

# Biographies & Criticism of Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy

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# The Criticism

# **A STUDY OF THOMAS HARDY**

## **by D.H. Lawrence**

This critical work was written in the early months of World War I, and was originally intended to be a short analysis of Hardy's characters, but then developed into a major statement of Lawrence's philosophy of art. The introduction to this work shows its relation to Lawrence's final rewriting of *The Rainbow* and its place among his continual attempts to express his philosophy in a definitive form.

D.H. Lawrence, the famous novelist and poet, who was greatly influenced by Hardy

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### **CHAPTER I**

Of Poppies and Phoenixes and the Beginning of the Argument

Man has made such a mighty struggle to feel at home on the face of the earth, without even yet succeeding. Ever since he first discovered himself exposed naked

betwixt sky and land, belonging to neither, he has gone on fighting for more food, more clothing, more shelter; and though he has roofed-in the world with houses and though the ground has heaved up massive abundance and excess of nutriment to his hand, still he cannot be appeased, satisfied. He goes on and on. In his anxiety he has evolved nations and tremendous governments to protect his person and his property; his strenuous purpose, unremitting, has brought to pass the whole frantic turmoil of modern industry, that he may have enough, enough to eat and wear, that he may be safe. Even his religion has for the systole of its heart-beat, propitiation of the Unknown God who controls death and the sources of nourishment.

But for the diastole of the heart-beat, there is something more, something else, thank heaven, than this unappeased rage of self - preservation. Even the passion to be rich is not merely the greedy wish to be secure within triple walls of brass, along with a huge barn of plenty. And the history of mankind is not altogether the history of an effort at self-preservation which has at length become over blown and extravagant.

Working in contradiction to the will of self-preservation, from the very first man wasted himself begetting children, colouring himself and dancing and howling, and sticking feathers in his hair, in scratching pictures on the walls of his cave, and making graven images of his unutterable feelings. So he went on wildly and with gorgeousness taking no thought for the morrow, but, at evening, considering the ruddy lily.

In his sleep, however, it must have come to him early that the lily is a wise and housewifely flower, considerate of herself, laying up secretly her little storehouse and barn, well under the ground, well tucked with supplies. And this providence on the part of the lily, man laid to heart. He went out anxiously at dawn to kill the largest mammoth, so that he should have a huge hill of meat, that he could never eat his way through.

And the old man at the door of the cave, afraid of the coming winter with its scant supplies, watching the young man go forth, told impressive tales to the children of the ant and the grasshopper; and praised the thrift and husbandry of that little red squirrel, and drew a moral from the gaudy, fleeting poppy.

“Don’t, my dear children,” continued the ancient paleolithic man as he sat at the door of his cave, “don’t behave like that reckless, shameless scarlet flower. Ah, my dears, you little know the amount of labour, the careful architecture, all the chemistry, the weaving and the casting of energy, the business of day after day and night after night, yon gaudy wreck has squandered. Pfff! — and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. Now, my dear children, don’t be like that.”

Nevertheless, the old man watched the last poppy coming out, the red flame licking into sight; watched the blaze at the top clinging around a little tender d-j<sup>^</sup>t, and he wept, thinking of his youth. Till the red flag fell before him, lay in rags on the earth. Then he did not know whether to pay homage to the void, or to preach.

So he compromised, and made a story about a phoenix. “Yes, my dears, in the waste desert, I know the green and graceful tree where the phoenix has her nest. And there I



have seen the eternal phoenix escape away into flame, leaving life behind in her ashes. Suddenly she went up in to red flame, and was gone, leaving life to rise from her ashes.”

“And did it?”

“Oh, yes, it rose up.”

“What did it do then?”

“It grew up, and burst into flame again.”

And the flame was all the story and all triumph. The old man knew this. It was this he praised, in his innermost heart, the red outburst at the top of the poppy that had no fear of winter. Even the latent seeds were secondary, within the fire. No red; and there was just a herb, without name or sign of poppy. But he had seen the flower in all its evanescence and its being.

When his educated grandson told him that the red was there to bring the bees and the flies, he knew well enough that more bees and flies and wasps would come to a sticky smear round his grandson’s mouth, than to yards of poppy-red.

Therefore his grandson began to talk about the excess which always accompanies reproduction. And the old man died during this talk, and was put away. But his soul was uneasy, and came back from the shades to have the last word, muttering inaudibly in the cave door, “If there is always excess accompanying reproduction, how can you call it excess? When your mother makes a pie, and has too much paste, then that is excess. So she carves a paste rose with her surplus, and sticks it on the top of the pie. That is the flowering of the excess. And children, if they are young enough, clap their hands at this blossom of pastry. And if the pie bloom not too often with the rose of excess, they eat the paste blossom - shaped lump with reverence. But soon they become sophisticated, and know that the rose is no rose, but only excess, surplus, a counterfeit, a lump, unedifying and unattractive, and they say, ‘No, thank you, mother; no rose.’

“Wherefore, if you mean to tell me that the red of my shed poppy was no more than the rose of the paste on the pie, you are a fool. You mean to say that young blood had more stuff than he knew what to do with. He knocked his structure of leaves and stalks together, hammered the poppy-knob safe on top, sieved and bolted the essential seeds, shut them up tight, and then said ‘Ah!’ And whilst he was dusting his hands, he saw a lot of poppy-stuff to spare. ‘Must do something with it — must do something with it — mustn’t be wasted!’ So he just rolled it out into red flakes, and dabbed it round the knobby seed-box, and said, ‘There, the simple creature will take it in, and I’ve got rid of it.’

“My dear child, that is the history of the poppy and of the excess which accompanied his reproduction, is it? That’s all you can say of him, when he makes his red splash in the world? — that he had a bit left over from his pie with the five-and-twenty blackbirds in, so he put a red frill round? My child, it is good you are young, for you are a fool.”

So the shade of the ancient man passed back again, to foregather with all the shades. And it shook its head as it went, muttering, “Conceit, conceit of self-preservation and

of race-preservation, conceit!" But he had seen the heart of his grandson, with the wasteful red peeping out, like a poppy-bud. So he chuckled.

Why, when we are away for our holidays, do we exclaim with rapture, "What a splendid field of poppies!" — or "Isn't the poppy sweet, a red dot among the camomile flowers!" — only to go back on it all, and when the troubles come in, and we walk forth in heaviness, taking ourselves seriously, later on, to cry, in a harsh and bitter voice: "Ah, the gaudy treason of those red weeds in the corn!" — or when children come up with nosegays, "Nasty red flowers, poison, darling, make baby go to sleep," or when we see the scarlet flutter in the wind: "Vanity and flaunting vanity," and with gusto watch the red bits disappear into nothingness, saying: "It is well such scarlet vanity is cast to nought."

Why are we so rarely away on our holidays? Why do we persist in taking ourselves seriously, in counting our money and our goods and our virtues? We are down in the end. We rot and crumble away. And that without ever bursting the bud, the tight economical bud of caution and thrift and self-preservation.

The phoenix grows up to maturity and fulness of wisdom, it attains to fatness and wealth and all things desirable, only to burst into flame and expire in ash. And the flame and the ash are the be-all and the end-all, and the fatness and wisdom and wealth are but the fuel spent. It is a wasteful ordering of things, indeed, to be sure: but so it is, and what must be must be.

But we are very cunning. If we cannot carry our goods and our fatness, at least our goodness can be stored up like coin. And if we are not sure of the credit of the bank, we form ourselves into an unlimited liability company to run the future. We must have an obvious eternal deposit in which to bank our effort. And because the red of the poppy and the fire of the phoenix are contributed to no store, but are spent with the day and disappear, we talk of vanity and foolish mortality.

The phoenix goes gadding off into flame and leaves the future behind, unprovided for, in its ashes. There is no prodigal poppy left to return home in repentance, after the red is squandered in a day. Vanity, and vanity, and pathetic transience of mortality. All that is left us to call eternal is the tick-tack of birth and death, monotonous as time. The vain blaze flapped away into space and is gone, and what is left but the tick-tack of time, of birth and death?

But I will chase that flamy phoenix that gadded off into nothingness. Whoop and halloo and away we go into nothingness, in hot pursuit. Say, where are the flowers of yester-year? *Ou sont les neiges d'antan?* Where's Hippolyta, where's Thai's, each one loveliest among women? Who knows? Where are the snows of yester-year?

That is all very well, but they must be somewhere. They may not be in any bank or deposit, but they are not lost for ever. The virtue of them is still blowing about in nothingness and in somethingness. I cannot walk up and say, "How do you do, Dido?" as *Eneas* did in the shades. But Dido — Dido! — the robin cocks a scornful tail and goes off, disgusted with the noise. You might as well look for your own soul as to look for Dido. "*Didon dina dit-on du dos d'un dodu dindon,*" comes rapidly into my mind,

and a few frayed scraps of Virgil, and a vision of fair, round, half-globe breasts and blue eyes with tears in them; and a tightness comes into my heart: all forces rushing into me through my consciousness. But what of Dido my unconsciousness has, I could not tell you. Something, I am sure, and something that has come to me without my knowledge, something that flew away in the flames long ago, something that flew away from that pillar of fire, which was her body, day after day whilst she lived, flocking into nothingness to make a difference there. The reckoning of her money and her mortal assets may be discoverable in print. But what she is in the roomy space of somethingness, called nothingness, is all that matters to me.

She is something, I declare, even if she were utterly forgotten. How could any new thing be born unless it had a new nothingness to breathe? A new creature breathing old air, or even renewed air: it is terrible to think of. A new creature must have new air, absolutely brand-new air to breathe. Otherwise there is no new creature, and birth and death are a tick-tack.

What was Dido was new, absolutely new. It had never been before, and in Dido it was. In its own degree, the prickly sow-thistle I have just pulled up is, for the first time in all time. It is itself, a new thing. And most vividly it is itself in its yellow little disc of a flower: most vividly. In its flower it is. In its flower it issues something to the world that never was issued before. Its like has been before, its exact equivalent never. And this richness of new being is richest in the flowering yellow disc of my plant.

What then of this excess that accompanies reproduction? The excess is the thing itself at its maximum of being. If it had stopped short of this excess, it would not have been at all. If this excess were missing, darkness would cover the face of the earth. In this excess, the plant is transfigured into flower, it achieves at last itself. The aim, the culmination of all is the red of the poppy, this flame of the phoenix, this extravagant being of Dido, even her so-called waste.

But no, we dare not. We dare not fulfil the last part of our programme. We linger into inactivity at the vegetable, self-preserving stage. As if we preserved ourselves merely for the sake of remaining as we are. Yet there we remain, like the regulation cabbage, hidebound, a bunch of leaves that may not go any farther for fear of losing a market value. A cabbage seen straddling up into weakly fiery flower is a piteous, almost an indecent sight to us. Better be a weed, and noxious. So we remain tight shut, a bunch of leaves, full of greenness and substance.

But the rising flower thrusts and pushes at the heart of us, strives and wrestles, while the static will holds us immovable. And neither will relent. But the flower, if it cannot beat its way through into being, will thrash destruction about itself. So the bound-up cabbage is beaten rotten at the heart.

Yet we call the poppy “vanity” and we write it down a weed. It is humiliating to think that, when we are taking ourselves seriously, we are considering our own self-preservation, or the greater scheme for the preservation of mankind. What is it that really matters? For the poppy, that the poppy disclose its red: for the cabbage, that it run up into weakly fiery flower: for Dido, that she be Dido, that she become herself,

and die as fate will have it. Seed and fruit and produce, these are only a minor aim: children and good works are a minor aim. Work, in its ordinary meaning, and all effort for the public good, these are labour of self-preservation, they are only means to the end. The final aim is the flower, the fluttering, singing nucleus which is a bird in spring, the magical spurt of being which is a hare all explosive with fulness of self, in the moonlight; the real passage of a man down the road, no sham, no shadow, no counterfeit, whose eyes shine blue with his own reality, as he moves amongst things free as they are, a being; the flitting under the lamp of a woman incontrovertible, distinct from everything and from everybody, as one who is herself, of whom Christ said, "to them that have shall be given."

The final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself. This accomplished, it will produce what it will produce, it will bear the fruit of its nature. Not the fruit, however, but the flower is the culmination and climax, the degree to be striven for. Not the work I shall produce, but the real Me I shall achieve, that is the consideration; of the complete Me will come the complete fruit of me, the work, the children.

And I know that the common wild poppy has achieved so far its complete poppy-self, unquestionable. It has uncovered its red. Its light, its self, has risen and shone out, has run on the winds for a moment. It is splendid. The world is a world because of the poppy's red. Otherwise it would be a lump of clay. And I am I as well, since the disclosure. What it is, I breathe it and snuff it up, it is about me and upon me and of me. And I can tell that I do not know it all yet. There is more to disclose. What more, I do not know. I tremble at the inchoate infinity of life when I think of that which the poppy has to reveal, and has not as yet had time to bring forth. I make a jest of it. I say to the flower, "Come, you've played that red card long enough. Let's see what else you have got up your sleeve." But I am premature and impertinent. My impertinence makes me ashamed. He has not played his red card long enough to have outsatisfied me.

Yet we must always hold that life is the great struggle for self - preservation, - that this struggle for the means of life is the essence and whole of life. As if it would be anything so futile, so ingestive. Yet we ding-dong at it, always hammering out the same phrase, about the struggle for existence, the right to work, the right to the vote, the right to this and the right to that, all in the struggle for existence, as if any external power could give us the right to ourselves. That we have within ourselves. And if we have it not, then the remainder that we do possess will be taken away from us. "To them that have shall be given, and from them that have not shall be taken away even that which they have."

## CHAPTER II

Still Introductory: About Women's Suffrage, and Laws, and the War, and the Poor, with Some Fanciful Moralising

It is so sad that the earnest people of today serve at the old, second - rate altar of self-preservation. The woman-suffragists, who are certainly the bravest, and, in the old sense, most heroic party amongst us, even they are content to fight the old battles on the old ground, to fight an old system of self-preservation to obtain a more advanced system of preservation. The vote is only a means, they admit. A means to what? A means to making better laws, laws which shall protect the unprotected girl from a vicious male, which shall protect the sweated woman-labourer from the unscrupulous greed of the capitalist, which shall protect the interest of women in the State. And surely this is worthy and admirable.

Yet it is like protecting the well-being of a cabbage in the cabbage - patch, while the cabbage is rotting at the heart for lack of power to run out into blossom. Could you make any law in any land, empowering the poppy to flower? You might make a law refusing it liberty to bloom. But that is another thing. Could any law put into being something which did not before exist? It could not. Law can only modify the conditions, for better or worse, of that which already exists.

But law is a very, very clumsy and mechanical instrument, and we people are very, very delicate and subtle beings. Therefore I only ask that the law shall leave me alone as much as possible. I insist that no law shall have immediate power over me, either for my good or for my ill. And I would wish that many laws be unmade, and no more laws made. Let there be a parliament of men and women for the careful and gradual unmaking of laws.

If it were for this purpose that women wanted the vote, I should be glad, and the opposition would be vital and intense, instead of just flippantly or exasperatedly static. Because then the woman's movement would be a living human movement. But even so, the claiming of a vote for the purpose of unmaking the laws would be rather like taking a malady in order to achieve a cure.

The women, however, want the vote in order to make more laws. That is the most lamentable and pathetic fact. They will take this clumsy machinery to make right the body politic. And, pray, what is the sickness of the body politic? Is it that some men are sex-mad or sex-degraded, and that some, or many, employers are money - degraded? And if so, will you, by making laws for putting in prison the sex-degraded, and putting out of power the money-degraded, thereby make whole and clean the State? Wherever you put them, will not the degradation exist, and continue? And is the State, then, merely an instrument for weeding the public of destructive members? And is this, then, the crying necessity for more thorough weeding?

Whence does the degradation or perversion arise? Is there any great sickness in the body politic? Then where and what is it? Am I, or your suffragist woman, or your voting man, sex-whole and money-healthy, are we sound human beings? Have we

achieved to true individuality and to a sufficient completeness in ourselves? Because, if not — then, physician, heal thyself.

That is no taunt, but the finest and most damning criticism ever passed: “Physician, heal thyself.” No amount of pity can blind us to the inexorable reality of the challenge.

Where is the source of all money-sickness, and the origin of all sex-perversion? That is the question to answer. And no cause shall come to life unless it contain an answer to this question. Laws, and all State machinery, these only regulate the sick, separate the sick and the whole, clumsily, oh, so clumsily that it is worse than futile. Who is there who searches out the origin of the sickness, with a hope to quench the malady at its source?

It lies in the heart of man, and not in the conditions — that is obvious, yet always forgotten. It is not a malaria which blows in through the window and attacks us when we are healthy. We are each one of us a swamp, we are like the hide-bound cabbage going rotten at the heart. And for the same reason that, instead of producing our flower, instead of continuing our activity, satisfying our true desire, climbing and clambering till, like the poppy, we lean on the sill of all the unknown, and run our flag out there in the colour and shine of being, having surpassed that which has been before, we hang back, we dare not even peep forth, but, safely shut up in bud, safely and darkly and snugly enclosed, like the regulation cabbage, we remain secure till our hearts go rotten, saying all the while how safe we are.

No wonder there is a war. No wonder there is a great waste and squandering of life. Anything, anything to prove that we are not altogether sealed in our own self-preservation as dying chrysalides. Better the light be blown out, wilfully, recklessly, in the wildest wind, than remain secure under the bushel, saved from every draught.

So we go to war to show that we can throw our lives away. Indeed, they have become of so little value to us. We cannot live, we cannot be. Then let us tip-cat with death, let us rush, throwing our lives away. Then, at any rate, we shall have a sensation — and “perhaps,” after all, the value of life is in death.

What does the law matter? What does money, power, or public approval matter? All that matters is that each human being shall be in his own fulness. If something obstruct us, we break it or put it aside, as the shoots of the trees break even through the London pavements. That is, if life is strong enough in us. If not, we are glad to fight with death. Does not the war show us how little, under all our carefulness, we count human life and human suffering, how little we value ourselves at bottom, how we hate our own security? We have many hospitals and many laws and charities for the poor. And at the same time, we send ourselves to be killed and torn and tortured, we spread grief and desolation, and then, only then, we are somewhat satisfied. For have we not proved that we can transcend our own self-preservation, that we do not care so much for ourselves, after all? Indeed, we almost hate ourselves.

Indeed, well may we talk about a just and righteous war against Germany, but against ourselves also, our own self-love and caution. It is no war for the freedom of man from militarism or the Prussian yoke; it is a war for freedom of the bonds of our

own cowardice and sluggish greed of security and well-being; it is a fight to regain ourselves out of the grip of our own caution.

Tell me no more we care about human life and suffering. We are, every one of us, revelling at this moment in the squandering of human life as if it were something we needed. And it is shameful. And all because that, to live, we are afraid to [risk] ourselves. We can only die.

Let there be an end, then, of all this welter of pity, which is only self-pity reflected onto some obvious surface. And let there be an end of this German hatred. We ought to be grateful to Germany that she still has the power to burst the bound hide of the cabbage. Where do I meet a man or a woman who does not draw deep and thorough satisfaction from this war? Because of pure shame that we should have seemed such poltroons living safe and atrophied, not daring to take one step to life. And this is the only good that can result from the "world disaster": that we realise once more that self-preservation is not the final goal of life; that we realise that we can still squander life and property and inflict suffering wholesale. That will free us, perhaps, from the bushel we cower under, from the paucity of our lives, from the cowardice that will not let us be, which will only let us exist in security, unflowering, unreal, fat, under the cosy jam-pot of the State, under the shelter of the social frame.

And we must be prepared to fight, after the war, a renewed rage of activity for greater self-preservation, a renewed outcry for a stronger bushel to shelter our light. We must also undertake the incubus of crippled souls that will come home, and of crippled souls that will be left behind: men in whom the violence of war shall have shaken the life-flow and broken or perverted the course; women who will cease to live henceforth, yet will remain existing in the land, fixed at some lower point of fear or brutality.

Yet if we are left maimed and halt, if you die or I die, it will not matter, so long as there is alive in the land some new sense of what is and what is not, some new courage to let go the securities, and to be, to risk ourselves in a forward venture of life, as we are willing to risk ourselves in a rush of death.

Nothing will matter so long as life shall sprout up again strong after this winter of cowardice and well-being, sprout into the unknown. Let us only have had enough of pity: pity that stands before the glass and weeps for ever over the sight of its own tears. This is what we have made of Christ's Commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" — a mirror for the tears of self-pity. How do we love our neighbour? By taking to heart his poverty, his small wage, and the attendant evils thereof. And is that how we love our neighbour as ourselves? Do I, then, think of myself as a moneyed thing enjoying advantages, or a non-moneyed thing suffering from disadvantages? Evidently I do. Then why the tears? They must rise from the inborn knowledge that neither money or non-money, advantages or disadvantages, matter supremely: what matters is the light under the bushel, the flower fighting under the safeguard of the leaves. I am weeping over my denied self. And I am very sorry for myself, held in the grip of some stronger force. Where can I find an image of myself?\* Ah, in the poor, in my

poor neighbour labouring in the grip of an unjust system of capitalism. Let me look at him, let my heart be wrung, let me give myself to his service. Poor fellow, poor image, he is so badly off. Alas and alas, I do love my neighbour as myself: I am as anxious about his pecuniary welfare as I am about myself. I am so sorry for him, the poor X. He is a man like me. So I lie to myself and to him. For I do not care about him and his poverty: I care about my own unsatisfied soul. But I sidetrack to him, my poor neighbour, to vent on him my self-pity.

It is as if a poppy, when he is grown taller than his neighbours, but has not come to flower, should look down and, because he can get no further, say: "Alas, for those poor dwindlers down there: they don't get half as much rain as I do." He grows no more, and his non-growing makes him sad, and he tries to crouch down so as not to be any taller than his neighbour, thinking his sorrow is for his neighbour; and his neighbour struggles weakly into flower, after his fight for the sunshine. But the rich young poppy crouches, gazing down, nor even once lifts up his head to blossom. He is so afraid of giving himself forth, he cannot move on to expose his new nakedness, up there to confront the horrific space of the void, he is afraid of giving himself away to the unknown. He stays within his shell.

Which is the parable of the rich poppy. The truth about him is, \* See note?9, p.?66.

he grows as fast as he can, though he devours no man's substance, because he has neither storehouse nor barn to devour them with, and neither a poppy nor a man can devour much through his own mouth. He grows as fast as he can, and from his innermost self he shuttles the red fire out, bit by bit, a little further, till he has brought it together and up to bud. There he hangs his head, hesitates, halts, reflects a moment, shrinking from the great climax when he lets off his fire. He ought to perceive now his neighbours, and to stand arrested, crying, "Alas, those poor dwindlers!" But his fire breaks out of him, and he lifts his head, slowly, subtly, tense in an ecstasy of fear overwhelmed by joy, submits to the issuing of his flame and his fire, and there it hangs at the brink of the void, scarlet and radiant for a little while, immanent on the unknown, a signal, an outpost, an advance-guard, a forlorn, splendid flag quivering from the brink of the unfathomed void, into which it flutters silently, satisfied, whilst a little ash, a little dusty seed remains behind on the solid ledge of earth.

And the day is richer for a poppy, the flame of another phoenix is filled in to the universe, something is, which was not.

That is the whole point: something is which was not. And I wish it were true of us. I wish we were all like kindled bonfires on the edge of space, marking out the advance-posts. What is the aim of self-preservation, but to carry us right out to the firing-line; there, what is in contact with what is not. If many lives be lost by the way, it cannot be helped, nor if much suffering be entailed. I do not go out to war in the intention of avoiding all danger or discomfort: I go to fight for myself. Every step I move forward into being brings a newer, juster proportion into the world, gives me less need of storehouse and barn, allows me to leave all, and to take what I want by



the way, sure that it will always be there; allows me in the end to fly the flag of myself, at the extreme tip of life.

He who would save his life must lose it. But why should he go on and waste it? Certainly let him cast it upon the waters. Whence and how and whither it will return is no matter, in terms of values. But like a poppy that has come to bud, when he reaches the shore, when he has traversed his known and come to the beach to meet the unknown, he must strip himself naked and plunge in, and pass out: if he dare. And the rest of his life he will be a stirring at the unknown, cast out upon the waters. But if he dare not plunge in, if he dare not take off his clothes and give himself naked to the flood, then let him prowl in rotten safety, weeping for pity of those he imagines worse off than himself. He dare not weep aloud for his own cowardice. And weep he must. So he will find himself objects of pity.

## CHAPTER III

Containing Six Novels and the Real Tragedy This is supposed to be a book about the people in Thomas Hardy's novels. But if one wrote everything they give rise to, it would fill the Judgment Book.

One thing about them is that none of the heroes and heroines care very much for money, or immediate self-preservation, and all of them are struggling hard to come into being. What exactly the struggle into being consists in, is the question. But most obviously, from the Wessex novels, the first and chiefest factor is the struggle into love and the struggle with love: by love, meaning the love of a man for a woman and a woman for a man. The *via media* to being, for man or woman, is love, and love alone. Having achieved and accomplished love, then the man passes into the unknown. He has become himself, his tale is told. Of anything that is complete there is no more tale to tell. The tale is about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete.

It is urged against Thomas Hardy's characters that they do unreasonable things — quite, quite unreasonable things. They are always going off unexpectedly and doing something that nobody would do. That is quite true, and the charge is amusing. These people of Wessex are always bursting suddenly out of bud and taking a wild flight into flower, always shooting suddenly out of a tight convention, a tight, hide-bound cabbage state into something quite madly personal. It would be amusing to count the number of special marriage licenses taken out in Hardy's books. Nowhere, except perhaps in *Jude*, is there the slightest development of personal action in the characters: it is all explosive. *Jude*, however, does see more or less what he is doing, and acts from choice. He is more consecutive. The rest explode out of the convention. They are people each with a real, vital, potential self, even the apparently wishy-washy - heroines of the earlier books, and this self suddenly bursts the shell of manner and convention and commonplace opinion, and acts independently, absurdly, without mental knowledge or acquiescence.

And from such an outburst the tragedy usually develops. For there does exist, after all, the great self-preservation scheme, and in it we must all live. Now to live in it after bursting out of it was the problem these Wessex people found themselves faced with. And they never solved the problem, none of them except the comically, insufficiently treated Ethelberta.

This because they must subscribe to the system in themselves. From the more immediate claims of self-preservation they could free themselves: from money, from ambition for social success. None of the heroes or heroines of Hardy cared much for these things. But there is the greater idea of self-preservation, which is formulated in the State, in the whole modelling of the community. And from this idea, the heroes and heroines of Wessex, like the heroes and heroines of almost anywhere else, could not free themselves. In the long run, the State, the Community, the established form of life remained, remained intact and impregnable, the individual, trying to break forth from it, died of fear, of exhaustion, or of exposure to attacks from all sides, like men who have left the walled city to live outside in the precarious open,

This is the tragedy of Hardy, always the same: the tragedy of those who, more or less pioneers, have died in the wilderness, whither they had escaped for free action, after having left the walled security, and the comparative imprisonment, of the established convention. This is the theme of novel after novel: remain quite within the convention, and you are good, safe, and happy in the long run, though you never have the vivid pang of sympathy on your side: or, on the other hand, be passionate, individual, wilful, you will find the security of the convention a walled prison, you will escape, and you will die, either of your own lack of strength to bear the isolation and the exposure, or by direct revenge from the community, or from both. This is the tragedy, and only this: it is nothing more metaphysical than the division of a man against himself in such a way: first, that he is a member of the community, and must, upon his honour, in no way move to disintegrate the community, either in its moral or its practical form; second, that the convention of the community is a prison to his natural, individual desire, a desire that compels him, whether he feel justified or not, to break the bounds of the community, lands him outside the pale, there to stand alone, and say: "I was right, my desire was real and inevitable; if I was to be myself I must fulfil it, convention or no convention," or else,

there to stand alone, doubting, and saying: "Was I right, was I wrong? If I was wrong, oh, let me die!" — in which case he courts death.

The growth and the development of this tragedy, the deeper and deeper realisation of this division and this problem, the coming towards some conclusion, is the one theme of the Wessex novels.

And therefore the books must be taken chronologically, to reveal the development and to advance towards the conclusion.

#### 1. Desperate Remedies.

Springrove, the dull hero, fast within convention, dare not tell Cytherea that he is already engaged, and thus prepares the complication. Manston, represented as fleshily

passionate, breaks the convention and commits murder, which is very extreme, under compulsion of his desire for Cytherea. He is aided by the darkly passionate, lawless Miss Aldclyffe. He and Miss Aldclyffe meet death, and Spring - rove and Cytherea are united to happiness and success.

#### 2. Under the Greenwood Tree.

After a brief excursion from the beaten track in the pursuit of social ambition and satisfaction of the imagination, figured by the Clergyman, Fancy, the little school-mistress, returns to Dick, renounces imagination, and settles down to steady, solid, physically satisfactory married life, and all is as it should be. But Fancy will carry in her heart all her life many unopened buds that will die un - flowered; and Dick will probably have a bad time of it.

#### 3. A Pair of Blue Eyes.

Elfride breaks down in her attempt to jump the first little hedge of convention, when she comes back after running away with Stephen. She cannot stand even a little alone. Knight, his conventional ideas backed up by selfish instinct, cannot endure Elfride when he thinks she is not virgin, though now she loves him beyond bounds. She submits to him, and owns the conventional idea entirely right, even whilst she is innocent. An aristocrat walks off with her whilst the two men hesitate, and she, poor innocent victim of passion not vital enough to overthrow the most banal conventional ideas, lies in a bright coffin, while the three confirmed lovers mourn, and say how great the tragedy is.

#### 4. Far from the Madding Crowd.

The unruly Bathsheba, though almost pledged to Farmer Bold - wood, a ravingly passionate, middle-aged bachelor pretendant, who has suddenly started in mad pursuit of some unreal conception of woman, personified in Bathsheba, lightly runs off and marries Sergeant Troy, an illegitimate aristocrat, unscrupulous and yet sensitive in taking his pleasures. She loves Troy, he does not love her. All the time she is loved faithfully and persistently by the good Gabriel, who is like a dog that watches the bone and bides the time. Sergeant Troy treats Bathsheba badly, never loves her, though he is the only man in the book who knows anything about her. Her pride helps her to recover. Troy is killed by Boldwood; exit the unscrupulous, but discriminative, almost cynical young soldier and the mad, middle-aged pursuer of the Fata Morgana; enter the good, steady Gabriel, who marries Bathsheba because he will make her a good husband, and the flower of imaginative first love is dead for her with Troy's scorn of her.

#### 5. The Hand of Ethelberta.

Ethelberta, a woman of character and of brilliant parts, sets out in pursuit of social success, finds that Julius, the only man she is inclined to love, is too small for her, hands him over to the good little Picotee, and she herself, sacrificing almost cynically what is called her heart, marries the old scoundrelly Lord Mountclerc, runs him and his estates and governs well, a sound, strong pillar of established society, now she has

nipped off the bud of her heart. Moral: it is easier for the butler's daughter to marry a lord than to find a husband with her love, if she be an exceptional woman.

The Hand of Ethelberta is the one almost cynical comedy. It marks the zenith of a certain feeling in the Wessex novels, the zenith of the feeling that the best thing to do is to kick out the craving for "Love" and substitute commonsense, leaving sentiment to the minor characters.

This novel is a shrug of the shoulders, and a last taunt to hope, it is the end of the happy endings, except where sanity and a little cynicism again appear in *The Trumpet Major*, to bless where they despise. It is the hard, resistant, ironical announcement of personal failure, resistant and half-grinning. It gives way to violent, angry passions and real tragedy, real killing of beloved people, self-killing. Till now, only Elfrida among the beloved, has been killed; the good men have always come out on top.

#### 6. The Return of the Native.

This is the first tragic and important novel. Eustacia, dark, wild, passionate, quite conscious of her desires and inheriting no tradition which would make her ashamed of them, since she is of a novelistic Italian birth, loves, first, the unstable Wildeve, who does not satisfy her, then casts him aside for the newly returned Clym,

whom she marries. What does she want? She does not know, but it is evidently some form of self-realisation; she wants to be herself, to attain herself. But she does not know how, by what means, so romantic imagination says, Paris and the beau monde. As if that would have stayed her dissatisfaction.

Clym has found out the vanity of Paris and the beau monde. What, then, does he want? He does not know; his imagination tells him he wants to serve the moral system of the community, since the material system is despicable. He wants to teach little Egdon boys in school. There is as much vanity in this, easily, as in Eustacia's Paris. For what is the moral system but the ratified form of the material system? What is Clym's altruism but a deep, very subtle cowardice, that makes him shirk his own being whilst apparently acting nobly; which makes him choose to improve mankind rather than to struggle at the quick of himself into being. He is not able to undertake his own soul, so he will take a commission for society to enlighten the souls of others. It is a subtle equivocation. Thus both Eustacia and he sidetrack from themselves, and each leaves the other unconvinced, unsatisfied, unrealised. Eustacia, because she moves outside the convention, must die; Clym, because he identified himself with the community, is transferred from Paris to preaching. He had never become an integral man, because when faced with the demand to produce himself, he remained under cover of the community and excused by his altruism.

His remorse over his mother is adulterated with sentiment; it is exaggerated by the push of tradition behind it. Even in this he does not ring true. He is always according to pattern, producing his feelings more or less on demand, according to the accepted standard. Practically never is he able to act or even feel in his original self; he is always according to the convention. His punishment is his final loss of all his original self: he is left preaching, out of sheer emptiness.

Thomasin and Venn have nothing in them turbulent enough to push them to the bounds of the convention. There is always room for them inside. They are genuine people, and they get the prize within the walls.

Wildeve, shifty and unhappy, attracted always from outside and never driven from within, can neither stand with nor without the established system. He cares nothing for it, because he is unstable, has no positive being. He is an eternal assumption.

The other victim, Clym's mother, is the crashing-down of one of the old, rigid pillars of the system. The pressure on her is too great. She is weakened from the inside also, for her nature is non - conventional; it cannot own the bounds.

So, in this book, all the exceptional people, those with strong feelings and unusual characters, are reduced; only those remain who are steady and genuine, if commonplace. Let a man will for himself, and he is destroyed. He must will according to the established system.

The real sense of tragedy is got from the setting. What is the great, tragic power in the book? It is Egdon Heath. And who are the real spirits of the Heath? First, Eustacia, then Clym's mother, then Wild - eve. The natives have little or nothing in common with the place.

What is the real stuff of tragedy in the book? It is the Heath. It is the primitive, primal earth, where the instinctive life heaves up. There, in the deep, rude stirring of the instincts, there was the reality that worked the tragedy. Close to the body of things, there can be heard the stir that makes us and destroys us. The heath heaved with raw instinct. Egdon, whose dark soil was strong and crude and organic as the body of a beast. Out of the body of this crude earth are born Eustacia, Wildeve, Mistress Yeobright, Clym, and all the others. They are one year's accidental crop. What matters if some are drowned or dead, and others preaching or married: what matter, any more than the withering heath, the reddening berries, the seedy furze, and the dead fern of one autumn of Egdon? The Heath persists. Its body is strong and fecund, it will bear many more crops beside this. Here is the sombre, latent power that will go on producing, no matter what happens to the product. Here is the deep, black source from whence all these little contents of lives are drawn. And the contents of the small lives are spilled and wasted. There is savage satisfaction in it: for so much more remains to come, such a black, powerful fecundity is working there that what does it matter?

Three people die and are taken back into the Heath; they mingle their strong earth again with its powerful soil, having been broken off at their stem. It is very good. Not Egdon is futile, sending forth life on the powerful heave of passion. It cannot be futile, for it is eternal. What is futile is the purpose of man.

Man has a purpose which he has divorced from the passionate purpose that issued him out of the earth into being. The Heath threw forth its shaggy heather and furze and fern, clean into being. It threw forth Eustacia and Wildeve and Mistress Yeobright and Clym, but to what purpose? Eustacia thought she wanted the hats and bonnets of Paris. Perhaps she was right. The heavy, strong soil of Egdon, breeding original native beings, is under Paris as well as under Wessex, and Eustacia sought herself in the gay

city. She thought life there, in Paris, would be tropical, and all her energy and passion out of Egdon would there come into handsome flower. And if Paris real had been Paris as she imagined it, no doubt she was right, and her instinct was soundly expressed. But Paris real was not Eustacia's imagined Paris. Where was her imagined Paris, the place where her powerful nature could come to blossom? Beside some strong-passioned, unconfined man, her mate.

Which mate Clym might have been. He was born out of passionate Egdon to live as a passionate being whose strong feelings moved him ever further into being. But quite early his life became narrowed down to a small purpose: he must of necessity go into business, and submit his whole being, body and soul as well as mind, to the business and to the greater system it represented. His feelings, that should have produced the man, were suppressed and contained, he worked according to a system imposed from without. The dark struggle of Egdon, a struggle into being as the furze struggles into flower, went on in him, but could not burst the enclosure of the idea, the system which contained him. Impotent to be, he must transform himself, and live in an abstraction, in a generalization, he must identify himself with the system. He must live as Man or Humanity, or as the Community, or as Society, or as Civilization. "An inner strenuousness was preying on his outer symmetry, and they rated his look as singular. . . . His countenance was overlaid with legible meanings. Without being thought-wom, he yet had certain marks derived from a perception of his surroundings, such as are not infrequently found on man at the end of the four or five years of endeavour which follow the close of placid pupilage. He already showed that thought is a disease of the flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things. Mental luminousness must be fed with the oil of life, even if there is already a physical seed for it; and the pitiful sight of two demands on one supply was just showing itself here."

But did the face of Clym show that thought is a disease of flesh, or merely that in his case a dis-ease, an un-ease, of flesh produced thought? One does not catch thought like a fever: one produces it. If it be in any way a disease of flesh, it is rather the rash that indicates the disease than the disease itself. The "inner strenuousness"

of Clym's nature was not fighting against his physical symmetry, but against the limits imposed on his physical movement. By nature, as a passionate, violent product of Egdon, he should have loved and suffered in flesh and in soul from love, long before this age. He should have lived and moved and had his being, whereas he had only his business, and afterwards his inactivity. His years of pupilage were past, "he was one of whom something original was expected," yet he continued in pupilage. For he produced nothing original in being or in act, and certainly no original thought. None of his ideas were original. Even he himself was not original. He was over-taught, had become an echo. His life had been arrested, and his activity turned into repetition. Far from being emotionally developed, he was emotionally undeveloped, almost entirely. Only his mental faculties were developed. And, hid, his emotions were obliged to work according to the label he put upon them: a ready - made label.

Yet he remained for all that an original, the force of life was in him, however much he frustrated and suppressed its natural movement. "As is usual with bright natures, the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcass shone out of him like a ray." But was the deity chained within his ephemeral human carcass, or within his limited human consciousness? Was it his blood, which rose dark and potent out of Egdon, which hampered and confined the deity, or was it his mind, that house built of extraneous knowledge and guarded by his will, which formed the prison?

He came back to Egdon — what for? To re-unite himself with the strong, free flow of life that rose out of Egdon as from a source? No — "to preach to the Egdon eremites that they might rise to a serene comprehensiveness without going through the process of enriching themselves." As if the Egdon eremites had not already far more serene comprehensiveness than ever he had himself, rooted as they were in the soil of all things, and living from the root! What did it matter how they enriched themselves, so long as they kept this strong, deep root in the primal soil, so long as their instincts moved out to action and to expression? The system was big enough for them, and had no power over their instincts. They should have taught him rather than he them.

And Egdon made him marry Eustacia. Here was action and life, here was a move into being on his part. But as soon as he got her, she became an idea to him, she had to fit in his system of ideas. According to his way of living, he knew her already, she was labelled and classed and fixed down. He had got into this way of living, and he could not get out of it. He had identified himself with the system, and he could not extricate himself. He did not know that Eustacia had her being beyond his. He did not know that she existed untouched by his system and his mind, where no system had sway and where no consciousness had risen to the surface. He did not know that she was Egdon, the powerful, eternal origin seething with production. He thought he knew. Egdon to him was the tract of common land, producing familiar rough herbage, and having some few unenlightened inhabitants. So he skated over heaven and hell, and having made a map of the surface, thought he knew all. But underneath and among his mapped world, the eternal powerful fecundity worked on heedless of him and his arrogance. His preaching, his superficiality made no difference. What did it matter if he had calculated a moral chart from the surface of life? Could that affect life, any more than a chart of the heavens affects the stars, affects the whole stellar universe which exists beyond our knowledge? Could the sound of his words affect the working of the body of Egdon, where in the unfathomable womb was begot and conceived all that would ever come forth? Did not his own heart beat far removed and immune from his thinking and talking? Had he been able to put even his own heart's mysterious resonance upon his map, from which he charted the course of lives in his moral system? And how much more completely, then, had he left out, in utter ignorance, the dark, powerful source whence all things rise into being, whence they will always continue to rise, to struggle forward to further being? A little of the static surface he could see, and map out. Then he thought his map was the thing itself. How blind he was, how utterly blind to the tremendous movement carrying and producing the surface. He did

not know that the greater part of every life is underground, like roots in the dark in contact with the beyond. He preached, chinking lives could be moved like hen-houses from here to there. His blindness indeed brought on the calamity. But what matter if Eustacia or Wildeve or Mrs. Yeobright died: what matter if he himself became a mere rattle of repetitive words — what did it matter? It was regrettable; no more. Egdon, the primal impulsive body, would go on producing all that was to be produced, eternally, though the will of man should destroy the blossom yet in bud, over and over again. At last he must learn what it is to be at one, in his mind and will, with the primal impulses that rise in him. Till then.

let him perish or preach. The great reality on which the little tragedies enact themselves cannot be detracted from. The will and words which militate against it are the only vanity.

This is a constant revelation in Hardy's novels: that there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it. Against the background of dark, passionate Egdon, of the leafy, sappy passion and sentiment of the woodlands, of the unfathomed stars, is drawn the lesser scheme of lives: *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, or *Two on a Tower*. Upon the vast, incomprehensible pattern of some primal morality greater than ever the human mind can grasp, is drawn the little, pathetic pattern of man's moral life and struggle, pathetic, almost ridiculous. The little fold of law and order, the little walled city within which man has to defend himself from the waste enormity of nature, becomes always too small, and the pioneers venturing out with the code of the walled city upon them, die in the bonds of that code, free and yet unfree, preaching the walled city and looking to the waste.

This is the wonder of Hardy's novels, and gives them their beauty. The vast, unexplored morality of life itself, what we call the immorality of nature, surrounds us in its eternal incomprehensibility, and in its midst goes on the little human morality play, with its queer frame of morality and its mechanized movement; seriously, portentously, till some one of the protagonists chances to look out of the charmed circle, weary of the stage, to look into the wilderness raging round. Then he is lost, his little drama falls to pieces, or becomes mere repetition, but the stupendous theatre outside goes on enacting its own incomprehensible drama, untouched. There is this quality in almost all Hardy's work, and this is the magnificent irony it all contains, the challenge, the contempt. Not the deliberate ironies, little tales of widows or widowers, contain the irony of human life as we live it in our self-aggrandized gravity, but the big novels, *The Return of the Native*, and the others.

And this is the quality Hardy shares with the great writers, Shakespeare or Sophocles or Tolstoi, this setting behind the small action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed nature; setting a smaller system of morality, the one grasped and formulated by the human consciousness within the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself, surpassing human consciousness. The difference is, that whereas in Shakespeare or Sophocles the greater, uncomprehended morality, or fate, is actively transgressed and gives active punishment, in Hardy and



Tolstoi the lesser, human morality, the mechanical system is actively transgressed, and holds, and punishes the protagonist, whilst the greater morality is only passively, negatively transgressed, it is represented merely as being present in background, in scenery, not taking any active part, having no direct connection with the protagonist. CEdipus, Hamlet, Macbeth set themselves up against, or find themselves set up against, the unfathomed moral forces of nature, and out of this unfathomed force comes their death. Whereas Anna Kare - nina, Eustacia, Tess, Sue, and Jude find themselves up against the established system of human government and morality, they cannot detach themselves, and are brought down. Their real tragedy is that they are unfaithful to the greater unwritten morality, which would have bidden Anna Karenina be patient and wait until she, by virtue of greater right, could take what she needed from society; would have bidden Vronsky detach himself from the system, become an individual, creating a new colony of morality with Anna; would have bidden Eustacia fight Clym for his own soul, and Tess take and claim her Angel, since she had the greater light; would have bidden Jude and Sue endure for very honour's sake, since one must bide by the best that one has known, and not succumb to the lesser good.

Had CEdipus, Hamlet, Macbeth been weaker, less full of real, potent life, they would have made no tragedy; they would have comprehended and contrived some arrangement of their affairs, sheltering in the human morality from the great stress and attack of the unknown morality. But being, as they are, men to the fullest capacity, when they find themselves, daggers drawn, with the very forces of life itself, they can only fight till they themselves are killed, since the morality of life, the greater morality, is eternally unalterable and invincible. It can be dodged for some time, but not opposed. On the other hand, Anna, Eustacia, Tess or Sue — what was there in their position that was necessarily tragic? Necessarily painful it was, but they were not at war with God, only with Society. Yet they were all cowed by the mere judgment of man upon them, and all the while by their own souls they were right. And the judgment of men killed them, not the judgment of their own souls or the judgment of Eternal God.

Which is the weakness of modern tragedy, where transgression against the social code is made to bring destruction, as though the social code worked our irrevocable fate. Like Clym, the map appears to us more real than the land. Shortsighted almost to blindness, we pore over the chart, map out journeys, and confirm them: and we cannot see life itself giving us the lie the whole time.

## CHAPTER IV

### An Attack on Work and the Money Appetite and on the State

There is always excess, the biologists say, a brimming-over. For they have made the measure, and the supply must be made to fit. They have charted the course, and if at the end of it there is a jump beyond the bounds into nothingness: well, there is always excess, for they have charted the journey aright.

There is always excess, a brimming-over. At spring-time a bird brims over with blue and yellow, a glow-worm brims over with a drop of green moonshine, a lark flies up like heady wine, with song, an errand-boy whistles down the road, and scents brim over the measure of the flower. Then we say, It is spring.

When is a glow-worm a glow-worm? When she's got a light on her tail. What is she when she hasn't got a light on her tail? Then she's a mere worm, an insect.

When is a man a man? When he is alight with life. Call it excess? If it is missing, there is no man, only a creature, a clod, undistinguished.

With man it is always spring — or it may be; with him every day is a blossoming day, if he will. He is a plant eternally in flower, he is an animal eternally in rut, he is a bird eternally in song. He has his excess constantly on his hands, almost every day. It is not with him a case of seasons, spring and autumn and winter. And happy man if his excess come out in blue and gold and singing, if it be not like the paste rose on the pie, a burden, at last a very sickness.

The wild creatures are like fountains whose sources gather their waters until spring-time, when they leap their highest. But man is a fountain that is always playing, leaping, ebbing, sinking, and springing up. It is not for him to gather his waters till spring-time, when his fountain, rising higher, can at last flow out flower-wise in mid-air, teeming awhile with excess, before it falls spent again.

His rhythm is not so simple. A pleasant little stream of life is a bud at autumn and winter, fluttering in flocks over the stubble, the fallow, rustling along. Till spring, when many waters rush in to the sources, and each bird is a fountain playing.

Man, fortunate or unfortunate, is rarely like an autumn bird, to enjoy his pleasant stream of life flowing at ease. Some men are like that, fortunate and delightful. But those men or women will not read this book. Why should they?

The sources of man's life are ovet-full, they receive more than they give out. And why? Because a man is a well-head built over a strong, perennial spring and enclosing it in, a well-head whence the water may be drawn at will, and under which the water may be held back indefinitely. Sometimes, and in certain ways, according to certain rules, the source may bubble and spring out, but only at certain times, always under control. And the fountain cannot always bide for the permission, the suppressed waters strain at the well-head, and hence so much sadness without cause. Weltschmerz and other unrealised pains, where the source presses for utterance.

And how is it given utterance? In sheer play of being free? That cannot be. It shall be given utterance in work, the conscious mind has unanimously decreed. And the door is held holy. My life is to be utilized for work, first and foremost — and this in spite of Mary of Bethany.

Only, or very largely, in the work I do, must I live, must my life take movement. And why do I work? To eat — is the original answer. When I have earned enough to eat, what then? Work for more, to provide for the future. And when I have provided for the future? Work for more to provide for the poor. And when I have worked to

provide for the poor, what then? Keep on working, the poor are never provided for, the poor have ye always with you.

That is the best that man has been able to do.

But what a ghastly programme! I do not want to work. You must, comes the answer. But nobody wants to work, originally. Yet everybody works, because he must — it is repeated. And what when he is not working? Let him rest and amuse himself, and get ready for tomorrow morning.

Oh, my God, work is the great body of life, and sleep and amusement like two wings, bent only to carry it along. Is this, then, all?

And Carlyle gets up and says, It is all, and mankind goes on in grim, serious approval, more than acquiescent, approving, thinking itself religiously right.

But let us pull the tail out of the mouth of this serpent. Eternity is not a process of eternal self-inglutination. We must work to eat, and eat to work — that is how it is given out. But the real problem is quite different. “We must work to eat, and eat to — what?” Don’t say “work,” it is so unoriginal.

In Nottingham we boys began learning German by learning proverbs. “Mann muss essen um zu leben, aber Mann muss nicht leben um zu essen,” was the first. “One must eat to live, but one must not live to eat.” A good German proverb according to the lesson-book. Starting a step further back, it might be written, “One must work to eat, but one must not eat to work.” Surely that is just, because the second proverb says, “One must eat to live.”

“One must work to eat, and eat to live,” is the result.

Take this vague and almost uninterpretable word “living.” To how great a degree are “to work” and “to live” synonymous? That is the question to answer, when the highest flight that our thought can take, for the sake of living, is to say that we must return to the medieval system of handicrafts, and that each man must become a labouring artist, producing a complete article.

Work is, simply, the activity necessary for the production of a sufficient supply of food and shelter: nothing more holy than that. It is the producing of the means of self-preservation. Therefore it is obvious that it is not the be-all and the end-all of existence. We work to provide means of subsistence, and when we have made provision, we proceed to live. But all work is only the making provision for that which is to follow.

It may be argued that work has a fuller meaning, that man lives most intensely when he works. That may be, for some few men, for some few artists whose lives are otherwise empty. But for the mass, for the 99.9 per cent of mankind, work is a form of non-living, of non-existence, of submergence.

It is necessary to produce food and clothing. Then, under necessity, the thing must be done as quickly as possible. Is not the highest recommendation for a labourer the fact that he is quick? And how does any man become quick, save through finding the shortest way to his end, and by repeating one set of actions? A man who can repeat certain movements accurately is an expert, if his movements are those which produce the required result.

And these movements are the calculative or scientific movements of a machine. When a man is working perfectly, he is the perfect machine. Aware of certain forces, he moves accurately along the line of their resultant. The perfect machine does the same.

All work is like this, the approximation to a perfect mechanism more or less intricate and adjustable. The doctor, the teacher, the lawyer, just as much as the farm labourer or the mechanic, when working most perfectly, is working with the utmost of mechanical, scientific precision, along a line calculated from known fact, calculated instantaneously.

In this work, man has a certain definite, keen satisfaction. When he is utterly impersonal, when he is merely the mode where certain mechanical forces meet to find their resultant, then a man is something perfect, the perfect instrument, the perfect machine.

It is a state which, in his own line, every man strives and longs for. It is a state which satisfies his moral craving, almost the deepest craving within him. It is a state when he lies in line with the great force of gravity, partakes perfectly of its subtlest movement and motion, even to psychic vibration.

But it is a state which every man hopes for release from. The dream of every man is that in the end he shall have to work no more. The joy of every man is, when he is released from his labour, having done his share for the time being.

What does he want to be released from, and what does he want to be released unto? A man is not a machine: when he has finished work, he is not motionless, inert. He begins a new activity. And what?

It seems to me as if a man, in his normal state, were like a palpitating leading-shoot of life, where the unknown, all unresolved, beats and pulses, containing the quick of all experience, as yet un-revealed, not singled out. But when he thinks, when he moves, he is retracing some proved experience. He is as the leading-shoot which, for the moment, remembers only that which is behind, the fixed wood, the cells conducting towards their undifferentiated tissue of life. He moves as it were in the trunk of the tree, in the channels long since built, where the sap must flow as in a canal. He takes knowledge of all this past experience upon which the new tip rides quivering, he becomes again the old life, which has built itself out in the fixed tissue, he lies in line with the old movement, unconscious of where it breaks, at the growing plasm, into something new, unknown. He is happy, all is known, all is finite, all is established, and knowledge can be perfect here in the trunk of the tree, which life built up and climbed beyond.

Such is a man at work, safe within the proven, deposited experience, thrilling as he traverses the fixed channels and courses of life; he is only matter of some of the open ways which life laid down for its own passage; he has only made himself one with what has been, travelling the old, fixed courses, through which life still passe:, but which are not in themselves living.

And in the end, this is always a prison to him, this proven, deposited experience which he must explore, this past of life. For is he not in himself a growing tip, is not his

own body a quivering plasm of what will be, and has never yet been? Is not his own soul a fighting-line, where what is and what will be separates itself off from what has been? Is not this his purest joy of movement, the indistinguishable, complex movement of being? And is not this his deepest desire, to be himself, to be this quivering bud of growing tissue which he is? He may find knowledge by retracing the old courses, he may satisfy his moral sense by working within the known, certain of what he is doing. But for real, utter satisfaction, he must give himself up to complete quivering uncertainty, to sentient non - knowledge.

And this is why man is always crying out for freedom, to be free. He wants to be free to be himself. For this reason he has always made a heaven where no work need be done, where to be is all, where to be comprises all that has been done, is perfect knowledge, and where that which will be done is so swift as to be a sleep, a Nirvana, an absorption.

So there is this deepest craving of all, to be free from the necessity to work. It is obvious in all mankind. "Must I become one with the old, habitual movements?" says man. "I must, to satisfy myself that the new is new and the old is old, that all is one like a tree, though I am no more than the tiniest cell in the tree." So he becomes one with the old, habitual movement: he is the perfect machine, the perfect instrument: he works. But, satisfied for the time being of that which has been and remains now finite, he wearies for his own limitless being, for the unresolved, quivering, infinitely complex and indefinite movement of new living, he wants to be free.

And ever, as his knowledge of what is past becomes greater, he wants more and more liberty to be himself. There is the necessity for self-preservation, the necessity to submerge himself in the utter mechanical movement. But why so much: why repeat so often the mechanical movement? Let me not have so much of this work to do, let me not be consumed overmuch in my own self-preservation, let me not be imprisoned in this proven, finite experience all my days.

This has been the cry of humanity since the world began. This is the glamour of kings, the glamour of men who had opportunity to be, who were not under compulsion to do, to serve. This is why kings were chosen heroes, because they were the beings, the producers of new life, not servants of necessity, repeating old experience.

And humanity has laboured to make work shorter, so we may all be kings. True, we have the necessity to work, more or less, according as we are near the growing tip, or further away. Some men are far from the growing tip. They have little for growth in them, only the power for repeating old movement. They will always find their own level. But let those that have life, live.

So there has been produced machinery, to take the place of the human machine. And the inventor of the labour-saving machine has been hailed as a public benefactor, and we have rejoiced over his discovery. Now there is a railing against the machine, as if it were an evil thing. And the thinkers talk about the return to the medieval system of handicrafts. Which is absurd.

As I look round this room, at the bed, at the counterpane, at the books and chairs and the little bottles, and think that machines made them, I am glad. I am very glad of the bedstead, of the white enamelled iron with brass rail. As it stands, I rejoice over its essential simplicity. I would not wish it different. Its lines are straight and parallel, or at right angles, giving a sense of static motionless - ness. Only that which is necessary is there, whittled down to the minimum. There is nothing to hurt me or to hinder me; my wish for something to serve my purpose is perfectly fulfilled.

Which is what a machine can do. It can provide me with the perfect mechanical instrument, a thing mathematically and scientifically correct. Which is what I want. I like the books, on the whole, I can scarcely imagine them more convenient to me, I like the common green-glass smelling-salts, and the machine-turned feet of the common chest of drawers. I hate the machine-carving on a chair, and the stamped pattern on a rug. But I have no business to ask a machine to make beautiful things for me. I can ask it for perfect accommodating utensils or articles of use, and I shall get them.

Wherefore I do honour to the machine and to its inventor. It will produce what we want, and save us the necessity of much labour. Which is what it was invented for.

But to what pitiable misuse is it put! Do we use the machine to produce goods for our need, or is it used as a muck-rake for raking together heaps of money? Why, when man, in his godly effort, has produced a means to freedom, do we make it a means to more slavery?

Why? — because the heart of man is crude and greedy. Why is a labourer willing to work ten hours a day for a mere pittance? Because he is serving a system for the enrichment of the individual, a system to which he subscribes, because he might himself be that individual, and, since his one ideal is to be rich, he owes his allegiance to the system established for the raking of riches into heaps, a system that satisfies his imagination. Why try to alter the present industrial system on behalf of the working-man, when his imagination is satisfied only by such a system?

The poor man and the rich, they are the head and tail of the same penny. Stand them naked side by side, and which is better than the other? The rich man, probably, for he is likely to be the sadder and the wiser.

The universal ideal, the one conscious ideal of the poor people, is riches. The only hope lies in those people, who, in fact or imagination, have experienced wealth, and have appetites accordingly.

It is not true, that, before we can get over our absorbing passion to be rich, we must each one of us know wealth. There are sufficient people with sound imagination and normal appetite to put away the whole money tyranny of England today.

There is no evil in money. If there were a million pounds under my bed, and I did not know of it, it would make no difference to me. If there were a million pounds under my bed, and I did know of it, it would make a difference, perhaps, to the form of my life, but to the living me, and to my individual purpose, it could make no difference, since I depend neither on riches nor on poverty for my being.

Neither poverty nor riches obsesses me. I would not be like a begging friar to forswear all owing and having. For I would not admit myself so weak that either I must abstain totally from wealth, or succumb to the passion for possessions.

Have I not a normal money appetite, as I have a normal appetite for food? Do I want to kill a hundred bison, to satisfy the imaginative need of my stomach, as the Red Indian did? Then why should I want a thousand pounds, when ten are enough? "Thy eyes are bigger than thy belly," says the mother of the child who takes more than he can eat. "Your pocket is bigger than your breeches," one could say to a man greedy to get rich.

It is only greediness. But it is very wearisome. There are plenty of people who are not greedy, who have normal money appetites. They need a certain amount, and they know they need it. It is no honour to be a pauper. It is only decent that every man should have enough and a little to spare, and every self-respecting man will see he gets it. But why can't we really grow up, and become adult with regard to money as with regard to food? Why can't we know when we have enough, as we know when we have had enough to eat?

We could, of course, if we had any real sense of values. It is all very well to leave, as Christianity tries to leave, the dinner to be devoured by the glutton, whilst the Christian draws off in disgust, and fasts. But we each have our place at the board, as we well know, and it is indecent to withdraw before the glutton, leaving the earth to be devoured.

Can we not stay at the board? We must eat to live. And living is not simply not-dying. It is the only real thing, it is the aim and end of all life. Work is only a means to subsistence. The work done, the living earned, how then to go on to enjoy it, to fulfil it, that is the question. How shall a man live? What do we mean by living?

Let every man answer for himself. We only know, we want the freedom to live, the freedom of leisure and means. But there are ample means, there is half an eternity of pure leisure for mankind to take, if he would, if he did not think, at the back of his mind, that riches are the means of freedom. Riches would be the means of freedom, if there were no poor, if there were equal riches everywhere. Till then, riches and poverty alike are bonds and prisons, for every man must live in the ring of his own defences, to defend his property. And this ring is the surest of prisons.

So cannot we see, rich and poor alike, how we have circumscribed, hampered, imprisoned ourselves within the limits of our poor-and - rich system, till our life is utterly pot-bound? It is not that some of us want more money and some of us less. It is that our money is like walls between us, we are immured in gold, and we die of starvation or etiolation.

A plant has strength to burst its pot. The shoots of London trees have force to burst through the London pavements. Is there not life enough in us to break out of this system? Let every man take his own, and go his own way, regardless of system and State, when his hour comes. Which is greater, the State or myself? Myself, unquestionably, since the State is only an arrangement made for my convenience. If it is not convenient

for me, I must depart from it. There is no need to break laws. The only need is to be a law unto oneself.

And if sufficient people came out of the walled defences, and pitched in the open, then very soon the walled city would be a mere dependent on the free tents of the wilderness. Why should we care about bursting the city walls? We can walk through the gates into the open world. Those State educations with their ideals, their armaments of aggression and defence, what are they to me? They must fight out their own fates. As for me, I would say to every decent man whose heart is straining at the enclosure, "Come away from the crowd and the community, come away and be separate in your own soul, and live. Your business is to produce your own real life, no matter what the nations do. The nations are made up of individual men, each man will know at length that he must single himself out, nor remain any longer embedded in the matrix of his nation, or community, or class. Our time has come; let us draw apart. Let the physician heal himself."

And outside, what will it matter save that a man is a man, is himself? If he must work, let him work a few hours a day, a very few, whether it be at wheeling bricks, or shovelling coal into a furnace, or tending a machine. Let him do his work, according to his kind, for some three or four hours a day. That will produce supplies in ample sufficiency. Then let him have twenty hours for being himself, for producing himself.

## CHAPTER V

### Work and the Angel and the Unbegotten Hero

It is an inherent passion, this will to work, it is a craving to produce, to create, to be as God. Man turns his back on the unknown, on that which is yet to be, he turns his face towards that which has been, and he sees, he rediscovers, he becomes again that which has been before. But this time he is conscious, he knows what he is doing. He can at will reproduce the movement life made in its initial passage, the movement life still makes, and will continue to make, as a habit, the movement already made so unthinkably often that rather than a movement it has become a state, a condition of all life: it has become matter, or the force of gravity, or cohesion, or heat, or light. These old, old habits of life man rejoices to rediscover »n all their detail.

Long, long ago life first rolled itself into seed, and fell to earth, and covered itself up with soil, slowly. And long, long ago man discovered the process, joyfully, and, in this wise as God, repeated it. He found out how soil is shifted. Proud as a needy God, he dug the ground, and threw the little, silent fragments of life under the dust. And was he not doing what life itself had initiated, was he not, in this particular, even greater than life, more definite?

Still further back, in an unthinkable period long before chaos, life formed the habit we call gravitation. This was almost before any differentiation, before all those later, lesser habits, which we call matter or such a thing as centrifugal force, were formed.\*



It was a habit of the great mass of life, not of any part in particular. Therefore it took man's consciousness much longer to apprehend, and even now we have only some indications of it, from various parts. But we rejoice in that which we know. Long, long ago, one surface of matter learned to roll on a rolling motion across another surface, as the tide rolls up the land. And long ago man saw this motion, and learned a secret, and made the wheel, and rejoiced.

So, facing both ways, like Janus, face forward, in the quivering, glimmering fringe of the unresolved, facing the unknown, and looking backward over the vast rolling tract of life which follows and represents the initial movement, man is given up to his dual business, of being, in blindness and wonder and pure godliness, the living stuff of life itself, unrevealed; and of knowing, with unwearying labour and unceasing success, the manner of that which has been, which is revealed.

And work is the repetition of some one of those rediscovered movements, the enacting of some part imitated from life, the attaining of a similar result as life attained. And this, even if it be only shovelling coal onto a fire, or hammering nails into a shoe-sole, or making accounts in ledgers, is what work is, and in this lies the initial satisfaction of labour. The motive of labour, that of obtaining wages, is only the overcoming of inertia. It is not the real driving force. When necessity alone compels man, from moment to moment, to work, then man rebels and dies. The driving force is the pleasure in doing something, the living will to work.

And man must always struggle against the necessity to work, though the necessity to work is one of the inevitable conditions of man's existence. And no man can continue in any piece of work, out of sheer necessity, devoid of any essential pleasure in that work.

It seems as if the great aim and purpose in human life were to \* See note 20, p. 766.

bring all life into the human consciousness. And this is the final meaning of work: the extension of human consciousness. The lesser meaning of work is the achieving of self-preservation. From this lesser, immediate necessity man always struggles to be free. From the other, greater necessity, of extending the human consciousness, man does not struggle to be free.

And to the immediate necessity for self-preservation man must concede, but always having in mind the other, greater necessity, to which he would hasten.

But the bringing of life into human consciousness is not an aim in itself, it is only a necessary condition of the progress of life itself. Man is himself the vivid body of life, rolling glimmering against the void. In his fullest living he does not know what he does, his mind, his consciousness, unacquaint, hovers behind, full of extraneous gleams and glances, and altogether devoid of knowledge. Altogether devoid of knowledge and conscious motive is he when he is heaving into uncreated space, when he is actually living, becoming himself.

And yet, that he may go on, may proceed with his living, it is necessary that his mind, his consciousness, should extend behind him. The mind itself is one of life's later-developed habits. To know is a force, like any other force. Knowledge is only

one of the conditions of this force, as combustion is one of the conditions of heat. To will is only a manifestation of the same force, as expansion may be a manifestation of heat. And this knowing is now an inevitable habit of life's, developed late; it is a force active in the immediate rear of life, and the greater its activity, the greater the forward, unknown movement ahead of it.

It seems as though one of the conditions of life is, that life shall continually and progressively differentiate itself, almost as though this differentiation were a Purpose. Life starts crude and unspecified, a great Mass. And it proceeds to evolve out of that mass ever more distinct and definite particular forms, an ever-multiplying number of separate species and orders, as if it were working always to the production of the infinite number of perfect individuals, the individual so thorough that he should have nothing in common with any other individual. It is as if all coagulation must be loosened, as if the elements must work themselves free and pure from the compound.

Man's consciousness, that is, his mind, his knowledge, is his greater manifestation of individuality. With his consciousness he can perceive and know that which is not himself. The further he goes, the more extended his consciousness, the more he realises the things that are not himself. Everything he perceives, everything he knows, everything he feels, is something extraneous to him, is not himself, and his perception of it is like a cell-wall, or more, a real space separating him. I see a flower, because it is not me. I know a melody, because it is not me. I feel cold, because it is not me. I feel joy when I kiss, because it is not me, the kiss, but rather one of the bounds or limits where I end. But the kiss is a closer division of me from the mass than a sense of cold or heat. It whittles the more keenly naked from the gross.

And the more that I am driven from admixture, the more I am singled out into utter individuality, the more this intrinsic me rejoices. For I am as yet a gross impurity, I partake of everything. I am still rudimentary, part of a great, unquickened lump.

In the origin, life must have been uniform, a great, unmoved, utterly homogeneous infinity, a great not-being, at once a positive and negative infinity: the whole universe, the whole infinity, one motionless homogeneity, a something, a nothing. And yet it can never have been utterly homogeneous: mathematically, yes; actually, no. There must always have been some reaction, infinitesimally faint, stirring somehow through the vast, homogeneous inertia.

And since the beginning, the reaction has become extended and intensified; what was one great mass of individual constituency has stirred and resolved itself into many smaller, characteristic parts; what was an utter, infinite neutrality, has become evolved into still rudimentary, but positive, orders and species. So on and on till we get to naked jelly, and from naked jelly to enclosed and separated jelly, from homogeneous tissue to organic tissue, on and on, from invertebrates to mammals, from mammals to man, from man to tribesman, from tribesman to me: and on and on, till, in the future, wonderful, distinct individuals, like angels, move about, each one being himself, perfect as a complete melody or a pure colour.

Now one craves that his life should be more individual, that I and you and my neighbour should each be distinct in clarity from each other, perfectly distinct from the general mass. Then it would be a melody if I walked down the road; if I stood with my neighbour, it would be a pure harmony.

Could I, then, being my perfect self, be selfish? A selfish person is an impure person, one who wants that which is not himself. Selfishness implies admixture, grossness, unclarity of being. How can I,

a pure person incapable of being anything but myself, detract from my neighbour? That which is mine is singled out to me from the mass, and to each man is left his own. And what can any man want for, except that which is his own, if he be himself? If he have that which is not his own, it is a burden, he is not himself. And how can I help my neighbour except by being utterly myself? That gives him into himself: which is the greatest gift a man can receive.

And necessarily accompanying this more perfect being of myself is the more extended knowledge of that which is not myself. That is, the finer, more distinct the individual, the more finely and distinctly is he aware of all other individuality. It needs a delicate, pure soul to distinguish between the souls of others; it needs a thing which is purely itself to see other things in their purity or their impurity.

Yet in life, so often, one feels that a man, who is, by nature, intrinsically an individual, is by practice and knowledge an impurity, almost a nonentity. To each individuality belongs, by nature, its own knowledge. It would seem as if each soul, detaching itself from the mass, the matrix, should achieve its own knowledge. Yet this is not so. Many a soul which we feel should have detached itself and become distinct, remains embedded, and struggles with knowledge that does not pertain to it. It reached a point of distinctness and a degree of personal knowledge, and then became confused, lost itself.

And then, it sought for its whole being in work. By re-enacting some old movement of life's, a struggling soul seeks to detach itself, to become pure. By gathering all the knowledge possible, it seeks to receive the stimulus which shall help it to continue to distinguish itself.

"Ye must be born again," it is said to us. Once we are born, detached from the flesh and blood of our parents, issued separate, as distinct creatures. And later on, the incomplete germ which is a young soul must be fertilized, the parent womb which encloses the incomplete individuality must conceive, and we must be brought forth to ourselves, distinct. This is at the age of twenty or thirty.

And we, who imagine we live by knowledge, imagine that the impetus for our second birth must come from knowledge, that the germ, the sperm impulse, can come out of some utterance only. So, when I am young, at eighteen, twenty, twenty-three, when the anguish of desire comes upon me, as I lie in the womb of my times, to receive the quickening, the impetus, I send forth all my calls and call hither and thither, asking for the Word, the Word which is the spermatozoon which shall come and fertilize me and set me free. And it may be the word, the idea exists which shall bring me forth, give me birth. But it may also be that the word, the idea, has never yet been uttered.

Shall I, then, be able, with all the knowledge in the world, to produce my being, if the knowledge be not extant? I shall not.

And yet we believe that only the Uttered Word can come into us and give us the impetus to our second birth. Give us a religion, give us something to believe in, cries the unsatisfied soul embedded in the womb of our times. Speak the quickening word, it cries, that will deliver us into our own being.

So it searches out the Spoken Word, and finds it, or finds it not. Possibly it is not yet uttered. But all that will be uttered lies potent in life. The fools do not know this. They think the fruit of knowledge is found only in shops. They will go anywhere to find it, save to the Tree. For the Tree is so obvious, and seems so played out.

Therefore the unsatisfied soul remains unsatisfied, and chooses Work, maybe Good Works, for its incomplete action. It thinks that in work it has being, in knowledge it has gained its distinct self.

Whereas all amount of clumsy distinguishing ourselves from other things will not make us thus become ourselves, and all amount of repeating even the most complex motions of life will not produce one new motion.

We start the wrong way round: thinking, by learning what we are not, to know what we as individuals are: whereas the whole of the human consciousness contains, as we know, not a tithe of what is, and therefore it is hopeless to proceed by a method of elimination; and thinking, by discovering the motion life has made, to be able therefrom to produce the motion it will make: whereas we know that, in life, the new motion is not the resultant of the old, but something quite new, quite other, according to our perception.

So we struggle mechanically, unformed, unbegotten, unborn, repeating some old process of life, unable to become ourselves, unable to produce anything new.

Looking over the Hardy novels, it is interesting to see which of the heroes one would call a distinct individuality, more or less achieved, which an unaccomplished potential individuality, and which an impure, unindividualised life embedded in the matrix, either achieving its own lower degree of distinction, or not achieving it.

In *Desperate Remedies* there are scarcely any people at all, particularly when the plot is working. The tiresome part about Hardy is that, so often, he will neither write a morality play nor a novel. The people of the first book, as far as the plot is concerned, are not people: they are the heroine, faultless and white; the hero, with a small spot on his whiteness; the villainess, red and black, but more red than black; the villain, black and red; the Murderer, aided by the Adulteress, obtains power over the Virgin, who, rescued at the last moment by the Virgin Knight, evades the evil clutch. Then the Murderer, overtaken by vengeance, is put to death, whilst Divine Justice descends upon the Adulteress. Then the Virgin unites with the Virgin Knight, and receives Divine Blessing.

That is a morality play, and if the morality were vigorous and original, all well and good. But, between-whiles, we see that the Virgin is being played by a nice, rather ordinary girl.

In *The Laodicean*, there is all the way through a predilection d'artiste for the aristocrat, and all the way through a moral condemnation of him, a substituting the middle or lower-class personage with bourgeois virtues into his place. This was the root of Hardy's pessimism. Not until he comes to Tess and Jude does he ever sympathize with the aristocrat — unless it be in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and then he sympathizes only to slay. He always, always represents them the same, as having some vital weakness, some radical ineffectuality. From first to last it is the same.

Miss Aldclyffe and Manston, Elfride and the sickly lord she married, Troy and Farmer Boldwood, Eustacia Vye and Wildeve, de Stancy in *The Laodicean*, Lady Constantine in *Two on a Tower*, the Mayor of Casterbridge and Lucetta, Mrs. Charmond and Dr. Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders*, Tess and Alec d'Urberville, and, though different, Jude. There is also the blond, passionate, yielding man: Sergeant Troy, Wildeve, and, in spirit, Jude.

These are all, in their way, the aristocrat-characters of Hardy. They must every one die, every single one.

Why has Hardy this predilection d'artiste for the aristocrat, and why, at the same time, this moral antagonism to him?

It is fairly obvious in *The Laodicean*, a book where, the spirit being small, the complaint is narrow. The heroine, the daughter a famous railway engineer, lives in the castle of the old de Stancys. She sighs, wishing she were of the de Stancy line: the tombs and portraits have a spell over her. "But," says the hero to her, have you forgotten your father's line of ancestry: Archimedes, New - comen, Watt, Tylford, Stephenson?" — "But I have a predilection d'artiste for ancestors of the other sort," sighs Paula. And the hero despairs of impressing her with the list of his architect ancestors: Phidias, Ictinus and Callicrates, Chersiphron, Vitruvius, Wilars of Cambray, William of Wykeham. He deplores her marked preference for an "animal pedigree."

But what is this "animal pedigree"? If a family pedigree of her ancestors, workingmen and burghers, had been kept, Paula would not have gloried in it, animal though it were. Hers was a predilection d'artiste.

And this because the aristocrat alone has occupied a position where he could afford to be, to be himself, to create himself, to live as himself. That is his eternal fascination. This is why the preference for him is a predilection d'artiste. The preference for the architect line would be a predilection de savant, the preference for the engineer pedigree would be a predilection d'economiste.

The predilection d'artiste — Hardy has it strongly, and it is rooted deeply in every imaginative human being. The glory of mankind has been to produce lives, to produce vivid, independent, individual men, not buildings or engineering works or even art, not even the public good. The glory of mankind is not in a host of secure, comfortable, law-abiding citizens, but in the few more fine, clear lives, beings, individuals, distinct, detached, single as may be from the public.

And these the artist of all time has chosen. Why, then, must the aristocrat always be condemned to death, in Hardy? Has the community come to consciousness in him,

as in the French Revolutionaries, determined to destroy all that is not the average? Certainly in the Wessex novels, all but the average people die. But why? Is there the germ of death in these more single, distinguished people, or has the artist himself a bourgeois taint, a jealous vindictive - ness that will now take revenge, now that the community, the average, has gained power over the aristocrat, the exception?

It is evident that both is true. Starting with the bourgeois morality, Hardy makes every exceptional person a villain, all exceptional or strong individual traits he holds up as weaknesses or wicked faults. So in *Desperate Remedies*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Hand of Ethelberta*, *The Return of the Native* (but in *The Trumpet-Major* there is an ironical dig in the ribs to this civic communal morality), *The Laodicean*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *Tess*, in steadily weakening degree. The blackest villain is Manston, the next, perhaps, Troy, the next Eustacia, and Wildeve, always becoming less villainous and more human. The first show of real sympathy, nearly conquering the bourgeois or commune morality, is for Eustacia, whilst the dark villain is becoming merely a weak, pitiable person in *Dr. Fitzpiers*. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* the dark villain is already almost the hero. There is a lapse in the maudlin, weak but not wicked *Dr. Fitzpiers*, duly condemned, *Alec d'Urberville* is not unlikable, and *Jude* is a complete tragic hero, at once the old Virgin Knight and Dark Villain. The condemnation gradually shifts over from the dark villain to the blond bourgeois virgin hero, from *Alec d'Urberville* to *Angel Clare*, till in *Jude* they are united and loved, though the preponderance is of a dark villain, now dark, beloved, passionate hero. The condemnation shifts over at last from the dark villain to the white virgin, the bourgeois in soul: from *Arabella* to *Sue*. Infinitely more subtle and sad is the condemnation at the end, but there it is: the virgin knight is hated with intensity, yet still loved; the white virgin, the beloved, is the arch-sinner against life at last, and the last note of hatred is against her.

It is a complete and devastating shift-over, it is a complete volte - face of moralities. Black does not become white, but it takes white's place as good; white remains white, but it is found bad. The old, communal morality is like a leprosy, a white sickness: the old, antisocial, individualist morality is alone on the side of life and health.

But yet, the aristocrat must die, all the way through: even *Jude*. Was the germ of death in him at the start? Or was he merely at outs with his times, the times of the Average in triumph? Would *Manston*, *Troy*, *Farmer Boldwood*, *Eustacia*, *de Stancy*, *Henchard*, *Alec d'Urberville*, *Jude* have been real heroes in heroic times, without tragedy? It seems as if *Manston*, *Boldwood*, *Eustacia*, *Henchard*, *Alec d'Urberville*, and almost *Jude*, might have been. In an heroic age they might have lived and more or less triumphed. But *Troy*, *Wildeve*, *de Stancy*, *Fitzpiers*, and *Jude* have something fatal in them. There is a rottenness at the core of them. The failure, the misfortune, or the tragedy, whichever it may be, was inherent in them: as it was in *Elfride*, *Lady Constantine*, *Marty South* in *The Woodlanders*, and *Tess*. They have all passionate natures, and in them all failure is inherent.

So that we have, of men, the noble Lord in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*,

Sergeant Troy, Wildeve, de Stancy, Fitzpiers, and Jude, all passionate, aristocratic males, doomed by their very being, to tragedy, or to misfortune in the end.

Of the same class among women are Elfride, Lady Constantine, Marty South, and Tess, all aristocratic, passionate, yet necessarily unfortunate females.

We have also, of men, Manston, Farmer Boldwood, Henchard, Alec d'Urberville, and perhaps Jude, all passionate, aristocratic males, who fell before the weight of the average, the lawful crowd, but who, in more primitive times, would have formed romantic rather than tragic figures.

Of women in the same class are Miss Aldclyffe, Eustacia, Lucetta, Mrs. Chaimond.

The third class, of bourgeois or average hero, whose purpose is to live and have his being in the community, contains the successful hero of *Desperate Remedies*, the unsuccessful but not very much injured two heroes of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the successful Gabriel Oak, the unsuccessful, left-preaching Clym, the unsuccessful but not very much injured astronomer of *Two on a Tower*, the successful Scotchman of *Casterbridge*, the unsuccessful and expired Giles Winter - borne of *The Woodlanders*, the arch-type, Angel Clare, and perhaps a little of Jude.

The companion women to these men are: the heroine of *Desperate Remedies*, Bathsheba, Thomasin, Paula, Henchard's daughter, Grace in *The Woodlanders*, and Sue.

This, then, is the moral conclusion drawn from the novels:

j. The physical individual is in the end an inferior thing which must fall before the community: Manston, Henchard, etc.

2. The physical and spiritual individualist is a fine thing which must fall because of its own isolation, because it is a sport, not in the true line of life: Jude, Tess, Lady Constantine.

3. The physical individualist and spiritual bourgeois or communist is a thing, finally, of ugly, undeveloped, non-distinguished or perverted physical instinct, and must fall physically. Sue, Angel Clare, Clym, Knight. It remains, however, fitted into the community.

4. The undistinguished, bourgeois or average being with average or civic virtues usually succeeds in the end. If he fails, he is left practically uninjured. If he expire during probation, he has flowers on his grave.

By individualist is meant, not a selfish or greedy person, anxious to satisfy appetites, but a man of distinct being, who must act in his own particular way to fulfil his own individual nature. He is a man who, being beyond the average, chooses to rule his own life to his own completion, and as such is an aristocrat.

The artist always has a predilection for him. But Hardy, like Tolstoi, is forced in the issue always to stand with the community in condemnation of the aristocrat. He cannot help himself, but must stand with the average against the exception, he must, in his ultimate judgment, represent the interests of humanity, or the community as a whole, and rule out the individual interest.

To do this, however, he must go against himself. His private sympathy is always with the individual against the community: as is the case with the artist. Therefore he will create a more or less blameless individual and, making him seek his own fulfilment, his highest aim, will show him destroyed by the community, or by that in himself which represents the community, or by some close embodiment of the civic idea. Hence the pessimism. To do this, however, he must select his individual with a definite weakness, a certain coldness of temper, inelastic, a certain inevitable and unconquerable adhesion to the community.

This is obvious in Troy, Clym, Tess, and Jude. They have naturally distinct individuality but, as it were, a weak life-flow, so that they cannot break away from the old adhesion, they cannot separate themselves from the mass which bore them, they cannot detach themselves from the common. Therefore they are pathetic rather than tragic figures. They have not the necessary strength: the question of their unfortunate end is begged in the beginning.

Whereas Oedipus or Agamemnon or Clytemnestra or Orestes, or Macbeth or Hamlet or Lear, these are destroyed by their own conflicting passions. Out of greed for adventure, a desire to be off, Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia: moreover he has his love-affairs outside Troy: and this brings on him death from the mother of his daughter, and from his pledged wife. Which is the working of the natural law. Hamlet, a later Orestes, is commanded by the Erinyes of his father to kill his mother and his uncle\*: but his maternal filial feeling tears him. It is almost the same tragedy as Orestes, without any goddess or god to grant peace.

In these plays, conventional morality is transcended. The action is between the great, single, individual forces in the nature of Man, not between the dictates of the community and the original passion. The Commandment says: "Thou shalt not kill." But doubtless Mac - \* See note 21, p. 67.

Macbeth had killed many a man who was in his way. Certainly Hamlet suffered no qualms about killing the old man behind the curtain. Why should he? But when Macbeth killed Duncan, he divided himself in twain, into two hostile parts. It was all in his own soul and blood: it was nothing outside himself: as it was, really, with Clym, Troy, Tess, Jude. Troy would probably have been faithful to his little unfortunate person, had she been a lady, and had he not felt himself cut off from society in his very being, whilst all the time he cleaved to it. Tess allowed herself to be condemned, and asked for punishment from Angel Clare. Why? She had done nothing particularly, or at least irrevocably, unnatural, were her life young and strong. But she sided with the community's condemnation of her. And almost the bitterest, most pathetic, deepest part of Jude's misfortune was his failure to obtain admission to Oxford, his failure to gain his place and standing in the world's knowledge, in the world's work.

There is a lack of sternness, there is a hesitating betwixt life and public opinion, which diminishes the Wessex novels from the rank of pure tragedy. It is not so much the eternal, immutable laws of being which are transgressed, it is not that vital life-forces are set in conflict with each other, bringing almost inevitable tragedy - yet not



necessarily death, as we see in the most splendid Aeschylus. It is, in Wessex, that the individual succumbs to what is in its shallowest, public opinion, in its deepest, the human compact by which we live together, to form a community.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Axle and the Wheel of Eternity

It is agreed, then, that we will do a little work — two or three hours a day — labouring for the community, to produce the ample necessities of life. Then we will be free.

