing *Hugh and Ion*, Ion would have eventually become Hugh's disciple by adopting Hugh's religious views (Ross 264-66).

The character of Ion may have been suggested to Crawford by several newspaper accounts of William Henry Jackson, Riel's personal secretary.<sup>7</sup> When Riel arrived in the Northwest Territories to agitate for constitutional reform on behalf of the Métis, Jackson was secretary to the executive committee of a settlers' union in Prince Albert. A graduate of the University of Toronto, Jackson had forsaken the city to move to the Northwest with his father and brothers. Jackson was an intelligent, energetic political agitator who was soon won over to Riel's cause, assuming primary responsibility for aligning the interests of the Native Indians and Métis with those of the non-native settlers (Stanley 268-306). His devotion to Riel was that of a disciple to a prophet.<sup>8</sup> After the defeat of the Métis at Batoche, Jackson expressed his desire to share Riel's fate and later volunteered to be executed in his leader's place. Earlier, shortly after having become Riel's personal secretary, Jackson had embraced the Roman Catholic faith (*Globe*, 3 August 1885, 5). At his baptism, Riel acted as his godfather (Stanley 306).

In a letter subsequently quoted in the *Globe*, Jackson described his and Riel's utopian dream for the future of the Northwest. One can imagine the effect of the following passage on Crawford, the idealistic author of "Coming Days"<sup>9</sup>:

Let this be our aim. Let us sink all distinctions of race and religion. Let the white man delight in seeing the Indian helped forward to fill his place as a producer of wealth, and let the Indian and Halfbreed [sic] scorn to charge rent for the soil which God has given to man, upon the settler who comes in to help build up the country and increase its public funds by his arts and machinery, and let both unite in seeing that the fur country be managed for the benefit of the Indians who live by hunting, not for the good of a grasping company.  
(*Globe*, 2 July 1885, 7)

Musing on the suitability of a particular wilderness location for his colony, it is Crawford's Hugh, rather than Ion, who echoes the spirit, if not the letter, of Jackson's text:

Thus Hugh, with eyes large on the ebon woods  
"A fine, full soil—free grants for every soul—  
Pure water—timber—hills for little towns—  
Shelter for cattle in the valley dips

I' ll search no further—hither my colony  
Shall tramp; here tent, and touch red Plenty' s robe."

(24)

Unlike Jackson, Ion is not easily won over to the utopian frame of mind. With characteristic irony, he responds to Hugh' s communal deliberations by pointing out a good spot for a jail (24). Ion is presented as an artist-figure, highly educated, disillusioned, and skeptical. Despite his bleak outlook, he remains good-humoured and witty, evincing genuine affection for his companion. His amused irony acts as a brake upon Hugh' s effusiveness, causing the idealistic M閤is to clarify his thinking and qualify his ideas. Ion' s name may be meant to associate him with any one or all of three people bearing his name. Two are fictional, one historical. First there is the legendary son of Apollo who became king of Athens. Crawford' s Ion comes from "little Athens," and Pythia, to whom Hugh alludes, is connected with Apollo' s oracle at Delphi. As an artist, Ion may be connected with the Athenian tragic poet who was a contemporary of Euripides, or he could suggest by his songs the *rhapsode* who is accused by Socrates of having "as many forms as Proteus," a perfect description of the artist-figure as it emerges in Crawford' s work ("Ion<sub>1</sub>"; "Ion<sub>2</sub>"). Crawford' s Ion has escaped from "young leafy Athens," which he describes in the same terms of squalor and corruption that distinguish the premature decay of the "infant city" from which Hugh escaped in Part Five (25).

A fragment with its narrative portions in various stages of revision, the text of *Hugh and Ion* begins with a single, unnamed protagonist whom Crawford seems to have subsequently differentiated into the two main characters. Similarly, if she had been able to continue her revisions, Ion' s "little Athens" would probably have merged with Hugh' s "infant city" to become the single, archetypal nineteenth-century Canadian city from which they both flee into the wilderness.