Free for what? The terror of the ordinary man is lest leisure should come upon him. His eternal, divine instinct is to free himself from the labour of providing what we call the necessities of life, in the common sense. And his personal horror is of finding himself with nothing to do.

What does a flower do? It provides itself with the necessities of life, it propagates itself in its seeds, and it has its fling all in one. Out from the crest and summit comes the fiery self, the flower, gorgeously.

This is the fall into the future, like a waterfall that tumbles over the edge of the known world into the unknown. The little, individualised river of life issues out of its source, its little seed, its wellhead, flows on and on, making its course as it goes, establishing a bed of green tissue and stalks, flows on, and draws near the edge where all things disappear. Then the stream divides. Part hangs back, recovers itself, and lies quiescent, in seed. The rest flows over, the rest dips into the unknown, and is gone.

The same with man. He has to build his own tissue and form, serving the community for the means wherewithal, and then he comes to the climax. And at the climax, simultaneously, he begins to roll to the edge of the unknown, and, in the same moment, lays down his seed for security's sake. That is the secret of life: it contains the lesser motions in the greater. In love, a man, a woman, flows on to the very furthest edge of known feeling, being, and out beyond the furthest edge: and taking the superb and supreme risk, deposits a security of life in the womb.

Am I here to deposit security, continuance of life in the flesh? Or is that only a minor function in me? Is it not merely a preservative measure, procreation? It is the same for me as for any man or woman. That she bear children is not a woman's significance. But that she bear herself, that is her supreme and risky fate: that she drive on to the edge of the unknown, and beyond. She may leave children behind, for security. It is arranged so.

It is so arranged that the very act which carries us out into the unknown shall probably deposit seed for security to be left behind. But the act, called the sexual act, is not for the depositing of the seed. It is for leaping off into the unknown, as from a cliff's edge, like Sappho into the sea.

It is so plain in my plant, the poppy. Out of the living river, a fine silver stream detaches itself, and flows through a green bed which it makes for itself. It flows on and on, till it reaches the crest beyond which is ethereal space. Then, in tiny, concentrated pools, a little hangs back, in reservoirs that shall later seal themselves up as quick hut silent sources. But the whole, almost the whole, splashes splendidly over, is seen in red just as it drips into darkness, and disappears.

So with a man in the act of love. A little of him, a very little, flows into the tiny quick pool to start another source. But the whole spills over in waste to the beyond.

And only at high flood should the little hollows fill to make a new source. Only when the whole rises to pour in a great wave over the edge of all that has been, should the little seed-wells run full. In the woman lie the reservoirs. And when there comes the flood-tide, then the dual stream of woman and man, as the whole two waves meet and break to foam, bursting into the unknown, these wells and fountain heads are filled.

Thus man and woman pass beyond this Has-Been and this is when the two waves meet in flood and heave over and out of Time, leaving their dole to Time deposited. It is for this man needs liberty, and to prepare him for this he must use his leisure.

Always so that the wave of his being shall meet the other wave, that the two shall make flood which shall flow beyond the face of the earth, must a man live. Always the dual wave. Where does my poppy spill over in red, but there where the two streams have flowed and clasped together, where the pollen stream clashes into the pistil stream, where the male clashes into the female, and the two heave out in utterance. There, in the seethe of male and female, seeds are filled as the flood rises to pour out in a red fall. There, only there, where the male seethes against the female, comes the transcendent flame and the filling of seeds.

In plants where the male stream and the female stream flow separately, as in dog's mercury or in the oak tree, where is the flame? It is not. But in my poppy, where at the summit the two streams, which till now have run deviously, scattered down many ways, at length flow concentrated together, and the pure male stream meets the pure female stream in a heave and an overflowing: there, there is the flower indeed.

And this is happiness: that my poppy gather his material and build his tissue till he has led the stream of life in him on and on to the end, to the whirlpool at the summit, where the male seethes and whirls in incredible speed upon the pivot of the female, where the two are one, as axle and wheel are one, and the motions travel out to infinity. There, where he is a complete full stream, travelling with and upon the other complete female stream, the twain make a flood over the face of all the earth, which shall pass away from the earth. And since I am a man with a body of flesh, I shall contain the seed to make sure this continuing of life in this body of flesh, I shall contain the seed for the woman of flesh in whom to beg<jt my children.

But this is an incorporate need: it is really no separate or distinct need. The clear, full, inevitable need in me is that I, the male, meet the female stream which shall carry mine so that the two run to fullest flood, to furthest motion. It is no primary need of

the begetting of children. It is the arriving at my highest mark of activity, of being; it is her arrival at her intensest self.

Why do we consider the male stream and the female stream as being only in the flesh? It is something other than physical. The physical, what we call in its narrowest meaning, the sex, is only a definite indication of the great male and female duality and unity. It is that part which is settled into an almost mechanized system of detaining some of the life which otherwise sweeps on and is lost in the full adventure.

There is female apart from Woman, as we know, and male apart from Man. There is male and female in my poppy plant, and this is neither man nor woman. It is part of the great twin river, eternally each branch resistant to the other, eternally running each to meet the other.

It may be said that male and female are terms relative only to physical sex. But this is the consistent indication of the greater meaning. Do we for a moment believe that a man is a man and a woman a woman, merely according to, and for the purpose of, the begetting of children? If there were organic reproduction of children, would there be no distinction between man and woman? Should we all be asexual?

We know that our view is partial. Man is man, and woman is woman, whether no children be born any more for ever. As long as time lasts, man is man. In eternity, where infinite motion becomes rest, the two may be one. But until eternity man is man. Until eternity, there shall be this separateness, this interaction of man upon woman, male upon female, this suffering, this delight, this imperfection. In eternity, maybe, the action may be perfect. In infinity, the spinning of the wheel upon the hub may be a friction - less whole, complete, an unbroken sleep that is infinite, motion that is utter rest, a duality that is sheerly one.

But except in infinity, everything of life is male or female, distinct. But the consciousness, that is of both: and the flower, that is of both. Every impulse that stirs in life, every single impulse, is either male or female, distinct, except the being of the complete flower, of the complete consciousness, which is two in one, fused. These are infinite and eternal. The consciousness, what we call the truth, is eternal, beyond change or motion, beyond time or limit.

But that which is not conscious, which is Time, and Life, that is our field.

## CHAPTER VII

### Of Being and Not-Being

In life, then, no new thing has ever arisen, or can arise, save out of the impulse of the male upon the female, the female upon the male. The interaction of the male and female spirit begot the wheel, the plough, and the first utterance that was made on the face of the earth.

As in my flower, the pistil, female, is the centre and swivel, the stamens, male, are close-clasping the hub, and the blossom is the great motion outwards into the

unknown, so in a man's life, the female is the swivel and centre on which he turns closely, producing his movement. And the female to a man is the obvious form, a woman. And normally, the centre, the turning pivot, of a man's life is his sex-life, the centre and swivel of his being is the sexual act. Upon this turns the whole rest of his life, from this emanates every motion he betrays. And that this should be so, every man makes his effort. The supreme effort each man makes, for himself, is the effort to clasp as a hub the woman who shall be the axle, compelling him to true motion, without aberration. The supreme desire of every man is for mating with a woman, such that the sexual act be the closest, most concentrated motion in his life, closest upon the axle, the prime movement of himself, of which all the rest of his motion is a continuance in the same kind. And the vital desire of every woman is that she shall be clasped as axle to the hub of the man, that his motion shall portray her motionlessness, convey her static being into movement, complete and radiating out into infinity, starting from her stable eternity, and reaching eternity again, after having covered the whole of time.

This is complete movement: man upon woman, woman within man. This is the desire, the achieving of which, frictionless, is impossible, yet for which every man will try, with greater or less intensity, achieving more or less success.

This is the desire of every man, that his movement, the manner of his walk, and the supremest effort of his mind, shall be the pulsation outwards from stimulus received in the sex, in the sexual act, that the woman of his body shall be the begetter of his whole life, that she, in her female spirit, shall beget in him his idea, his motion, himself. When a man shall look at the work of his hands, that has succeeded, and shall know that it was begotten in him by the woman of his body, then he shall know what fundamental happiness is. Just as when a woman shall look at her child, that was begotten in her by the man of her spirit, she shall know what it is to be happy, fundamentally. But when a woman looks at her children that were begotten in her by a strange man, not the man of her spirit, she must know what it is to be happy with anguish, and to love with pain. So with a man who looks at his work which was not begotten in him by the woman of his body. He rejoices, troubles, and suffers an agony like death which contains resurrection.

For while, ideally, the soul of the woman possesses the soul of the man, procreates it and makes it big with new idea, motion, in the sexual act, yet, most commonly, it is not so. Usually, sex is only functional, a matter of relief or sensation, equivalent to eating or drinking or passing of excrement.

Then, if a man must produce work, he must produce it to some other than the woman of his body: as, in the same case, if a woman produce children, it must be to some other than the man of her desire.

In this case, a man must seek elsewhere than in woman for the female to possess his soul, to fertilize him and make him try with increase. And the female exists in much more than his woman. And the finding of it for himself gives a man his vision, his God.

And since no man and no woman can get a perfect mate, nor obtain complete satisfaction at all times, each man according to his need must have a God, an idea,

that shall compel him to the movement of his own being. And then, when he lies with his woman, the man may concurrently be with God, and so get increase of his soul. Or he may have communion with his God apart and averse from the woman.

Every man seeks in woman for that which is stable, eternal. And if, under his motion, this break down in her, in the particular woman, so that she be no axle for his hub, but be driven away from herself, then he must seek elsewhere for his stability, for the centre to himself.

Then either he must seek another woman, or he must seek to make conscious his desire to find a symbol, to create and define in his consciousness the object of his desire, so that he may have it at will, for his own complete satisfaction.

In doing this latter, he seeks with his desire the female elsewhere than in the particular woman. Since everything that is, is either male or female or both, whether it be clouds or sunshine or hills or trees or a fallen feather from a bird, therefore in other things and in such things man seeks for his complement. And he must at last always call God the unutterable and the inexpressible, the unknowable, because it is his unrealised complement.

But all gods have some attributes in common. They are the unexpressed Absolute: eternal, infinite, unchanging. Eternal, Infinite, Unchanging: the High God of all Humanity is this.

Yet man, the male, is essentially a thing of movement and time and change. Until he is stirred into thought, he is complete in movement and change. But once he thinks, he must have the Absolute, the Eternal, Infinite, Unchanging.

And Man is stirred into thought by dissatisfaction, or unsatisfac - tion, as heat is born of friction. Consciousness is the same effort in male and female to obtain perfect frictionless interaction, perfect as Nirvana. It is the reflex both of male and female from defect in their dual motion. Being reflex from the dual motion, consciousness contains the two in one, and is therefore in itself Absolute.

And desire is the admitting of deficiency. And the embodiment of the object of desire reveals the original defect or the defaulture. So that the attributes of God will reveal that which man lacked and yearned for in his living. And these attributes are always, in their essence, Eternality, Infinity, Immutability.

And these are the qualities man feels in woman, as a principle. Let a man walk alone on the face of the earth, and he feels himself like a loose speck blown at random. Let him have a woman to whom he belongs, and he will feel as though he had a wall to back up against; even though the woman be mentally a fool. No man can endure the sense of space, of chaos, on four sides of himself. It drives him mad. He must be able to put his back to the wall. And this wall is his woman.

From her he has a sense of stability. She supplies him with the feeling of Immutability, Permanence, Eternality. He himself is a raging activity, change potent within change. He dare not even conceive of himself, save when he is sure of the woman permanent beneath him, beside him. He dare not leap into the unknown save from the

sure stability of the unyielding female. Like a wheel, if he turn without an axle, his motion is wandering neutrality.

So always, the fear of a man is that he shall find no axle for his motion, that no woman can centralise his activity. And always, the fear of a woman is that she can find no hub for her stability, no man to convey into motion her full stability. Either the particular woman breaks down before the stress of the man, becomes erratic herself, no stay, no centre; or else the man is insufficiently active to carry out the static principle of his female, of his woman.

So life consists in the dual form of the Will-to-Motion and the Will-to-Inertia, and everything we see and know and are is the resultant of these two Wills. But the One Will, of which they are dual forms, that is as yet unthinkable.

And according as the Will-to-Motion predominates in race, or the Will-to-Inertia, so must that race's conception of the One Will enlarge the attributes which are lacking or deficient in the race.

Since there is never to be found a perfect balance or accord of the two Wills, but always one triumphs over the other, in life, according to our knowledge, so must the human effort be always to recover balance, to symbolize and so to possess that which is missing. Which is the religious effort of Man.

There seems to be a fundamental, insuperable division, difference, between man's artistic effort and his religious effort. The two efforts are mixed with each other, as they are revealed, but all the while they remain two, not one, all the while they are separate, single, never compounded.

The religious effort is to conceive, to symbolize that which the human soul, or the soul of the race, lacks, that which it is not, and which it requires, yearns for. It is the portrayal of that complement to the race-life which is known only as a desire: it is the symbolizing of a great desire, the statement of the desire in terms which have no meaning apart from the desire.

Whereas the artistic effort is the effort of utterance, the supreme effort of expressing knowledge, that which has been for once, that which was enacted, where the two wills met and intersected and left their result, complete for the moment. The artistic effort is the portraying of a moment of union between the two wills, according to knowledge. The religious effort is the portrayal or symbolizing of the eternal union of the two wills, according to aspiration. But in this eternal union, the features of one or the other Will are always salient.

The dual Will we call the Will-to-Motion and the Will-to-Inertia. These cause the whole of life, from the ebb and flow of a wave, to the stable equilibrium of the whole universe, from birth and being and knowledge to death and decay and forgetfulness. And the Will - to-Motion we call the male will or spirit, the Will-to-Inertia the female. This will to inertia is not negative, and the other positive. Rather, according to some conception, is Motion negative and Inertia, the static, geometric idea, positive. That is according to the point of view.

According to the race-conception of God, we can see whether in that race the male or the female element triumphs, becomes predominant.

But it must first be seen that the division into male and female is arbitrary, for the purpose of thought. The rapid motion of the rim of a wheel is the same as the perfect rest at the centre of the wheel. How can one divide them? Motion and rest are the same, when seen completely. Motion is only true of things outside oneself. When I am in a moving train, strictly, the land moves under me, I and the train are still. If I were both land and train, if  $f$  were large enough, there would be no motion. And if I were very very small, every fibre of the train would be in motion for me, the point of rest would be infinitely reduced.

How can one say, there is motion and rest? If all things move together in one infinite motion, that is rest. Rest and motion are only two degrees of motion, or two degrees of rest. Infinite motion and infinite rest are the same thing. It is obvious. Since, if motion were infinite, there would be no standing-ground from which to regard it as motion. And the same with rest.

It is easier to conceive that there is no such thing as rest. For a thing to us at rest is only a thing travelling at our own rate of motion: from another point of view, it is a thing moving at the lowest rate of motion we can recognize. But this table on which I write, which I call at rest, I know is really in motion.

So there is no such thing as rest. There is only infinite motion. But infinite motion must contain every degree of rest. So that motion and rest are the same thing. Rest is the lowest speed of motion which I recognize under normal conditions.

So how can one speak of a Will-to-Motion or a Will-to-Inertia, when there is no such thing as rest or motion? And yet, starting from any given degree of motion, and travelling forward in ever - increasing degree, one comes to a state of speed which covers the whole of space instantaneously, and is therefore rest, utter rest. \*nd starting from the same speed and reducing the motion infinitely, one reaches the same condition of utter rest. And the direction or method of approach to this infinite rest is different to our conception. And only travelling upon the slower, does the swifter reach the infinite rest of inertia: which is the same as the infinite rest of speed, the two things having united to surpass our comprehension.

So we may speak of Male and Female, of the Will-to-Motion and of the Will-to-Inertia. And so, looking at a race, we can say whether the Will-to-Inertia or the Will-to-Motion has gained the ascendancy, and in which direction this race tends to disappear.

For it is as if life were a double cycle, of men and women, facing opposite ways, travelling opposite ways, revolving upon each other, man reaching forward with outstretched hand, woman reaching forward with outstretched hand, and neither able to move till their hands have grasped each other, when they draw towards each other from opposite directions, draw nearer and nearer, each travelling in his separate cycle, till the two are abreast, and side by side, until even they pass on again, away from each other, travelling their opposite ways to the same infinite goal.

Each travelling to the same goal of infinity, but entering it from the opposite ends of space. And man, remembering what lies behind him, how the hands met and grasped and tore apart, utters his tragic art. Then moreover, facing the other way into the unknown, conscious of the tug of the goal at his heart, he hails the woman coming from the place whither he is travelling, searches in her for signs, and makes his God from the suggestion he receives, -as she advances.

Then she draws near, and he is full of delight. She is so close, that they touch, and then there is a joyful utterance of religious art. They are torn apart, and he gives the cry of tragedy, and goes on remembering, till the dance slows down and breaks, and there is only a crowd.

It is as if this cycle dance where the female makes the chain with the male becomes ever wider, ever more extended, and the further they get from the source, from the infinity, the more distinct and 'nindividual do the dancers become. At first they are only figures. In the Jewish cycle, David, with his hand stretched forth, cannot recognize the woman, the female. He can only recognize some likeness himself. For both he and she have not danced very far from the source and origin where they were both one. Though she is in the gross utterly other than he, yet she is not very distinct from him. And he hails her Father, Almighty, God, Beloved, Strength, hails her in his own image. And with hand outstretched, fearful and passionate, he reaches to her. But it is Solomon who touches her hand with rapture and joy, and cries out his gladness in the Song of Songs. Who is the Shulamite but God come close, for a moment, into physical contact? The Song may be a drama: it is still religious art. It is the development of the Psalms. It is utterly different from the Book of Job, which is remembrance.

Always the threefold utterance: the declaring of the God seen approaching, the rapture of contact, the anguished joy of remembrance, when the meeting has passed into separation. Such is religion, religious art, and tragic art.

But the chain is not broken by the letting-go of hands. It is broken by the overbearing of one cycle by the other. David, when he lay with a woman, lay also with God; Solomon, when he lay with a woman, knew God and possessed Him and was possessed by Him. For in Solomon and in the Woman, the male clasped hands with the female.

But in the terrible moment when they should break free again, the male in the Jew was too weak, the female overbore him. He remained in the grip of the female. The force of inertia overpowered him, and he remained remembering. But very true had been David's vision, and very real Solomon's contact. So that the living thing was conserved, kept always alive and powerful, but restrained, restricted, partial.

For centuries, the Jew knew God as David had perceived Him, as Solomon had known Him. It was the God of the body, the rudimentary God of physical laws and physical functions. The Jew lived on in physical contact with God. Each of his physical functions he shared with God; he kept his body always like the body of a bride ready to serve the bridegroom. He had become the servant of his God, the female, passive. The female in him predominated, held him passive, set utter bounds to his movement, to his roving, kept his mind as a slave to guard intact the state of sensation wherein he found



himself. Which persisted century after century, the secret, scrupulous voluptuousness of the Jew, become almost self - voluptuousness, engaged in the consciousness of his own physique, or in the extracted existence of his own physique. His own physique included the woman, naturally, since the man's body included the woman's, the woman's the man's. His religion had become a physical morality, deep and fundamental, but entirely of one sort. Its jiving element was this scrupulous physical voluptuousness, wonderful and satisfying in a large measure.

The conscious element was a resistance to the male or active principle. Being female, occupied in self-feeling, in realisation of the age, in submission to sensation, the Jewish temper was antagonistic to the active male principle, which would deny the age and refuse sensation, seeking ever to make transformation, desiring to be an instrument of change, to register relationships. So this race recognized only male sins: it conceived only sins of commission, sins of change, of transformation. In the whole of the Ten Commandments, it is the female who speaks. It is natural to the male to make the male God a God of benevolence and mercy, susceptible to pity. Such is the male conception of God. It was the female spirit which conceived the saying: "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me."

It was a female conception. For is not man the child of woman? Does she not see in him her body, even more vividly than in her own? Man is more her body to her even than her own body. For the whole of flesh is hers. Woman knows that she is the fountain of all flesh. And her pride is that the body of man is of her issue. She can see the man as the One Being, for she knows he is of her issue.

It were a male conception to see God with a manifold Being, even though He be One God. For man is ever keenly aware of the multiplicity of things, and their diversity. But woman, issuing from the other end of infinity, coming forth as the flesh, manifest in sensation, is obsessed by the oneness of things, the One Being, undifferentiated. Man, on the other hand, coming forth as the desire to single out one thing from another, to reduce each thing to its intrinsic self by process of elimination, cannot but be possessed by the infinite diversity and contrariety in life, by a passionate sense of isolation, and a poignant yearning to be at one.

That is the fundamental of female conception: that there is but One Being: this Being necessarily female. Whereas man conceives a manifold Being, the supreme of which is male. And owing to the complete Monism of the female, which is essentially static, self - sufficient, the expression of God has been left always to the male, so that the supreme God is forever He.

Nevertheless, in the God of the Ancient Jew, the female has triumphed. That which was born of Woman, that is indeed the God of the Old Testament. So utterly is he born of Woman that he scarcely needs to consider Woman: she is there unuttered.

And the Jewish race, continued in this Monism, stable, circumscribed, utterly unadventurous, utterly self-preservative, yet very deeply living, until the present century.

But Christ rose from the suppressed male spirit of Judea, and uttered a new commandment: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. He repudiated Woman: "Who is my mother?" He lived the male life utterly apart from woman.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" — that is the great utterance against Monism, and the compromise with Monism. It does not say "Thou shalt love thy neighbour because he is thyself," as the ancient Jew would have said. It commands "Thou shalt recognize thy neighbour's distinction from thyself, and allow his separate being, because he also is of God, even though he be almost a contradiction to thyself."

Such is the cry of anguish of Christianity: that man is separate from his brother, separate, maybe, even, in his measure, inimical to him. This the Jew had to learn. The old Jewish creed of identity, that Eve was identical with Adam, and all men children of one single parent, and therefore, in the absolute, identical, this must be destroyed.

Cunning and according to female suggestion is the story of the Creation: that Eve was born from the single body of Adam, without intervention of sex, both issuing from one flesh, as a child at birth seems to issue from one flesh of its mother. And the birth of Jesus is the retaliation to this: a child is born, not to the flesh, but to the spirit: and you, Woman, shall conceive, not to the body, but to the Word. "In the beginning was the Word," says the New Testament.

The great assertion of the Male was the New Testament, and, in its beauty, the Union of Male and Female. Christ was born of Woman, begotten by the Holy Spirit. This was why Christ should be called the Son of Man. For He was born of Woman. He was born to the Spirit, the Word, the Man, the Male.

And the assertion entailed the sacrifice of the Son of Woman. The body of Christ must be destroyed, that of Him which was Woman must be put to death, to testify that He was Spirit, that He was Male, that He was Man, without any womanly part.

So the other great camp was made. In the creation, Man was driven forth from Paradise to labour for his body and for the woman. All was lost for the knowledge of the flesh. Out of the innocence and Nirvana of Paradise came, with the Fall, the consciousness of the flesh, the body of man and woman came into very being.

This was the first great movement of Man: the movement into the conscious possession of a body. And this consciousness of the body came through woman. And this knowledge, this possession, this enjoyment, was jealously guarded. In spite of all criticism and attack, Job remained true to this knowledge, to the utter belief in his body, in the God of his body. Though the Woman herself turned tempter, he remained true to it.

The senses, sensation, sensuousness, these things which are in - controvertibly Me, these are my God, these belong to God, said Job. And he persisted, and he was right. They issue from God on the female side.

But Christ came with His contradiction: That which is Not-Me, that is God. All is God, except that which I know immediately as Myself. First I must lose Myself, then I find God. Ye must be born again.

Unto what must man be born again? Unto knowledge of his own separate existence, as in Woman he is conscious of his own incorporate existence. Man must be born unto knowledge of his own distinct identity, as in woman he was born to knowledge of his identification with the Whole. Man must be born to the knowledge, that in the whole being he is nothing, as he was bom to know that in the whole being he was all. He must be born to the knowledge that other things exist beside himself, and utterly apart from all, and before he can exist himself as a separate identity, he must allow and recognize their distinct existence. Whereas previously, on the more female Jewish side, it had been said: "All that exists is as Me. We are all one family, out of one God, having one being."

With Christ ended the Monism of the Jew. God, the One God, became a Trinity, three-fold. He was the Father, the All-containing; He was the Son, the Word, the Changer, the Separator; and He was the Spirit, the Comforter, the Reconciliator between the Two.

And according to its conditions, Christianity has, since Christ, worshipped the Father or the Son, the one more than the other. Out of an over-female race came the male utterance of Christ. Throughout Europe, the suppressed, inadequate male desire, both in men and women, stretched to the idea of Christ, as a woman should stretch out her hands to a man. But Greece, in whom the female was overridden and neglected, became silent. So through the Middle Ages went on in Europe this fight against the body, against the senses, against this continual triumph of the senses. The worship of Europe, predominantly female, all through the medieval period, was to the male, to the incorporeal Christ, as a bridegroom, whilst the art produced was the collective, stupendous, emotional gesture of the Cathedrals, where a blind, collective impulse rose into concrete form. It was the profound, sensuous desire and gratitude which produced an art of architecture, whose essence is in utter stability, of movement resolved and centralised, of absolute movement, that has no relationship with any other form, that admits the existence of no other form, but is conclusive, propounding in its sum the One Being of All.

There was, however, in the Cathedrals, already the denial of the Monism which the Whole uttered. All the little figures, the gargoyles, the imps, the human faces, whilst subordinated within the Great Conclusion of the Whole, still, from their obscurity, jeered their mockery of the Absolute, and declared for multiplicity, polygeny. But all medieval art has the static, architectural, absolute quality, in the main, even whilst in detail it is differentiated and distinct. Such is Diirer, for example. When his art succeeds, it conveys the sense of Absolute Movement, movement proper only to the given form, and not relative to other movements. It portrays the Object, with its Movement content, and not the movement which contains in one of its moments the Object.

It is only when the Greek stimulus is received, with its addition of male influence, its additior. of relative movement, its revelation of movement driving the object, the highest revelation which had yet been made, that medieval art became complete Re-

naissance art, that there was the union and fusion of the male and female spirits, creating a perfect expression for the time being.

During the medieval times, the God had been Christ on the Cross, the Body Crucified, the flesh destroyed, the Virgin Chastity combating Desire. Such had been the God of the Aspiration. But the God of Knowledge, of that which they acknowledged as themselves, had been the Father, the God of the Ancient Jew.

But now, with the Renaissance, the God of Aspiration became in accord with the God of Knowledge, and there was a great outburst of joy, and the theme was not Christ Crucified, but Christ born of Woman, the Infant Saviour and the Virgin; or of the Annunciation, the Spirit embracing the flesh in pure embrace.

This was the perfect union of male and female, in this the hands met and clasped, and never was such a manifestation of Joy. This Joy reached its highest utterance perhaps in Botticelli, as in his Nativity of the Saviour, in our National Gallery. Still there is the architectural composition, but what an outburst of movement from the source of motion. The Infant Christ is a centre, a radiating spark of movement, the Virgin is bowed in Absolute Movement, the earthly father, Joseph, is folded up, like a clod or a boulder, obliterated, whilst the Angels fly round in ecstasy, embracing and linking hands.

The bodily father is almost obliterated. As balance to the Virgin Mother he is there, presented, but silenced, only the movement of his loin conveyed. He is not the male. The male is the radiant infant, over which the mother leans. They two are the ecstatic centre, the complete origin, the force which is both centrifugal and centripetal.

This is the joyous utterance of the Renaissance, to which we listen for ever. Perhaps there is a melancholy in Botticelli, a pain of Woman mated to the Spirit, a nakedness of the Aphrodite issued exposed to the clear elements, to the fleshlessness of the male. But still it is joy transparent over pain. It is the utterance of complete, perfect religious art, unwilling, perhaps, when the true male and the female meet. In the Song of Solomon, the female was preponderant, the male was impure, not single. But here the heart is satisfied for the moment, there is a moment of perfect being.

And it seems to be so in other religions: the most perfect moment centres round the mother and the male child, whilst the physical male is deified separately, as a bull, perhaps.

After Botticelli came Correggio. In him the development from gesture to articulate expression was continued, unconsciously, the movement from the symbolic to the representation went on in him, from the object to the animate creature. The Virgin and Child are no longer symbolic, in Correggio: they no longer belong to religious art, but are distinctly secular. The effort is to render the living person, the individual perceived, and not the great aspiration, or an idea. Art now passes from the naive, intuitive stage to the state of knowledge. The female impulse, to feel and to live in feeling, is now embraced by the male impulse — to know, and almost carried off by knowledge. But not yet. Still Correggio is unconscious, in his art; he is in that state of elation which represents the marriage of male and female, with the pride of the male perhaps pre-

dominant. In the Madonna with the Basket, of the National Gallery, the Madonna is most thoroughly a wife, the child is most triumphantly a man's child. The Father is the origin. He is seen labouring in the distance, the true support of this mother and child. There is no Virgin worship, none of the mystery of woman. The artist has reached to a sufficiency of knowledge. He knows his woman. What he is now concerned with is not her great female mystery, but her individual character. The picture has become almost lyrical — it is the woman as known by the man, it is the woman as he has experienced her. But still she is also unknown, also she is the mystery. But Correggio's chief business is to portray the woman of his own experience and knowledge, rather than the woman of his aspiration and fear. The artist is now concerned with his own experience rather than with his own desire. The female is now more or less within the power and reach of the male. But still she is there, to centralise and control his movement, still the two react and are not resolved. But for the man, the woman is henceforth part of a stream of movement, she is herself a stream of movement, carried along with himself. He sees everything as motion, retarded perhaps by the flesh, or by the stable being of this life in the body. But still man is held and pivoted by the object, even if he tend to wear down the pivot to a nothingness.

Thus Correggio leads on to the whole of modern art, where the male still wrestles with the female, in unconscious struggle, but where he gains ever gradually over her, reducing her to nothing. Ever there is more and more vibration, movement, and less and less stability, centralization. Ever man is more and more occupied with his own experience, with his own overpowering of resistance, ever less and less aware of any resistance in the object, less and less aware of any stability, less and less aware of anything unknown, more and more preoccupied with that which he knows, till his knowledge tends to become an abstraction, because it is limited by no unknown.

It is the contradiction of Diirer, as the Parthenon Frieze was the contradiction of Babylon and Egypt. To Diirer woman did not exist; even as to a child at the breast, woman does not exist separately. She is the overwhelming condition of life. She was to Diirer that which possessed him, and not that which he possessed. Her being overpowered him, he could only see in her terms, in terms of stability and of stable, incontrovertible being. He is overpowered by the vast assurance at whose breasts he is suckled, and, as if astounded, he grasps at the unknown. He knows that he rests within some great stability, and, marvelling at his own power for movement, touches the objects of this stability, becomes familiar with them. It is a question of the starting-point. Diirer starts with a sense of that which he does not know and would discover; Correggio with the sense of that which he has known, and would re-create.

And in the Renaissance, after Botticelli, the motion begins to divide in these two directions. The hands no longer clasp in perfect union, but one clasp overbears the other. Botticelli develops to Correggio and to Andrea del Sarto, develops forward to Rembrandt, and Rembrandt to the Impressionists, to the male extreme of motion. But Botticelli, on the other hand, becomes Raphael, Raphael and Michelangelo.

In Raphael we see the stable, architectural developing out further, and becoming the geometric: the denial or refusal of all movement. In the Madonna degli Ansdei the child is drooping, the mother stereotyped, the picture geometric, static, abstract. When there is any union of male and female, there is no goal of abstraction: the abstract is used in place, as a means of a real union. The goal of the male impulse is the announcement of motion, endless motion, endless diversity, endless change. The goal of the female impulse is the announcement of infinite oneness, of infinite stability. When the two are working in combination, as they must in life, there is, as it were, a dual motion, centrifugal for the male, fleeing abroad, away from the centre, outward to infinite vibration, and centripetal for the female, fleeing in to the eternal centre of rest. A combination of the two movements produces a sum of motion and stability at once, satisfying. But in life there tends always to be more of one than the other. The Cathedrals, Fra Angelico, frighten us or [bore] us with their final annunciation of centrality and stability. We want to escape. The influence is too female for us.

In Botticelli, the architecture remains, but there is the wonderful movement outwards, the joyous, if still clumsy, escape from the centre. His religious pictures tend to be stereotyped, resigned. The Primavera herself is static, melancholy, a stability become almost a negation. It is as if the female, instead of being the great, unknown Positive, towards which all must flow, became the great Negative, the centre which denied all motion. And the Aphrodite stands there not as a force, to draw all things unto her, but as the naked, almost unwilling pivot, as the keystone which endured all thrust and remained static. But still there is the joy, the great motion around her, sky and sea, all the elements and living, joyful forces.

Raphael, however, seeks and finds nothing there. He goes to the centre to ask: "What is this mystery we are all pivoted upon?" To Fra Angelico it was the unknown Omnipotent. It was a goal, to which man travelled inevitably. It was the desired, the end of the long horizontal journey. But to Raphael it was the negation. Still he is a seeker, an aspirant, still his art is religious art. But the Virgin, the essential female, was to him a negation, a neutrality. Such must have been his vivid experience. But still he seeks her. Still he desires the stability, the positive keystone which grasps the arch together, not the negative keystone neutralising the thrust, itself a neutrality. And reacting upon his own desire, the male reacting upon itself, he creates the Abstraction, the geometric conception of life. The fundament of all is the geometry of all. Which is the Plato conception. And the desire is to formulate the complete geometry.

So Raphael, knowing that his desire reaches out beyond the range of possible experience, sensible that he will not find satisfaction in any one woman, sensible that the female impulse does not, or cannot unite in him with the male impulse sufficiently to create a stability, an eternal moment of truth for him, of realisation, closes his eyes and his mind upon experience, and abstracting himself, reacting upon himself, produces the geometric conception of the fundamental truth, departs from religion, from any God idea, and becomes philosophic.

Raphael is the real end of Renaissance in Italy; almost he is the real end of Italy, as Plato was the real end of Greece. When the God-idea passes into the philosophic or geometric idea, then there is a sign that the male impulse has thrown the female impulse, and has recoiled upon itself, has become abstract, asexual.

Michelangelo, however, too physically passionate, containing too much of the female in his body ever to reach the geometric abstraction, unable to abstract himself, and at the same time, like Raphael, unable to find any woman who in her being should resist him and reserve still some unknown from him, strives to obtain his own physical satisfaction in his art. He is obsessed by the desire of the body. And he must react upon himself to produce his own bodily satisfaction, aware that he can never obtain it through woman. He must seek the moment, the consummation, the keystone, the pivot, in his own flesh. For his own body is both male and female.

Raphael and Michelangelo are men of different nature placed in the same position and resolving the same question in their several ways. Socrates and Plato are a parallel pair, and, in another degree, Tolstoi and Turgeniev, and, perhaps, St. Paul and St. John the Evangelist, and) perhaps, Shakespeare and Shelley.

The body it is which attaches us directly to the female. Sex, as we call it, is only the point where the dual stream begins to divide, where it is nearly together, almost one. An infant is of no very determinate sex: that is, it is of both. Only at adolescence is there a real differentiation, the one is singled out to predominate. In what we call happy natures, in the lazy, contented people, there is a fairly equable balance of sex. There is sufficient of the female in the body of such a man as to leave him fairly free. He does not suffer the torture of desire of a more male being. It is obvious even from the physique of such a man that in him there is a proper proportion between male and female, so that he can be easy, balanced, and without excess. The Greek sculptors of the "best" period, Phidias and then Sophocles, Alcibiades, then Horace, must have been fairly well-balanced men, not passionate to any excess, tending to voluptuousness rather than to passion. So also Victor Hugo and Schiller and Tennyson. The real voluptuary is a man who is female as well as male, and who lives according to the female side of his nature, like Lord Byron.

The pure male is himself almost an abstraction, almost bodiless, like Shelley or Edmund Spenser. But, as we know humanity, this condition comes of an omission of some vital part. In the ordinary sense, Shelley never lived. He transcended life. But we do not want to transcend life, since we are of life.

Why should Shelley say of the skylark:

"Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! — bird thou never wert! —"? Why should he insist on the bodilessness of beauty, when we cannot know of any save embodied beauty? Who would wish that the skylark were not a bird, but a spirit? If the whistling skylark were a spirit, then we should all wish to be spirits. Which were impious and flippant.

I can think of no being in the world so transcendently male as Shelley. He is phenomenal. The rest of us have bodies which contain the male and the female. If we were so singled out as Shelley, we should not belong to life, as he did not belong to life. But

it were impious to wish to be like the angels. So long as mankind exists it must exist in the body, and so long must each body pertain both to the male and the female.

In the degree of pure maleness below Shelley are Plato and Raphael and Wordsworth, then Goethe and Milton and Dante, then Michelangelo, then Shakespeare, then Tolstoi, then St. Paul.

A man who is well balanced between male and female, in his own nature, is, as a rule, happy, easy to mate, easy to satisfy, and content to exist. It is only a disproportion, or a dissatisfaction, which makes the man struggle into articulation. And the articulation is of two sorts, the cry of desire or the cry of realisation, the cry of satisfaction, the effort to prolong the sense of satisfaction, to prolong the moment of consummation.

A bird in spring sings with the dawn, ringing out from the moment of consummation in wider and wider circles. Diirer, Fra Angelico, Botticelli, all sing of the moment of consummation, some of them still marvelling and lost in the wonder at the other being, Botticelli poignant with distinct memory. Raphael too sings of the moment of consummation. But he was not lost in the moment, only sufficiently lost to know what it was. In the moment, he was not completely consummated. He must strive to complete his satisfaction from himself. So, whilst making his great acknowledgment to the Woman, he must add to her to make her whole, he must give her his completion. So he rings her round with pure geometry, till she becomes herself almost of the geometric figure, an abstraction. The picture becomes a great ellipse crossed by a dark column. This is the Madonna degli Ansidei. The Madonna herself is almost insignificant. She and the child are contained within the shaft thrust across the ellipse.

This column must always stand for the male aspiration, the arch or ellipse for the female completeness containing this aspiration. And the whole picture is a geometric symbol of the consummation of life.

What we call the Truth is, in actual experience, that momentary state when in living the union between the male and the female is consummated. This consummation may be also physical, between the male body and the female body. But it may be only spiritual, between the male and female spirit.

And the symbol by which Raphael expresses this moment of consummation is by a dark, strong shaft or column leaping up into, and almost transgressing a faint, radiant, inclusive ellipse.

To express the same moment Botticelli uses no symbol, but builds up a complicated system of circles, of movements wheeling in their horizontal plane about their fixed centres, the whole builded up dome-shape, and then the dome surpassed by another singing cycle in the open air above.

This is Botticelli always: different cycles of joy, different moments of embrace, different forms of dancing round, all contained in one picture, without solution. He has not solved it yet.

And Raphael, in reaching the pure symbolic solution, has surpassed art and become almost mathematics. Since the business of art is never to solve, but only to declare.



There is no such thing as solution. Nietzsche talks about the Ewige Wiederkehr. It is like Botticelli singing cycles. But each cycle is different. There is no real recurrence.

And to single out one cycle, one moment, and to exclude from this moment all context, and to make this moment timeless, this is what Raphael does, and what Plato does. So that their absolute Truth, their geometric Truth, is only true in timelessness.

Michelangelo, on the other hand, seeks for no absolute Truth. His desire is to realise in his body, in his feeling, the moment - consummation which is for Man the perfect truth-experience. But he knows of no embrace. For him, personally, woman does not exist. For Botticelli she existed as the Virgin-Mother, and as the Primavera, and as Aphrodite. She existed as the pure origin of life on the female side, as the bringer of light and delight, and as the passionately Desired of every man, as the Known and Unknown in one: to Raphael she existed either as a minor part of his experience, having nothing to do with his aspiration, or else his aspiration merely used her as a statement included within the Great Abstraction.

To Michelangelo the female scarcely existed outside his own physique. There he knew of her and knew the desire of her. But Raphael, in his passion to be self-complete, roused his desire for consummation to a white-hot pitch, so that he became incandescent, reacting on himself, consuming his own flesh and his own bodily life, to reach the pitch of perfect abstraction, the resisting body holding back the raging stream of outward force, till the two formed a stable incandescence, a luminous geometric conception of permanence and inviolability. Meanwhile his body burned away, overpowered, in this state of incandescence.

Michelangelo's will was different. The body in him, that which knew of the female and therefore was the female, was stronger and more insistent. His desire for consummation was desire for the satisfying moment when the male and female spirits touch in closest embrace, vivifying each other, not one destroying the other, but still are two. He knew that for Man consummation is a temporal state. The pure male spirit must ever conceive of timelessness, the pure female of the moment. And Michelangelo, more mixed than Raphael, must always rage within the limits of time and of temporal forms. So he reacted upon himself, sought the female in himself, aggrandized it, and so reached a wonderful momentary stability of flesh exaggerated till it became tenuous, but filled and balanced by the outward-pressing force. And he reached his consummation in that way, reached the perfect moment, when he realised and revealed his figures in all their marvellous equilibrium. The Jewish tradition, with its great physical God, source of male and female, attracted him. By turning towards the female goal, of utter stability and permanence in Time, he arrived at his consummation. But only by reacting on himself, by withdrawing his own mobility. Thus he made his great figures, the Moses, static and looming, announcing, like the Jewish God, the magnificence and eternity of the physical law; the David, young, but with too much body for a young figure, the physique exaggerated, the clear, outward-leaping, essential spirit of the young man smothered over, the real maleness cloaked, so that the statue is almost a falsity. Then the slaves, heaving in body, fastened in bondage that refuses them movement; the mo-

tionless Madonna, no Virgin but Woman in the flesh, not the pure female conception, but the spouse of man, the mother of bodily children. The men are not male, nor the women female, to any degree.

The Adam can scarcely stir into life. That large body of almost transparent, tenuous texture is not established enough for motion. It is not that it is too ponderous: it is too unsubstantial, unreal. It is not motion, life, he craves, but body. Give him but a firm, concentrated physique. That is the cry of all Michelangelo's pictures.

But, powerful male as he was, he satisfies his desire by insisting upon and exaggerating the body in him, he reaches the point of consummation in the most marvellous equilibrium which his figures show. To attain this equilibrium he must exaggerate and exaggerate and exaggerate the flesh, make it ever more tenuous, keeping it really in true ratio. And then comes the moment, the perfect stable poise, the perfect balance between object and movement, the perfect combination of male and female in one figure.

It is wonderful, and peaceful, this equilibrium, once reached. But it is reached through anguish and self-battle and self-repression, therefore it is sad. Always, Michelangelo's\* pictures are full of joy, \* Surely, Raphael's (editor's note).

of self-acceptance and self-proclamation. Michelangelo fought and arrested the mobile male in him; Raphael was proud in the male he was, and gave himself utter liberty, at the female expense.

And it seems as though Italy had ever since the Renaissance been possessed by the Raphaelian conception of the ultimate geometric basis of life, the geometric essentiality of all things. There is in the Italian, at the very bottom of all, the fundamental, geometric conception of absolute static combination. There is the shaft enclosed in the ellipse, as a permanent symbol. There exists no shaft, no ellipse separately, but only the whole complete thing; there is neither male nor female, but an absolute interlocking of the two in one, an absolute combination, so that each is gone in the complete identity. There is only the geometric abstraction of the moment of consummation, a moment made timeless. And this conception of a long, clinched, timeless embrace, this overwhelming conception of timeless consummation, of which there is no beginning nor end, from which there is no escape, has arrested the Italian race for three centuries. It is the source of its indifference and its fatalism and its positive abandon, and of its utter incapacity to be sceptical, in the Russian sense.

This conception contains also, naturally, as part of the same idea, Aphrodite-worship and Phallic-worship. But these are subordinate, and belong to a sort of initiatory period. The real conception, for the individual, is marriage, inviolable marriage, which always was and always has been, no matter what apparent aberrations there may or may not be. And the manifestation of divinity is the child. In marriage, in utter, interlocked marriage, man and woman cease to be two beings and become one, one and one only, not two in one as with us, but absolute One, a geometric absolute, timeless, the Absolute, the Divine. And the child, as issue of this divine and timeless state, is hailed with love and joy.

But the Italian is now beginning to withdraw from his clinched and timeless embrace, from his geometric abstraction, into the northern conception of himself and the woman as two separate identities, which meet, combine, but always must withdraw again.

So that the Futurist Boccioni now makes his sculpture, *Development of a Bottle through Space*, try to express the withdrawal, and at the same time he must adhere to the conception of this same interlocked state of marriage between centripetal and centrifugal forces, the geometric abstraction of the bottle. But he can neither do one thing nor the other. He wants to re-state the real abstraction.

And at the same time he has an unsatisfied desire to satisfy. He must insist on the centrifugal force, and so destroy at once his abstraction. He must insist on the male spirit of motion outwards, because, during three static centuries, there has necessarily come to pass a preponderance of the female in the race, so that the Italian is rather more female than male now, as is the whole Latin race rather voluptuous than passionate, too much aware of their utter locked - ness male with female, and too hopeless, as males, to act, to be passionate. So that when I look at Boccioni's sculpture, and see him trying to state the timeless abstract being of a bottle, the pure geometric abstraction of the bottle, I am fascinated. But then, when I see him driven by his desire for the male complement into portraying motion, simple motion, trying to give expression to the bottle in terms of mechanics, I am confused. It is for science to explain the bottle in terms of force and motion. Geometry, pure mathematics, is very near to art, and the vivid attempt to render the bottle as a pure geometric abstraction might give rise to a work of art, because of the resistance of the medium, the stone. But a representation in stone of the lines of force which create that state of rest called a bottle, that is a model in mechanics.

And the two representations require two different states of mind in the appreciator, so that the result is almost nothingness, mere confusion. And the portraying of a state of mind is impossible. There can only be made scientific diagrams of states of mind. A state of mind is a resultant between an attack and a resistance. And how can one produce a resultant without first causing the collision of the originating forces?

The attitude of the Futurists is the scientific attitude, as the attitude of Italy is mainly scientific. It is the forgetting of the old, perfect Abstraction, it is the departure of the male from the female, it is the act of withdrawal: the denying of consummation and the starting afresh, the learning of the alphabet.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Light of the World

The climax that was reached in Italy with Raphael has never been reached in like manner in England. There has never been,

in England, the great embrace, the surprising consummation, which Botticelli recorded and which Raphael fixed in a perfect Abstraction.

Correggio, Andrea del Sarto, both men of less force than those other supreme three, continued the direct line of development, turning no curve. They still found women whom they could not exhaust: in them, the male still reacted upon the incontrovertible female. But ever there was a tendency to greater movement, to a closer characterization, a tendency to individualise the human being, and to represent him as being embedded in some common, divine matrix.

Till after the Renaissance, supreme God had always been God the Father. The Church moved and had its being in Almighty God, Christ was only the distant, incandescent gleam towards which humanity aspired, but which it did not know.

Raphael and Michelangelo were both servants of the Father, of the Eternal Law, of the Prime Being. Raphael, faced with the question of Not-Being, when it was forced upon him that he would never accomplish his own being in the flesh, that he would never know completeness, the momentary consummation, in the body, accomplished the Geometrical Abstraction, which is the abstraction from the Law, which is the Father.

There was, however, Christ's great assertion of Not-Being, of No - Consummation, of life after death, to reckon with. It was after the Renaissance, Christianity began to exist. It had not existed before.

In God the Father we are all one body, one flesh. But in Christ we abjure the flesh, there is no flesh. A man must lose his life to save it. All the natural desires of the body, these a man must be able to deny, before he can live. And then, when he lives, he shall live in the knowledge that he is himself, so that he can always say: "I am I."

In the Father we are one flesh, in Christ we are crucified, and rise again, and are One with Him in Spirit. It is the difference between Law and Love. Each man shall live according to the Law, which changeth not, says the old religion. Each man shall live according to Love, which shall save us from death and from the Law, says the new religion.

But what is Love? What is the deepest desire Man has yet known? It is always for this consummation, this momentary contact or union of male with female, of spirit with spirit and flesh with flesh, when each is complete in itself and rejoices in its own being, when each is in himself or in herself complete and single and essential. And love is the great aspiration towards this complete consummation and this joy; it is the aspiration of each man that all men, that all life, shall know it and rejoice. Since, until all men shall know it, no man shall fully know it. Since, by the Law, we are all one flesh. So that Love is only a closer vision of the Law, a more comprehensive interpretation: "Think not I come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I come not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled."

In Christ I must save my soul through love, I must lose my life, and thereby find it. The Law bids me preserve my life to the Glory of God. But Love bids me lose my life to the Glory of God. In Christ, when I shall have overcome every desire I know in myself, so that I adhere to nothing, but am loosed and set free and single, then,

being without fear, and having nothing that I can lose, I shall know what I am, I, transcendent, intrinsic, eternal.

The Christian commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” is a more indirect and moving, a more emotional form of the Greek commandment “Know thyself.” This is what Christianity says, indirectly: “Know thyself, and each man shall thereby know himself.”

Now in the Law, no man shall know himself, save in the Law. And the Law is the immediate law of the body. And the necessity of each man to know himself, to achieve his own consummation, shall be satisfied and fulfilled in the body. God, Almighty God, is the father, and in fatherhood man draws nearest to him. In the act of love, in the act of begetting, Man is with God and of God. Such is the Law. And there shall be no other God devised. That is the great obstructive commandment.

This is the old religious leap down, absolutely, even if not in direct statement. It is the Law. But through Christ it was at last declared that in the physical act of love, in the begetting of children, man does not necessarily know himself, nor become Godlike, nor satisfy his deep, innate desire to BE. The physical act of love may be a complete disappointment, a nothing, and fatherhood may be the least significant attribute to a man. And physical love may fail utterly, may prove a sterility, a nothingness. Is a man then duped, and is his deepest desire a joke played on him?

There is a law, beyond the known law, there is a new Commandment. There is love. A man shall find his consummation the crucifixion of the body and the resurrection of the spirit.

Christ, the Bridegroom, or the Bride, as may be, awaits the desiring soul that shall seek Him, and in Him shall all men find their consummation, after their new birth. It is the New Law; the old Law is revoked.

“This is my Body, take, and eat,” says Christ, in the Communion, the ritual representing the Consummation. “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

For each man there is the bride, for each woman the bridegroom, for all, the Mystic Marriage. It is the New Law. In the mystic embrace of Christ each man shall find fulfilment and relief, each man shall become himself, a male individual, tried, proved, completed, and satisfied. In the mystic embrace of Christ each man shall say, “I am myself, and Christ is Christ”; each woman shall be proud and satisfied, saying, “It is enough.”

So, by the New Law, man shall satisfy this his deepest desire. “In the body ye must die, even as I died, on the cross,” says Christ, “that ye may have everlasting life.” But this is a real contradiction of the Old Law, which says, “In the life of the body we are one with the Father.” The Old Law bids us live: it is the old, original commandment, that we shall live in the Law, and not die. So that the new Christian preaching of Christ Crucified is indeed against the Law. “And when ye are dead in the body, ye shall be one with the spirit, ye shall know the Bride, and be consummate in Her Embrace, in the Spirit,” continues the Christian Commandment.

It is a larger interpretation of the Law, but, also, it is a breach of the Law. For by the Law, Man shall in no wise injure or deny or desecrate his living body of flesh, which is of the Father. Therefore, though Christ gave the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; though He bowed before the Father; though He said that no man should be forgiven the denial of the Holy Spirit, the Reconciler between the Father and the Son; yet did the Son deny the Father, must he deny the Father?

“Ye are my Spirit, in the Spirit ye know Me, and in marriage of the Spirit I am fulfilled of you,” said the Son.

And it is the Unforgivable Sin to declare that these two are contradictions one of the other, though contradictions they are. Between them is linked the Holy Spirit, as a reconciliation, and whoso shall speak hurtfully against the Holy Spirit shall find no forgiveness.

So Christ, up in arms against the Father, exculpated Himself and bowed to the Father. Yet man must insist either on one or on the other: either he must adhere to the Son or to the Father. And since the Renaissance, disappointed in the flesh, the northern races have sought the consummation through Love; and they have denied the Father.

The greatest and deepest human desire, for consummation, for Self-Knowledge, has sought a different satisfaction. In Love, in the act of love, that which is mixed in me becomes pure, that which is female in me is given to the female, that which is male in her draws into me,? am complete, I am pure male, she is pure female; we rejoice in contact perfect and naked and clear, singled out unto ourselves, and given the surpassing freedom. No longer we see through a glass, darkly. For she is she, and I am I, and, clasped together with her, I know how perfectly she is not me, how perfectly I am not her, how utterly we are two, the light and the darkness, and how infinitely and eternally not-to-be-comprehended by either of us is the surpassing One we make. Yet of this One, this incomprehensible, we have an inkling that satisfies us.

And through Christ Jesus, I know that I shall find my Bride, when I have overcome the impurity of the flesh. When the flesh in me is put away, I shall embrace the Bride, and I shall know as I am known.

But why the Schism? Why shall the Father say “Thou shalt have no other God before Me”? Why is the Lord our God a jealous God? Why, when the body fails me, must I still adhere to the Law, and give it praise as the perfect Abstraction, like Raphael, announce it as the Absolute? Why must I be imprisoned within the flesh, like Michelangelo, till I must stop the voice of my crying out, and be satisfied with a little where I wanted completeness?

And why, on the other hand, must I lose my life to save it? Why must I die, before I can be born again? Can I not be born again, save out of my own ashes, save in resurrection from the dead? Why must I deny the Father, to love the Son? Why are they not One God to me, as we always protest they are?

It is time that the schism ended, that man ceased to oppose the Father to the Son, the Son to the Father. It is time that the Protestant Church, the Church of the Son,

should be one again with the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Father. It is time that man shall cease, first to live in the flesh, with joy, and then, unsatisfied, to renounce and to mortify the flesh, declaring that the Spirit alone exists, that Christ He is God.

If a man find incomplete satisfaction in the body, why therefore shall he renounce the body and say it is of the devil? And why, at the start, shall a man say, "The body, that is all, and the consummation, that is complete in the flesh, for me."

Must it always be that a man set out with a worship of passion and a blindness to love, and that he end with a stern commandment to love and a renunciation of passion?

Does not a youth now know that he desires the body as the *via media*, that consummation is consummation of body and spirit, both?

How can a man say, "I am this body," when he will desire beyond the body tomorrow? And how can a man say, "I am this spirit," when his own mouth gives lie to the words it forms?

Why is a race, like the Italian race, fundamentally melancholy, save that it has circumscribed its consummation within the body? And the Jewish race, for the same reason, has become now almost hollow, with a pit of emptiness and misery in their eyes.

And why is the English race neutral, indifferent, like a thing that eschews life, save that it has said so insistently: "I am this spirit. This body, it is not me, it is unworthy"? The body at last begins to wilt and become corrupt. But before it submits, half the life of the English race must be a lie. The life of the body, denied by the professed adherence to the spirit, must be something disowned, corrupt, ugly.

Why should the worship of the Son entail the denial of the Father?

Since the Renaissance, northern humanity has sought for consummation in the spirit, it has sought for the female apart from woman. "I am I, and the Spirit is the Spirit; in the Spirit I am myself," and this has been the utterance of our art since Raphael.

There has been the ever-developing dissolution of form, the dissolving of the solid body within the spirit. He began to break the clear outline of the object, to seek for further marriage, not only between body and body, not the perfect, stable union of body with body, not the utter completeness and accomplishment of architectural form, with its recurrent cycles, but the marriage between body and spirit, or between spirit and spirit.

It is no longer the Catholic exultation "God is God," but the Christian annunciation, "Light is come into the world." No longer has a man only to obey, but he has to die and be born again; he has to close his eyes upon his own immediate desires, and in the darkness receive the perfect light. He has to know himself in the spirit, he has to follow Christ to the Cross, and rise again in the light of the life.

And, in this light of life, he will see his Bride, he will embrace his complement and his fulfilment, and achieve his consummation. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh forgetteth nothing; the words I speak unto you, they are the spirit, and they are life."

And though in the Gospel, according to John particularly, Jesus constantly asserts that the Father has sent Him, and that He is of the Father, yet there is always the spirit of antagonism to the Father.

“And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto Him: ‘Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps thou hast sucked.’

“But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”

And the woman who heard this knew that she was denied of the honour of her womb, and that the blessing of her breasts was taken away.

Again He said: “And there be those that were born eunuchs, and there be those that were made eunuchs by men, and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” But before the Father a eunuch is blemished, even a childless man is without honour.

So that the spirit of Jesus is antagonistic to the spirit of the Father. And St. John enhances this antagonism. But in St. John there is the constant insistence on the Oneness of Father and Son, and on the Holy Spirit.

Since the Renaissance there has been the striving for the Light, and the escape from the Flesh, from the Body, the Object. And sometimes there has been the antagonism to the Father, sometimes reconciliation with Him. In painting, the Spirit, the Word, the Love, all that was represented by John, has appeared as light. Light is the constant symbol of Christ in the New Testament. It is light, actual sunlight or the luminous quality of day, which has infused more and more into the defined body, fusing away the outline, absolving the concrete reality, making a marriage, an embrace between the two things, light and object.

In Rembrandt there is the first great evidence of this, the new exposition of the commandment “Know thyself.” It is more than the “Hail, holy Light!” of Milton. It is the declaration that light is our medium of existence, that where the light falls upon our darkness, there we are: that I am but the point where light and darkness meet and break upon one another.

There is now a new conception of life, an utterly new conception, of duality, of two-fold existence, light and darkness, object and spirit two-fold, and almost inimical.

The old desire, for movement about a centre of rest, for stability, is gone, and in its place rises the desire for pure ambience, pure spirit of change, free from all laws and conditions of being.

Henceforward there are two things, and not one. But there is journeying towards the one thing again. There is no longer the One God Who contains us all, and in Whom we live and move and have our being, and to Whom belongs each one of our movements. I am no longer a child of the Father, brother of all men. I am no longer part of the great body of God, as all men are part of it. I am no longer consummate in the body of God, identified with it and divine in the act of marriage.

The conception has utterly changed. There is the Spirit, and there is Myself. I exist in contact with the Spirit, but I am not the Spirit. I am other, I am Myself. Now I am



become a man, I am no more a child of the Father. I am a man. And there are many men. And the Father has lost his importance. We are multiple, manifold men, we own only one Hope, one Desire, one Bride, one Spirit.

At last man insists upon his own separate Self, insists that he has a distinct, inconquerable being which stands apart even from Spirit, which exists other than the Spirit, and which seeks marriage with the Spirit.

And he must study himself and marvel over himself in the light of the Spirit, he must become lyrical: but he must glorify the Spirit, above all. Since that is the Bride. So Rembrandt paints his own portrait again and again, sees it again and again within the light.

He has no hatred of the flesh. That he was not completed in the flesh, even in the marriage of the body, is inevitable. But he is married in the flesh, and his wife is with him in the body, he loves his body, which she gave him complete, and he loves her body, which is not himself, but which he has known. He has known and rejoiced in the earthly bride, he will adhere to her always. But there is the Spirit beyond her: there is his desire which transcends her, there is the Bride still he craves for and courts. And he knows, this is the Spirit, it is not the body. And he paints it as the light. And he paints himself within the light. For he has a deep desire to know himself in the embrace of the spirit. For he does not know himself, he is never consummated.

In the Old Law, fulfilled in him, he is not appeased, he must transcend the Law. The Woman is embraced, caught up, and carried forward, the male spirit, passing on half satisfied, must seek a new bride, a further consummation. For there is no bride on earth for him.

To Diirer, the whole earth was as a bride, unknown and unaccomplished, offering satisfaction to him. And he sought out the earth endlessly, as a man seeks to know a bride who surpasses him. It was all: the Bride.

But to Rembrandt the bride was not to be found, he must react upon himself, he must seek in himself for his own consummation. There was the Light, the Spirit, the Bridegroom. But when Rembrandt sought the complete Bride, sought for his own consummation, he knew it was not to be found, he knew she did not exist in the concrete. He knew, as Michelangelo knew, that there was not on the earth a woman to satisfy him, to be his mate. He must seek for the Bride beyond the physical woman; he must seek for the great female principle in an abstraction.

But the abstraction was not the geometric abstraction, created from knowledge, a state of Absolute Remembering, making Absolute of the Consummation which had been, as in Raphael. It was the desired Unknown, the goodly Unknown, the Spirit, the Light. And with this Light Rembrandt must seek even the marriage of the body. Everything he did approximates to the Consummation, but never can realise it. He paints always faith, belief, hope; never Raphael's terrible, dead certainty.

To Diirer, every moment of his existence was occupied. He existed within the embrace of the Bride, which embrace he could never fathom nor exhaust.

Raphael knew and outraged the Bride, but he harked back, obsessed by the consummation which had been.

To Rembrandt, woman was only the first acquaintance with the Bride. Of woman he obtained and expected no complete satisfaction. He knew he must go on, beyond the woman. But though the flesh could not find its consummation, still he did not deny the flesh. He was an artist, and in his art no artist ever could blaspheme the Holy Spirit, the Reconciler. Only a dogmatist could do that. Rembrandt did not deny the flesh, as so many artists try to do. He went on from her to the fuller knowledge of the Bride, in true progression. Which makes the wonderful beauty of Rembrandt.

But, like Michelangelo, owning the flesh, and a northern Christian being bent on personal salvation, personal consummation in the flesh, such as a Christian feels with us when he receives the Sacrament and hears the words "This is My Body, take, and eat," Rembrandt craved to marry the flesh and the Spirit, to achieve consummation in the flesh through marriage with the Spirit.

Which is the great northern confusion. For the flesh is of the flesh, and the Spirit of the Spirit, and they are two, even as the Father and the Son are two, and not One.

Raphael conceived the two as One, thereby revoking Time. Michelangelo would have created the bridal Flesh, to satisfy himself. Rembrandt would have married his own flesh to the Spirit, taken the consummate Kiss of the Light upon his fleshly face.

Which is a confusion. For the Father cannot know the Son, nor the Son the Father. So, in Rembrandt, the marriage is always imperfect, the embrace is never close nor consummate, as it is in Botticelli or in Raphael, or in Michelangelo. There is an eternal non - marriage betwixt flesh and spirit. They are two; they are never Two-in-One. So that in Rembrandt there is never complete marriage betwixt the Light and the Body. They are contiguous, never.

This has been the confusion and the error of the northern countries, but particularly of Germany, this desire to have the spirit mate with the flesh, the flesh with the spirit. Spirit can mate with spirit, and flesh with flesh, and the two matings can take place separately, flesh with flesh, or spirit with spirit. But to try to mate flesh with spirit makes confusion.

The bride I mate with my body may or may not be the Bride in whom I find my consummation. It may be that, at times, the great female principle does not abide abundantly in woman: that, at certain periods, woman, in the body, is not the supreme representative of the Bride. It may be the Bride is hidden from Man, as the Light, or as the Darkness, which he can never know in the flesh.

It may be, in the same way, that the great male principle is only weakly evidenced in man during certain periods, that the Bridegroom be hidden away from woman, for a century or centuries, and that she can only find Him as the voice, or the Wind. So I think it was with her during the medieval period; that the greatest women of the period knew that the Bridegroom did not exist for them in the body, but as the Christ, the Spirit.

And, in times of the absence of the bridegroom from the body, then woman in the body must either die in the body, or, mating in the body, she must mate with the Bridegroom in the Spirit, in a separate marriage. She cannot mate her body with the Spirit, nor mate her spirit with the Body. That is confusion. Let her mate the man in body, and her spirit with the Spirit, in a separate marriage. But let her not try to mate her spirit with the body of the man, that does not mate her Spirit.

The effort to mate spirit with body, body with spirit, is the crying confusion and pain of our times.

Rembrandt made the first effort. But art has developed to a clarity since then. It reached its climax in our own Turner. He did not seek to mate body with spirit. He mated his body easily, he did not deny it. But what he sought was the mating of the Spirit. Ever, he sought the consummation in the Spirit, and he reached it at last. Ever, he sought the Light, to make the light transfuse the body, till the body was carried away, a mere bloodstain, became a ruddy stain of red sunlight within white sunlight. This was perfect consummation in Turner, when, the body gone, the ruddy light meets the crystal light in a perfect fusion, the utter dawn, the utter golden sunset, the extreme of all life, where all is One, One-Being, a perfect glowing Oneness.

Like Raphael, it becomes an abstraction. But this, in Turner, is the abstraction from the spiritual marriage and consummation, the final transcending of all the Law, the achieving of what is to us almost a nullity. If Turner had ever painted his last picture, it would have been a white, incandescent surface, the same whiteness when he finished as when he began, proceeding from nullity to nullity, through all the range of colour.

Turner is perfect. Such a picture as his Norham Castle, Sunrise, where only the faintest shadow of life stains the light, is the last word that can be uttered,..before the blazing and timeless silence.

He sought, and he found, perfect marriage in the spirit. It was apart from woman. His Bride was the Light. Or he was the bride himself, and the Light — the Bridegroom. Be that as it may, he became one and consummate with the Light, and gave us the consummate revelation.

Corot, also, nearer to the Latin tradition of utter consummation in the body, made a wonderful marriage in the spirit between light and darkness, just tintured with life. But he contained more of the two consummations together, the marriage in the body, represented in geometric form, and the marriage in the spirit, represented by shimmering transfusion and infusion of light through darkness.

But Turner is the crisis in this effort: he achieves pure light, pure and singing. In him the consummation is perfect, the perfect marriage in the spirit.

In the body his marriage was other. He never attempted to mingle the two. The marriage in the body, with the woman, was apart from, completed away from the marriage in the Spirit, with the Bride, the Light.

But I cannot look at a later Turner picture without abstracting myself, without denying that I have limbs, knees and thighs and breast. If I look at the Norham Castle,

and remember my own knees and my own breast, then the picture is a nothing to me. I must not know. And if I look at Raphael's Madonna degli Ansdei, I am cut off from my future, from aspiration. The gate is shut upon me, I can go no further. The thought of Turner's Sunrise becomes magic and fascinating, it gives the lie to this completed symbol. I know I am the other thing as well.

So that, whenever art or any expression becomes perfect, it becomes a lie. For it is only perfect by reason of abstraction from that context by which and in which it exists as truth.

So Turner is a lie, and Raphael is a lie, and the marriage in the spirit is a lie, and the marriage in the body is a lie, each is a lie without the other. Since each excludes the other in these instances, they are both lies. If they were brought together, and reconciled, then there were a jubilee. But where is the Holy Spirit that shall reconcile Raphael and Turner?

There must be marriage of body in body, and of spirit in spirit, and Two-in-One. And the marriage in the body must not deny the marriage in the spirit, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; and the marriage in the spirit shall not deny the marriage in the body, for that is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But the two must be for ever reconciled, even if they must exist on occasions apart one from the other.

For in Botticelli the dual marriage is perfect, or almost perfect, body and spirit reconciled, or almost reconciled, in a perfect dual consummation. And in all art there is testimony to the wonderful dual marriage, the true consummation. But in Raphael, the marriage in the spirit is left out so much that it is almost denied, so that the picture is almost a lie, almost a blasphemy. And in Turner, the marriage in the body is almost denied in the same way, so that his picture is almost a blasphemy. But neither in Raphael nor in Turner is the denial positive: it is only an over-affirmation of the one at the expense of the other.

But in some men, in some small men, like bishops, the denial of marriage in the body is positive and blasphemous, a sin against the Holy Ghost. And in some men, like Prussian army officers, the denial of marriage in the spirit is an equal blasphemy. But which of the two is a greater sinner, working better for the destruction of his fellow-man, that is for the One God to judge.

## CHAPTER IX

### A Nos Moutons

Most fascinating in all artists is this antinomy between Law and Love, between the Flesh and the Spirit, between the Father and the Son.

For the moralist it is easy. He can insist on that aspect of the Law or Love which is in the immediate line of development for his age, and he can sternly and severely exclude or suppress all the rest.

So that all morality is of temporary value, useful to its times. But Art must give a deeper satisfaction. It must give fair play all round.

Yet every work of art adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. And hence the antinomy, hence the conflict necessary to every tragic conception.

The degree to which the system of morality, or the metaphysic, of any work of art is submitted to criticism within the work of art makes the lasting value and satisfaction of that work. Aeschylus, having caught the oriental idea of Love, correcting the tremendous Greek conception of the Law with this new idea, produces the intoxicating satisfaction of the Oresteian trilogy. The Law, and Love, they are here the Two-in-One in all their magnificence. But Euripides, with his aspiration towards Love, Love the supreme, and his almost hatred of the Law, Law the Triumphant but Base Closer of Doom, is less satisfactory, because of the very fact that he holds Love always Supreme, and yet must endure the chagrin of seeing Love perpetually transgressed and overthrown. So he makes his tragedy: the higher thing eternally pulled down by the lower. And this unfairness in the use of terms, higher and lower, but above all, the unfairness of showing Love always violated and suffering, never supreme and triumphant, makes us disbelieve Euripides in the end. For we have to bring in pity, we must admit that Love is at a fundamental disadvantage before the Law, and cannot therefore ever hold its own. Which is weak philosophy.

If Aeschylus has a metaphysic to his art, this metaphysic is that Love and Law are Two, eternally in conflict, and eternally being reconciled. This is the tragic significance of Aeschylus.

But the metaphysic of Euripides is that the Law and Love are two eternally in conflict, and unequally matched, so that Love must always be borne down. In Love a man shall only suffer. There is also a Reconciliation, otherwise Euripides were not so great. But there is always the unfair matching, this disposition insisted on, which at last leaves one cold and unbelieving.

The moments of pure satisfaction come in the choruses, in the pure lyrics, when Love is put into true relations with the Law, apart from knowledge, transcending knowledge, transcending the metaphysic, where the aspiration to Love meets the acknowledgment of the Law in a consummate marriage, for the moment.

Where Euripides adheres to his metaphysic, he is unsatisfactory. Where he transcends his metaphysic, he gives that supreme equilibrium wherein we know satisfaction.

The adherence to a metaphysic does not necessarily give artistic form. Indeed the over-strong adherence to a metaphysic usually destroys any possibility of artistic form. Artistic form is a revelation of the two principles of Love and the Law in a state of conflict and yet reconciled: pure motion struggling against and yet reconciled with the Spirit: active force meeting and overcoming and yet not overcoming inertia. It is the conjunction of the two which makes form. And since the two must always meet under fresh conditions, form must always be different. Each work of art has its own

form, which has no relation to any other form. When a young painter studies an old master, he studies, not the form, that is an abstraction which does not exist: he studies maybe the method of the old great artist: but he studies chiefly to understand how the old great artist suffered in himself the conflict of Love and Law, and brought them to a reconciliation. Apart from artistic method, it is not Art that the young man is studying, but the State of Soul of the great old artist, so that he, the young artist, may understand his own soul and gain a reconciliation between the aspiration and the resistant.

It is most wonderful in poetry, this sense of conflict contained within a reconciliation:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

Bird thou never wert, That from Heaven, or near it,

Pourest thy full heart In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Shelley wishes to say, the skylark is a pure, untrammelled spirit, a pure motion. But the very "Bird thou never wert" admits that the skylark is in very fact a bird, a concrete, momentary thing. If the line ran, "Bird thou never art," that would spoil it all. Shelley wishes to say, the song is poured out of heaven: but "or near it," he admits. There is the perfect relation between heaven and earth. And the last line is the tumbling sound of a lark's singing, the real Two-in-One.

The very adherence to rhyme and regular rhythm is a concession to the Law, a concession to the body, to the being and requirements of the body. They are an admission of the living, positive inertia which is the other half of life, other than the pure will to motion. In this consummation, they are the resistance and response of the Bride in the arms of the Bridegroom. And according as the Bride and Bridegroom come closer together, so is the response and resistance more fine, indistinguishable, so much the more, in this act of consummation, is the movement that of Two-in-One, indistinguishable each from the other, and not the movement of two brought together clumsily.

So that in Swinburne, where almost all is concession to the body, so that the poetry becomes almost a sensation and not an experience or a consummation, justifying Spinoza's "Amor est titillatio, con - comitante idea causae externae," we find continual adherence to the body, to the Rose, to the Flesh, the physical in everything, in the sea, in the marshes; there is an overbalance in the favour of Supreme Law; Love is not Love, but passion, part of the Law; there is no Love, there is only Supreme Law. And the poet sings the Supreme Law to gain rebalance in himself, for he hovers always on the edge of death, of Not-Being, he is always out of reach of the Law, bodiless, in the faintness of Love that has triumphed and denied the Law, in the dread of an over-developed, over-sensitive soul which exists always on the point of dissolution from the body.

But he is not divided against himself. It is the novelists and dramatists who have the hardest task in reconciling their metaphysic, their theory of being and knowing, with their living sense of being. Because a novel is a microcosm, and because man in viewing the universe must view it in the light of a theory, therefore every novel

must have the background or the structural skeleton of some theory of being, some metaphysic. But the metaphysic must always subserve the artistic purpose beyond the artist's conscious aim. Otherwise the novel becomes a treatise.

And the danger is, that a man shall make himself a metaphysic to excuse or cover his own faults or failure. Indeed, a sense of fault or failure is the usual cause of a man's making himself a metaphysic, to justify himself.

Then, having made himself a metaphysic of self-justification, or a metaphysic of self-denial, the novelist proceeds to apply the world to this, instead of applying this to the world.

Tolstoi is a flagrant example of this. Probably because of profligacy in his youth, because he had disgusted himself in his own flesh, by excess or by prostitution, therefore Tolstoi, in his metaphysic, renounced the flesh altogether, later on, when he had tried and had failed to achieve complete marriage in the flesh. But above all things, Tolstoi was a child of the Law, he belonged to the Father. He had a marvellous sensuous understanding, and very little clarity of mind.

So that, in his metaphysic, he had to deny himself, his own being, in order to escape his own disgust of what he had done to himself, and to escape admission of his own failure.

Which made all the later part of his life a crying falsity and shame. Reading the reminiscences of Tolstoi, one can only feel shame at the way Tolstoi denied all that was great in him, with vehement cowardice. He degraded himself infinitely, he perjured himself far more than did Peter when he denied Christ. Peter repented. But Tolstoi denied the Father, and propagated a great system of his recusancy, elaborating his own weakness, blaspheming his own strength. "What difficulty is there in writing about how an officer fell in love with a married woman?" he used to say of his Anna Karenina; "there's no difficulty in it, and, above all, no good in it."

Because he was mouthpiece to the Father in uttering the law of passion, he said there was no difficulty in it, because it came naturally to him. Christ might just as easily have said, there was no difficulty in the Parable of the Sower, and no good in it, either, because it flowed out of him without effort.

And Thomas Hardy's metaphysic is something like Tolstoi's. "There is no reconciliation between Love and the Law," says Hardy. "The spirit of Love must always succumb before the blind, stupid, but overwhelming power of the Law."

Already as early as *The Return of the Native* he has come to this theory, in order to explain his own sense of failure. But before that time, from the very start, he has had an overweening theoretic antagonism to the Law. "That which is physical, of the body, is weak, despicable, bad," he said at the very start. He represented his fleshy heroes as villains, but ver7 weak and maundering villains. At its worst, the Law is a weak, craven sensuality: at its best, it is a passive inertia. It is the gap in the armour, it is the hole in the foundation.

Such a metaphysic is almost silly. If it were not that man is much stronger in feeling than in thought, the Wessex novels would be sheer rubbish, as they are already in

parts. The Well-Beloved is sheer rubbish, fatuity, as is a good deal of The Dynasts conception.

But it is not as a metaphysician that one must consider Hardy. He makes a poor show there. For nothing in his work is so pitiable as his clumsy efforts to push events into line with his theory of being, and to make calamity fall on those who represent the principle of Love. He does it exceedingly badly, and owing to this effort his form is execrable in the extreme.

His feeling, his instinct, his sensuous understanding is, however, apart from his metaphysic, very great and deep, deeper than that, perhaps, of any other English novelist. Putting aside his metaphysic, which must always obtrude when he thinks of people, and turning to the earth, to landscape, then he is true to himself.

Always he must start from the earth, from the great source of the Law, and his people move in his landscape almost insignificantly, somewhat like tame animals wandering in the wild. The earth is the manifestation of the Father, of the Creator, Who made us in the Law. God still speaks aloud in His Works, as to Job, so to Hardy, surpassing human conception and the human law. "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? How thy garments are warm, when he quiet - eth the earth by the south wind? Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong?"

This is the true attitude of Hardy — "With God is terrible majesty." The theory of knowledge, the metaphysic of the man, is much smaller than the man himself. So with Tolstoi.

"Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. Their young ones are good in liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them."

There is a good deal of this in Hardy. But in Hardy there is more than the concept of Job, protesting his integrity. Job says in the end: "Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

"I have heard of thee by hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.

"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

But Jude ends where Job began, cursing the day and the services of his birth, and in so much cursing the act of the Lord, "Who made him in the womb."

It is the same cry all through Hardy, this curse upon the birth in the flesh, and this unconscious adherence to the flesh. The instincts, the bodily passions are strong and sudden in all Hardy's men. They are too strong and sudden. They fling Jude into the arms of Arabella, years after he has known Sue, and against his own will.

For every man comprises male and female in his being, the male always struggling for predominance. A woman likewise consists in male and female, with female predominant.



And a man who is strongly male tends to deny, to refute the female in him. A real "man" takes no heed for his body, which is the more female part of him. He considers himself only as an instrument, to be used in the service of some idea.

The true female, on the other hand, will eternally hold herself superior to any idea, will hold full life in the body to be the real happiness. The male exists in doing, the female in being. The male lives in the satisfaction of some purpose achieved, the female in the satisfaction of some purpose contained.

In Aeschylus, in the Eumenides, there is Apollo, Loxias, the Sun God, the prophet, the male: there are the Erinyes, daughters of primeval Mother Night, representing here the female risen in retribution for some crime against the flesh; and there is Pallas, unbegotten daughter of Zeus, who is as the Holy Spirit in the Christian religion, the spirit of wisdom.

Orestes is bidden by the male god, Apollo, to avenge the murder of his father, Agamemnon, by his mother: that is, the male, murdered by the female, must be avenged by the male. But Orestes is child of his mother. He is in himself female. So that in himself the conscience, the madness, the violated part of his own self, his own body, drives him to the Furies. On the male side, he is right; on the female, wrong. But peace is given at last by Pallas, the Arbitrator, the spirit of wisdom.

And although Aeschylus in his consciousness makes the Furies hideous, and Apollo supreme, yet, in his own self and in very fact, he makes the Furies wonderful and noble, with their tremendous hymns, and makes Apollo a trivial, sixth-form braggart and ranter. Clytemnestra also, wherever she appears, is wonderful and noble. Her sin is the sin of pride: she was the first to be injured. Agamemnon is a feeble thing beside her.

So Aeschylus adheres still to the Law, to Right, to the Creator who created man in His Own Image, and in His Law. What he has learned of Love, he does not yet quite believe.

Hardy has the same belief in the Law, but in concept of his own understanding, which cannot understand the Law, he says that the Law is nothing, a blind confusion.

And in concept of understanding, he deprecates and destroys both women and men who would represent the old primeval Law, the great Law of the Womb, the primeval Female principle. The Female shall not exist. Where it appears, it is a criminal tendency, to be stamped out.

This in Manston, Troy, Boldwood, Eustacia, Wildeve, Henchard, Tess, Jude, everybody. The women approved of are not Female in any real sense. They are passive subjects to the male, the re-echo from the male. As in the Christian religion, the Virgin worship is no real Female worship, but worship of the Female as she is passive and subjected to the male. Hence the sadness of Botticelli's Virgins.

Thus Tess sets out, not as any positive thing, containing all purpose, but as the acquiescent complement to the male. The female in her has become inert. Then Alec d'Urberville comes along, and possesses her. From the man who takes her Tess expects her own consummation, the singling out of herself, the addition of the male complement.

She is of an old line, and has the aristocratic quality of respect for the other being. She does not see the other person as an extension of herself, existing in a universe of which she is the centre and pivot. She knows that other people are outside her. Therein she is an aristocrat. And out of this attitude to the other person came her passivity. It is not the same as the passive quality in the other little heroines, such as the girl in *The Woodlanders*, who is passive because she is small.

Tess is passive out of self-acceptance, a true aristocratic quality, amounting almost to self-indifference. She knows she is herself in - controvertibly, and she knows that other people are not herself. This is a very rare quality, even in a woman. And in a civilization so unequal, it is almost a weakness.

Tess never tries to alter or to change anybody, neither to alter nor to change nor to divert. What another person decides, that is his decision. She respects utterly the other's right to be. She is herself always.

But the others do not respect her right to be. Alec d'Urberville sees her as the embodied fulfilment of his own desire: something, that is, belonging to him. She cannot, in his conception, exist apart from him nor have any being apart from his being. For she is the embodiment of his desire.

This is very natural and common in men, this attitude to the world. But in Alec d'Urberville it applies only to the woman of his desire. He cares only for her. Such a man adheres to the female like a parasite.

It is a male quality to resolve a purpose to its fulfilment. It is the male quality, to seek the motive power in the female, and to convey this to a fulfilment; to receive some impulse into his senses, and to transmit it into expression.

Alec d'Urberville does not do this. He is male enough, in his way; but only physically male. He is constitutionally an enemy of the principle of self-subordination, which principle is inherent in every man. It is this principle which makes a man, a true male, see his job through, at no matter what cost. A man is strictly only himself when he is fulfilling some purpose he has conceived: so that the principle is not of self-subordination, but of continuity, of development. Only when insisted on, as in Christianity, does it become self-sacrifice. And this resistance to self-sacrifice on Alec d'Urberville's part does not make him an individualist, an egoist, but rather a non-individual, an incomplete, almost a fragmentary thing.

There seems to be in d'Urberville an inherent antagonism to any progression in himself. Yet he seeks with all his power for the source of stimulus in woman. He takes the deep impulse from the female. In this he is exceptional. No ordinary man could really have betrayed Tess. Even if she had had an illegitimate child to another man, to Angel Clare, for example, it would not have shattered her as did her connection with Alec d'Urberville. For Alec d'Urberville could reach some of the real sources of the female in a woman, and draw from them. Troy could also do this. And, as a woman instinctively knows, such men are rare. Therefore they have a power over a woman. They draw from the depth of her being.

And what they draw, they betray. With a natural male, what he draws from the source of the female, the impulse he receives from the source he transmits through his own being into utterance, motion, action, expression. But Troy and Alec d'Urberville, what they received they knew only as gratification in the senses; some perverse will prevented them from submitting to it, from becoming instrumental to it.

Which was why Tess was shattered by Alec d'Urberville, and why she murdered him in the end. The murder is badly done, altogether the book is botched, owing to the way of thinking in the author, owing to the weak yet obstinate theory of being. Nevertheless, the murder is true, the whole book is true, in its conception.

Angel Clare has the very opposite qualities to those of Alec d'Urberville. To the latter, the female in himself is the only part of himself he will acknowledge: the body, the senses, that which he shares with the female, which the female shares with him. To Angel Clare, the female in himself is detestable, the body, the senses, that which he will share with a woman, is held degraded. What he wants really is to receive the female impulse other than through the body. But his thinking has made him criticize Christianity, his deeper instinct has forbidden him to deny his body any further, a deadlock in his own being, which denies him any purpose, so that he must take to hand, labour out of sheer impotence to resolve himself, drives him unwillingly to woman. But he must see her only as the Female Principle, he cannot bear to see her as the Woman in the Body. Her he thinks degraded. To marry her, to have a physical marriage with her, he must overcome all his ascetic revulsion, he must, in his own mind, put off his own divinity, his pure maleness, his singleness, his pure completeness, and descend to the heated welter of the flesh. It is objectionable to him. Yet his body, his life, is too strong for him.