The text begins with the unnamed protagonist, later apparently differentiated as Ion, being rejected as a suitor in favour of a businessman by a beautiful and sophisticated fortune-hunter. The manner of the successful lover, leaning "a portly shoulder by a distant door," combines banality with a quality of vague menace. His eyes are "dull and dreamy," casting "their little light" upon the "phantom of the dead days [sic] ' deal" in which "stocks and margins" are counted among the "licens' d weapons of the world' s wide war / against large Plenty" (2). By choosing the financier, the woman has sacrificed love to money, and she justifies her action by characterizing love as illusion, a "Dark God of voids" that soon changes "To virile Hate" (2-4). To comfort the rejected suitor, she tells him a story of a man who was crucified on a "shadow built of wings / of moth and butterfly, and wither' d limbs / of feeble rose-vines" (1). To the woman, love is such a "phantom little cross" from which the rejected suitor should "Burst on the world unshackl' d by thy dreams" (2). The unsuccessful suitor recognizes the obvious parallel between this phantom crucifixion and that of Christ, who chose to die rather than free Himself from the cross, as he presumably could have done. The suitor responds to the woman' s "Away with love, away!" with "And give us up Barabbas," thereby illuminating through biblical intertext the cynicism of the woman' s choice as well as the larger context within which the choice was made (2). "Barabbas was a robber," replies the woman, making clear Crawford' s association of commerce with thievery:

. . . we need our thieves  
Our Benedict Barabbas who can steal  
With such bland gestures, and wise brows bent down  
In plans financial . . . .

(2)

Although Barabbas may seem a "Benedict" to the speaker, the ruthlessness of the marketplace is anything but a blessing to the starving poor. The fate of the rejected suitor functions as a synecdoche for the situation in the wider milieu of the city, where the ideals of justice,





in Hugh' s description of what he wants to escape from:

"I' ll plunge to drowning depths in leaf-built waves,  
And let them wash me from this clanging world  
That shrieks with steam—where mostly men are merely ghosts  
That tend on iron tyrants—solid kings  
That turn and rend the dream-like flesh and blood  
That forms and serves them—I saw one monster take  
A serf that serv' d it, in its mighty maw  
And comb his sweating flesh sheer from his bones  
With glittering fangs. . . ."

(10)

Crawford personifies the city as a voracious infant ironically feeding with fangs and claws on the "primal forest" and "prairie breasts / mounded, all teeming with the milk of life" (8). At this point in the narrative Hugh is the focal character, and so to animate the natural landscape as a woman' s body is consistent with his Native identification of Earth with the Great Mother. It is noteworthy that during his trial, Riel expressed his devotion to two mothers: his biological mother, whom he idolized, and the North West (Markson et al., 249). Hugh' s consciousness of the landscape as female continues in his vision of the dawn as a naked woman waking and stretching herself against the sky as birds flutter to her fingers, deer rub themselves against her knees, and squirrels watch from the branches of trees (12).

Following Hugh' s escape into the wilderness, he and Ion share an idyllic interlude of camping, fishing, and canoeing while the two of them carry on a running debate of their sharply opposing points-of-view. Hugh argues idealistically for hope while Ion, whose discourse is shot through with irony, maintains a profound pessimism. The debate adds dramatic tension to the narrative, which is interrupted from time to time by lyric sequences, two of which are revisions of "The Dark Stag" and "The Lily Bed," poems originally published in the *Evening Telegram*. "The Dark Stag" is Ion' s answer to Hugh' s vision of the dawn as the embodiment of hope, replacing Hugh' s gently awakening female figure with a male hunter whose "moccasins are stain' d with red" and whose arrows bring down the stag of night (15-17).

Hugh' s vision of the dawn calls up the Peaceable Kingdom while Ion' s text, which he calls "the Dawn, I Love," modulates images of violence and death over sixty-three lines. Before returning to their debate, the pair enjoy an interlude of trout-fishing, during the narration of which Crawford interpolates the text of "The Lily Bed," a gently erotic lyric in which Ion achieves union with nature, personified as a "proud and crested brave" making love with a "bead-bright . . . maiden." Crawford' s use of the language of Native myth in the text of "The Lily Bed" suggests that Ion may be beginning to share Hugh' s viewpoint, which the text clearly identifies with his Native heritage:

Hugh' s eyes held all the heritage of light,  
From Council fires that fac' d a thousand moons,  
And warm' d the tribal wisdom into life,  
From age to age—so loved he prairie crests  
And awful forests and the might of hills . . . .

(18)

Later, following Hugh' s paean to his tent, the two friends resume their discussion of hope and despair at the campfire, Hugh articulating his hopes for his new community and Ion commenting on Hugh' s plans with characteristic irony and skepticism. After Ion' s facetious and conditional pledge to become Hugh' s "pupil," Hugh urges Ion to seek Hugh' s God and Hope, and the two of them retire for the night with their differences seemingly intact. A final fragmentary passage evokes Hugh' s violent nightmare, which may have been intended to foreshadow a tragic climax and



denouement.