Who is he, that he shall be pure male, and deny the existence of the female? This is the question the Creator asks of him. Is then the male the exclusive whole of life? — is he even the higher or supreme part of life? Angel Clare thinks so: as Christ thought.

Yet it is not so, as even Angel Clare must find out. Life, that is Two-in-One, Male and Female. Nor is either part greater than the other.

It is not Angel Clare's fault that he cannot come to Tess when he finds that she has, in his words, been defiled. It is the result of generations of ultra-Christian training, which had left in him an inherent aversion to the female, and to all in himself which pertained to the female. What he, in his Christian sense, conceived of as Woman, was only the servant and attendant and administering spirit to the male. He had no idea that there was such a thing as positive Woman, as the Female, another great living Principle counterbalancing his own male principle. He conceived of the world as consisting of the One, the Male Principle.

Which conception was already gendered in Botticelli, whence the melancholy of the Virgin. Which conception reached its fullest in Turner's pictures, which were utterly bodiless; and also in the great scientists or thinkers of the last generation, even Darwin and Spencer and Huxley. For these last conceived of evolution, of one spirit or principle starting at the far end of time, and lonely traversing Time. But there is not one

principle, there are two, travelling always to meet, each step of each one lessening the distance between the two of them. And Space, which so frightened Herbert Spencer, is as a Bride to us. And the cry of Man does not ring out into the Void. It rings out to Woman, whom we know not.

This Tess knew, unconsciously. An aristocrat she was, developed through generations to the belief in her own self-establishment. She could help, but she could not be helped. She could give, but she could not receive. She could attend to the wants of the other person, but no other person, save another aristocrat — and there is scarcely — such a thing as another aristocrat — could attend to her wants, her deepest wants.

So it is the aristocrat alone who has any real and vital sense of “the neighbour,” of the other person; who has the habit of submerging himself, putting himself entirely away before the other person: because he expects to receive nothing from the other person. So that now he has lost much of his initiative force, and exists almost isolated, detached, and without the surging ego of the ordinary man, because he has controlled his nature according to the other man, to exclude him.

AncL Tess, despising herself in the flesh, despising the deep Female she was, because Alec d’Urberville had betrayed her very source loved Angel Clare, who also despised and hated the flesh. She did not hate d’Urberville. What a man did, he did, and if he did it to her, it was her look-out. She did not conceive of him as having any human duty towards her.

The same with Angel Clare as with Alec d’Urberville. She was very grateful to him for saving her from her despair of contamination, and from her bewildered isolation. But when he accused her, she could not plead or answer. For she had no right to his goodness. She stood alone.

The female was strong in her. She was herself. But she was out of place, utterly out of her element and her times. Hence her utter bewilderment. This is the reason why she was so overcome. She was outwearied from the start, in her spirit. For it is only by receiving from all our fellows that we are kept fresh and vital. Tess was herself, female, intrinsically a woman.

The female in her was indomitable, unchangeable, she was utterly constant to herself. But she was, by long breeding, intact from mankind. Though Alec d’Urberville was of no kin to her, yet, in the book, he has always a quality of kinship. It was as if only a kinsman, an aristocrat, could approach her. And this to her undoing. Angel Clare would never have reached her. She would have abandoned herself to him, but he would never have reached her. It needed a physical aristocrat. She would have lived with her husband, Clare, in a state of abandon to him, like a coma. Alec d’Urberville forced her to realise him, and to realise herself. He came close to her, as Clare could never have done. So she murdered him. For she was herself.

And just as the aristocratic principle had isolated Tess, it had isolated Alec d’Urberville. For though Hardy consciously made the young betrayer a plebeian and an impostor, unconsciously, with the supreme justice of the artist, he made him the same as de Stancy, a true aristocrat, or as Fitzpiers, or Troy. He did not give him the

tiredness, the touch of exhaustion necessary, in Hardy's mind, to an aristocrat. But he gave him the intrinsic qualities.

With the men as with the women of old descent: they have nothing to do with mankind in general, they are exceedingly personal.

For many generations they have been accustomed to regard their own desires as their own supreme laws. They have not been bound by the conventional morality: this they have transcended, being a code unto themselves. The other person has been always present to their imagination, in the spectacular sense. He has always existed to them. But he has always existed as something other than themselves.

Hence the inevitable isolation, detachment of the aristocrat. His one aim, during centuries, has been to keep himself detached. At last he finds himself, by his very nature, cut off.

Then either he must go his own way, or he must struggle towards reunion with the mass of mankind. Either he must be an incomplete individualist, like de Stancy, or like the famous Russian nobles, he must become a wild humanitarian and reformer.

For as all the governing power has gradually been taken from the nobleman, and as, by tradition, by inherent inclination, he does not occupy himself with profession other than government, how shall he use that power which is in him and which comes into him?

He is, by virtue of breed and long training, a perfect instrument. He knows, as every pure-bred thing knows, that his root and source is in his female. He seeks the motive power in the woman. And, having taken it, has nothing to do with it, can find, in this democratic, plebeian age, no means by which to transfer it into action, expression, utterance. So there is a continual gnawing of unsatisfac - tion, a constant seeking of another woman, still another woman. For each time the impulse comes fresh, everything seems all right.

It may be, also, that in the aristocrat a certain weariness makes him purposeless, vicious, like a form of death. But that is not necessary. One feels that in Manston, and Troy, and Fitzpiers, and Alec d'Urberville, there is good stuff gone wrong. Just as in Angel Clare, there is good stuff gone wrong in the other direction.

There can never be one extreme of wrong, without the other extreme. If there had never been the extravagant Puritan idea, that the Female Principle was to be denied, cast out by man from his soul, that only the Male Principle, of Abstraction, of Good, of Public Good, of the Community, embodied in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," really existed, there would never have been produced the extreme Cavalier type, which says that only the Female Principle endures in man, that all the Abstraction, the Good, the Public Elevation, the Community, was a grovelling cowardice, and that man lived by enjoyment, through his senses, enjoyment which ended in his senses. Or perhaps better, if the extreme Cavalier type had never been produced, we should not have had the Puritan, the extreme correction.

The one extreme produces the other. It is inevitable for Angel Clare and for Alec d'Urberville mutually to destroy the woman they both loved. Each does her the extreme of wrong, so she is destroyed.

The book is handled with very uncertain skill, botched and bungled. But it contains the elements of the greatest tragedy: Alec d'Urberville, who has killed the male in himself, as Clytemnestra symbolically for Orestes killed Agamemnon; Angel Clare, who has killed the female in himself, as Orestes killed Clytemnestra: and Tess, the Woman, the Life, destroyed by a mechanical fate, in the communal law.

There is no reconciliation. Tess, Angel Clare, Alec d'Urberville, they are all as good as dead. For Angel Clare, though still apparently alive, is in reality no more than a mouth, a piece of paper, like Clym left preaching.

There is no reconciliation, only death. And so Hardy really states his case, which is not his consciously stated metaphysic, by any means, but a statement how man has gone wrong and brought death on himself: how man has violated the Law, how he has superero - gated himself, gone so far in his male conceit as to supersede the Creator, and win death as a reward. Indeed, the works of supererogation of our male assiduity help us to a better salvation.

Jude is only Tess turned round about. Instead of the heroine containing the two principles, male and female, at strife within her one being, it is Jude who contains them both, whilst the two women with him take the place of the two men to Tess. Arabella is Alec d'Urberville, Sue is Angel Clare. These represent the same pair of principles.

But, first, let it be said again that Hardy is a bad artist. Because he must condemn Alec d'Urberville, according to his own personal creed, therefore he shows him a vulgar intriguer of coarse lasses, and as ridiculous convert to evangelism. But Alec d'Urberville, by the artist's account, is neither of these. It is, in actual life, a rare man who seeks and seeks among women for one of such character and intrinsic female being as Tess. The ordinary sensualist avoids such characters. They implicate him too deeply. An ordinary sensualist would have been much too common, much too afraid, to turn to Tess. In a way, d'Urberville was her mate. And his subsequent passion for her is in its way noble enough. But whatever his passion, as a male, he must be a betrayer, even if he had been the most faithful husband on earth. He betrayed the female in a woman, by taking her, and by responding with no male impulse from himself. He roused her, but never satisfied her. He could never satisfy her. It was like a soul-disease in him: he was, in the strict though not the technical sense, impotent. But he must have wanted, later on, not to be so. But he could not help himself. He was spiritually impotent in love.

Arabella was the same. She, like d'Urberville, was converted by an evangelical preacher. It is significant in both of them. They were not just shallow, as Hardy would have made them out.

He is, however, more contemptuous in his personal attitude to the woman than to the man. "He insists that she is a pig-killer's daughter; he insists that she drag Jude into pig-killing; he lays stress on her false tail of hair. That is not the point at all.

This is only Hardy's bad art. He himself, as an artist, manages in the whole picture of Arabella almost to make insignificant in her these pigsticking, false-hair crudities. But he must have his personal revenge on her for her coarseness, which offends him, because he is something of an Angel Clare.

The pig-sticking and so forth are not so important in the real picture. As for the false tail of hair, few women dared have been so open and natural about it. Few women, indeed, dared have made Jude marry them. It may have been a case with Arabella of "fools rush in." But she was not such a fool. And her motives are explained in the book. Life is not, in the actual, such a simple affair of getting a fellow and getting married. It is, even for Arabella, an affair on which she places her all. No barmaid marries anybody, the first man she can lay hands on. She cannot. It must be a personal thing to her. And no ordinary woman would want Jude. Moreover, no ordinary woman could have laid her hands on Jude.

It is an absurd fallacy this, that a small man wants a woman bigger and finer than he is himself. A man is as big as his real desires. Let a man, seeing with his eyes a woman of force and being, want her for his own, then that man is intrinsically an equal of that woman. And the same with a woman.

A coarse, shallow woman does not want to marry a sensitive, deep - feeling man. She feels no desire for him, she is not drawn to him, but repelled, knowing he will condemn her. She wants a man to correspond to herself: that is, if she is a young woman looking for a mate, as Arabella was.

What an old, jaded, yet still unsatisfied woman or man wants is another matter. Yet not even one of these will take a young creature of real character, superior in force. Instinct and fear prevent it.

Arabella was under all her disguise of pig-fat and false hair, and vulgar speech, in character somewhat an aristocrat. She was, like Eustacia, amazingly lawless, even splendidly so. She believed in herself and she was not altered by any outside opinion of herself. Her fault was pride. She thought herself the centre of life, that all which existed belonged to her in so far as she wanted it.

In this she was something like Job. His attitude was "I am strong and rich, and, also, I am a good man." He gave out of his own sense of bounty, and felt no indebtedness. Arabella was almost the same. She felt also strong and abundant, arrogant in her hold on life. She needed a complement; and the nearest thing to her satisfaction was Jude. For as she, intrinsically, was a strong female, by far overpowering her Annies and her friends, so was he a strong male.

The difference between them was not so much a difference of quality, or degree, as a difference of form. Jude, like Tess, wanted full consummation. Arabella, like Alec d'Urberville, had that in her which resisted full consummation, wanted only to enjoy herself in contact with the male. She would have no transmission.

There are two attitudes to love. A man in love with a woman says either: "I, the man, the male, am the supreme, I am the one, and the woman is administered unto me, and this is her highest function, to be administered unto me." This was the conscious

attitude of the Greeks. But their unconscious attitude was the reverse: they were in truth afraid of the female principle, their vaunt was empty, they went in deep, inner dread of her. So did the Jews, so do the Italians. But after the Renaissance, there was a change. Then began conscious Woman-reverence, and a lack of instinctive reverence, rather only an instinctive pity. It is according to the balance between the Male and Female principles.

The other attitude of a man in love, besides this of "she is administered unto my maleness," is, "She is the unknown, the undiscovered, into which I plunge to discovery, losing myself."

And what we call real love has always this latter attitude.

The first attitude, which belongs to passion, makes a man feel proud, splendid. It is a powerful stimulant to him, the female administered to him. He feels full of blood, he walks the earth like a Lord. And it is to this state Nietzsche aspires in his *Wille zur Macht*. It is this the passionate nations crave.

And under all this there is, naturally, the sense of fear, transition, and the sadness of mortality. For, the female being herself an independent force, may she not withdraw, and leave a man empty, like ash, as one sees a Jew or an Italian so often?

This first attitude, too, of male pride receiving the female administration may, and often does, contain the corresponding intense fear and reverence of the female, as of the unknown. So that, starting from the male assertion, there came in the old days the full consummation; as often there comes the full consummation now.

But not always. The man may retain all the while the sense of himself, the primary male, receiving gratification. This constant reaction upon himself at length dulls his senses and his sensibility, and makes him mechanical, automatic. He grows gradually incapable of receiving any gratification from the female, and becomes a rouse, only automatically alive, and frantic with the knowledge thereof.

It is the tendency of the Parisian — or has been — to take this attitude to love, and to intercourse. The woman knows herself all the while as the primary female receiving administration of the male. So she becomes hard and external, and inwardly jaded, tired out. It is the tendency of English women to take this attitude also. And it is this attitude of love, more than anything else, which devitalises a race, and makes it barren.

It is an attitude natural enough to start with. Every young man must think that it is the highest honour he can do to a woman, to receive from her her female administration to his male being, whilst he meanwhile gives her the gratification of himself. But intimacy usually corrects this, love, or use, or marriage: a married man ceases to think of himself as the primary male: hence often his dullness. Unfortunately, he also fails in many cases to realise the gladness of a man in contact with the unknown in the female, which gives him a sense of richness and oneness with all life, as if, by being part of life, he were infinitely rich. Which is different from the sense of power, of dominating life. The *Wille zur Macht* is a spurious feeling.



For a man who dares to look upon, and to venture within the unknown of the female, losing himself, like a man who gives himself to the sea, or a man who enters a primeval, virgin forest, feels,

when he returns, the utmost gladness of singing. This is certainly the gladness of a male bird in his singing, the amazing joy of return from the adventure into the unknown, rich with addition to his soul, rich with the knowledge of the utterly illimitable depth and breadth of the unknown; the ever-yielding extent of the unacquired, the unattained; the inexhaustible riches lain under unknown skies over unknown seas, all the magnificence that is, and yet which is unknown to any of us. And the knowledge of the reality with which it awaits me, the male, the knowledge of the calling and struggling of all the unknown, illimitable Female towards me, unembraced as yet, towards those men who will endlessly follow me, who will endlessly struggle after me, beyond me, further into this calling, unrealised vastness, nearer to the outstretched, eager, advancing unknown in the woman.

It is for this sense of All the magnificence that is unknown to me, of All that which stretches forth arms and breast to the Inexhaustible Embrace of all the ages, towards me, whose arms are outstretched, for this moment's embrace which gives me the inkling of the Inexhaustible Embrace that every man must and does yearn. And whether he be a roue, and vicious, or young and virgin, this is the bottom of every man's desire, for the embrace, for the advancing into the unknown, for the landing on the shore of the undiscovered half of the world, where the wealth of the female lies before us.

What is true of men is so of women. If we turn our faces west, towards nightfall and the unknown within the dark embrace of a wife, they turn their faces east, towards the sunrise and the brilliant, bewildering, active embrace of a husband. And as we are dazed with the unknown in her, so is she dazed with the unknown in us. It is so. And we throw up our joy to heaven like towers and spires and fountains and leaping flowers, so glad we are.

But always, we are divided within ourselves. Is it not that I am wonderful? Is it not a gratification for me when a stranger shall land on my shores and enjoy what he finds there? Shall I not also enjoy it? Shall I not enjoy the strange motion of the stranger, like a pleasant sensation of silk and warmth against me, stirring unknown fibres? Shall I not take this enjoyment without venturing out in dangerous waters, losing myself, perhaps destroying myself seeking the unknown? Shall I not stay at home, and by feeling the swift, soft airs blow out of the unknown upon my body, shall I not have rich pleasure of myself?

And, because they were afraid of the unknown, and because they wanted to retain the full-veined gratification of self-pleasure, men have kept their women tightly in bondage. But when the men were no longer afraid of the unknown, when they deemed it exhausted, they said, "There are no women; there are only daughters of men" — as we say now, as the Greeks tried to say. Hence the "Virgin" conception of woman, the passionless, passive conception, progressing from Fielding's Amelia to Dickens's Agnes, and on to Hardy's Sue.

Whereas Arabella in *Jude the Obscure* has what one might call the selfish instinct for love, Jude himself has the other, the unselfish. She sees in him a male who can gratify her. She takes him, and is gratified by him. Which makes a man of him. He becomes a grown, independent man in the arms of Arabella, conscious of having met, and satisfied, the female demand in him. This makes a man of any youth. He is proven unto himself as a male being, initiated into the freedom of life.

But Arabella refused his purpose. She refused to combine with him in one purpose. Just like Alec d'Urberville, she had from the outset an antagonism to the submission to any change in herself, to any development. She had the will to remain where she was, static, and to receive and exhaust all impulse she received from the male, in her senses. Whereas in a normal woman, impulse received from the male drives her on to a sense of joy and wonder and glad freedom in touch with the unknown of which she is made aware, so that she exists on the edge of the unknown half in rapture. Which is the state the writers wish to portray in "Amelia" and "Agnes," but particularly in the former; which Reynolds wishes to portray in his pictures of women.

To all this Arabella was antagonistic. It seems like a perversion in her, as if she played havoc with the stuff she was made of, as Alec d'Urberville did. Nevertheless she remained always unswerving female, she never truckled to the male idea, but was self-responsible, without fear. It is easier to imagine such a woman, out of one's desires, than to find her in real life. For, where a half-criminal type, a reckless, dare-devil type resembling her, may be found on the outskirts of society, yet these are not Arabella. Which criminal type, or reckless, low woman, would want to marry Jude? Arabella wanted Jude. And it is evident she was not too coarse for him, since she made no show of refinement from the first. The female in her, reckless and unconstrained, was strong enough to draw him after her, as her male, right to the end. Which other woman could have done this? At least let acknowledgment be made to her great female force of character. Her coarseness seems to me exaggerated to make the moralist's case good against her.

Jude could never hate her. She did a great deal for the true making of him, for making him a grown man. She gave him to himself.

And there was danger at the outset that he should never become a man, but that he should remain incorporeal, smothered out under his idea of learning. He was somewhat in Angel Clare's position. Not that generations of particular training had made him almost rigid and paralysed to the female: but that his whole passion was concentrated away from woman to reinforce in him the male impulse towards extending the consciousness. His family was a difficult family to marry. And this because, whilst the men were physically vital, with a passion towards the female from which no moral training had restrained them, like a plant tied to a stick and diverted, they had at the same time an inherent complete contempt of the female, valuing only that which was male. So that they were strongly divided against themselves, with no external hold, such as a moral system, to grip to.

It would have been possible for Jude, monkish, passionate, medieval, belonging to woman yet striving away from her, refusing to know her, to have gone on denying one side of his nature, adhering to his idea of learning, till he had stultified the physical impulse of his being and perverted it entirely. Arabella brought him to himself, gave him himself, made him free, sound as a physical male.

That she would not, or could not, combine her life with him for the fulfilment of a purpose was their misfortune. But at any rate, his purpose of becoming an Oxford don was a cut-and-dried purpose which had no connection with his living body, and for which probably no woman could have united with him.

No doubt Arabella hated his books, and hated his whole attitude to study. What had he, a passionate, emotional nature, to do with learning for learning's sake, with mere academics? Any woman must know it was ridiculous. But he persisted with the tenacity of all perverseness. And she, in this something of an aristocrat, like Tess, feeling that she had no right to him, no right to receive anything from him, except his sex, in which she felt she gave and did not receive, for she conceived of herself as the primary female, as that which, in taking the male, conferred on him his greatest boon, she left him alone. Her attitude was, that he would find all he desired in coming to her. She was occupied with herself. It was not that she wanted him. She wanted to have the sensation of herself in contact with him. His being she refused. She allowed only her own being.

Therefore she scarcely troubled him, when he earned little money and took no notice of her. He did not refuse to take notice of her because he hated her, or was deceived by her, or disappointed in her. He was not. He refused to consider her seriously because he adhered with all his pertinacity to the idea of study, from which he excluded her.

Which she saw and knew, and allowed. She would not force him to notice her, or to consider her seriously. She would compel him to nothing. She had had a certain satisfaction of him, which would be no more if she stayed for ever. For she was non-developing. When she knew him in her senses she knew the end of him, as far as she was concerned. That was all.

So she just went her way. He did not blame her. He scarcely missed her. He returned to his books.

Really, he had lost nothing by his marriage with Arabella: neither innocence nor belief nor hope. He had indeed gained his manhood. She left him the stronger and completer.

And now he would concentrate all on his male idea, of arresting himself, of becoming himself a non-developing quality, an academic mechanism. That was his obsession. That was his craving: to have nothing to do with his own life. This was the same as Tess when she turned to Angel Clare. She wanted life merely in the secondary, outside form, in the consciousness.

It was another form of the disease, or decay of old family, which possessed Alec d'Urberville; a different form, but closely related. D'Urberville wanted to arrest all his activity in his senses. Jude Fawley wanted to arrest all his activity in his mind. Each

of them wanted to become an impersonal force working automatically. Each of them wanted to deny, or escape the responsibility and trouble of living as a complete person, a full individual.

And neither was able to bring it off. Jude's real desire was, not to live in the body. He wanted to exist only in his mentality. He was as if bored, or blase, in the body, just like Tess. This seems to be the result of coming of an old family, that had been long conscious, long self-conscious, specialised, separate, exhausted.

This drove him to Sue. She was his kinswoman, as d'Urberville was kinsman to Tess. She was like himself in her being and her desire. Like Jude, she wanted to live partially, in the consciousness, in the mind only. She wanted no experience in the senses, she wished only to know.

She belonged, with Tess, to the old woman-type of witch or prophetess, which adhered to the male principle, and destroyed the female. But in the true prophetess, in Cassandra, for example, the denial of the female cost a strong and almost maddening [effort]. But in Sue it was done before she was born.

She was born with the vital female atrophied in her: she was almost male. Her will was male. It was wrong for Jude to take her physically, it was a violation of her. She was not the virgin type, but the witch type, which has no sex. Why should she be forced into intercourse that was not natural to her?

It was not natural for her to have children. It is inevitable that her children die. It is not natural for Tess nor for Angel Clare to have children, nor for Arabella nor for Alec d'Urberville. Because none of these wished to give of themselves to the lover, none of them wished to mate: they only wanted their own experience. For Jude alone it was natural to have children, and this in spite of himself.

Sue wished to identify herself utterly with the male principle. That which was female in her she wanted to consume within the male force, to consume it in the fire of understanding, of giving utterance. Whereas an ordinary woman knows that she contains all understanding, that she is the unutterable which man must for ever continue to try to utter, Sue felt that all must be uttered, must be given to the male, that, in truth, only Male existed, that everything was the Word, and the Word was everything.

Sue is the production of the long selection by man of the woman in whom the female is subordinated to the male principle. A long line of Amelias and Agneses, those women who submitted to the man-idea, flattered the man, and bored him, the Gretchens and the Turgeniev heroines, those who have betrayed the female and who therefore only seem to exist to be betrayed by their men, these have produced at length a Sue, the pure thing. And as soon as she is produced she is execrated.

What Cassandra and Aspasia became to the Greeks, Sue has become to the northern civilization. But the Greeks never pitied Woman. They did not show her that highest impertinence — not even Euripides.

But Sue is scarcely a woman at all, though she is feminine enough.

Cassandra submitted to Apollo, and gave him the Word of affiance, brought forth prophecy to him, not children. She received the embrace of the spirit, He breathed His Grace upon her: and she conceived and brought forth a prophecy. It was still a marriage. Not the marriage of the Virgin with the Spirit, but the marriage of the female spirit with the male spirit, bodiless.

With Sue, however, the marriage was no marriage, but a submission, a service, a slavery. Her female spirit did not wed with the male spirit: she could not prophesy. Her spirit submitted to the male spirit, owned the priority of the male spirit, wished to become the male spirit. That which was female in her, resistant, gave her only her critical faculty. When she sought out the physical quality in the Greeks, that was her effort to make even the unknowable physique a part of knowledge, to contain the body within the mind.

One of the supremest products of our civilization is Sue, and a product that well frightens us. It is quite natural that, with all her mental alertness, she married Phillotson without ever considering the physical quality of marriage. Deep instinct made her avoid the consideration. And the duality of her nature made her extremely liable to self-destruction. The suppressed, atrophied female in her, like a potent fury, was always there, suggesting to her to make the fatal mistake. She contained always the rarest, most deadly anarchy in her own being.

It needed that she should have some place in society where the clarity of her mental being, which was in itself a form of death, could shine out without attracting any desire for her body. She needed a refinement on Angel Clare. For she herself was a more specialised, more highly civilized product on the female side, than Angel Clare on the male. Yet the atrophied female in her would still want the bodily male.

She attracted to herself Jude. His experience with Arabella had for the time being diverted his attention altogether from the female. His attitude was that of service to the pure male spirit. But the physical male in him, that which knew and belonged to the female, was potent, and roused the female in Sue as much as she wanted it roused, so much that it was a stimulant to her, making her mind the brighter.

It was a cruelly difficult position. She must, by the constitution of her nature, remain quite physically intact, for the female was atrophied in her, to the enlargement of the male activity. Yet she wanted some quickening for this atrophied female. She wanted even kisses.

That the new rousing might give her a sense of life. But she could only live in the mind.

Then, where could she find a man who would be able to feed her with his male vitality, through kisses, proximity, without demanding the female return? For she was such that she could only receive quickening from a strong male, for she was herself no small thing. Could she then find a man, a strong, passionate male, who would devote himself entirely to the production of the mind in her, to the production of male activity, or of female activity critical to the male?

She could only receive the highest stimulus, which she must inevitably seek, from a man who put her in constant jeopardy. Her essentiality rested upon her remaining intact. Any suggestion of the physical was utter confusion to her. Her principle was the ultra - Christian principle — of living entirely according to the Spirit, to the One, male spirit, which knows, and utters, and shines, but exists beyond feeling, beyond joy or sorrow, or pain, exists only in Knowing. In tune with this, she was herself. Let her, however, be turned under the influence of the other dark, silent, strong principle, of the female, and she would break like a fine instrument under discord.

Yet, to live at all in tune with the male spirit, she must receive the male stimulus from a man. Otherwise she was as an instrument without a player. She must feel the hands of a man upon her, she must be infused with his male vitality, or she was not alive.

Here then was her difficulty: to find a man whose vitality could infuse her and make her live, and who would not, at the same time, demand of her a return, the return of the female impulse into him. What man could receive this drainage, receiving nothing back again? He must either die, or revolt.

One man had died. She knew it well enough. She knew her own fatality. She knew she drained the vital, male stimulus out of a man, producing in him only knowledge of the mind, only mental clarity: which man must always strive to attain, but which is not life in him, rather the product of life.

Just as Alec d'Urberville, on the other hand, drained the female vitality out of a woman, and gave her only sensation, only experience in the senses, a sense of herself, nothing to the soul or spirit, thereby exhausting her.

Now Jude, after Arabella, and following his own *idee fixe*, [wanted] this mental clarity, this knowing, above all. What he contained in himself, of male and female impulse, he wanted to bring forth to draw into his mind, to resolve into understanding, as a lant resolves that which it contains into flower.

This Sue could do for him. By creating a vacuum, she could cause the vivid flow which clarified him. By rousing him, by drawing from him his turgid vitality, made thick and heavy and physical with Arabella, she could bring into consciousness that which he contained. For he was heavy and full of unrealised life, clogged with untransmuted knowledge, with accretion of his senses. His whole life had been till now an indrawing, ingestion. Arabella had been a vital experience for him, received into his blood. And how was he to bring out all this fulness into knowledge or utterance? For all the time he was being roused to new physical desire, new life - experience, new sense-enriching, and he could not perform his male function of transmitting this into expression, or action. The particular form his flowering should take, he could not find. So he hunted and studied, to find the call, the appeal which should call out of him that which was in him.

And great was his transport when the appeal came from Sue. She wanted, at first, only his words. That of him which could come to her through speech, through his

consciousness, her mind, like a bottomless gulf, cried out for. She wanted satisfaction through the mind, and cried out for him to satisfy her through the mind.

Great, then, was his joy at giving himself out to her. He gave, for it was more blessed to give than to receive. He gave, and she received some satisfaction. But where she was not satisfied, there he must try still to satisfy her. He struggled to bring it all forth. She was, as himself, asking himself what he was. And he strove to answer, in a transport.

And he answered in a great measure. He singled himself out from the old matrix of the accepted idea, he produced an individual flower of his own.

It was for this he loved Sue. She did for him quickly what he would have done for himself slowly, through study. By patient, diligent study, he would have used up the surplus of that turgid energy in him, and would, by long contact with old truth, have arrived at the form of truth which was in him. What he indeed wanted to get from study was, not a store of learning, nor the vanity of education, a sort of superiority of educational wealth, though this also gave him pleasure. He wanted, through familiarity with the true thinkers and poets, particularly with the classic and theological thinkers, because of their comparative sensuousness, to find conscious expression for that which he held in his blood. And to do this, it was necessary for him to resolve and to reduce his blood, to overcome the female sensuousness in himself, to transmute his sensuous being into another state, a state of clarity, of consciousness. Slowly, labouriously, struggling with the Greek and the Latin, he would have burned down his thick blood as fuel, and have come to the true light of himself.

This Sue did for him. In marriage, each party fulfils a dual function with regard to the other:; exhaustive and enriching. The female at the same time exhausts and invigorates the male, the male at the same time exhausts and invigorates the female. The exhaustion and invigoration are both temporary and relative. The male, making the effort to penetrate into the female, exhausts himself and invigorates her. But that which, at the end, he discovers and carries off from her, some seed of being, enriches him and exhausts her. Arabella, in taking Jude, accepted very little from him. She absorbed very little of his strength and vitality into herself. For she only wanted to be aware of herself in contact with him, she did not want him to penetrate into her very being, till he moved her to her very depths, till she loosened to him some of her very self for his enriching. She was intrinsically impotent, as was Alec d'Urberville.

So that in her Jude went very little further in Knowledge, or in Self-Knowledge. He took only the first steps: of knowing himself sexually, as a sexual male. That is only the first, the first necessary, but rudimentary, step.

When he came to Sue, he found her physically impotent, but spiritually potent. That was what he wanted. Of Knowledge in the blood he had a rich enough store: more than he knew what to do with. He wished for the further step, of reduction, of essentialising into Knowledge. Which Sue gave to him.

So that his experience with Arabella, plus his first experience of trembling intimacy and incandescent realisation with Sue made one complete marriage: that is, the two women added together made One Bride.

When Jude had exhausted his surplus self, in spiritual intimacy with Sue, when he had gained through her all the wonderful understanding she could evoke in him, when he was clarified to himself, then his marriage with Sue was over. Jude's marriage with Sue was over before he knew her physically. She had, physically, nothing to give him.

Which, in her deepest instinct, she knew. She made no mistake in marrying Phillotson. She acted according to the pure logic of her nature. Phillotson was a man who wanted no marriage whatsoever with the female. Sexually, he wanted her as an instrument through which he obtained relief, and some gratification: but, really, relief. Spiritually, he wanted her as a thing to be wondered over and delighted in, but quite separately from himself. He knew quite well he could never marry her. He was a human being as near to mechanical function as a human being can be. The whole process of digestion, masticating, swallowing, digesting, excretion, is a sort of super-mechanical process. And Phillotson was like this. He was an organ, a function-fulfilling organ, he had no separate existence. He could not create a single new movement or thought or expression. Everything he did was a repetition of what had been. All his study was a study of what had been. It was a mechanical, functional process. He was a true, if small, form of the Savant. He could understand only the functional laws of living, but these he understood honestly. He was true to himself, he was not overcome by any cant or sentimentalising. So that in this he was splendid. But it is a cruel thing for a complete, or a spiritual, individuality to be submitted to a functional organism.

The Widow Edlin said that there are some men no woman of any feeling could touch, and Phillotson was one of them. If the Widow knew this, why was Sue's instinct so short?

But Mrs. Edlin was a full human being, creating life in a new form through her personality. She must have known Sue's deficiency. It was natural for Sue to read and to turn again to:

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean!

The world has grown grey from Thy breath.

In her the pale Galilean had indeed triumphed. Her body was as insentient as hoarfrost. She knew well enough that she was not alive in the ordinary human sense. She did not, like an ordinary woman, receive all she knew through her senses, her instincts, but through her consciousness. The pale Galilean had a pure disciple in her: in her He was fulfilled. For the senses, the body, did not exist in her; she existed as a consciousness. And this is so much so, that she was almost an Apostate. She turned to look at Venus and Apollo. As if she could know either Venus or Apollo, save as ideas. Nor Venus nor Aphrodite had anything to do with her, but only Pallas and Christ.

She was unhappy every moment of her life, poor Sue, with the knowledge of her own non-existence within life. She felt all the time the ghastly sickness of dissolution upon her, she was as a void unto herself.



So she married Phillotson, the only man she could, in reality, marry. To him she could be a wife: she could give him the sexual relief he wanted of her, and supply him with the transcendence which was a pleasure to him; it was hers to seal him with the seal which made an honourable human being of him. For he felt, deep within himself, something a reptile feels. And she was his guarantee, his crown.

Why does a snake horrify us, or even a newt? Why was Phillotson like a newt? What is it, in our life or in our feeling, to which a newt corresponds? Is it that life has the two sides, of growth and of decay, symbolized most acutely in our bodies by the semen and the excreta? Is it that the newt, the reptile, belong to the putrescent activity of life; the bird, the fish to the growth activity? Is it that the newt and the reptile are suggested to us through those sensations connected with excretion? And was Phillotson more or less connected with the decay activity of life? Was it his function to reorganize the life-excreta of the ages? At any rate, one can honour him, for he was true to himself.

Sue married Phillotson according to her true instinct. But being almost pure Christian, in the sense of having no physical life, she had turned to the Greeks, and with her mind was an Aphrodite - worshipper. In craving for the highest form of that which she lacked, she worshipped Aphrodite. There are two sets of Aphrodite - worshippers: daughters of Aphrodite and the almost neutral daughters of Mary of Bethany. Sue was, oh, cruelly far from being a daughter of Aphrodite. She was the furthest alien from Aphrodite. She might excuse herself through her Venus Urania — but it was hopeless.

Therefore, when she left Phillotson, in whose marriage she consummated her own crucifixion, to go to Jude, she was deserting the God of her being for the God of her hopeless want. How much could she become a living, physical woman? But she would get away from Phillotson.

She went to Jude to continue the spiritual marriage, bodiless. That was all very well, if he had been satisfied. If he had been satisfied, they might have lived in this spiritual intimacy, without physical contact, for the rest of their lives, so strong was her true instinct for herself.

He, however, was not satisfied. He reached the point where he was clarified, where he had reduced from his blood into his consciousness all that was un-compounded before. He had become himself as far as he could, he had fulfilled himself. All that he had gathered in his youth, all that he had gathered from Arabella, was assimilated now, fused and transformed into one clear Jude.

Now he wants that which is necessary for him if he is to go on. He wants, at its lowest, the physical, sexual relief. For continually baulked sexual desire, or necessity, makes a man unable to live freely, scotches him, stultifies him. And where a man is roused to the fullest pitch, as Jude was roused by Sue, then the principal connection becomes a necessity, if only for relief. Anything else is a violation.

Sue ran away to escape physical connection with Phillotson, only to find herself in the arms of Jude. But Jude wanted of her more than Phillotson wanted. This was what terrified her to the bottom of her nature. Whereas Phillotson always only

wanted sexual relief of her, Jude wanted the consummation of marriage. He wanted that deepest experience, that penetrating far into the unknown and undiscovered which lies in the body and blood of man and woman, during life. He wanted to receive from her the quickening, the primitive seed and impulse which should start him to a new birth. And for this he must go back deep into the primal, unshown, unknown life of the blood, the thick source-stream of life in her.

And she was terrified lest he should find her out, that it was wanting in her. This was her deepest dread, to see him inevitably disappointed in her. She could not bear to be put into the balance, wherein she knew she would be found wanting.

For she knew in herself that she was cut off from the source and origin of life. For her, the way back was lost irrevocably. And when Jude came to her, wanting to retrace with her the course right back to the springs and the welling-out, she was more afraid than of death. For she could not. She was like a flower broken off from the tree, that lives a while in water, and even puts forth. So Sue lived sustained and nourished by the rarefied life of books and art, and by the inflow from the man. But, owing to centuries and centuries of weaning away from the body of life, centuries of insisting upon the supremacy and bodilessness of Love, centuries of striving to escape the conditions of being and of striving to attain the condition of Knowledge, centuries of pure Christianity, she had gone too far. She had climbed and climbed to be near the stars. And now, at last, on the topmost pinnacle, exposed to all the horrors and the magnificence of space, she could not go back. Her strength had fallen from her. Up at that great height, with scarcely any foothold, but only space, space all round her, rising up to her from beneath, she was like a thing suspended, supported almost at the point of extinction by the density of the medium. Her body was lost to her, fallen away, gone. She existed there as a point of consciousness, no more, like one swooned at a great height, held up at the tip of a fine pinnacle that drove upwards into nothingness.

Jude rose to that height with her. But he did not die as she died. Beneath him the foothold was more, he did not swoon. There came a time when he wanted to go back, down to earth. But she was fastened like Andromeda.

Perhaps; if Jude had not known Arabella, Sue might have persuaded him that he too was bodiless, only a point of consciousness. But she was too late; another had been before her and given her the lie.

Arabella was never so jealous of Sue as Sue of Arabella. How shall the saint that tips the pinnacle, Saint Simon Stylites thrust on the highest needle that pricks the heavens, be envied by the man who walks the horizontal earth? But Sue was cruelly anguished with jealousy of Arabella. It was only this, this knowledge that Jude wanted Arabella, which made Sue give him access to her own body.

When she did that, she died. The Sue that had been till then, the glimmering, pale, star-like Sue, died and was revoked on the night when Arabella called at their house at Aldbrickham, and Jude went out in his slippers to look for her, and did not find her, but came back to Sue, who in her anguish gave him then the access to her body. Till that day, Sue had been, in her will and in her very self, true to one motion, to

Love, to Knowledge, to the Light, to the upward motion. Phillotson had not altered this. When she had suffered him, she had said: "He does not touch me; I am beyond him."

But now she must give her body to Jude. At that moment her light began to go out, all she had lived for and by began to turn into a falseness, Sue began to nullify herself.

She could never become physical. She could never return down to earth. But there, lying bound at the pinnacle-tip, she had to pretend she was lying on the horizontal earth, prostrate with a man.

It was a profanation and a pollution, worse than the pollution of Cassandra or of the Vestals. Sue had her own form: to break this form was to destroy her. Her destruction began only when she said to Jude, "I give in."

As for Jude, he dragged his body after his consciousness. His instinct could never have made him actually desire physical connection with Sue. He was roused by an appeal made through his consciousness. This appeal automatically roused his senses. His consciousness desired Sue. So his senses were forced to follow his consciousness.

But he must have felt, in knowing her, the frisson of sacrilege, something like the Frenchman who lay with a corpse. Her body, the body of a Vestal, was swooned into that state of bloodless ecstasy wherein it was dead to the senses. Or it was the body of an insane woman, whose senses are directed from the disordered mind, whose mind is not subjected to the senses.

But Jude was physically undeveloped. Altogether he was medieval. His senses were vigorous but not delicate. He never realised what it meant to him, his taking Sue. He thought he was satisfied.

But if it was death to her, or profanation, or pollution, or breaking, it was unnatural to him, blasphemy. How could he, a living, loving man, warm and productive, take with his body the moonlit cold body of a woman who did not live to him, and did not want him? It was monstrous, and it sent him mad.

She knew it was wrong, she knew it should never be. But what else could she do? Jude loved her now with his will. To have left him to Arabella would have been to destroy him. To have shared him with Arabella would have been possible to Sue, but impossible to him, for he had the strong, purist idea that a man's body should follow and be subordinate to his spirit, his senses should be subordinate to and subsequent to his mind. Which idea is utterly false.

So Jude and Sue are damned, partly by their very being, but chiefly by their incapacity to accept the conditions of their own and each other's being. If Jude could have known that he did not want Sue physically, and then have made his choice, they might not have wasted their lives. But he could not know.

If he could have known, after a while, after he had taken her many times, that it was wrong, still they might have made a life. He must have known that, after taking Sue, he was depressed as she was depressed. He must have known worse than that. He must have felt the devastating sense of the unlivingness of life, things must have

ceased to exist for him, when he rose from taking Sue, and he must have felt that he walked in a ghastly blank, confronted just by space, void.

But he would acknowledge nothing of what he felt. He must feel according to his idea and his will. Nevertheless, they were too truthful ever to marry. A man as real and personal as Jude cannot, from his deeper religious sense, marry a woman unless indeed he can marry her, unless with her he can find or approach the real consummation of marriage. And Sue and Jude could not lie to themselves, in their last and deepest feelings. They knew it was no marriage; they knew it was wrong, all along; they knew they were sinning against life, in forcing a physical marriage between themselves.

How many people, man and woman, live together, in England, and have children, and are never, never asked whether they have been through the marriage ceremony together? Why then should Jude and Sue have been brought to task? Only because of their own uneasy sense of wrong, of sin, which they communicated to other people. And this wrong or sin was not against the community, but against their own being, against life. Which is why they were, the pair of them, instinctively disliked.

They never knew happiness, actual, sure-footed happiness, not for a moment. That was incompatible with Sue's nature. But what they knew was a very delightful but poignant and unhealthy condition of lightened consciousness. They reacted on each other to stimulate the consciousness. So that, when they went to the flower-show, her sense of the roses, and Jude's sense of the roses, would be most, most poignant. There is always this pathos, this poignancy, this trembling on the verge of pain and tears, in their happiness.

"Happy?" he murmured. She nodded.

The roses, how the roses glowed for them! The flowers had more being than either he or she. But as their ecstasy over things sank a little, they felt, the pair of them, as if they themselves were wanting in real body, as if they were too unsubstantial, too thin and evanescent in substance, as if the other solid people might jostle right through them, two wandering shades as they were.

This they felt themselves. Hence their uncertainty in contact with other people, hence their abnormal sensitiveness. But they had their own form of happiness, nevertheless, this trembling on the verge of ecstasy, when, the senses strongly roused to the service of the consciousness, the things they contemplated took flaming being, became flaming symbols of their own emotions to them.

So that the real marriage of Jude and Sue was in the roses. Then, in the third state, in the spirit, these two beings met upon the roses and in the roses were symbolized in consummation. The rose is the symbol of marriage-consummation in its beauty. To them it is more than a symbol, it is a fact, a flaming experience.

They went home tremblingly glad. And then the horror when, because of Jude's unsatisfaction, he must take Sue sexually. The flaming experience became a falsity, or an ignis fatuus leading them on.

They exhausted their lives, he in the consciousness, she in the body. She was glad to have children, to prove she was a woman. But in her it was a perversity to wish

to prove she was a woman. She was no woman. And her children, the proof thereof, vanished like hoarfrost from her.

It was not the stone-masonry that exhausted him and weakened him and made him ill. It was this continuous feeding of his consciousness from his senses, this continuous state of incandescence of the consciousness, when his body, his vital tissues, the very protoplasm in him, was being slowly consumed away. For he had no life in the body. Every time he went to Sue, physically, his inner experience must have been a shock back from life and from the form of outgoing, like that of a man who lies with a corpse. He had no life in the senses: he had no inflow from the source to make up for the enormous wastage. So he gradually became exhausted, burned more and more away, till he was frail as an ember.

And she, her body also suffered. But it was in the mind that she had had her being, and it was in the mind she paid her price. She tried and tried to receive and to satisfy Jude physically. She bore him children, she gave herself to the life of the body.

But as she was formed she was formed, and there was no altering it. She needed all the life that belonged to her, and more, for the supplying of her mind, since such a mind as hers is found only, healthily, in a person of powerful vitality. For the mind, in a common person, is created out of the surplus vitality, or out of the remainder after all the sensuous life has been fulfilled.

She needed all the life that belonged to her, for her mind. It was her form. To disturb that arrangement was to make her into somebody else, not herself. Therefore, when she became a physical wife and a mother, she forswore her own being. She abjured her own mind, she denied it, took her faith, her belief, her very living away from it.

It is most probable she lived chiefly in her children. They were her guarantee as a physical woman, the being to which she now laid claim. She had forsaken the ideal of an independent mind.

She would love her children with anguish, afraid always for their safety, never certain of their stable existence, never assured of their real reality. When they were out of her sight, she would be uneasy, uneasy almost as if they did not exist. There would be a gnawing at her till they came back. She would not be satisfied till she had them crushed on her breast. And even then, she would not be sure, she would not be sure. She could not be sure, in life, of anything. She could only be sure, in the old days, of what she saw with her mind. Of that she was absolutely sure.

Meanwhile Jude became exhausted in vitality, bewildered, aimless, lost, pathetically nonproductive.

Again one can see what instinct, what feeling it was which made Arabella's boy bring about the death of the children and of himself. He, sensitive, so bodiless, so selfless as to be a sort of automaton, is very badly suggested, exaggerated, but one can see what is meant. And he feels, as any child will feel, as many children feel today, that they are really anachronisms, accidents, fatal accidents, unreal, false notes in their mothers' lives, that, according to her, they have no being: that, if they have being, then she has not. So he takes away all the children.

And then Sue ceases to be: she strikes the line through her own existence, cancels herself. There exists no more Sue Fawley. She cancels herself. She wishes to cease to exist, as a person, she wishes to be absorbed away, so that she is no longer self-responsible.

For she denied and forsook and broke her own real form, her own independent, cool-lighted mind-life. And now her children are not only dead, but self-slain, those pledges of the physical life for which she abandoned the other.

She has a passion to expiate, to expiate, to expiate. Her children should never have been born: her instinct always knew this. Now their dead bodies drive her mad with a sense of blasphemy. And she blasphemed the Holy Spirit, which told her she is guilty of their birth and their death, of the horrible nothing which they are. She is even guilty of their little, palpitating sufferings and joys of mortal life, now made nothing. She cannot bear it — who could? And she wants to expiate, doubly expiate. Her mind, which she set up in her conceit, and then forswore, she must stamp it out of existence, as one stamps out fire. She would never again think or decide for herself. The world, the past, should have written every decision for her. The last act of her intellect was the utter renunciation of her w mind and the embracing of utter orthodoxy, where every belief, every thought, every decision was made ready for her, so that she did not exist self-responsible. And then her loathed body, which had committed the crime of bearing dead children, which had come to life only to spread nihilism like a pestilence, that too should be scourged out of existence. She chose the bitterest penalty in going back to Phillotson.

There was no more Sue. Body, soul, and spirit, she annihilated herself. All that remained of her was the will by which she annihilated herself. That remained fixed, a locked centre of self-hatred, life-hatred so utter that it had no hope of death. It knew that life is life, and there is no death for life.

Jude was toq exhausted himself to save her. He says of her she was not worth a man's love. But that was not the point. It was not a question of her worth. It was a question of her being. If he had said she was not capable of receiving a man's love as he wished to bestow it, he might have spoken nearer the truth. But she practically told him this. She made it plain to him what she wanted, what she could take. But he overrode her. She tried hard to abide by her own form. But he forced her. He had no case against her, unless she made the great appeal for him, that he should flow to her, whilst at the same time she could not take him completely, body and spirit both.

She asked for what he could not give — what perhaps no man can give: passionate love without physical desire. She had no blame for him: she had no love for him. Self-love triumphed in her when she first knew him. She almost deliberately asked for more, far more, than she intended to give. Self-hatred triumphed in the end. So it had to be.

As for Jude, he had been dying slowly, but much quicker than she, since the first night she took him. It was best to get it done quickly in the end.

And this tragedy is the result of over-development of one principle of human life at the expense of the other; an over-balancing; a laying of all the stress on the Male,

the Love, the Spirit, the Mind, the Consciousness; a denying, a blaspheming against the Female, the Law, the Soul, the Senses, the Feelings. But she is developed to the very extreme, she scarcely lives in the body at all. Being of the feminine gender, she is yet no woman at all, nor male; she is almost neuter. He is nearer the balance, nearer the centre, nearer the wholeness. But the whole human effort, towards pure life in the spirit, towards becoming pure Sue, drags him along; he identifies himself with this effort, destroys himself and her in his adherence to this identification.

But why, in casting off one or another form of religion, has man ceased to be religious altogether? Why will he not recognize Sue and Jude, as Cassandra was recognized long ago, and Achilles, and the Vestals, and the nuns, and the monks? Why must being be denied altogether?

Sue had a being, special and beautiful. Why must not Jude recognize it in all its speciality? Why must man be so utterly irreverent, that he approaches each being as if it were no-being? Why must it be assumed that Sue is an "ordinary" woman — as if such a thing existed? Why must she feel ashamed if she is specialised? And why must Jude, owing to the conception he is brought up in, force her to act as if she were his "ordinary" abstraction, a woman?

She was not a woman. She was Sue Bridehead, something very particular. Why was there no place for her? Cassandra had the Temple of Apollo. Why are we so foul that we have no reverence for that which we are and for that which is amongst us? If we had reverence for our life, our life would take at once religious form. But as it is, in our filthy irreverence, it remains a disgusting slough, where each one of us goes so thoroughly disguised in dirt that we are all alike and indistinguishable.

If we had reverence for what we are, our life would take real form, and Sue would have a place, as Cassandra had a place; she would have a place which does not yet exist, because we are all so vulgar, we have nothing.

## CHAPTER X

It seems as if the history of humanity were divided into two epochs: the Epoch of the Law and the Epoch of Love. It seems as though humanity, during the time of its activity on earth, has made two great efforts: the effort to appreciate the Law and the effort to overcome the Law in Love. And in both efforts it has succeeded, it has reached and proved the Two Complementary Absolutes, the Absolute of the Father, of the Law, of Nature, and the Absolute of the Son, of Love, of Knowledge. What remains is to reconcile the two.

In the beginning, Man said: "What am I, and whence is this world around me, and why is it as it is?" Then he proceeded to explore and to personify and to deify the Natural Law, which he called Father. And having reached the point where he conceived of the Natural Law in its purity, he had finished his journey, and was arrested.

But he found that he could not remain at rest. He must still go on. Then there was to discover by what principle he must proceed further than the Law. And he received an inkling of Love. All over the world the same, the second great epoch started with the incipient conception of Love, and continued until the principle of Love was conceived in all its purity. Then man was again at an end, in a cul-de-sac.

The Law it is by which we exist. It was the Father, the Law - Maker, Who said: "Let there be Light": it was He Who breathed life into the handful of dust and made man. "Thus have I made man, in mine own image. I have ordered his outgoing and his incoming, and have cast the fine whereby he shall walk." So said the Father. And man went out and came in according to the ordering of the Lord; he walked by the line of the Lord and did not deviate. Till the path was worn barren, and man knew all the way, and the end seemed to have drawn nigh.

Then he said: "I will leave the path. I will go out as the Lord hath not ordained, and come in when my hour is fulfilled. For it is written, a man shall eat and drink with the Lord: but I will neither eat nor drink, I will go hungry, yet I will not die. It is written, a man shall take himself a wife and beget him seed unto the glory of God. But I will not take me a wife, nor beget seed, but I will know no woman. Yet will I not die. And it is written, a man shall save his body from harm, and preserve his flesh from hurt, for he is made in the image and likeness of the Father. But I will deliver up my body to hurt, and give my flesh unto the dust, yet will I not die, but live. For man does not live by bread alone, nor by the common law of the Father. Beyond this common law, I am I. When my body is destroyed and my bones have perished, then I am I. Yes, not until my body is consumed and my bones have mingled with the dust, not until then am I whole, not until then do I live. But I die in Christ, and rise again. And when I am risen again, I live in the spirit. Neither hunger nor cold can lay hold on me, nor desire lay hands on me. When I am risen again, then I shall know. Then I shall live in the ineffable bliss of knowledge. When the sun goes forth in the morning, I shall know the glory of God, who passes the sun from His left hand to His right, in the peace of His Understanding. As the night comes in her divers shadows, I know the peace that passeth all understanding. For God knoweth. Neither, does He Will nor Command nor desire nor act, but exists perfect in the peace of knowledge."

If a man must live still and act in the body, then let his action be to the recognizing of the life in other bodies. Each man is to himself the Natural Law. He can only conceive of the Natural Law as he knows it in himself. The hardest thing for any man to do is for him to recognize and to know that the natural law of his neighbour is other than, and maybe even hostile to, his own natural law, and yet is true. This hard lesson Christ tried to instil in the doctrine of the other cheek. Orestes could not conceive that it was the natural law of Clytemnestra's nature that she should murder Agamemnon for sacrificing her daughter, and for leaving herself abandoned in the pride of her womanhood, unmated because he wanted the pleasure of war, and for his unfaithfulness to her with other women; Clytemnestra could not understand that Orestes should want to kill her for fulfilling the law of her own nature. The law



of the mother's nature was other than the law of the son's nature. This they could neither of them see: hence the killing. This Christianity would teach them: to recognize and to admit the law of the other person, outside and different from the law of one's own being. It is the hardest lesson of love. And the lesson of love learnt, there must be learned the next lesson, of reconciliation between different, maybe hostile, things. That is the final lesson. Christianity ends in submission, in recognizing and submitting to the law of the other person. "Thou shalt love thy enemy."

Therefore, since by the law man must act or move, let his motion be the utterance of the God of Peace, of the perfect, unutterable Peace of Knowledge.

And man has striven this way, to utter the Universal Peace of God. And, striving on, he has passed beyond the limits of utterance, and has reached once more the silence of the beginning.

After Sue, after Dostoievsky's *Idiot*, after Turner's latest pictures, after the symbolist poetry of Mallarme and the others, after the music of Debussy, there is no further possible utterance of the peace that passeth all understanding, the peace of God which is Perfect Knowledge. There is only silence beyond this.

Just as after Plato, after Dante, after Raphael, there was no further utterance of the Absoluteness of the Law, of the Immutability of the Divine Conception.

So that, as the great pause came over Greece, and over Italy, after the Renaissance, when the Law had been uttered in its absoluteness, there comes over us now, over England and Russia and France, the pause of finality, now we have seen the purity of Knowledge, the great, white, uninterrupted Light, infinite and eternal.

But that is not the end. The two great conceptions, of Law and of Knowledge or Love, are not diverse and accidental, but complementary. They are, in a way, contradictions each of the other. But they are complementary. They are the Fixed Absolute, the Geometric Absolute, and they are the radiant Absolute, the Unthinkable Absolute of pure, free motion. They are the perfect Stability, and they are the perfect Mobility. They are the fixed condition of our being, and they are the transcendent condition of knowledge in us. They are our Soul, and our Spirit, they are our Feelings, and our Mind. They are our Body and our Brain. They are Two-in-One.

And everything that has ever been produced has been produced by the combined activity of the two, in humanity, by the combined activity of soul and spirit. When the two are acting together, then Life is produced, then Life, or Utterance, Something, is created. And nothing is <sup>01</sup> can be created save by combined effort of the two principles, Law and Love.

All through the medieval times, Law and Love were striving together to give the perfect expression to the Law, to arrive at the perfect conception of the Law. All through the rise of the Greek nation, to its culmination, the Law and Love were working in that nation to attain the perfect expression of the Law. They were driven by the Unknown Desire, the Holy Spirit, the Unknown and Unexpressed. But the Holy Spirit is the Reconciler and the Originator. Him we do not know.

The greatest of all Utterance of the Law has given expression to the Law as it is in relation to Love, both ruled by the Holy Spirit. Such is the Book of Job, such Aeschylus in the Trilogy, such, more or less, is Dante, such is Botticelli. Those who gave expression to the Law after these suppressed the contact, and achieved an abstraction. Plato, Raphael.

The greatest utterance of Love has given expression to Love as it is in relation to the Law: so Rembrandt, Shakespeare, Shelley, Wordsworth, Goethe, Tolstoi. But beyond these there have been Turner, who suppressed the context of the Law; also there have been Dostoievsky, Hardy, Flaubert. These have shown Love in conflict with the Law, and only Death the resultant, no Reconciliation.

So that humanity does not continue for long to accept the conclusions of these writers, nor even of Euripides and Shakespeare always. These great tragic writers endure by reason of the truth of the conflict they describe, because of its completeness, Law, Love, and Reconciliation, all active. But with regard to their conclusions, they leave the soul finally unsatisfied, unbelieving.

Now the aim of man remains to recognize and seek out the Holy Spirit, the Reconciler, the Originator, He who drives the twin principles of Law and of Love across the ages.

Now it remains for us to know the Law and to know the Love, and further to seek out the Reconciliation. It is time for us to build our temples to the Holy Spirit, and to raise our altars to the Holy Ghost, the Supreme, Who is beyond us but is with us.

We know of the Law, and we know of Love, and to that little we know of each of these we have given our full expression. But have not completed one perfect utterance, not one. Small as is the circle of our knowledge, we are not able to cast it complete. In Aeschylus's Eumenides, Apollo is foolish, Athena mechanical. In Shakespeare's Hamlet the conclusion is all foolish. If we had conceived each -party in his proper force, if Apollo had been equally potent with the Furies and no Pallas had appeared to settle the question merely by dropping a pebble, how would Aeschylus have solved his riddle? He could not work out the solution he knew must come, so he forced it.

And so it has always been, always: either a wrong conclusion, or one forced by the artist, as if he put his thumb in the scale to equalise a balance which he could not make level. Now it remains for us to seek the true balance, to give each party, Apollo and the Furies, Love and the Law, his due, and so to seek the Reconciler.

Now the principle of the Law is found strongest in Woman, and the principle of Love in Man. In every creature, the mobility, the law of change, is found exemplified in the male; the stability, the conservatism is found in the female. In woman man finds his root and establishment. In man woman finds her exfoliation and florescence. The woman grows downwards, like a root, towards the centre and the darkness and the origin. The man grows upwards, like the stalk, towards discovery and light and utterance.

Man and Woman are, roughly, the embodiment of Love and the Law: they are the two complementary parts. In the body they are most alike, in genitals they are almost

one. Starting from the connection, almost unification, of the genitals, and travelling towards the feelings and the mind, there becomes ever a greater difference and a finer distinction between the two, male and female, till at last, at the other closing in the circle, in pure utterance, the two are really one again, so that any pure utterance is a perfect unity, the two as one, united by the Holy Spirit.

We start from one side or the other, from the female side or the male, but what we want is always the perfect union of the two. That is the Law of the Holy Spirit, the law of Consummate Marriage. That every living thing seeks, individually and collectively. Every man starts with his deepest desire, a desire for consummation of marriage between himself and the female, a desire for completeness, that completeness of being which will give completeness of satisfaction and completeness of utterance. No man can as yet find perfect consummation of marriage between himself and the Bride, be the bride either Woman or an Idea, but he can approximate to it, and every generation can get a little nearer.

But it needs that a man shall first know in reverence and submit to the Natural Law of his own individual being: that he shall also know that he is but contained within the great Natural Law, that he is but a Child of God, and not God himself: that he shall then poignantly and personally recognize that the law of another man's nature is different from the law of his own nature, that it may be even hostile to him, and yet is part of the great Law of God, to be admitted: this is the Christian action of "loving thy neighbour," and of dying to be born again: lastly, that a man shall know that between his law and the law of his neighbour there is an affinity, that all is contained in one, through the Holy Spirit.

It needs that a man shall know the natural law of his own being, then that he shall seek out the law of the-female, with which to join himself as complement. He must know that he is half, and the woman is the other half: that they are two, but that they are two - in-one.

He must with reverence submit to the law of himself: and he must with suffering and joy know and submit to the law of the woman: and he must know that they two together are one within the Great Law, reconciled within the Great Peace. Out of this final knowledge shall come his supreme art. There shall be the art which recognizes and utters his own law; there shall be the art which recognizes his own and also the law of the woman, his neighbour, utters the glad embraces and the struggle between them, and the submission of one; there shall be the art which knows the struggle between the two conflicting laws, and knows the final reconciliation, where both are equal, two in one, complete. This is the supreme art, which yet remains to be done. Some men have attempted it, and left us the results of efforts. But it remains to be fully done.

But when the two clasp hands, a moment, male and female, clasp hands and are one, the poppy, the gay poppy flies into flower again; and when the two fling their arms about each other, the moonlight runs and dashes against the shadow; and when the two toss back their hair, all the larks break out singing; and when they kiss on the mouth, a lovely human utterance is heard again-and so it is.

THE END

# THOMAS HARDY by Leon H. Vincent

Leon H. Vincent (1859-1941) was an American author, literary critic, and lecturer. He taught English and American literature in schools and colleges across the country and wrote several books and essays on noted authors. This chapter is taken from Vincent's critical work *The Bibliotaph and Other People*.

## THOMAS HARDY

### I

'The reason why so few good books are written is that so few people that can write know anything.' So said a man who, during a busy career, found time to add several fine volumes to the scanty number of good books. And in a vivacious paragraph which follows this initial sentence he humorously anathematizes the literary life. He shows convincingly that 'secluded habits do not tend to eloquence.' He says that the 'indifferent apathy' so common among studious persons is by no means favorable to liveliness of narration. He proves that men who will not live cannot write; that people who shut themselves up in libraries have dry brains. He avows his confidence in the 'original way of writing books,' the way of the first author, who must have looked at things for himself, 'since there were no books for him to copy from;' and he challenges the reader to prove that this original way is not the best way. 'Where,' he asks, 'are the amusing books from voracious students and habitual writers?'

This startling arraignment of authors has been made by other men than Walter Bagehot. Hazlitt in his essay on the 'Ignorance of the Learned' teaches much the same doctrine. Its general truth is indisputable, though Bagehot himself makes exception in favour of Sir Walter Scott. But the two famous critics are united in their conviction that learned people are generally dull, and that books which are the work of habitual writers are not amusing.

There are as a matter of course more exceptions than one. Thomas Hardy is a distinguished exception. Thomas Hardy is an 'habitual writer,' but he is always amusing. The following paragraphs are intended to emphasize certain causes of this quality in his work, the quality by virtue of which he chains the attention and proves himself the most readable novelist now living. That he does attract and hold is clear to any one who has tried no more than a half-dozen pages from one of his best stories. He has

the fatal habit of being interesting, — fatal because it robs you who read him of time which you might else have devoted to ‘improving’ literature, such as history, political economy, or light science. He destroys your peace of mind by compelling your sympathies in behalf of people who never existed. He undermines your will power and makes you his slave. You declare that you will read but one more chapter and you weakly consent to make it two chapters. As a special indulgence you spoil a working day in order to learn about the Return of the Native, perhaps agreeing with a supposititious ‘better self’ that you will waste no more time on novels for the next six months. But you are of ascetic fibre indeed if you do not follow up the book with a reading of *The Woodlanders* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

There is a reason for this. If the practiced writer often fails to make a good book because he knows nothing, Mr. Hardy must succeed in large part because he knows so much. The more one reads him the more is one impressed with the extent of his knowledge. He has an intimate acquaintance with an immense number of interesting things.

He knows men and women — if not all sorts and all conditions, at least a great many varieties of the human animal. Moreover, his men are men and his women are women. He does not use them as figures to accentuate a landscape, or as ventriloquist’s puppets to draw away attention from the fact that he himself is doing all the talking. His people have individuality, power of speech, power of motion. He does not tell you that such a one is clever or witty; the character which he has created does that for himself by doing clever things and making witty remarks. In an excellent story by a celebrated modern master there is a young lady who is declared to be clever and brilliant. Out of forty or fifty observations which she makes, the most extraordinary concerns her father; she says, ‘Isn’t dear papa delightful?’ At another time she inquires whether another gentleman is not also delightful. Hardy’s resources are not so meagre as this. When his people talk we listen, — we do not endure.

He knows other things besides men and women. He knows the soil, the trees, the sky, the sunsets, the infinite variations of the landscape under cloud and sunshine. He knows horses, sheep, cows, dogs, cats. He understands the interpretation of sounds, — a detail which few novelists comprehend or treat with accuracy; the pages of his books ring with the noises of house, street, and country. Moreover there is nothing conventional in his transcript of facts. There is no evidence that he has been in the least degree influenced by other men’s minds. He takes the raw stuff of which novels are made and moulds it as he will. He has an absolutely fresh eye, as painters sometimes say. He looks on life as if he were the first literary man, ‘and none had ever lived before him.’ Paraphrasing Ruskin, one may say of Hardy that in place of studying the old masters he has studied what the old masters studied. But his point of view is his own. His pages are not reminiscent of other pages. He never makes you think of something you have read, but invariably of something you have seen or would like to see. He is an original writer, which means that he takes his material at first hand and eschews

documents. There is considerable evidence that he has read books, but there is no reason for supposing that books have damaged him.

Dr. Farmer proved that Shakespeare had no 'learning.' One might perhaps demonstrate that Thomas Hardy is equally fortunate. In that case he and Shakespeare may felicitate one another. Though when we remember that in our day it is hardly possible to avoid a tincture of scholarship, we may be doing the fairer thing by these two men if we say that the one had small Greek and the other has adroitly concealed the measure of Greek, whether great or small, which is in his possession. To put the matter in another form, though Hardy may have drunk in large quantity 'the spirit breathed from dead men to their kind,' he has not allowed his potations to intoxicate him.

This paragraph is not likely to be misinterpreted unless by some honest soul who has yet to learn that 'literature is not sworn testimony.' Therefore it may be well to add that Mr. Hardy undoubtedly owns a collection of books, and has upon his shelves dictionaries and encyclopedias, together with a decent representation of those works which people call 'standard.' But it is of importance to remember this: That while he may be a well-read man, as the phrase goes, he is not and never has been of that class which Emerson describes with pale sarcasm as 'meek young men in libraries.' It is clear that Hardy has not 'weakened his eyesight over books,' and it is equally clear that he has 'sharpened his eyesight on men and women.' Let us consider a few of his virtues.

## II

In the first place he tells a good story. No extravagant praise is due him for this; it is his business, his trade. He ought to do it, and therefore he does it. The 'first morality' of a novelist is to be able to tell a story, as the first morality of a painter is to be able to handle his brush skillfully and make it do his brain's intending. After all, telling stories in an admirable fashion is rather a familiar accomplishment nowadays. Many men, many women are able to make stories of considerable ingenuity as to plot, and of thrilling interest in the unrolling of a scheme of events. Numberless writers are shrewd and clever in constructing their 'fable,' but they are unable to do much beyond this. Walter Besant writes good stories; Robert Buchanan writes good stories; Grant Allen and David Christie Murray are acceptable to many readers. But unless I mistake greatly and do these men an injustice I should be sorry to do them, their ability ceases just at this point. They tell good stories and do nothing else. They write books and do not make literature. They are authors by their own will and not by grace of God. It may be said of them as Augustine Birrell said of Professor Freeman and the Bishop of Chester, that they are horny-handed sons of toil and worthy of their wage. But one would like to say a little more. Granting that this is praise, it is so faint as to be almost inaudible. If Hardy only wrote good stories he would be merely doing his duty, and therefore accounted an unprofitable servant. But he does much besides.

He fulfills one great function of the literary artist, which is to mediate between nature and the reading public. Such a man is an eye specialist. Through his amiable

offices people who have hitherto been blind are put into condition to see. Near-sighted persons have spectacles fitted to them — which they generally refuse to wear, not caring for literature which clears the mental vision.

Hardy opens the eyes of the reader to the charm, the beauty, the mystery to be found in common life and in every-day objects. So alert and forceful an intelligence rarely applies its energy to fiction. The result is that he makes an almost hopelessly high standard. The exceptional man who comes after him may be a rival, but the majority of writing gentlemen can do little more than enviously admire. He seems to have established for himself such a rule as this, that he will write no page which shall not be interesting. He pours out the treasures of his observation in every chapter. He sees everything, feels everything, sympathizes with everything. To be sure he has an unusually rich field for work. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is an account of the discovery of the remains of an old Roman soldier. One would expect Hardy to make something graphic of the episode. And so he does. You can almost see the warrior as he lies there 'in an oval scoop in the chalk, like a chicken in its shell; his knees drawn up to his chest; his spear against his arm; an urn at his knees, a jar at his throat, a bottle at his mouth; and mystified conjecture pouring down upon him from the eyes of Casterbridge street-boys and men.'

The real virtue in this bit of description lies in the few words expressive of the mental attitude of the onlookers. And it is a nice distinction which Hardy makes when he says that 'imaginative inhabitants who would have felt an unpleasantness at the discovery of a comparatively modern skeleton in their gardens were quite unmoved by these hoary shapes. They had lived so long ago, their hopes and motives were so widely removed from ours, that between them and the living there seemed to stretch a gulf too wide for even a spirit to pass.'

He takes note of that language which, though not articulate, is in common use among yeomen, dairymen, farmers, and the townfolk of his little world. It is a language superimposed upon the ordinary language. 'To express satisfaction the Casterbridge market-man added to his utterance a broadening of the cheeks, a crevicing of the eyes, a throwing back of the shoulders.' 'If he wondered ... you knew it from perceiving the inside of his crimson mouth and the target-like circling of his eyes.' The language of deliberation expressed itself in the form of 'sundry attacks on the moss of adjoining walls with the end of his stick' or a 'change of his hat from the horizontal to the less so.'

The novel called *The Woodlanders* is filled with notable illustrations of an interest in minute things. The facts are introduced unobtrusively and no great emphasis is laid upon them. But they cling to the memory. Giles Winterbourne, a chief character in this story, 'had a marvelous power in making trees grow. Although he would seem to shovel in the earth quite carelessly there was a sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech that he was operating on; so that the roots took hold of the soil in a few days.' When any of the journeymen planted, one quarter of the trees died away. There is a graphic little scene where Winterbourne plants and Marty South



holds the trees for him. 'Winterbourne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjurer's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper direction for growth.' Marty declared that the trees began to 'sigh' as soon as they were put upright, 'though when they are lying down they don't sigh at all.' Winterbourne had never noticed it. 'She erected one of the young pines into its hole, and held up her finger; the soft musical breathing instantly set in, which was not to cease night or day till the grown tree should be felled — probably long after the two planters had been felled themselves.'

Later on in the story there is a description of this same Giles Winterbourne returning with his horses and his cider apparatus from a neighbouring village. 'He looked and smelt like autumn's very brother, his face being sunburnt to wheat colour, his eyes blue as corn flowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips, and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been born and bred among the orchards.'

Hardy throws off little sketches of this sort with an air of unconsciousness which is fascinating.... It may be a sunset, or it may be only a flake of snow falling upon a young girl's hair, or the light from lanterns penetrating the shutters and flickering over the ceiling of a room in the early winter morning, — no matter what the circumstance or happening is, it is caught in the act, photographed in permanent colours, made indelible and beautiful.

Hardy's art is tyrannical. It compels one to be interested in that which delights him. It imposes its own standards. There is a rude strength about the man which readers endure because they are not unwilling to be slaves to genius. You may dislike sheep, and care but little for the poetical aspect of cows, if indeed you are not inclined to question the existence of poetry in cows; but if you read *Far from the Madding Crowd* you can never again pass a flock of sheep without being conscious of a multitude of new thoughts, new images, new matters for comparison. All that dormant section of your soul which for years was in a comatose condition on the subject of sheep is suddenly and broadly awake. Read *Tess* and at once cows and a dairy have a new meaning to you. They are a conspicuous part of the setting of that stage upon which poor *Tess Durbeyfield's* life drama was played.

But Hardy does not flaunt his knowledge in his reader's face. These things are distinctly means to an end, not ends in themselves. He has no theory to advance about keeping bees or making cider. He has taken no little journeys in the world. On the contrary, where he has traveled at all, he has traveled extensively. He is like a tourist who has been so many times abroad that his allusions are naturally and unaffectedly made. But the man just back from a first trip on the continent has astonishment stamped upon his face, and he speaks of Paris and of the Alps as if he had discovered both. Zola is one of those practitioners who, big with recently acquired knowledge, appear to labour under the idea that the chief end of a novel is to convey miscellaneous information. This is probably a mistake. Novels are not handbooks on floriculture,

banking, railways, or the management of department stores. One may make a parade of minute details and endlessly wearisome learning and gain a certain credit thereby; but what if the details and the learning are chiefly of value in a dictionary of sciences and commerce? Wisdom of this sort is to be sparingly used in a work of art.

In these matters I cannot but feel that Hardy has a reticence so commendable that praise of it is superfluous and impertinent. After all, men and women are better than sheep and cows, and had he been more explicit, he would have tempted one to inquire whether he proposed making a story or a volume which might bear the title *The Wessex Farmer's Own Hand-Book*, and containing wise advice as to pigs, poultry, and the useful art of making two heads of cabbage grow where only one had grown before.

### III

Among the most engaging qualities of this writer is humor. Hardy is a humorous man himself and entirely appreciative of the humor that is in others. According to a distinguished philosopher, wit and humor produce love. Hardy must then be in daily receipt of large measures of this 'improving passion' from his innumerable readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

His humor manifests itself in a variety of ways; by the use of witty epithet; by ingenious description of a thing which is not strikingly laughable in itself, but which becomes so from the closeness of his rendering; by a leisurely and ample account of a character with humorous traits, — traits which are brought artistically into prominence as an actor heightens the complexion in stage make-up; and finally by his lively reproductions of the talk of village and country people, — a class of society whose everyday speech has only to be heard to be enjoyed. I do not pretend that the sources of Hardy's humor are exhausted in this analysis, but the majority of illustrations can be assigned to some one of these divisions.

He is usually thought to be at his best in descriptions of farmers, village mechanics, labourers, dairymen, men who kill pigs, tend sheep, furze-cutters, masons, hostlers, loafers who do nothing in particular, and while thus occupied rail on *Lady Fortune* in good set terms. Certainly he paints these people with affectionate fidelity. Their virile, racy talk delights him. His reproductions of that talk are often intensely realistic. Nearly every book has its chorus of human grotesques whose mere names are a source of mirth. William Worm, Grandfer Cattle, 'Corp'el' Tullidge, Christopher Coney, John Upjohn, Robert Creedle, Martin Cannister, Haymoss Fry, Robert Lickpan, and Sammy Blore, — men so denominated should stand for comic things, and these men do. William Worm, for example, was deaf. His deafness took an unusual form; he heard fish frying in his head, and he was not reticent upon the subject of his infirmity. He usually described himself by the epithet 'wambling,' and protested that he would never pay the Lord for his making, — a degree of self-knowledge which many have arrived at but few have the courage to confess. He was once observed in the act of

making himself 'passing civil and friendly by overspreading his face with a large smile that seemed to have no connection with the humor he was in.' Sympathy because of his deafness elicited this response: 'Ay, I assure you that frying o' fish is going on for nights and days. And, you know, sometimes 't isn't only fish, but rashers o' bacon and inions. Ay, I can hear the fat pop and fizz as nateral as life.'

He was questioned as to what means of cure he had tried.

'Oh, ay bless ye, I've tried everything. Ay, Providence is a merciful man, and I have hoped he'd have found it out by this time, living so many years in a parson's family, too, as I have; but 'a don't seem to relieve me. Ay, I be a poor wambling man, and life's a mint o' trouble.'

One knows not which to admire the more, the appetizing realism in William Worm's account of his infirmity, or the primitive state of his theological views which allowed him to look for special divine favour by virtue of the ecclesiastical conspicuousness of his late residence.

Hardy must have heard, with comfort in the thought of its literary possibilities, the following dialogue on the cleverness of women. It occurs in the last chapter of *The Woodlanders*. A man who is always spoken of as the 'hollow-turner,' a phrase obviously descriptive of his line of business, which related to wooden bowls, spigots, cheese-vats, and funnels, talks with John Upjohn.

'What women do know nowadays!' he says. 'You can't deceive 'em as you could in my time.'

'What they knowed then was not small,' said John Upjohn. 'Always a good deal more than the men! Why, when I went courting my wife that is now, the skillfulness that she would show in keeping me on her pretty side as she walked was beyond all belief. Perhaps you've noticed that she's got a pretty side to her face as well as a plain one?'

'I can't say I've noticed it particular much,' said the hollow-turner blandly.

'Well,' continued Upjohn, not disconcerted, 'she has. All women under the sun be prettier one side than t'other. And, as I was saying, the pains she would take to make me walk on the pretty side were unending. I warrent that whether we were going with the sun or against the sun, uphill or downhill, in wind or in lewth, that wart of hers was always toward the hedge, and that dimple toward me. There was I too simple to see her wheelings and turnings; and she so artful though two years younger, that she could lead me with a cotton thread like a blind ham; ... no, I don't think the women have got cleverer, for they was never otherwise.'

## IV

These men have sap and juice in their talk. When they think they think clearly. When they speak they express themselves with an energy and directness which mortify the thin speech of conventional persons. Here is Farfrae, the young Scotchman, in the tap-room of the Three Mariners Inn of Casterbridge, singing of his ain contree with a

pathos quite unknown in that part of the world. The worthies who frequent the place are deeply moved. 'Danged if our country down here is worth singing about like that,' says Billy Wills, the glazier, — while the literal Christopher Coney inquires, 'What did ye come away from yer own country for, young maister, if ye be so wounded about it?' Then it occurs to him that it wasn't worth Farfrae's while to leave the fair face and the home of which he had been singing to come among such as they. 'We be bruckle folk here — the best o' us hardly honest sometimes, what with hard winters, and so many mouths to fill, and God-a'mighty sending his little taties so terrible small to fill 'em with. We don't think about flowers and fair faces, not we — except in the shape of cauliflowers and pigs' chaps.'

I should like to see the man who sat to Artist Hardy for the portrait of Corporal Tullidge in *The Trumpet-Major*. This worthy, who was deaf and talked in an uncompromisingly loud voice, had been struck in the head by a piece of shell at Valenciennes in '93. His left arm had been smashed. Time and Nature had done what they could, and under their beneficent influences the arm had become a sort of anatomical rattle-box. People interested in Corp'el Tullidge were allowed to see his head and hear his arm. The corp'el gave these private views at any time, and was quite willing to show off, though the exhibition was apt to bore him a little. His fellows displayed him much as one would a 'freak' in a dime museum.

'You have got a silver plate let into yer head, haven't ye, corp'el?' said Anthony Cripplestraw. 'I have heard that the way they mortised yer skull was a beautiful piece of workmanship. Perhaps the young woman would like to see the place.'

The young woman was Anne Garland, the sweet heroine of the story; and Anne didn't want to see the silver plate, the thought of which made her almost faint. Nor could she be tempted by being told that one couldn't see such a 'wound' every day. Then Cripplestraw, earnest to please her, suggested that Tullidge rattle his arm, which Tullidge did, to Anne's great distress.

'Oh, it don't hurt him, bless ye. Do it, corp'el?' said Cripplestraw.

'Not a bit,' said the corporal, still working his arm with great energy. There was, however, a perfunctoriness in his manner 'as if the glory of exhibition had lost somewhat of its novelty, though he was still willing to oblige.' Anne resisted all entreaties to convince herself by feeling of the corporal's arm that the bones were 'as loose as a bag of ninepins,' and displayed an anxiety to escape. Whereupon the corporal, 'with a sense that his time was getting wasted,' inquired: 'Do she want to see or hear any more, or don't she?'

This is but a single detail in the account of a party which Miller Loveday gave to soldier guests in honour of his son John, — a description the sustained vivacity of which can only be appreciated through a reading of those brilliant early chapters of the story.

Half the mirth that is in these men comes from the frankness with which they confess their actual thoughts. Ask a man of average morals and average attainments why he doesn't go to church. You won't know any better after he has given you his

answer. Ask Nat Chapman, of the novel entitled *Two on a Tower*, and you will not be troubled with ambiguities. He doesn't like to go because Mr. Torkingham's sermons make him think of soul-saving and other bewildering and uncomfortable topics. So when the son of Torkingham's predecessor asks Nat how it goes with him, that tiller of the soil answers promptly: 'Pa'son Tarkenham do tease a feller's conscience that much, that church is no holler-day at all to the limbs, as it was in yer reverent father's time!'

The unswerving honesty with which they assign utilitarian motives for a particular line of conduct is delightful. Three men discuss a wedding, which took place not at the home of the bride but in a neighbouring parish, and was therefore very private. The first doesn't blame the new married pair, because 'a wedding at home means five and six handed reels by the hour, and they do a man's legs no good when he's over forty.' A second corroborates the remark and says: 'True. Once at the woman's house you can hardly say nay to being one in a jig, knowing all the time that you be expected to make yourself worth your victuals.'

The third puts the whole matter beyond the need of further discussion by adding: 'For my part, I like a good hearty funeral as well as anything. You've as splendid victuals and drink as at other parties, and even better. And it don't wear your legs to stumps in talking over a poor fellow's ways as it do to stand up in hornpipes.'

Beings who talk like this know their minds, — a rather unwonted circumstance among the sons of men, — and knowing them, they do the next most natural thing in the world, which is to speak the minds they have.

There is yet another phase of Hardy's humor to be noted: that humor, sometimes defiant, sometimes philosophic, which concerns death and its accompaniments. It cannot be thought morbid. Hardy is too fond of Nature ever to degenerate into mere morbidity. He has lived much in the open air, which always corrects a tendency to 'vapors.' He takes little pleasure in the gruesome, a statement in support of which one may cite all his works up to 1892, the date of the appearance of *Tess*. This paper includes no comment in detail upon the later books; but so far as *Tess* is concerned it would be critical folly to speak of it as morbid. It is sad, it is terrible, as *Lear* is terrible, or as any one of the great tragedies, written by men we call 'masters,' is terrible. *Jude* is psychologically gruesome, no doubt; but not absolutely indefensible. Even if it were as black a book as some critics have painted it, the general truth of the statement as to the healthfulness of Hardy's work would not be impaired. This work judged as a whole is sound and invigorating. He cannot be accused of over-fondness for charnel-houses or ghosts. He does not discourse of graves and vaults in order to arouse that terror which the thought of death inspires. It is not for the purpose of making the reader uncomfortable. If the grave interests him, it is because of the reflections awakened. 'Man, proud man,' needs that jog to his memory which the pomp of interments and aspect of tombstones give. Hardy has keen perception of that humor which glows in the presence of death and on the edge of the grave. The living have such a tremendous advantage over the dead, that they can neither help feeling it nor avoid a display of the feeling. When the lion is buried the dogs crack jokes at the funeral. They do it in

a subdued manner, no doubt, and with a sense of proprieties, but nevertheless they do it. Their immense superiority is never so apparent as at just this moment.

This humor, which one notes in Hardy, is akin to the humor of the grave-diggers in Hamlet, but not so grim. I have heard a country undertaker describe the details of the least attractive branch of his uncomfortable business with a pride and self-satisfaction that would have been farcical had not the subject been so depressing. This would have been matter for Hardy's pen. There are few scenes in his books more telling than that which shows the operations in the family vault of the Luxellians, when John Smith, Martin Cannister, and old Simeon prepare the place for Lady Luxellian's coffin. It seems hardly wise to pronounce this episode as good as the grave-diggers' scene in Hamlet; that would shock some one and gain for the writer the reputation of being enthusiastic rather than critical. But I profess that I enjoy the talk of old Simeon and Martin Cannister quite as much as the talk of the first and second grave-diggers.

Simeon, the shriveled mason, was 'a marvelously old man, whose skin seemed so much too large for his body that it would not stay in position.' He talked of the various great dead whose coffins filled the family vault. Here was the stately and irascible Lord George: —

'Ah, poor Lord George,' said the mason, looking contemplatively at the huge coffin; 'he and I were as bitter enemies once as any could be when one is a lord and t'other only a mortal man. Poor fellow! He'd clap his hand upon my shoulder and cuss me as familiar and neighbourly as if he'd been a common chap. Ay, 'a cussed me up hill and 'a cussed me down; and then 'a would rave out again and the goold clamps of his fine new teeth would glisten in the sun like fetters of brass, while I, being a small man and poor, was fain to say nothing at all. Such a strappen fine gentleman as he was too! Yes, I rather liken en sometimes. But once now and then, when I looked at his towering height, I'd think in my inside, "What a weight you'll be, my lord, for our arms to lower under the inside of Endelstow church some day!"'

'And was he?' inquired a young labourer.

'He was. He was five hundred weight if 'a were a pound. What with his lead, and his oak, and his handles, and his one thing and t'other' — here the ancient man slapped his hand upon the cover with a force that caused a rattle among the bones inside — 'he half broke my back when I took his feet to lower en down the steps there. "Ah," saith I to John there — didn't I, John? — "that ever one man's glory should be such a weight upon another man!" But there, I liked my Lord George sometimes.'

It may be observed that as Hardy grows older his humor becomes more subtle or quite dies away, as if serious matters pressed upon his mind, and there was no time for being jocular. Some day, perhaps, if he should rise to the dignity of an English classic, this will be spoken of as his third period, and critics will be wise in the elucidation thereof. But just at present this third period is characterized by the terms 'pessimistic' and 'unhealthy.'

That he is a pessimist in the colloquial sense admits of little question. Nor is it surprising; it is rather difficult not to be. Not a few persons are pessimists and won't

tell. They preserve a fair exterior, but secretly hold that all flesh is grass. Some people escape the disease by virtue of much philosophy or much religion or much work. Many who have not taken up permanent residence beneath the roof of Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann are occasional guests. Then there is that great mass of pessimism which is the result, not of thought, but of mere discomfort, physical and super-physical. One may have attacks of pessimism from a variety of small causes. A bad stomach will produce it. Financial difficulties will produce it. The light-minded get it from changes in the weather.

That note of melancholy which we detect in many of Hardy's novels is as it should be. For no man can apprehend life aright and still look upon it as a carnival. He may attain serenity in respect to it, but he can never be jaunty and flippant. He can never slap life upon the back and call it by familiar names. He may hold that the world is indisputably growing better, but he will need to admit that the world is having a hard time in so doing.

Hardy would be sure of a reputation for pessimism in some quarters if only because of his attitude, or what people think is his attitude, toward marriage. He has devoted many pages and not a little thought to the problems of the relations between men and women. He is considerably interested in questions of 'matrimonial divergence.' He recognizes that most obvious of all obvious truths, that marriage is not always a success; nay, more than this, that it is often a makeshift, an apology, a pretense. But he professes to undertake nothing beyond a statement of the facts. It rests with the public to lay his statement beside their experience and observation, and thus take measure of the fidelity of his art.

He notes the variety of motives by which people are actuated in the choice of husbands and wives. In the novel called *The Woodlanders*, Grace Melbury, the daughter of a rich though humbly-born yeoman, has unusual opportunities for a girl of her class, and is educated to a point of physical and intellectual daintiness which make her seem superior to her home environment. Her father has hoped that she will marry her rustic lover, Giles Winterbourne, who, by the way, is a man in every fibre of his being. Grace is quite unspoiled by her life at a fashionable boarding school, but after her return her father feels (and Hardy makes the reader feel) that in marrying Giles she will sacrifice herself. She marries Dr. Fitzspiers, a brilliant young physician, recently come into the neighbourhood, and in so doing she chooses for the worse. The character of Dr. Fitzspiers is summarized in a statement he once made (presumably to a male friend) that 'on one occasion he had noticed himself to be possessed by five distinct infatuations at the same time.'

His flagrant infidelities bring about a temporary separation; Grace is not able to comprehend 'such double and treble-barreled hearts.' When finally they are reunited the life-problem of each still awaits an adequate solution. For the motive which brings the girl back to her husband is only a more complex phase of the same motive which chiefly prompted her to marry him. Hardy says that Fitzspiers as a lover acted upon Grace 'like a dram.' His presence 'threw her into an atmosphere which biased her

doings until the influence was over.' Afterward she felt 'something of the nature of regret for the mood she had experienced.'

But this same story contains two other characters who are unmatched in fiction as the incarnation of pure love and self-forgetfulness. Giles Winterbourne, whose devotion to Grace is without wish for happiness which shall not imply a greater happiness for her, dies that no breath of suspicion may fall upon her. He in turn is loved by Marty South with a completeness which destroys all thought of self. She enjoys no measure of reward while Winterbourne lives. He never knows of Marty's love. But in that last fine paragraph of this remarkable book, when the poor girl places the flowers upon his grave she utters a little lament which for beauty, pathos, and realistic simplicity is without parallel in modern fiction. Hardy was never more of an artist than when writing the last chapter of *The Woodlanders*.

After all, a book in which unselfish love is described in terms at once just and noble cannot be dangerously pessimistic, even if it also takes cognizance of such hopeless cases as a man with a chronic tendency to fluctuations of the heart.

The matter may be put briefly thus: In Hardy's novels one sees the artistic result of an effort to paint life as it is, with much of its joy and a deal of its sorrow, with its good people and its selfish people, its positive characters and its Laodiceans, its men and women who dominate circumstances, and its unhappy ones who are submerged. These books are the record of what a clear-eyed, sane, vigorous, sympathetic, humorous man knows about life; a man too conscious of things as they are to wish grossly to exaggerate or to disguise them; and at the same time so entirely aware how much poetry as well as irony God has mingled in the order of the world as to be incapable of concealing that fact either. He is of such ample intellectual frame that he makes the petty contentions of literary schools appear foolish. I find a measure of Hardy's mind in passages which set forth his conception of the preciousness of life, no matter what the form in which life expresses itself. He is peculiarly tender toward brute creation. In that paragraph which describes Tess discovering the wounded pheasants in the wood, Hardy suggests the thought, quite new to many people, that chivalry is not confined to the relations of man to man or of man to woman. There are still weaker fellow-creatures in Nature's teeming family. What if we are unmannerly or unchivalrous toward them?

He abounds in all manner of pithy sayings, many of them wise, a few of them profound, and not one which is unworthy a second reading. It is to be hoped that he will escape the doubtful honour of being dispersedly set forth in a 'Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Hardy.' Such books are a depressing species of literature and seem chiefly designed to be given away at holiday time to acquaintances who are too important to be put off with Christmas cards, and not important enough to be supplied with gifts of a calculable value.

One must praise the immense spirit and vivacity of scenes where something in the nature of a struggle, a moral duel, goes on. In such passages every power at the writer's command is needed; unerring directness of thought, and words which clothe this thought as an athlete's garments fit the body. Everything must count, and the



movement of the narrative must be sustained to the utmost. The chess-playing scene between Elfride and Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is an illustration. Sergeant Troy displaying his skill in handling the sword — weaving his spell about Bathsheba in true snake fashion, is another example. Still more brilliant is the gambling scene in *The Return of the Native*, where Wildeve and Diggory Venn, out on the heath in the night, throw dice by the light of a lantern for Thomasin's money. Venn, the reddleman, in the Mephistophelian garb of his profession, is the incarnation of a good spirit, and wins the guineas from the clutch of the spendthrift husband. The scene is immensely dramatic, with its accompaniments of blackness and silence, Wildeve's haggard face, the circle of ponies, known as heath-croppers, which are attracted by the light, the death's-head moth which extinguishes the candle, and the finish of the game by the light of glow-worms. It is a glorious bit of writing in true bravura style.

His books have a quality which I shall venture to call 'spaciousness,' in the hope that the word conveys the meaning I try to express. It is obvious that there is a difference between books which are large and books which are merely long. The one epithet refers to atmosphere, the other to number of pages. Hardy writes large books. There is room in them for the reader to expand his mind. They are distinctly out-of-door books, 'not smacking of the cloister or the library.' In reading them one has a feeling that the vault of heaven is very high, and that the earth stretches away to interminable distances upon all sides. This quality of largeness is not dependent upon number of pages; nor is length absolute as applied to books. A book may contain one hundred pages and still be ninety-nine pages too long, for the reason that its truth, its lesson, its literary virtue, are not greater than might be expressed in a single page.

Spaciousness is in even less degree dependent upon miles. The narrowness, geographically speaking, of Hardy's range of expression is notable. There is much contrast between him and Stevenson in this respect. The Scotchman has embodied in his fine books the experiences of life in a dozen different quarters of the globe. Hardy, with more robust health, has traveled from Portland to Bath, and from 'Wintoncester' to 'Exonbury,' — journeys hardly more serious than from the blue bed to the brown. And it is better thus. No reader of *The Return of the Native* would have been content that Eustacia Vye should persuade her husband back to Paris. Rather than the boulevards one prefers Egdon heath, as Hardy paints it, 'the great inviolate place,' the 'untamable Ishmaelish thing' which its arch-enemy, Civilization, could not subdue.

He is without question one of the best writers of our time, whether for comedy or for tragedy; and for extravaganza, too, as witness his lively farce called *The Hand of Ethelberta*. He can write dialogue or description. He is so excellent in either that either, as you read it, appears to make for your highest pleasure. If his characters talk, you would gladly have them talk to the end of the book. If he, the author, speaks, you would not wish to interrupt. More than most skillful writers, he preserves that just balance between narrative and colloquy.

His best novels prior to the appearance of *Tess*, are *The Woodlanders*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. These

four are the bulwarks of his reputation, while a separate and great fame might be based alone on that powerful tragedy called by its author *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Criticism which glorifies any one book of a given author at the expense of all his other books is profitless, if not dangerous. Moreover, it is dangerous to have a favorite author as well as a favorite book of that favorite author. A man's choice of books, like his choice of friends, is usually inexplicable to everybody but himself. However, the chief object in recommending books is to make converts to the gospel of literature according to the writer of these books. For which legitimate purpose I would recommend to the reader who has hitherto denied himself the pleasure of an acquaintance with Thomas Hardy, the two volumes known as *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native*. The first of these is the more genial because it presents a more genial side of Nature. But the other is a noble piece of literary workmanship, a powerful book, ingeniously framed, with every detail strongly realised; a book which is dramatic, humorous, sincere in its pathos, rich in its word-colouring, eloquent in its descriptive passages; a book which embodies so much of life and poetry that one has a feeling of mental exaltation as he reads.

Surely it is not wise in the critical Jeremiahs so despairingly to lift up their voices, and so strenuously to bewail the condition of the literature of the time. The literature of the time is very well, as they would see could they but turn their fascinated gaze from the meretricious and spectacular elements of that literature to the work of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith. With such men among the most influential in modern letters, and with Barrie and Stevenson among the idols of the reading world, it would seem that the office of public Jeremiah should be continued rather from courtesy than from an overwhelming sense of the needs of the hour.

# THE LYRICAL POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY by Edmund Gosse

Sir Edmund William Gosse (1849 –1928) was an English poet, author and critic. This chapter was taken from Gosse's criticism book *Some Diversions of a Man of Letters*.

Sir Edmund Gosse

## THE LYRICAL POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY

When, about Christmas time in 1898, Mr. Hardy's admirers, who were expecting from him a new novel, received instead a thick volume of verse, there was mingled with their sympathy and respect a little disappointment and a great failure in apprehension. Those who were not rude enough to suggest that a cobbler should stick to his last, reminded one another that many novelists had sought relaxation by trifling with the Muses. Thackeray had published *Ballads*, and George Eliot had expatiated in a *Legend of Jubal*. No one thought the worse of *Coningsby* because its author had produced a *Revolutionary Epic*. It took some time for even intelligent criticism to see that the new *Wessex Poems* did not fall into this accidental category, and still, after twenty years, there survives a tendency to take the verse of Mr. Hardy, abundant and solid as it has become, as a mere subsidiary and ornamental appendage to his novels. It is still necessary to insist on the complete independence of his career as a poet, and to point out that if he had never published a page of prose he would deserve to rank high among the writers of his country on the score of the eight volumes of his verse. It is as a lyrical poet, and solely as a lyrical poet, that I propose to speak of him to-day.

It has been thought extraordinary that Cowper was over fifty when he published his first secular verses, but Mr. Hardy was approaching his sixtieth year when he sent *Wessex Poems* to the press. Such self-restraint — "none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit none shall" — has always fascinated the genuine artist, but few have practised it with so much tenacity. When the work of Mr. Hardy is completed, nothing, it is probable, will more strike posterity than its unity, its consistency. He has given proof, as scarce any other modern writer has

done, of tireless constancy of resolve. His novels formed an unbroken series from the *Desperate Remedies* of 1871 to *The Well-Beloved* of 1897. In the fulness of his success, and unseduced by all temptation, he closed that chapter of his career, and has kept it closed. Since 1898 he has been, persistently and periodically, a poet and nothing else. That he determined, for reasons best left to his own judgment, to defer the exhibition of his verse until he had completed his work in prose, ought not to prejudice criticism in its analysis of the lyrics and the colossal dramatic panorama. Mr. Hardy, exclusively as a poet, demands our undivided attention.

It is legitimate to speculate on other probable causes of Mr. Hardy's delay. From such information as lies scattered before us, we gather that it was from 1865 to 1867 that he originally took poetry to be his vocation. The dated pieces in the volume of 1898 help us to form an idea of the original character of his utterance. On the whole it was very much what it remains in the pieces composed after a lapse of half a century. Already, as a very young man, Mr. Hardy possessed his extraordinary insight into the movements of human character, and his eloquence in translating what he had observed of the tragedy and pain of rustic lives. No one, for sixty years, had taken so closely to heart the admonitions of Wordsworth in his famous Preface to the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* to seek for inspiration in that condition where "the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful forms of nature." But it may well be doubted whether Mr. Hardy's poems would have been received in the mid-Victorian age with favour, or even have been comprehended. Fifty years ahead of his time, he was asking in 1866 for novelty of ideas, and he must have been conscious that his questioning would seem inopportune. He needed a different atmosphere, and he left the task of revolt to another, and, at first sight, a very unrelated force, that of the *Poems and Ballads* of the same year. But Swinburne succeeded in his revolution, and although he approached the art from an opposite direction, he prepared the way for an ultimate appreciation of Mr. Hardy.

We should therefore regard the latter, in spite of his silence of forty years, as a poet who laboured, like Swinburne, at a revolution against the optimism and superficial sweetness of his age. Swinburne, it is true, tended to accentuate the poetic side of poetry, while Mr. Hardy drew verse, in some verbal respects, nearer to prose. This does not affect their common attitude, and the sympathy of these great artists for one another's work has already been revealed, and will be still more clearly exposed. But they were unknown to each other in 1866, when to both of them the cheap philosophy of the moment, the glittering femininity of the "jewelled line," the intense respect for Mrs. Grundy in her Sunday satin, appeared trumpery, hateful, and to be trampled upon. We find in Mr. Hardy's earliest verse no echo of the passionate belief in personal immortality which was professed by Ruskin and Browning. He opposed the Victorian theory of human "progress"; the Tennysonian beatific Vision seemed to him ridiculous. He rejected the idea of the sympathy and goodness of Nature, and was in revolt against the self-centredness of the Romantics. We may conjecture that he combined a great reverence for *The Book of Job* with a considerable contempt for *In Memoriam*.

This was not a mere rebellious fancy which passed off; it was something inherent that remained, and gives to-day their peculiar character to Mr. Hardy's latest lyrics. But before we examine the features of this personal mode of interpreting poetry to the world, we may collect what little light we can on the historic development of it. In the pieces dated between 1865 and 1867 we find the germ of almost everything which has since characterised the poet. In "Amabel" the ruinous passage of years, which has continued to be an obsession with Mr. Hardy, is already crudely dealt with. The habit of taking poetical negatives of small scenes — "your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree, and a pond edged with grayish leaves" ("Neutral Times") — which had not existed in English verse since the days of Crabbe, reappears. There is marked already a sense of terror and resentment against the blind motions of chance — In "Hap" the author would positively welcome a certainty of divine hatred as a relief from the strain of depending upon "crass casualty." Here and there in these earliest pieces an extreme difficulty of utterance is remarkable in the face of the ease which the poet attained afterwards in the expression of his most strange images and fantastic revelations. We read in "At a Bridal": —

"Should I, too, wed as slave to Mode's decree, And each thus found apart, of false desire  
A stolid line, whom no high aims will fire As had fired ours could ever have mingled we!"

This, although perfectly reducible, takes time to think out, and at a hasty glance seems muffled up in obscurity beyond the darkness of Donne; moreover, it is scarcely worthy in form of the virtuoso which Mr. Hardy was presently to become. Perhaps of the poems certainly attributable to this earliest period, the little cycle of sonnets called "She to Him" gives clearest promise of what was coming. The sentiment is that of Ronsard's famous "Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, à la chandelle," but turned round, as Mr. Hardy loves to do, from the man to the woman, and embroidered with ingenuities, such as where the latter says that as her temperament dies down the habit of loving will remain, and she be

"Numb as a vane that cankers on its point, True to the wind that kissed ere canker came,"

which attest a complexity of mind that Ronsard's society knew nothing of.

On the whole, we may perhaps be safe in conjecturing that whatever the cause, the definite dedication to verse was now postponed. Meanwhile, the writing of novels had become the business of Mr. Hardy's life, and ten years go by before we trace a poet in that life again. But it is interesting to find that when the great success of *Far from the Madding Crowd* had introduced him to a circle of the best readers, there followed an effect which again disturbed his ambition for the moment. Mr. Hardy was once more tempted to change the form of his work. He wished "to get back to verse," but was dissuaded by Leslie Stephen, who induced him to start writing *The Return of the Native* instead. On March 29th, 1875, Coventry Patmore, then a complete stranger, wrote to express his regret that "such almost unequalled beauty and power as appeared in the novels should not have assured themselves the immortality which would have

been conferred upon them by the form of verse." This was just at the moment when we find Mr. Hardy's conversations with "long Leslie Stephen in the velveteen coat" obstinately turning upon "theologies decayed and defunct, the origin of things, the constitution of matter, and the unreality of time." To this period belongs also the earliest conception of *The Dynasts*, an old note-book containing, under the date June 20th, 1875, the suggestion that the author should attempt "An Iliad of Europe from 1789 to 1815."

To this time also seems to belong the execution of what has proved the most attractive section of Mr. Hardy's poetry, the narratives, or short Wessex ballads. The method in which these came into the world is very curious. Many of these stories were jotted down to the extent of a stanza or two when the subject first occurred to the author. For instance, "The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's," first published by Lionel Johnson in 1894, had been begun as early as 1867, and was finished ten years later. The long ballad of "Leipzig" and the savage "San Sebastian," both highly characteristic, were also conceived and a few lines of each noted down long before their completion. "Valenciennes," however, belongs to 1878, and the "Dance at the Phoenix," of which the stanza beginning "'Twas Christmas" alone had been written years before, seems to have been finished about the same time. What evidence is before us goes to prove that in the 'seventies Mr. Hardy became a complete master of the art of verse, and that his poetic style was by this time fixed. He still kept poetry out of public sight, but he wrote during the next twenty years, as though in a backwater off the stream of his novels, the poems which form the greater part of the volume of 1898. If no other collection of his lyrical verse existed, we should miss a multitude of fine things, but our general conception of his genius would be little modified.

We should judge carelessly, however, if we treated the subsequent volumes as mere repetitions of the original Wessex Poems. They present interesting differences, which I may rapidly note before I touch on the features which characterise the whole body of Mr. Hardy's verse. *Poems of the Past and Present*, which came out in the first days of 1902, could not but be in a certain measure disappointing, in so far as it paralleled its three years' product with that of the thirty years of *Wessex Poems*. Old pieces were published in it, and it was obvious that in 1898 Mr. Hardy might be expected to have chosen from what used to be called his "portfolio" those specimens which he thought to be most attractive. But on further inspection this did not prove to be quite the case. After pondering for twelve years on the era of Napoleon, his preoccupation began in 1887 to drive him into song: —

"Must I pipe a palinody, Or be silent thereupon?"

He decides that silence has become impossible: —

"Nay; I'll sing 'The Bridge of Lodi' — That long-loved, romantic thing, Though none show by smile or nod, he Guesses why and what I sing!"

Here is the germ of *The Dynasts*. But in the meantime the crisis of the Boer War had cut across the poet's dream of Europe a hundred years ago, and a group of records of the Dorsetshire elements of the British army at the close of 1899 showed in Mr.

Hardy's poetry what had not been suspected there — a military talent of a most remarkable kind. Another set of pieces composed in Rome were not so interesting; Mr. Hardy always seems a little languid when he leaves the confines of his native Wessex. Another section of *Poems of the Past and Present* is severely, almost didactically, metaphysical, and expands in varied language the daring thought, so constantly present in Mr. Hardy's reverie, that God Himself has forgotten the existence of earth, this "tiny sphere," this "tainted ball," "so poor a thing," and has left all human life to be the plaything of blind chance. This sad conviction is hardly ruffled by "The Darkling Thrush," which goes as far towards optimism as Mr. Hardy can let himself be drawn, or by such reflections as those in "On a Fine Morning": —

"Whence comes Solace? Not from seeing What is doing, suffering, being; Not from noting Life's conditions, Not from heeding Time's monitions; But in cleaving to the Dream, And in gazing on the gleam Whereby gray things golden seem."

Eight years more passed, years marked by the stupendous effort of *The Dynasts*, before Mr. Hardy put forth another collection of lyrical poems. *Time's Laughingstocks* confirmed, and more than confirmed, the high promise of *Wessex Poems*. The author, in one of his modest prefaces, where he seems to whisper while we bend forward in our anxiety not to miss one thrifty sentence, expresses the hope that *Time's Laughingstocks* will, as a whole, take the "reader forward, even if not far, rather than backward."

The book, indeed, does not take us "far" forward, simply because the writer's style and scope were definitely exposed to us already, and yet it does take us "forward," because the hand of the master is conspicuously firmer and his touch more daring. *The Laughingstocks* themselves are fifteen in number, tragical stories of division and isolation, of failures in passion, of the treason of physical decay. No landscape of Mr. Hardy's had been more vivid than the night-pictures in "The Revisitation," where the old soldier in barracks creeps out on to the gaunt down, and meets (by one of Mr. Hardy's coincidences) his ancient mistress, and no picture more terrible than the revelation of each to the other in a blaze of sunrise. What a document for the future is "Reminiscences of a Dancing Man"? If only Shakespeare could have left us such a song of the London in 1585! But the power of the poet culminates in the pathos of "The Tramp Woman" — perhaps the greatest of all Mr. Hardy's lyrical poems — and in the horror of "A Sunday Morning's Tragedy."

It is noticeable that *Time's Laughingstocks* is, in some respects, a more daring collection than its predecessors. We find the poet here entirely emancipated from convention, and guided both in religion and morals exclusively by the inner light of his reflection. His energy now interacts on his clairvoyance with a completeness which he had never quite displayed before, and it is here that we find Mr. Hardy's utterance peculiarly a quintessence of himself. Especially in the narrative pieces — which are often *Wessex* novels distilled into a wine-glass, such as "Rose-Ann," and "The Vampirine Fair" — he allows no considerations of what the reader may think "nice" or "pleasant" to shackle his sincerity or his determination; and it is therefore to *Time's Laughingstocks* that the reader who wishes to become intimately acquainted with Mr. Hardy

as a moralist most frequently recurs. We notice here more than elsewhere in his poems Mr. Hardy's sympathy with the local music of Wessex, and especially with its expression by the village choir, which he uses as a spiritual symbol. Quite a large section of *Time's Laughingstocks* takes us to the old-fashioned gallery of some church, where the minstrels are bowing "New Sabbath" or "Mount Ephraim," or to a later scene where the ghosts, in whose melancholy apparition Mr. Hardy takes such pleasure, chant their goblin melodies and strum "the viols of the dead" in the moonlit churchyard. The very essence of Mr. Hardy's reverie at this moment of his career is to be found, for instance, in "The Dead Quire," where the ancient phantom-minstrels revenge themselves on their gross grandsons outside the alehouse.

Almost immediately after the outbreak of the present war Mr. Hardy presented to a somewhat distraught and inattentive public another collection of his poems. It cannot be said that *Satires of Circumstance* is the most satisfactory of those volumes; it is, perhaps, that which we could with the least discomposure persuade ourselves to overlook. Such a statement refers more to the high quality of other pages than to any positive decay of power or finish here. There is no less adroitness of touch and penetration of view in this book than elsewhere, and the poet awakens once more our admiration by his skill in giving poetic value to minute conditions of life which have escaped less careful observers. But in *Satires of Circumstance* the ugliness of experience is more accentuated than it is elsewhere, and is flung in our face with less compunction. The pieces which give name to the volume are only fifteen in number, but the spirit which inspires them is very frequently repeated in other parts of the collection. That spirit is one of mocking sarcasm, and it acts in every case by presenting a beautifully draped figure of illusion, from which the poet, like a sardonic showman, twitches away the robe that he may display a skeleton beneath it. We can with little danger assume, as we read the *Satires of Circumstance*, hard and cruel shafts of searchlight as they seem, that Mr. Hardy was passing through a mental crisis when he wrote them. This seems to be the *Troilus and Cressida* of his life's work, the book in which he is revealed most distracted by conjecture and most overwhelmed by the miscarriage of everything. The wells of human hope have been poisoned for him by some condition of which we know nothing, and even the picturesque features of Dorsetshire landscape, that have always before dispersed his melancholy, fail to win his attention: —

"Bright yellowhammers Made mirthful clamours, And billed long straws with a bustling air, And bearing their load, Flew up the road That he followed alone, without interest there."

The strongest of the poems of disillusion which are the outcome of this mood, is "The Newcomer's Wife," with the terrible abruptness of its last stanza. It is not for criticism to find fault with the theme of a work of art, but only to comment upon its execution. Of the merit of these monotonously sinister *Satires of Circumstance* there can be no question; whether the poet's indulgence in the mood which gave birth to them does not tend to lower our moral temperature and to lessen the rebound of our energy, is another matter. At all events, every one must welcome a postscript in which



a blast on the bugle of war seemed to have wakened the poet from his dark brooding to the sense of a new chapter in history.

In the fourth year of the war the veteran poet published *Moments of Vision*. These show a remarkable recovery of spirit, and an ingenuity never before excelled. With the passage of years Mr. Hardy, observing everything in the little world of Wessex, and forgetting nothing, has become almost preternaturally wise, and, if it may be said so, “knowing,” with a sort of magic, like that of a wizard. He has learned to track the windings of the human heart with the familiarity of a gamekeeper who finds plenty of vermin in the woods, and who nails what he finds, be it stoat or squirrel, to the barn-door of his poetry. But there is also in these last-fruits of Mr. Hardy’s mossed tree much that is wholly detached from the bitterness of satire, much that simply records, with an infinite delicacy of pathos, little incidents of the personal life of long ago, bestowing the immortality of art on these fugitive fancies in the spirit of the Japanese sculptor when he chisels the melting of a cloud or the flight of an insect on his sword hilt: —

“I idly cut a parsley stalk  
And blew therein towards the moon; I had not thought  
what ghosts would walk  
With shivering footsteps to my tune.

“I went and knelt, and scooped my hand  
As if to drink, into the brook, And a faint  
figure seemed to stand  
Above me, with the bye-gone look.

“I lipped rough rhymes of chance not choice, I thought not what my words might  
be; There came into my ear a voice  
That turned a tenderer verse for me.”

We have now in brief historic survey marshalled before us the various volumes in which Mr. Hardy’s lyrical poetry was originally collected. Before we examine its general character more closely, it may be well to call attention to its technical quality, which was singularly misunderstood at first, and which has never, we believe, been boldly faced. In 1898, and later, when a melodious falsetto was much in fashion amongst us, the reviewers found great fault with Mr. Hardy’s prosody; they judged him as a versifier to be rude and incorrect. As regards the single line, it may be confessed that Mr. Hardy, in his anxiety to present his thought in an undiluted form, is not infrequently clogged and hard. Such a line as

“Fused from its separateness by ecstasy”

hisses at us like a snake, and crawls like a wounded one. Mr. Hardy is apt to clog his lines with consonants, and he seems indifferent to the stiffness which is the consequence of this neglect. Ben Jonson said that “Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging”; perhaps we may go so far as to say that Mr. Hardy, for his indifference to a mellifluous run lays himself open to a mild rebuke. He is negligent of that eternal ornament of English verse, audible intricacy, probably because of Swinburne’s abuse of it. But most of what is called his harshness should rather be called bareness, and is the result of a revolt, conscious or unconscious, against Keats’ prescription of “loading the rifts with ore.”

In saying this, all has been said that an enemy could in justice say in blame of his metrical peculiarities. Unquestionably he does occasionally, like Robert Browning,

err in the direction of cacophony. But when we turn to the broader part of prosody, we must perceive that Mr. Hardy is not only a very ingenious, but a very correct and admirable metricist. His stanzaic invention is abundant; no other Victorian poet, not even Swinburne, has employed so many forms, mostly of his own invention, and employed them so appropriately, that is to say, in so close harmony with the subject or story enshrined in them. To take an example from his pure lyrics of reflection first, from "The Bullfinches": —

"Brother Bulleys, let us sing  
From the dawn till evening!  
For we know not that we  
go not  
When the day's pale visions fold  
Unto those who sang of old,"

in the exquisite fineness and sadness of the stanza we seem to hear the very voices of the birds warbling faintly in the sunset. Again, the hurried, timid irresolution of a lover always too late is marvellously rendered in the form of "Lizbie Browne": —

"And Lizbie Browne, Who else had hair Bay-red as yours,  
Or flesh so fair Bred out  
of doors, Sweet Lizbie Browne?"

On the other hand, the fierceness of "I said to Love" is interpreted in a stanza that suits the mood of denunciation, while "Tess's Lament" wails in a metre which seems to rock like an ageing woman seated alone before the fire, with an infinite haunting sadness.

It is, however, in the narrative pieces, the little Wessex Tales, that Mr. Hardy's metrical imagination is most triumphant. No two of these are identical in form, and for each he selects, or more often invents, a wholly appropriate stanza. He makes many experiments, one of the strangest being the introduction of rhymeless lines at regular intervals. Of this, "Cicely" is an example which repays attention: —

"And still sadly onward I followed,  
That Highway the Icen Which trails its pale  
riband down Wessex O'er lynchet and lea.

"Along through the Stour-bordered Forum,  
Where legions had wayfared, And where  
the slow river up-glasses Its green canopy";

and one still more remarkable is the enchanting "Friends Beyond," to which we shall presently recur. The drawling voice of a weary old campaigner is wonderfully rendered in the stanza of "Valenciennes": —

"Well: Heaven wi' its jasper halls  
Is now the on'y town I care to be in..  
Good Lord,  
if Nick should bomb the walls  
As we did Valencieën!"

whereas for long Napoleonic stories like "Leipzig" and "The Peasant's Confession," a ballad-measure which contemporaries such as Southey or Campbell might have used is artfully chosen. In striking contrast we have the elaborate verse-form of "The Souls of the Slain," in which the throbbing stanza seems to dilate and withdraw like the very cloud of moth-like phantoms which it describes. It is difficult to follow out this theme without more frequent quotation than I have space, for here, but the reader who pursues it carefully will not repeat the rumour that Mr. Hardy is a careless or "incorrect" metricist. He is, on the contrary, a metrical artist of great accomplishment.

The conception of life revealed in his verses by this careful artist is one which displays very exactly the bent of his temperament. During the whole of his long career

Mr. Hardy has not budged an inch from his original line of direction. He holds that, abandoned by God, treated with scorn by Nature, man lies helpless at the mercy of "those purblind Doomsters," accident, chance, and time, from whom he has had to endure injury and insult from the cradle to the grave. This is stating the Hardy doctrine in its extreme form, but it is not stating it too strongly. This has been called his "pessimism," a phrase to which some admirers, unwilling to give things their true name, have objected. But, of course, Mr. Hardy is a pessimist, just as Browning is an optimist, just as white is not black, and day is not night. Our juggling with words in paradox is too often apt to disguise a want of decision in thought. Let us admit that Mr. Hardy's conception of the fatal forces which beleaguer human life is a "pessimistic" one, or else words have no meaning.

Yet it is needful to define in what this pessimism consists. It is not the egotism of Byron or the morbid melancholy of Chateaubriand. It is directed towards an observation of others, not towards an analysis of self, and this gives it more philosophical importance, because although romantic peevishness is very common among modern poets, and although ennui inspires a multitude of sonnets, a deliberate and imaginative study of useless suffering in the world around us is rare indeed among the poets. It is particularly to be noted that Mr. Hardy, although one of the most profoundly tragic of all modern writers, is neither effeminate nor sickly. His melancholy could never have dictated the third stanza of Shelley's "Lines written in Dejection in the Bay of Naples." His pessimism is involuntary, forced from him by his experience and his constitution, and no analysis could give a better definition of what divides him from the petulant despair of a poet like Leopardi than the lines "To Life": —

"O life, with the sad scared face, I weary of seeing thee, And thy draggled cloak, and thy hobbling pace, And thy too-forced pleasantry!

"I know what thou would'st tell Of Death, Time, Destiny — I have known it long, and know, too, well What it all means for me.

"But canst thou not array Thyself in rare disguise, And feign like truth, for one mad day, That Earth is Paradise?

"I'll tune me to the mood, And mumm with thee till eve, And maybe what as interlude I feign, I shall believe!"

But the mumming goes no deeper than it does in the exquisite poem of "The Darkling Thrush," where the carolings of an aged bird, on a frosty evening, are so ecstatic that they waken a vague hope in the listener's mind that the thrush may possibly know of "some blessed hope" of which the poet is "unaware." This is as far as Mr. Hardy ever gets on the blest Victorian pathway of satisfaction.

There are certain aspects in which it is not unnatural to see a parallel between Mr. Hardy and George Crabbe. Each is the spokesman of a district, each has a passion for the study of mankind, each has gained by long years of observation a profound knowledge of local human character, and each has plucked on the open moor, and wears in his coat, the hueless flower of disillusion. But there is a great distinction in the aim of the two poets. Crabbe, as he describes himself in *The Parish Register*, was

“the true physician” who “walks the foulest ward.” He was utilitarian in his morality; he exposed the pathos of tragedy by dwelling on the faults which led to it, forgetful of the fatality which in more consistent moments he acknowledged. Crabbe was realistic with a moral design, even in the *Tales of the Hall*, where he made a gallant effort at last to arrive at a detachment of spirit. No such effort is needed by Mr. Hardy, who has none of the instinct of a preacher, and who considers moral improvement outside his responsibility. He admits, with his great French contemporary, that

“Tout désir est menteur, toute joie éphémère, Toute liqueur au fond de la coupe est amère,”

but he is bent on discovering the cause of this devastation, and not disposed to waste time over its consequences. At the end he produces a panacea which neither Crabbe nor Byron dreamed of — resignation.

But the poet has not reached the end of his disillusion. He thinks to secure repose on the breast of Nature, the *alma mater*, to whom Goethe and Wordsworth and Browning each in his own way turned, and were rewarded by consolation and refreshment. We should be prepared to find Mr. Hardy, with his remarkable aptitude for the perception of natural forms, easily consoled by the influences of landscape and the inanimate world. His range of vision is wide and extremely exact; he has the gift of reproducing before us scenes of various character with a vividness which is sometimes startling. But Mr. Hardy’s disdain of sentimentality, and his vigorous analysis of the facts of life, render him insensible not indeed to the mystery nor to the beauty, but to the imagined sympathy, of Nature. He has no more confidence in the visible earth than in the invisible heavens, and neither here nor there is he able to persuade himself to discover a counsellor or a friend. In this connection, we do well to follow the poet’s train of thought in the lyric called “*In a Wood*,” where he enters a copse dreaming that, in that realm of “*sylvan peace*,” Nature would offer “*a soft release from man’s unrest*.” He immediately observes that the pine and the beech are struggling for existence, and trying to blight each other with dripping poison. He sees the ivy eager to strangle the elm, and the hawthorns choking the hollies. Even the poplars sulk and turn black under the shadow of a rival. In the end, filled with horror at all these crimes of Nature, the poet flees from the copse as from an accursed place, and he determines that life offers him no consolation except the company of those human beings who are as beleaguered as himself: —

“Since, then, no grace I find Taught me of trees, Turn I back to my kind Worthy as these. There at least smiles abound, There discourse trills around, There, now and then, are found, Life-loyalties.”

It is absurd, he decides, to love Nature, which has either no response to give, or answers in irony. Let us even avoid, as much as we can, deep concentration of thought upon the mysteries of Nature, lest we become demoralised by contemplating her negligence, her blindness, her implacability. We find here a violent reaction against the poetry of egotistic optimism which had ruled the romantic school in England for more than a hundred years, and we recognise a branch of Mr. Hardy’s originality. He has

lifted the veil of Isis, and he finds beneath it, not a benevolent mother of men, but the tomb of an illusion. One short lyric, "Yell'ham-Wood's Story," puts this, again with a sylvan setting, in its unflinching crudity: —

"Coomb-Firtrees say that Life is a moan, And Clyffe-hill Clump says 'Yea!' But Yell'ham says a thing of its own: It's not, 'Gray, gray, Is Life alway!' That Yell'ham says, Nor that Life is for ends unknown.

"It says that Life would signify A thwarted purposing: That we come to live, and are called to die. Yes, that's the thing In fall, in spring, That Yell'ham says: — Life offers — to deny!"

It is therefore almost exclusively to the obscure history of those who suffer and stumble around him, victims of the universal disillusion, men and women "come to live but called to die," that Mr. Hardy dedicates his poetic function. "Lizbie Browne" appeals to us as a typical instance of his rustic pathos, his direct and poignant tenderness, and if we compare it with such poems of Wordsworth's as "Lucy Gray" or "Alice Fell" we see that he starts by standing much closer to the level of the subject than his great predecessor does. Wordsworth is the benevolent philosopher sitting in a post-chaise or crossing the "wide moor" in meditation. Mr. Hardy is the familiar neighbour, the shy mourner at the grave; his relation is a more intimate one: he is patient, humble, un-upbraiding. Sometimes, as in the remarkable colloquy called "The Ruined Maid," his sympathy is so close as to offer an absolute flout in the face to the system of Victorian morality. Mr. Hardy, indeed, is not concerned with sentimental morals, but with the primitive instincts of the soul, applauding them, or at least recording them with complacency, even when they outrage ethical tradition, as they do in the lyric narrative called "A Wife and Another." The stanzas "To an Unborn Pauper Child" sum up what is sinister and what is genial in Mr. Hardy's attitude to the unambitious forms of life which he loves to contemplate.

His temperature is not always so low as it is in the class of poems to which we have just referred, but his ultimate view is never more sanguine. He is pleased sometimes to act as the fiddler at a dance, surveying the hot-blooded couples, and urging them on by the lilt of his instrument, but he is always perfectly aware that they will have "to pay high for their prancing" at the end of all. No instance of this is more remarkable than the poem called "Julie-Jane," a perfect example of Mr. Hardy's metrical ingenuity and skill, which begins thus: —

"Sing; how 'a would sing! How 'a would raise the tune When we rode in the waggon from harvesting By the light o' the moon!

"Dance; how 'a would dance! If a fiddlestring did but sound She would hold out her coats, give a slanting glance, And go round and round.

"Laugh; how 'a would laugh! Her peony lips would part As if none such a place for a lover to quaff At the deeps of a heart,"

and which then turns to the most plaintive and the most irreparable tragedy, woven, as a black design on to a background of gold, upon this basis of temperamental joyousness.

Alphonse Daudet once said that the great gift of Edmond de Goncourt was to, “rendre l’irrendable.” This is much more true of Mr. Hardy than it was of Goncourt, and more true than it is of any other English poet except Donne. There is absolutely no observation too minute, no flutter of reminiscence too faint, for Mr. Hardy to adopt as the subject of a metaphysical lyric, and his skill in this direction has grown upon him; it is nowhere so remarkable as in his latest volume, aptly termed *Moments of Vision*. Everything in village life is grist to his mill; he seems to make no selection, and his field is modest to humility and yet practically boundless. We have a poem on the attitude of two people with nothing to do and no book to read, waiting in the parlour of an hotel for the rain to stop, a recollection after more than forty years. That the poet once dropped a pencil into the cranny of an old church where he was sketching inspires an elaborate lyric. The disappearance of a rotted summer-house, the look of a row of silver drops of fog condensed on the bar of a gate, the effect of candlelight years and years ago on a woman’s neck and hair, the vision of a giant at a fair, led by a dwarf with a red string — such are amongst the subjects which awaken in Mr. Hardy thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears, and call for interpretation in verse. The skeleton of a lady’s sunshade, picked up on Swanage Cliffs, the pages of a fly-blown Testament lying in a railway waiting-room, a journeying boy in a third-class carriage, with his ticket stuck in the band of his hat — such are among the themes which awake in Mr. Hardy’s imagination reveries which are always wholly serious and usually deeply tragic.

Mr. Hardy’s notation of human touches hitherto excluded from the realm of poetry is one of the most notable features of his originality. It marked his work from the beginning, as in the early ballad of “The Widow,” where the sudden damping of the wooer’s amatory ardour in consequence of his jealousy of the child is rendered with extraordinary refinement. The difficulty of course is to know when to stop. There is always a danger that a poet, in his search after the infinitely ingenious, may lapse into amphigory, into sheer absurdity and triviality, which Cowper, in spite of his elegant lightness, does not always escape. Wordsworth, more serious in his intent, fell headlong in parts of *Peter Bell*, and in such ballads as “Betty Foy.” Mr. Hardy, whatever the poverty of his incident, commonly redeems it by the oddity of his observation; as in “The Pedigree”: —

“I bent in the deep of night  
Over a pedigree the chronicler gave  
As mine; and as I bent there, half-unrobed,  
The uncurtained panes of my window-square  
Let in the watery light  
Of the moon in its old age:  
And green-rheumed clouds were hurrying past  
Where mute and cold it globed  
Like a dying dolphin’s eye seen through a lapping  
wave.”

Mr. Hardy’s love of strange experiences, and of adventures founded on a balance of conscience and instinct, is constantly exemplified in those ballads and verse-anecdotes which form the section of his poetry most appreciated by the general public. Among these, extraordinarily representative of the poet’s habit of mind, is “My Cicely,” a tale of the eighteenth century, where a man impetuously rides from London through Wessex to

be present at the funeral of the wrong woman; as he returns, by a coincidence, he meets the right woman, whom he used to love, and is horrified at "her liquor-fired face, her thick accents." He determines that by an effort of will the dead woman (whom he never saw) shall remain, what she seemed during his wild ride, "my Cicely," and the living woman be expunged from memory. A similar deliberate electing that the dream shall hold the place of the fact is the motive of "The Well-Beloved." The ghastly humour of "The Curate's Kindness" is a sort of reverse action of the same mental subtlety. Misunderstanding takes a very prominent place in Mr. Hardy's irony of circumstance; as, almost too painfully, in "The Rash Bride," a hideous tale of suicide following on the duplicity of a tender and innocent widow.

The grandmother of Mr. Hardy was born in 1772, and survived until 1857. From her lips he heard many an obscure old legend of the life of Wessex in the eighteenth century. Was it she who told him the terrible Exmoor story of "The Sacrilege;" the early tale of "The Two Men," which might be the skeleton-scenario for a whole elaborate novel; or that incomparable comedy in verse, "The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's," with its splendid human touch at the very end? We suspect that it was; and perhaps at the same source he acquired his dangerous insight into the female heart, whether exquisitely feeble as in "The Home-coming" with its delicate and ironic surprise, or treacherous, as in the desolating ballad of "Rose-Ann." No one, in prose or verse, has expatiated more poignantly than Mr. Hardy on what our forefathers used to call "cases of conscience." He seems to have shared the experiences of souls to whom life was "a wood before your doors, and a labyrinth within the wood, and locks and bars to every door within that labyrinth," as Jeremy Taylor describes that of the anxious penitents who came to him to confession. The probably very early story of "The Casterbridge Captains" is a delicate study in compunction, and a still more important example is "The Alarm," where the balance of conscience and instinct gives to what in coarser hands might seem the most trivial of actions a momentous character of tragedy.

This is one of Mr. Hardy's studies in military history, where he is almost always singularly happy. His portraits of the non-commissioned officer of the old service are as excellent in verse as they are in the prose of *The Trumpet-Major* or *The Melancholy Hussar*. The reader of the novels will not have to be reminded that "Valenciennes" and the other ballads have their prose-parallel in Simon Burden's reminiscences of Minden. Mr. Hardy, with a great curiosity about the science of war and a close acquaintance with the mind of the common soldier, has pondered on the philosophy of fighting. "The Man he Killed," written in 1902, expresses the wonder of the rifleman who is called upon to shoot his brother-in-arms, although

"Had he and I but met, By some old ancient inn, We should have set us down to wet Right many a nipperkin."

In this connection the *Poems of War and Patriotism*, which form an important part of the volume of 1918, should be carefully examined by those who meditate on the tremendous problems of the moment.

A poet so profoundly absorbed in the study of life could not fail to speculate on the probabilities of immortality. Here Mr. Hardy presents to us his habitual serenity in negation. He sees the beautiful human body "lined by tool of time," and he asks what becomes of it when its dissolution is complete. He sees no evidence of a conscious state after death, of what would have to be, in the case of aged or exhausted persons, a revival of spiritual force, and on the whole he is disinclined to cling to the faith in a future life. He holds that the immortality of a dead man resides in the memory of the living, his "finer part shining within ever-faithful hearts of those bereft." He pursues this theme in a large number of his most serious and affecting lyrics, most gravely perhaps in "The To-be-Forgotten" and in "The Superseded." This sense of the forlorn condition of the dead, surviving only in the dwindling memory of the living, inspires what has some claims to be considered the loveliest of all Mr. Hardy's poems, "Friends Beyond," which in its tenderness, its humour, and its pathos contains in a few pages every characteristic of his genius.

His speculation perceives the dead as a crowd of slowly vanishing phantoms, clustering in their ineffectual longing round the footsteps of those through whom alone they continue to exist. This conception has inspired Mr. Hardy with several wonderful visions, among which the spectacle of "The Souls of the Slain" in the Boer War, alighting, like vast flights of moths, over Portland Bill at night, is the most remarkable. It has the sublimity and much of the character of some apocalyptic design by Blake. The volume of 1902 contains a whole group of phantasmal pieces of this kind, where there is frequent mention of spectres, who address the poet in the accents of nature, as in the unrhymed ode called "The Mother Mourns." The obsession of old age, with its physical decay ("I look into my glass"), the inevitable division which leads to that isolation which the poet regards as the greatest of adversities ("The Impercipient"), the tragedies of moral indecision, the contrast between the tangible earth and the bodyless ghosts, and endless repetition of the cry, "Why find we us here?" and of the question "Has some Vast Imbecility framed us in jest, and left us now to hazardry?" — all start from the overwhelming love of physical life and acquaintance with its possibilities, which Mr. Hardy possesses to an inordinate degree.

It would be ridiculous at the close of an essay to attempt any discussion of the huge dramatic panorama which many believe to be Mr. Hardy's most weighty contribution to English literature. The spacious theatre of *The Dynasts* with its comprehensive and yet concise realisations of vast passages of human history, is a work which calls for a commentary as lengthy as itself, and yet needs no commentary at all. No work of the imagination is more its own interpreter than this sublime historic peep-show, this rolling vision of the Napoleonic chronicle drawn on the broadest lines, and yet in detail made up of intensely concentrated and vivid glimpses of reality. But the subject of my present study, the lyrical poetry of Mr. Hardy, is not largely illustrated in *The Dynasts*, except by the choral interludes of the phantom intelligences, which have great lyrical value, and by three or four admirable songs.



When we resume the effect which the poetry of Mr. Hardy makes upon the careful reader, we note, as I have indicated already, a sense of unity of direction throughout. Mr. Hardy has expressed himself in a thousand ways, but has never altered his vision. From 1867 to 1917, through half a century of imaginative creation, he has not modified the large outlines of his art in the smallest degree. To early readers of his poems, before the full meaning of them became evident, his voice sounded inharmonious, because it did not fit in with the exquisite melodies of the later Victorian age. But Mr. Hardy, with characteristic pertinacity, did not attempt to alter his utterance in the least, and now we can all perceive, if we take the trouble to do so, that what seemed harsh in his poetry was his peculiar and personal mode of interpreting his thoughts to the world.

As in his novels so in his poems, Mr. Hardy has chosen to remain local, to be the interpreter for present and future times of one rich and neglected province of the British realm. From his standpoint there he contemplates the wide aspect of life, but it seems huge and misty to him, and he broods over the tiny incidents of Wessex idiosyncrasy. His irony is audacious and even sardonic, and few poets have been less solicitous to please their weaker brethren. But no poet of modern times has been more careful to avoid the abstract and to touch upon the real.

# UNDER FRENCH ENCOURAGEMENT by David Christie Murray

This essay was published by the novelist David Christie Murray and is taken from the book *My Contemporaries in Fiction* in 1897. The essay explores the influence of French fiction in Hardy's novels.

The novelist and critic David Christie Murray

## VI. — UNDER FRENCH ENCOURAGEMENT — THOMAS HARDY

Within the last half-score of years an extraordinary impulse towards freedom in the artistic representation of life has touched some of our English writers. Thackeray, in 'Pendennis,' laments that since Fielding no English novelist has 'dared to draw a man.' Dr. George Macdonald, in his 'Robert Falconer,' whispers, in a sort of stage aside, his wish that it were possible to be both decent and honest in the exposition of the character of the Baron of Rothie, who is a seducer by profession. Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of Thackeray was, that he was a gentleman, and that his good-breeding and his manliness were essentially of the English pattern. Dr. Macdonald's most intense impulse is towards purity of life, as an integral necessity for that communion with the Eternal Fatherhood which he preaches with so much earnestness and charm. That two such men should have felt that their work was subject to a painful limitation on one side of it is significant, but it is a fact which may be used with equal force as an argument by the advocates of the old method and the adopters of the new. It is perfectly true that they felt the restriction, but it is equally true that they respected it, and were resolute not to break through it. Their cases are cited here, not as an aid to argument on one side or the other, but simply to show that the argument itself is no new thing — that the question as to how far freedom is allowable has been debated in the minds of honest writers, and decided in one way, long before it came to be debated by another set of honest writers, who decided it in another.

There never was an age in which outspoken honesty was indecent. There never was an age in which pruriency in any guise could cease to be indecent. There never was an

age when the fashion of outspoken honesty did not give a seeming excuse to pruriency; and it is this fact, that freedom in the artistic presentation of the sexual problems has invariably led to license, which has in many successive ages of literature forced the artist back to restraint, and has made him content to be bound by a rigid puritanism. In the beat of the eternal pendulum of taste it seems ordained that puritanism shall become so very puritanic that art shall grow tired of its bonds, and that liberty in turn shall grow offensive, and shall compel art by an overmastering instinct to return towards puritanism.

It is France which has led the way in the latest protest against the restrictions imposed by modern taste upon art. It may be admitted as a fact that those restrictions were felt severely, for it is obvious that until they began to chafe there was no likelihood of their being violently broken. The chief apostle of the new movement towards entire freedom is, of course, Emile Zola. After having excited for many years an incredulous amazement and disgust, he is now almost universally recognised as an honest and honourable artist, and as a great master in his craft. Nobody who is at all instructed ventures any longer to say that Zola is indecent because he loves indecency, or is pleased by the contemplation of the squalid and obscene. We see him as he truly is — a pessimist in humanity — sad and oppressed, and bitter with the gall of a hopeless sympathy with suffering and distorted mankind.

One English artist, whom, in the just language of contemporary criticism, it is no exaggeration to describe as great, has elected (rather late in life for so strong a departure) to cast in his lot with the new school. That his ambitions are wholly honourable it would be the mere vanity of injustice to deny. That his new methods contrast very unfavourably with his old ones, that he is lending the weight of his authority to a movement which is full of mischief, that in obeying in all sincerity an artistic impulse he is doing a marked disservice to his own art in particular, and to English art in general, are with me so many rooted personal convictions; but I dare not pretend that they are more. Mr. Hardy is just as sincere in his belief that he is right as I and others among his critics are in our belief that he is wrong. The question must be threshed out dispassionately and judicially, if it be faced at all. It cannot be settled by an appeal to personal sentiment on either side. But in the limits to which I am now restricted it is impossible to do justice to the discussion, and it would, indeed, be barely possible to state even the whole of its terms.

I am forced to content myself, therefore, with a temperamental expression of opinion in place of a judicial one, pleading only that the arguments against me are recognised and respected, although I have no present opportunity of recapitulating and disputing them. It appears, then — to speak merely as an advocate *ex parte* — to us of the old school that an essential part of the fiction writer's duty is to be harmless. That, of course, to the men of the cayenne-pepper-caster creed seems a very milky sort of proclamation, but to us it is a matter of grave moment. I have always thought, for my own part, that the novelist might well take for his motto the last five words of that passage in 'The Tempest' where we read: 'This isle is full of noises, sounds and sweet

airs, which give delight and hurt not! Simple as the motto seems, it will be found to offer a fairly wide range. When Reade tilted against prison abuses and the abuses of private asylas, or when Dickens rode down on the law of Chancery as administered in his day, or when Thackeray scourged snobbery and selfishness in society, they were all well within the limits of this rule. We experience a delight which hurts not, but on the contrary is entirely tonic and inspiring, when Satire swings his lash on the bared back of Hypocrisy or cruel and intentioned Vice. We experience a delight which hurts not, but on the contrary freshens the whole flood of feeling within us, when a true artist deals truly with the sorrows and infirmities of our kind. To offer it as our intent to give delight and hurt not is no mere profession of an artistic Grundyism. It is the proclamation of what is to our minds the simple truth, that fiction should be a joyful, an inspiring, a sympathetic, and a helpful art. There are certain questions the public discussion of which we purposely avoid. There are certain manifestations of character the exhibition of which we hold to be something like a crime.

Mr. Hardy would plead, and with perfectly apparent propriety, that he does not choose to write for 'the young person.' But I answer that he cannot help himself. He cannot choose his audience. Fiction appeals to everybody, and fiction so robust, so delicate and charming as his own finds its way into all hands. When a man can take a hall, and openly advertise that he intends to speak therein 'to men only,' he is reasonably allowed a certain latitude. If he pitches his cart on the village green, and talks with the village lads and lasses within hearing, he will, if he be a decent fellow, avoid the treatment of certain themes.

To take the most striking example: — In 'Jude the Obscure' Mr. Hardy deals very largely with the emotions and reasons which animate a young woman when she decides not to sleep with her husband, when she decides that she will sleep with her husband, when she decides to sleep with a man who is not her husband, and when she decides not to sleep with the man who is not her husband. Now, all this does not matter to the mentally solid and well-balanced reader. It is not very interesting, for one thing, and apart from the fact that it is, from a workman's point of view, astonishingly well done, it would not be interesting at all. Mr. Hardy offers it as the study of a temperament. Very well. It is an excellent study of a temperament, but it bores. The theme is not big enough to be worth the effort expended upon it. Here is an hysterical, wrong-headed, and confused-hearted little hussy who can't make up her mind as to what is right and what is wrong, and who is a prey to the impulse of the moment, psychical or physical. I don't think there are many people like her. I don't think that from the broad human-natural point of view it matters a great deal how she decides. But I am sure of this — that the more that kind of small monstrosity is publicly analysed and anatomised and made much of, the more her morbidities will increase in her, and the more unbearable in real life she is likely to become. Mr. Hardy's labour in this particular is a direct incentive to the study of hysteria as a fine art amongst such women as are natively prone to it. One of the gravest dangers which beset women is that of hysterical self-deception. The common-sense fashion of dealing with them when they suffer in that

way is kindly and gently to ignore their symptoms until the reign of common-sense returns. To make them believe that their emotions are worthy of the scrutiny of a great analyst of the human heart is to increase their morbid temptations, and in the end to render those temptations irresistible. The one kind of person to whom 'Jude the Obscure' must necessarily appeal with the greatest power is the kind of person depicted in its pages, and the tendency of the book is unavoidably towards the development and multiplication of the type described. This is the only end the book can serve, apart from the fact that it does reveal to us Mr. Hardy's special knowledge of a dangerous and disagreeable form of mental disorder, But it is not the physician's business to sow disease, and any treatise on hysteria which is thrown into a captivating popular form, and makes hysteria look like an interesting and romantic thing, will spread the malady as surely as a spark will ignite gunpowder. This at least is not a mere matter of opinion, but of sound scientific fact, which no student of that disorder which Mr. Hardy has so masterfully handled will deny. In this respect, then, the book is a centre of infection, and that the author of 'A Pair of Blue Eyes' should have written it is matter at once for astonishment and grief. That is to say, it is a matter of astonishment and grief to me, and to those who think as I do. There is a large and growing contingent of writers and readers to whom it is a theme for joyful congratulation. It is one of the rules of the game we are now playing to respect all honest conviction.

Of Mr. Hardy, from the purely artistic side, there is little time to speak. On that side let me first set down what is to be said in dispraise, for the mere sake of leaving a sweet taste in the mouth at the end. Even from his own point of view — that lauded 'sense of the overwhelming sadness of modern life' which captivates the admirers of his latest style — it is possible to spread the epic table of sorrow without finding a place upon it for scraps of the hoggish anatomy which are not nameable except in strictly scientific or wholly boorish speech. But it seems necessary to the new realism that its devotee should be able to write for the perusal of gentlemen and ladies about things he dared not mention orally in the presence of either; so that what a drunken cabman would be deservedly kicked for saying in a lady's hearing may be honourably printed for a lady's reading by a scholar and a sage. It was once thought otherwise, but I am arguing here, not against realism per se, but against the inartistic introduction of gross episodes. Every reader of Mr. Hardy will recognise my meaning, and the passage in my mind seems gratuitously and unserviceably offensive.

To come to less unpleasing themes, where, still expressing disapproval, one may do it with some grace, one of the few limitations to Mr. Hardy's great charm as a writer lies in his tendency to encumber his page with detail. At a supremely romantic moment one of his people sits down to contemplate a tribe of ants, and watches them through two whole printed pages. In another case a man in imminent deadly peril surveys through two pages the history of the geologic changes which have befallen our planet. Each passage, taken by itself, is good enough. Taken where it is, each is terribly wearisome and wrong.

I do not know that any critic has yet recorded Mr. Hardy's singular limitations as to the invention of plot. Speaking from memory, I cannot at this moment recall a novel of his in which some trouble does not circle about a marriage licence, and I can recall many instances of going to church to get married and coming back single. That, indeed, is Mr. Hardy's *pièce de résistance* in the way of invention, and it crops up in one book after another with a helpless inevitable-ness which at last grows comic.

But here we can afford to have done with carping, and can turn to the much more grateful task of praise. I do not think it too much to say that Mr. Hardy has studied his own especial part of England, has made himself master of its landscape, its town and hamlet life, its tradition and sentiment, and general spiritual atmosphere, to such triumphant effect as to set himself wholly apart from all other English writers of fiction. His devotion to his own beloved Wessex has brought him this rich and merited reward — that he is the recognised first and final master of its field. His knowledge of rustic life within his own borders is beautifully sympathetic and profound. His impression of the landscape in the midst of which this life displays itself is broad and noble and alive. His literary style is a thing to admire, to study, and to admire again. All worthy readers of English fiction are his debtors for many idyllic happy hours, and many deep inspirations of wholesome English air. And if, at the parting of the ways, we wave a decisive farewell to him, we are not unmindful of the time when he was the best and dearest of our comrades, and we leave him in the certainty that, whatever path he has chosen, he has been guided in his choice by an ambition which is entirely honourable and sincere.

# THOMAS HARDY by John Cowper Powys

This essay was taken from Powys' critical book *Visions and Revisions*. Powys was a British novelist and lecturer, as well as a respected literary critic.

John Cowper Powys

## THOMAS HARDY

With a name suggestive of the purest English origin, Mr. Hardy has become identified with that portion of England where the various race-deposits in our national "strata" are most dear and defined. In Wessex, the traditions of Saxon and Celt, Norman and Dane, Roman and Iberian, have grown side by side into the soil, and all the villages and towns, all the hills and streams, of this country have preserved the rumour of what they have seen.

In Celtic legend the country of the West Saxons is marvellously rich. Camelot and the Island of Avalon greet one another across the Somersetshire vale. And Dorsetshire, Hardy's immediate home, adds the Roman traditions of Casterbridge to tragic memories of King Lear. Tribe by tribe, race by race, as they come and go, leaving their monuments and their names behind, Mr. Hardy broods over them, noting their survivals, their lingering footprints, their long decline.

In his well-loved Dorchester we find him pondering, like one of his own spirits of Pity and Irony, while the moonlight shines on the haunted amphitheatre where the Romans held their games. He devotes much care to noting all those little "omens by the way" that make a journey along the great highways of Wessex so full of imaginative suggestion.

It is the history of the human race itself that holds him with a mesmeric spell, as century after century it unrolls its acts and scenes, under the indifferent stars. The continuity of life! The long, piteous "ascent of man," from those queer fossils in the Portland Quarries — to what we see today, so palpable, so real! And yet for all his tragic pity, Mr. Hardy is a sly and whimsical chronicler. He does not allow one point of the little jest the gods play on us — the little long-drawn-out jest — to lose its sting. With something of a goblin-like alertness he skips here and there, watching those strange scene shifters at their work. The dual stops of Mr. Hardy's country pipe

are cut from the same reed. With the one he challenges the Immortals on behalf of humanity; with the other he plays such a shrewd Priapian tune that all the Satyrs dance.

I sometimes think that only those born and bred in the country can do justice to this great writer. That dual pipe of his is bewildering to city people. They over emphasize the "magnanimity" of his art, or they over emphasize its "miching-mallecho." They do not catch the secret of that mingled strain. The same type of cultured "foreigner" is puzzled by Mr. Hardy's self-possession. He ought to commit himself more completely, or he ought not to have committed himself at all! There is something that looks to them — so they are tempted to express it — like the cloven hoof of a most Satyrish cunning, about his attitude to certain things. That little caustic by-play, for instance, with which he girds at the established order, never denouncing it wholesale like Shelley, or accepting it wholesale like Wordsworth — and always with a tang, a dash of gall and wormwood, an impish malice.

The truth is, there are two spirits in Mr. Hardy, one infinitely sorrowful and tender, the other whimsical, elfish and malign.

The first spirit rises up in stern Promethean revolt against the decrees of Fate. The second spirit deliberately allies itself in wanton, bitter glee, with the humorous provocation of humanity, by the cruel Powers of the Air. The psychology of all this is not hard to unravel. The same abnormal sensitiveness that makes him pity the victims of destiny makes him also not unaware of what may be sweet to the palate of the gods in such "merry jests." These two tendencies seem to have grown upon him as years went on and to have become more and more pronounced. Often, with artists, the reverse thing happens. Every human being has his own secretive reaction, his own furtive recoil, from the queer trap we are all in, — his little private method of retaliation. But many writers are most unscrupulously themselves when they are young. The changes and chances of this mortal life mellow them into a more neutral tint. Their revenge upon life grows less personal and more objective as they get older. They become balanced and resigned. They attain "the wisdom of Sophocles."

The opposite of this has been the history of Mr. Hardy's progression. He began with quite harmless rustic realism, fanciful and quaint. Then came his masterpieces wherein the power and grandeur of a great artist's inspiration fused everything into harmony. At the last, in his third period, we have the exaggeration of all that is most personal in his emotion intensified to the extreme limit.

It is absurd to turn away from these books, books like *Jude the Obscure* and the *Well-Beloved*. If Mr. Hardy had not had such sardonic emotions, such desire to "hit back" at the great "opposeless wills," and such Goblin-like glee at the tricks they play us, he would never have been able to write "*Tess*." Against the ways of God to this sweet girl he raises a hand of terrible revolt, but it is with more than human "pity" that he lays her down on the Altar of Sacrifice.

But, after all, it is in the supreme passages of pure imaginative grandeur that Mr. Hardy is greatest. Here he is "with Shakespeare" and we forget both Titan and Goblin.



How hard it is exactly to put into words what this “imaginative grandeur” consists of! It is, at any rate, an intensification of our general consciousness of the Life-Drama as a whole, but this, under a poetic, rather than a scientific, light, and yet with the scientific facts, — they also not without their dramatic significance — indicated and allowed for. It is a clarifying of our mental vision and a heightening of our sensual apprehension. It is a certain withdrawing from the mere personal pull of our own fate into a more rarified air, where the tragic beauty of life falls into perspective, and, beholding the world in a clear mirror, we escape for a moment from “the will to live.”

At such times it is as though, “taken up upon a high mountain, we see, without desire and without despair, the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them.” Then it is that we feel the very wind of the earth’s revolution, and the circling hours touch us with a palpable hand.

And the turmoil of the world grown so distant, it is then that we feel at once the greatness of humanity and the littleness of what it strives for. We are seized with a shuddering tenderness for Man. This bewildered animal — wrestling in darkness with he knows not what.

And gazing long and long into this mirror, the poignancy of what we behold is strangely softened. After all, it is something, whatever becomes of us, to have been conscious of all this. It is something to have outwatched Arcturus, and felt “the sweet influences” of the Pleiades. Congruous with such a mood is the manner in which, while Mr. Hardy opposes himself to Christianity, he cannot forget it. He cannot “cleanse the stuff’d bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart.” It troubles and vexes him. It haunts him. And his work both gains and suffers. He flings gibe after gibe at “God,” but across his anger falls the shadow of the Cross. How should it not be so? “All may be permitted,” but one must not add a feather’s weight to the wheel that breaks our “little ones.”

It is this that separates Mr. Hardy’s work from so much modern fiction that is clever and “philosophical” but does not satisfy one’s imagination. All things with Mr. Hardy — even the facts of geology and chemistry — are treated with that imaginative clairvoyance that gives them their place in the human comedy. And is not Christianity itself one of these facts? How amazing that such a thing should have appeared at all upon the earth! When one reads Meredith, with his brilliant intellectual cleverness, one finds Christianity “taken for granted,” and dismissed as hardly relevant to modern topics.

But Mr. Hardy is too pagan, in the true sense, too fascinated by the poetry of life and the essential ritual of life, to dismiss any great religion in this way. The thing is always with him, just as the Gothic Tower of St. Peter’s Church in Casterbridge is always with him. He may burst into impish fury with its doctrines, but, like one of those queer demons who peep out from such consecrated places, yet never leave them, his imagination requires that atmosphere. For the same reason, in spite of his intellectual realisation of the mechanical processes of Fate, their engine-like dumbness and blindness, he is always being driven to personify these ultimate powers; to personify

them, or it, as something that takes infernal satisfaction in fooling its luckless creations; in provoking them and scourging them to madness.

Mr. Hardy's ultimate thought is that the universe is blind and unconscious; that it knows not what it does. But, standing among the graves of those Wessex churchyards, or watching the twisted threads of perverse destiny that plague those hapless hearts under a thousand village roofs, it is impossible for him not to long to "strike back" at this damned System of Things that alone is responsible. And how can one "strike back" unless one converts unconscious machinery into a wanton Providence? Where Mr. Hardy is so incomparably greater than Meredith and all his modern followers is that in these Wessex novels there is none of that intolerable "ethical discussion" which obscures "the old essential candours" of the human situation.

The reaction of men and women upon one another, in the presence of the solemn and the mocking elements; this will outlast all social readjustments and all ethical reforms.

While the sun shines and the moon draws the tides, men and women will ache from jealousy, and the lover will not be the beloved! Long after a quite new set of "interesting modern ideas" have replaced the present, children will break the hearts of their parents, and parents will break the hearts of their children. Mr. Hardy is indignant enough over the ridiculous conventions of Society, but he knows that, at the bottom, what we suffer from is "the dust out of which we are made;" the eternal illusion and disillusion which must drive us on and "take us off" until the planet's last hour.

Mr. Hardy's style, at its best, has an imaginative suggestiveness which approaches, though it may not quite reach, the indescribable touch of the Shakespearean tragedies. There is also a quality in it peculiar to himself — threatening and silencing; a thunderous suppression, a formidable reserve, an iron tenacity. Sometimes, again, one is reminded of the ancient Roman poets, and not unfrequently, too, of the rhythmic incantations of Sir Thomas Browne, that majestic and perverted Latinist.

The description, for instance, of Egdon Heath, at the beginning of the *Return of the Native*, has a dusky architectural grandeur that is like the Portico of an Egyptian Temple. The same thing may be noted of that sudden apparition of Stonehenge, as Tess and Angel stumble upon it in their flight through the darkness.

One thinks of the words of William Blake: "He who does not love Form more than Colour is a coward." For it is, above all, Form that appeals to Mr. Hardy. The iron plough of his implacable style drives pitilessly through the soft flesh of the earth until it reaches the architectural sub-structure. Whoever tries to visualise any scene out of the Wessex Novels will be forced to see the figures of the persons concerned "silhouetted" against a formidable skyline. One sees them, these poor impassioned ones, moving in tragic procession along the edge of the world, and, when the procession is over, darkness re-establishes itself. The quality that makes Mr. Hardy's manner such a refuge from the levities and gravities of the "reforming writers" is a quality that springs from the soil. The soil has a gift of "proportion" like nothing else. Things fall into due perspective

on Egdon Heath, and among the water-meadows of Blackmoor life is felt as the tribes of men have felt it since the beginning.

The modern tendency is to mock at sexual passion and grow grave over social and artistic problems. Mr. Hardy eliminates social and artistic problems and “takes nothing seriously” — not even “God” — except the love and the hate of men and women, and the natural elements that are their accomplices. It is for this lack in them, this uneasy levity over the one thing that really counts, that it is so hard to read many humorous and arresting modern writers, except in railway trains and cafes. They have thought it clever to dispossess the passion of our poor heart of its essential poetry. They have not understood that man would sooner suffer the bitterness of death than be deprived of his right to suffer the bitterness of love.

It must be, I suppose, that these flippant triflers are so optimistic about their reforms and their ethical ideals and their sanitary projects that to them such things as how the sun rises over Shaston and sinks over Budmouth; such things as what Eustacia felt when she walked, “talking to herself,” across the blasted heath; such things as the mood of Henchard when he cursed the day of his birth, are mere accidents and irrelevancies, by no means germane to the matter.

Well, perhaps they are wise to be so hopeful. But for the rest of us, for whom the world does not seem likely to “improve” so fast, it is an unspeakable relief that there should be at least one writer left interested in the things that interested Sophocles and Shakespeare, and possessed of a style that does not, remembering the work of such hands, put our generation altogether to shame.

WALTER PATER

What are the qualities that make this shy and furtive Recluse, this Wanderer in the shadow, the greatest of critics? Imagination, in the first place, and then that rare, unusual, divine gift of limitless Reverence for the Human Senses. Imagination has a two-fold power. It visualises and it creates. With clairvoyant ubiquity it floats and flows into the most recondite recesses, the most reluctant sanctuaries, of other men’s souls. With clear-cut, architectural volition it builds up its own Byzantium, out of the quarried debris of all the centuries.

One loves to think of Pater leaving that Olney country, where he “hated” to hear anything more about “the Poet Cowper,” and nursing his weird boy-fancies in the security of the Canterbury cloisters. The most passionate and dedicated spirit he — to sulk, and dream, and hide, and love, and “watch the others playing,” in that quiet retreat — since the great soul of Christopher Marlowe flamed up there into consciousness!

And then Oxford. And it is meet and right, at such a point as this, to lay our offering, modest, secret, shy — a shadow, a nothing — at the feet of this gracious Alma Mater; “who needs not June for Beauty’s heightening!” One revolts against her sometimes. The charm is too exclusive, too withdrawn. And something — what shall I say? — of ironic, supercilious disillusion makes her forehead weary, and her eyelids heavy. But after all, to what exquisite children, like rare, exotic flowers, she has the power to give birth! But did you know, you for whom the syllables “Oxford” are an

Incantation, that to the yet more subtle, yet more withdrawn, and yet more elaborate soul of Walter Pater, Oxford Herself appeared, as time went on, a little vulgar and silly?

Indeed, he fled from her, and took refuge-sometimes with his sisters, for, like Charles Lamb, Pater was "Conventual" in his taste — and sometimes with the "original" of Marius the Epicurean. But what matter where he fled — he who always followed the "shady side" of the road? He has not only managed to escape, himself, with all his "Boxes of Alabaster," into the sanctuary of the Ivory Tower, that even Oxford cannot reach, but he has carried us thither with him.

And there, from the opal-clouded windows of that high place, he shows us still the secret kingdoms of art and philosophy and life, and the remotest glories of them. We see them all — from those windows — a little lovelier, a little rarer, a little more "selective," than, perchance, they really are. But what matter? What does one expect when one looks through opal-clouded windows? And, after all, those are the kinds of windows from which it is best to look at the dazzling limbs of the immortal gods!

Not but what, sometimes, he permits us to throw those "magic casements" wide open. And then, in how lucid an air, in how clean and fresh a morning of reality, those pure forms and godlike figures stand out, their naked feet in the cold, clear dew!

For one must note two things about Walter Pater. He is able to throw the glimmering mantle of his own elaborate sophistry of the senses over comparatively fleeting, unarresting objects. And he is able to compel us to follow, line by line, curve by curve, contour by contour, the very palpable body and presence of the Beauty that passeth not away.

In plainer words, he is a great and exact scholar — labourious, patient, indefatigable, reserved; and, at the same time, a Protean Wizard, breathing forbidden life into the Tyrian-stained writhings of many an enchanted Lamia! At a thousand points he is the only modern literary figure who draws us towards him with the old Leonardian, Goethean spell. For, like Goethe and Da Vinci, he is never far from those eternal "Partings of the Ways." which alone make life interesting.

He is, for instance, more profoundly drenched, dyed, and endued in "Christian Mythology" than any mortal writer, short of the Saints themselves. He is more native to the pure Hellenic air than any since Walter Savage Landor. And he is more subtle, in his understanding of "German Philosophy" as opposed to "Celtic Romance," than all — outside the most inner circles — since Hegel — or Heine! The greedy, capricious "Uranian Babyishness" of his pupil Oscar, with its peevish clutching at all soft and provocative and glimmering things, is mere child's play, compared with the deep, dark Vampirism with which this furtive Hermit drains the scarlet blood of the Vestals of every Sanctuary.

How little the conventional critics have understood this master of their own craft! What hopeless people have "rushed in" to interpret this super-subtle Interpreter! Mr. Gosse has, however, done one thing for us. Somewhere, somehow, he once drew a picture of Walter Pater "gambolling," in the moonlight, on the velvet lawn of his own

secluded Oxford garden, like a satin-pawed Wombat! I always think of that picture. It is a pleasanter one than that of Mark Pattison, running round his Gooseberry bushes, after great screaming girls. But they are both touching sketches, and, no doubt, very indicative of Life beneath the shadow of the Bodleian.

Why have the professional philosophers — ever since that Master of Baliol who used to spend his time boring holes in the Ship that carried him — "fought shy" of Pater's Philosophy? For a sufficient reason! Because, like Protagoras the Sophist, and like Aristippus the Cyrenean, he has undermined Metaphysic, by means of Metaphysic.

For Walter Pater — is that clearly understood? — was an adept, long before Nietzsche's campaign began, at showing the human desire, the human craving, the human ferocity, the human spite, hidden behind the mask of "Pure Reason."

He treats every great System of Metaphysic as a great work of Art — with a very human, often a too human, artizan behind it — a work of Art which we have a perfect right to appropriate, to enjoy, to look at the world through, and then to pass on!

Every Philosophy has its "secret," according to Pater, its "formula," its lost Atlantis. Well! It is for us to search it out; to take colour from its dim-lit under-world; to feed upon its wavering Sea-Lotus — and then, returning to the surface, to swim away, in search of other diving-grounds!

No Philosopher except Pater has dared to carry Esoteric Eclecticism quite as far as this. And, be it understood, he is no frivolous Dilettante. This draining the secret wine of the great embalmed Sarcophagi of Thought is his Life-Lure, his secret madness, his grand obsession. Walter Pater approaches a System of Metaphysical Thought as a somewhat furtive amorist might approach a sleeping Nymph. On light-stepping, crafty feet he approaches — and the hand with which he twitches the sleeve of the sleeper is as soft as the flutter of a moth's wing. "I do not like," he said once, "to be called a Hedonist. It gives such a queer impression to people who don't know Greek."

Ardent young people sometimes come to me, when in the wayfaring of my patient academic duties, I speak about Pater, and ask me point-blank to tell them what his "view-point" — so they are pleased to express it — "really and truly" was. Sweet reader, do you know the pain of these "really and truly" questions? I try to answer in some blundering manner like this. I try to explain how, for him, nothing in this world was certain or fixed; how everything "flowed away"; how all that we touch or taste or see, vanished, changed its nature, became something else, even as we vanish, as the years go on, and change our nature and become something else. I try to explain how, for him, we are ourselves but the meeting-places of strange forces, journeying at large and by chance through a shifting world; how we, too, these very meeting-places of such forces, waver and flicker and shift and are transformed, like dreams within dreams!

I try to explain how, this being so, and nothing being "written in the sky" it is our right to test every single experience that life can offer, short of those which would make things bitterer, harder, narrower, less easy, for "the other person."

And if my Innocents ask — as they do sometimes — Innocents are like that! — "Why must we consider the other person?" I answer — for no reason, and under no

threat or danger or categorical imperative; but simply because we have grown to be the sort of animal, the sort of queer fish, who cannot do the things “that he would”! It is not, I try to indicate, a case of conscience; it is a matter of taste; and there are certain things, when it comes to that point, which an animal possessed of such taste cannot do, even though he desire to do them. And one of these things is to hurt the other trapped creatures who happen to have been caught in the same “gin” as ourself.

With regard to Art and Literature, Pater has the same method as with regard to Philosophy. Everything in a world so fluid is obviously relative. It is ridiculous to dream that there is any absolute standard — even of beauty itself. Those high and immutable Principles of The Good and True are as much an illusion as any other human dream. There are no such principles. Beauty is a Daughter of Life, and is forever changing as Life changes, and as we change who have to live. The lonely, tragic faith of certain great souls in that high, cold “Mathematic” of the Universe, the rhythm of whose ordered Harmony is the Music of the Spheres, is a Faith that may well inspire and solemnize us; it cannot persuade or convince us.

Beauty is not Mathematical; it is — if one may say so — physiological and psychological, and though that austere severity of pure line and pure colour, the impersonal technique of art, has a seemingly pre-ordained power of appeal, in reality it is far less immutable than it appears, and has far more in it of the arbitrariness of life and growth and change than we sometimes would care to allow.

Walter Pater’s magnetic spell is never more wonder-working than when he deals with the materials which artists use. And most of all, with words, that material which is so stained and corrupted and outraged — and yet which is the richest of all. But how tenderly he always speaks of materials! What a limitless reverence he has for the subtle reciprocity and correspondence between the human senses and what — so thrillingly, so dangerously, sometimes! — they apprehend. Wood and clay and marble and bronze and gold and silver; these — and the fabrics of cunning looms and deft, insatiable fingers — he handles with the reverence of a priest touching consecrated elements.

Not only the great main rivers of art’s tradition, but the little streams and tributaries, he loves. Perhaps he loves some of these best of all, for the pathways to their exquisite margins are less trodden than the others, and one is more apt to find one’s self alone there.

Perhaps of all his essays, three might be selected as most characteristic of certain recurrent moods. That one on Denys L’Auxerrois, where the sweet, perilous legend of the exiled god — has he really been ever far from us, that treacherous Son of scorched white Flesh? — leads us so far, so strangely far. That one on Watteau, the Prince of Court Painters, where his passion for things faded and withdrawn reaches its climax. For Pater, like Antoine, is one of those always ready to turn a little wearily from the pressure of their own too vivid days, and seek a wistful escape in some fantastic valley of dreams. Watteau’s “happy valley” is, indeed, sadder than our most crowded hours — how should it not be, when it is no “valley” at all, but the melancholy cypress-alleys of Versailles? — but, though sadder, it is so fine; so fine and rare and gay!

And along the borders of it and under its clipped trees, by its fountains and ghostly lawns, still, still can one catch in the twilight the shimmer of the dancing feet of the Phantom-Pierrot, and the despair in his smile! For him, too — for Gilles the Mummer — as for Antoine Watteau and Walter Pater, the wistfulness of such places is not inconsistent with their levity. Soon the music must stop. Soon it must be only a garden, “only a garden of Lenotre, correct, ridiculous and charming.” For the lips of the Despair of Pierrot cannot always touch the lips of the Mockery of Columbine; in the end, the Ultimate Futility must turn them both to stone!

And, finally, that Essay upon Leonardo, with the lines “we say to our friend” about Her who is “older than the rocks on which she sits.”

What really makes Pater so great, so wise, so salutary a writer is his perpetual insistence on the criminal, mad foolishness of letting slip, in silly chatter and vapid preaching, the unreturning days of our youth! “Carry, O Youths and Maidens,” he seems to say. “Carry with infinite devotion that vase of many odours which is your Life on Earth. Spill as little as may be of its unvalued wine; let no rain-drops or bryony-dew, or floating gossamer-seed, fall into it and spoil its taste. For it is all you have, and it cannot last long!”

He is a great writer, because from him we may learn the difficult and subtle art of drinking the cup of life so as to taste every drop.

One could expatiate long upon his attitude to Christianity — his final desire to be “ordained Priest” — his alternating pieties and incredulities. His deliberate clinging to what “experience” brought him, as the final test of “truth,” made it quite easy for him to dip his arms deep into the Holy Well. He might not find the Graal; he might see nothing there but his own shadow! What matter? The Well itself was so cool and chaste and dark and cavern-like, that it was worth long summer days spent dreaming over it — dreaming over it in the cloistered garden, out of the dust and the folly and the grossness of the brutal World, that knows neither Apollo or Christ!

# A NOTE ON THE GENIUS OF THOMAS HARDY by Arthur Symons

Arthur Symons (1865 –1945) was a British poet, critic and magazine editor. This short chapter is taken from his critical work *Figures of Several Centuries*.

Arthur Symons, a renowned poet and critic

## A NOTE ON THE GENIUS OF THOMAS HARDY

He has a kind of naked face, in which you see the brain always working, with an almost painful simplicity — just saved from being painful by a humorous sense of external things, which becomes also a kind of intellectual criticism. He is a fatalist, and he studies the workings of fate in the chief vivifying and disturbing influence in life, women. His view of women is more French than English; it is subtle, a little cruel, not as tolerant as it seems, thoroughly a man's point of view, and not, as with Meredith, man's and woman's at once. He sees all that is irresponsible for good and evil in a woman's character, all that is unreliable in her brain and will, all that is alluring in her variability. He is her apologist, but always with a certain reserve of private judgment. No one has created more attractive women, women whom a man would have been more likely to love, or more likely to regret loving. *Jude the Obscure* is perhaps the most unbiased consideration of the more complicated questions of sex which we can find in English fiction. At the same time, there is almost no passion in his work, neither the author nor any of his characters ever seeming able to pass beyond the state of curiosity, the most intellectually interesting of limitations, under the influence of any emotion. In his feeling for nature, curiosity sometimes seems to broaden into a more intimate kind of communion. The heath, the village with its peasants, the change of every hour among the fields and on the roads, mean more to him, in a sense, than even the spectacle of man and woman in their blind, and painful, and absorbing struggle for existence. His knowledge of woman confirms him in a suspension of judgment; his knowledge of nature brings him nearer to the unchanging and consoling element in the world. All the quite happy entertainment which he gets out of life comes to him from his contemplation of the peasant, as himself a rooted part



of the earth, translating the dumbness of the fields into humour. His peasants have been compared with Shakespeare's; that is, because he has the Shakespearean sense of their placid vegetation by the side of hurrying animal life, to which they act the part of chorus, with an unconscious wisdom in their close, narrow, and undistracted view of things.