If Crawford planned to follow her sources closely, Hugh's utopian scheme would fail, and perhaps, like Riel, Hugh would have ended his dream of hope on the gallows. Such a development would appear to indicate that in *Hugh and Ion* Crawford abandons the comedy of "Malcolm's Katie" for a tragic manner more suitable to the general disillusionment of the 1880s. However, this easy conclusion fails to take into account the view of several critics that "Malcolm's Katie" is only superficially a comedy, designed to appeal at once to a popular audience and to a more serious readership who would appreciate the implications of the subtext. In *Hugh and Ion*, written in the aftermath of Riel's execution, the dark under current has risen to the surface.

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## Notes

1. That Tennyson's poem could appear in England and Canada on the same day attests to the efficacy of the transatlantic cable. The texts of Tennyson's poem and Crawford's parody are as follows:

### THE FLEET—ON ITS REPORTED INEFFICIENCY

You, you if you have failed to understand  
The fleet of England is her all in all  
On you will come the curse of all the land  
If that old England fall—  
Which Nelson left so great.

This isle, the mightiest naval power on earth,  
This one small isle, the lord of every sea,  
Poor England! what would all those votes be worth  
And what avail thy ancient fame of free  
Wert thou a fallen state?

You, you who had the ordering of her fleet,  
If you have only compassed her disgrace,  
When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet  
Will knock you from your place—  
But then too late, too late!

### TO GLADSTONE

"Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery."

You, you who have not fail'd to understand  
That keen-arm'd Quiet is the Lord of all,  
On you will come the praise of all the land;  
When that sly pow'r fall  
Which Peter left so great!

This isle, the Mighty One of all the earth;  
This one strong pulse that moveth ev'ry sea  
Great England, still will thy staunch heart be worth  
Thy ancient fame—the paeans of the Free—  
Thou iron-rooted State!

You, you who had the ord'ring of her bands

When you have compass' d Russia' s deep disgrace;  
When all men praise, the wild mob' s million hands  
Will lift to loftier place:  
Nor will it prove—"too late!" [\[back\]](#)

2. See Gilbert and Gubar 46. Crawford' s use of parody here provides a third alternative to "trying to sound like the King" or "talk [ing] back to him in her own vocabulary, her own timbre." Crawford' s text subverts by imitating, mocks while pretending to flatter. Also cited in Bentley, "Introduction" xvi. [\[back\]](#)
3. Bentley provides fresh commentary and insight in an area shown by Burns to have been repeatedly examined and copiously discussed by Crawford' s commentators. Campbell detects in Crawford' s texts intertextual material from Elizabeth Barrett Browning while Warkentin contributes the epithet "Browningesque" in her discussion of Crawford' s style. [\[back\]](#)
4. Dated November 16, 1885, the day of Riel' s execution, "All Men Are Bom Free and Equal" appeared in the *Globe* on the 18th on the page facing a full-page account of the hanging. [\[back\]](#)
5. I have examined with care the manuscript of the poem at Queen' s University Archives. As I found Professor Clever' s text to be an accurate rendering of the original, I have based my discussion on his published text. [\[back\]](#)
6. See Markson et al. (246-52) for a discussion of Riel' s messianic delusions, his identification with Moses, and his utopian ambitions for the M<sup>an</sup>is; see also Ross (110-11) for a discussion of Hugh' s messianic role, which Ross identifies (mistakenly, I believe) as Christian. [\[back\]](#)
7. See the Toronto *Globe* 2 July 1885: 7; 31 July 1885: 2; 3 August 1885: 5; and 17 November 1885: 1. [\[back\]](#)
8. After the surrender, Jackson was found "not guilty of treason-felony on the ground of insanity" primarily because he held "peculiar ideas on religious matters. . . in connection with the new religion of which he thinks Riel is the founder" (Markson et al. 260). [\[back\]](#)
9. Crawford' s "Coming Days" was published in the *Evening Telegram* on 13 April 1880. The poem contrasts the present with a future in which peace, justice, and brotherhood will prevail. The text of the fifth stanza is as follows:

When Pagan lands by purple seas,  
And Christian isles on ruder waves  
Yet other bonds shall have than these,  
Famine' s deep groans and shallow graves,  
Something beyond shrill cries for food,  
To tell of common brotherhood! [\[back\]](#)

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