In his verse there is something brooding, obscure, tremulous, half-inarticulate, as he meditates over man, nature, and destiny: Nature, 'waking by touch alone,' and Fate, who sees and feels. In *The Mother Mourns*, a strange, dreary, ironical song of science, Nature laments that her best achievement, man, has become discontented with her in his ungrateful discontent with himself. It is like the whimpering of a hurt animal, and the queer, ingenious metre, with its one rhyme set at wide but distinct and heavily recurrent intervals, beats on the ear like a knell. Blind and dumb forces speak, conjecture, half awaking out of sleep, turning back heavily to sleep again. Many poets have been sorry for man, angry with Nature on man's behalf. Here is a poet who is sorry for Nature, who feels the earth and its roots, as if he had sap in his veins instead of blood, and could get closer than any other man to the things of the earth.

Who else could have written this crabbed, subtle, strangely impressive poem?

#### AN AUGUST MIDNIGHT

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,  
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor;  
On this scene enter — winged, horned, and spined —  
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;  
While 'mid my page there idly stands  
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands.  
Thus meet we five, in this still place,  
At this point of time, at this point in space.  
— My guests parade my new-penned ink,  
Or bang at the lamp-glass, whirl, and sink.  
'God's humblest, they!' I muse. Yet why?  
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.

No such drama has been written in verse since Browning, and the people of the drama are condensed to almost as pregnant an utterance as Adam, Lilith, and Eve.

Why is it that there are so few novels which can be read twice, while all good poetry can be read over and over? Is it something inherent in the form, one of the reasons in nature why a novel cannot be of the same supreme imaginative substance as a poem? I think it is, and that it will never be otherwise. But, among novels, why is it that one here and there calls us back to its shelf with almost the insistence of a lyric, while for the most part a story read is a story done with? Balzac is always good to re-read, but not Tolstoi: and I couple two of the giants. To take lesser artists, I would say that we can re-read Lavengro but not Romola. But what seems puzzling is that Hardy, who is above all a story-teller, and whose stories are of the kind that

rouse suspense and satisfy it, can be read more than once, and never be quite without novelty. There is often, in his books, too much story, as in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, where the plot extends into almost inextricable entanglements; and yet that is precisely one of the books that can be re-read. Is it on account of that concealed poetry, never absent though often unseen, which gives to these fantastic or real histories a meaning beyond the meaning of the facts, beneath it like an under-current, around it like an atmosphere? Facts, once known, are done with; stories of mere action gallop through the brain and are gone; but in Hardy there is a vision or interpretation, a sense of life as a growth out of the earth, and as much a mystery between soil and sky as the corn is, which will draw men back to the stories with an interest which outlasts their interest in the story.

It is a little difficult to get accustomed to Hardy, or to do him justice without doing him more than justice. He is always right, always a seer, when he is writing about 'the seasons in their moods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voices of inanimate things.' (What gravity and intimacy in his numbering of them!) He is always right, always faultless in matter and style, when he is showing that 'the impressionable peasant leads a larger, fuller, more dramatic life than the pachydermatous king.' But he requires a certain amount of emotion to shake off the lethargy natural to his style, and when he has merely a dull fact to mention he says it like this: 'He reclined on his couch in the sitting-room, and extinguished the light.' In the next sentence, where he is interested in expressing the impalpable emotion of the situation, we get this faultless and uncommon use of words: 'The night came in, and took up its place there, unconcerned and indifferent; the night which had already swallowed up his happiness, and was now digesting it listlessly; and was ready to swallow up the happiness of a thousand other people with as little disturbance or change of mien.'

No one has ever studied so scrupulously as Hardy the effect of emotion on inanimate things, or has ever seen emotion so visually in people. For instance: 'Terror was upon her white face as she saw it; her cheek was flaccid, and her mouth had almost the aspect of a round little hole.' But so intense is his preoccupation with these visual effects that he sometimes cannot resist noting a minute appearance, though in the very moment of assuring us that the person looking on did not see it. 'She hardly observed that a tear descended slowly upon his cheek, a tear so large that it magnified the pores of the skin over which it rolled, like the object lens of a microscope.' And it is this power of seeing to excess, and being limited to sight which is often strangely revealing, that leaves him at times helpless before the naked words that a situation supremely seen demands for its completion. The one failure in what is perhaps his masterpiece, *The Return of the Native*, is in the words put into the mouth of Eustacia and Yeobright in the perfectly imagined scene before the mirror, a scene which should be the culminating scene of the book; and it is, all but the words: the words are crackle and tinsel.

What is it, then, that makes up the main part of the value and fascination of Hardy, and how is it that what at first seem, and may well be, defects, uncouthnesses, bits

of formal preaching, grotesque ironies of event and idea, come at last to seem either good in themselves or good where they are, a part of the man if not of the artist? One begins by reading for the story, and the story is of an attaching interest. Here is a story-teller of the good old kind, a story-teller whose plot is enough to hold his readers. With this point no doubt many readers stop and are content. But go on, and next after the story-teller one comes on the philosopher. He is dejected and a little sinister, and may check your pleasure in his narrative if you are too attentive to his criticism of it. But a new meaning comes into the facts as you observe his attitude towards them, and you may be well content to stop and be fed with thoughts by the philosopher. But if you go further still you will find, at the very last, the poet, and you need look for nothing beyond. I am inclined to question if any novelist has been more truly a poet without ceasing to be in the true sense a novelist. The poetry of Hardy's novels is a poetry of roots, and it is a voice of the earth. He seems often to be closer to the earth (which is at times, as in *The Return of the Native*, the chief person, or the chorus, of the story) than to men and women, and to see men and women out of the eyes of wild creatures, and out of the weeds and stones of the heath. How often, and for how profound a reason, does he not show us to ourselves, not as we or our fellows see us, but out of the continual observation of humanity which goes on in the wary and inquiring eyes of birds, the meditative and indifferent regard of cattle, and the deprecating aloofness and inspection of sheep?

1907

# The Biographies

# THE EARLY LIFE OF THOMAS HARDY, 1841–1891 by Florence Hardy

Shortly after Hardy's death, the executors of his estate burnt his letters and notebooks. Twelve records survived, one of them containing notes and extracts of newspaper stories from the 1820s. In the year of his death, Hardy's second wife, his former secretary Florence, published this biography, compiled largely from contemporary notes, letters, diaries, and biographical memoranda, as well as from oral information in conversations extending over many years. Many critics believe the biographies were mostly written by Hardy himself. It was later followed by a second biography covering Hardy's later years and poetic output.

Florence Hardy, 1915

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## **PREFATORY NOTE TO 'THE EARLY LIFE'**

Mr. Hardy's feeling for a long time was that he would not care to have his life written at all. And though often asked to record his recollections he would say that he 'had not sufficient admiration for himself' to do so. But later, having observed many erroneous and grotesque statements advanced as his experiences, and a so-called 'Life' published as authoritative, his hand was forced, and he agreed to my strong request that the facts of his career should be set down for use in the event of its proving necessary to print them.

To this end he put on paper headings of chapters, etc., and, in especial, memories of his early days whenever they came into his mind, also communicating many particulars by word of mouth from time to time. In addition a great help has been given by the dated observations which he made in pocket-books, during the years of his novel-writing, apparently with the idea that if one followed the trade of fiction one must take notes, rather than from natural tendency, for when he ceased fiction and resumed the writing of verses he left off note-taking except to a very limited extent.

The opinions quoted from these pocket-books and fugitive papers are often to be understood as his passing thoughts only, temporarily jotted there for consideration, and not as permanent conclusions — a fact of which we are reminded by his frequent remarks on the tentative character of his theories.

As such memoranda were not written with any view to their being printed, at least as they stood, and hence are often abrupt, a few words of explanation have been given occasionally.

It may be added that in the book generally Mr. Hardy's own reminiscent phrases have been used or approximated to whenever they could be remembered or were written down at the time of their expression *viva voce*. On this point great trouble has been taken to secure exactness.

Some incidents of his country experiences herein recorded may be considered as trivial, or as not strictly appertaining to a personal biography, but they have been included from a sense that they embody customs and manners of old West-of-England life that have now entirely passed away.

F. E. H.

## PART I – EARLY LIFE AND ARCHITECTURE

### CHAPTER I

#### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

1840-1855: Aet. 1-15

June 2, 1840. It was in a lonely and silent spot between woodland and heathland that Thomas Hardy was born, about eight o'clock on Tuesday morning the 2nd of June 1840, the place of his birth being the seven-roomed rambling house that stands easternmost of the few scattered dwellings called Higher Bockhampton, in the parish of Stinsford, Dorset. The domiciles were quaint, brass-knocked, and green-shuttered then, some with green garden-doors and white balls on the posts, and mainly occupied by lifeholders of substantial footing like the Hardys themselves. In the years of his infancy, or shortly preceding it, the personages tenanting these few houses included two retired military officers, one old navy lieutenant, a small farmer and tranter, a relieving officer and registrar, and an old militiaman, whose wife was the monthly nurse that assisted Thomas Hardy into the world. These being mostly elderly people, the place was at one time nicknamed 'Veterans' Valley'. It was also dubbed 'Cherry Alley', the lane or street leading through it being planted with an avenue of cherry-trees. But the lifeholds fell into hand, and the quaint residences with their trees, clipped hedges, orchards, white gatepost-balls, the naval officer's masts and weather-cocks, have now perished every one, and have been replaced by labourers' brick cottages and other new farm-buildings, a convenient pump occupying the site of the mossy well and bucket. The Hardy homestead, too, is weather-worn and reduced, having comprised, in addition to the house, two gardens (one of them part orchard), a horse-paddock, and sand-and-gravel pits, afterwards exhausted and overgrown: also stabling and like buildings since removed; while the leaves and mould washed down by rains from the plantation have risen high against the back wall of the house, that was formerly covered with ivy. The wide, brilliantly white chimney-corner, in his child-time such a feature of the sitting-room, is also gone.

Some Wordsworthian lines — the earliest discoverable of young Hardy's attempts in verse — give with obvious and naive fidelity the appearance of the paternal homestead at a date nearly half a century before the birth of their writer, when his grandparents settled there, after his great-grandfather had built for their residence the first house in the valley.<sup>1</sup>

The family, on Hardy's paternal side, like all the Hardys of the south-west, derived from the Jersey le Hardys who had sailed across



1 The poem, written between 1857 and 1860, runs as follows:

DOMICILIUM

It faces west, and round the back and sides  
High beeches, bending, hang a veil of boughs,  
And sweep against the roof. Wild honeysucks  
Climb on the walls, and seem to sprout a wish  
(If we may fancy wish of trees and plants)  
To overtop the apple-trees hard by.  
Red roses, lilacs, variegated box  
Are there in plenty, and such hardy flowers  
As flourish best untrained. Adjoining these  
Are herbs and esculents; and farther still  
A field; then cottages with trees, and last  
The distant hills and sky.  
Behind, the scene is wilder. Heath and furze  
Are everything that seems to grow and thrive  
Upon the uneven ground. A stunted thorn  
Stands here and there, indeed; and from a pit  
An oak uprises, springing from a seed  
Dropped by some bird a hundred years ago.  
In days bygone —  
Long gone — my father's mother, who is now  
Blest with the blest, would take me out to walk.  
At such a time I once inquired of her  
How looked the spot when first she settled here.  
The answer I remember. ' Fifty years  
Have passed since then, my child, and change has marked  
The face of all things. Yonder garden-plots  
And orchards were uncultivated slopes  
O'ergrown with bramble bushes, furze and thorn:  
That road a narrow path shut in by ferns,  
Which, almost trees, obscured the passer-by.  
'Our house stood quite alone, and those tall firs  
And beeches were not planted. Snakes and efts  
Swarmed in the summer days, and nightly bats  
Would fly about our bedrooms. Heathcroppers  
Lived on the hills, and were our only friends;  
So wild it was when first we settled here.'

to Dorset for centuries — the coasts being just opposite. Hardy often thought he would like to restore the 'le' to his name, and call himself 'Thomas le Hardy'; but he never did so. The Dorset Hardys were traditionally said to descend in particular from a Clement le Hardy, Bailly of Jersey, whose son John settled hereabouts in the

fifteenth century, having probably landed at Wareham, then a port. They all had the characteristics of an old family of spent social energies, that were revealed even in the Thomas Hardy of this memoir (as in his father and grandfather), who never cared to take advantage of the many worldly opportunities that his popularity and esteem as an author afforded him. They had dwelt for many generations in or near the valley of the River Frome or Frome, which extends inland from Wareham, occupying various properties whose sites lay scattered about from Woolcombe, Toller-Welme, and Up-Sydling (near the higher course of the river), down the stream to Dorchester, Weymouth, and onward to Wareham, where the Frome flows into Poole Harbour. It was a family whose diverse Dorset sections included the Elizabethan Thomas Hardy who endowed the Dorchester Grammar School, the Thomas Hardy captain of the Victory at Trafalgar, Thomas Hardy an influential burgess of Wareham, Thomas Hardy of Chaldon, and others of local note, the tablet commemorating the first-mentioned being still in St. Peter's Church, Dorchester, though shifted from its original position in the 'Hardy Chapel', the inscription running as follows:

TO THE MEMORYE OF THOMAS HARDY OF MELCOMBE REGIS IN THE COUNTY OF DORSETT, ESQUIER, WHOE ENDOWED THIS BORROUGHE W<sup>TM</sup> A YEARELY REVENEW OF 50/.; AND APPOYNTED OUT OF IT, TO BE EMPLOYED FOR YE BETTER MAYNTENANCE OF A PREACHER, 20/.; A SCHOOLEMASTER, TWENTY POUNDES; AN HUISHER, TWENTY NOBLES; THE ALMES WOMEN FIVE MARKS. THE BAYLIVES AND BURGISSES OF DORCHESTER, IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR GRATITUDE, AND TO COMMEND TO POSTERITY AN EXAMPLE SO WORTHY OF IMITATION, HATH ERECTED THIS MONUMENT.

HE DYED THE 15 OF OCTOBER, ANNO DO: 1599.

But at the birth of the subject of this biography the family had declined, so far as its Dorset representatives were concerned, from whatever importance it once might have been able to claim there; and at his father's death the latter was, it is believed, the only landowner of the name in the county, his property being, besides the acre-and-half lifehold at Bockhampton, a small freehold farm at Tal - bothays, with some houses there, and about a dozen freehold cottages and a brick-yard-and-kiln elsewhere. The Talbothays farm was a small outlying property standing detached in a ring fence, its possessors in the reign of Henry VII having been Talbots, from a seventeenth - century daughter of whom Hardy borrowed the name of Avis or Avice in *The Well-Beloved*.

On the maternal side he was Anglo-Saxon, being descended from the Chiles, Childs, or Childses (who gave their name to the villages of Child-Okeford, Chilfrome, Childhay, etc.), the Swetmans, and other families of northwest Dorset that were small proprietors of lands there in the reign of Charles the First (see Hutchins' *History of Dorset*): and also from the Hanns or Hands of the Pidele Valley, Dorset, and earlier of the Vale of Blackmore. (In the parish register of Affpuddle the spelling is Hann.) The Swetmans and the Childses seem to have been involved in the Monmouth rising, and one of the former to have been brought before Jeffreys, 'for being absent from home att the

tyme of the Rebellion'. As his name does not appear in the lists of those executed he was probably transported, and this connection with Monmouth's adventures and misfortunes seems to have helped to becloud the family prospects of the maternal line of Hardy's ancestry, if they had ever been bright.

Several traditions survived in the Swetman family concerning the Rebellion. An indubitably true one was that after the Battle of Sedge - moor two of the Swetman daughters — Grace and Leonarde — were beset in their house by some of the victorious soldiery, and only escaped violation by slipping from the upper rooms down the back stairs into the orchard. It is said that Hardy's great-grandmother could remember them as very old women. Part of the house, now in the possession of the Earl of Ilchester, and divided into two cottages, is still standing with its old Elizabethan windows; but the hall and open oak staircase have disappeared, and also the Ham-Hill stone chimneys. The spot is called 'Townsend'.

Another tradition, of more doubtful authenticity, is that to which the short story by Hardy called *The Duke's Reappearance* approximates. Certainly a mysterious man did come to Swetman after the battle, but it was generally understood that he was one of Monmouth's defeated officers.

Thomas Hardy's maternal grandmother Elizabeth,<sup>1</sup> or Betty, was 1 [She married George Hand (or Hadd). Her daughter Jemima used the former spelling.]

the daughter of one of those Swetmans by his wife Maria Childs, sister of the Christopher Childs who married into the Cave family, became a mining engineer in Cornwall, and founded the *West Briton* newspaper, his portrait being painted when he was about eighty by Sir Charles Eastlake. The traditions about Betty, Maria's daughter, were that she was tall, handsome, had thirty gowns, was an omnivorous reader, and one who owned a stock of books of exceptional extent for a yeoman's daughter living in a remote place.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A curious reminiscence by her daughter bears testimony to her rather striking features. She was crossing the fields with the latter as a child, a few years after Waterloo, when a gentleman shouted after her: 'A relation of Wellington's? You must be! That nose!' He excitedly followed them till they were frightened, jumping over stiles till they reached home. He was found to be an officer who had fought under Wellington, and had been wounded in the head, so that he was at times deranged.

She knew the writings of Addison, Steele, and others of the *Spectator* group almost by heart, was familiar with Richardson and Fielding, and, of course, with such standard works as *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrims Progress*. From the old medical books in her possession she doctored half the village, her sheet-anchor being Culpepper's *Herbal and Dispensary*; and if ever there was any doubt as to the position of particular graves in the churchyard, the parson, sexton, and relatives applied to her as an unerring authority.

But alas for her fortunes! Her bright intelligence in a literary direction did not serve her in domestic life. After her mother's death she clandestinely married a young man of whom her father strongly disapproved. The sturdy yeoman, apparently a severe and

unyielding parent, never forgave her, and never would see her again. His unbending temper is illustrated by the only anecdote known of him. A fortune-telling gipsy had encamped on the edge of one of his fields, and on a Sunday morning he went to order her away. Finding her obdurate he said: 'If you don't take yourself off I'll have you burnt as a witch!' She pulled his handkerchief from his pocket, and threw it into her fire, saying, 'If that burn I burn'. The flames curled up round the handkerchief, which was his best, of India silk, but it did not burn, and she handed it back to him intact. The tale goes that he was so impressed by her magic that he left her alone.

Not so long after the death of this stern father of Elizabeth's — Hardy's maternal great-grandfather — her husband also died, leaving her with several children, the youngest only a few months old. Her father, though in comfortable circumstances, had bequeathed her nothing, and she was at her wit's end to maintain herself and her family, if ever widow was. Among Elizabeth's children there was one, a girl, of unusual ability and judgment, and an energy that might have carried her to incalculable issues. This was the child Jemima, the mother of Thomas Hardy. By reason of her parent's bereavement and consequent poverty under the burden of a young family, Jemima saw during girlhood and young womanhood some very stressful experiences of which she could never speak in her maturer years without pain, though she appears to have mollified her troubles by reading every book she could lay hands on. Moreover she turned her manual activities to whatever came in her way; grew to be exceptionally skilled in, among other things, 'tambouring' gloves; also was good at mantua-making, and excellent in the oddly dissimilar occupation of cookery. She resolved to be a cook in a London clubhouse; but her plans in this direction were ended by her meeting her future husband, and being married to him at the age of five-and - twenty.

He carried on an old-established building and master-masoning business (the designation of 'builder', denoting a manager of and contractor for all trades, was then unknown in the country districts). It was occasionally extensive, demanding from twelve to fifteen men, but frequently smaller; and the partner with whom she had thrown in her lot, though in substantial circumstances and unexceptionable in every other way, did not possess the art of enriching himself by business. Moreover he was devoted to church music, and secondarily to mundane, of the country-dance, hornpipe, and early waltz description, as had been his father, and was his brother also. It may be mentioned that an ancestral Thomas Hardy, living in Dorchester in 1724, was a subscriber to 'Thirty Select Anthems in Score', by Dr. W. Croft, organist of the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, which seems to show that the family were interested in church music at an early date.

Jemima's husband's father, our subject's grandfather (the first Thomas of three in succession), when a young man living at Puddle - town before the year 1800, had expressed his strong musical bias by playing the violoncello in the church of that parish. He had somewhat improvidently married at one-and-twenty, whereupon his father John had set him up in business by purchasing a piece of land at Bock - hampton in the adjoining parish of Stinsford, and building a house for him there. On removing with

his wife in 1801 to this home provided by his father John, Thomas Hardy the First (of these Stinsford Hardys) found the church music there in a deplorable condition, it being conducted from the gallery by a solitary old man with an oboe. He immediately set himself, with the easy-going vicar's hearty concurrence, to improve it, and got together some instrumentalists, himself taking the bass-viol as before, which he played in the gallery of Stinsford Church at two services every Sunday from 1801 or 1802 till his death in 1837, being joined later by his two sons, who, with other reinforcement, continued playing till about 1842, the period of performance by the three Hardys thus covering inclusively a little under forty years.

It was, and is, an interesting old church of various styles from Transition-Norman to late Perpendicular. In its vaults lie many members of the Grey and Pitt families, the latter collaterally related to the famous Prime Minister; there also lies the actor and dramatist William O'Brien with his wife Lady Susan, daughter of the first Earl of Ilchester, whose secret marriage in 1764 with the handsome Irish comedian whom Garrick had discovered and brought to Drury Lane caused such scandal in aristocratic circles. 'Even a footman were preferable' wrote Walpole. 'I could not have believed that Lady Susan would have stooped so low.'

Though in these modern days the 'stooping' might have been viewed inversely — for O'Brien, besides being *jeune premier* at Drury, was an accomplished and well-read man, whose presentations of the gay Lothario in Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, *Brisk* in *The Double Dealer*, *Sir Harry Wildair* in *The Constant Couple*, *Archer* in *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Sir Andrew Aguecheek*, the *Prince* in *Henry the Fourth*, and many other leading parts, made him highly popular, and whose own plays were of considerable merit. His marriage annihilated a promising career, for his wife's father would not hear of his remaining on the stage. The coincidence that both young Hardy's grandmothers had seen and admired O'Brien, that he was one of the Stinsford congregation for many years, that young Thomas's great-grandfather and grandfather had known him well, and that the latter as the local builder had constructed the vault for him and his wife (according to the builder's old Day-books still in existence his workmen drank nineteen quarts of beer over the job); had been asked by her to 'make it just large enough for our two selves only', had placed them in it, and erected their monument, lent the occupants of the little vault in the chancel a romantic interest in the boy's mind at an early age.

In this church (see the annexed plan, which is reproduced from a drawing made by Hardy many years ago under the supervision of his father) the Hardys became well known as violinists, Thomas the Second, the poet and novelist's father aforesaid, after his early boyhood as chorister beginning as a youth with the 'counter' viol, and later taking on the tenor and treble.

They were considered among the best church-players in the neighbourhood, accident having helped their natural bent. This was the fact that in 1822, shortly after the death of the old vicar Mr. Floyer, the Rev. Edward Murray, a connection of the Earl of Ilchester, who was the patron of the living, was presented to it. Mr. Murray was

an ardent musician and performer on the violin himself, and the two younger Hardys and sometimes their father used to practise two or three times a week with him in his study at Stinsford House, where he lived instead of at the Vicarage.

Thus it was that the Hardy instrumentalists, though never more than four, maintained an easy superiority over the larger bodies in parishes near. For while Puddletown west-gallery, for instance, could boast of eight players, and Maiden Newton of nine, these included wood-wind and leather — that is to say, clarionets and serpents — which were apt to be a little too sonorous, even strident, when zealously blown. But the few and well-practised violists of Stinsford were never unduly emphatic, according to tradition.

Elaborate Canticle services, such as the noted ‘Jackson in F’, and in ‘E flat’ — popular in the West of England, possibly because Jackson had been an Exeter man — Pope’s Ode, and anthems with portentous repetitions and ‘mountainous fugues’, were carried through by the performers every Sunday, with what real success is not known, but to their own great satisfaction and the hearty approval of the musical vicar.

In their psalmody they adhered strictly to Tate-and-Brady — upon whom, in truth, the modern hymn-book has been no great improvement — such tunes as the ‘Old Hundredth’, ‘New Sabbath’, ‘Devizes’, ‘Wilton’, ‘Lydia’, and ‘Cambridge New’ being their staple ones; while ‘Barthelemon’ and ‘Tallis’ were played to Ken’s Morning and Evening Hymns respectively every Sunday throughout the year: a practice now obsolete, but a great stimulus to congregational singing.

As if the superintendence of the Stinsford choir were not enough distraction from business for Thomas Hardy the First, he would go whenever opportunity served and assist other choirs by performing with his violoncello in the galleries of their parish churches, mostly to the high contentment of the congregations. Although Thomas the Third had not come into the world soon enough to know his grandfather in person, there is no doubt that the description by Fairway in *The Return of the Native* of the bowing of Thomasin’s father, when lending his services to the choir of Kingsbere, is a humorous exaggeration of the traditions concerning Thomas Hardy the First’s musical triumphs as *locum-tenens*.

In addition it may be mentioned that he had been a volunteer till the end of the war, and lay in Weymouth with his company from time to time, waiting for Bonaparte who never came.

Conducting the church choir all the year round involved carol - playing and singing at Christmas, which Thomas Hardy the Second loved as much as did his father. In addition to the ordinary practice, the work of preparing and copying carols a month of evenings beforehand was not light, and incidental expenses were appreciable. The parish being a large and scattered one, it was the custom of Thomas Hardy the First to assemble the rather perfunctory rank-and-file of the choir at his house; and this necessitated suppers, and suppers demanded (in those days) plenty of liquor. This was especially the case on Christmas Eve itself, when the rule was to go to the northern part

of the parish and play at every house before supper; then to return to Bockhampton and sit over the meal till twelve o'clock, during which interval a good deal was consumed at the Hardys' expense, the choir being mainly poor men and hungry. They then started for the other parts of the parish, and did not get home till all was finished at about six in the morning, the performers themselves feeling 'no more than malkins' in church next day, as they used to declare. The practice was kept up by Thomas Hardy the Second, much as described in *Under the Greenwood Tree* or *The Mellstock Quire*, though its author, Thomas Hardy the Third, invented the personages, incidents, manners, etc., never having seen or heard the choir as such, they ending their office when he was about a year old. He was accustomed to say that on this account he had rather burlesqued them, the story not so adequately reflecting as he could have wished in later years the poetry and romance that coloured their time-honoured observances.

This preoccupation of the Hardys with the music of the parish church and less solemn assemblies did not, to say the least, assist their building business, and it was somewhat of a relief to Thomas Hardy the Second's young wife — though musical herself to a degree — when ecclesiastical changes after the death of Thomas Hardy the First, including the cession of the living by Murray, led to her husband's 1 Mal/cin, a damp rag for swabbing out an oven.

abandoning in 1841 or 1842 all connection with the choir. The First Thomas's death having been quite unexpected, inasmuch as he was playing in the church one Sunday, and brought in for burial on the next, there could be no such quiring over his grave as he had performed over the graves of so many, owing to the remaining players being chief mourners. And thus ended his devoted musical services to Stinsford Church, in which he had occupied the middle seat of the gallery with his bass-viol on Sundays for a period of thirty-five years — to no worldly profit; far the reverse, indeed.

After his death the building and masoning business also saw changes, being carried on by his widow, her sons assisting — an unsatisfactory arrangement which ultimately led to the division of the goodwill between the brothers.

The second Thomas Hardy, the author's father, was a man who in his prime could be, and was, called handsome. To the courtesy of his manners there was much testimony among the local county-ladies with whom he came in contact as a builder. All the Dorset Hardys have more or less a family likeness (of which the Admiral may be considered the middle type), and the present one was a good specimen. He was about five feet nine in height, of good figure, with dark Vandyke-brown hair, and a beard which he wore cut back all round in the custom of his date; with teeth that were white and regular to nearly the last years of his life, and blue eyes that never faded grey; a quick step, and a habit of bearing his head a little to one side as he walked. He carried no stick or umbrella till past middle life, and was altogether an open-air liver, and a great walker always. He was good, too, when young, at hornpipes and jigs, and other folk-dances, performing them with all the old movements of leg-crossing and hop, to the delight of the children, till warned by his wife that this fast perishing style might

tend to teach them what it was not quite necessary they should be familiar with, the more genteel 'country-dance' having superseded the former.

Mrs. Hardy once described him to her son as he was when she first set eyes on him in the now removed west gallery of Stinsford Church, appearing to her more travelled glance (she had lived for a time in London, Weymouth, and other towns) and somewhat satirical vision, 'rather amusingly old-fashioned, in spite of being decidedly good-looking — wearing the blue swallow-tailed coat with gilt embossed buttons then customary, a red and black flowered waistcoat, Wellington boots, and French-blue trousers'. The sonnet which follows expresses her first view of him.

A CHURCH ROMANCE (Mellstock, circa 1836)

She turned in the high pew, until her sight  
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row  
Of music-men with viol, book, and bow  
Against the sinking, sad tower-window light.  
She turned again; and in her pride's despite  
One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw  
A message from his string to her below,  
Which said: 'I claim thee as my own forthright!'  
Thus their hearts' bond began, in due time signed,  
And long years thence, when Age had scared Romance,  
At some old attitude of his or glance  
That gallery-scene would break upon her mind,  
With him as minstrel, ardent, young, and trim,  
Bowing 'New Sabbath' or 'Mount Ephraim'.

Mrs. Hardy herself was rather below the middle height with chestnut hair and grey eyes, and a trim and upright figure. Her movement also in walking being buoyant through life, strangers approaching her from behind imagined themselves, even when she was nearly seventy, about to overtake quite a young woman. The Roman nose and countenance inherited from her mother would better have suited a taller build. Like her mother, too, she read omnivorously. She sang songs of the date, such as the then popular Haynes Bayly's 'Isle of Beauty', and 'Gaily the Troubadolir'; also 'Why are you wandering here, I pray?' and 'Jeannette and Jeannot'. The children had a quaint old piano for their practice, over which she would sigh because she could not play it herself.

Thomas Hardy the Third, their eldest child of a family of four (and the only one of the four who married, so that he had no blood - nephew or niece), showed not the physique of his father. Had it not been for the common sense of the estimable woman who attended as monthly nurse, he might never have walked the earth. At his birth he was thrown aside as dead till rescued by her as she exclaimed to the surgeon, 'Dead! Stop a minute: he's alive enough, sure!'

Of his infancy nothing has been handed down save the curious fact that on his mother's returning from out-of-doors one hot afternoon, to him asleep in his cradle,



she found a large snake curled up upon his breast, comfortably asleep like himself. It had crept into the house from the heath hard by, where there were many.

Though healthy he was fragile, and precocious to a degree, being able to read almost before he could walk, and to tune a violin when of quite tender years. He was of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music, and among the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes, and country-dances that his father played of an evening in his early married years, and to which the boy danced a pas seul in the middle of the room, there were three or four that always moved the child to tears, though he strenuously tried to hide them. Among the airs (though he did not know their names at that time) were, by the way, 'Enrico' (popular in the Regency), 'The Fairy Dance', 'Miss Macleod of Ayr' (an old Scotch tune to which Burns may have danced), and a melody named 'My Fancy-Lad' or 'Johnny's gone to sea'. This peculiarity in himself troubled the mind of 'Tommy' as he was called, and set him wondering at a phenomenon to which he ventured not to confess. He used to say in later life that, like Calantha in Ford's Broken Heart, he danced on at these times to conceal his weeping. He was not over four years of age at this date.

One or two more characteristics of his personality at this childhood-time can be recounted. In those days the staircase at Bockhampton (later removed) had its walls coloured Venetian red by his father, and was so situated that the evening sun shone into it, adding to its colour a great intensity for a quarter of an hour or more. Tommy used to wait for this chromatic effect, and, sitting alone there, would recite to himself 'And now another day is gone' from Dr. Watts's Hymns, with great fervency, though perhaps not for any religious reason, but from a sense that the scene suited the lines.

It is not therefore to be wondered at that a boy of this sort should have a dramatic sense of the church services, and on wet Sunday mornings should wrap himself in a tablecloth, and read the morning Prayer standing in a chair, his cousin playing the clerk with loud Amens, and his grandmother representing the congregation. The sermon which followed was simply a patchwork of the sentences used by the vicar. Everybody said that Tommy would have to be a parson, being obviously no good for any practical pursuit; which remark caused his mother many misgivings.

One event of this date or a little later stood out, he used to say, more distinctly than any. He was lying on his back in the sun, thinking how useless he was, and covered his face with his straw hat. The sun's rays streamed through the interstices of the straw, the lining having disappeared. Reflecting on his experiences of the world so far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up. Other boys were always talking of when they would be men; he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot, and to know no more people than he already knew (about half a dozen). Yet this early evidence of that lack of social ambition which followed him through life was shown when he was in perfect health and happy circumstances.

Afterwards he told his mother of his conclusions on existence, thinking she would enter into his views. But to his great surprise she was very much hurt, which was

natural enough considering she had been near death's door in bringing him forth. And she never forgot what he had said, a source of much regret to him in after years.

When but little older he was puzzled by what seemed to him a resemblance between two marches of totally opposite sentiments — 'See the conquering hero comes' and 'The Dead March in Saul'. Some dozen years were to pass before he discovered that they were by the same composer.

It may be added here that this sensitiveness to melody, though he was no skilled musician, remained with him through life.

1848. First School Until his fifth or sixth year his parents hardly supposed he would survive to grow up, but at eight he was thought strong enough to go to the village school, to learn the rudiments before being sent further afield; and by a curious coincidence he was the first pupil to enter the new school-building, arriving on the day of opening, and awaiting tremulously and alone, in the empty room, the formal entry of the other scholars two-and-two with the schoolmaster and mistress from the temporary premises near. The school is still standing much in its original condition.

Here he worked at Walkingame's Arithmetic and at geography, in both of which he excelled, though his handwriting was indifferent. About this time his mother gave him Dryden's Virgil, Johnson's Rasselas, and Paul and Virginia. He also found in a closet A History of the Wars — a periodical dealing with the war with Napoleon, which his grandfather had subscribed to at the time, having been himself a volunteer. The torn pages of these contemporary numbers with their melodramatic prints of serried ranks, crossed bayonets,

huge knapsacks, and dead bodies, were the first to set him on the train of ideas that led to The Trumpet-Major and The Dynasts.

A Journey The boy Thomas's first experience of travel was when, at eight or nine years old, his mother took him with her — 'for protection', as she used to say — being then an attractive and still young woman — on a visit to her sister in Hertfordshire. As the visit lasted three weeks or a month he was sent while there to a private school, which appears to have been somewhat on the Squeers model. Since, however, he was only a day-scholar this did not affect him much, though he was mercilessly tyrannized over by the bigger boys whom he could beat hollow in arithmetic and geography.

Their return from this visit was marked by an experience which became of interest in the light of after events. The Great Northern Railway to London was then only in process of construction, and it was necessary to go thither by coach from Hertfordshire in order to take the train at Waterloo Station for Dorchester. Mrs. Hardy had not been to London since she had lived there for some months twelve years earlier. The coaching-inn was The Cross-Keys, St. John Street, Clerkenwell, and here mother and boy put up for the night. It was the inn at which Shelley and Mary Godwin had been accustomed to meet at week-ends not two-score years before, and was at this time unaltered from its state during the lovers' romantic experiences there — the oval stone staircase, the skylight, and the hotel entrance being untouched. As Mrs. Hardy and her little boy took a room rather high up the staircase for economy, and the poet had probably done

so for the same reason, there is a possibility that it may have been the same as that occupied by our most marvellous lyrist.

They stayed but a short time in London, but long enough for him to see and remember some of the streets, the Pantheon, then a fashionable pantehnicon, Cumberland Gate into Hyde Park, which then could boast of no Marble Arch, and the pandemonium of Smithfield, with its mud, curses, and cries of ill-treated animals. Also, that when passing through the city on the way up, they stopped at the point now called Swiss Cottage, and looked back at the outside of London creeping towards them across green fields.

1849-1850

By another year he was judged to be strong enough to walk further than to the village school, and after some postponements he was sent to a Dorchester day-school, whose headmaster his mother had learnt to be an exceptionally able man, and a good teacher of Latin, which was quite enough to lead her to waive the fact that the school was Nonconformist, though she had no nonconforming tendencies whatever.

It is somewhat curious, and shows the honour with which the school was conducted, that the boy did not know till he had been there several months that it was a Nonconformist school, a large number, probably a majority, of the boys coming like himself from Church-of-England homes, having been attracted thither by the reputation of the said master; though Thomas used to wonder why the familiar but rather boring Church Catechism had vanished — or rather all of it except the Ten Commandments, in which the pupils were made proficient once a week. However, though nominally unorthodox during the week Thomas was kept strictly at church on Sundays as usual, till he knew the Morning and Evening Services by heart including the rubrics, as well as large portions of the New Version of the Psalms. The aspect of that time to him is clearly indicated in the verses ‘Afternoon Service at Mellstock’, included in Moments of Vision.

The removal of the boy from Bockhampton school seriously wounded the lady of the manor who had erected it, though she must have guessed that he had only been sent there till sturdy enough to go further. To his mother this came as an unpleasant misunderstanding. While not wishing to be uncivil she had, naturally, not consulted the other at all in taking him away, considering his interests solely, the Hardys being comparatively independent of the manor, as their house and the adjoining land were a family lifehold, and the estate - work forming only part of Mr. Hardy’s business. That the school to which he was removed was not a Church-of-England one was another rock of offence to this too sensitive lady, though, as has been stated, it was an accident as unwished by the boy’s mother as by the squire’s wife. The latter had just built a model school at her own expense and, though it was but small, had provided it with a well-trained master and mistress; had made it her hobby, till it was far superior to an ordinary village school. Moreover under her dignity lay a tender heart, and having no children of her own she had grown passionately fond of Tommy almost from his infancy — he is said to have been an attractive little fellow at this time — whom she

had been accustomed to take into her lap and kiss until he was quite a big child. He quite reciprocated her fondness.

Shortly before or after the boy's removal the estate-building work was taken out of the hands of Tommy's father, who went further afield to replace it, soon obtaining a mansion to enlarge, and other contracts, and thus not suffering much from his loss of business in the immediate vicinity of his home. He would have left the parish altogether, the house his grandfather John had built for his father Thomas the First, as stated, being awkwardly small and ill-arranged, and the spot inconvenient for a builder. But as the rambling dwelling, field, and sandpits attached were his for life, he remained.

Thomas Hardy the youngest, however, secretly mourned the loss of his friend the landowner's wife, to whom he had grown more attached than he cared to own. In fact, though he was only nine or ten and she must have been nearly forty, his feeling for her was almost that of a lover. He had been wont to make drawings of animals in water-colours for her, and to sing to her, one of his songs being 'I've journeyed over many lands, I've sailed on every sea', which was comical enough considering the extent of his travels. He so much longed to see her that he jumped at the offer of a young woman of the village to take him to a harvest-supper at which he knew she would be present, one of the farms on the estate being carried on by the landowner himself as a hobby, with the aid of a bailiff — much to his pecuniary loss as it turned out. The young woman\* a small farmer's daughter, called for young Thomas on the afternoon of the festivity. Together they went off, his mother being away from home, though they left word where he had gone. The 'Supper', an early meal at that date, probably about four o'clock, was over by the time they reached the barn, and tea was going on, after which there was singing and dancing, some non-commissioned officers having been invited from the barracks by the Squire as partners for the girls. The Squire showed himself by no means strait-laced in this respect. What his wife thought is not recorded. It may be remarked in passing that here probably began Thomas's extensive acquaintance with soldiers of the old uniforms and long service, which was to serve him in good stead when he came to write *The Trumpet-Major* and *The Dynasts*.

Presently the manor-lady, her husband, and a house-party arrived to lead off some dances. As soon as she saw little Thomas — who had no business whatever there — she came up to him and said reproachfully:

'O Tommy, how is this? I thought you had deserted me!'

Tommy assured her through his tears that he had not deserted her, and never would desert her: and then the dance went on. He being wildly fond of dancing, she gave him for a partner a little niece of hers about his own age staying at her house, who had come with her. The manor-house party remained for a few figures and then left, but Tommy perforce stayed on, being afraid to go home without the strapping young woman his companion, who was dancing with the soldiers. There he wearily waited for her till three in the morning, having eaten and drunk nothing since one o'clock on the previous day, through his fear of asking the merry-makers for food. What the estate owner's tender wife would have given him had she but known of his hunger and thirst,

and how carefully have sent him home had she been aware of his dilemma! A reproof from both his parents when Tommy reached home ended the day's adventure. It was the only harvest-supper and dance that he ever saw, save one that he dropped into by chance years after.

In spite of his lover-like promise of fidelity to her ladyship, the two never met again till he was a young man of twenty-two, and she quite an elderly woman; though it was not his fault, her husband selling the estate shortly after and occupying a house in London.

It may be worthy of note that this harvest-home was among the last at which the old traditional ballads were sung, the railway having been extended to Dorchester just then, and the orally transmitted ditties of centuries being slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced. The particular ballad which he remembered hearing that night from the lips of the farm-women was that one variously called 'The Outlandish Knight', 'May Colvine', 'The Western Tragedy', etc. He could recall to old age the scene of the young women in their light gowns sitting on a bench against the wall in the barn, and leaning against each other as they warbled the Dorset version of the ballad, which differed a little from the northern:

'Lie there, lie there, thou false-hearted man,  
Lie there instead o' me;  
For six pretty maidens thou hast a-drown'd here,  
But the seventh hath drown-ed thee!  
'O tell no more, my pretty par-rot,  
Lay not the blame on me;  
And your cage shall be made o' the glittering gold,  
Wi' a door o' the white ivo-rie!'

The question of moving from the parish, above alluded to, and taking more commodious premises nearer to or in the town, again arose with the Hardys — was, indeed, always arising. An opportunity to develop her husband's business which a more convenient centre would have afforded him had been long in Mrs. Hardy's perception, and she thought he should seek it for the sake of his growing family. It must be admitted that a lonely spot between a heath and a wood, the search for which by messengers and other people of affairs often became wearisomely tedious to them, was almost unreasonable as a place for carrying on the building trade. But Thomas Hardy the Second had not the tradesman's soul. Instead of waylaying possible needers of brick and stone in the market-place or elsewhere, he liked going alone into the woods or on the heath, where, with a telescope inherited from some collateral ancestor who had been captain of a merchant craft, he would stay peering into the distance by the half-hour; or, in the hot weather, lying on a bank of thyme or camomile with the grasshoppers leaping over him. Among his son's other childish memories were those of seeing men in the stocks, corn-law agitations, mail-coaches, road-waggons, tinder-boxes, and candle - snuffing. When still a small boy he was taken by his father to witness the burning in effigy of the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman in the old Roman Amphitheatre

at Dorchester during the No-Popery Riots. The sight to young Hardy was most lurid, and he never forgot it; and when the cowl of one of the monks in the ghastly procession blew aside and revealed the features of one of his father's workmen his bewilderment was great.

His earliest recollection was of receiving from his father the gift of a small accordion. He knew that he was but four years old at this time, as his name and the date were written by his father upon the toy: Thomas Hardy. 1844.

Another memory, some two or three years later, is connected with the Corn Law Agitation. The boy had a little wooden sword, which his father had made for him, and this he dipped into the blood of a pig which had just been killed, and brandished it as he walked about the garden exclaiming: 'Free Trade or blood!'

A member of his family recalled, even after an interval of sixty years, the innocent glee with which the young Thomas and his mother would set off on various expeditions. They were excellent companions, having each a keen sense of humour and a love of adventure. Hardy would tell of one prank when he and his mother put on fantastic garb, pulling cabbage-nets over their faces to disguise themselves. Thus oddly dressed they walked across the heath to visit a sister of Mrs. Hardy, living at Puddletown, whose amazement was great when she set eyes upon these strange visitors at her door.

It was natural that with the imitativeness of a boy he should at an early age have attempted to perform on the violin, and under his father's instruction was soon able to tweedle from notation some hundreds of jigs and country-dances that he found in his father's and grandfather's old books. From tuning fiddles as a boy he went on as a youth in his teens to keep his mother's old table-piano in tune whenever he had the time, and was worried by 'The Wolf' in a musical octave, which he thought a defect in his own ear.

One other experience of his boyhood may be mentioned which, though comical in itself, gave him much mental distress. This was at church when listening to the sermon. Some mischievous movement of his mind set him imagining that the vicar was preaching mockingly, and he began trying to trace a humorous twitch in the corners of Mr. S — — 's mouth, as if he could hardly keep a serious countenance. Once having imagined this the impish boy found to his consternation that he could not dismiss the idea. Like Sterne in the pulpit, the vicar seemed to be 'always tottering on the verge of laughter', and hence against his will Thomas could scarcely control his merriment, till it became a positive discomfort to him.

By good fortune the report that the schoolmaster was an able teacher turned out to be true — and finding that he had an apt pupil who galloped unconcernedly over the ordinary school lessons, he either agreed to Hardy's parents' proposal, or proposed himself, that he should teach the boy Latin immediately, Latin being considered an extra.

1852

So at twelve years of age young Thomas was started on the old Eton grammar and readings in Eutropius and Caesar. Though extraordinarily quick in acquisition he was

undoubtedly rather an idle schoolboy; and in respect of the grammar, having, like so many thousands of schoolboys before him, been worried by the 'Propria quae maribus', he devised a plan for saving himself trouble in learning the genders by colouring the nouns in three tints respectively; but whether he profited much by his plan is not known. Once, many years after, he deplored to a friend, a classical scholar and Fellow of his college, that he had been taught from the venerable Etonian 'Introduction to the Latin Tongue', and not from the celebrated new Latin primer which came out later. His friend said grimly: 'The old one was just as good as the new.'

But despite the classics and his general bookishness he loved adventures with the fiddle, both now and far on towards young manhood, though it was strange that his mother, a 'progressive' woman, ambitious on his account though not her own, did not object to these performances. Possibly it was from a feeling that they would help to teach him what life was. His father, however, objected to them strongly, though as he himself had not been averse to them when young he could hardly do other than wink at them. So little Thomas played sometimes at village weddings, at one of which the bride, all in white, kissed him in her intense pleasure at the dance; once at a New Year's Eve party in the house of the tailor who had breeched him; also in farmers' parlours; and on another occasion at a homestead where he was stopped by his hostess clutching his bow-arm at the end of a three-quarter-hour's unbroken footing to his notes by twelve tireless couples in the favourite country-dance of 'The New - Rigged Ship'. The matron had done it lest he should 'burst a bloodvessel', fearing the sustained exertion to be too much for a boy of thirteen or fourteen.

He had always been told by his mother that he must on no account take any payment for these services as fiddler, but on one occasion temptation was too strong. A hatful of pennies was collected, amounting to four or five shillings, and Thomas had that morning seen in a shop in Dorchester a copy of *The Boys' Own Book* which could be bought with about this sum. He accepted the money and soon owned the coveted volume. His mother shook her head over the transaction, and refused to see any merit in a book which was chiefly about games. This volume was carefully kept, and remained in his library to the end of his life.

Among the queer occurrences accompanying these merry minstrel - lings may be described one that happened when he was coming home with his father at three in the morning from a gentleman-farmer's house where he had been second violin to his senior's first for six or seven hours, his father for some reason having had a generous wish to oblige the entertainers to the full. It was bitterly cold, and the moon glistened bright upon the encrusted snow, amid which they saw motionless in the hedge what appeared to be a white human figure without a head. The boy, being very tired, with finger-tips tingling from pressing the strings, was for passing the ghastly sight quickly, but the elder went up to the object, which proved to be a very tall thin man in a long white smock-frock, leaning against the bank in a drunken stupor, his head hanging forward so low that at a distance he had seemed to have no head at all. Hardy senior, seeing the danger of leaving the man where he might be frozen to death, awoke him

after much exertion, and they supported him to a cottage near, where he lived, and pushed him in through the door, their ears being greeted as they left with a stream of abuse from the man's wife, which was also vented upon her unfortunate husband, whom she promptly knocked down. Hardy's father remarked that it might have been as well to leave him where he was, to take his chance of being frozen to death.

At this age Thomas also loved reading Dumas's romances, which he did in an English translation, and Shakespeare's tragedies for the plots only, not thinking much of Hamlet because the ghost did not play his part up to the end as he ought to have done.

1853-1854

A year or two later his accomplished schoolmaster opened a more advanced school called an Academy, where boarders were taken. His abilities had in fact attracted the notice of parents and guardians, and but for an affection of the chest which compelled him later to give up teaching he would no doubt have been heard of further afield. (His son, it may be observed, became a well-known science-master at South Kensington.) Hardy followed him to the new school — the grammar school founded by his namesake being reported to be indifferent just then — and remained there all the rest of his school life, thus continuing his Latin under the same teacher, and winning the prize of Beza's Latin Testament for his progress in the tongue — a little pocket edition which he often carried with him in after years. His course of instruction also included elementary drawing, advanced arithmetic, geometry, and algebra, in which he was fairly good, always saying that he found a certain poetry in the rule for the extraction of the cube-root, owing to its rhythm, and in some of the 'Miscellaneous Questions' of Walkingame. In applied mathematics he worked completely through Tate's Mechanics and Nesbitt's Mensuration.

Hardy was popular — too popular almost — with his schoolfellows, for their friendship at times became burdensome. He loved being alone, but often, to his concealed discomfort, some of the other boys would volunteer to accompany him on his homeward journey to Bockhampton. How much this irked him he recalled long years after. He tried also to avoid being touched by his playmates. One lad with more insight than the rest, discovered the fact: 'Hardy, how is it that you do not like us to touch you?' This peculiarity never left him, and to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm or his shoulder. Probably no one else ever observed this.

One day at this time Hardy, then a boy of fourteen, fell madly in love with a pretty girl who passed him on horseback near the South Walk, Dorchester, as he came out of school hard by, and for some unaccountable reason smiled at him. She was a total stranger. Next day he saw her with an old gentleman, probably her father. He wandered about miserably, looking for her through several days, and caught sight of her once again — this time riding with a young man. Then she disappeared for ever. He told other boys in confidence, who sympathized, but could do nothing, though some



boarders watched for her on his behalf. He was more than a week getting over this desperate attachment.

At fifteen he was sent to receive French lessons from a lady who was the French governess at the school attended by his sister, and began the study of German from a periodical in which he had become deeply interested, entitled *The Popular Educator*, published by that genius in home-education, John Cassell. Hardy's mother had begun to buy the publications of that firm for her son, and he himself continued their purchase whenever he had any pocket-money.

And it was about this date that he formed one of a trio of youths (the vicar's sons being the other two) who taught the Sunday School of the parish, where as a pupil in his class he had a dairymaid four years older than himself, who afterwards appeared in *Tess of the d' Urbervilles* as Marian — one of the few portraits from life in his works. This pink and plump damsel had a marvellous power of memorizing whole chapters in the Bible, and would repeat to him by heart in class, to his boredom, the long gospels before Easter without missing a word, and with evident delight in her facility; though she was by no means a model of virtue in her love-affairs.

Somewhat later, though it may as well be mentioned here among other such trivialities, he lost his heart for a few days to a young girl who had come from Windsor just after he had been reading Ainsworth's *Windsor Castle*. But she disappointed him on his finding that she took no interest in *Hemlock the Hunter* or *Anne Boleyn*. In this kind there was another young girl, a gamekeeper's pretty daughter,

who won Hardy's boyish admiration because of her beautiful bay-red hair. But she despised him, as being two or three years her junior, and married early. He celebrated her later on as 'Lizzie Browne'. Yet another attachment, somewhat later, which went deeper, was to a farmer's daughter named Louisa. There were more probably. They all appear, however, to have been quite fugitive, except perhaps the one for Louisa.

He believed that his attachment to this damsel was reciprocated, for on one occasion when he was walking home from Dorchester he beheld her sauntering down the lane as if to meet him. He longed to speak to her, but bashfulness overcame him, and he passed on with a murmured 'Good evening', while poor Louisa had no word to say.

Later he heard that she had gone to Weymouth to a boarding school for young ladies, and thither he went, Sunday after Sunday, until he discovered the church which the maiden of his affections attended with her fellow-scholars. But, alas, all that resulted from these efforts was a shy smile from Louisa.

That the vision remained may be gathered from a poem 'Louisa in the Lane' written not many months before his death. Louisa lies under a nameless mound in 'Mellstock' churchyard. That 'Good evening' was the only word that passed between them.

## CHAPTER II

### STUDENT AND ARCHITECT

1856-1862: Aet. 16-21

At sixteen, though he had just begun to be interested in French and the Latin classics, the question arose of a profession or business. His father as a builder had carried out the designs of, and so become associated with, Mr. John Hicks, an architect and church-restorer originally in practice in Bristol and now in Dorchester. Having seen Thomas Hardy junior when his father conjointly with another builder was executing Mr. Hicks's restoration of, it is believed, Woodsford Castle, and tested him by inviting him to assist at a survey, Hicks wished to have him as a pupil, offering to take him for somewhat less than the usual premium, payable in the middle of a term of three years. As the father was a ready-money man, Mrs. Hardy suggested to the architect a substantial abatement for paying down the whole premium at the beginning of the term, and to this Mr. Hicks, who was not a ready-money man, agreed. Hardy was a born bookworm, that and that alone was unchanging in him; he had sometimes, too, wished to enter the Church; but he cheerfully agreed to go to Mr. Hicks's.

July 1856

The architect's office was at 39 South Street, Dorchester, now part of a Temperance Hotel, though the room in which Hardy used to draw is unchanged. On arriving he found there a pupil of twenty - one, who was at the end of his term and was just leaving; also a pupil in the first year of his articles, a year or more older than himself, who had been well educated at a good school in or near London, and who, having a liking for the classical tongues, regretted his recent necessity of breaking off his studies to take up architecture. They began later to read together, and during the ensuing two or three years often gave more time to books than to drawing. Hicks, too, was exceptionally well educated for an ordinary country architect. The son of a loucestershire rector, who had been a good classical scholar, he had read some Greek, and had a smattering of Hebrew (probably taught him by his father); though, rather oddly, he was less at home with Latin. He was a kindly-natured man, almost jovial, and allowed the two youths some leisure for other than architectural study, though much of Hardy's reading in the ensuing years was done between five and eight in the morning before he left home for the office. In the long summer days he would even rise at four and begin. In these circumstances he got through a moderately good number of the usual classical pages — several books of the Aeneid, some Horace and Ovid, etc.; and in fact grew so familiar with his authors that in his walks to and from the town he often caught himself soliloquizing in Latin on his various projects. He also took up Greek, which he had not learnt at school, getting on with some books of the Iliad. He once said that nearly all his readings in the last-named work had been done in the morning before breakfast.

Hicks was ahead of them in Greek, though they could beat him in Latin, and he used to ridicule their construing, often when these were more correct than his own. When cornered and proved wrong he would take shelter behind the excuse that his school-days were longer ago than theirs.

At this time the Rev. William Barnes, the Dorset poet and philologist, was keeping school next door. Knowing him to be an authority upon grammar Hardy would often run in to ask Barnes to decide some knotty point in dispute between him and his fellow-pupil. Hardy used to assert in later years that upon almost every occasion the verdict was given in his favour.

An unusual incident occurred during his pupillage at Hicks's which, though it had nothing to do with his own life, was dramatic enough to have mention. One summer morning at Bockhampton, just before he sat down to breakfast, he remembered that a man was to be hanged at eight o'clock at Dorchester. He took up the big brass telescope that had been handed on in the family, and hastened to a hill on the heath a quarter of a mile from the house, whence he looked towards the town. The sun behind his back shone straight on the white stone facade of the gaol, the gallows upon it, and the form of the murderer in white fustian, the executioner and officials in dark clothing and the crowd below being invisible at this distance of nearly three miles. At the moment of his placing the glass to his eye the white figure dropped downwards, and the faint note of the town clock struck eight.

The whole thing had been so sudden that the glass nearly fell from Hardy's hands. He seemed alone on the heath with the hanged man, and crept homeward wishing he had not been so curious. It was the second and last execution he witnessed, the first having been that of a woman two or three years earlier, when he stood close to the gallows.

It had so happened that Bastow, the other pupil (who, strangely enough for an architect mostly occupied with church-work, had been bred a Baptist), became very doctrinal during this time; he said he was going to be baptized, and in fact was baptized shortly after. He so impressed young Hardy with his earnestness and the necessity of doing likewise that, though the junior pupil had been brought up in High Church principles, he almost felt that he ought to be baptized again as an adult. He went to the vicar of his parish and stated the case. The vicar, an Oxford man, seemed bewildered, and said that the only book he possessed that might help Hardy was Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, which he lent his inquirer. Finding that this learned work did not help much in the peculiar circumstances, Hardy went to the curate of another parish with whom he was acquainted. But all that the curate had was a handbook on the Sacraments of an elementary kind.

However, he got hold of as many books and notes on Paedo - baptism as he could, and though he was appalled at the feebleness of the arguments for infant christening (assuming that New Testament practice must be followed) he incontinently determined to 'stick to his own side', as he considered the Church to be, at some costs of conscience. The clash of polemics between the two pupils in the office sometimes reached such a

pitch of clamour that the architect's wife would send down a message from the drawing-room, which was on the first floor over, imploring them not to make so much noise. To add to the heat, two of the Dorchester Baptist minister's sons, friends of Bastow, hard-headed Scotch youths fresh from Aberdeen University, good classics, who could rattle off at a moment's notice the Greek original of any passage in the New Testament, joined in the controversy. But though Hardy thus found himself in the position of one against three, he fought on with his back to the wall as it were working at night at the Greek Testament to confute his opponents, and for this purpose getting a new text, Griesbach's, that he had seen advertised as the most correct, instead of his old one, and conceding to his serious-minded disputants as much as he thought a Churchman fairly could concede — namely, that he would limit his Greek reading to the New Testament in future, giving up the heathen authors, and would show his broad-mindedness by attending a prayer-meeting in the chapel-vestry.

At half-past six on a hot August evening he entered the chapel for the meeting. Not a soul was in the building, and he waited in the dreary little vestry till the hour of appointment had passed by nearly half an hour, the yellow sun shining in on the drab paint through the skylight, through which also came the faint notes of a brass band. Just as he was about to leave at a quarter-past seven, Bastow and the minister's sons tumbled breathlessly in, apologizing for their lateness. Cooke's then popular circus had entered the town at the moment of the prayer-meeting, and they had all dismissed the engagement for a while, and remained for the spectacle. Hardy had known the circus entry was going to take place; but he had kept his appointment faithfully. How the meeting ended Hardy had forgotten when he related the experience.

His convictions on the necessity of adult baptism gradually wore out of him. Though he was younger than his companions he seems to have possessed a breadth of mind which they lacked; and while perceiving that there was not a shred of evidence for infant baptism in the New Testament, he saw that Christianity did not hang on temporary details that expediency might modify, and that the practice of an isolated few in the early ages could not be binding on its multitudes in differing circumstances, when it had grown to be the religion of continents.

Nevertheless it would be unjust to the Baptist minister Perkins and his argumentative family to omit from these gleanings out of the past Hardy's remarks on their finer qualities. They formed an austere and frugal household, and won his admiration by their thoroughness and strenuousness. He often visited them, and one of the sons about his own age, not insistent on Baptist doctrines like his two brethren, was a great friend of Hardy's till his death of consumption a year or two after. It was through these Scotch people that Thomas Hardy first became impressed with the necessity for 'plain living and high thinking', which stood him in such good stead in later years. Among the few portraits of actual persons in Hardy's novels, that of the Baptist minister in *A Laodicean* is one — being a recognizable drawing of Perkins the father as he appeared to Hardy at this time, though the incidents are invented.

To return to the architect's pupils. The Greek Testament had been now taken up by both of them — though it had necessitated the younger's learning a new dialect — and Homer and Virgil were thrown aside (a misfortune to Hardy, who was just getting pleasure from these). In pursuing this study it became an occasional practice for the youths to take out their Testaments into the fields and sit on a gate reading them. The gate of the enclosure in Kingston M&irward eweleaze, now the cricket-ground, was the scene of some of the readings. They were brought to an end by the expiry of Bastow's term of four years as a pupil, and his departure for the office of a London architect, which, it may be mentioned, he shortly afterwards left to start in practice on his own account in Tasmania.

1860-1861

With the departure of Bastow, Hardy's duties grew more exacting, and though, in consideration of his immaturity, the term of his pupillage had been lengthened by between one and two years, a time had arrived at which it became necessary that he should give more attention to practical architecture than he had hitherto done. Church 'restoration' was at this time in full cry in Dorsetshire and the neighbouring counties, and young Hardy found himself making many surveys, measurements, and sketches of old churches with a view to such changes. Much beautiful ancient Gothic, as well as Jacobean and Georgian work, he was passively instrumental in destroying or in altering beyond identification; a matter for his deep regret in later years.

Despite the greater demands of architecture upon his attention it appears that Hardy kept up his classics for some time after the departure of his fellow-pupil for Tasmania; since, in an old letter of Bastow's, replying to Hardy from Hobart Town in May 1861, the emigrant says:

'Really you are a plodding chap to have got through such a lot of Homer and all the rest. I am not a bit farther than I was in Dorchester; indeed, I think I have scarcely touched a book — Greek, I mean — since. I see you are trying all you can to cut me out!'

The allusion to Homer seems to show that after his earnest Baptist-senior's departure, and the weakening of his influence, Hardy,

St. Augustine, lapsed from the Greek New Testament back again to pagan writers, though he was rather impulsive than 'plodding' in his studies, his strength lying in a power of keeping going in most disheartening circumstances.

Owing to the accident of his being an architect's pupil in a county - town of assizes and aldermen, which had advanced to railways and telegraphs and daily London papers; yet not living there, but walking in every day from a world of shepherds and ploughmen in a hamlet three miles off, where modern improvements were still regarded as wonders, he saw rustic and borough doings in a juxtaposition peculiarly close. To these externals may be added the peculiarities of his inner life, which might almost have been called academic — a triple existence unusual for a young man — what he used to call, in looking back, a life twisted of three strands — the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life, combined in the twenty-four hours of one day, as it was with him

through these years. He would be reading the Iliad, the Aeneid, or the Greek Testament from six to eight in the morning, would work at Gothic architecture all day, and then in the evening rush off with his fiddle under his arm, sometimes in the company of his father as first violin and uncle as 'cellist, to play country-dances, reels, and hornpipes at an agriculturist's wedding, christening, or Christmas party in a remote dwelling among the fallow fields, not returning sometimes till nearly dawn, the Hardys still being traditionally string-bandsmen available on such occasions, and having the added recommendation of charging nothing for their services, which was a firm principle with them, the entertainers being mostly acquaintances; though the tireless zeal of young couples in the dance often rendered the Hardys' act of friendship anything but an enjoyment to themselves. But young Hardy's physical vigour was now much greater than it had been when he was a child, and it enabled him, like a conjuror at a fair, to keep in the air the three balls of architecture, scholarship, and dance-fiddling, without ill effects, the fiddling being of course not daily, like the other two.

His immaturity, above alluded to, was greater than is common for his years, and it may be mentioned here that a clue to much of his character and action throughout his life is afforded by his lateness of development in virility, while mentally precocious. He himself said humorously in later times that he was a child till he was sixteen, a youth till he was five-and-twenty, and a young man till he was nearly fifty. Whether this was intrinsic, or owed anything to his having lived in a remote spot in early life, is an open question.

During the years of architectural pupillage Hardy had two other literary friends in Dorchester. One was Hooper Tolbort, orphan nephew of one of the partners in a firm of mechanical engineers, who had an extraordinary facility in the acquisition of languages. He was a pupil of the Rev. W. Barnes, and was preparing for the Indian Civil Service. The other was Horace Moule of Queens' College, Cam bridge just then beginning practice as author and reviewer. Walks in the fields with each of these friends biassed Thomas Hardy still further in the direction of books, two works among those he met with impressing him much — the newly published *Essays and Reviews* by 'The Seven against Christ', as the authors were nicknamed; and Walter Bagehot's *Estimates* (afterwards called *Literary Studies*). He began writing verses, and also a few prose articles, which do not appear to have been printed anywhere. The first effusion of his to see the light of print was an anonymous skit in a Dorchester paper on the disappearance of the Aims-House clock, which then as now stood on a bracket in South Street, the paragraph being in the form of a plaintive letter from the ghost of the clock. (It had been neglected, after having been taken down to be cleaned.) As the author was supposed to be an alderman of influence the clock was immediately replaced. He would never have been known to be Hardy but for the conspiracy of a post-office clerk, who watched the handwriting of letters posted till he had spotted the culprit. After this followed the descriptive verses 'Domicilium', and accounts of church-restorations carried out by Hicks, which Hardy prepared for the grateful reporter of the *Dorset Chronicle*.

It seems he had also set to work on the Agamemnon or the Oedipus-, but on his inquiring of Moule — who was a fine Greek scholar and was always ready to act the tutor in any classical difficulty — if he ought not to go on reading scrme Greek plays, Moule's reluctant opinion was that if Hardy really had (as his father had insisted, and as indeed was reasonable, since he never as yet had earned a farthing in his life) to make an income in some way by architecture in 1862, it would be hardly worth while for him to read Aeschylus or Sophocles in 1859 — 61. He had secretly wished that Moule would advise him to go on with Greek plays, in spite of the serious damage it might do his architecture; but he felt bound to listen to reason and prudence. So, as much Greek as he had got he had to be content with, the language being almost dropped from that date; for though he did take up one or two of the dramatists again some years later, it was in a fragmentary way only. Nevertheless his substantial knowledge of them was not small.

It may be permissible to ponder whether Hardy's career might not have been altogether different if Moule's opinion had been the contrary one, and he had advised going on with Greek plays. The younger man would hardly have resisted the suggestion, and might have risked the consequences, so strong was his bias that way. The upshot might have been his abandonment of architecture for a University career, his father never absolutely refusing to advance him money in a good cause. Having every instinct of a scholar he might have ended his life as a Don of whom it could be said that

He settled Hod's business,

Properly based Oun.

But this was not to be, and it was possibly better so.

One other Dorchester young man, who has been cursorily mentioned — the pupil of Hicks's whose time had expired shortly after Hardy's arrival, and who then departed permanently from the West of England — may be again given a word for the single thing about him that had attracted the fresh-comer — his one or two trips to London during their passing acquaintance, and his return thence whistling quadrilles and other popular music, with accounts of his dancing experiences at the Argyle Rooms and Cremorne, both then in full swing. Hardy would relate that one quadrille in particular his precursor Fippard could whistle faultlessly, and while giving it would caper about the office to an imaginary dance-figure, embracing an imaginary Cremorne or Argyle danseuse. The fascinating quadrille remained with Hardy all his life, but he never could identify it. Being some six years the junior of this comet-like young man, Hardy was treated by him with the superciliousness such a boy usually gets from such seniority, and with the other's departure from Dorchester he passed quite out of Hardy's knowledge.

## CHAPTER III

### WORK IN LONDON

1862-1867: Aet. 21-27 A New Start

On Thursday, April 17, 1862, Thomas Hardy started alone for London, to pursue the art and science of architecture on more advanced lines. He had for some time left Bockhampton as a permanent resident, living, except at weekends, in Dorchester, either with Hicks or at lodgings; though he often sojourned at Bockhampton later on.

The Great Exhibition of that year was about to be opened, and this perhaps influenced him in the choice of a date for his migration. His only previous journey to the capital had been made with his mother in 1848 or 1849, when they passed through it on the way to and back from Hertfordshire, on a visit to a relative, as mentioned earlier. With prudent forethought he bought a return ticket for the journey, so that he might be able to travel back to Dorchester did he reach the end of his resources. After six months he threw away the unused half.

Hardy used to relate humorously that on the afternoon of his arrival he called to inquire for lodgings at a house where was employed a bachelor some ten years older than himself, whose cousin Hardy had known. This acquaintance, looking him up and down, was sceptical about his establishing himself in London. 'Wait till you have walked the streets a few weeks', he said satirically, 'and your elbows begin to shine, and the hems of your trousers get frayed, as if nibbled by rats! Only practical men are wanted here.' Hardy began to wish he had thought less of the Greek Testament and more of iron girders.

However, he had at least two letters of introduction in his pocket — one from a gushing lady to Mr. Benjamin Ferrey, F.R.I.B.A., of Trinity Place, Charing Cross, an architect who had been a pupil of the elder Pugin's, was connected with the West of England, and had designed a Dorset mansion of which Hardy's father had been one of the builders, carrying out the work to that gentleman's complete satisfaction. But, as usually happens, this sheet-anchor was less trustworthy than had been expected. Mr. Ferrey was civil to the young man, remembered his father, promised every assistance; and there the matter ended.

The other introduction was to Mr. John Norton of Old Bond Street, also an architect in full practice. Mr. Norton was a Bristol man, a pupil of Ferrey's, and a friend of Hicks of Dorchester, by reason, it is believed, of their joint association with Bristol. Anyhow, Norton received young Thomas Hardy with great kindness, and, his friendship coming at the nick of time when it was needed, he proved himself one of the best helps Hardy ever had. The generous architect told him that he must on no account be doing nothing in London (Hardy looked quite a pink-faced youth even now), and arranged that he should come daily and make drawings in his office for a merely nominal remuneration



whilst looking further about town. As Mr. Norton was in no real need of assistance the proposal was most considerate of him.

Last Week in April 1862

Here was indeed as good a thing as could have happened. It was an anchorage, and Hardy never forgot it. Strangely enough, on his arriving on the following Monday to begin, Mr. Norton informed him that a friend whom he had met at the Institute of British Architects had asked him if he knew of a young Gothic draughtsman who could restore and design churches and rectory-houses. He had strongly recommended Hardy, and packed him off at once to call on Mr. Arthur Blomfield, the friend in question.

Blomfield was a son of the recently deceased Dr. Blomfield, Bishop of London; a Rugbeian, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he had been a great boating man; and a well - known church-designer and restorer, whose architectural pupillage had been under Philip C. Hardwicke. Hardy found him in, a lithe, brisk man of thirty-three, with whom Hardy was to keep up a friendship for near on forty years. Arrangements were made, and on the following Monday, May 5, he began work as an assistant-architect in Mr. Blomfield's drawing-office — at that time at 8 St. Martin's Place, in rooms also used by the Alpine Club. This was another linking coincidence with aftertimes, for Leslie Stephen, an ardent climber and a member of the Club, was a visitor to these rooms, though ten years were to elapse before Hardy got to know him, and to be mentally influenced by him so deeply. In the following autumn or winter, however, more commodious and lighter drawing-offices were taken at 8 Adelphi Terrace, first floor; which Blomfield continued to occupy during the remaining five years that Hardy worked with him. Shortly after his entry there Hardy had an experience which might have been serious:

'March 10. Went into the streets in the evening to see the illuminations on the occasion of the P. of Wales's marriage. By the fortunate accident of beginning my walk at the city end of the route I had left the neighbourhood of the Mansion House before the great mass of people got there, but I had enough to do to hold my own at the bottom of Bond Street, where my waistcoat buttons were torn off and my ribs bent in before I could get into a doorway. Molsey and Paris [two pupils of Ferrey's, friends of Hardy's] were in the Mansion House crush, having started from the West End, like most of the spectators. Six people were killed close to them, and they did not expect to get out alive.'

In a letter written many years after to an inquirer who was interested in his association with Adelphi Terrace, Hardy states:

'I sat there drawing, inside the easternmost window of the front room on the first floor above the ground floor, occasionally varying the experience by idling on the balcony. I saw from there the Embankment and Charing-Cross Bridge built, and of course used to think of Garrick and Johnson. The rooms contained at that date fine Adam mantelpieces in white marble, on which we used to sketch caricatures in pencil.'

It may be added that the ground-floor rooms of this 8 Adelphi Terrace were occupied by the Reform League during Hardy's stay overhead, and that] Swinburne in one of

his letters speaks of a correspondence with the League about this date. 'The Reform League,' he says, 'a body of extreme reformers not now extant I believe, but of some note and power for a time, solicited me to sit in Parliament — as representative of more advanced democratic or republican opinions than were represented there.' Swinburne consulted Mazzini, who dissuaded him from consenting. The heads of the League were familiar personages to Blomfield's pupils, who, as became Tory and Churchy young men, indulged in satire at the League's expense, letting down ironical bits of paper on the heads of members, and once coming nearly to loggerheads with the worthy resident secretary, Mr. George Howell — to whom they had to apologize for their exasperating conduct — all this being unknown to Mr. Blomfield himself.

The following letters were written to his sister, Miss Mary Hardy, during 1862 and 1863, the first year that Hardy was at St. Martin's Place and Adelphi Terrace.

'Kilburn, 17 August 1862.

'9 p.m.

'My dear Mary "After the fire a still small voice" — I have just come from the evening service at St. Mary's Kilburn and this verse, which I always notice, was in the 1st Lesson.

'This Ch. of St. Mary is rather to my taste and they sing most of the tunes in the Salisbury hymn book there.

'H. M. M. was up the week before last. We went to a Roman Catholic Chapel on the Thursday evening. It was a very impressive service. The Chapel was built by Pugin. Afterwards we took a cab to the old Hummums, an hotel near Covent Garden where we had supper. He may come and settle permanently in London in a few months, but is not certain yet.

'E — was up last week. I had a half day at the Exhibition with him. He is now living at home, looking out for a situation. I do not think he will get into anything yet.

'I have not been to a theatre since you were here. I generally run down to the Exhibition for an hour in the evening two or three times a week; after I come out I go to the reading room of the Kensington Musuem.

'It has been pouring with rain all the day and last night, such a disappointment for thousands of Londoners, whose only holiday is Sunday.

'I should like to have a look at the old Cathedral, etc., in about a month or so. The autumn seems the proper season for seeing Salisbury. Do you ever go to St. Thomas's? Be careful about getting cold again and do not go out in evenings.

'P. S. is reading extracts from Ruskin's "Modern Painters" to me which accounts for the wretched composition of this epistle as I am obliged to make comments etc. on what he reads.

'Ever yours,

'T. H.'

'Kilburn, 19th February.

'My dear Mary:

‘I don’t fancy that ‘tis so very long since I wrote and the Saturdays [Saturday Reviews] have been sent regularly but I really intended to write this week.

‘You see that we have moved, so for the future my address will be as on the other side. We have not recovered from the confusion yet, and our drawings and papers are nohow.

‘The new office is a capital place. It is on the first floor and on a terrace that overlooks the river. We can see from our window right across the Thames, and on a clear day every bridge is visible. Everybody says that we have a beautiful place.

‘To-day has been wretched. It was almost pitch dark in the middle of the day, and everything visible appeared of the colour of brown paper or pea-soup.

‘There is a great deal of preparation for the approaching wedding. The Princess is to arrive on the 7th March and the wedding will be on the 10th. On her landing at Gravesend she will be received by the Prince, the Mayor, Mayoress, etc. They will then go by train to the Bricklayers’ Arms station, and then in procession over London Bridge, along Fleet Street, Strand, Charing Cross, Pall Mall, Piccadilly, through Hyde Park, and up the Edgware Road to Paddington Station — thence to Windsor. The windows along the route are full of notices that seats to view the procession are to be let. There will be an illumination the evening of the 10th.

‘I went to Richmond yesterday to see Lee. He’s better but is going to Kent for a short time before coming back to the office.

‘I have not heard anything about the Essay yet. The name of the successful competitor will be known in about a fortnight. I am now very busy getting up a design for a country mansion for which a small prize is offered — £3 the best and £2 the second best. It has to be sent in by the 27th March.

‘I am glad you have got a drawing prize, but you don’t say what. I think you have done very well altogether. Tell me about the organ and how the Sundays go off — I am uncommonly interested. How is your friend the blind man etc., School, clergyman etc. Say how you are, don’t forget. I am quite well. Horace Moule has been ill. So has H. A. as I daresay you know. Has she written yet? I sent a valentine to Harry and Kate to please them. Harry wrote me a letter, and Kate printed one and sent — rather a curiosity in its way.

‘I sent Mrs. Rolls photographs and she sent me a paper and letter.

She says that Parsons is postmaster in place of Lock who has resigned.

‘I tried the Underground Railway one day — Everything is excellently arranged.

‘Do you think to run up Easter? If so, you must not mind being left alone all day — but you know your way about.

‘T. S. has commenced the sketch of our house for you. He says it will soon be finished.

‘Is Katie coming up to live with you and when is Mother coming?

‘Ever your affectionate ‘Tom’

‘8 Adelphi Terrace, ‘19 Dec. 1863.

‘My dear Mary,

‘I was beginning to think you had given up writing altogether, when your letter came. Certainly try to get as long a time as you can Christmas.

‘I am glad you have been to Oxford again. It must be a jolly place. I shall try to get down there some time or other. You have no right to say you are not connected with art. Everybody is to a certain extent; the only difference between a professor and an amateur being that the former has the (often disagreeable) necessity of making it his means of earning bread and cheese — and thus often rendering what is a pleasure to other people a “bore” to himself.

‘About Thackeray. You must read something of his. He is considered to be the greatest novelist of the day — looking at novel writing of the highest kind as a perfect and truthful representation of actual life — which is no doubt the proper view to take. Hence, because his novels stand so high as works of Art or Truth, they often have anything but an elevating tendency, and on that account are particularly unfitted for young people — from their very truthfulness. People say that it is beyond Mr. Thackeray to paint a perfect man or woman — a great fault if novels are intended to instruct, but just the opposite if they are to be considered merely as Pictures. Vanity Fair is considered one of his best.

‘I expect to go home about Tuesday or Wednesday after Xmas and then shall find you there of course — We must have a “bit of a lark.”

‘Ever affectionately ‘Tom.

aet. 21-27

‘I am able to write 40 words a minute. The average rate of a speaker is from 100, to 120 and occasionally 140; so I have much more to do yet.’

During the first few months of Hardy’s life in London he had not forgotten to pay a call on the lady of his earliest passion as a child, who had been so tender towards him in those days, and had used to take him in her arms. She and her husband were now living in Bryton Street. The butler who opened the door was, he recalled, the same one who had been with the family at Kingston Maurward all those years ago, and looked little altered. But the lady of his dreams — alas! To her, too, the meeting must have been no less painful than pleasant: she was plainly embarrassed at having in her presence a young man of over twenty-one, who was very much of a handful in comparison with the rosy-cheeked, innocent little boy she had almost expected ‘Tommy’ to remain. One interview was not quite sufficient to wear off the stiffness resulting from such changed conditions, though, warming up, she asked him to .come again. But getting immersed in London life, he did not respond to her invitation, showing that the fickleness was his alone. But they occasionally corresponded, as will be seen.

It may be hardly necessary to record, since he somewhere describes it himself, that the metropolis into which he had plunged at this date differed greatly from the London of even a short time after. It was the London of Dickens and Thackeray, and Evans’s supper-rooms were still in existence in an underground hall in Covent Garden, which Hardy once at least visited. The Cider Cellars and the Coal Hole were still flourishing, with ‘Judge and Jury’ mock trials, ‘ Baron Nicholson’ or his successor being judge.

And Dr. Donovan the phrenologist gauged heads in the Strand, informing Hardy that his would lead him to no good.

The ladies talked about by the architects' pupils and other young men into whose society Hardy was thrown were Cora Pearl, 'Skittles', Agnes Willoughby, Adah Isaacs Menken, and others successively, of whom they professed to know many romantic and risqued details but really knew nothing at all; another of their romantic interests that Hardy recalled being, a little later, the legend of the moorhen dive of Lady Florence Paget into Marshall & Snelgrove's shop away from Mr. Chaplin, her fianci, and her emergence at the other door into the arms of Lord Hastings, and marriage with him — a sensational piece of news with which they came in breathless the week it happened.

Hungerford Market was still in being where the Charing Cross Station now stands, and Hardy occasionally lunched at a 'coffee house' there. He also lunched or dined at Bertolini's with some pupils of Ferrey's, the architect who had known his father and been the pupil of Pugin. This restaurant in St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, called Newton House, had been the residence and observatory of Sir Isaac Newton, and later the home of the Burneys, who were visited there by Johnson, Reynolds, etc., and the stone floors were still sanded as in former days. A few years after Hardy frequented it Swinburne used to dine there as a member of the 'Cannibal Club'. Tennyson is also stated to have often dined at Bertolini's. To Hardy's great regret this building of many associations was pulled down in later years.

On his way to Adelphi Terrace he used to take some short cut near Seven Dials, passing daily the liquor saloons of Alec Keene and Tom King (?) in West Street (now demolished), and Nat Langham at the top of St. Martin's Lane, when he could sometimes discern the forms of those famous prize-fighters behind their respective bars.

There was no Thames Embankment. Temple Bar still stood in its place, and the huge block of buildings known as the Law Courts was not erected. Holborn Hill was still a steep and noisy thoroughfare which almost broke the legs of the slipping horses, and Skinner Street ran close by, with presumably Godwin's house yet standing in it, at which Shelley first set eyes on Mary. No bridge across Ludgate Hill disfigured St. Paul's and the whole neighbourhood. The South Kensington Museum was housed in iron sheds nicknamed the 'Brompton Boilers', which Hardy used to frequent this year to obtain materials for an Essay he sent in to the Royal Institute of British Architects; it was awarded the prize in the following spring. The Underground Railway was just in its infancy, and omnibus conductors leaving 'Kilburn Gate', near which Hardy lived awhile, cried, 'Any more passengers for London?' The list of such changes might be infinitely extended.

Charles Kean and his wife were still performing Shakespeare at the Princess's Theatre, and Buckstone was at the Haymarket in the new play of *The American Cousin*, in which he played the name-part. At most of the theatres about nine o'clock there was a noise of trampling feet, and the audience whispered, 'Half-price coming in'. The play paused for a few moments, and when all was quiet went on again.

Balls were constant at Willis's Rooms, earlier Almack's, and in 1862 Hardy danced at these rooms, or at Almack's as he preferred to call the place, realising its historic character. He used to recount that in those old days, the pretty Lancers and Caledonians were still footed there to the original charming tunes, which brought out the beauty of the figures as no later tunes did, and every movement was a correct quadrille step and gesture. For those dances had not at that date degenerated to a waltzing step, to be followed by galloping romps to uproarious pieces.

Cremorne and the Argyle he also sought, remembering the jaunty senior-pupil at Hicks's who had used to haunt those gallant resorts. But he did not dance there much himself, if at all, and the fascinating quadrille-tune has vanished like a ghost, though he went one day to second-hand music shops, and also to the British Museum, and hunted over a lot of such music in a search for it. Allusions to these experiences occur in more than one of his poems, 'Reminiscences of a Dancing Man' in particular; and they were largely drawn upon, so he once remarked, in the destroyed novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* — of which later on.

In a corresponding fit of musical enthusiasm he also bought an old fiddle at this time, with which he practised at his lodgings, with another man there who performed on the piano, pieces from the romantic Italian operas of Covent Garden and Her Majesty's, the latter being then also an opera house, which places they used to frequent two or three times a week; not, except on rare occasions, in the best parts of the houses, as will be well imagined, but in the half-crown amphitheatre.

The foreign operas in vogue were those of Rossini, Donizetti, Verdi, Meyerbeer, Bellini: and thus Hardy became familiar with such singers as Mario (Grisi had just departed), Tietjens, Nilsson, Patti (just come), Giuglini, Parepa, and others of the date. An English Opera Company was also in existence, and Hardy patriotically supported it by going often to operas by Balfe, Wallace, and others. Here he had the painful experience of hearing the gradual breakdown of the once fine voice of William Harrison, who, with Miss Louisa Pyne, had established the company and endeavoured to keep such opera going. Hardy was heard to assert that, as it were in defiance of fate, Harrison would sing night after night his favourite songs, such as 'Let me like a soldier fall' in *Maritana*, and, particularly, 'When other lips' in *The Bohemian Girl*, wherein his complete failure towards the last attempts would move a sensitive listener to tears: he thought Harrison's courage in struggling on, hoping against hope,

might probably cause him to be remembered longer than his greatest success.

At Blomfield's Mr. Blomfield (afterwards Sir Arthur) being the son of a late Bishop of London, was considered a right and proper man for supervising the removal of human bodies in cases where railways had obtained a faculty for making cuttings through the city churchyards, so that it should be done decently and in order. A case occurred in which this function on the Bishop's behalf was considered to be duly carried out. But afterwards Mr. Blomfield came to Hardy and informed him with a look of concern that he had just returned from visiting the site on which all the removed bodies were said by the company to be reinterred; but there appeared to be nothing deposited,

the surface of the ground lying quite level as before. Also that there were rumours of mysterious full bags of something that rattled, and cartage to bone-mills. He much feared that he had not exercised a sufficiently sharp supervision, and that the railway company had got over him somehow. 'I believe these people are all ground up!' said Blomfield grimly.

Soon there was to occur a similar proceeding on a much larger scale by another company; the carrying of a cutting by the Midland Railway through Old St. Pancras Churchyard, which would necessitate the removal of many hundreds of coffins, and bones in huge quantities. In this business Mr. Blomfield was to represent the Bishop as before. The architect said that now there should be no mistake about his thoroughly carrying out the superintendence. Accordingly, he set a clerk-of-works in the churchyard, who was never to leave during working hours; and as the removals were effected by night, and the clerk-of-works might be lax or late, he deputed Hardy to go on evenings at uncertain hours, to see that the clerk-of-works was performing his duties; while Hardy's chief himself was to drop in at unexpected moments during the week, presumably to see that neither his assistant nor the clerk-of-works was a defaulter.

The plan succeeded excellently, and throughout the late autumn and early winter (of probably the year 1865 or thereabouts) Hardy attended at the churchyard — each evening between five and six, as well as sometimes at other hours. There after nightfall, within a high hoarding that could not be overlooked, and by the light of flare-lamps, the exhumation went on continuously of the coffins that had been uncovered during the day, new coffins being provided for those that came apart in lifting, and for loose skeletons; and those that held together being carried to the new ground on a board merely; Hardy supervising these mournful processions when present, with what thoughts may be imagined, and Blomfield sometimes meeting him there. In one coffin that fell apart was a skeleton and two skulls. He used to tell that when, after some fifteen years of separation, he met Arthur Blomfield again and their friendship was fully renewed, among the latter's first words were: 'Do you remember how we found the man with two heads at St. Pancras?'

It may conceivably have been some rumour of the possibility of this lamentable upheaval of Old St. Pancras Churchyard by the railway company in the near future which had led Sir Percy, the son of Mary Shelley, to remove the bodies of her parents therefrom to St. Peter's, Bournemouth, where she had been buried in 1851, and where they now lie beside her, though few people seem to know that such an illustrious group is in the churchyard.

Hardy used to tell some amusing stories of his chief, a genuine humorist like his father the bishop. Among other strange ways in which he and his pupils, including Hardy, used to get on with their architecture was by singing glees and catches at intervals during office hours. Having always been musically inclined and, as has been stated, a fiddler of countless jigs and reels in his boyhood, Hardy could sing at sight with moderate accuracy from notation, though his voice was not strong. Hence Blomfield welcomed him in the office choir, where he himself took the bass, the rest waiting till he

had 'got his low E\ Hardy also, at Blomfield's request, sang in the church-choir at the opening of the organ at St. Matthias' Church, Richmond, where Blomfield took a bass part, one of his pupils being organist. But in the office the alto part was the difficulty, and Blomfield would say: 'If you meet an alto anywhere in the Strand, Hardy, ask him to come in and join us'.

Among other things, the architect related that one day before he (Hardy) came, a Punch-and-Judy show performed outside the office in St. Martin's Place. Presently the housekeeper, a woman London - bred, came running upstairs exclaiming, 'Why, Mr. Arthur, I declare there's a man inside! And I never knew it before!'

On an occasion when a builder had called on business, Hardy being present and some pupils, Blomfield airily said to the builder:

'Well, Mr. T, what can I do for you? What will you take this morning — sherry or port?' Though it was only between 10 and 11 Mr. Treflected earnestly and said, 'Port, sir, if you please'.

As they naturally had no wine or any other liquor at the offices, Blomfield was comically disconcerted at the worthy builder's seriousness, but was as good as his word, and the office-boy was secretly dispatched to the Strand to buy a bottle of port, and to the housekeeper to borrow a glass.

Grotesque incidents that seldom happened to other people seemed to happen to Blomfield. One day he and Hardy went together to some slum near Soho to survey the site for a new building. The inspection made their boots muddy, and on the way back Blomfield suggested they should have them cleaned, as two bootblacks had come up pointing significantly. When Hardy and he had placed themselves Blomfield asked the second why he did not proceed with his brushing, like the first. "Cause he's got no blacking nor brush", said the first. 'What good is he then?' asked Blomfield. 'I've cracked my blacking - bottle, and it goes dry; so I pay him a penny a day to spit for me.'

However, matters were graver sometimes. Hardy remembered how one morning he arrived at the Terrace to find Blomfield standing with his back to the fireplace, and with a very anxious face. The architect said slowly without any preface, 'Hardy, that tower has fallen'. His eyes were fixed on the opposite wall where was the drawing of a new church just then finished. It was a serious matter, especially as some years earlier another well-known architect had been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for manslaughter, one of his new erections having fallen and killed some people. Fortunately no one was killed in the present case, and the designer was quite exonerated by having the tower rebuilt stone by stone as it had been before, and so proving the construction to be unimpeachable, for there it has stood ever since without a crack. What had caused the fall was always a mystery.

This used to remind Hardy of another church-tower story. Mr. Hicks, with whom he served his pupillage, once told him that at the beginning of his practice he built a church-tower near Bristol, and on a night just after its erection he dreamt that on approaching it he saw a huge crack in its west wall from the parapet downwards.



He was so disturbed that next morning he mounted his horse; it was before railways, and architects often then rode on horseback to the supervision of their buildings; and trotting off to the village the tower rose into his view. There was the crack in its face exactly as he had beheld it in his dream.

Having somewhat settled down with Blomfield, but feeling that architectural drawing in which the actual designing had no great part was monotonous and mechanical; having besides little inclination for pushing his way into influential sets which would help him to start a practice of his own, Hardy's tastes reverted to the literary pursuits that he had been compelled to abandon in 1861, and had not resumed except to write the Prize Architectural Essay before mentioned. By as early as the end of 1863 he had recommenced to read a great deal, with a growing tendency towards poetry. But he was forced to consider ways and means, and it was suggested to him that he might combine literature with architecture by becoming an art - critic for the press, particularly in the province of architectural art. It is probable that he might easily have carried this out, reviewers with a speciality being then, and possibly now, in demand. His preparations for such a course were, however, quickly abandoned, and by 1865 he had begun to write verses, and by 1866 to send his productions to magazines. That these were rejected by editors, and that he paid such respect to their judgment as scarcely ever to send out a MS. twice, was in one feature fortunate for him, since in years long after he was able to examine those poems of which he kept copies, and by the mere change of a few words or the rewriting of a line or two to make them quite worthy of publication. Such of them as are dated in these years were all written in his lodgings at 16 West - bourne Park Villas. He also began turning the Book of Ecclesiastes into Spenserian stanzas, but finding the original unmatchable abandoned the task.

As another outcome of the same drift of mind, he used to deliver short addresses or talks on poets and poetry to Blomfield's pupils and assistants on afternoons when there was not much to be done, or at all events when not much was done. There is no tradition of what Blomfield thought of this method of passing office hours instead of making architectural plans.

The only thing he got published at the time was, so far as is known, a trifle in Chambers's Journal in 1865 entitled 'How I built myself a house', written to amuse the pupils of Blomfield. It may have been the acceptance of this jeu d'esprit that turned his mind in the direction of prose; yet he made such notes as the following:

'April, 1865. The form on the canvas which immortalises the painter is but the last of a series of tentative and abandoned sketches each of which contained some particular feature nearer perfection than any part of the finished product.'

'Public opinion is of the nature of a woman.'

There is not that regular gradation among womankind that there is among men. You may meet with 999 exactly alike, and then the thousandth — not a little better, but far above them. Practically therefore it is useless for a man to seek after this thousandth to make her his.'

‘May. How often we see a vital truth flung about carelessly wrapt in a commonplace subject, without the slightest conception on the speaker’s part that his words contain an unsmelted treasure.’

‘In architecture, men who are clever in details are bunglers in generalities. So it is in everything whatsoever.’

‘More conducive to success in life than the desire for much knowledge is the being satisfied with ignorance on irrelevant subjects.’

‘The world does not despise us; it only neglects us.’

Whether or no, he did not seriously take up prose till two or three years later, when he was practically compelled to try his hand on it by finding himself perilously near coming to the ground between the two stools of architecture and literature.

Subsequent historic events brought back to his mind that this year he went with Blomfield to New Windsor, to the laying of the Memorial-stone of a church there by the Crown Princess of Germany (the English Princess Royal). She was accompanied by her husband the Crown Prince, afterwards the Emperor Frederick. ‘Blomfield handed her the trowel, and during the ceremony she got her glove daubed with the mortar. In her distress she handed the trowel back to him with an impatient whisper of “Take it, take it!”’

Here is another note of his relating to this time:

‘July 2 (1865). Worked at J. H. Newman’s Apologia, which we have all been talking about lately. A great desire to be convinced by him, because Moule likes him so much. Style charming, and his logic really human, being based not on syllogisms but on converging probabilities. Only — and here comes the fatal catastrophe — there is no first link to his excellent chain of reasoning, and down you come headlong. . . . Read some Horace; also Childe Harold and Lalla Rookh till J past 12.’

However, as yet he did not by any means abandon verse, which he wrote constantly, but kept private, through the years 1866 and most of 1867, resolving to send no more to magazines whose editors probably did not know good poetry from bad, and forming meanwhile the quixotic opinion that, as in verse was concentrated the essence of all imaginative and emotional literature, to read verse and nothing else was the shortest way to the fountain-head of such, for one who had not a great deal of spare time. And in fact for nearly or quite years he did not read a word of prose except such as came under his eye in the daily newspapers and weekly reviews. Thus his reading naturally covered a fairly large tract of English poetry, and it may be mentioned^ as showing that he had some views of his own, that he preferred Scott the poet to Scott the novelist, and never ceased to regret that the author of ‘the most Homeric poem in the English language — Marmion’ — should later have declined on prose fiction.

He was not so keenly anxious to get into print as many young men are; in this indifference, as in some qualities of his verse, curiously resembling Donne. The Horatian exhortation that he had come across in his reading — to keep his own compositions back till the ninth year — had made a deep impression on him. *Nescit vox missa reverti*; and by retaining his poems, and destroying those he thought irremediably bad

— though he afterwards fancied he had destroyed too many — he may have been saved from the annoyance of seeing his early crude effusions crop up in later life.

At the same time there can be no doubt that some closer association with living poets and the poetry of the moment would have afforded Hardy considerable stimulus and help. But his unfortunate shyness — or rather aloofness, for he was not shy in the ordinary sense — served him badly at this period of his life. During part of his residence at Westbourne Park Villas he was living within half a mile of Swinburne, and hardly more than a stone's throw from Browning, to whom introductions would not have been difficult through literary friends of Blomfield's. He might have obtained at least encouragement from these, and, if he cared, possibly have floated off some of his poems in a small volume. But such a proceeding as trying to know these contemporaries seems never to have crossed his mind.

During his residence in London he had entered himself at King's College for the French classes, where he studied the tongue through a term or two under Professor Stievenard, never having taken it up seriously since in his boyhood he had worked at exercises under a governess. He used to say that Stievenard was the most charming Frenchman he ever met, as well as being a fine teacher. Hardy's mind had, however, become at this date so deeply immersed in the practice and study of English poetry that he gave but a perfunctory attention to his French readings.

March ii. The woman at a first interview will know as much of the man as he will know of her on the wedding morning; whilst she will know as little of him then as he knew of her when they first shook hands. Her knowledge will have come upon her like a flood, and have as gradually soaked away.'

'June 2. My 25 th birthday. Not very cheerful. Feel as if I had lived a long time and done very little.

'Walked about by moonlight in the evening. Wondered what woman, if any, I should be thinking about in five years' time.'

'July 9. The greatest and most majestic being on the face of the earth will accept pleasure from the most insignificant.'

'July 19. Patience is the union of moral courage with physical cowardice.'

'End of July. The dull period in the life of an event is when it ceases to be news and has not begun to be history.'

'August. The anguish of a defeat is most severely felt when we look upon weak ones who have believed us invincible and have made preparations for our victory.'

'Aug. 23. The poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all.'

About this time Hardy nourished a scheme of a highly visionary character. He perceived from the impossibility of getting his verses accepted by magazines that he could not live by poetry, and (rather strangely) thought that architecture and poetry — particularly architecture in London — would not work well together. So he formed the idea of combining poetry and the Church — towards which he had long had a leaning — and wrote to a friend in Cambridge for particulars as to matriculation at

that University, which with his late classical reading would have been easy for him. He knew that what money he could not muster himself for keeping terms his father would lend him for a few years, his idea being that of a curacy in a country village. This fell through less because of its difficulty than from a conscientious feeling, after some theological study, that he could hardly take the step with honour while holding the views which on examination he found himself to hold. And so he allowed the curious scheme to drift out of sight, though not till after he had begun to practise orthodoxy. For example:

‘July 5 - Sunday. To Westminster Abbey morning service. Stayed to the Sacrament. A very odd experience, amid a crowd of strangers.’

Among other incidents of his life in London during these years was also one that he used to recall with interest, when writing *The Dynasts* — his hearing Palmerston speak in the House of Commons a short time before his death, Palmerston having been War Secretary during the decisive hostilities with Napoleon embodied in the Third Part of Hardy’s Epic-Drama, a personal conjunction which brought its writer face to face not only with actual participants in the great struggle — as was the case with his numerous acquaintance of rank - and-file who had fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo — but with one who had contributed to direct the affairs of that war. The only note on the fact that can be found is the following:

‘Oct. 18 . Wet evening. At Regent Circus, coming home saw the announcement of the death of Ld. Palmerston, whom I heard speak in the House of Commons a year or two ago.’

‘Oct. 27. To Westminster Abbey with Mr. Heaton and Lee. Took up a position in the triforium, from which spot I saw Ld. Palmerston lowered into the grave. Purcell’s service. Dead March in Saul.’

The following letter to his sister describes the ceremony:

‘Saturday, Oct. 28. 1865.

‘My dear Mary ‘I sent Barchester Towers by B. P., and you are probably by this time acquainted with Eleanor Bold, etc. This novel is considered the best of Trollope’s.

‘Yesterday Lord Palmerston was buried — the Prime Minister. I and the Lees got tickets through a friend of a friend of Mr. B’s, and we went of course. Our tickets admitted to the triforium, or monks’

walk, of Westminster Abbey, and we got from there a complete view of the ceremony. You will know wh. part of the Abbey I mean if you think of Salisbury Cathedral and of the row of small arches over the large arches, wh. throw open the space between the roof of the aisles and the vaulting.

‘Where I have put the X in the Section is where I stood; over the gj on the Plan. The mark \* shows where the grave is, between L.T.H — E

Pitt’s and Fox’s and close by Canning’s. All the Cabinet Ministers were there as pall bearers. The burial service was Purcell’s. The opening sentences “I am the resurrection, etc” were sung to Croft’s music. Beethoven’s Funeral March was played as they went

from the choir to the vault, and the Dead March in Saul was played at the close. I think I was never so much impressed with a ceremony in my life before, and I wd. not have missed it for anything. The Prince of Wales and Duke of Cambridge were present.

‘Ld. John Russell, or Earl Russell as he is now, is to be Prime Minister in Pam’s place. Only fancy, Ld. P. has been connected with the govt, off and on for the last 60 years, and that he was contemporaneous with Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Burke, etc. I mean to say his life overlapped theirs so to speak. I sent father a newspaper containing an account of his life, and today one with an account of the funeral. As you are not a politician I didn’t send you one, but these things interest him.

‘If you can get Pelham, read it when you want something. Do not hurry over Barchester, for I have enough to do. I think Wells is the place intended. Will it be a good thing or will it be awkward for you if H. A. and I come down for Xmas day and the next?’

‘I am rather glad that hot close weather is gone and the bracing air come again. I think I told you I had joined the French class at King’s College.

‘Ever sincerely.

‘T. H.’

‘A tall man went to see Chang the Chinese Giant, and on his offering to pay, the doorkeeper said “Not at all Sir, we don’t take money from the profession!” at least so Punch says.’

Through this winter the following note continually occurs: ‘Read some more Horace’.

His interest in painting led him to devote for many months, on every day that the National Gallery was open, twenty minutes after lunch to an inspection of the masters hung there, confining his attention to a single master on each visit, and forbidding his eyes to stray to any other. He went there from sheer liking, and not with any practical object; but he used to recommend the plan to young people, telling them that they would insensibly acquire a greater insight into schools and styles by this means than from any guide-books to the painters’ works and manners.

During Phelps’s series of Shakespeare plays at Drury Lane Hardy followed up every one, his companion being one of Blomfield’s pupils. They used to carry a good edition of the play with them, and be amongst the first of the pit crowd, holding the book edgewise on the barrier in front (which in those days was close to the orchestra) during the performance — a severe enough test for the actors, if they noticed the two enthusiasts. He always said that Phelps never received his due as a Shakespearean actor — particularly as Falstaff.

He also frequented the later readings by Charles Dickens at the Hanover Square Rooms, and oratorios at Exeter Hall.

Summer 1867

Adelphi Terrace, as everybody knows, faces the river, and in the heat of summer, while Hardy was there, the stench from the mud at low water increased, the Metropolitan main-drainage system not having been yet constructed. Whether from the effects of this smell upon a constitution that had grown up in a pure country atmosphere (as

he himself supposed), or because he had been accustomed to shut himself up in his rooms at Westbourne Park Villas every evening from six to twelve, reading incessantly, instead of getting out for air after the day's confinement, Hardy's health had become much weakened. He used to say that on sitting down to begin drawing in the morning he had scarcely physical power left him to hold the pencil and square. When he visited his friends in Dorset they were shocked at the pallor which sheeted a countenance formerly ruddy with health. His languor increased month by month. Blomfield, who must have been inconvenienced by it, suggested to Hardy that he should go into the country for a time to regain vigour. Hardy was beginning to feel that he would rather go into the country altogether. He constitutionally shrank from the business of social advancement, caring for life as an emotion rather than for life as a science of climbing, in which respect he was quizzed by his acquaintance for his lack of ambition. However, Blomfield thought that to stay permanently in the country would be a mistake, advising him to return to London by the following October at latest.

An opportunity of trying the experiment, at any rate, was afforded by the arrival of a communication from Mr. Hicks, his old instructor in architecture, asking if he could recommend him any good assistant accustomed to church-restoration, as he was hampered by frequently suffering from gout. Hardy wrote that he would go himself, and at the latter part of July (1867) went down to Dorchester, leaving most of his books and other belongings behind him at Westbourne Park, which included such of his poems in manuscript as he had thought worth keeping. Of these the only ones not ultimately destroyed were consigned to darkness till between thirty and forty years after, when they were printed — mainly in *Ivessex Poems*, though several, that had been overlooked at first, appeared in later volumes. Among the earliest were 'Amabel', 'Hap', 'In Vision I Roamed', 'At a Bridal', 'Postponement', 'A Confession to a Friend', 'Neutral Tones', 'Her Dilemma', 'Revulsion', 'Her Reproach', 'The Ruined Maid', 'Heiress and Architect', and four sonnets called 'She, to Him' (part of a much larger number which perished). Some had been sent to magazines, one sonnet that he rather liked, which began 'Many a one has loved as much as I', having been lost, the editor never returning it and Hardy having kept no copy. But most had never been sent anywhere.

It should be mentioned that several months before leaving London he had formed an idea of writing plays in blank verse — and had planned to try the stage as a supernumerary for six or twelve months, to acquire technical skill in their construction — going so far as to make use of an introduction to Mark Lemon, the then editor of *Punch*, and an ardent amateur-actor, for his opinion on this point. Nothing, however, came of the idea beyond the call on the genial editor, and on Mr. Coe, the stage-manager at the Haymarket under Buckstone's lesseeship, with whom he had a conversation. The former rather damped the young man's ardour by reminding him that the elder Mathews had said that he would not let a dog of his go on the stage, and that he himself, much as he personally liked the art of acting, would rather see a daughter of his in her grave than on the boards of a theatre. In fact almost the first moment of his sight of stage realities disinclined him to push further in that direction; and his only

actual contact with the stage at this time was his appearance at Covent Garden as a nondescript in the pantomime of 'The Forty Thieves', and in a representation of the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race — this having come about through the accident of the smith who did the ironwork for the pantomime being the man who executed some of Blomfield's designs for church metal-work, and who made crucifixes and harlequin-traps with equal imperturbability. More than forty years were to elapse before Hardy trod the same boards again — this time at rehearsals of the Italian Opera by Baron Frdddric d'Erlanger, founded on Tess of the d'Urhervilles.

aet. 21-27work in london55

'End of Dec. 1865. To insects the twelvemonth has been an epoch, to leaves a life, to tweeting birds a generation, to man a year.'

Notes of 1866-67

'A certain man: He creeps away to a meeting with his own sensations.'

'He feels himself shrink into nothing when contemplating other people's means of working. When he looks upon their ends he expands with triumph.'

'There is no more painful lesson to be learnt by a man of capacious mind than that of excluding general knowledge for particular.'

'The defects of a class are more perceptible to the class immediately below it than to itself.'

'June 6. Went to Hatfield. Changed since my early visit. A youth thought the altered highway had always run as it did. Pied rabbits in the Park, descendants of those I knew. The once children are quite old inhabitants. I regretted that the beautiful sunset did not occur in a place of no reminiscences, that I might have enjoyed it without their tinge.'

'June 19. A widely appreciative mind mostly fails to achieve a great work from pure far-sightedness. The very clearness with which he discerns remote possibilities is, from its nature, scarcely ever co-existent with the microscopic vision demanded for tracing the narrow path that leads to them.'

'July 13. A man's grief has a touch of the ludicrous unless it is so keen as to be awful.'

'Feb. 18. Remember that Evil dies as well as Good.'

'April 29. Had the teachings of experience grown cumulatively with the age of the world we should have been ere now as great as God.'

## CHAPTER IV

# BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

1867-1870: Aet. 27-30

End of Summer 1867

A few weeks in the country — where he returned to his former custom of walking to the Dorchester architect's office from his mother's house every day — completely restored him. He easily fell into the routine that he had followed before, though, with between five and six years superadded of experience as a young man at large in London, it was with very different ideas of things.

Among the churches for restoration or rebuilding that Hicks had in hand, or in prospect, was one which should be named here — that of the parish of St. Juliot in Cornwall — for which remote spot Mr. Hicks set out one day to report upon the said building, shortly after Hardy had gone back to help him. Hardy noticed the romantic name of the church and parish — but had no idea of the meaning it would have for him in aftertime.

An effect among others of his return to the country was to take him out of the fitful yet mechanical and monotonous existence that befalls many a young man in London lodgings. Almost suddenly he became more practical, and queried of himself definitely how to achieve some tangible result from his desultory yet strenuous labours at literature during the previous four years. He considered that he knew fairly well both West-country life in its less explored recesses and the life of an isolated student cast upon the billows of London with no protection but his brains — the young man of whom it may be said more truly than perhaps of any, that 'save his own soul he hath no star'. The two contrasting experiences seemed to afford him abundant materials out of which to evolve a striking socialistic novel — not that he mentally defined it as such, for the word had probably never, or scarcely ever, been heard of at that date.

So down he sat in one of the intervals of his attendances at Mr.

Hicks's drawing-office (which were not regular), and, abandoning verse as a waste of labour — though he had resumed it awhile on arriving in the country — he began the novel the title of which is here written as it was at first intended to be:

THE POOR MAN AND THE LADY

A Story with no Plot

Containing some original verses

This, however, he plainly did not like, for it was ultimately abridged to

THE POOR MAN AND THE LADY

By the Poor Man

And the narrative was proceeded with till, in October of this year (1867), he paid a flying visit to London to fetch his books and other impedimenta.

Thus it happened that under the stress of necessity he had set about a kind of literature in which he had hitherto taken but little interest — prose fiction; so little indeed, that at one of the brief literary lectures, or speeches, he had occasionally delivered to Blomfield's pupils in a spare half-hour of an afternoon, he had expressed to their astonishment an indifference to a popular novelist's fame.

1868. January 16 and Onwards We find from an entry in a note-book that on this date he began to make a fair copy of the projected story, so that all of it must



have been written out roughly during the five preceding months in the intervals of his architectural work for Hicks. In the February following a memorandum shows that he composed a lyric entitled 'A Departure by Train', which has disappeared. In April he was reading Browning and Thackeray; also taking down the exact sound of the song of the nightingale — the latter showing that he must have been living in sylvan shades at his parents', or at least sleeping there, at the time, where nightingales sang within a yard of the bedroom windows in those days, though they do not now.

On June 9 he enters, 'Finished copying MS.', and on the 17th is recorded at some length the outline of a narrative poem on the Battle of the Nile. It was never finished, but it shows that the war with Napoleon was even then in his mind as material for poetry of some sort.

On July 1 he writes down — in all likelihood after a time of mental depression over his work and prospects:

'Cures for despair:

'To read Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence".

„, Stuart Mill's "Individuality" (in Liberty).

„, „ Carlyle's "Jean Paul Richter".'

On July 17 he writes: 'Perhaps I can do a volume of poems consisting of the other side of common emotions'. What this means is not quite clear.

On July 25 he posted the MS. of *The Poor Man and the Lady* to Mr. Alexander Macmillan, and now being free of it, lent some more help to Mr. Hicks in his drawings for church-restorations, reading the Seventh Book of the *Aeneid* between whiles.

'August 12. A reply from Macmillan on the MS.'

The letter was a very long and interesting one, and is printed in full in the *Letters of Alexander Macmillan*. The well-known publisher begins by stating that he had read the novel 'with care, and with much interest and admiration, but feeling at the same time that it has what seem to me drawbacks fatal to its success, and what I think, judging the writer from the book itself, you would feel even more strongly, to its truthfulness and justice'.

He then went into particulars of criticism. 'The utter heartless - ness of all the conversation you give in drawing-rooms and ballrooms about the working-classes has some ground of truth, I fear, and might justly be scourged as you aim at doing; but your chastisement would fall harmless from its very excess. Will's speech to the working men is full of wisdom. . . .

'Much of the writing seems to me admirable. The scene in Rotten Row is full of power and insight. . . . You see I am writing to you as a writer who seems to me, at least potentially, of considerable mark, of power and purpose. If this is your first book I think you ought to go on. May I ask if it is, and — you are not a lady, so perhaps you will forgive the question — are you young?

'I have shown your MS. to one friend, whose judgment coincides with my own.'

The opinion of the friend — who was Mr. John Morley — was enclosed. He said that the book was 'A very curious and original performance: the opening pictures of

the Christmas-eve in the tranter's house are really of good quality: much of the writing is strong and fresh'. But he added as to its faults that 'the thing hangs too loosely together', and that some of the scenes were wildly extravagant, 'so that they read like some clever lad's dream'. He wound up by saying, 'If the man is young he has stuff and purpose in him'.

It was perhaps not usual for a first haphazard attempt at fiction to receive such close attention from so experienced a publisher as Mr. Macmillan, and so real a man of letters as Mr. Morley. However, Hardy seems to have done little in the matter during the autumn, beyond rewriting some of the pages; but in December he paid a flying visit to London, and saw Mr. Macmillan.

The substance of the interview was that though *The Poor Man and the Lady*, if printed, might create a considerable curiosity, it was a class of book which Macmillan himself could not publish; but if Hardy were bent on issuing it he would probably have no difficulty in doing so through another firm, such as that of Chapman and Hall. The young man, it is assumed, was so bent, for Mr. Macmillan gave him an introduction to Mr. Frederick Chapman, and Hardy called on the latter with the MS. under his arm. He makes a note on December 8 that he had been to see Chapman, adding: 'I fear the interview was an unfortunate one'. He returned to Dorchester, leaving the MS. in Mr. Chapman's hands, and this brought the year to an unsatisfactory close — so far as it affected Hardy's desire to get into print as the author of a three-volume novel, since he could not do so as a poet without paying for publication.

In the midst of these attempts at authorship, and the intermittent preparation of architectural drawings, Hardy found time to read a good many books. The only reference discoverable includes various plays of Shakespeare, Walpole's *Letters to Sir Horace Mann* in six volumes, Thackeray, Macaulay, Walt Whitman, Virgil's *Aeneid* (of which he never wearied), and other books during his interval of leisure.

The following note, amongst others, occurs in his pocket-book this autumn:

'The village sermon. If it was very bad the parish concluded that he [the vicar] wrote it himself; if very good, that his wife wrote it; if middling, that he bought it, so that they could have a nap without offending him.' What parish this refers to is unknown.

There is also another note, some days later:

'How people will laugh in the midst of a misery! Some would soon get to whistle in Hell.'

1869

Presumably it was the uncertainty of his position between architecture and literature, and a vague sense of ominousness at getting no reply (so far as can be ascertained) from Messrs. Chapman and Hall, that led Hardy to London again during the January of the new year.

Suggestions that he should try his hand at articles in reviews were made to him by Mr. Macmillan, and also by the critic of his manuscript, Mr. Morley, with whom he got acquainted about this time, Morley offering him an introduction to the editor of

The Saturday Review. But Hardy was not so much in want of a means of subsistence — having always his father's house to fall back upon in addition to architectural jobs which were offered him readily by Blomfield and other London architects — as of a clear call to him which course in life to take — the course he loved, and which was his natural instinct, that of letters, or the course all practical wisdom dictated, that of architecture.

He stayed on in London lodgings, studying pictures at the South Kensington Museum and other places, and reading desultorily, till at last a letter did arrive from Chapman and Hall. On his calling at their address in Piccadilly Chapman was in the back part of the shop, and on Hardy's joining him said with nonchalance, ignoring Hardy's business, 'You see that old man talking to my clerk? He's Thomas Carlyle.' Hardy turned and saw leaning on one elbow at the clerk's desk an aged figure in an in-vernness cape and slouched hat. 'Have a good look at him,' continued Chapman. 'You'll be glad I pointed him out to you some day.' Hardy was rather surprised that Chapman did not think enough of Thomas Carlyle to attend to his wants in person, but said nothing.

The publisher stated they could not purchase the MS. outright, but that they would publish it if he would guarantee a small sum against loss — say £20. The offer on the whole was fair and reasonable: Hardy agreed to the guarantee, Chapman promised to put the book in hand and to send a memorandum of his undertaking to publish it; and Hardy shortly after left London, expecting proof - sheets soon to be forwarded.

As they did not come he may have written to inquire about them; anyhow Messrs. Chapman suddenly asked him in a note if he would call on them and meet 'the gentleman who read your manuscript' — whose opinion they would like him to have.

He went in March, by appointment as to the day and hour, it is believed, not knowing that the 'gentleman' was George Meredith. He was shown into a back room of the publishing offices (opposite Sackville Street, and where Prince's Restaurant now stands); and before him, in the dusty and untidy apartment, piled with books and papers, was a handsome man in a frock-coat — 'buttoned at the waist, but loose above' — no other than Meredith in person, his ample dark - brown beard, wavy locks, and somewhat dramatic manner lending him a striking appearance to the younger man's eye, who even then did not know his name.

Meredith had the manuscript in his hand, and began lecturing Hardy upon it in a sonorous voice. No record was kept by the latter of their conversation, but the gist of it he remembered very well. It was that the firm were willing to publish the novel as agreed, but that he, the speaker, strongly advised its author not to 'nail his colours to the mast' so definitely in a first book, if he wished to do anything practical in literature; for if he printed so pronounced a thing he would be attacked on all sides by the conventional reviewers, and his future injured. The story was, in fact, a sweeping dramatic satire of the squirearchy and nobility, London society, the vulgarity of the middle class, modern Christianity, church-restoration, and political and domestic morals in general, the author's views, in fact, being obviously those of a young man

with a passion for reforming the world — those of many a young man before and after him; the tendency of the writing being socialistic, not to say revolutionary; yet not argumentatively so, the style having the affected simplicity of Defoe's (which had long attracted Hardy, as it did Stevenson, years later, to imitation of it). This naive realism in circumstantial details that were pure inventions was so well assumed that both Macmillan and Morley had been perhaps a little, or more than a little, deceived by its seeming actuality; to Hardy's surprise, when he thought the matter over in later years, that his inexperienced imagination should have created figments that could win credence from such experienced heads.

The satire was obviously pushed too far — as sometimes in Swift and Defoe themselves — and portions of the book, apparently taken in earnest by both his readers, had no foundation either in Hardy's beliefs or his experience. One instance he could remember was a chapter in which, with every circumstantial detail, he described in the first person his introduction to the kept mistress of an architect who 'took in washing' (as it was called in the profession) — that is, worked at his own office for other architects — the said mistress adding to her lover's income by designing for him the pulpits, altars, reredoses, texts, holy vessels, crucifixes, and other ecclesiastical furniture which were handed on to him by the nominal architects who employed her protector — the lady herself being a dancer at a music-hall when not engaged in designing Christian emblems — all told so plausibly as to seem actual proof of the degeneracy of the age.

Whatever might have been the case with the other two, Meredith was not taken in by the affected simplicity of the narrative, and that was obviously why he warned his young acquaintance that the press would be about his ears like hornets if he published his manuscript. For though the novel might have been accepted calmly enough by the reviewers and public in these days, in genteel mid-Victorian 1869 it would no doubt have incurred, as Meredith judged, severe strictures which might have handicapped a young writer for a long time. It may be added that the most important scenes were laid in London, of which city Hardy had just had between five and six years' constant and varied experience — as only a young man at large in the metropolis can get it — knowing every street and alley west of St. Paul's like a born Londoner, which he was often supposed to be; an experience quite ignored by the reviewers of his later books, who, if he only touched on London in his pages, promptly reminded him not to write of a place he was unacquainted with, but to get back to his sheepfolds.

The upshot of this interview was that Hardy took away the MS. with him to decide on a course.

Meredith had added that Hardy could rewrite the story, softening it down considerably; or what would be much better, put it away altogether for the present, and attempt a novel with a purely artistic purpose, giving it a more complicated 'plot' than was attempted with *The Poor Man and the Lady*.

Thus it happened that a first and probably very crude manuscript by an unknown young man, who had no connection with the press, or with literary circles, was read by a most experienced publisher, and by two authors among the most eminent in letters

of their time. Also that they had been interested to more than an average degree in his work, as was shown by their wish to see him, and their voluntary bestowal of good counsel. Except the writer himself, these three seem to have been the only ones whose eyes ever scanned the MS.

It was surprising enough to Hardy to find that, in the opinion of such experienced critics, he had written so aggressive and even dangerous a work (Mr. Macmillan had said it 'meant mischief') almost without knowing it, for his mind had been given in the main to poetry and other forms of pure literature. What he did with the MS. is uncertain, and he could not precisely remember in after years, though he found a few unimportant leaves of it — now also gone. He fancied that he may have sent it to some other publisher just as it stood, to get another opinion before finally deciding its fate, which publisher may have thought it too risky also. What happened in respect of new writing was that he took Meredith's advice too literally, and set about constructing the eminently 'sensational' plot of *Desperate Remedies*, of which anon.

Meanwhile, during his stay in London in the winter, Hardy heard news of the death at Dorchester of Mr. John Hicks, whose pupil he had been, and whom he had lately assisted; and at the end of April received a request from Mr. G. R. Crickmay, an architect of Weymouth, who had purchased Mr. Hicks's practice, to aid him in carrying out the church-restorations that Hicks had begun, or undertaken to begin. Hardy called on Mr. Crickmay, who appeared not to have studied Gothic architecture specially, if at all, but was an amiable, straight-dealing man; and Hardy assented to help him finish the churches. Probably thinking of his book, he agreed for a fortnight only in the first place, though Mr. Crickmay had asked for a longer time.

During May Hardy continued to prepare for Crickmay, in Hicks's old Dorchester office, the church-drawings he had already made some progress with; and the arrangement proved eminently satisfactory, as is evident, Mr. Crickmay proposing to enlist Hardy's services for three months certain at his Weymouth office, the church-work left, unfinished by Hicks turning out to be more than had been anticipated. It is to be gathered that Hardy considered this brief occupation would afford, at any rate, breathing-time while he should ruminate on what it was best to do about the writing of the novels, and he closed with Crickmay for a term which was afterwards still further lengthened by unforeseen circumstances.

He used to remember that after coming away from the interview with Crickmay with much lightness of heart at having shelved further thought about himself for at least three months, he stood opposite the Burdon Hotel on the Esplanade, facing the beautiful sunlit bay, and listened to the Town band's performance of a set of charming new waltzes by Johann Strauss. He inquired their name, and found that it was the 'Morgenblatter'. The verses 'At a Seaside Town' must refer in their background to this place at this time and a little onward, though the gist of them can be fancy only.

He now became regularly resident at Weymouth, and took lodgings there, rowing in the bay almost every evening of this summer, and bathing at seven in the morning either on the pebble-beach towards Preston, or diving off from a boat. Being — like

Swinburne — a swimmer, he would lie a long time on his back on the surface of the waves, rising and falling with the tide in the warmth of the morning sun. He used to tell that, after the enervation of London, this tonic existence by the sea seemed ideal, and that physically he went back ten years in his age almost as by the touch of an enchanter's wand.

In August or September a new assistant came to Mr. Crickmay's drawing-offices, who was afterwards sketched in *Desperate Remedies* as 'Edward Springrove' — and in November this young man persuaded Hardy to join a quadrille class in the town, which was a source of much amusement to them both. Dancing was still an art in those days, though Hardy remarked once that he found the young ladies of Weymouth heavier on the arm than their London sisters. By the time that winter drew on he had finished all the drawings for church - restoration that had been placed in his hands, but he remained at his Weymouth lodgings, working at the MS. of *Desperate Remedies*, the melodramatic novel, quite below the level of *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was the unfortunate consequence of Meredith's advice to 'write a story with a plot'.

A Development So 1869 passed, and at the beginning of February in the year following Hardy gave up his rooms at Weymouth and returned to his rural home to be able to concentrate more particularly on the MS. than he could do in a lively town and as a member of a dancing-class where a good deal of flirtation went on, the so-called 'class' being, in fact, a gay gathering for dances and love-making by adepts of both sexes. The poem entitled 'The Dawn after the Dance', and dated 'Weymouth, 1869', is supposed, though without proof, to have some bearing on these dances.

He had not been in the seclusion of his mother's house more than a week when he received the following letter from Mr. Crickmay, which, as it led to unexpected emotional developments, it may be worth while to give verbatim:

'Weymouth, ' nth February, 1870.

'Dear Sir:

'Can you go into Cornwall for me, to take a plan and particulars of a church I am about to rebuild there? It must be done early next week, and I should be glad to see you on Monday morning. — Yours truly,'G. R. Crickmay.'

This was the church of St. Juliot, near Boscastle, of which Hardy had vaguely heard in Mr. John Hicks's time as being likely to turn up for manipulation, and had been struck by its romantic sound. Despite the somewhat urgent summons he declined the job, the moment being inconvenient with the new novel in hand. But receiving a more persuasive request from Crickmay later, and having finished the MS. of *Desperate Remedies* (except the three or four final chapters) by the beginning of March, he agreed to go on the errand.

Sending off, therefore, on the previous Saturday the copy of his second novel to Mr. Alexander Macmillan, whom he now regarded as a friend, he set out on Monday, March 7, for the remote parish mentioned, in a county he had never entered, though it was not distant. It was a journey of seeming unimportance, and was reluctantly undertaken, yet it turned out to have lifelong consequences for him. The restoration

of this church was, moreover, the work which brought to a close Hardy's labours in Gothic architecture, though he did not know it at the time.

Though the distance was not great the way was tedious, there being few railways in Cornwall at this date. Rising at four in the morning, and starting by starlight from his country retreat, armed with sketch-book, measuring-tape, and rule, he did not reach Launceston till four in the afternoon, where he hired a conveyance for the additional sixteen or seventeen miles' distance by the Boscastle road towards the north coast, and the spot with the charming name — the dilapidated church, parish, and residence of the Rev. Caddell Holder, M.A. Oxon.

It was a cloudy evening at the end of a fine day, with a dry breeze blowing; and leaving the Boscastle highway by a by-road to the left he reached St. Juliot Rectory, by which time it was quite dark. His arrival and entry can best be described in the words of the lady whom he met that night for the first time, and who later on became his wife. Long afterwards she wrote down her: 'Recollections',

which are given in the following pages in full so far as they relate to her husband, these making up the whole of the second half of her manuscript, the first half being entirely concerned with other members of her family and herself before she knew him.

She was born at 10 York Street, Plymouth, and baptized at St. Andrew's Church, being the younger daughter of Mr. J. Attersoll Gifford, a solicitor. She had grown up in a house close to the Hoe, which she used to call 'the playground of her childhood'. She would relate how, to her terror at first, she was daily dipped as a little girl in the pools under the Hoe; and on its cliffs — very much more rugged than now — had had her youthful adventures, one of which, leaving her clinging to a crag, would have cost her her life but for the timely aid of a kind boatman. Her education was carried on at a school for young ladies also overlooking the Hoe's green slopes, where, to use her own words, 'military drills took place on frequent mornings, and then our dear instructress drew down the blinds'. At nineteen she removed from Plymouth with her parents.

## CHAPTER V

### ST. JULIOT

1870: Aet. 29-30

The Latter Part of Mrs. (Emma Lavinia) Hardy's MS., found after her Death, and entitled 'Some Recollections'

[The words in square brackets are added to make the allusions intelligible]

'My only sister married the Rev. Caddell Holder, son of a Judge of Barbadoes, where he was born: he often spoke of his beautiful home there, with oranges growing by his bedroom window. At Trinity College, Oxford, he was a "gentleman-commoner" (this is now abolished), where so far as he could discover his only privilege [from the distinction] was being allowed to walk upon the grass and wear a gold-tasselled cap,

he used to say. He was rector of St. Juliot, North Cornwall, where I [first] knew him; and it was there that my husband made my acquaintance, which afterwards proved a romance in full for us. . . .

‘[He was] a man older than herself by many years, and somewhat delicate because of his West Indian birth; he was, however, energetic, and a very Boanerges in his preaching, which style was greatly relished by the simple folk of his scattered parish. In those days clergymen were [often] very lax in their duties, but he was quite exact and faithful, and [after I went to live there with my sister] we were marshalled off in regular staff style to the services. On Sundays they were two only, and the choir nil — the whole being carried out by the parson, his wife, myself, and the clerk. The congregation were mostly silent, or merely murmuring occasionally. The duty, however, was only arduous on Sundays.

‘They were married from our home, and immediately after went to his — and I went with them — to the said St. Juliot Rectory. My sister required my help, for it was a difficult parish, from neglect by a former incumbent, whose wife, however, had done as much as she could, even to ringing the bell for service.

‘At this date [of writing, i.e. 1911] it seems as if all had been arranged in orderly sequence for me, link after link occurring in a chain of movements to bring me to the point where my own fortunes came on.

‘St. Juliot is a romantic spot indeed of North Cornwall. It was sixteen miles away from a station then, [and a place] where the belief in witchcraft was carried out in actual practice among the primitive inhabitants. Traditions and strange gossipings [were] the common talk . . . indulged in by those isolated natives [of a parish] where newspapers rarely penetrated, or [were] thrown aside for local news; where new books rarely came, or strangers, and where hard labour upon the stony soil made a cold, often ill-natured, working class; yet with some good traits and fine exceptions. Our neighbours beyond the hamlets were nine miles off, or most of them.

‘When we arrived at the Rectory there was a great gathering and welcome from the parishioners, and a tremendous fusilade of salutes, cheering, and bell-ringing — quite a hubbub to welcome the Rector home with his new wife. Then these welcomers (all men and nearly all young) came into the hall to drink the healths of bridegroom and bride, and a speech was made by the foremost young farmer and duly replied to by my brother-in-law. . . . It proved indeed an eventful day for me, for my future was bound up in that day in a way which I could not foresee.

‘The whole parish seemed delighted with the event and the prospect of having things in better order after the long neglect. . . . Riding about on my Fanny [her pony] I enjoyed the place immensely, and helped my sister in the house affairs, visiting the parish folk, and playing the harmonium on Sundays. . . .

‘It was a very poor parish; the church had been a long while out of repair for want of funds; the Patron lived abroad: in contrast with these days of frequent services [and attendance] it was unfrequented, the Sunday congregation in the morning not large, not much larger in the evenings [afternoons]. No week-day services were held. The



tower went on cracking from year to year, and the bells remained in the little north transept [to which they had been removed for safety], their mouths open upward. The carved bench - ends rotted more and more, the ivy hung gaily from the roof timbers, and the birds and the bats had a good time up there unmolested; no one seemed to care. The Architect continued delaying and delaying to come or send his head man to begin operations, though my sister was active in the matter, both Patron and Architect getting urgent appeals from her, till the former decided at last to commence.

‘It was the period of Church restoration, most churches being dilapidated more or less. My life now began. . . .

‘Scarcely any author and his wife could have had a much more romantic meeting, with its unusual circumstances in bringing them together from two different, though neighbouring counties to this one at this very remote spot, with a beautiful sea-coast, and the wild Atlantic Ocean rolling in with its magnificent waves and spray, its white gulls, and black choughs and grey puffins, its cliffs and rocks and gorgeous sunsettings, sparkling redness in a track widening from the horizon to the shore. All this should be seen in the winter to be truly appreciated. No summer visitors can have a true idea of its power to awaken heart and soul. [It was] an unforgettable experience to me, scampering up and down the hills on my beloved mare alone, wanting no protection, the rain going down my back often, and my hair floating on the wind.

‘I wore a soft deep dark coloured brown habit longer than to my heels, (as worn then), which had to be caught up to one side when walking, and thrown over the left arm gracefully and carefully, and this to be practised during the riding instruction — all of which my father [had] taught me with great pleasure and pride in my appearance and aptitude. I also wore a brown felt hat turned up at the sides. Fanny and I were one creature, and very happy. She was a lovely brown colour too, stopping where she liked, to drink or munch, I often getting off sketching and gathering flowers. The villagers stopped to gaze when I rushed down the hills, and a buttermilk man laid down his basket once to exclaim loudly. No one except myself dared to ride in such fashion.

‘Sometimes I left Fanny, and clambered down to the rocks and seal-caves. Sometimes I visited a favourite in the scattered parish. . . .

‘When it was known that the Church-restoration was to be gone on with, the whole village was alive about it. Mr. Crickmay of Weymouth undertook it — Mr. Hicks, the first architect consulted, having died in the interval. The [assistant-architect] of his office was to come on a certain day. The letter that brought this intelligence interested the whole house, and afterwards, later in the day, the whole parish too; it seemed almost wonderful that a fixed date should at last be given and the work set in hand, after so many years of waiting, of difficulties, and delays, since back in the time of the previous incumbent. All were delighted. I had myself worked hard for my brother-in-law, collecting small sums from time to time and selling water-colour sketches I had painted, and saving household expenses in order that the historic old church might be rebuilt — there being no landed proprietor, no “equals” in the parish (as the rector

often explained plaintively). So we were all ready to see the fruition of our endeavours, that is, my sister's and mine particularly.

'I must confess to a curiosity started by the coming event as to what the Architect would be like; seeing few strangers we had a vivid interest in every one who came: a strange clergyman, an occasional locum-tenens, a school-inspector, a stray missionary, or school - lecturer — all were welcome, including this architect to put us to rights at once.

'It was a, lovely Monday evening in March , after a wild winter, that we were on the qui-vive for the stranger,<sup>1</sup> who would have a tedious journey, his home being two counties off by the route necessitated changing trains many times, and waiting at stations, a sort of cross-jump journey like a chess-knight's move. The only damp to our gladness was the sudden laying up of my brother-in-law by gout, and he who was the chief person could not be present on the arrival of our guest. The dinner-cloth was laid; my sister had gone to her husband who required her constant attention. At that very moment the front-door bell rang, and the architect was ushered in. I had to receive him alone, and felt a curious uneasy embarrassment at receiving anyone, especially so necessary a person as the architect. I was immediately arrested by his familiar appearance, as if I had seen him in a dream — his slightly different accent, his soft voice; also I noticed a blue paper sticking out of his pocket. I was explaining who I was, as I saw that he took me for the parson's daughter or wife, when my sister appeared, to my great relief, and he went up to Mr. Holder's room with her.

'So I met my husband. I thought him much older than he was. He had a beard, and a rather shabby greatcoat, and had quite a business appearance. Afterwards he seemed younger, and by daylight especially so. . . . The blue paper proved to be the MS. of a poem, and not a plan of the church, he informed me, to my surprise.

'After this our first meeting there had to be many visits to the church, and these visits, of deep interest to both, merged in those of 1 The verses entitled 'A Man was drawing near to Me' obviously relate to this arrival. But in them Hardy assumes that she was not thinking about his coming, though from this diary one gathers that she was; which seems to show that when writing them he had either not read her reminiscence of the evening as printed above, or had forgotten it.

further acquaintance and affection, to end in marriage, but not till after four years.

'At first, though I was interested in him, the church-matters were paramount, and in due time I laid the foundation stone one morning [for the aisle and tower that were to be rebuilt]; with a bottle containing a record of the proceedings, the school-children attending. I plastered it well, the foreman said. Mr. Holder made a speech to the young ones to remember the event and speak of it to their descendants — just as if it had been a matter of world-wide interest. I wonder if they do remember it, and me.

'The work went rapidly on under the direction of the Architect, who had stayed on his first visit rather longer than intended. We showed him some of the neighbourhood, some clergymen and their wives came to visit us: we were all much pleased at the beginning. Mr. Holder got well again. The Patron of the living, who lived in Antigua,

wrote to inquire about it; an account was duly sent, and he replied that he was coming to see it if he could, and would certainly be at the opening.

‘My Architect came two or three times a year from that time to visit me. I rode my pretty mare Fanny and he walked by my side, and I showed him some [more] of the neighbourhood — the cliffs, along the roads, and through the scattered hamlets, sometimes gazing down at the solemn small shores below, where the seals lived, coming out of great deep caverns very occasionally. We sketched and talked of books; often we walked to Boscastle Harbour down the beautiful Vallency Valley where we had to jump over stones and climb over a low wall by rough steps, or get through a narrow pathway, to come out on great wide spaces suddenly, with a sparkling little brook going the same way, in which we once lost a tiny picnic-tumbler, and there it is to this day no doubt between two of the boulders.<sup>1</sup>

‘Sometimes we all drove to Tintagel, and Trebarwith Strand where donkeys [word illegible] employed to carry seaweed to the farmers; Strangles Beach also, Bossiney, Bude, and other places on the coast. Lovely drives they were, with sea-views all along at intervals, and very dawdling enjoyable slow ones; sometimes to visit a neighbouring clergyman and his family. We grew much interested in each other. I found him a perfectly new subject of study and delight and he found a “mine” in me he said. He was quite unlike any other person who came to see us, for they were slow of speech and ideas.

‘In the intervals of his visits we corresponded, and I studied, and sketched, and drove my brother-in-law and sister to the nearest market - <sup>1</sup> This incident was versified by Hardy afterwards, and entitled ‘ Under the Waterfall’.

town, Camelford, nine miles off, or to Launceston to see my cousins. The manservant taught me to jump hurdles on Fanny, but Fanny, though not at all objecting, got a little lame, so we stopped jumping.

‘I like to think of those details and small events, and am fancying some other people may like to have them.

‘It was a pleasant time, though there were difficulties in the parish. I have never liked the Cornish working-orders as I do Devonshire folk; their so-called admirable independence of character was most disagreeable to live with, and usually amounted to absence of kindly interest in others, though it was unnoticeable by casual acquaintance. . . . Nevertheless their nature had a glamour about it — that of an old-world romantic expression; and then sometimes there came to one’s cognizance in the hamlets a dear heart-whole person.

‘So the days went on between the visits. The church-opening was somewhat impressive, the element of unusualness being more conspicuous however by the immense numbers of people outside waiting for it to be over and the lunch to begin, than the many attentive and admiring parishioners within, collected imperatively by the rector’s wife and himself. Mr. Holder was in a good state of health and spirits; my sister was very important. The patron of the living, the Rev. Richard Rawle, [who owned land in the parish, and was about this time consecrated as Bishop of Trinidad] was

present; but no architect came on that brilliant occasion.<sup>1</sup> He appeared, however, on the same scene from time to time afterwards.

‘I had two pleasant changes — one to stay at Bath with an old friend of the family; and when my chosen came there too, by her kindness, we had together an interesting time. And I went as country cousin to my brother in London, and was duly astonished, which gave him even more pleasure than it did me.

‘After a little time I copied a good deal of manuscript, which went to and fro by post, and I was very proud and happy doing this — which I did in the privacy of my own room, where I also read and wrote the letters.

‘The rarity of the visits made them highly delightful to both; we talked much of plots, possible scenes, tales and poetry, and of his own work. He came either from Dorset or London, driving from Launceston station eighteen [sixteen and a half] miles off.

‘The day we were married was a perfect September day — the 17th of the month — 1874, — not of brilliant sunshine, but wearing a soft sunny luminousness; just as it should be.

1 Neither Hardy nor Crickmay was able to attend, for some unknown reason.

‘I have had various experiences, interesting some, sad others, since that lovely day, but all showing that an Unseen Power of great benevolence directs my ways; I have some philosophy, and mysticism, and an ardent belief in Christianity and the life beyond this present one, all which makes any existence curiously interesting. As one watches happenings (and even if should occur unhappy happenings), outward circumstances are of less importance if Christ is our highest ideal. A strange unearthly brilliance shines around our path, penetrating and dispersing difficulties with its warmth and glow.

‘E. L. Hardy.

‘Max Gate. January 4th, 1911.’<sup>1</sup>

This transcript from the first Mrs. Hardy’s ‘Recollections’ (of the existence of which he was unaware till after her death) has carried us onward four years further than the date of Thomas Hardy’s arrival in Cornwall on that evening of March 1870. He himself entered in a memorandum-book a few rough notes of his visit, and from these we are able to glean vaguely his impressions of the experience.

It is apparent that he was soon, if not immediately, struck by the nature and appearance of the lady who received him. She was so living, he used to say. Though her features were not regular her complexion at this date was perfect in hue, her figure and movement graceful, and her corn-coloured hair abundant in its coils.

It may be mentioned here that the story *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (which Hardy himself classes among his Romances and Fantasies — as if to suggest its visionary nature) has been considered to show a picture of his own personality as the architect on this visit. But in addition to Hardy’s own testimony there is proof that this is not the case, he having ever been shy of putting his personal characteristics into his novels. The Adonis depicted was known to be both in appearance and temperament an idealization of a

pupil whom Hardy found at Mr. John Hicks's on his return there temporarily from London; a nephew of that architect, and exactly of the age attributed to Stephen Smith. He is represented as altogether more youthful and sanguine in nature than Hardy, a thoughtful man of twenty-nine, with years of London buffeting and architectural and literary experiences, was at this time. Many of his verses with which readers have since grown familiar in *JVessex Poems* had already been written. Stephen Smith's father was a mason in Hardy's father's employ, combined with one near Boscastle, while Smith's ingenious mode of being 1 It will be seen later that she died the year after this was written.

tutored in Latin was based on a story Hardy had from Holder, as that of a man he had known. Its practicability is, however, doubtful, Henry Knight the reviewer, Elfride's second lover, was really much more like Thomas Hardy as described in his future wife's diary just given; while the event of the young man arriving as a town-stranger at a village with which he was quite familiar, and the catastrophe that ensued when his familiarity with it was discovered, was an experience of an uncle of his, of which the dramatic possibilities had long arrested him. His own wooing in the 'Delectable Duchy' ran, in fact, without a hitch from beginning to end, and with encouragement from all parties concerned.

But the whole story, except as to the lonely drive across the hills towards the coast, the architectural detail, and a few other external scenes and incidents, is so at variance with any possible facts as to be quite misleading, Hardy's wilful purpose in his early novels until *Far from the Madding Crowd* appeared, if not later, having been to mystify the reader as to their locality, origin, and authorship by various interchanges and inventions, probably owing at first to his doubt if he would pursue the craft, and his sense of the shadow that would fall on an architect who had failed as a novelist. He modified the landscape, and called the Rectory a vicarage in early editions, showing a church with the sea visible from it, which was not true of St. Juliot. The character and appearance of Elfride have points in common with those of Mrs. Hardy in quite young womanhood, a few years before Hardy met her (though her eyes would have been described as deep grey, not as blue); moreover, like Elfride, the moment she was on a horse she was part of the animal. But this is all that can be asserted, the plot of the story being one that he had thought of and written down long before he knew her.

What he says about the visit is laconic and hurried, but interesting enough to be given here:

'March 7. The dreary yet poetical drive over the hills. Arrived at St. Juliot Rectory between 6 and 7. Received by young lady in brown (Miss Gifford, the rector's sister-in-law). Mr. Holder gout. Saw Mrs. Holder. The meal. Talk. To Mr. Holder's room. Returned downstairs. Music.

'March 8. Austere grey view of hills from bedroom window. A funeral. Man tolled the bell (which stood inverted on the ground in the neglected transept) by lifting the clapper and letting it fall against the side. Five bells stood thus in a row (having been

taken down from the cracked tower for safety). Staying there drawing and measuring all day, with intervals for meals at rectory.

‘March 9. Drove with Mrs. Holder and Miss Gifford to Boscastle, and on to Tintagel and Penpethy slate-quarries, with a view to the church roofing. Mr. Symons accompanied us to the quarries. Mr. Symons did not think himself a native; he was only born there. Now Mrs. Symons was a native; her family had been there 500 years. Talked about Douglas Cook coming home [the first editor of the Saturday Review, whom the Holders had known; buried on the hill above Tintagel]. . . . Music in the evening. The two ladies sang duets, including “The Elfin Call”, “Let us dance on the sands”, etc. . . .  
• • Miss Gifford said that a man asked her for “a drop o’ that that isn’t gin, please, Miss”. He meant hollands, which they kept at the Rectory, as he knew.

‘March 10. Went with E. L. G. to Beeny Cliff. She on horseback. . . . On the cliff. . . . “The tender grace of a day”, etc. The run down to the edge. The coming home.

‘In the afternoon I walked to Boscastle, Mrs. H. and E. L. G. accompanying me three-quarters of the way: the overshot mill: E. provokingly reading as she walked; evening in garden; music later in evening.

‘March 11. Dawn. Adieu. E. L. G. had struck a light six times in her anxiety to call the servants early enough for me. The journey home. Photo of Bishop of Exeter (for Mrs. Holder). . . .’

The poem entitled ‘At the Word “Farewell”’ seems to refer either to this or the following visit; and the one called ‘When I set out for Lyonesse’ refers certainly to this first visit, it having been his custom to apply the name ‘Lyonesse’ to the whole of Cornwall. The latter poem, it may be mentioned, was hailed by a distant voice from the West of America as his sweetest lyric, an opinion from which he himself did not dissent.

‘March 12. (Sat.) Went to Weymouth. Mr. Crickmay’s account £6:10: 9.’

On April 5, having resumed lodgings at Weymouth, to proceed, probably, with the detailed drawings for the restoration of St. Juliot Church by the light of the survey and measurements he had made, Hardy received a letter from the Messrs. Macmillan declining to publish *Desperate Remedies*, the MS. of which they returned, on the ground (it is conjectured) of their disapproval of the incidents. By this time it seemed to have dawned upon him that the Macmillan publishing-house was not in the way of issuing novels of a sensational kind: and accordingly he packed up the MS. again and posted it to the Messrs. Tinsley, a firm to which he was a stranger, but which did publish such novels. Why he did not send it to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, with whom he had now a slight link, and whose reader, George Meredith, had recommended him to write what Hardy understood to be a story of this kind, is inexplicable. Possibly it was from an adventurous feeling that he would like the story to be judged on its own merits by a house which had no knowledge of how it came into existence; possibly from inexperience. Anyhow it was a mistake from which he suffered, for there is no doubt that Meredith would have taken an interest in a book he had, or was supposed to have, instigated; and would have offered some suggestions on how to make a better

use of the good material at the back of the book. However, to Tinsley's it had gone, and on May 6 Tinsley wrote, stating the terms on which he would publish it, if Hardy would complete the remaining three or four chapters of which a pricis only had been sent.

About the second week in May, and possibly as a result of the correspondence, Hardy left Mr. Crickmay (whose church-designing he appears to have airily used as something of a stop-gap when his own literary enterprises hung fire) and on the following Monday, the 16th, he started again for London — sadly, as he said, for he had left his heart in Cornwall.

'May 18. Royal Academy. No. 118. "Death of Ney", by Gerome. The presence of Death makes the picture great.

'No. 985. "Jerusalem", by the same. The shadows only of the three crucified ones are seen. A fine conception.'

He seems to have passed the days in Town desultorily and dreamily — mostly visiting museums and picture-galleries, and it is not clear what he was waiting for there. In his leisure he seems to have written the 'Ditty' in *IVessex Poems*, inscribed with Miss Gifford's initials. In May he was reading Comte. Crossing Hyde Park one morning in June he saw the announcement of Dickens's death. He was welcomed by Mr. Blomfield, to whom he lent help in finishing some drawings. Being acquainted with another well-known Gothic architect, Mr. Raphael Brandon, Hardy assisted him also for a few weeks, though not continuously.

Brandon was a man who interested him much. In collaboration with his brother David he had published, several years before, the *Analysis of Gothic Architecture* in two quarto volumes, and an extra volume on the *Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages*. Both these works were familiar to Hardy, having been quite text-books for architects' pupils till latterly, when the absorbing interest given to French Gothic had caused them to be superseded by the works of Norman Shaw, Nesfield, and Viollet-le-Duc. Brandon, however, was convinced that the development of modern English architecture should be based on English Gothic and not on French, as was shown in his well-known design for the Catholic Apostolic Church in Gordon Square; and that his opinion was the true one was proved in the sequel, notwithstanding that the more fashionable architects, including Arthur Blomfield, were heart and soul of the other opinion at this date. It may have been partly on this account, partly because he was a 'literary architect' — a person always suspect in the profession in those days, Hardy used to say — that Brandon's practice had latterly declined, and he had drifted into a backwater, spending much time in strange projects and hopes, one of these being a scheme for unifying railway-fares on the principle of letter-postage. Hardy was in something of a similar backwater himself — so far as there could be similarity in the circumstances of a man of twenty-nine and a man of sixty, and the old-world out-of-the-way corner of Clement's Inn where Brandon's offices were situate made his weeks with Brandon still more attractive to him, Knight's chambers in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* being drawn from Brandon's. Whilst the latter attended to his scheme for railway-travel, Hardy attended

off and on to Brandon's architecture, which had fallen behindhand. Sometimes Hardy helped him also in the details of his scheme; though, having proved to himself its utter futility, he felt in an awkward dilemma; whether to show Brandon its futility and offend him, or to go against his own conscience by indulging him in the hobby.

However, the summer was passed in this way, and his friend Horace Moule, the reviewer and leader-writer, being also in London, the time was pleasant enough. Nothing seems to have been done about the novel, of which the MS., representing about seven-eighths of the whole, was apparently still lying at Tinsley's. He kept up a regular correspondence with 'the young lady in brown' who had attracted him at St. Juliot Rectory, and sent books to her, reading himself among other works Shakespeare and general poetry as usual, the Bible, Alison's Europe, and Mohammed and Mohammedanism by Bosworth Smith, his friend in later years; though it does not appear that he wrote any verses.

'June 30. What the world is saying, and what the world is thinking: It is the man who bases his action upon what the world is thinking, no matter what it may be saying, who rises to the top.

'It is not by rushing straight towards fame that men come up with her, but by so adapting the direction of their path to hers that at some point ahead the two must inevitably intersect.'

On July 15 war was declared by France against Prussia — a cause of much excitement to Brandon, who during the early weeks of the struggle would go into the Strand for every edition of the afternoon papers as they came out, and bring them in and read them to Hardy, who grew as excited as he; though probably the younger man did not realise that, should England have become involved in the Continental strife, he might have been among the first to be called upon to serve, outside the regular Army. All he seems to have done was to go to a service at Chelsea Hospital and look at the tattered banners mended with netting, and talk to the old asthmatic and crippled men, many of whom in the hospital at that date had fought at Waterloo, and some in the Peninsula.

On August 6 occurred the Battle of Worth: and on the 8<sup>th</sup>, in keeping with a promise given on his previous visit, he severed his temporary connection with Brandon and left for Cornwall.

Here, as he said, he found the 'young lady in brown' of the previous winter — at that time thickly muffled from the wind — to have become metamorphosed into a young lady in summer blue, which suited her fair complexion far better; and the visit was a most happy one. His hosts drove him to various picturesque points on the wild and rugged coast near the Rectory, among others to King Arthur's Castle, Tintagel, which he now saw for the first time; and where, owing to their lingering too long among the ruins, they found themselves locked in, only narrowly escaping being imprisoned there for the night by much signalling with their handkerchiefs to cottagers in the valley. The lingering might have been considered prophetic, seeing that, after it had been smouldering in his mind for between forty and fifty years, he constructed The Famous



Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall from the legends connected with that romantic spot. Why he did not do it sooner, while she was still living who knew the scene so well, and had frequently painted it, it is impossible to say.

H. M. Moule, who by this date knew of the vague understanding between the pair, sent them from time to time such of the daily and weekly papers as contained his leading articles on the war. Concerning such wars Hardy entered in his notebook: ‘*Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi!*’ On the day that the bloody battle of Gravelotte was fought they were reading Tennyson in the grounds of the rectory. It was at this time and spot that Hardy was struck (by the incident of the old horse harrowing the arable field in the valley below, which, when in far later years it was recalled to him by a still bloodier war, he made into the little poem of three verses entitled ‘In Time of “the Breaking of Nations”’. Several of the pieces — as is obvious — grouped as ‘Poems of 1912-13’ the same volume with *Satires of Circumstance*, and three in *Moments of Vision*, namely, ‘The Figure in the Scene’, ‘Why did I sketch’, and ‘It never looks like Summer now’, with doubtless many others, are known to be also memories of the present and later sojourns here in this vague romantic land of ‘Lyonnesse’.

It was at this time, too, that he saw the last of St. Juliot Church in its original condition of picturesque neglect, the local builder laying hands on it shortly after, and razing to the ground the tower and the north aisle (which had hitherto been the nave), and the transept. Hardy much regretted the obliteration in this manner of the church’s history, and, too, that he should be instrumental in such obliteration, the building as he had first set eyes on it having been so associated with what was romantic in his life. Yet his instrumentality was involuntary, the decision to alter and diminish its area having been come to before he arrived on the scene. What else could be done with the dilapidated structure was difficult to say if it had to be retained for use. The old walls of the former nave, dating from Norman or even earlier times, might possibly have been preserved. A north door, much like a Saxon one, was inadvertently destroyed, but Hardy made a drawing of it which is preserved in the present church, with his drawings of the highly carved seat-ends and other details that have disappeared. Fortunately the old south aisle was kept intact, with its arcade, the aisle now being adapted for a nave.

It was at this church that occurred his humorous experience of the builder’s view of the old chancel-screen. Hardy had made a careful drawing of it, with its decayed tracery, posts, and gilding, marking thereon where sundry patchings and scarfings were to be applied. Reaching the building one day he found a new and highly varnished travesty of the old screen standing in its place. ‘Well, Mr. Hardy,’ replied the builder in answer to his astonished inquiries, I said to myself, I won’t stand on a pound or two while I’m about it, and I’ll give ‘em a new screen instead of that patched-up old thing.’

## PART II – NOVELS - TO ILLNESS

### CHAPTER VI

#### FIRST THREE BOOKS

1870-1873: Aet. 30-33

He must when in London have obtained from Tinsley the MS. of *Desperate Remedies*-, for during the autumn of this year 1870 there were passing between him and Miss Gifford chapters of the story for her to make a fair copy of, the original MS. having been interlined and altered, so that it may have suffered, he thought, in the eyes of a publisher's reader by being difficult to read. He meanwhile wrote the three or four remaining chapters, and the novel — this time finished — was packed off to Tinsley in December. However, a minute fact seems to suggest that Hardy was far from being in bright spirits about this book and his future at this time. On the margin of his copy of *Hamlet* the following passage is marked with the date, 'December 15, 1870':

'Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter!'

Tinsley wrote his terms again, which for some unaccountable reason were worse now than they had been in the first place, an advance of £75 being demanded; and the following is a transcript of Hardy's letter to the publisher on these points, at the end of December:

'I believe I am right in understanding your terms thus — that if the gross receipts reach the costs of publishing I shall receive the £75 back again, and if they are more than the costs I shall have £75, added to half the receipts beyond the costs (i.e., assuming the expenditure to be £100, and the receipts £200, I should have returned to me £75+ £50 = £125).

'Will you be good enough to say, too, if the sum includes advertising to the customary extent, and about how long after my paying the money the book would appear.'

This adventurous arrangement by the would-be author, who at that date had only £123 in the world, beyond what he might have obtained from his father — which was not much — and who was virtually if not distinctly engaged to be married to a girl with no money except in reversion after the death of relatives, was actually carried out by him in the January following (1871): when, being in London again, he paid the £75 over to Tinsley in Bank of England notes (rather, as it seemed, to Tinsley's astonishment, Hardy said) and retired to Dorset to correct the proofs, filling up leisure moments not by anything practical, but by writing down such snatches of the old country ballads as he could hear from aged people. On the 25th March the book was published anonymously in three volumes; and on the 30th he again went to his Weymouth lodgings to lend Mr. Crickmay more help in his church-restorations.

On April 1 *Desperate Remedies* received a striking review in the *Athenaum* as being a powerful novel, and on April 13 an even better notice in the *Morning Post* as being an eminent success. But, alas, on the 22nd the *Spectator* brought down its heaviest-leaded pastoral staff on the prematurely happy volumes, the reason for this violence being mainly the author's daring to suppose it possible that an unmarried lady owning an estate could have an illegitimate child.

'This is an absolutely anonymous story', began the review: 'no assumption of a *nom-de-plume* which might, at some future time, disgrace the family name, and still more the Christian name, of a repentant and remorseful novelist — and very right too. By all means let him bury the secret in the profoundest depths of his own heart, out of reach, if possible, of his own consciousness. The law is hardly just which prevents Tinsley Brothers from concealing their participation also.'

When Moule, whom Hardy had not consulted on the venture, read the reception of the novel by the *Spectator* he wrote a brief line to Hardy bidding him not to mind the slating. After its first impact, which was with good reason staggering, it does not seem to have worried Hardy much or at any rate for long (though one of the personalities insinuated by the reviewer, in clumsy humour, that the novel must have been 'a desperate remedy for an emaciated purse', may well have been galling enough). And indeed about this time he noted down: 'Strictly, we should resent wrongs, be placid at justice, and grateful for favours. But I know one who is placid at a wrong, and would be grateful for simple justice; while a favour, if he ever gained one, would turn his brain.' He remembered, for long years after, how he had read this review as he sat on a stile leading to the eweleaze he had to cross on his way home to Bockhampton. The bitterness of that moment was never forgotten; at the time he wished that he were dead.

But that humorous observation was not seriously disturbed in him is shown by what he entered immediately after:

'End. of April. At the dairy. The dog looks as if he were glad that he is a dog. The cows look at him with a melancholy expression, as though they were sorry they are cows, and have to be milked, and to show too much dignity to roll in the mulch as he does. . . . The dairymaid flings her feet about the dairy floor in walking, as if they were mops.'

Anyhow, in May he enjoyed another visit to Cornwall. But in returning therefrom the day after his birthday in June he received a fresh buffet from circumstance in seeing at Exeter Station *Desperate Remedies* in Messrs. Smith and Son's surplus catalogue for sale at *zs. 6d.* the three volumes, and thought the *Spectator* had snuffed out the book, as it probably had done.

Although this was a serious matter for a beginner who had ventured on the novel £75 out of the £123 he possessed, one reason for the mitigation of his trouble may well have been that the powerfully, not to say wildly, melodramatic situations had been concocted in a style which was quite against his natural grain, through too crude an interpretation of George Meredith's advice. It was a sort of thing he had never

contemplated writing, till, finding himself in a corner, it seemed necessary to attract public attention at all hazards. What Meredith would have thought of the result of his teaching was not ascertained. Yet there was nothing in the book — admittedly an extremely clever novel — to call for such castigation, which, oddly enough, rather stultified itself by certain concessions on the nameless author's ability. Moreover he was surprised some time later by a letter from the reviewer, a stranger — whether dictated by pricks of conscience, an uneasy suspicion that he had mistaken his man, or otherwise, is unknown — showing some regret for his violence. Hardy replied to the letter — tardily and curtly enough at first, it is true — but as it dawned upon him that the harm had been done him not through malice but honest wrongheadedness he ceased to harbour resentment, and became acquainted with his critic, the Spectator reviewing him later with much generosity.

During June and July he marked time, as it were, by doing some more Gothic drawings for Crickmay, though in no very grand spirits, if we may judge from a marginal mark with the date 'July 1871' in his Shakespeare, opposite the passage in Macbeth:

Things at their worst will cease, or else climb upward  
To what they were before.

Later in the summer he finished the short and quite rustic story entitled Under the Greenwood Tree. A Rural Painting of the Dutch School — the execution of which had arisen from a remark of Mr. John Morley's on *The Poor Man and the Lady*, that the country scenes in the latter were the best in the book, the 'tranter' of *The Poor Man and the Lady* being reintroduced.

The pages of this idyll — at first intended to be called *The Mell - stock Quire* but altered to *Under the Greenwood Tree* because titles from poetry were in fashion just then — were dispatched to the Messrs. Macmillan some time the same autumn, and in due course Hardy received from them a letter which, events having rendered him sensitive, he read to mean that the firm did not wish to have anything to do with his 'Rural Painting of the Dutch School', although they said that 'they felt strongly inclined to avail themselves of his offer of it'; hence he wrote to them to return the MS. This was an unfortunate misunderstanding. It was not till its acceptance and issue by another publishing-house the year after that he discovered they had never declined it, and indeed would have been quite willing to print it a little later on.

They had taken the trouble to enclose when writing about the tale the opinion of the 'accomplished critic' to whom they had submitted it, the chief points of which may be quoted here:

'The work in this story is extremely careful, natural, and delicate, and the writer deserves more than common credit for the pains which he has taken with his style, and with the harmony of his construction and treatment. It is a simple and uneventful sketch of a rural courtship, with a climax of real delicacy of idea. ... I don't prophesy a large market for it, because the work is so delicate as not to hit every taste by any means. But it is good work, and would please people whose taste was not ruined by

novels of exaggerated action or forced ingenuity. . . . The writer would do well to shut his ears to the fooleries of critics, which his letter to you proves that he does not do.'

However, deeming their reply on the question of publishing the tale to be ambiguous at least, he got it back, threw the MS. into a box with his old poems, being quite sick of all such, and began to think about other ways and means. He consulted Miss Gifford by letter, declaring that he had banished novel-writing for ever, and was going on with architecture henceforward. But she, with no great opportunity of reasoning on the matter, yet, as Hardy used to think and say — truly or not — with that rapid instinct which serves women in such good stead, and may almost be called preternatural vision, wrote back instantly her desire that he should adhere to authorship, which she felt sure would be his true vocation. From the very fact that she wished thus, and set herself aside altogether — architecture being obviously the quick way to an income for marrying on — he was impelled to consider her interests more than his own. Unlike the case of Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, no letters between the couple are extant, to show the fluctuation of their minds on this vital matter. But what happened was that Hardy applied himself to architectural work during the winter 1871-72 more steadily than he ever had done in his life before, and in the spring of the latter year again set out for London, determined to stifle his constitutional tendency to care for life only as an emotion and not as a scientific game, and fully bent on sticking to the profession which had been the choice of his parents for him rather than his own; but with a faint dream at the back of his mind that he might perhaps write verses as an occasional hobby.

The years 1872 and 1873 were pre-eminently years of unexpectedness. Having engaged to give some help to Mr. T. Roger Smith, a well-known London architect and Professor of Architecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects, he speedily found himself on his arrival in the first-named year assisting Professor Smith in designing schools for the London School Board, which had then lately come into existence, public competition between architects for such designs being arranged by the Board from time to time. Hardy had no sooner settled down to do his best in this business than he met in the middle of a crossing by Trafalgar Square his friend Moule, whom he had not seen for a long time. Moule, a scholar and critic of perfect taste, firmly believed in Hardy's potentialities as a writer, and said he hoped he still kept a hand on the pen; but Hardy seems to have declared that he had thrown up authorship at last and for all. Moule was grieved at this, but merely advised him not to give up writing altogether, since, supposing anything were to happen to his eyes from the fine architectural drawing, literature would be a resource for him; he could dictate a book, article, or poem, but not a geometrical design. This, Hardy used to say, was essentially all that passed between them; but by a strange coincidence Moule's words were brought back to his mind one morning shortly after by his seeing, for the first time in his life, what seemed like floating specks on the white drawing-paper before him.

For some reason or other at this date — a year after its publication — he wrote to his publishers to render an account of their transactions over *Desperate Remedies*,

which he had once before requested, but had not been very curious upon; for though the Saturday Review had brought the volumes to life after their slaughter by the Spectator, he quite supposed he had lost on the venture both his time and his money. By return of post Tinsley Brothers rendered the account, showing that they had printed 500 copies of the novel in three volumes, and sold 370, and enclosing a cheque for £60, as being all that was returnable to him out of the £75 paid as guarantee — after the costs and the receipts were balanced, no part of the receipts being due to him.

From these figures Hardy, who did not examine them closely, found that after all he had only lost his labour and £15 in money — and was much gratified thereby.

Quite soon after, while reading in the Strand a poster of the Italian Opera, a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and turning he saw Tinsley himself, who asked when Hardy was going to let him have another novel.

Hardy, with thoughts of the balance-sheet, drily told him never.

‘Wot, now!’ said Tinsley. ‘Haven’t you anything written?’

Hardy remarked that he had written a short story some time before, but didn’t know what had become of the MS., and did not care. He also had outlined one for three volumes; but had abandoned it. He was now doing better things, and attending to his profession of architect.

‘Damned if that isn’t what I thought you wos!’ exclaimed Mr. Tinsley. ‘Well, now, can’t you get that story, and show it to me?’

Hardy would not promise, reminding the publisher that the account he had rendered for the other book was not likely to tempt him to publish a second.

‘Pon my soul, Mr. Hardy,’ said Tinsley, ‘you wouldn’t have got another man in London to print it! Oh, be hanged if you would! ‘twas a blood-curdling story! Now please try to find that new manuscript and let me see it.’

Hardy could not at first recollect what he had done with the MS., but recalling at last he wrote to his parents at home, telling them where to search for it, and to forward it to him.

When, the first week in April, *Under the Greenwood Tree* arrived Hardy sent it on to Tinsley without looking at it, saying he would have nothing to do with any publishing accounts. This probably was the reason why Tinsley offered him £30 for the copyright, which Hardy accepted. It should be added that Tinsley afterwards sent him £10 extra, and quite voluntarily, being, he said, half the amount he had obtained from Tauchnitz for the Continental copyright, of which transaction Hardy had known nothing.

Hardy’s indifference in selling *Under the Greenwood Tree* for a trifle could not have been because he still had altogether other aims than the literature of fiction, as had been the case in the previous winter; for he casually mentioned to Tinsley that he thought of going on with the three-volume novel before alluded to. Moule’s words on keeping a hand on the pen, and the specks in his eyes while drawing, may have influenced him in this harking back.

In the early part of May he was correcting the proofs of the rural story. It was mostly done late at night, at Westbourne Park, where he was again living, the day being occupied with the competition - drawings for Board schools in the various London districts — and some occasional evenings in preparing drawings for Blomfield, with whom Hardy was in frequent and friendly touch — though he told Blomfield at that time nothing about his adventures as a novel-writer.

Under the Greenwood Tree was published about the last week in May (1872) and met with a very kindly and gentle reception, being reviewed in the Athenceum as a book which could induce people 'to give up valuable time to see a marriage accomplished in its pages', and in the Pall Mall Gazette as a story of much freshness and originality.

As its author was at Bedford Chambers in Bedford Street — Professor Smith's offices — every day, and the office of the publishers was only a street or two further along the Strand, he was not infrequently encountering Tinsley, who one day asked him — the book continuing to receive good notices — for how much he would write a story for Tinsley's Magazine, to run a twelvemonth, the question being probably prompted by this tone of the press towards Under the Greenwood Tree.

Hardy reflected on the outlined novel he had abandoned — considered that he could do it in six months — but 'to guard against temptation' (as he put it) multiplied by two the utmost he could expect to make at architecture in the time, and told his inquirer the sum.

'All right, all right, Mr. Hardy — very reasonable,' said the friendly publisher, smacking Hardy's shoulder. 'Now come along into the office here, and we'll sign the agreement, and the job will be off our minds.'

Hardy, however, for some reason or other was growing wary, and said he would call next day. During the afternoon he went to a law-bookseller, bought Copinger on Copyright, the only book on the subject he could meet with, and sat up half the night studying it. Next day he called on Tinsley, and said he would write the story for the sum mentioned, it being understood that the amount paid was for the magazine-issue solely, after which publication all rights were to return to the author.

'Well, I'm damned!' Tinsley said, with a grim laugh. 'Who the devil have you been talking to, Mr. Hardy, if I may ask, since I saw you yesterday?'

Hardy said 'Nobody'. (Which was true, though only literally.)

'Well, but — Now, Mr. Hardy, you are hard, very hard upon me! However, I do like your writings: and if you'll throw in the three-volume edition of the novel with the magazine rights I'll agree.'

Hardy assented to this, having, as he used to say, some liking for Tinsley's keen sense of humour even when it went against himself; and the business was settled shortly after, the author agreeing to be ready with the first monthly part of his story for the magazine soon enough to give an artist time to prepare an illustration for it, and enable it to be printed in the September number, which in the case of this periodical came out on August 15.

It was now the 24th July, and walking back towards Professor Roger Smith's chambers Hardy began to feel that he had done rather a rash thing. He knew but vaguely the value of a three-volume edition, and as to the story, he had, as already mentioned, thought of a possible one some time before, roughly noted down the opening chapters and general outline, and then abandoned it with the rest of his literary schemes. He had never written a serial narrative and had no journalistic experience; and he was pledged to the Board-school drawings for at least another week, when they were to be sent in to the Committee. Nevertheless, having promised Tinsley, he resolved to stick to his promise, and on the 27th July agreed by letter.

Apparently without saying anything of his new commitment, he informed the genial Professor of Architecture that he thought he would take a holiday in August, when there would be little more of a pressing nature to do for that year; and going home to Westbourne Park wrote between then and midnight the first chapter or two of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Even though he may have thought over and roughly set down the beginning of the romance, the writing it out connectedly must have been done very rapidly, despite the physical enervation that London always brought upon him. (It may be noticed that he gave the youth who appears first in the novel the surname of the Professor of Architecture he had been assisting.) At any rate the MS. of the first number, with something over, was ready for the illustrator in an incredibly quick time. Thereupon, though he had shaped nothing of what the later chapters were to be like, he dismissed the subject as Sheridan dismissed a bill he had backed, and on August 7 went on board the *Avoca*, of the Irish Mail Packet Company (a boat which, by the way, went to the bottom shortly after) at London Bridge, to proceed to Cornwall by water.

In Cornwall he paid a visit to some friends — Captain and Mrs. Serjeant, of St. Benet's Abbey, who owned valuable china-clay works near, which were just then being developed; drove to St. Juliot, and met there among other visitors Miss d'Arville, a delightful old lady from Bath, who had a canary that fainted and fell to the bottom of the cage whenever a cat came into the room, or the picture of a cat was shown it. He walked to Tintagel Castle and sketched there a stone altar, having an Early-English ornamentation on its edge; which altar in after years he could never find; and in the intervals of this and other excursions went on with his MS., having naturally enough received an urgent letter for more copy from the publisher. He returned to London by way of Bath, where he left Miss d'Arville, who had accompanied him thus far.

He could not, however, get on with his novel in London, and late in September went down to the seclusion of Dorset to set about it more thoroughly. On this day *Under the Greenwood Tree* was reviewed by Moule in the Saturday. The *Spectator*, however, which had so mauled *Desperate Remedies*, took little notice of the book.

An entry in the diary at this time was: 'Sept. 30. Posted MS. of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to Tinsley up to Page 163.'

Before the date was reached he had received a letter from Professor Roger Smith, informing him that another of the six Board-school competitions for which Hardy had



helped him to prepare designs had been successful, and suggesting that he had 'been at grass' long enough, and would be welcomed back on any more liberal terms, if he felt dissatisfied.

This architectural success, for which he would have given much had it come sooner, was now merely provoking. However, Hardy confessed to the surprised and amused Smith what he had been doing, and was still occupied with; and thus was severed, to his great regret, an extremely pleasant if short professional connection with an able and amiable man; though their friendship was not broken, being renewed from time to time, and continued till the death of the elder of them.

Till the end of the year he was at Bockhampton finishing *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the action of which, as is known, proceeds on the coast near 'Lyonnesse' — not far from King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel. Its scene, he said, would have been clearly indicated by calling the romance *Elfride of Lyonnesse*, but for a wish to avoid drawing attention to the neighbouring St. Juliot while his friends were living there. After a flying visit to the Rectory, he remained on through the spring at his mother's; and it may be mentioned here that while staying at this place or at the Rectory or possibly in London, Hardy received an account of the death of 'the Tranter', after whom the character in *Under the Greenwood Tree* had been called, though it was not a portrait, nor was the fictitious tranter's kinship to the other musicians based on fact. He had been the many years' neighbour of the Hardys, and did the haulage of building materials for Hardy's father, of whom he also rented a field for his horses. The scene of his last moments was detailed in a letter to Hardy by one present at his death-bedside: 'He was quite in his senses, but not able to speak. A dark purple stain began in his leg that was injured many years ago by his waggon going over it; the stain ran up it about as fast as a fly walks. It ran up his body in the same way till, arriving level with his fingers, it began in them, and went on up his arms, up his neck and face, to the top of his head, when he breathed his last. Then a pure white began at his foot, and went upwards at the same rate, and in the same way, and he became as white throughout as he had been purple a minute before.'

In this connection it may be interesting to add that the actual name of the shoemaker 'Robert Penny' in the same story was Robert Reason. He, like the Tranter and the Tranter's wife, is buried in Stinsford Churchyard near the tombs of the Hardys, though his name is almost illegible. Hardy once said he would much have preferred to use the real name, as being better suited to the character, but thought at the time of writing that there were possible relatives who might be hurt by the use of it, though he afterwards found there were none. The only real name in the story is that of 'Voss', who brought the hot mead and viands to the choir on their rounds. It can still be read on a headstone, also quite near to where the Hardys lie. It will be remembered that these headstones are alluded to in the poem entitled 'The Dead Quire' —

There Dewy lay by the gaunt yew tree,  
There Reuben and Michael, a pace behind,  
And Bowman with his family

By the wall that the ivies bind.

Old Dewy has been called a portrait of Hardy's grandfather, but this was not the case; he died three years before the birth of the story-teller, almost in his prime, and long ere reaching the supposed age of William Dewy. There was, in fact, no family portrait in the tale.

A Pair of Blue Eyes was published in three volumes the latter part of May.

'May 5. "Maniel" [Immanuel] Riggs found dead. [A shepherd Hardy knew.] A curious man, who used to moisten his lips between every two or three words.'

'June 9, 1873. To London. Went to French Plays. Saw Brasseur, etc.'

'June 15. Met H. M. Moule at the Golden Cross Hotel. Dined with him at the British Hotel. Moule then left for Ipswich on his duties as Poor Law Inspector.'

'June 16-20. About London with my brother Henry.'

'June 20. By evening train to Cambridge. Stayed in College — Queens' — Went out with H. M. M. after dinner. A magnificent evening: sun over "the Backs".'

'Next morning went with H. M. M. to King's Chapel early. M. opened the great West doors to show the interior vista: we got upon the roof, where we could see Ely Cathedral gleaming in the distant sunlight. A never-to-be-forgotten morning. H. M. M. saw me off for London. His last smile.'

From London Hardy travelled on to Bath, arriving late at night and putting up at 8 Great Stanhope Street, where lodgings had been obtained for him by his warm-hearted friend Miss d'Arville, whom Miss Gifford was then visiting. The following dates are from the intermittent diary Hardy kept in these years.

'June 23. Excursions about Bath and Bristol with the ladies.'

'June 28. To Clifton with Miss Gifford.' — Where they were surprised by accidentally seeing in a newsagent's shop a commendatory review of A Pair of Blue Eyes in the Spectator.'

'June 30. About Bath alone. . . . Bath has a rural complexion on an urban substance. . . .'

'July 1. A day's trip with Miss G. To Chepstow, the Wye, the Wynd Cliff, which we climbed, and Tintern, where we repeated some of Wordsworth's lines thereon.

'At Tintern, silence is part of the pile. Destroy that, and you take a limb from an organism. . . . A wooded slope visible from every unmulioned window. But compare the age of the building with that of the marble hills from which it was drawn! . . .'

Here may be stated, in relation to the above words on the age of the hills, that this shortcoming of the most ancient architecture by comparison with geology was a consideration that frequently troubled Hardy's mind when measuring and drawing old Norman and other early buildings, just as it had been troubled by 'The Wolf' in his musical tuning, and by the thought that Greek literature had been at the mercy of dialects.

'July 2. Bath to Dorchester.'

## CHAPTER VII

### ‘FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD’, MARRIAGE, AND ANOTHER NOVEL

1873-1876: Aet. 33-36

Some half-year before this, in December 1872, Hardy had received at Bockhampton a letter from Leslie Stephen, the editor of the *Corn-hill* — by that time well known as a man of letters, Saturday reviewer, and Alpine climber — asking for a serial story for his magazine. He had lately read *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and thought ‘the descriptions admirable’. It was ‘long since he had received more pleasure from a new writer’, and it had occurred to him that such writing would probably please the readers of the *Cornhill Magazine* as much as it had pleased him.

Hardy had replied that he feared the date at which he could write a story for the *Cornhill* would be too late for Mr. Stephen’s purpose, since he already had on hand a succeeding novel (i.e. *A Pair of Blue Eyes*), which was arranged for; but that the next after should be at Mr. Stephen’s disposal. He had thought of making it a pastoral tale with the title of *Far from the Madding Crowd* — and that the chief characters would probably be a young woman-farmer, a shepherd, and a sergeant of cavalry. That was all he had done. Mr. Stephen had rejoined that he was sorry he could not expect a story from Hardy at an earlier date; that he did not, however, mean to fix any particular time; that the idea of the story attracted him just also the proposed title; and that he would like Hardy to call and talk it over when he came to Town. There the matter had been left. Now Hardy set about the pastoral tale, the success of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* meanwhile surpassing his expectations, the influential *Saturday Review* pronouncing it to be the most artistically constructed of the novels of its time — a quality which, by the bye, would carry little recommendation in these days of loose construction and indifference to organic homogeneity.

But Hardy did not call on Stephen just then.

It was, indeed, by the merest chance that he had ever got the *Cornhill* letter at all. The postal arrangements in Dorset were still so primitive at this date that the only delivery of letters at Hardy’s father’s house was by the hand of some friendly neighbour who had come from the next village, and Stephen’s request for a story had been picked up in the mud of the lane by a labouring man, the school children to whom it had been entrusted having dropped it on the way.

While thus in the seclusion of Bockhampton, writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*, we find him on September 21, walking to Woodbury-Hill Fair, approximately described in the novel as ‘*Green-hill Fair*’. On the 24th he was shocked at hearing of the tragic death of his friend Horace Moule, from whom he had parted cheerfully at Cambridge in June. The body was brought to be buried at Ford-ington, Dorchester, and Hardy attended the funeral. It was a matter of keen regret to him now, and for a long time

after, that Moule and the woman to whom Hardy was warmly attached had never set eyes on each other; and that she could never make Moule's acquaintance, or be his friend.

On the 30th of September he sent to Leslie Stephen at his request as much of the MS. of *Far from the Madding Crowd* as was written — apparently between two and three monthly parts, though some of it only in rough outline — and a few days after a letter came from Stephen stating that the story suited him admirably as far as it had gone, and that though as a rule it was desirable to see the whole of a novel before definitely accepting it, under the circumstances he decided to accept it at once.

So Hardy went on writing *Far from the Madding Crowd* — sometimes indoors, sometimes out — when he would occasionally find himself without a scrap of paper at the very moment that he felt volumes. In such circumstances he would use large dead leaves, white chips left by the wood-cutters, or pieces of stone or slate that came to hand. He used to say that when he carried a pocket-book his mind was barren as the Sahara.

This autumn Hardy assisted at his father's cider-making — a proceeding he had always enjoyed from childhood — the apples being from huge old trees that have now long perished. It was the last time he ever took part in a work whose sweet smells and oozings in the crisp autumn air can never be forgotten by those who have had a hand in it.

Memorandum by T. H.:

'Met J. D., one of the old Mellstock fiddlers — who kept me talking interminably: a man who speaks neither truth nor lies, but a sort of Not Proven compound which is very relishable. Told me of Jack, who spent all the money he had — sixpence — at the Oak Inn, took his sixpence out of the till when the landlady's back was turned, and spent it over again; then stole it again, and again spent it, till he had had a real skinful. "Was too honest to take any money but his own", said J. D.' (Some of J. D.'s characteristics appear in 'the Tranter' of *Under the Greenwood Tree*.)

At the end of October an unexpected note from the Cornhill editor asked if, supposing he were to start *Far from the Madding Crowd* in the January number (which would be out the third week in December) instead of the spring, as intended, Hardy could keep in front of the printers with his copy. He learnt afterwards that what had happened was that the MS. of a novel which the editor had arranged to begin in his pages in January had been lost in the post, according, at any rate, to its author's account. Hardy thought January not too soon for him, and that he could keep the printers going. Terms were consequently arranged with the publishers and proofs of the first number sent forthwith, Hardy incidentally expressing with regard to any illustrations, in a letter of October 1873, '<a hope that the rustics, although quaint, may be made to appear intelligent, and not boorish at all'; adding in a later letter: 'In reference to the illustrations, I have sketched in my note-book during the past summer a few correct outlines of smockfrocks, gaiters, sheep-crooks, rick-" staddles", a sheep-washing pool, one of the old-fashioned malt-houses, and some other out-of-the-way things that might

have to be shown. These I could send you if they would be of any use to the artist, but if he is a sensitive man and you think he would rather not be interfered with, I would not do so.'

No response had been made to this, and he was not quite clear whether, after all, Leslie Stephen had finally decided to begin so soon, when, returning from Cornwall on a fine December noontide (being New Year's Eve 1873-74), he opened on Plymouth Hoe a copy of the Cornhill that he had bought at the station, and there to his surprise saw his story placed at the beginning of the magazine, with a striking illustration, the artist being — also to his surprise — not a man but a woman, Miss Helen Paterson. He had only expected, from the undistinguished rank of the characters in the tale, that it would be put at the end, and possibly without a picture. Why this had come without warning to him was owing to the accident of his being away from his permanent address for several days, and nothing having been forwarded. It can be imagined how delighted Miss Gifford was to receive the first number of the story, whose nature he had kept from her to give her a pleasant surprise, and to find that her desire of a literary course for Hardy was in fair way of being justified.

In the first week of January 1874 the story was noticed in a marked degree by the Spectator, and a guess hazarded that it might be from the pen of George Eliot — why, the author could never understand, since, so far as he had read that great thinker — one of the greatest living, he thought, though not a born storyteller by any means — she had never touched the life of the fields: her country-people having seemed to him, too, more like small townfolk than rustics; and as evidencing a woman's wit cast in country dialogue rather than real country humour, which he regarded as rather of the Shakespeare and Fielding sort. However, he conjectured, as a possible reason for the flattering guess, that he had latterly been reading Comte's Positive Philosophy, and writings of that school, some of whose expressions had thus passed into his vocabulary, expressions which were also common to George Eliot. Leslie Stephen wrote:

'I am glad to congratulate you on the reception of your first number. Besides the gentle Spectator, which thinks that you must be George Eliot because you know the names of the stars, several good judges have spoken to me warmly of the Madding Crowd. Moreover the Spectator, though flighty in its head, has really a good deal of critical feeling. I always like to be praised by it — and indeed by other people! . . . The story comes out very well, I think, and I have no criticism to make.'

Respecting the public interest in the opening of the story, in later days Miss Thackeray informed him, with some of her father's humour, that to inquiries with which she was besieged on the sex of the author, and requests to be given an introduction to him or her, she would reply: 'It lives in the country, and I could not very well introduce you to it in Town.'

A passage may be quoted here from Mr. F. W. Maitland's Life of Leslie Stephen (to which Hardy contributed half a chapter or so, on Stephen as editor) which affords a humorous illustration of the difficulties of 'serial' writing in Victorian days. Stephen

had written to say that the seduction of Fanny Robin must be treated in ‘a gingerly fashion’, adding that it was owing to an ‘excessive prudery of which I am ashamed’.

‘I wondered what had so suddenly caused, in one who had seemed anything but a prude, the “excessive prudery” alluded to. But I did not learn till I saw him in April. Then he told me that an unexpected Grundian cloud, though no bigger than a man’s hand as yet, had appeared on our serene horizon. Three respectable ladies and subscribers, representing he knew not how many more, had written to upbraid him for an improper passage in a page of the story which had already been published.

‘I was struck mute, till I said, “Well, if you value the opinion of such people, why didn’t you think of them beforehand, and strike out the passage?” — “I ought to have, since it is their opinion, whether I value it or no”, he said with a half groan. “But it didn’t occur to me that there was anything to object to!” I reminded him that though three objectors who disliked the passage, or pretended to, might write their disapproval, three hundred who possibly approved of it would not take the trouble to write, and hence he might have a false impression of the public as a body. “ Yes; I agree. Still I suppose I ought to have foreseen these gentry, and have omitted it,” he murmured.

‘It may be added here, to finish with this detail (though it anticipates dates), that when the novel came out in volume form The Times quoted in a commendatory review the very passage that had offended. As soon as I met him, I said, “You see what The Times says about that paragraph; and you cannot say that The Times is not respectable.” He was smoking and answered tardily: “No, I can’t say that The Times is not respectable.” I then urged that if he had omitted the sentences, as he had wished he had done, I should never have taken the trouble to restore them in the reprint, and The Times could not have quoted them with approbation. I suppose my manner was slightly triumphant; at any rate, he said, “I spoke as an editor, not as a man. You have no more consciousness of these things than a child.”

To go back for a moment. Having attracted so much attention Hardy now again withdrew into retreat at Bockhampton to get ahead with the novel, which was in a lamentably unadvanced condition, writing to Stephen, when requesting that the proofs might be sent to that hermitage: ‘I have decided to finish it here, which is within a walk of the district in which the incidents are supposed to occur. I find it a great advantage to be actually among the people described at the time of describing them.’

However, that he did not care much for a reputation as a novelist in lieu of being able to follow the pursuit of poetry — now for ever hindered, as it seemed — becomes obvious from a remark written to Mr. Stephen about this time:

‘The truth is that I am willing, and indeed anxious, to give up any points which may be desirable in a story when read as a whole, for the sake of others which shall please those who read it in numbers. Perhaps I may have higher aims some day, and be a great stickler for the proper artistic balance of the completed work, but for the present circumstances lead me to wish merely to be considered a good hand at a serial.’

The fact was that at this date he was bent on carrying out later in the year an intention beside which a high repute as an artistic novelist loomed even less importantly than in ordinary — an intention to be presently mentioned.

He found he had drifted anew into a position he had vowed after his past experience he would in future keep clear of — that of having unfinished on his hands a novel of which the beginning was already before the public, and so having to write against time. He wrote so rapidly in fact that by February he was able to send the editor an instalment of copy sufficient for two or three months further, and another instalment in April.

On a visit to London in the winter Hardy had made the personal acquaintance of Leslie Stephen, the man whose philosophy was to influence his own for many years, indeed, more than that of any other contemporary, and received a welcome in his household, which was renewed from time to time, whereby he became acquainted with Mrs. Stephen and her sister Miss Thackeray. He also made acquaintance with Mr. G. Murray Smith, the publisher, and his family in April. At dinner there in May he met his skilful illustrator, Miss Helen Paterson, and gave her a few points; Mr. Frederick Greenwood; and Mrs. Procter, wife and soon after widow of ‘ Barry Cornwall’ the poet. The enormous acquaintance of Mrs. Procter with past celebrities was astonishing, and her humour in relating anecdotes of them charmed Hardy. She used to tell him that sometimes after avowing to Americans her acquaintance with a long list of famous bygone people, she had been compelled to deny knowledge of certain others she had equally well known, to re-establish her listener’s wavering faith in her veracity.

Back again in Dorsetshire he continued his application to the story, and by July had written it all, the last few chapters having been done at a gallop, for a reason to be told directly. In the middle of the month he resumed residence in London, where he hurriedly corrected the concluding pages and posted the end of the MS. to the editor early in August.

The next month Thomas Hardy and Miss Emma Lavinia Gifford were married at St. Peter’s, Elgin Avenue, Paddington, by her uncle Dr. E. Hamilton Gifford, Canon of Worcester, and afterwards Archdeacon of London. In the November following *Far from the Madding Crowd* was published in two volumes, with the illustrations by Miss Helen Paterson, who by an odd coincidence had also thought fit to marry William Allingham during the progress of the story. It may be said in passing that the development of the chapters month by month had brought these lines from Mrs. Procter:

‘You would be gratified to know what a shock the marriage of Bathsheba was. I resembled Mr. Boldwood — and to deceive such an old novel-reader as myself is a triumph. We are always looking out for traps, and scent a long way off a surprise. . . .

‘I hear that you are coming to live in stony-hearted London. Our great fault is that we are all alike. . . . We press so closely against each other that any small shoots are cut off at once, and the young tree grows in shape like the old one.’

When the book appeared complete the author and his wife, after a short visit to the Continent — their first Continental days having been spent at Rouen — had tem-

porarily gone to live at Surbiton, and remained there for a considerable time without nearly realising the full extent of the interest that had been excited among the reading public by the novel, which unsophistication was only partially removed by their seeing with unusual frequency, during their journeys to and from London, ladies carrying about copies of it with Mudie's label on the covers.

Meanwhile Mr. George Smith, head of the firm of Smith and Elder — a man of wide experience, who had brought Charlotte Bronte before the reading public, and who became a disinterested friend of Hardy's — suggested to him that he should if possible get back the copyright of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, which he had sold to Tinsley Brothers for £30. Tinsley at first replied that he would not return it for any sum: then that he would sell it for £300. Hardy offered half, which offer Tinsley did not respond to, and there the matter dropped.

Among the curious consequences of the popularity of *Far from the Madding Crowd* was a letter from the lady he had so admired as a child, when she was the grande dame of the parish in which he was born. He had seen her only once since — at her town-house in Bruton Street as aforesaid. But it should be stated in justice to her that her writing was not merely a rekindled interest on account of his book's popularity, for she had written to him in his obscurity, before he had published a line, asking him to come and see her, and addressing him as her dear Tommy, as when he was a small boy, apologizing for doing so on the ground that she could not help it. She was now quite an elderly lady, but by signing her letter 'Julia Augusta' she revived throbs of tender feeling in him, and brought back to his memory the thrilling 'frou-frou' of her four grey silk flounces when she had used to bend over him, and when they brushed against the font as she entered church on Sundays. He replied, but, as it appears, did not go to see her.

Meanwhile the more tangible result of the demand for *Far from the Madding Crowd* was an immediate request from the editor and publishers of the Cornhill for another story, which should begin as early as possible in 1875.

This was the means of urging Hardy into the unfortunate course of hurrying forward a further production before he was aware of what there had been of value in his previous one: before learning, that is, not only what had attracted the public, but what was of true and genuine substance on which to build a career as a writer with a real literary message. For mere popularity he cared little, as little as he did for large payments; but having now to live by the pen — or, as he would quote, 'to keep base life afoot' — he had to consider popularity. This request for more of his writing not only from the Cornhill but from other quarters coincided with quizzing personal gossip, among other paragraphs being one that novel-writing was coming to a pretty pass, the author of *Lorna Doone* having avowed himself a market-gardener, and the author of *Far from the Madding Crowd* having been discovered to be a house-decorator (!). Criticism like this influenced him to put aside a woodland story he had thought of (which later took shape in *The Woodlanders*), and make a plunge in a new and untried direction. He was aware of the pecuniary value of a reputation for a speciality; and as above stated, the



acquisition of something like a regular income had become important. Yet he had not the slightest intention of writing for ever about sheepfarming, as the reading public was apparently expecting him to do, and as, in fact, they presently resented his not doing. Hence, to the consternation of his editor and publishers, in March he sent up as a response to their requests the beginning of a tale called *The Hand of Ethelberta* — A Comedy in Chapters which had nothing whatever in common with anything he had written before.

In March he went to the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-Race, and entered rooms taken in Newton Road, Westbourne Grove, a light being thrown on the domestic and practical side of his life at this time by the following:

‘Newton Road, Westbourne Grove, March 19, 1875.

‘Messrs Townly and Bonniwell, Surbiton.

‘Gentlemen: Please to warehouse the cases and boxes sent herewith, and numbered as follows:

‘No. 1. Size 3 ft. 6 ins. x 2 ft. 6 ins. x 2 ft. 2 ins., containing linen and books.

‘No. 2. Size 2 ft. 0 ins. x 1 ft. 9 ins. x 1 ft. 1 ins. containing books.

‘No. 3. Size 2 ft. 0 ins. x 1 ft. 4 ins. x 1 ft. 2 ins. containing books.

‘No. 4. Size 1 ft. 5 ins. x 1 ft. 0 ins. x 1 ft. 0 ins. containing sundries.

‘A receipt for same will oblige’.

Their entire worldly goods were contained in this small compass.

The next three months were spent at the address given above, where they followed an ordinary round of museum, theatre, and concert-going, with some dining-out, in keeping with (what he had written earlier to Mr. George Smith: ‘We are coming to Town for three months on account of *Ethelberta*, some London scenes occurring in her chequered career which I want to do as vigorously as possible — having already visited Rouen and Paris with the same object, other adventures of hers taking place there.’ He also asked Smith’s advice on a German translation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which had been asked for.

The *Comedy in Chapters*, despite its departure from a path desired by his new-found readers, and to some extent desired by himself, was accepted for the magazine. The beginning appeared in the *Cornhill* for May, when Hardy had at last the satisfaction of proving, amid the general disappointment at the lack of sheep and shepherds, that he did not mean to imitate anybody, whatever the satisfaction might have been worth. The sub-title did not appear in the magazine, Mr. Stephen having written in respect of it:

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‘I am sorry to have to bother you about a trifle! I fully approved of your suggestion for adding to “*Ethelberta’s Hand*” the descriptive title “*A Comedy in Chapters*”. I find however from other people that it gives rather an unfortunate idea. They understand by *Comedy* something of the farce description, and expect you to be funny after the fashion of Mr., or some professional joker. This, of course,

is stupid; but then, advertisements are meant for stupid people. The question is, unluckily, not what they ought to feel but what they do feel. ... I think, therefore, that if you have no strong reason to the contrary it will be better to drop the second title for the present. When the book is reprinted it can of course appear, because then the illusion would be immediately dispelled.'

One reflection about himself at this date sometimes made Hardy uneasy. He perceived that he was 'up against' the position of having to carry on his life not as an emotion, but as a scientific game; that he was committed by circumstances to novel-writing as a regular trade, as much as he had formerly been to architecture; and that hence he would, he deemed, have to look for material in manners — in ordinary social and fashionable life as other novelists did. Yet he took no interest in manners, but in the substance of life only. So far what he had written had not been novels at all, as usually understood — that is pictures of modern customs and observances — and might not long sustain the interest of the circulating library subscriber who cared mainly for those things. On the other hand, to go about to dinners and clubs and crushes as a business was not much to his mind. Yet that was necessary meat and drink to the popular author. Not that he was unsociable, but events and long habit had accustomed him to solitary living. So it was also with his wife, of whom he wrote later, in the poem entitled 'A Dream or No':

Lonely I found her,  
The sea-birds around her,  
And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

He mentioned this doubt of himself one day to Miss Thackeray, who confirmed his gloomy misgivings by saying with surprise: 'Certainly; a novelist must necessarily like society!'

Another incident which added to his dubiety was the arrival of a letter from Coventry Patmore, a total stranger to him, expressing the view that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was in its nature not a conception for prose, and that he 'regretted at almost every page that such unequalled beauty and power should not have assured themselves the immortality which would have been impressed upon them by the form of verse'. Hardy was much struck by this opinion from Pat - more. However, finding himself committed to prose, he renewed his consideration of a prose style, as it is evident from the following note: 'Read again Addison, Macaulay, Newman, Sterne, Defoe, Lamb, Gibbon, Burke, Times leaders, etc., in a study of style. Am more and more confirmed in an idea I have long held, as a matter of common sense, long before I thought of any old aphorism bearing on the subject: "Ars est celare artem". The whole secret of a living style and the difference between it and a dead style, lies in not having too much style — being, in fact, a little careless, or rather seeming to be, here and there. It brings wonderful life into the writing:

'A sweet disorder in the dress . . .  
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie I see a wild civility,  
Do more bewitch me than when art Is too precise in every part.

‘Otherwise your style is like worn half-pence — all the fresh images rounded off by rubbing, and no crispness or movement at all.

‘It is, of course, simply a carrying into prose the knowledge I have acquired in poetry — that inexact rhymes and rhythms now and then are far more pleasing than correct ones.’

About the time at which the Hardys were leaving Surbiton for Newton Road occurred an incident, which can best be described by quoting Hardy’s own account of it as printed in Mr. F. W. Maitland’s *Life of Leslie Stephen*:

‘One day (March 23, 1875) I received from Stephen a mysterious note asking me to call in the evening, as late as I liked. I went, and found him alone, wandering up and down his library in slippers; his tall thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown. After a few remarks on our magazine arrangements he said he wanted me to witness his signature to what, for a moment, I thought was his will; but it turned out to be a deed renunciatory of holy-orders under the act of 1870. He said grimly that he was really a reverend gentleman still, little as he might look it, and that he thought it was as well to cut himself adrift of a calling for which, to say the least, he had always been utterly unfit. The deed was executed with due formality. Our conversation then turned upon theologies decayed and defunct, the origin of things, the constitution of matter, the unreality of time and kindred subjects. He told me that he had “wasted”

much time on systems of religion and metaphysics, and that the new theory of vortex rings had “a staggering fascination” for him.’

On this description the editor of the *Life*, Mr. Maitland, remarks: ‘This scene — I need not say it — is well drawn. A tall thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown was what one saw if one climbed to that Stylites study at dead of night.’

In May Hardy formed one of a deputation to Mr. Disraeli in support of a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the state of Copyright Law; and on Waterloo Day he and his wife went to Chelsea Hospital — it being the 60th anniversary of the battle — and made acquaintance with the Waterloo men still surviving there. Hardy would tell that one of these — a delightful old campaigner named John Bentley whom he knew to the last — put his arm round Mrs. Hardy’s waist, and interlarded his discourse with ‘my dear young woman’, while he described to her his experiences of that memorable day, one rather incisive touch in his tale to her being that through the haze of smoke all that could be discerned was ‘anything that shined’, such as bayonets, helmets, and swords. The wet eve of the battle, when they slept in the rain with nothing over them, he spoke of as ‘last night’, as if he were speaking on the actual day. Another experience he related to her was a love-affair. While quartered in Brussels he had a sweetheart. When ordered to advance to Waterloo her friends offered to hide him if he would desert, as the French were sure to win. He refused, urging the oath he had taken; but he felt strongly tempted, as she was very fond of him, and he of her. She begged him to write, if he lived through the campaign, and to be sure to get a Belgian or Frenchman to direct the letter, or it might not find her. After the battle, and when he was in Paris he did write, and received an answer, saying she would come

to Paris and meet him on Christmas Day at 3 o'clock. His regiment had received orders to march before that time, and at Christmas he was — Mrs. Hardy forgot where. But he thought of her, and wondered if she came. 'Yes, you see, 'twas God's will we should meet no more', said Bentley, speaking of her with peculiar tenderness.

In this same month of 1875, it may be interesting to note, occurs the first mention in Hardy's memoranda of the idea of an epic on the war with Napoleon — carried out so many years later in *The Dynasts*. This earliest note runs as follows:

'Mem: A Ballad of the Hundred Days. Then another of Moscow. Others of earlier campaigns — forming altogether an *Iliad* of Europe from 1789 to 1815.'

That Hardy, however, was endeavouring to live practically at this time, as well as imaginatively, is shown by an entry immediately following:

'House at Childe-Okeford, Dorset. To be sold by auction June 10'; and by his starting on the 22nd for a day or two in Dorsetshire house-hunting, first visiting Shaftesbury, where he found a cottage for £25 a year, that did not, however, suit; thence to Blandford, and thence to Wimborne, where on arrival he entered the Minster at ten at night, having seen a light within, and sat in a stall listening to the organist practising, while the rays from the musician's solitary candle streamed across the arcades. This incident seems to have inclined him to Wimborne; but he did not go there yet.

In July the couple went to Bournemouth, and thence by steamer to Swanage, where they found lodgings at the house of an invalided captain of smacks and ketches; and Hardy, suspending his househunting, settled down there for the autumn and winter to finish *The Hand of Ethelberta*.

While completing it he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a ballad he had written nine or ten years earlier during his time with Blomfield, called 'The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's' (and in some editions 'The Bride-night Fire') — which, as with his other verses, he had been unable to get into print at the date of its composition by the rather perfunctory efforts he made.

'Nov. 28. I sit under a tree, and feel alone: I think of certain insects around me as magnified by the microscope: creatures like elephants, flying dragons, etc. And I feel I am by no means alone.

'29. He has read well who has learnt that there is more to read outside books than in them.'

Their landlord, the 'captain', used to tell them, as sailors will, strange stories of his sea-farings; mostly smuggling stories — one of them Hardy always remembered because of its odd development. The narrator was in a fishing-boat going to meet a French lugger half-Channel-over, to receive spirit-tubs and land them. He and his mates were some nine miles off Portland, which was the limit allowed, when they were sighted by the revenue-cutter. Seeing the cutter coming up, they said 'We must act as if we were fishing for mackerel'. But they had no bait, and the ruse would be discovered. They snapped up the stems of their tobacco-pipes, and unfastening the hook from a line they had with them slipped on the bits of tobacco - pipe above the shank. The officers came — saw them fishing, and merely observing that they were a long way

from shore, and dubiously asking why, and being innocently told because the fish were there, left them. Then, as if the bait had been genuine, to their surprise, on pulling up the sham line they began to haul in mackerel. The fish had made their deception truth.

Masters also told them that when persons are drowned in a high sea in the West (or Deadman's) Bay, 'the sea undresses them' — mauling off their clothes and leaving them naked.

While here at Swanage they walked daily on the cliffs and shore, Hardy noting thereon:

'Evening. Just after sunset. Sitting with E. on a stone under the wall before the Refreshment Cottage. The sounds are two, and only two. On the left Durlstone Head roaring high and low, like a giant asleep. On the right a thrush. Above the bird hangs the new moon, and a steady planet.'

In the same winter of 1875 an article appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* on Far from the Madding Crowd entitled 'Le roman pastoral en Angleterre'.

Ethelberta was finished in the January of the next year (1876) and the MS. dispatched. Pending the appearance of the story in volumes the twain removed in March to lodgings at Yeovil to facilitate their search for a little dwelling. Here they were living when the novel was published. It was received in a friendly spirit and even with admiration in some quarters — more, indeed, than Hardy had expected — one experienced critic going so far as to write that it was the finest ideal comedy since the days of Shakespeare. 'Show me the lady in the flesh', he said in a letter to the author, 'and I vow on my honour as a bachelor to become a humble addition to her devoted train.' It did not, however, win the cordiality that had greeted its two forerunners, the chief objection seeming to be that it was 'impossible'. It was, in fact, thirty years too soon for a Comedy of Society of that kind — just as *The Poor Man and the Lady* had been too soon for a socialist story, and as other of his writings — in prose and verse — were too soon for their date. The most impossible situation in it was said to be that of the heroine sitting at table at a dinner-party of 'the best people', at which her father was present by the sideboard as butler. Yet a similar situation has been applauded in a play in recent years by Mr. Bernard Shaw, without any sense of improbability.

This ended Hardy's connection with Leslie Stephen as editor, though not as friend; and in the course of a letter expressing a hope that it might be renewed, Stephen wrote (May 16, 1876):

'My remark about modern lectures [?] was of course "wrote sarcastic", as Artemus Ward says, and intended for a passing dig in the ribs of some modern critics, who think that they can lay down laws in art like the Pope in religion; e.g. the whole Rossetti-Swinburne school think as a critic, that the less authors read of criticism the better. You, e.g., have a perfectly fresh and original vein, and I think the less you bother yourself about critical canons the less chance there is of your becoming self-conscious and cramped. . . . Ste. Beuve, and Mat Arnold (in a smaller way), are the only modern

critics who seem to me worth reading. . . . We are generally a poor lot, horribly afraid of not being in the fashion, and disposed to give ourselves airs on very small grounds.'

1 May. In an orchard at Closeworth. Cowslips under trees. A light proceeds from them, as from Chinese lanterns or glow-worms.'

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOLLAND, THE RHINE, AND STURMINSTER NEWTON

1876-1878: Aet. 36-37

From their lodgings in Yeovil they set out at the end of May for Holland and the Rhine — the first thing that struck them being that 'the Dutch seemed like police perpetually keeping back an unruly crowd composed of waves'. They visited Rotterdam — 'looking over-clean and new, with not enough shadow, and with houses nearly all out of the perpendicular'; then The Hague, Scheveningen, Emmerich, and Cologne, where Hardy was disappointed by the machine-made Gothic of the Cathedral, and whence in a few days they went on 'between the banks that bear the vine', to Bonn, Coblenz, Ehrenbreitstein, and Mainz, where they were impressed by a huge confirmation in the cathedral which, by the way, was accompanied by a tune like that of Keble's Evening Hymn. Heidelberg they loved, and looking west one evening from the top of the tower on the Königsstuhl, Hardy remarks on a singular optical effect that was almost tragic. Owing to mist the wide landscape itself was not visible, but 'the Rhine glared like a riband of blood, as if it serpented through the atmosphere above the earth's surface'. Thence they went to Carlsruhe, where they attended a fair, and searched for a German lady Hardy had known in England, but were unable to find her. Baden and the Black Forest followed, and next they proceeded to Strassburg, and then they turned back, travelling by way of Metz to Brussels. Here Hardy — maybe with his mind on *The Dynasts* — explored the field of Waterloo, and a day or two later spent some time in investigating the problem of the actual scene of the Duchess of Richmond's Ball, with no result that satisfied him, writing a letter while here to some London paper to that effect — a letter which has not been traced.

A short stay in Brussels was followed by their homeward course through Antwerp, where they halted awhile; and Harwich, having a miserable passage on a windy night in a small steamer with cattle on board.

In London they were much astonished and amused to see in large letters on the newspaper-posters that there had been riots at Antwerp; and they recalled that they had noticed a brass band parading the streets with about a dozen workmen walking quietly behind.

June (1876). Arriving at Yeovil again after another Waterloo - day visit to Chelsea by Hardy (where, in the private parlour of 'The Turk's Head' over glasses of grog, the battle was fought yet again by the dwindling number of pensioners who had taken part in it), his first consideration was the resumed question of a cottage, having ere this received hints from relatives that he and his wife 'appeared to be wandering about like two tramps'; and also growing incommoded by an accumulation of luggage in packing-cases, mostly books, for of other furniture they had as yet not a stick; till they went out one day to an auction and bought a door-scraper and a book-case, with which two articles they laid the foundation of household goods and effects.

'June 25. The irritating necessity of conforming to rules which in themselves have no virtue.'

'June 26. If it be possible to compress into a sentence all that a man learns between 20 and 40, it is that all things merge in one another — good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, the year into the ages, the world into the universe. With this in view the evolution of species seems but a minute and obvious process in the same movement.'

A pretty cottage overlooking the Dorset Stour — called 'Riverside Villa' — offered itself at Sturminster Newton, and this they took at midsummer, hastily furnished it in part by going to Bristol and buying £100 worth of mid-Victorian furniture in two hours; entering on July 3. It was their first house and, though small, probably that in which they spent their happiest days. Several poems commemorate their term there of nearly two years. A memorandum dated just after their entry runs as follows:

'Rowed on the Stour in the evening, the sun setting up the river. Just afterwards a faint exhalation visible on surface of water as we stirred it with the oars. A fishy smell from the numerous eels and other fish beneath. Mowers salute us. Rowed among the water - lilies to gather them. Their long ropy stems.

'Passing the island drove out a flock of swallows from the bushes and sedge, which had gone there to roost. Gathered meadow-sweet.

Rowed with difficulty through the weeds, the rushes on the border standing like palisades against the bright sky. ... A cloud in the sky like a huge quill-pen.'

Another entry at this time:

'A story has been told me of a doctor at Maiden Newton, who attended a woman who could not pay him. He said he would take the dead baby in payment. He had it, and it was kept on his mantelpiece in a large glass jar in spirits, which stained the body brown. The doctor, who was a young man, afterwards married and used his wife badly, insisting on keeping the other woman's dead baby on his mantelpiece.'

Another:

'Mr. Warry says that a farmer who was tenant of a friend of his, used to take the heart of every calf that died, and, sticking it full of black thorns, hang it on the cotterel, or cross-bar, of his chimney: this was done to prevent the spread of the disease that had killed the calf. When the next tenant came the chimney smoked very much, and

examining it, they found it choked with hearts treated in the manner described — by that time dry and parched.’

Another:

““Toad Fair.” An old man, a wizard, used to bring toads’ legs in little bags to Bagber Bridge [close to where Hardy was living], where he was met by crowds of people who came in vehicles and on foot, and bought them as charms to cure scrofula by wearing them round the neck. These legs were supposed to twitch occasionally in the bag, and probably did, when it gave the wearer’s blood a “ turn “, and changed the course of the disease.’

‘There are two sorts of church people; those who go, and those who don’t go: there is only one sort of chapel-people; those who go-’

““All is vanity”, saith the Preacher. But if all were only vanity, who would mind? Alas, it is too often worse than vanity; agony, darkness, death also.’

‘A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situation, or were he not one who never has learnt it. After risibility from comedy, how often does the thoughtful mind reproach itself for forgetting the truth? Laughter always means blindness — either from defect, choice, or accident.’

During a visit to London in December Hardy attended a Conference on the Eastern Question at St. James’s Hall, and heard speak Mr. Gladstone, Lord Shaftesbury, Hon. E. Ashley, Anthony Trollope,

and the Duke of Westminster. ‘Trollope outran the five or seven minutes allowed for each speech, and the Duke, who was chairman, after various soundings of the bell, and other hints that he must stop, tugged at Trollope’s coat-tails in desperation. Trollope turned round, exclaimed parenthetically, “Please leave my coat alone,” and went on speaking.’

They spent Christmas with Hardy’s father and mother; and while there his father told them that when he was a boy the hobby-horse was still a Christmas amusement. On one occasion the village band of West Stafford was at Mr. Floyer’s (the landowner’s) at a party, where among other entertainments was that of the said hobby-horse. One of the servants was terrified death-white at the sight of it running about, and rushed into an adjoining dark room where the band’s violoncello was lying, entering with such force as to knock off the neck of the instrument.

A Pair of Blue Eyes was much to the taste of French readers, and was favourably criticized in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* early the next year (1877). It appears to have been also a romance that Hardy himself did not wish to let die, for we find him writing to Mr. George Smith in the following April:

‘There are circumstances in connection with A Pair of Blue Eyes which make me anxious to favour it, even at the expense of profit, if I can possibly do so. ... I know that you do sometimes, not to say frequently, take an interest in producing a book quite apart from commercial views as a publisher, and I should like to gain such interest for this one of mine. ... I can get a photograph of the picturesque Cornish coast, the scene of the story, from which a drawing could be made for the frontispiece.’



Mr. Smith replied that though he had not printed the original edition he would take it up, profit or no profit; but for some unexplained reason the book was published at other hands, the re-issue receiving much commendatory notice.

‘May 1. A man comes every evening to the cliff in front of our house to see the sun set, timing himself to arrive a few minutes before the descent. Last night he came, but there was a cloud. His disappointment.’

‘May 30. Walking to Marnhull. The prime of bird-singing. The thrushes and black-birds are the most prominent, — pleading earnestly rather than singing, and with such modulation that you seem to see their little tongues curl inside their bills in their emphasis. A bullfinch sings from a tree with a metallic sweetness piercing as a fife. Further on I come to a hideous carcass of a house in a green landscape, like a skull on a table of dessert.’

Same date:

‘I sometimes look upon all things in inanimate Nature as pensive mutes.’

‘June 3. Mr. Young says that his grandfather [about 1750-1830] was very much excited, as was everybody in Sturminster, when a mail-coach ran from Poole to Bristol. On the morning it ran for the first time he got up early, swept the whole street, and sprinkled sand for the vehicle and horses to pass over.’

Same date:

‘The world often feels certain works of genius to be great, without knowing why: hence it may be that particular poets and novelists may have had the wrong quality in them noticed and applauded as that which makes them great.’

We also find in this June of 1877 an entry that adumbrates *The Dynasts* yet again — showing that the idea by this time has advanced a stage — from that of a ballad, or ballad-sequence, to a ‘grand drama’, viz.:

‘Consider a grand drama, based on the wars with Napoleon, or some one campaign (but not as Shakespeare’s historical dramas). It might be called “Napoleon”, or “Josephine”, or by some other person’s name.’

He writes also, in another connection:

‘There is enough poetry in what is left [in life], after all the false romance has been abstracted, to make a sweet pattern: e.g. the poem by H. Coleridge:

“She is not fair to outward view”.

‘So, then, if Nature’s defects must be looked in the face and transcribed, whence arises the art in poetry and novel-writing? which must certainly show art, or it becomes merely mechanical reporting. I think the art lies in making these defects the basis of a hitherto unperceived beauty, by irradiating them with “the light that never was” on their surface, but is seen to be latent in them by the spiritual eye.’

‘June 28. Being Coronation Day there are games and dancing on the green at Sturminster Newton. The stewards with white rosettes. One is very anxious, fearing that while he is attending to the runners the leg of mutton on the pole will go wrong; hence he walks hither and thither with a compressed countenance and eyes far ahead.

‘The pretty girls, just before a dance, stand in inviting positions on the grass. As the couples in each figure pass near where their immediate friends loiter, each girl-partner gives a laughing glance at such friends, and whirls on.’

‘June 29. Have just passed through a painful night and morning. Our servant, whom we liked very much, was given a holiday yesterday to go to Bournemouth with her young man. Came home last night at ten, seeming oppressed. At about half-past twelve, when we were supposed to be asleep, she crept downstairs, went out, and on looking from the back window of our bedroom I saw her come from the outhouse with a man. She appeared to have only her nightgown on and something round her shoulders. Beside her slight white figure in the moonlight his form looked dark and gigantic. She preceded him to the door. Before I had thought what to do E. had run downstairs, and met her, and ordered her to bed. The man disappeared. Found that the bolts of the back-door had been oiled. He had evidently often stayed in the house.

‘She remained quiet till between four and five, when she got out of the dining-room window and vanished.’

1 June 30. About one o’clock went to her father’s cottage in the village, where we thought she had gone. Found them poorer than I expected (for they are said to be an old county family). Her father was in the field hay-making, and a little girl fetched him from the haymakers. He came across to me amid the windrows of hay, and seemed to read bad news in my face. She had not been home. I remembered that she had dressed up in her best clothes, and she probably has gone to Stalbridge to her lover.’

The further career of this young woman is not recorded, except as to one trifling detail.

‘July 4. Went to Stalbridge. Mrs. is a charming woman.

When we were looking over the church she recommended me to try a curious seat, adding, though we were only talking about the church itself, “That’s where I sat when Jamie was christened, and I could see him very well”. Another seat she pointed out with assumed casualness as being the one where she sat when she was churched; as if it were rather interesting that she did sit in those places, in spite of her not being a romantic person. When we arrived at her house she told us that Jamie really could not be seen — he was in a dreadful state — covered with hay; half laughing and catching

our eyes while she spoke, as if we should know at once how intensely humorous he must appear under those circumstances. Jamie was evidently her life, and flesh, and raiment. . . . Her husband is what we call a “yopping, or yapping man”. He strains his countenance hard in smiling, and keeps it so for a distinct length of time, so that you may on no account whatever miss his smile and the point of the words that gave rise to it. Picks up pictures and china for eighteenpence worth ever so much more. Gives cottagers a new set of tea-cups with handles for old ones without handles — an exchange which they are delighted to make.

‘Country life at Sturminster. Vegetables pass from growing to boiling, fruit from the bushes to the pudding, without a moment’s halt, and the gooseberries that were ripening on the twigs at noon are in the tart an hour later.’

‘July 13. The sudden disappointment of a hope leaves a scar which the ultimate fulfilment of that hope never entirely removes.’

‘July 27. James Bushrod of Broadmayne saw the two German soldiers [of the York Hussars] shot [for desertion] on Bincombe Down in 1801. It was in the path across the Down, or near it. James Selby of the same village thinks there is a mark.’ [The tragedy was used in *The Melancholy Hussar*, the real names of the deserters being given.]

‘August 13. We hear that Jane, our late servant, is soon to have a baby. Yet never a sign of one is there for us.’

‘September 25. Went to Shroton Fair. In a twopenny show saw a woman beheaded. In another a man whose hair grew on one side of his face. Coming back across Hambleton Hill (where the Club - Men assembled, temp. Cromwell) a fog came on. I nearly got lost in the dark inside the earthworks, the old hump-backed man I had parted from on the other side of the hill, who was going somewhere else before coming across the earthworks in my direction, being at the bottom as soon as I. A man might go round and round all night in such a place.’

‘September 28. An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand.’

‘October 31. To Bath. Took lodgings for my father near the baths and Abbey. Met him at G.W. Station. Took him to the lodgings. To theatre in the evening. Stayed in Bath. Next day went with father to the baths, to begin the cure.’

During this year 1877 Hardy had the sadness of hearing of the death of Raphael Brandon, the literary architect whom he had been thrown with seven years earlier, at a critical stage in his own career. He also at this time entered into an interesting correspondence with Mrs. Chatteris, daughter of Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, upon some facts in the life of the latter. But his main occupation at Riverside Villa (or ‘Rivercliff’ as they sometimes called it) was writing *The Return of the Native*. The only note he makes of its progress is that, on November 8, parts 3, 4, and 5 of the story were posted to Messrs. Chatto and Windus for publication in (of all places) *Belgravia* — a monthly magazine then running. Strangely enough, the rich alluvial district of Sturminster Newton in which the author was now living was not used by him at this

time as a setting for the story he was constructing there, but the heath country twenty miles off. It may be mentioned here that the name 'Eustacia' which he gave to his heroine was that of the wife of the owner of the manor of Ower Moigne in the reign of Henry IV, which parish includes part of the 'Egdon' Heath of the story (vide Hutchins's Dorset)-, and that 'Clement', the name of the hero, was suggested by its being borne by one of his supposed ancestors, Clement le Hardy, of Jersey, whose family migrated from that isle to the west of England at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

On the same day he jots down:

'November 8. Mr. and Mrs. Dashwood came to tea. Mr. Dash - wood [a local solicitor and landowner] says that poachers elevate a pan of brimstone on a stick under pheasants at roost, and so stupefy them that they fall.

'Sometimes the keepers make dummy pheasants and fix them in places where pheasants are known to roost: then watch by them. The poachers come; shoot and shoot again, when the keepers rush out.

'At a battue the other day lots of the birds ran into the keeper's house for protection.

'Mr. D. says that a poacher he defended at Quarter Sessions asked for time to pay the fine imposed, and they gave him till the next Justice-meeting. He said to Mr. D., "I shall be able to get it out of 'em before then", and in fact he had in a week poached enough birds from the Justices' preserves to pay the five pounds.'

'November 12. A flooded river after the incessant rains of yesterday. Lumps of froth float down like swans in front of our house. At the arches of the large stone bridge the froth has accumulated and lies like hillocks of salt against the bridge; then the arch chokes, and after a silence coughs out the air and froth, and gurgles on.'

'End of November. This evening the west is like some vast foundry where new worlds are being cast.'

'December 22. In the evening I went with Dr. Leach the coroner to an inquest which was to be held at Stourton Caundell on the body of a boy. Arrived at the Trooper Inn after a lonely drive through dark and muddy lanes. Met at the door by the Superintendent of Police and a policeman in plain clothes. Also by Mr. Long, who had begun the post-mortem. We then went to the cottage; a woman or two, and children, were sitting by the fire, who looked at us with a cowed expression. Upstairs the body of the boy lay on a box covered with a sheet. It was uncovered, and Mr. Long went on with his autopsy, I holding a candle, and the policeman another. Found a clot in the heart, but no irritant poison in the stomach, as had been suspected. The inquest was then held at the inn.'

'December 26. In literature young men usually begin their careers by being judges, and as wisdom and old experience arrive they reach the dignity of standing as culprits at the bar before new young bloods who have in their turn sprung up in the judgment-seat.'

A correspondence with Baron Tauchnitz in reference to Continental editions of his books was one of the businesses of the year-end.

Despite the pleasure of this life at Sturminster Newton Hardy had decided that the practical side of his vocation of novelist demanded that he should have his headquarters in or near London. The wisdom of his decision, considering the nature of his writing, he afterwards questioned. So in the first week of February he and Mrs. Hardy went up to look for a house, and about the middle of the month he signed an agreement for a three-years' lease of one at Upper Tooting, close to Wandsworth Common.

'March 5. Concert at Sturminster. A Miss Marsh of Sutton [Keinton?] Mandeville sang "Should he upbraid", to Bishop's old tune. She is the sweetest of singers — thrush-like in the descending scale, and lark-like in the ascending — drawing out the soul of listeners in a gradual thread of excruciating attenuation like silk from a cocoon.'

Many years after Hardy was accustomed to say that this was the most marvellous old song in English music in its power of touching an audience. There was no surer card to play as an encore, even when it was executed but indifferently well. He wrote some lines thereon entitled 'The Maid of Keinton Mandeville'.

'March 18. End of the Sturminster Newton idyll . . .' [The following is written in later] 'Our happiest time.'

It was also a poetical time. Several poems in *Moments of Vision* contain memories of it, such as 'Overlooking the River Stour', 'The Musical Box', and 'On Sturminster Foot-Bridge'.

That evening of March 18 a man came to arrange about packing their furniture, and the next day it was all out of the house. They slept at Mrs. Dashwood's, after breakfasting, lunching, and dining there; and in the morning saw their goods off, and left Sturminster for London.

## CHAPTER IX

### LIFE AND LITERATURE IN A LONDON SUBURB

1878-1880: Aet. 37-39

Two days later they beheld their furniture descending from a pair of vans at 1 Arundel Terrace ('The Larches'), Trinity Road, just beyond Wandsworth Common. They had stayed at Bolingbroke Grove to be near.

'March 22. We came from Bolingbroke Grove to Arundel Terrace and slept here for the first time. Our house is the south-east corner one where Brodrick Road crosses Trinity Road down towards Wandsworth Common Station, the side door being in Brodrick Road.'

'April — Note. A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason

of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions.

‘The advantages of the letter-system of telling a story (passing over the disadvantages) are that, hearing what one side has to say, you are led constantly to the imagination of what the other side must be feeling, and at last are anxious to know if the other side does really feel what you imagine.’

‘April 22. The method of Boldini, the painter of “The Morning Walk” in the French Gallery two or three years ago (a young lady beside an ugly blank wall on an ugly highway) — of Hobbema, in his view of a road with formal lopped trees and flat tame scenery — is that of infusing emotion into the baldest external objects either by the presence of a human figure among them, or by mark of some human connection with them.

‘This accords with my feeling about, say, Heidelberg and Baden versus Scheveningen — as I wrote at the beginning of *The Return of the Native* — that the beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect, and a beloved relative’s old battered tankard to 120

the finest Greek vase. Paradoxically put, it is to see the beauty in ugliness.’

‘April 29. Mr. George Smith (Smith Elder and Co.) informs me that how he first got to know Thackeray was through “a mutual friend” — to whom Smith said, “Tell Thackeray that I will publish everything he likes to write”. This was before Thackeray was much known, and when he had only published the *Titmarsh* and *Yellow-plush* papers. However, Thackeray did not appear. When they at length met, Thackeray said he wished to publish *Vanity Fair*, and Smith undertook it. Thackeray also said he had offered it to three or four publishers who had refused it. “Why didn’t you come to me?” said Smith. “Why didn’t you come to me?” said Thackeray.’

‘June 8. To Grosvenor Gallery. Seemed to have left flesh behind, and entered a world of soul. In some of the pictures, e.g. A. Tadema’s “Sculpture” (men at work carving the Sphinx), and “Ariadne abandoned by Theseus” (an uninteresting dreary shore, little tent one corner, etc.) the principles I have mentioned have been applied to choice of subject.’

‘June 16. Sunday evening. At Mr. Alexander Macmillan’s with E. He told me a story the late Mrs. Carlyle told him. One day when she was standing alone on Craigenputtock Moor, where she and Mr. Carlyle were living, she discerned in the distance a red spot. It proved to be the red cloak of a woman who passed for a witch in those parts. Mrs. Carlyle got to know her, and ultimately learnt her history. She was the daughter of a laird owning about eighty acres, and there had come to their house in her young-womanhood a young dealer in cattle. The daughter and he fell in love, and were married, and both lived with her father, whose farm the young man took in hand to manage. But he ran the farmer into debt, and ultimately (I think) house and property had to be sold. The young man vanished. A boy was born to the wife, and after a while she went away to find her husband. She came back in a state of great misery, but would not tell where she had been. It leaked out that the husband was a married man. She

was proud and would not complain; but her father died; the boy grew up and was intended for a schoolmaster, but he was crossing the moor one night and lost his way; was buried in the snow, and frozen to death. She lived on in a hut there, and became the red-cloaked old woman who was Mrs. Carlyle's witch-neighbour.'

In June he was elected a member of the Savile Club, and by degrees fell into line as a London man again. Dining at Mr. Kegan Paul's, Kensington Square, the same summer, they met Mr. Leighton (Sir F. Leighton's father), his daughter Mrs. Sutherland Orr, who had been in India during the Mutiny, and Professor Huxley, whom they had met before at Mr. Macmillan's. 'We sat down by daylight, and as we dined the moon brightened the trees in the garden, and shone under them into the room.' For Huxley Hardy had a liking which grew with knowledge of him — though that was never great — speaking of him as a man who united a fearless mind with the warmest of hearts and the most modest of manners.

'July. When a couple are shown to their room at an hotel, before the husband has seen that it is a room at all, the wife has found the looking-glass and is arranging her bonnet.'

'August 3. Minto dined with me at the club. Joined at end of dinner by W. H. Pollock, and we all three went to the Lyceum. It was Irving's last night, in which he appeared in a scene from Richard III.; then as "Jingle"; then recited "Eugene Aram's Dream" — (the only piece of literature outside plays that actors seem to know of). As "Jingle", forgetting his part, he kept up one shoulder as in Richard III. We went to his dressing-room, found him naked to the waist; champagne in tumblers.'

'August 31. to Sept. 9. In Dorset. Called on William Barnes the poet. Went to Kingston Lacy to see the pictures. Dined at West-Stafford Rectory. Went with C. W. Moule [Fellow of Corpus, Cambridge] to Ford Abbey.'

'September 20. Returned and called on G. Smith. Agreed to his terms for publishing *The Return of the Native*.'

Shortly after he wrote to Messrs. Smith and Elder:

'I enclose a sketch-map of the supposed scene in which *The Return of the Native* is laid, copied from the one I used in writing the story; and my suggestion is that we place an engraving of it as frontispiece to the first volume. Unity of place is so seldom preserved in novels that a map of the scene of action is as a rule quite impracticable. But since the present story affords an opportunity of doing so I am of opinion that it would be a desirable novelty.' The publishers fell in with the idea and the map was made.

A peculiarity in the local descriptions running through all Hardy's writings may be instanced here — that he never uses the word 'Dorset', never names the county at all (except possibly in an explanatory footnote), but obliterates the names of the six counties, whose area he traverses in his scenes, under the general appellation of 'Wessex' — an old word that became quite popular after the date of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, where he first introduced it. So far did he carry this idea of the unity of Wessex that he used to say he had grown to forget the crossing of county boundaries

within the ancient kingdom — in this respect being quite unlike the poet Barnes, who was ‘Dorset’ emphatically.

Mrs. Hardy used to relate that during this summer, she could not tell exactly when, she looked out of a window at the back of the house, and saw her husband running without a hat down Brodrick Road, and disappearing round a corner into a by-street. Before she had done wondering what could have happened, he returned, and all was explained. While sitting in his writing-room he had heard a street barrel-organ of the kind that used to be called a ‘harmoniflute’, playing somewhere near at hand the very quadrille over which the jaunty young man who had reached the end of his time at Hicks’s had spread such a bewitching halo more than twenty years earlier by describing the glories of dancing round to its beats on the Cre - morne platform or at the Argyle Rooms, and which Hardy had never been able to identify. He had thrown down his pen, and, as she had beheld, flown out and approached the organ-grinder with such speed that the latter, looking frightened, began to shuffle off. Hardy called out, ‘What’s the name of that tune?’ The grinder — a young foreigner, who could not speak English — exclaimed trembling as he stopped, ‘Quad-ree-ya! quad-ree-ya!’ and pointed to the index in front of the instrument. Hardy looked: ‘Quadrille’ was the only word there. He had till then never heard it since his smart senior had whistled it; he never heard it again, and never ascertained its name. It was possibly one of Jullien’s — then gone out of vogue — set off rather by the youthful imagination of Hardy at sixteen than by any virtue in the music itself.

‘October 27. Sunday. To Chelsea Hospital and Ranelagh Gardens: met a palsied pensioner — deaf. He is 88 — was in the Seventh (?) Hussars. He enlisted in 1807 or 1808, served under Sir John Moore in the Peninsula, through the Retreat, and was at Waterloo. It was extraordinary to talk and shake hands with a man who had shared in that terrible winter march to Coruna, and had seen Moore face to face.

‘Afterwards spoke to two or three others. When an incorrigible was drummed out of barracks to the tune of the Rogue’s March — (as my father had told me) — all the facings and the buttons were previously cut from his uniform, and a shilling given him. The fifes and drums accompanied him only just beyond the barrack-gates.

‘In those days if you only turned your eye you were punished. My informant had known men receive 600 lashes — 300 at a time, or 900, if the doctor said it could be borne. After the punishment salt was rubbed on the victim’s back, to harden it. He did not feel the pain of this, his back being numbed by the lashes. The men would hold a bullet between their teeth and chew it during the operation.’

The Return of the Native was published by Messrs. Smith and Elder in November, The Times’ remark upon the book being that the reader found himself taken farther from the madding crowd than ever. Old Mrs. Procter’s amusing criticism in a letter was: ‘Poor Eustacia. I so fully understood her longing for the Beautiful. I love the Common; but still one may wish for something else. I rejoice that Venn [a character] is happy. A man is never cured when he loves a stupid woman [Thomasin]. Beauty fades, and intelligence and wit grow irritating; but your dear Dulness is always the same.’



‘November 28. Woke before it was light. Felt that I had not enough staying power to hold my own in the world.’

On the last day of the year Hardy’s father wrote, saying that his mother was unwell, and that he had ‘drunk both their healths in gin and rhubarb wine, with hopes that they would live to see many and many a New Year’s day’. He suggested that they should come ere long.

‘1879. January New Year’s thought. A perception of the FAILURE of THINGS to be what they are meant to be, lends them, in place of the intended interest, a new and greater interest of an unintended kind.’

The poem ‘A January Night. 1879’ in Moments of Vision relates to an incident of this new year (1879) which occurred here at Tooting, where they seemed to begin to feel that ‘there had past away a glory from the earth’. And it was in this house that their troubles began. This, however, is anticipating unduly.

‘January 30. 1879. In Steven’s book-shop, Holywell Street. A bustling, vigorous young curate comes in — red-faced and full of life — the warm breath puffing from his mouth in a jet into the frosty air, and religion sitting with an ill grace upon him.

“‘Have you Able to Save?’”

‘Shopman addressed does not know, and passes on the inquiry to the master standing behind with his hat on: “Able to Save?’”

“‘I don’t know — hoi! (to boy at other end). Got Able to Save? Why the devil can’t you attend!’”

“‘What, Sir?’”

“‘Able to Save?’”

‘Boy’s face a blank. Shopman to curate: “Get it by to-morrow afternoon, Sir.”

“‘And please get Words of Comfort.’”

“‘Words of Comfort. Yes, Sir.’” Exit curate.

‘Master: “Why the h don’t anybody here know what’s in stock?” Business proceeds in a subdued manner.’

‘February i. To Dorchester. Cold. Rain on snow. Henry seen advancing through it, with wagonette and Bob [their father’s horse], to the station entrance. Drove me to Bockhampton through the sleet and rain from the East, which shaved us like a razor. Wind on Fordington Moor cut up my sleeves and round my wrists — even up to my elbows. The light of the lamp at the bottom of the town shone on the reins in Henry’s hands, and showed them glistening with ice. Bob’s behind-part was a mere grey arch; his foreparts invisible.’

‘February 4. To Weymouth and Portland. As to the ruined walls in the low part of Chesil, a woman says the house was washed down in the November gale of 1824. The owner never rebuilt it, but emigrated with his family. She says that in her house one person was drowned (they were all in bed except the fishermen) and next door two people. It was about four in the morning that the wave came.’

‘February 7. Father says that when there was a hanging at Dorchester in his boyhood it was carried out at one o’clock, it being the custom to wait till the mail-coach came in from London in case of a reprieve.

‘He says that at Puddletown Church, at the time of the old west - gallery violin, oboe, and clarionet players, Tom Sherren (one of them) used to copy tunes during the sermon. So did my grandfather at Stinsford Church. Old Squibb the parish-clerk used also to stay up late at night helping my grandfather in his “prick-noting” (as he called it).

‘He says that William, son of Mr. Sthe Rector of W,

became a miller at OMill, and married a German woman whom he met at Puddletown Fair playing her tambourine. When her husband was gone to market she used to call in John Porter, who could play the fiddle, and lived near, and give him some gin, when she would beat the tambourine to his playing. She was a good-natured woman with blue eyes, brown hair, and a round face; rather slovenly.

Her husband was a hot, hasty fellow, though you could hear by his speech that he was a better educated man than ordinary millers.

‘G. R. (who is a humorist) showed me his fowl-house,

which was built of old church-materials bought at Wellspring the builder’s sale. R.’s chickens roost under the gilt-lettered Lord’s Prayer and Creed, and the cock crows and flaps his wings against the Ten Commandments. It reminded me that I had seen these same Ten Commandments, Lord’s Prayer, and Creed, before, forming the sides of the stone-mason’s shed in that same builder’s yard, and that he had remarked casually that they did not prevent the workmen “cussing and damning” the same as ever. It also reminded me of seeing the old font of Church, Dorchester, in a garden, used as a flower-vase, the initials of ancient godparents and Churchwardens still legible upon it. A comic business — church restoration.

‘A villager says of the parson, who has been asked to pray for a sick person: “His prayers wouldn’t save a mouse”.’

‘February 12. Sketched the English Channel from Mayne Down.

‘I am told that when Jack Ketch had done whipping by the Town Pump [Dorchester] the prisoners’ coats were thrown over their bleeding backs, and, guarded by the town constables with their long staves, they were conducted back to prison. Close at their heels came J. K., the cats held erect — there was one cat to each man — the lashes were of knotted whipcord.

‘Also that in a village near Yeovil about 100 years ago, there lived a dumb woman, well known to my informant’s mother. One day the woman suddenly spoke and said:

“A cold winter, a forward spring, A bloody summer, a dead King” j ‘She then dropped dead. The French Revolution followed immediately after.’

‘February 15. Returned to London.’

‘April 5. Mary writes to tell me that “there is a very queer quire at Steepleton Church. It consists only of a shoemaker who plays the bass-viol, and his mother who sings the air.”’

‘June 9. To the International Literary Congress at the rooms of the Society of Arts. Met M. de Lesseps. A few days afterwards to the Soiree Musicale at the Hanover Square Club, to meet members of the Literary Congress and the Com<sup>^</sup>die Frangaise: A large gathering. The whole thing a free-and-easy mix-up. I was a total stranger, and wondered why I was there: many others were total strangers to everybody else; sometimes two or three of these total strangers would fraternize from very despair. A little old Frenchman, however, who bustled about in a skull cap and frilled shirt, seemed to know everybody.’

‘June 21. With E. to Bosworth Smith’s, Harrow (for the weekend). In the aviary he has a raven and a barn owl. One ridiculously small boy was in tails — he must have been a bright boy, but I forgot to ask about him. One of the boys in charity-tails could have eaten him.

‘Bos’s brother Henry the invalid has what I fear to be a churchyard cough [he died not so very long after]. His cough pleases the baby, so he coughs artificially much more than required by his disease, to go on pleasing the baby. Mrs. H. S. implores her husband not to do so; but he does, nevertheless, showing the extraordinary nonchalance about death that so many of his family show.

‘In chapel — which we attended — the little tablets in memory of the boys who have died at school there were a moving sight.

‘Sunday night we went with Bos, to the boys’ dormitories. One boy was unwell, and we talked to him as he lay in bed, his arm thrown over his head. Another boy has his room hung with proof engravings after Landseer. In another room were the two Ks of Clyffe. In another a big boy and a little boy — the little boy being very earnest about birds’ eggs, and the big boy silently affecting a mind above the subject, though covertly interested.’

‘27. From Tooting to Town again. In railway carriage a too statuesque girl; but her features were absolutely perfect. She sat quite still, and her smiles did not extend further than a finger-nail’s breadth from the edge of her mouth. The repose of her face was such that when the train shook her it seemed painful. Her mouth was very small, and her face not unlike that of a nymph. In the train coming home there was a contrasting girl of sly humour — the pupil of her eye being mostly half under the eyelid.’

It was in this year that pourparlers were opened with Leslie Stephen about another story for the Cornhill; and Hardy informed him that he was writing a tale of the reign of George III; on which Stephen remarks in respect of historical novels:

‘I can only tell you what is my own taste, but I rather think that my taste is in this case the common one. I think that a historical character in a novel is almost always a nuisance; but I like to have a bit of history in the background, so to speak; to feel that George III. is just round the corner, though he does not present himself in full front.’

Since coming into contact with Leslie Stephen about 1873, as has been shown, Hardy had been much influenced by his philosophy, and also by his criticism. He quotes the following sentence from Stephen in his note-book under the date of July 1, 1879:

‘The ultimate aim of the poet should be to touch our hearts by showing his own, and not to exhibit his learning, or his fine taste, or his skill in mimicking the notes of his predecessors.’ That Hardy adhered pretty closely to this principle when he resumed the writing of poetry can hardly be denied.

‘July 8 or 9. With E. to Mrs. [Alexander] Macmillan’s garden - party at Knapdale, near our house. A great many present. Talked to Mr. White of Harvard University, and Mr. Henry Holt the New York publisher, who said that American spelling and idiom must prevail over the English, as it was sixty millions against thirty. I forgot for the moment to say that it did not follow, the usage set up by a few people of rank, education, and fashion being the deciding factor. Also to John Morley, whom I had not seen since he read my first manuscript. He remembered it, and said in his level uninterested voice: “Well, since we met, you have . . .” etc. etc. Also met a Mrs. H., who pretended to be an admirer of my books, and apparently had never read one. She had with her an American lady, sallow, with black dancing eyes, dangling earrings, yellow costume, and gay laugh.’ It was at this garden-party at Mrs. Macmillan’s that the thunderstorm came on which Hardy made use of in a similar scene in *A Laodicean*.

‘July 12. To Chislehurst to funeral of young Louis Napoleon. Met [Sir G.] Greenhill in the crowd. We stood on the common while the procession passed. Was struck by the profile of Prince Napoleon as he walked by bareheaded, a son on each arm: complexion dark, sallow, even sinister: a round projecting chin: countenance altogether extraordinarily remindful of Boney.’ Hardy said long after that this sight of Napoleon’s nephew — ‘Plon-Plon’ — had been of enormous use to him, when writing *The Dynasts*, in imagining the Emperor’s appearance. And it has been remarked somewhere in print that when the Prince had been met, without warning in Paris at night, crossing one of the bridges over the Seine, the beholder had started back aghast under the impression that he was seeing the spirit of the great Napoleon.

‘July 29. Charles Leland — a man of higher literary rank than ever was accorded him [the American author of *Hans Breitmanns Ballads* and translator of Heine] — told some of his gipsy tales at the Savile Club, including one of how he visited at a country mansion and while there went to see a gipsy-family living in a tent on the squire’s land. He talked to them in Romany, and was received by the whole family as a bosom-friend. He was told by the head gipsy that his, the gipsy’s, brother would be happy to know him when he came out of gaol, but that at present he was doing six months for a horse. While Leland was sitting by the fire drinking brandy-and - water with this friend, the arrival of some gentlemen and ladies, fellow-guests at the house he was staying at, was announced. They had come to see the gipsies out of curiosity. Leland threw his brandy from his glass into the fire, not to be seen tipping there, but as they entered it blazed up in a blue flare much to their amazement, as if they thought it some unholy libation, which added to their surprise at discovering him. How he explained himself I cannot remember.’

In the latter half of August Hardy paid a visit to his parents in Dorset and a week later Mrs. Hardy joined him there. They spent a few days in going about the district,

and then took lodgings at Weymouth, right over the harbour, his mother coming to see them, and driving to Portland, Upwey, etc., in their company. Their time in the port was mostly wet; ‘ the [excursion] steamer-bell ringing persistently, and nobody going on board except an unfortunate boys’ school that had come eight miles by train that morning to spend a happy day by the sea. The rain goes into their baskets of provisions, and runs out a strange mixture of cake-juice and mustard-water, but they try to look as if they were enjoying it — all except the pale thin assistant-master who has come with them, and whose face is tragic with his responsibilities. The Quay seems quite deserted till, on going along it, groups of boatmen are discovered behind each projecting angle of wall — martyrs in countenance, talking of what their receipts would have been if the season had turned out fine; and the landladies’ faces at every lodging-house window watching the drizzle and the sea it half obscures. Two adventurous visitors have emerged from their lodgings as far as the doorway, where they stand in their waterproof cloaks and goloshes, saying cheerfully, “the air will do us good, and we can change as soon as we come in”. Young men rush to the bathing machines in ulsters, and the men engaged in loading a long-voyage steamer lose all patience, and say: “ I’m blanked, if it goes on much longer like this we shall be rotted alive!” The tradespeople are exceptionally civil, and fancy prices have miraculously disappeared. . .

‘Am told that has turned upon her drunken husband at last, and knocks him down without ceremony. In the morning he holds out his trembling hand and says, “Give me a sixpence for a drop o’ brandy — please do ye, my dear!”“ This was a woman Hardy had known as a pretty laughing girl, who had been married for the little money she had.

## CHAPTER X

### LONDON, NORMANDY, AND CAMBRIDGE

1879-1880: Aet. 39-40

After their return to London they visited and dined out here and there, and as Mrs. Hardy had never seen the Lord Mayor’s Show Hardy took her to view it from the upper windows of Good Words in Ludgate Hill. She remarked that the surface of the crowd seemed like a boiling cauldron of porridge. He jots down that ‘as the crowd grows denser it loses its character of an aggregate of countless units, and becomes an organic whole, a molluscous black creature having nothing in common with humanity, that takes the shape of the streets along which it has lain itself, and throws out horrid excrescences and limbs into neighbouring alleys; a creature whose voice exudes from its scaly coat, and who has an eye in every pore of its body. The balconies, stands, and railway-bridge are occupied by small detached shapes of the same tissue, but of gentler motion, as if they were the spawn of the monster in their midst.’

On a Sunday in the same November they met in Mr. Frith's studio, to which they had been invited, Sir Percy Shelley (the son of Percy Bysshe) and Lady Shelley. Hardy said afterwards that the meeting was as shadowy and remote as were those previous occasions when he had impinged on the penumbra of the poet he loved — that time of his sleeping at the Cross-Keys, St. John Street, and that of the visits he paid to Old St. Pancras Churchyard. He was to enter that faint penumbra twice more, once when he stood beside Shelley's dust in the English cemetery at Rome, and last when by Mary Shelley's grave at Bournemouth.

They also met in the studio a deaf old lady, introduced as 'Lady Bacon' (though she must have been Lady Charlotte Bacon), who 'talked vapidly of novels, saying she never read them — not thinking them positively wicked, but, well . . .'. Mr. Frith afterwards explained that she was Byron's Ianthe, to whom he dedicated the First and Second Cantos of *Childe Harold* when she was Lady Charlotte Harley. That 'Peri of the West', with an eye 'wild as the Gazelle's', and a voice that had entered Byron's ear, was now a feeble beldame muffled up in black and furs. (It may be mentioned that she died the following year.)

Hardy met there too — a distinctly modern juxtaposition — Miss Braddon, who 'had a broad, thought-creased, world-beaten face a most amiable woman', whom he always liked.

In December Hardy attended the inaugural dinner of the Rabelais Club at the Tavistock Hotel, in a 'large, empty, dimly-lit, cheerless apartment, with a gloomy crimson screen hiding what remained of the only cheerful object there — the fire. There was a fog in the room as in the streets, and one man only came in evening dress, who, Walter Pollock said, looked like the skull at the banquet, but who really looked like a conjuror dying of the cold among a common set of thick-jacketed men who could stand it. When I came in Leland turned his high flat facade to me — like that of a clock-tower; his face being the clock-face, his coat swaying like a pendulum; features earnest and energetic, altogether those of a single-minded man. There were also Fred Pollock, girlish-looking; and genial Walter Besant, with his West-of-England sailor face and silent pantomimic laughter. Sir Patrick Colquhoun was as if he didn't know what he was there for, how he arrived there, or how he was going to get home again. Two others present, Palmer [afterwards murdered in the East] and Joe Knight [the dramatic critic] also seemed puzzled about it.

'When dinner was over and things had got warmer, Leland in his speech remarked with much emphasis that we were men who ought to be encouraged, which sentiment was applauded with no misgivings of self-conceit. D, now as always, made himself the clown of our court, privileged to say anything by virtue of his' office. Hence when we rose to drink the health of absent members, he stayed firmly sitting, saying he would not drink it because they ought to have been there, afterwards lapsing into Spanish on the strength of his being going some day to publish a translation of *Don Quixote*. Altogether we were as Rabelaisian as it was possible to be in the foggy circumstances, though I succeeded but poorly.'

It should be explained that this Rabelais Club, which had a successful existence for many years, had been instituted by Sir Walter Besant — a great lover of clubs and societies — as a declaration for virility in literature. Hardy was pressed to join as being the most virile writer of works of imagination then in London; while, it may be added, Henry James after a discussion was rejected for the lack of that quality, though he was afterwards invited as a guest.

On the first of February 1880 Hardy observed a man skating by himself on the pond by the Trinity-Church Schools at Upper Tooting, near his own house, and was moved to note down:

‘It is a warm evening for the date, and there has been a thaw for two or three days, so that the birds sing cheerfully. A buttercup is said to be visible somewhere, and spring has, in short, peeped in upon us. What can the sentiments of that man be, to enjoy ice at such a time? The mental jar must overcome physical enjoyment in any well-regulated mind. He skates round the edge, it being unsafe to go into the middle, and he seems to sigh as he puts up with a limitation resulting from blessed promise.’

‘1 Arundel Terrace, Trinity Road, ‘Upper Tooting, S.W.

‘Feb. 2, 1880.

‘Dear Mr. Locker,

‘I can hardly express to you how grateful I am to get your letter. When I consider the perfect literary taste that is shown in all your own writings, apart from their other merits, I am not sure that I do not value your expressions of pleasure more highly than all the printed criticisms put together. It is very generous of you to pass over the defects of style in the book which, whenever I look into it, seem blunders that any child ought to have avoided.

‘In enjoying your poems over again, I felt — will you mind my saying it? — quite ill-used to find you had altered two of my favourite lines which I had been in the habit of muttering to myself for some years past. I mean ““They never do so now — because I’m not so handsome as I was.”

‘I shall stick to the old reading as much the nicest, whatever you may choose to do in new editions.

‘One other remark of quite a different sort. I unhesitatingly affirm that nothing more beautiful and powerful, for its length, than “the Old Stone-Mason” has been done by any modern poet. The only poem which has affected me at all in the same way is Wordsworth’s “Two April Mornings”, but this being less condensed than yours does not strike through one with such sudden power as yours in the last verse.

‘I will not forget to give myself the pleasure of calling some Sunday afternoon. Meanwhile I should hope that you will be so kindly disposed as to give us a few more “old stone-masons” as well as ballads of a lighter kind.

‘Believe me, Yours very truly,

‘Thomas Hardy.’

The same week Hardy met Matthew Arnold — probably for the first time — at a dinner given by Mr. G. Murray Smith, the publisher, at the Continental Hotel, where

also were present Henry James and Richard Jefferies — the latter a modest young man then getting into notice as a writer, through having a year or so earlier published his first successful book, entitled *The Gamekeeper at Home*.

Arnold, according to Hardy's account of their meeting much later, 'had a manner of having made up his mind upon everything years ago, so that it was a pleasing futility for his interlocutor to begin thinking new ideas, different from his own, at that time of day'. Yet he was frank and modest enough to assure Hardy deprecatingly that he was only a hard-worked school-inspector.

He seems to have discussed the subject of literary style with the younger writer, but all the latter could recall of his remarks thereon was his saying that 'the best man to read for style — narrative style — was Swift' — an opinion that may well be questioned, like many more of Arnold's pronouncements, despite his undoubtedly true ones.

At dinner an incident occurred in which he was charmingly amusing. Mrs. Murray Smith having that afternoon found herself suddenly too unwell to preside, her place had to be taken at the last minute by her daughter, and, it being the latter's first experience of the kind, she was timorous as to the time of withdrawal, murmuring to Arnold, 'I — think we must retire now?' Arnold put his hand upon her shoulder and pressed her down into her seat as if she were a child — she was not much more, — saying, 'No, no! what's the use of going into that room? Now I'll pour you out a glass of sherry to keep you here.' And kept there she and the other ladies were.

'Savile Club, 'Savile Row, W.

'February 11, 1880.

'Dear Mr. Handley Moule,

'I have just been reading in a Dorset paper a report of your sermon on the death of the Rev. H. Moule, and I cannot refrain from sending you a line to tell you how deeply it has affected me, and — what is more to the point — to express my sense of the singular power with which you have brought Mr. Moule's life and innermost heart before all readers of that address.

'You will, I am sure, believe me when I say that I have been frequently with you and your brothers in spirit during the last few days. Though not, topographically, a parishioner of your father's I virtually stood in that relation to him, and his home generally, during many years of my life, and I always feel precisely as if I had been one. I had many times resolved during the year or two before his death to try to attend a service in the old Church in the old way before he should be gone: but to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow! — I never did.

'A day or two ago Matthew Arnold talked a good deal about him to me: he was greatly struck with an imperfect description I gave him (from what I had heard my father say) of the state of Fordington 50 years ago, and its state after the vicar had brought his energies to bear upon the village for a few years. His words "energy is genius" express your father very happily.



‘Please give my kind remembrances to Mr. Charles Moule and your other brothers who have not forgotten me — if they are with you — and believe me,

‘Sincerely yours,

‘Thomas Hardy.’

The first week in March the Hardys called by arrangement on Mrs. Procter — the widow of ‘Barry Cornwall’ — at her flat in Queen Anne’s Mansions. Hardy had been asked to her house when he first made her acquaintance before his marriage, and when her husband was living, though bedridden: but being then, as always, backward in seeking new friends, Hardy had never gone — to his regret. He was evidently impressed newly by her on this call, as one who was a remarkable link with the literary past, though she herself was not a literary woman; and the visit on this Sunday afternoon was the first one of a long series of such, extending over many years almost to her death, for she showed a great liking for Hardy and his wife, and she always made them particularly welcome. It was here, on these Sunday afternoons, that they used frequently to meet Browning.

Hardy said after her death that on such occasions she sat in a fixed attitude, almost as if placed in her seat like an unconscious image of Buddha. Into her eyes and face would come continually an expression from a time fifty or sixty years before, when she was a handsome coquette, a faint tendency to which would show even in old age in the momentary archness of her glance now and then. ‘You would talk to her’, he said, ‘and believe you were talking to a person of the same date as yourself, with recent emotions and impulses: you would see her sideways when crossing the room to show you something, and realise her, with sudden sadness, to be a withered woman whose interests and emotions must be nearly extinct.’

Of the poets she had met she expressed herself to have been unattracted by Wordsworth’s personality, but to have had a great liking for Leigh Hunt. She remembered that the latter called one day, bringing with him ‘a youth whom nobody noticed much’, and who remained in the background, Hunt casually introducing him as ‘Mr. Keats’.

She would also tell of an experience she and her husband had, shortly after their marriage, when they were living in fashionable lodgings in Southampton Row. They went to see Lamb at Edmonton, and caused him much embarrassment by a hint that she would like to wash her hands, it being a hot day. He seemed bewildered and asked stammeringly if she would mind washing them in the kitchen, which she did.

A little later she wrote to Hardy concerning his short story *Fellow - Townsmen*, which had lately come out in a periodical:

‘You are cruel. Why not let him come home again and marry his first love? But I see you are right. He should not have deserted her. I smiled about the Tombstone. Sir Francis Chantrey told me that he had prepared fine plans — nothing could be too beautiful and too expensive at first, and the end was generally merely a headstone.’

It was in the same month, and in the company of Mrs. Procter, that Hardy lunched at Tennyson’s at a house Tennyson had temporarily taken in Belgrave Street; Mrs.

Tennyson, though an invalid, presiding at the table, at the end of which she reclined, and his friends F. Locker, Countess Russell (Lord John's widow), Lady Agatha Russell, and others, being present. 'When I arrived Mrs. Tennyson was lying as if in a coffin, but she got up to welcome me.' Hardy often said that he was surprised to find such an expression of humour in the Poet-Laureate's face, the corners of his mouth twitching with that mood when he talked; 'it was a genial human face, which all his portraits belied'; and it was enhanced by a beard and hair straggling like briars, a shirt with a large loose collar, and old steel spectacles. He was very sociable that day, asking Mrs. Procter absurd riddles, and telling Hardy amusing stories, and about misprints in his books that drove him wild, one in especial of late, where 'airy does' had appeared as 'hairy does'. He said he liked *A Pair of Blue Eyes* the best of Hardy's novels. Tennyson also told him that he and his family were compelled to come to London for a month or two every year, though he hated it, because they all 'got so rusty' down in the Isle of Wight if they did not come at all. Hardy often regretted that he never again went to see them, though warmly invited that day both by Tennyson and his wife to pay them a visit at Freshwater.

'March 24. Lunched with Mrs. Procter. She showed me one of her late husband's love-letters, date 1824. Also a photo of Henry James. She says he has made her an offer of marriage. Can it be so?' Mrs. Procter was born in 1800.

At this time he writes down, 'A Hint for Reviewers — adapted from Carlyle:

'Observe what is true, not what is false; what is to be loved and held fast, and earnestly laid to heart; not what is to be contemned, and derided, and sportfully cast out-of-doors.'

The Hardys' house at Upper Tooting stood in a rather elevated position, and when the air was clear they could see a long way from the top windows. The following note on London at dawn occurs on May 19, a night on which he could not sleep, partly on account of an eerie feeling which sometimes haunted him, a horror at lying down in close proximity to 'a monster whose body had four million heads and eight million eyes':

'In upper back bedroom at daybreak: just past three. A golden light behind the horizon; within it are the Four Millions. The roofs are damp gray: the streets are still filled with night as with a dark stagnant flood whose surface brims to the tops of the houses. Above the air is light. A fire or two glares within the mass. Behind are the Highgate Hills. On the Crystal Palace hills in the other direction a lamp is still burning up in the daylight. The lamps are also still flickering in the street, and one policeman walks down it as if it were noon.'

Two days later they were sitting in the chairs by Rotten Row and the Park Drive, and the chief thing he noticed against the sun in the west was that 'a sparrow descends from the tree amid the stream of vehicles, and drinks from the little pool left by the watering - cart' — the same sunlight causing 'a glitter from carriage-lamp glasses, from Coachmen's and footmen's buttons, from silver carriage handles and harness

mountings, from a matron's bracelet, from four parasols of four young ladies in a landau, their parasol-tips touching like four mushrooms growing close together.'•'-

On the 26th, the Derby Day, Hardy went alone to Epsom. On his way he noticed that 'all the people going to the races have a twinkle in their eye, particularly the old men'. He lunched there with a friend, and together they proceeded, by permission, through Lord Rosebery's grounds to the Down. They saw and examined the favourite before he emerged — neither one of the twain knowing anything of race-horses or betting — 'the jockeys in their greatcoats; little ghastly men looking half putrid, standing silent and apathetic while their horses were rubbed down, and saddles adjusted'; till they passed on into the paddock, and the race was run, and the shouts arose, and they 'were greeted by a breeze of tobacco-smoke and orange-peels'.

During the summer he dined at clubs, etc., meeting again Lord Houghton, Du Maurier, Henry Irving, and Alma-Tadema, among others. Toole, who was at one of these dinners, imitated a number of other actors, Irving included; and though the mimicry was funny and good, 'ghostliness arose, in my mind at least, when after a few living ones had been mimicked, each succeeding representation turned out to be that of an actor then in his grave. "What did they go dying for, stupid!" said somebody, when Toole's face suddenly lost its smiling.'

In July he met Lord Houghton again at dinner, and was introduced by him to James Russell Lowell, who was also present. His opinion of Lowell was that as a man he was charming, as a writer one of extraordinary talent, but of no instinctive and creative genius.

In the same month he arranged with Messrs. Smith and Elder for the three-volume publication of *The Trumpet-Major*, which had been coming out in a periodical, and on the 27th started with Mrs. Hardy for Boulogne, Amiens — 'the misfortune of the Cathedral is that it does not look half so lofty as it really is' — and several towns in Normandy, including Etretat, where they put up at the Hotel Blan-quet, and stayed some time, bathing every day — a recreation which cost Hardy dear, for being fond of swimming he was apt to stay too long in the water. Anyhow he blamed these frequent immersions for starting the long illness from which he suffered the following autumn and winter.

From Etretat they went to Havre, and here they had half an hour of whimsical uneasiness. The hotel they chose was on the Quay,

one that had been recommended to Hardy by a stranger on the coach, and was old and gloomy in the extreme when they got inside. Mrs. Hardy fancied that the landlord's look was sinister; also the landlady's; and the waiter's manner seemed queer. Their room was hung with heavy dark velvet, and when the chambermaid came, and they talked to her, she sighed continually and spoke in a foreboding voice; as if she knew what was going to happen to them, and was on their side, but could do nothing. The floor of the bedroom was painted a bloody red, and the wall beside the bed was a little battered, as if struggles had taken place there. When they were left to themselves Hardy suddenly remembered that he had told the friendly stranger with whom he had

travelled on the coach from fitretat, and who had recommended the inn, that he carried his money with him in Bank notes to save the trouble of circular notes. He had known it was a thing one never should do; yet he had done it.

They then began to search the room, found a small door behind the curtains of one of their beds, and on opening it there was revealed inside a closet of lumber, which had at its innermost recess another door, leading they did not know whither. With their luggage they barricaded the closet door, so jamming their trunks and portmanteau between the door and the nearest bedstead that it was impossible to open the closet. They lay down and waited, keeping the light burning a long time. Nothing happened, and they slept soundly at last, and awoke to a bright sunny morning.

August 5. They went on to Trouville, to the then fashionable Hotel Bellevue, and thence to Honfleur, a place more to Hardy's mind, after the fast life of Trouville. On a gloomy gusty afternoon, going up the steep incline through the trees behind the town they came upon a Calvary tottering to its fall; and as it rocked in the wind like a ship's mast Hardy thought that the crudely painted figure of Christ upon it seemed to writhe and cry in the twilight: ' Yes, Yes! I agree that this travesty of me and my doctrines should totter and overturn in this modern world!' They hastened on from the strange and ghastly scene.

Thence they went to Lisieux and Caen, where they spent some days, returning to London by the way they had come.

Going down to Dorset in September, Hardy was informed of a curious bit of family history; that his mother's grandfather was a man who worried a good deal about the disposition of his property as he grew old. It was mostly in the form of long leasehold and life - hold houses, and he would call on his lawyer about once a fortnight to make some alteration in his will. The lawyer lived at Bere Regis and her grandfather used to talk the matter over with the man who was accustomed to drive him there and back — a connection of his by marriage. Gradually this man so influenced the testator on each journey, by artfully playing on his nervous perplexities as they drove along, that he got three-quarters of the property, including the houses, bequeathed to himself.

The same month he replied to a letter from J. R. Lowell, then American Minister in London:

'Dear Mr. Lowell:

'I have read with great interest the outline of the proposed Copyright treaty that you have communicated to me in your letter of the 16 th.

'For my own part I should be quite ready to accept some such treaty — with a modification in detail mentioned below — since whatever may be one's opinion on an author's abstract right to manufacture his property in any country most convenient to him, the treaty would unquestionably remove the heaviest grievances complained of under the existing law.

'The modification I mention refers to the three-months term of grace to be allowed to foreign authors who do not choose to print in both countries simultaneously.

‘If I clearly understand the provisions under this head it may happen that in the event of any difficulty about terms between the author and his foreign publishers the author would be bound to give way as the end of the three months approached, or lose all by lapse of copyright. With some provision to meet such a contingency as this the treaty would seem to me satisfactory.’

Accompanying Mrs. Hardy on a day’s shopping in October Hardy makes this remark on the saleswoman at a fashionable dressmaking establishment in Regent Street, from observing her while he sat waiting:

‘She is a woman of somewhat striking appearance, tall, thin, decided; one who knows what life is, and human nature, to plenitude. Hence she acts as by clockwork; she puts each cloak on herself, turns round, makes a remark, puts on the next cloak, and the next, and so on, like an automaton. She knows by heart every mood in which a feminine buyer of cloaks can possibly be, and has a machine - made answer promptly ready for each.’

On the 16th of October he and his wife paid a visit of a week to Cambridge, in spirits that would have been considerably lower if they had known what was to befall them on their return. They received much hospitality, and were shown the usual buildings and other things worth seeing, though Cambridge was not new to Hardy. After the first day or two he felt an indescribable physical weariness, which was really the beginning of the long illness he was to endure; but he kept going.

Attending the 5 o’clock service at King’s Chapel, he comments upon the architect ‘who planned this glorious work of fine intelligence’; also upon Milton’s ‘dim religious light’ beheld here, and the scene presented by the growing darkness as viewed from the stalls where they sat. ‘The reds and the blues of the windows became of one indistinguishable black, the candles guttered in the most fantastic shapes I ever saw — and while the wicks burnt down these weird shapes changed form; so that you were fascinated into watching them, and wondering what shape those wisps of wax would take next, till they dropped off with a click during a silence. They were stalactites, plumes, laces; or rather they were surplises, — frayed shreds from those of bygone “white-robed scholars”, or from their shrouds — dropping bit by bit in a ghostly decay. Wordsworth’s ghost, too, seemed to haunt the place, lingering and wandering on somewhere alone in the fan-traceried vaulting.’

## **PART III - ILLNESS, NOVELS, AND ITALY**

### **CHAPTER XI**

#### **A DIFFICULT PERIOD; AND A CHANGE**

1880-1881: Aet. 40-41

They returned to London on October the 23rd — the very day *The Trumpet-Major* was published, Hardy feeling by this time very unwell, so unwell that he had to write and postpone an engagement or two, and decline an invitation to Fryston by Lord Houghton. On the Sunday after he was worse, and seeing the name of a surgeon on a brass plate opposite his house, sent for him. The surgeon came at once, and came again on that and the two or three succeeding days; he said that Hardy was bleeding internally. Mrs. Hardy, in her distress, called on their neighbours the Macmillans, to ask their opinion, and they immediately sent their own doctor. He agreed about the bleeding, said the case was serious; and that the patient was not to get up on any account.

Later it was supposed that a dangerous operation would be necessary, till the doctor inquired how long Hardy could lie in bed — could he lie there, if necessary, for months? — in which case there possibly need be no operation.

Now he had already written the early chapters of a story for Harper's *Magazine* — *A Laodicean*, which was to begin in the (nominally) December number, issued in November. The first part was already printed, and Du Maurier was illustrating it. The story had to go on somehow, it happening, unfortunately, that the number containing it was the first number also of the publication of Harper's as an English and not exclusively American magazine as hitherto, and the success of its launch in London depended largely upon the serial tale. Its writer was, during the first few weeks, in considerable pain, and compelled to lie on an inclined plane with the lower part of his body higher than his head. Yet he felt determined to finish the novel, at whatever stress to himself — so as not to ruin the new venture of the publishers, and also in the interests of his wife, for whom as yet he had made but a poor provision in the event of his own decease. Accordingly from November onwards he began dictating it to her from the awkward position he occupied; and continued to do so — with greater ease as the pain and haemorrhage went off. She worked bravely both at writing and nursing, till at the beginning of the following May a rough draft was finished by one shift and another.

'November 20. Freiherr von Tauchnitz Junior called.' This was probably about a Continental edition of *The Trumpet-Major*. But Hardy was still too ill to see him. *The Trumpet-Major*, however, duly appeared in the Tauchnitz series.

It is somewhat strange that at the end of November he makes a note of an intention to resume poetry as soon as possible. Having plenty of time to think he also projected as he lay what he calls a 'Great Modern Drama' — which seems to have been a considerable advance on his first conception, in June 1875, of a Napoleonic chronicle in ballad form — a sequence of such making a lyrical whole. Yet it does not appear to have been quite the same in detail as that of *The Dynasts* later on. He also made the following irrelative note of rather vague import:

'Discover for how many years, and on how many occasions, the organism, Society, has been standing, lying, etc., in varied positions, as if it were a tree or a man hit by vicissitudes.'

‘There would be found these periods:

1.Upright, normal or healthy periods.

2.Oblique or cramped periods.

3.Prostrate periods (intellect counterpoised by ignorance or narrowness, producing stagnation).

4.Drooping periods.

5.Inverted periods.’

George Eliot died during the winter in which he lay ill, and this set him thinking about Positivism, on which he remarks:

‘If Comte had introduced Christ among the worthies in his calendar it would have made Positivism tolerable to thousands who, from position, family connection, or early education, now decry what in their heart of hearts they hold to contain the germs of a true system. It would have enabled them to modulate gently into the new religion by deceiving themselves with the sophistry that they still continued one-quarter Christians, or one-eighth, or one-twentieth, as the case might be: This as a matter of policy, without which no religion succeeds in making way.’

Also on literary criticism:

‘Arnold is wrong about provincialism, if he means anything more aet 4o4,a difficult period,47

than a provincialism of style and manner in exposition. A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is of the essence of individuality, and is largely made up of that crude enthusiasm without which no great thoughts are thought, no great deeds done.’

Some days later he writes:

‘Romanticism will exist in human nature as long as human nature itself exists. The point is (in imaginative literature) to adopt that form of romanticism which is the mood of the age.’

Also on adversity — no doubt suggested by the distresses he was undergoing:

‘There is mercy in troubles coming in battalions — they neutralise each other. Tell a man in prosperity that he must suffer the amputation of a limb, and it is a horror to him; but tell him this the minute after he has been reduced to beggary and his only son has died: it hurts him but feebly.’

‘January 1881. My third month in bed. Driving snow: fine, and so fast that individual flakes cannot be seen.’ In sheltered places they occasionally stop, and balance themselves in the air like hawks. . . . It creeps into the house, the window-plants being covered as if out-of-doors. Our passage (downstairs) is sole-deep, Em says, and feet leave tracks on it.’

(Same month.) ‘Style — Consider the Wordsworthian dictum (the more perfectly the natural object is reproduced, the more truly poetic the picture). This reproduction is achieved by seeing into the heart of a thing (as rain, wind, for instance), and is realism, in fact, though through being pursued by means of the imagination it is confounded with invention, which is pursued by the same means. It is, in short, reached by what M. Arnold calls “the imaginative reason “.’

‘January 30. Sunday. Dr. S. called as usual. I can by this time see all round his knowledge of my illness. He showed a lost manner on entering, as if among his many cases he had forgotten all about my case and me, which has to be revived in his mind by looking hard at me, when it all comes back.

‘He told us of having been called in to an accident which, do the best he possibly could, would only end in discredit to him. A lady had fallen down, and so badly broken her wrist that it must always be deformed even after the most careful treatment. But, seeing the result, she would give him a bad name for want of skill in setting it. These cases often occur in a surgeon’s practice, he says.’

‘January 31. Incidents of lying in bed for months. Skin gets fair: corns take their leave: feet and toes grow shapely as those of a Greek statue. Keys get rusty; watch dim, boots mildewed; hat and clothes old-fashioned; umbrella eaten out with rust; children seen through the window are grown taller.’

‘February 7. Carlyle died last Saturday. Both he and George Eliot have vanished into nescience while I have been lying here.’

‘February 17. Conservatism is not estimable in itself, nor is Change, or Radicalism. To conserve the existing good, to supplant the existing bad by good, is to act on a true political principle, w\icb is neither Conservative nor Radical.’

‘February 21. A. G. called. Explained to Em about Aerostation, and how long her wings would have to be if she flew, — how light her weight, etc., and the process generally of turning her into a flying person.’

‘March 22. Maggie Macmillan called. Sat with Em in my room — had tea. She and Em worked, watching the sun set gorgeously. That I should also be able to see it Miss Macmillan conceived the kind idea of reflecting the sun into my face by a looking-glass.’ [The incident was made use of in *Jude the Obscure* as a plan adopted by Sue when the schoolmaster was ill.]

‘March 27. A Homeric Ballad, in which Napoleon is a sort of Achilles, to be written.’ [This entry, of a kind with earlier ones, is, however, superseded a few days later by the following:] ‘ Mode for a historical Drama. Action mostly automatic; reflex movement, etc. Not the result of what is called motive, though always ostensibly so, even to the actors’ own consciousness. Apply an enlargement of these theories to, say, “The Hundred Days”!’

This note is, apparently, Hardy’s first written idea of a philosophic scheme or framework as the larger feature of *The Dynasts*, enclosing the historic scenes.

On the 10th of April he went outside the door again for the first time since that October afternoon of the previous year when he returned from Cambridge, driving out with his wife and the doctor. On the 19th occurred the death of Disraeli, whom Hardy had met twice, and found unexpectedly urbane. On Sunday the 1st of May he finished *A Laodicean* in pencil, and on the 3rd went with Mrs. Hardy by appointment to call on Sir Henry Thompson for a consultation.

‘May 9. After infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be inter - destructive I come to the following:



‘General Principles. Law has produced in man a child who cannot but constantly reproach its parent for doing much and yet not all, and constantly say to such parent that it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have overdone so indecisively; that is, than to have created so far beyond all apparent first intention (on the emotional side), without mending matters by a second intent and execution, to eliminate the evils of the blunder of overdoing. The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it.

‘If Law itself had consciousness, how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse!’

Though he had been out in vehicles it was not till a day early in May, more than six months after he had taken to his bed, that he went forth on foot alone; and it being a warm and sunny morning he walked on Wandsworth Common, where, as he used to tell, standing still he repeated out loud to himself:

See the wretch that long has tost  
On the thorny bed of pain,  
At length repair his  
vigour lost, And breathe and walk again:

The meanest flowret of the vale,  
The simplest note that swells the gale,  
The common sun, the air, the skies,  
To him are opening Paradise.

Immediately on Hardy’s recovery the question arose of whereabouts he and his wife should live. The three years’ lease of the house at Upper Tooting had run out on the preceding Lady Day, when Hardy was too ill to change, and he had been obliged to apply for a three months’ extension, which was granted. During the latter part of May they searched in Dorset, having concluded that it would be better to make London a place of sojourn for a few months only in each year, and establish their home in the country, both for reasons of health and for mental inspiration, Hardy finding, or thinking he found, that residence in or near a city tended to force mechanical and ordinary productions from his pen, concerning ordinary society-life and habits.

They found a little house called ‘Llanherne’ in the Avenue, Wimborne, that would at any rate suit them temporarily, and till they could discover a better, or perhaps build one. Hardy makes a note that on June 25 they slept at Llanherne for the first time, and saw the new comet from the conservatory. ‘Our garden’, he says a few days later, ‘has all sorts of old-fashioned flowers, in full bloom: Canterbury Bells, blue and white, and Sweet Williams of every variety, strawberries and cherries that are ripe, currants and gooseberries that are almost ripe, peaches that are green, and apples that are decidedly immature.’

In July he jots down some notes on fiction, possibly for an article that was never written:

‘The real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience, mental or corporeal.

‘This is done all the more perfectly in proportion as the reader is illuded to believe the personages true and real like himself.

‘Solely to this latter end a work of fiction should be a precise transcript of ordinary life: but,

‘The uncommon would be absent and the interest lost. Hence,

‘The writer’s problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

‘In working out this problem, human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer’s art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood, if it be unlikely.’

On August 23rd Hardy and his wife left Wimborne for Scotland. Arriving at Edinburgh on the 24th, they discovered to their dismay that Queen Victoria was to review the Volunteers in that city on the very next day, and that they could get no lodging anywhere. They took train to Roslin and put up at the Royal Hotel there. At sight of the crowds in the city Hardy had made the entry: ‘ There are, then, some Scotch people who stay at home ‘.

The next day or two, though wet, they spent in viewing Roslin Castle and Chapel, and Hawthornden, the old man who showed them the castle saying that he remembered Sir Walter Scott. Returning to Edinburgh, now calm and normal, they stayed there a few days, and at the beginning of September went on to Stirling, where they were laid up with colds. They started again for Callander and the Tros - sadhs, where Hardy made a sketch of Ben Venue, and followed the usual route across Loch Katrine, by coach to Inversnaid, down Loch Lomond, and so on to Glasgow. On their way back they visited Windermere and Chester, returning through London to Wimborne.

During some sunny days in September Hardy corrected *A Laodicean* for the issue in volumes, sitting under the vine on their stable-wall, ‘which for want of training hangs in long arms over my head nearly to the ground. The sun tries to shine through the great leaves, making a green light on the paper, the tendrils twisting in every direction, in gymnastic endeavours to find something to lay hold of.’

Though they had expected to feel lonely in Wimborne after London, they were visited by many casual friends, were called in to Shakespeare readings, then much in vogue, and had a genial neighbour in the county-court judge, Tindal-Atkinson, one of the last of the Serjeants-at Law, who took care they should not mope if dinners and his and his daughter’s music could prevent it. They kept in touch with London, however, and were there in the following December, where they met various friends, and Hardy did some business in arranging for the publication in the *Atlantic Monthly* of a novel that he was about to begin writing, called off-hand by the title of *Two on a Tower*, a title he afterwards disliked, though it was much imitated. An amusing experience of formality occurred to him in connection with this novel. It was necessary that he should examine an observatory, the story moving in an astronomical medium, and he applied to the Astronomer Royal for permission to see Greenwich. He was requested to state before it could be granted if his application was made for astronomical and scientific reasons or not. He therefore drew up a scientific letter, the gist of which was that he wished to ascertain if it would be possible for him to adapt an old tower, built in a plantation in the West of England for other objects, to the requirements of a

telescopic study of the stars by a young man very ardent in that pursuit (this being the imagined situation in the proposed novel). An order to view Greenwich Observatory was promptly sent.

The year was wound up by Hardy and his wife at a ball at Lady Wimborne's, Canford Manor, where he met Sir Henry Layard. Lord Wimborne in a conversation about the house complained that it was rendered damp by the miller below penning the water for grinding, and, on Hardy's suggesting the removal of the mill, his host amused him by saying that was out of the question, because the miller paid him £50 a year in rent. However that might have been, Hardy felt glad the old mill was to remain, having as great a repugnance to pulling down a mill where (to use his own words) they ground food for the body, as to pulling down a church where they ground food for the soul.

Thus ended 1881 — with a much brighter atmosphere for the author and his wife than the opening had shown.

## CHAPTER XII

### WIMBORNE AND 'TWO ON A TOWER'

1882-1883: Aet. 41-43

'January 26. Coleridge says, aim at illusion in audience or readers — i.e., the mental state when dreaming, intermediate between complete delusion (which the French mistakenly aim at) and a clear perception of falsity.'

'February 4 and 11. Shakespeare readings at 's, "The Tempest" being the play chosen. The host was omnivorous of parts — absorbing other people's besides his own, and was greedily vexed when I read a line of his part by mistake. When I praise his reading he tells me meditatively, "Oh, yes; I've given it a deal of study — thrown myself into the life of the character, you know; thought of what my supposed parents were, and my early life". The firelight shone out as the day diminished, the young girl N.P. crouching on a footstool, the wealthy Mrs. B. impassive and grand in her unintelligence, like a Carthaginian statue. . . . The General reads with gingerly caution, telling me privately that he blurted out one of Shakespeare's improprieties last time before he was aware, and is in fear and trembling lest he may do it again.'

In this month's entries occurs another note which appears to be related to the philosophic scheme afterwards adopted as a framework for *The Dynasts*:

'February 16. Write a history of human automatism, or impulsion — viz., an account of human action in spite of human knowledge, showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it.'

A dramatization of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, prepared by Mr. J. Comyns Carr some months earlier, was produced during March at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, and Hardy and his wife took the trouble to make a trip to Liverpool to be

present. The play, with Miss Marion Terry as the heroine, was not sufficiently near the novel to be to Hardy's liking, but it was well received, and was staged in London at the Globe Theatre in April, where it ran for many nights, but brought Hardy no profit, nor the adapter, as he was informed. During his stay in London he attended, on April 26, the funeral of Darwin in Westminster Abbey. As a young man he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*.

'May 13 - The slow meditative lives of people who live in habitual solitude. . . • • Solitude renders every trivial act of a solitary full of interest, as showing thoughts that cannot be expressed for want of an interlocutor.'

'June 3. . . . As, in looking at a carpet, by following one colour a certain pattern is suggested, by following another colour, another; so in life the seer should watch that pattern among general things which his idiosyncrasy moves him to observe, and describe that alone. This is, quite accurately, a going to Nature; yet the result is no mere photograph, but purely the product of the writer's own mind.'

'June 18. M. F., son of Parson F., was well known by sight to my mother in her childhood. He had taken his degree and had been ordained. But he drank. He worked with the labourers and "yarn - barton-wenches" (as they were called in the village) in the yarn - barton. After a rollick as they worked he would suddenly stop, down his implement, and mounting a log or trestle, preach an excellent sermon to them; then go on cursing and swearing as before. He wore faded black clothes, and had an allowance of some small sum from his family, to which he liked to add a little by manual labour. He was a tall, upright, dignified man. She did not know what became of him.'

'August. — An ample theme: the intense interests, passions, and strategy that throb through the commonest lives.

'This month blackbirds and thrushes creep about under fruit - bushes and in other shady places in gardens rather like four-legged animals than birds. ... I notice that a blackbird has eaten nearly a whole pear lying in the garden-path in the course of the day.'

'September 9. Dr. and Mrs. Brine . . . came to tea. Brine says that Jack White's gibbet (near Wincanton) was standing as late as 1835 — i.e. the oak-post with the iron arm sticking out, and a portion of the cage in which the body had formerly hung. It would have been standing now if some young men had not burnt it down by piling faggots round it one fifth of November.'

Later in the month he went with Mrs. Hardy on a small circular tour in the adjoining counties — taking in Salisbury, Axminster, Lyme Regis, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorchester, and back to Wimborne.

From Axminster to Lyme the journey on the coach was spoiled for them by the condition of one of the horses.

'The off-horse was weak and worn. "O yes, tender on his vore veet", said the driver with nonchalance. The coach itself weighed a ton. The horse swayed, leant against the pole, then outwards His head hung like his tail. The straps and brass rings of the harness seemed barbarously harsh on his shrinking skin. E., with her admirable

courage, would have interfered, at the cost of walking the rest of the distance: then we felt helpless against the anger of the other passengers who wanted to get on.' They were, in fact, on the tableland half-way between the two towns. But they complained when they alighted — with what effect Hardy could not remember.

At Lyme they 'met a cheerful man who had turned his trousers hind part before, because the knees had worn through'.

On The Cobb they encountered an old man who had undergone an operation for cataract:

'It was like a red-hot needle in yer eye whilst he was doing it. But he wasn't long about it. Oh no. If he had been long I couldn't ha' beared it. He wasn't a minute more than three-quarters of an hour at the outside. When he had done one eye, 'a said, "Now my man, you must make shift with that one, and be thankful you bain't left wi' nam." So he didn't do the other. And I'm glad 'a didn't. I've saved half-crowns and half-crowns out of number in only wanting one glass to my spectacles. T'other eye would never have paid the expenses of keeping en going.'

From Charmouth they came to Bridport on the box of a coach better horsed, and driven by a merry coachmen, 'who wore a lavish quantity of wool in his ears, and in smiling checked his smile in the centre of his mouth by closing his lips, letting it continue at the corners'. (A sketch of the coachman's mouth in the act of smiling was attached to illustrate this.)

Before returning to Wimborne Hardy called on the poet Barnes at Came Rectory. Mr. Barnes told him of an old woman who had asked him to explain a picture she possessed. He told her it was the family of Darius at the feet of Alexander. She shook her head, and said: 'But that's not in the Bible', looking up and down his clerical attire as if she thought him a wicked old man who disgraced his cloth by speaking of profane history.

This autumn *Two on a Tower*, which was ending its career in the *Atlantic Monthly*, came out in three volumes, and at the beginning of October its author and his wife started for Cherbourg via Wey-

mouth, and onward to Paris, where they took a little appartement of jviro bedrooms and a sitting room, near the left bank of the Seine. p jgre they stayed for some weeks, away from English and American tourists, roving about the city and to Versailles, studying the pictures at the Louvre and the Luxembourg, practising housekeeping in the Parisian bourgeois manner, buying their own groceries and vegetables, dining at restaurants, and catching bad colds owing to the uncertain weather. He seems to have done little in the French capital besides these things, making only one memorandum beyond personal trifles, expenses, and a few picture notes:

'Since I discovered, several years ago, that I was living in a world where nothing bears out in practice what it promises incipiently, I have troubled myself very little about theories. . . . Where development according to perfect reason is limited to the narrow region of pure mathematics, I am content with tentativeness from day to day.'

At the end of the autumn Mrs. Hardy received news at Wimborne of the death of her brother-in-law, the Rev. C. Holder, at St. Juliot Rectory, Cornwall, of which he had long been the incumbent; and they realised that the scene of the fairest romance of their lives, in the picturesque land of Lyonesse, would have no more kinship with them. By this loss Hardy was reminded of the genial and genuine humour of his clerical relative and friend despite his fragility and ill-health; of his qualities; among them, of a mysterious power he had (as it seemed to his brother-in-law) of counting his congregation to a man before he had got half a dozen lines down the page in 'Dearly beloved brethren'; and of his many strange and amusing stories of his experiences, such as that of the sick man to whose bedside he was called to read a chapter in the Bible, and who said when it was ended that it did him almost as much good as a glass of gin-and-water: or of the astonishing entry in the marriage register of Holder's parish before he was rector, by which the bridegroom and bridesmaid had made themselves husband and wife, and the bride and best man the witnesses. Hardy himself had seen the entry.

Of another cast was the following. Holder as a young man was a curate in Bristol during the terrible cholera visitation. He related that one day at a friend's house he met a charming young widow, who invited him to call on her. With pleasant anticipations he went at tea-time a day or two later, and duly inquired if she was at home. The servant said with a strange face: 'Why, Sir, you buried her this morning!' He found that amongst the many funerals of cholera victims he had conducted that day, as on every day, hers had been one.

At another of these funerals the clerk or sexton rushed to him immediately before the procession arrived to ask him to come and look at the just opened grave, which was of brick, with room for two or more, the first place being occupied by the coffin of the deceased person's husband, who had died three weeks before. The coffin was overturned into the space beside it. Holder hastily told the sexton 'to turn it back into its place, and say nothing, to avoid distressing; the relatives by the obvious inference.

He also remembered a singular alarm to which he had once been subjected. He was roused one night by a voice calling from below 'Holder, Holder! Can you help me?' It was the voice of a neighbouring incumbent named Woodman, and wondering what terrible thing had happened he rushed downstairs as soon as he could, seizing a heavy stick on the way. He found his neighbour in great agitation, who explained that the news had come late the previous evening that a certain noble lord the patron, who was a great critic of sermons, had arrived in the parish, and was going to attend next morning's service. 'Have you a sermon that will do? I have nothing — nothing!' The conjuncture had so preyed upon his friend's nerves during the night that he had not been able to resist getting up and coming. Holder found something he thought might suit the noble critic, and Woodman departed with it under his arm, much relieved.

Some of Holder's stories to him were, as Hardy guessed, rather well-found than well-founded, but they were always told with much solemnity. Yet he would sometimes recount one 'the truth of which he could not quite guarantee'. It was what had been

related to him by some of his aged parishioners concerning an incumbent of that or an adjacent living many years before. This worthy ecclesiastic was a bachelor addicted to drinking habits, and one night when riding up Boscastle Hill fell off his horse. He lay a few minutes in the road, when he said 'Help me up, Jolly!' and a local man who was returning home behind him saw a dark figure with a cloven foot emerge from the fence, and toss him upon his horse in a jiffy. The end of him was that on one night of terrific lightning and thunder he was missed, and was found to have entirely disappeared.

Holder had kept up a friendly acquaintance with Hawker of Morwenstow, who predeceased him by seven years, though the broad and tolerant views of the rector of St. Juliot did not quite chime in with the poet-vicar's precisianism; and the twenty miles of wild Cornish coast that separated their livings was a heavy bit of road for the rector's stout cob to traverse both ways in a day. Hardy regretted the loss of his relative, and was reminded sadly of the pleasure used to find in reading the lessons in the ancient church when his brother-in-law was not in vigour. The poem 'Quid hie agis?' in *Moments of Vision* is in part apparently a reminiscence of these readings.

In December Hardy was told a story by a Mrs. Cross, a very old country-woman he met, of a girl she had known who had been betrayed and deserted by a lover. She kept her child by her own exertions, and lived bravely and throve. After a time the man returned poorer than she, and wanted to marry her; but she refused. He ultimately went into the Union workhouse. The young woman's conduct in not caring to be 'made respectable' won the novelist - poet's admiration, and he wished to know her name; but the old narrator said, 'Oh, never mind their names! they be dead and rotted by now'.

The eminently modern idea embodied in this example — of a woman's not becoming necessarily the chattel and slave of her seducer — impressed Hardy as being one of the first glimmers of woman's enfranchisement; and he made use of it in succeeding years in more than one case in his fiction and verse.

In the same month the Hardys attended Ambulance-Society lectures — First-Aid teaching being in fashion just then. He makes a note concerning a particular lecture:

'A skeleton — the one used in these lectures — is hung up inside the window. We face it as we sit. Outside the band is playing, and the children are dancing. I can see their little figures through the window past the skeleton dangling in front.' Another note — this on the wintry weather: 'Heard of an open cart being driven through the freezing rain. The people in it became literally packed in ice; the men's beards and hair were hung with icicles. Getting one of the men into the house was like bringing in a chandelier of lustres.'

In the same month he replied as follows to a question asked him by letter:

'To A. A. Reade, Esq. 'Dear Sir,

'I can say that I have never found alcohol helpful to literary production in any degree. My experience goes to prove that the effect of wine, taken as a preliminary to imaginative work, as it is called,

is to blind the writer to the quality of what he produces rather than to raise its quality.

‘When walking much out of doors, and particularly when on Continental rambles, I occasionally drink a glass or two of claret or mild ale. The German beers seem really beneficial at these times of exertion which (as wine seems otherwise) may be owing to some alimentary qualities they possess apart from their stimulating property. With these rare exceptions I have taken no alcoholic liquor for the last two years.

‘Yours truly,  
‘T. Hardy.’

‘February 25, 1883. Sent a short hastily written novel to the Graphic for Summer Number.’ [It was *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*.]

‘February 28. Walked with Walter Fletcher (County Surveyor) to Corfe Mullen. He says that the scene of the auction of turnpike tolls used to be curious. It was held at an inn, and at one end of the room would be the auctioneer and trustees, at the other a crowd of strange beings, looking as not worth sixpence among them. Yet the biddings for the Poole Trust would sometimes reach £1400. Sometimes the bidders would say, “Beg yer pardon, gentlemen, but will you wait to let us step outside a minute or two?” Perhaps the trustees would say they could not. The men would say, “then we’ll step out without your letting us”. On their return only one or two would bid, and the peremptory trustees be nettled.

‘Passed a lonely old house formerly an inn. The road-contractor now living there showed us into the stable, and drew our attention to the furthest stall. When the place was an inn, he said, it was the haunt of smugglers, and in a quarrel there one night a man was killed in that stall. If an old horse is put there on certain nights, at about two in the morning (when the smuggler died) the horse cries like a child, and on entering you find him in a lather of sweat.

‘The huge chestnut tree which stood in front of this melancholy house is dead, but the trunk is left standing. In it are still the hooks to which horses were fastened by the reins while their owners were inside.’

‘March 13. M. writes to me that when a farmer at Puddlehinton who did not want rain found that a neighbouring farmer had sent to the parson to pray for it, and it had come, he went and abused the other farmer, and told him ‘twas a very dirty trick of his to catch God A’mighty unawares, and he ought to be ashamed of it.

‘Our servant Ann brings us a report, which has been verified, that the carpenter who made a coffin for Mr. W. who died the other day, made it too short. A bystander said satirically, “Anybody would think you’d made it for yourself, John!” (the carpenter was a short man). The maker said, “Ah — they would!” and fell dead instantly.’

In reply to a letter from Miss Mary Christie:

‘Wimborne, April 11, 1883.

‘Dear Madam,

‘I have read with great interest the account of your scheme for encouraging a feeling for art in National schools, and if my name be of any service in support of the general



proposition, I willingly consent to your using it. As to the details of such a scheme, my views differ somewhat from your own. For instance, I think for children between 9 and 12 or 13 — the great mass of those in elementary schools — fairly good engravings, such as those in the *Graphic*, *Illustrated News*, etc., (not the coloured pictures) to be as conducive to the end desired as more finished pictures and photographs. A child's imagination is so powerful that it only requires the idea to set it to work: and hence a dozen suggestions of scenes and persons by as many prints would seem to me to be of more value to him or her than the perfect representation of one, — while the latter would cost as much as the former. This, however, is altogether a secondary point, and I daresay that if we were to talk over the subject we should soon be quite at one about it. . . .'

Hardy and his wife were in London off and on during May and June, seeing pictures, plays, and friends. At a lunch at Lord Houghton's, who with his sister Lady Galway had taken a small house off Park Lane for this season, Hardy met Robert Browning again, Rhoda Broughton for the first time, and several others, including Mrs.

from America, 'a large-eyed lady-owner of ten serial publications, which, she told me, she called her ten children. Also Lady C. who talked to me about Rabelais — without knowledge obviously — having heard that I belonged to the Rabelais Club. She said she meant to read him through. She had read one chapter, but couldn't get on with the old French, so was looking for a literal translation. Heaven bless her reading!

'Houghton, seeing Browning about to introduce me to Rhoda Broughton, hastened forward before Browning, and emphatically introduced us with the manner of a man who means to see things properly done in his own house; then walked round, pleased with himself as the company dropped in; like one who, having set a machinery in motion, has now only to wait and observe how it goes.'

'June 24. Sunday. Went in the afternoon to see Mrs. Procter at Albert Hall Mansions. Found Browning present. He told me that Mrs. , whom he and I had met at Lord Houghton's, had made £200,000 by publishing pirated works of authors who had made comparatively nothing. Presently Mrs. Sutherland Orr and Mrs. Frank Hill (*Daily News*) came in. Also two Jewesses — the Misses Lazarus — from America. Browning tried the elder with Hebrew, and she appeared to understand so well that he said he perceived she knew the tongue better than he. When these had gone George Smith [the publisher] called. He and Mrs. Procter declared that there was something tender between Mrs. Orr and Browning. "Why don't they settle it!" said Mrs. P.

'In the evening went to the Irving dinner. Sir Frederick Pollock, who took the chair, and made a speech, said that the departure of Irving for America would be a loss that would eclipse the gaiety of nations (!) Irving in his reply said that in the twenty-seven years he had been on the stage he had enacted 650 different characters.'

'June 25. Dined at the Savile with Gosse. Met W. D. Howells of New York there. He told me a story of Emerson's loss of memory. At the funeral of Longfellow he had to make a speech. "The brightness and beauty of soul", he began, "of him we have lost, has been acknowledged wherever the English language is spoken. I've known him

these forty years; and no American, whatever may be his opinions, will deny that in — in — in — I can't remember the gentleman's name — beat the heart of a true poet.”

‘Howells said that Mark Twain usually makes a good speech. But once he heard him fail. In his speech he was telling a story of an occasion when he was in some western city, and found that some impostors personating Longfellow, Emerson, and others had been there. Mark began to describe these impostors, and while doing it found that Longfellow, Emerson, etc., were present, listening, and, from a titter or two, found also that his satirical description of the impostors was becoming regarded as an oblique satirical description of the originals. He was overspread by a sudden cold chill, and struggled to a lame ending. He was so convinced that he had given offence that he wrote to Emerson and Longfellow, apologizing. Emerson could not understand the letter, his memory of the incident having failed him, and wrote to Mark asking what it meant. Then Mark had to tell him what he wished he had never uttered; and altogether the fiasco was complete.’

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE COUNTY TOWN

1883-1885: Aet. 43-45

In this month of June the Hardys removed from Wimborne to Dorchester, which town and its neighbourhood, though they did not foresee it, was to be their country-quarters for the remainder of their lives. But several months of each spring and summer were to be spent in London during the ensuing twenty years, and occasionally spells abroad. This removal to the county town, and later to a spot a little outside it, was a step they often regretted having taken; but the bracing air brought them health and renewed vigour, and in the long run it proved not ill-advised.

‘July 19. In future I am not going to praise things because the accumulated remarks of ages say they are great and good, if those accumulated remarks are not based on observation. And I am not going to condemn things because a pile of accepted views raked together from tradition, and acquired by instillation, say antecedently that they are bad.’

‘July 22. To Winterborne-Came Church with Gosse, to hear and see the poet Barnes. Stayed for sermon. Barnes, knowing we should be on the watch for a prepared sermon, addressed it entirely to his own flock, almost pointedly excluding us. Afterwards walked to the rectory and looked at his pictures.

‘Poetry versus reason: e.g., A band plays “God save the Queen”, and being musical the uncompromising Republican joins in the harmony: a hymn rolls from a church-window, and the uncompromising No-God-ist or Unconscious God-ist takes up the refrain.’

Mr. T. W. H. Tolbort, a friend of Hardy's from youth, and a pupil of Barnes's, who years earlier had come out at the top in the Indian Civil Service examination, died at the beginning of the next month, after a bright and promising career in India, and Hardy wrote an obituary notice of him in the Dorset Chronicle. The only note Hardy makes on him in addition to the printed account is as follows:

'August 13. Tolbort lived and studied as if everything in the world were so very much worth while. But what a bright mind has gone out at one-and-forty!'

He writes elsewhere of an anecdote told him by Barnes touching his tuition of Tolbort. Barnes had relinquished his school and retired to the country rectory in which he ended his days, when Tolbort's name, and Barnes's as his schoolmaster, appeared in *The Times* at the head of the Indian examination list, a wide proportion of marks separating it from the name following. It was in the early days when these lists excited great interest. In a few mornings Barnes was deluged with letters from all parts of the country requesting him at almost any price to take innumerable sons, and produce upon them the same successful effect. 'I told them that it took two to do it', he would say, adding sadly that a popularity which would have been invaluable during the hard-working years of his life came at almost the first moment when it was no longer of use to him.

In this month of August he made a memorandum on another matter:

'Write a list of things which everybody thinks and nobody says; and a list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks.'

At this time too Hardy encountered an old man named P,

whose father, or grandfather, had been one of the keepers of the Rainbarrows' Beacon, 1800-1815, as described in *The Dynasts*, the remains of whose hut are still to be seen on the spot. It may be interesting to mention that the daughter of a travelling waxwork proprietor had some years before, when exhibiting at Puddletown,

entirely lost her heart to P's brother, a handsome young labourer of the village, and he had married her. As her father grew old and infirm the son-in-law and his wife succeeded to the showman's business and carried it on successfully. They were a worthy and happy couple,

and whenever in their rounds they came to P's native village the husband's old acquaintance were admitted gratis to the exhibition, which was of a highly moral and religious cast, including Solomon's Judgment, and Daniel in the Den of Lions, where the lions moved their heads, tails, eyes, and paws terrifically, while Daniel lifted his hands in prayer. Heads of murderers were ranged on the other side, as a wholesome lesson to evildoers. Hardy duly attended the show because the man's forefather had kept Rainbarrows' Beacon (described in *The Dynasts*); and the last he saw of old P was in the private tent attached to the exhibition, where he was sitting as a glorified figure drinking gin-and-water with his relatives.

Not having been able when he came to Dorchester to find a house to suit him, Hardy had obtained a plot of land of the Duchy of Cornwall in Fordington Field, about a mile into the country, on which to build one; and at the beginning of October marked

out as a preliminary the spot where the well was to be sunk. The only drawback to the site seemed to him to be its newness. But before the well - diggers had got deeper than three feet they came upon Romano - British urns and skeletons. Hardy and his wife found the spot was steeped in antiquity, and thought the omens gloomy; but they did not prove so, the extreme age of the relics dissipating any sense of gruesomeness. More of the sort were found in digging the house - foundations, and Hardy wrote an account of the remains, which he read at the Dorchester Meeting of the Dorset Field Club, 1884. It was printed in the 'Proceedings' of the Club in 1890.

'November 3. The Athenceum says: "The glass-stainer maintains his existence at the sacrifice of everything the painter holds dear. In place of the freedom and sweet abandonment which is nature's own charm and which the painter can achieve, the glass-stainer gives us splendour as luminous as that of the rainbow ... in patches, and stripes, and bars." The above canons are interesting in their conveyance of a half truth. All art is only approximative — not exact, as the reviewer thinks; and hence the methods of all art differ from that of the glass-stainer but in degree.'

'November 17. Poem. We [human beings] have reached a degree of intelligence which Nature never contemplated when framing her laws, and for which she consequently has provided no adequate satisfactions.' [This, which he had adumbrated before, was clearly the germ of the poem entitled 'The Mother Mourns' and others.]

'December 23. There is what we used to call "The Birds' Bedroom" in the plantation at Bockhampton. Some large hollies grow among leafless ash, oak, birch, etc. At this time of year the birds select the hollies for roosting in, and at dusk noises not unlike the creaking of withy-chairs arise, with a busy rustling as of people going to bed in a lodging-house; accompanied by sundry shakings, adjustings, and pattings, as if they were making their beds vigorously before turning in.

'Death of old Billy C at a great age. He used to talk enthusiastically of Lady Susan O'Brien [the daughter of Lord Ilchester, who excited London by eloping with O'Brien the actor, as so inimitably described in Walpole's Letters, and who afterwards settled in the Hardys' parish as before mentioned]. — "She kept a splendid house — - a cellarful of home-brewed strong beer that would a'most knock you down; everybody drank as much as he liked. The head - gardener [whom Billy as a youth assisted] was drunk every morning before breakfast. There are no such houses now! On wet days we used to make a point of working opposite the drawing-room window, that she might pity us. She would send out and tell us to go indoors, and not expose ourselves to the weather so reckless." [A kind - hearted woman, Lady Susan.]'V

On the eve of the New Year 1884 Hardy planted some trees on his new property at Max Gate, Dorchester, and passed part of the January following in London, where he saw Henry James, Gosse, and Thornycroft, and talked to Alma-Tadema about the Anglo - Roman remains he was finding on the site of his proposed house, over which discovery Tadema was much excited, as he was painting, or about to paint, a picture expressing the art of that date.

‘February. “Ye shall weep and mourn, and the world shall rejoice.” Such shows the natural limitation of the Christian view when the Christians were a small and despised community. The widened view of nowadays perceives that the world weeps and mourns all round. — Nevertheless, if “the world” denotes the brutal and thoughtless merely, the text is eternally true.’

‘James S — — [the quaint old man already mentioned, who worked forty years for Hardy’s father, and had been a smuggler], once heard a hurdlemaker bet at the “Black Dog”, Broadmayne, that he would make a hurdle sooner than the other man (not a hurdler) could pull one to pieces. They put it to the test, and the hurdlemaker won the stakes.

‘When trees and underwood are cut down, and the ground bared, three crops of flowers follow. First a sheet of yellow; they are primroses. Then a sheet of blue; they are wild hyacinths, or as we call them, graegles. Then a sheet of red; they are ragged robins, or as they are called here, robin-hoods. What have these plants been doing through the scores of years before the trees were felled, and how did they come there?’

‘March. Write a novel entitled *Time against Two*, in which the antagonism of the parents of a *Romeo and Juliet* does succeed in separating the couple and stamping out their love, — alas, a more probable development than the other!’ [The idea is briefly used in *The Well-Beloved*.]

March or April. ‘Every error under the sun seems to arise from thinking that you are right yourself because you are yourself, and other people wrong because they are not you.

‘It is now spring; when, according to the poets, birds pipe, and (the householder adds) day-labourers get independent after their preternatural civility through the frost and snow.’

‘April 26. Curious scene. A fine poem in it:

‘Four girls — itinerant musicians — sisters, have been playing opposite Parmiter’s in the High Street. The eldest had a fixed, old, hard face, and wore white roses in her hat. Her eyes remained on one close object, such as the buttons of her sister’s dress; she played the violin. The next sister, with red roses in her hat, had rather bold dark eyes, and a coquettish smirk. She too played a violin. The next, with her hair in ringlets, beat the tambourine. The youngest, a mere child, dinged the triangle. She wore a bead necklace. All wore large brass earrings like Jews’-harps, which dangled to the time of the jig.

‘I saw them again in the evening, the silvery gleams from Saunders’s [silver-smith’s] shop shining out upon them. They were now sublimed to a wondrous charm. The hard face of the eldest was flooded with soft solicitous thought; the coquettish one was no longer bold but archly tender; her dirty white roses were pure as snow; her sister’s red ones a fine crimson: the brass earrings were golden; the iron triangle silver; the tambourine Miriam’s own; the third child’s face that of an angel; the fourth that of a cherub. The pretty one smiled on the second, and began to play ‘In the gloaming’, the little voices singing it. Now they were what Nature made them, before the smear of

“civilization” had sullied their existences.’ [An impression of a somewhat similar scene is given in the poem entitled ‘Music in a Snowy Street’.]

‘Rural low life may reveal coarseness of considerable leaven; but that libidinousness which makes the scum of cities so noxious is not usually there.’

‘June 2. At Bockhampton. My birthday — 44. Alone in the plantation, at 9 o’clock. A weird hour: strange faces and figures formed by dying lights. Holm leaves shine like human eyes, and the sky glimpses between the trunks are like white phantoms and cloven tongues. It is so silent and still that a footstep on the dead leaves could be heard a quarter of a mile off. Squirrels run up the trunks in fear, stamping and crying “chut-chut-chut!” [There is not a single squirrel in that plantation now.]

The following letter was written to Hardy on his birthday:

‘Burford Bridge, ‘Box Hill, ‘ June 2, 1884.

‘What a good day this was for Anne Benson Procter, when Thomas Hardy was born! She little knew what stores of delightful reading she would owe to the Baby of 1840.

‘If she could write an Ode — or, even worse, a Sonnet!

‘He has something to be thankful for. He must have read the verses — and he is so good and kind that he would have praised them.

‘We go home on Wednesday next, having been here for ten days — sitting by the fire, for the summer comes slowly up this way.

‘Your old admirer,

‘Anne B. Procter.’

‘June 3. The leaves are approaching their finished summer shape, the evergreens wear new pale suits over the old deep attire. I watered the thirsty earth at Max Gate, which drank in the liquid with a swallowing noise. In the evening I entered Tayleure’s Circus in Fordington Field for a short time during the performance. There is a dim haze in the tent, and the green grass in the middle, within the circular horse-track, looks amazingly fresh in the artificial light. The damp orbits of the spectators’ eyes gleam in its rays. The clowns, when “off”, lounge and smoke cigarettes, and chat with serious cynicism, and as if the necessity of their occupation to society at large were not to be questioned, their true domestic expression being visible under the official expression given by the paint. This sub-expression is one of good-humoured pain.’

Hardy seems to have had something of a craze for circuses in these years, and went to all that came to Dorchester. In one performance the equestrienne who leapt through hoops on her circuit missed her footing and fell with a thud on the turf. He followed her into the dressing-tent, and became deeply interested in her recovery. The incident seems to have some bearing on the verses of many years after entitled ‘Circus-Rider to Ringmaster’.

They were in London part of June and July, and among other places went to an evening party at Alma-Tadema’s, meeting an artistic crowd which included Burne-Jones; and to another at Mrs.

Murray Smith's with Mrs. Procter, where they met again Matthew Arnold, whom Hardy liked better now than he did at their first meeting; also Du Maurier; also Henry James 'with his nebulous gaze'. Mrs. Procter, though so old, 'swam about through the crowd like a swan'.

Of Madame Judic's acting in *Niniche*, Hardy says, 'This woman has genius. The picture of the pair of them — Judic and Lassouche — putting their faces side by side and bumping each other in making love, was the most comic phase of real art I ever saw. . . . And yet the world calls a great actress.'

'July 14. Assizes. Dorchester — The Lord Chief Justice, eminent counsel, etc., reveal more of their weaknesses and vanities here in the country than in London. Their foibles expand, being off their guard. A shabby lad on trial for setting fire to a common, holds an amusingly familiar conversation with the C. J. (Coleridge) when asked if he has anything to say. Witnesses always begin their evidence in sentences containing ornamental words, evidently prepared beforehand, but when they get into the thick of it this breaks down to struggling grammar and lamentably jumbled narrative.'

'August 14. Strolling players at Dorchester in the market-field. Went to *Othello*. A vermilion sunset fell on the west end of the booth, where, while the audience assembled, Cassio, in supposed Venetian costume, was lounging and smoking in the red light at the bottom of the van-steps behind the theatre: *Othello* also lounging in the same sunlight on the grass by the stage door, and touching up the black of his face.

'The play begins as the dusk comes on, the theatre-lights within throwing the spectators' and the actors' profiles on the canvas, so that they are visible outside, and the immortal words spread through it into the silence around, and to the trees, and stars.

'I enter. A woman plays Montano, and her fencing with Cassio leaves much to the imagination. Desdemona's face still retains its anxiety about the supper that she had been cooking a few minutes earlier in the stove without.

'*Othello* is played by the proprietor, and his speeches can be heard as far as to the town-pump. Emilia wears the earrings I saw her wearing when buying the family vegetables this morning. The tragedy goes on successfully, till the audience laughs at the beginning of the murder scene. *Othello* stops, and turning, says sternly to them after an awful pause: "Is this the Nineteenth Century?" The conscience-stricken audience feel the justice of the reproof, and preserve an abashed silence as he resumes. When he comes to the pillow-scene they applaud with tragic vehemence, to show that their hearts are in the right place after all.'

August 16. Hardy took a trip to the Channel Islands from Weymouth with his brother. They went to Guernsey, Jersey, and Sark and at one of the hotels found that every man there except themselves was a commercial traveller. As they seemed so lonely they were allowed to dine with these gentlemen, and became very friendly with them. Manners at the dinner-table were highly ceremonious: 'Can I send you a cut of this boiled mutton, Mr. President?' 'No, thank you, Mr. Vice. May I help you to beef?' At the end of dinner: 'Gentlemen, you can leave the table.' Chorus of diners: 'Thank you, Mr. President.'

Conversation turned on a certain town in England, and it was defined as being a 'warm place'. Hardy, who had lived there, was puzzled, and said he had not noticed that it was particularly warm. The speaker scarcely condescended to reply that he did not understand the meaning they attached to the word.

Off and on he was now writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; but before leaving London he agreed with the Macmillans to take in hand later a story of twelve numbers for their magazine, no time being fixed. It came out two years later under the title of *The Woodlanders*.

'October 20. Query: Is not the present quasi-scientific system of writing history mere charlatanism? Events and tendencies are traced as if they were rivers of voluntary activity, and courses reasoned out from the circumstances in which natures, religions, or what-not, have found themselves. But are they not in the main the outcome of passivity — acted upon by unconscious propensity?'

'November 16. My sister Mary says that women of the past generation have faces now out of fashion. Face-expressions have their fashions like clothes.'

During the general election about this time Mr. John Morley wrote to Hardy from Newcastle:

'Your letter recalls literature, art, and sober reason — visitants as welcome as they are rare in the heats of electioneering.' And a few days later he heard from Professor Beesly, who had been beaten at the Westminster poll: 'I suppose there is not a more hopeless seat in England. We might have made head against its Toryism alone, or the clergy, or the Baroness's legitimate influence from her almsgiving of old date there (it being her special preserve), or the special tap of philanthropy turned on for the Occasion. But all united were much too strong for us. ... I return to my work in much contentment.

Leslie Stephen (like Hardy himself, quite outside politics) wrote the same week: 'I am glad to have got that book off my hands, though any vacuum in my occupations is very soon filled up (not that my nature abhors it!) and though in many ways I am very ill - satisfied with the result. However I meant well, and I can now begin to forget it.'

'December 4. A gusty wind makes the raindrops hit the windows in stars, and the sunshine flaps open and shut like a fan, flinging into the room a tin-coloured light. . . .

'Conjuror Mynterne [of whom mention has already been made], when consulted by Patt P (a strapping handsome woman), told her that her husband would die on a certain day, and showed her the funeral in a glass of water. She said she could see the bearers moving along. She made her mourning. She used to impress all this on her inoffensive husband, and assure him that he would go to hell if he made the conjuror a liar. He didn't, but died on the day foretold. Oddly enough she never married again.'

'December 31. To St. Peter's belfry to the New-Year's-Eve ringing. The night-wind whiffed in through the louvres as the men prepared the mufflers with tar-twine and pieces of horse-cloth. Climbed over the bells to fix the mufflers. I climbed with them



and looked into the tenor bell: it is worn into a bright pit where the clapper has struck it so many years, and the clapper is battered with its many blows.

‘The ringers now put their coats and waistcoats and hats upon the chimes and clock and stand to. Old John is fragile, as if the bell would pull him up rather than he pull the rope down, his neck being withered and white as his white neckcloth. But his manner is severe as he says “Tenor out?” One of the two tenor men gently eases the bell forward — - that fine old E flat [?] (probably D in modern sharpened pitch), my father’s admiration, unsurpassed in metal all the world over — and answers, “Tenor’s out”. Then old John tells them to “Go!” and they start. Through long practice he rings with the least possible movement of his body, though the youngest ringers — strong, dark-haired men with ruddy faces — soon perspire with their exertions. The red, green, and white sallies bolt up through the holes like rats between the huge beams overhead.

‘The grey stones of the fifteenth-century masonry have many of their joints mortarless, and are carved with many initials and dates.

On the sill of one louvered window stands a great pewter pot with a hinged cover and engraved: “For the use of the ringers 16 — ” [It is now in the County Museum.]

In the early part of the next year (1885) Hardy accepted a longstanding invitation to Eggesford by his friend Lady Portsmouth, whither he was to bring his work and continue it as if at home, but Mrs. Hardy was unable to accompany him. He found her there surrounded by her daughters, and their cousin Lady Winifred Herbert, afterwards Lady Burghclere; making altogether a lively house-party, Lady Portsmouth apologizing for its being mostly composed of ‘better halves’. Hence, though the library was placed at his disposal, and entry forbidden, that his labours should not be interrupted, very little work indeed was done while he stayed there, most of the time being spent in driving about the villages with his hosts and walking in the Park. Lord Portsmouth he found to be ‘a farmer-like man with a broad Devon accent. He showed me a bridge over which bastards were thrown and drowned, even down to quite recent times.’ Lady Dorothea, one of the daughters, told him of some of the escapades of her uncle Auberon Herbert — whom Hardy afterwards got to know very well — one of the most amusing being how he had personated a groom of his father’s at a Drawing-room, and by that trick got to see a flame of his who was to be there. Altogether they were an extraordinarily sympathetic group of women, and among other discussions was, of course, one on love, in which Lady Camilla informed him that ‘a woman is never so near being in love with a man she does not love as immediately he has left her after she has refused him’.

‘Lady P. tells me she never knew real anxiety till she had a family of daughters. She wants us to come to Devonshire and live near them. She says they would find a house for us. Cannot think why we live in benighted Dorset. Em would go willingly, as it is her native county; but alas, my house at Dorchester is nearly finished.’

‘Easter Sunday. Evidences of art in Bible narratives. They are written with a watchful attention (though disguised) as to their effect on their reader. Their so-called simplicity is, in fact, the simplicity of the highest cunning. And one is led to inquire, when

even in these latter days artistic development and arrangement are the qualities least appreciated by readers, who was there likely to appreciate the art in these chronicles at that day?

‘Looking round on a well-selected jhelf of fiction or history, how few stories of any length does one recognize as well told from begin ning to end! The first half of this story, the last half of that, the middle of another. . . . The modern art of narration is yet in its infancy.

‘But in these Bible lives and adventures there is the spherical completeness of perfect art. And our first, and second, feeling that they must be true because they are so impressive, becomes, as a third feeling, modified to, “Are they so very true, after all? Is not the fact of their being so convincing an argument, not for their actuality, but for the actuality of a consummate artist who was no more content with what Nature offered than Sophocles and Pheidias were content?”’

‘Friday, April 17. Wrote the last page of *The Mayor of Caster - bridge*, begun at least a year ago, and frequently interrupted in the writing of each part.’

‘April 19. The business of the poet and novelist is to show the sorriness underlying the grandest things, and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things.’

He was in London at the end of April, and probably saw Leslie Stephen there, since he makes the following remark: ‘Leslie Stephen as a critic. His approval is disapproval minimized.’

They went to the Academy this year as usual. On the *Private View* Hardy remarks: ‘The great difference between a *Private View* and a public one is the loud chatter that prevails at the former, everybody knowing everybody else’. In the evening of the same day they were at a party at Lady Carnarvon’s, where Hardy met Lord Salisbury for the first time, and had an interesting talk with him on the art of making speeches — ‘whether it is best to plunge in medias res, or to adopt a developing method’. In the middle of May they were at another of these parties of Lady Carnarvon’s, where they met Browning again; also Mrs. Jeune (afterwards Lady St. Helier), and the usual friends whom they found there.

‘May 28. Waiting at the Marble Arch while Em called a little way further on. . . . This hum of the wheel — the roar of London! What is it composed of? Hurry, speech, laughters, moans, cries of little children. The people in this tragedy laugh, sing, smoke, toss off wines, etc., make love to girls in drawing-rooms and areas; and yet are playing their parts in the tragedy just the same. Some wear jewels and feathers, some wear rags. All are caged birds; the only difference lies in the size of the cage. This too is part of the tragedy.’

‘Sunday May 31. Called on Mrs. Procter. Shocked to find her in mourning for Edith. Can’t tell why I did not see announcement of her death. Browning also present.

‘Mrs. Procter was vexed with Browning and myself for sending cards to Victor Hugo’s funeral to attach to wreaths.’

At one of these crushes in the early part of 1885 they found themselves on a particular evening amid a simmer of political excitement. It was supposed to be a non-political

‘small-and-early’, but on their arrival the house was already full to overflowing; and a well-known Conservative peeress of that date, who had lately invited Hardy to her friendship, came up to him as if she must express her feelings to somebody, and said, ‘I’m ashamed of my party! They are actually all hoping that General Gordon is murdered, in order that it may ruin Gladstone!’ It seems to have been this rumour of Gordon’s death, which had just been circulated, that had brought so many brilliant and titled people there. Auberon Herbert, who was also there, told Hardy privately that it was true. Presently another and grimmer lady, the Dowager Viscountess Galway, said to him that she half-believed Gordon was still alive, because no relic, bloody rag, or any scrap of him had been produced, which from her experience of those countries she knew to be almost the invariable custom. So the crowd waited, and conjectured, and did not leave till a late hour, the truth as to Gordon’s fate not being generally known till some days after.

It must have been his experiences at these nominally social but really political parties that gave rise to the following note at the same date:

‘History is rather a stream than a tree. There is nothing organic in its shape, nothing systematic in its development. It flows on like a thunderstorm-rill by a road side; now a straw turns it this way, now a tiny barrier of sand that. The offhand decision of some commonplace mind high in office at a critical moment influences the course of events for a hundred years. Consider the evenings at Lord Carnarvon’s, and the intensely average conversation on politics held there by average men who two or three weeks later were members of the Cabinet. A row of shopkeepers in Oxford Street taken just as they came would conduct the affairs of the nation as ably as these.

‘Thus, judging by bulk of effect, it becomes impossible to estimate the intrinsic value of ideas, acts, material things: we are forced to appraise them by the curves of their career. There were more beautiful women in Greece than Helen; but what of them?’

‘What Ruskin says as to the cause of the want of imagination in works of the present age is probably true — that it is the flippant sarcasm of the time. “Men dare not open their hearts to us if we are to broil them on a thorn fire.”’

At the end of the month of June Hardy was obliged to go down to Dorset to superintend the removal of his furniture from the house he had temporarily taken in Dorchester to the one he had built in the fields at Max Gate, a mile out of the town.

This house, one mile east of Dorchester, had been about eighteen months in building, commencing November 26, 1883, during which time Hardy was constantly overlooking operations. The plot of ground, which he bought from the Duchy of Cornwall, was acres in extent, and nearly forty years later another half-acre was added to the garden.

A visitor to Max Gate in 1886 gives the following description:

‘The house that is, from its position, almost the first object in the neighbourhood to catch the sun’s morning rays, and the last to relinquish the evening glow, is approached . . . along the Wareham road across an open down. From this side the building appears as an unpretending red-brick structure of moderate size, somewhat quaintly built, and

standing in a garden which is divided from the upland without by an enclosing wall. . . . The place is as lonely as it is elevated; and it is evident that from the narrow windows of a turret which rises at the salient angle an extensive view of the surrounding country may be obtained.

‘From the white entrance gate in the wall a short drive, planted on the windward side with beech and sycamore, leads up to the house, arrivals being notified to the inmates by the voice of a glossy black setter [Moss], who comes into view from the stable at the back as far as his chain will allow him. Within, we find ourselves in a small square hall, floored with dark polished wood, and resembling rather a cosy sitting-room with a staircase in it than a hall as commonly understood. It is lighted by a window of leaded panes, through which may be seen Conygar Hill, Came Plantation, and the elevated seamark of Culliford Tree.’

Some two or three thousand small trees, mostly Austrian pines, were planted around the house by Hardy himself, and in later years these grew so thickly that the house was almost entirely screened from the road, and finally appeared, in summer, as if at the bottom of a dark green well of trees.

To the right of the front door upon entering is the drawing-room, and to the left the dining-room. Above the drawing-room is the room which Hardy used as his first study at Max Gate, and in this room *The Woodlanders* was written. Later he moved his study to the back of the house with a window facing west, where *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* took shape. In after years another study was built over a new kitchen, and here *The Dynasts* and all the later poems were written, with the remaining literary work of Hardy’s life. The rather large window of this, the last of all his workrooms, faced east, and the full moon rising over the tops of the dark pines was a familiar sight.

When Max Gate was built Hardy intended to have a sundial affixed to the easternmost turret, as shown in an illustration drawn by himself for *IVessex Poems*. This design, constantly in his mind, never matured during his life, though at the time of his death the sundial was actually being made in Dorchester, from a model prepared by himself, more than forty years after it was first planned.

A description of his personal appearance at this time, by a careful observer, is as follows:

‘A somewhat fair-complexioned man, a trifle below the middle - height [he was actually 5 ft. 6\ ins.] of slight build, with a pleasant thoughtful face, exceptionally broad at the temples, and fringed by a beard trimmed after the Elizabethan manner [this beard was shaved off about 1890, and he never grew another, but had always a moustache]; a man readily sociable and genial, but one whose mien conveys the impression that the world in his eyes has rather more of the tragedy than the comedy about it.’

His smile was of exceptional sweetness, and his eyes were a clear blue-grey. His whole aspect was almost childlike in its sincerity and simplicity, the features being strongly marked, and his nose, as he himself once described it, more Roman than aquiline. The nobility of his brow was striking. When young he had abundant hair of a deep chestnut

colour, which later became a dark brown, almost black, until it turned grey. His hands were well shaped, with long deft fingers; his shoulders particularly neat, and his gait light and easy. He walked very rapidly. He was always a spare man, though not actually thin, and he never in his life allowed himself to be weighed, as he said he considered that to be unlucky.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MAX GATE AND ‘THE WOODLANDERS’

1885-1887: Aet. 45-46

On June 29 the Hardys slept at Max Gate for the first time — the house being one they were destined to occupy permanently thence onward, except during the four or five months in each year that were spent in London or abroad. Almost the first visitor at their new house was R. L. Stevenson, till then a stranger to Hardy, who wrote from Bournemouth to announce his coming, adding characteristically: ‘I could have got an introduction, but my acquaintance with your mind is already of old date. ... If you should be busy or unwilling, the irregularity of my approach leaves you the safer retreat.’ He appeared two days afterwards, with his wife, wife’s son, and cousin. They were on their way to Dartmoor, the air of which Stevenson had learnt would be good for his complaint. But, alas, he never reached Dartmoor, falling ill at Exeter and being detained there till he was well enough to go home again.

‘September 16. Dined with [Hon. Aubrey] Spring-Rice [who lived at Dorchester]. Met there his cousin Aubrey de Vere the poet, and Father Poole. De Vere says that his father used to say a Greek drama was the fifth act of an Elizabethan one, which of course it is, when not a sixth.’

‘October 17. Called on William Barnes. Talked of old families. He told me a story of Louis Napoleon. During his residence in England he was friendly with the Damers, and used to visit at Winterborne-Came House, near Dorchester, where they lived. (It was a current tradition that he wished to marry Miss Damer; also that he would dreamily remark that it was fated he should be the Emperor of the French to avenge the defeat of Waterloo.) It was the fashion then for the Dorchester people to parade in full dress in the South Walk on Sunday afternoons, and on one occasion the gamblers with their guests came in from their house a mile off and joined the promenade. Barnes, who kept a school in the town, had an usher from Blackmore Vale named Hann (whose people seem to have been of my mother’s stock), and Barnes and his usher also promenaded. For a freak Louis Napoleon, who was walking with Colonel Damer, slipped his cane between Hann’s legs when they brushed past each other in opposite directions, and nearly threw the usher down. Hann was peppery, like all of that pedigree, my maternal line included, and almost before Barnes knew what was happening had pulled off his coat, thrown it on Barnes, and was challenging Louis Napoleon to fight. The latter

apologized profusely, said it was quite an accident, and laughed the affair off; so the burghers who had stood round expecting a fight resumed their walk disappointed.'

1 November 17-19. In a fit of depression, as if enveloped in a leaden cloud. Have gone back to my original plot for *The Woodlanders* after all. Am working from half-past ten a.m. to twelve p.m., to get my mind made up on the details.'

'November 21-22. Sick headache.'

'Tragedy. It may be put thus in brief: a tragedy exhibits a state of things in the life of an individual which unavoidably causes some natural aim or desire of his to end in a catastrophe when carried out.'

'November 25. Letter from John Morley [probably about *The Woodlanders*, he being then editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* in which it was to appear]; and one from Leslie Stephen, with remarks on books he had read between whiles.'

'December 9. "Everything looks so little — so ghastly little!" A local exclamation heard.'

'December 12. Experience wnteaches — (what one at first thinks to be the rule in events).'

'December 21. The Hypocrisy of things. Nature is an arch - dissembler. A child is deceived completely; the older members of society more or less according to their penetration; though even they seldom get to realise that nothing is as it appears.'

'December 31. This evening, the end of the old year 1885 finds me sadder than many previous New Year's Eves have done. Whether building this house at Max Gate was a wise expenditure of energy is one doubt, which, if resolved in the negative, is depressing enough. And there are others. But:

"This is the chief thing: Be not perturbed; for all things are according to the nature of the universal." ' [Marcus Aurelius.]

1886. — 'January 2, The Mayor of Casterbridge begins to-day in the *Graphic* newspaper and *Harper's Weekly*. — I fear it will not be so good as I meant, but after all, it is not improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of character that matter. . . .

'Cold weather brings out upon the faces of people the written marks of their habits, vices, passions, and memories, as warmth brings out on paper a writing in sympathetic ink. The drunkard looks still more a drunkard when the splotches have their margins made distinct by frost, the hectic blush becomes a stain now, the cadaverous complexion reveals the bone under, the quality of handsomeness is reduced to its lowest terms.'

'January 3. My art is to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, etc., so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible.'

'January 6. Misapprehension. The shrinking soul thinks its weak place is going to be laid bare, and shows its thought by a suddenly clipped manner. The other shrinking soul thinks the clipped manner of the first to be the result of its own weakness in some way, not of its strength, and shows its fear also by its constrained air! So they withdraw from each other and misunderstand.'

‘March 4. Novel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend it by going still further in the same direction. Why not by rendering as visible essences, spectres, etc., the abstract thoughts of the analytic school?’

This notion was approximately carried out, not in a novel, but through the much more appropriate medium of poetry, in the supernatural framework of *The Dynasts* as also in smaller poems. And a further note of the same date enlarges the same idea:

‘The human race to be shown as one great network or tissue which quivers in every part when one point is shaken, like a spider’s web if touched. Abstract realisms to be in the form of Spirits, Spectral figures, etc.

‘The Realities to be the true realities of life, hitherto called abstractions. The old material realities to be placed behind the former, as shadowy accessories.’

In the spring and summer they were again in London, staying in Bloomsbury to have the Reading Room of the Museum at hand. It was the spring during which Gladstone brought in his Home Rule Bill for Ireland. The first that Hardy says about it occurs in an entry dated April 8, 9, 10, 11:

‘A critical time, politically. I never remember a debate of such absorbing interest as this on Gladstone’s Bill for Irish Government. He spoke lucidly: Chamberlain with manly practical earnestness; Hartington fairly forcibly; Morley without much effect (for him). Morley’s speech shows that in Parliament a fine intelligence is not appreciated without sword-and-buckler doggedness. Chamberlain impresses me most of all, as combining these qualities.’

And on May 10: ‘Saw Gladstone enter the Houses of Parliament. The crowd was very excited, not only waving their hats and shouting and running, but leaping in the air. His head was bare, and his now bald crown showed pale and distinct over the top of Mrs. Gladstone’s bonnet.’

On the 13<sup>th</sup> Hardy was in the House, the debate on the Government of Ireland still continuing:

‘Gladstone was suave in replying to Bradlaugh, almost unctuous. “Not accustomed to recognize Parliamentary debts after five years”, etc. He would shake his head and smile contradictions to his opponents across the table and red box, on which he wrote from time to time. Heard Morley say a few words, also Sir W. Harcourt, and Lord Hartington; a speech from Sir H. James, also from Lord G. Hamilton, Campbell-Bannerman, etc. Saw the dandy party enter in evening-dress, eye-glasses, diamond rings, etc. They were a great contrast to Joseph Arch and the Irish members in their plain, simple, ill-fitting clothes. The House is a motley assembly nowadays. Gladstone’s frock-coat dangled and swung as he went in and out with a white flower in his button-hole and open waistcoat. Lord Randolph’s manner in turning to Dillon, the Irish member, was almost arrogant. Sir R. Cross was sturdy, like T. B. the Dorchester butcher, when he used to stand at the chopping-block on market-days. The earnestness of the Irish members who spoke was very impressive; Lord G. Hamilton was entirely wanting in

earnestness; Sir H. James quite the reverse; E. Clarke direct, firm, and incisive, but inhumane.

‘To realise the difficulty of the Irish question it is necessary to see the Irish phalanx sitting tight: it then seems as if one must go with Morley, and get rid of them at any cost.

‘Morley kept trying to look used to it all, and not as if he were a consummate man of letters there by mistake. Gladstone was quite distinct from all others in the House, though he sits low in his seat from age. When he smiled one could see benevolence on his face. Large-heartedness versus small-heartedness is a distinct attitude which the House of Commons takes up to an observer’s eye.’

Though he did not enter it here Hardy often wrote elsewhere, and said of Home Rule that it was a staring dilemma, of which good policy and good philanthropy were the huge horns. Policy for England required that it should not be granted; humanity to Ireland that it should. Neither Liberals nor Conservatives would honestly own up to this opposition between two moralities, but speciously insisted that humanity and policy were both on one side — of course their own.

‘May. Reading in the British Museum. Have been thinking over the dictum of Hegel — that the real is the rational and the rational the real — that real pain is compatible with a formal pleasure — that the idea is all, etc., but it doesn’t help much. These venerable philosophers seem to start wrong; they cannot get away from a prepossession that the world must somehow have been made to be a comfortable place for man. If I remember, it was Comte who said that metaphysics was a mere sorry attempt to reconcile theology and physics.’

‘May 17. At a curious soiree in Bond Street. Met a Hindu Buddhist, a remarkably well-educated man who speaks English fluently. He is the coach of the Theosophical Society. Also encountered a Mr. E. Maitland, author of a book called *The Pilgrim and the Shrine*, which I remember. He mentioned also another, written, I think he said, by himself and Dr. Anna Kingsford in collaboration. If he could not get on with the work on any particular night he would go to her next morning and she would supply him with the sentences, written down by her on waking, as sentences she had dreamt of without knowing why. Met also Dr. Anna Kingsford herself, and others; all very strange people.’

The Mayor of Casterbridge was issued complete about the end of May. It was a story which Hardy fancied he had damaged more recklessly as an artistic whole, in the interest of the newspaper in which it appeared serially, than perhaps any other of his novels, his aiming to get an incident into almost every week’s part causing him in his own judgment to add events to the narrative somewhat too freely. However, as at this time he called his novel-writing ‘mere journeywork’ he cared little about it as art, though it must be said in favour of the plot, as he admitted later, that it was quite coherent and organic, in spite of its complication. And others thought better of it than he did himself, as is shown by the letter R. L. Stevenson writes thereon:

‘Skerryvore,



‘Bournemouth,  
‘My dear Hardy,

‘I have read “ The Mayor of Casterbridge” with sincere admiration: Henchard is a great fellow, and Dorchester is touched in with the hand of a master.

‘Do you think you would let me try to dramatize it? I keep unusually well, and am  
‘Yours very sincerely,

‘Robert Louis Stevenson.’

What became of this dramatic project there is no evidence to show in the Life of Stevenson, so far as is remembered by the present writer. The story in long after years became highly popular; but it is curious to find that Hardy had some difficulty in getting it issued in volume-form, James Payn, the publishers’ reader, having reported to Smith, Elder and Co. that the lack of gentry among the characters made it uninteresting — a typical estimate of what was, or was supposed to be, mid-Victorian taste.

During the remainder of this month, and through June and July, they were dining and lunching out almost every day. Hardy did not take much account of these functions, though some remarks he makes are interesting. For instance, he describes the charming daughter of a then popular hostess with whom he and his wife had been lunching:

‘M<sup>W</sup> is still as childlike as when I first met her. She has an instinct to give something which she cannot resist. Gave me a flower. She expresses as usual contrary opinions at different moments. At one time she is going to marry; then she never is: at one moment she has been ill; at another she is always well. Pities the row of poor husbands at Marshall and Snelgrove’s. Gave a poor crossing-sweeper a shilling; came back and found her drunk. An emotional delicate girl, in spite of what she calls her “largeness”, i.e. her being bigly built.’

In these weeks Hardy met Walter Pater, ‘whose manner is that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them’. Also a lot of politicians, on whom he notes: ‘Plenty of form in their handling of politics, but no matter, or originality.’ Either on this occasion or a few days later the hostess, Mrs. Jeune, drew the attention of Justin McCarthy — also a guest — to the Conservative placard in her window. ‘I hope you don’t mind the blue bill?’ ‘Not at all,’ said the amiable McCarthy blandly. ‘Blue is a colour I have liked from a boy.’

At Mr. and Mrs. Gosse’s they met Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and his daughter:

‘His is a little figure, that of an aged boy. He said markedly that he did not read novels; I did not say I had never read his essays,

though it would have been true, I am ashamed to think. . . . But authors are not so touchy as they are supposed to be on such matters — at least I am not — and I found him a very bright, pleasant, juvenile old man.’ At a Rabelais Club dinner a few days later he renewed acquaintance with Dr. Holmes, and with Henry James, ‘who has a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences’; and also talked to George Meredith. This may possibly have been the first time he and Meredith had met since Hardy received Meredith’s advice about novel-writing; but it is not clear that

it was so. At dinners elsewhere in these weeks he met Whistler and Charles Keene, Bret Harte, Sambourne, and others — most of them for the first and last time; at Sidney Colvin's he renewed acquaintance with R. L. Stevenson, then in London; and at another house sat next to a genial old lady, Lady Camperdown, and 'could not get rid of the feeling that I was close to a great naval engagement'.

On some music of Wagner's listened to at a concert at this time when it was less familiar to the public than after, Hardy remarks: 'It was weather and ghost music — whistling of wind and storm, the strumming of a gale on iron railings, the creaking of doors; low screams of entreaty and agony through key-holes, amid which trumpet-voices are heard. Such music, like any other, may be made to express emotion of various kinds; but it cannot express the subject or reason of that emotion.'

Apropos of this it may be mentioned here that, many years after, Hardy met Grieg, and in doing his best to talk about music Hardy explained that Wagner's compositions seemed to him like the wind-effects above described. 'I would rather have the wind and rain myself,' Grieg replied, shaking his head.

Mrs. Procter, who was still strong enough to go out, came to the Hardys to tea, and among her stores of anecdotes told one that was amusing about Macaulay and Sydney Smith, who had dined at her house in years gone by: when Macaulay had gone she said to Sydney Smith: 'You gave him no chance at all to talk.' 'On the contrary,' said Sydney Smith, 'I gave him several opportunities — which you took advantage of.'

It was during this summer that the Hardys either began or renewed their acquaintance with Mrs. Henry Reeve and her sister Miss Gollop, whose family was an old Dorset one; and with Reeve himself, the well-known editor of the *Edinburgh Review* and of the famous *Greville Memoirs*. Notwithstanding a slight pompousness of manner he attracted the younger man by his wide experience of Continental men of letters, musicians, and princes, and of English affairs political and journalistic.

'June 29. Called on Leslie Stephen. He is just the same or worse; as if dying to express sympathy, but suffering under some terrible curse which prevents his saying any but caustic things, and showing antipathy instead.' [Hardy was not aware that Stephen was unwell, and growing deaf, or he would not have put in this form his impression of a man he so much liked, and who had been so much to him.]

'Afterwards had a good talk with Auberon Herbert at Lady Portsmouth's. He said that the clue to Gladstone's faults was personal vanity. His niece Lady Winifred Herbert, who was present, said that politics had revealed themselves to her as a horror of late. Nevertheless she insisted that to listen to our conversation on the same horror was not an infliction.'

Mr. George Gissing, finding that Hardy was in London this summer, had asked if he might call upon him for some advice about novel-writing; which he did. Sending one of his own novels afterwards, Gissing writes at the end of June:

'It is possible you will find *The Unclassed* detestable. I myself should not dare to read it now, it is too saturated with bygone miseries of every kind. . . . May I add in one word what very real pleasure it has given me to meet and speak with you? I have

not been the least careful of your readers, and in your books I have constantly found refreshment and onward help. That aid is much needed now - a-days by anyone who wishes to pursue literature as distinct from the profession of letters. In literature my interests begin and end; I hope to make my life and all its acquirements subservient to my ideal of artistic creation. The end of it all may prove ineffectual, but as well spend one's strength thus as in another way. The misery of it is that, writing for English people, one may not be thorough: reticences and superficialities have so often to fill places where one is willing to put in honest work.'

'July 11. Met and talked to Browning at Mrs. Procter's again, and a day or two later at Mrs. Skirrow's, where was also Oscar Wilde, etc.

'In Rotten Row. Every now and then each woman, however interesting, puts on her battle face.

'In evening to bookstalls in Holywell Street known to me so many years ago.'

Hardy by this time had quite resigned himself to novel-writing as a trade, which he had never wanted to carry on as such. He now went about the business mechanically. He was in court a part of the time during which the Crawford-Dilke case was proceeding. He makes no comment on the case itself, but a general remark on the court:

'The personality which fills the court is that of the witness. The judge's personality during the cross-examination contracts to his corporeal dimensions merely. So do they all save that of the pervasive witness aforesaid. . . . The witness is also the fool of the court. . . . The witness's little peculiarities supersede those of all the other personages together. He is at once king and victim.

'As to the architecture of the courts, there are everywhere religious art-forces masquerading as law symbols! The leaf, flower, fret, suggested by spiritual emotion, are pressed into the service of social strife.'

The remainder of his spare time in London this year appears to have been spent in the British Museum Library and elsewhere, considering the question of *The Dynasts*.

At the end of July they returned to Max Gate, where he went on with *The IWoodlanders*; and in October they paid another visit to Lady Portsmouth in Devon, where they had a pleasant week, visiting local scenes and surroundings down to the kennels (Lord Portsmouth being Master of Hounds) and the dogs' cemetery. 'Lord Portsmouth made his whipper-in tell Emma the story of the hunted fox that ran up the old woman's clock-case, adding corroborative words with much gravity as the story proceeded and enjoying it more than she did, though he had heard it 100 times.'

In October the Dorset poet William Barnes died. Hardy had known him ever since his schoolmastering time in South Street, Dorchester, next door to the architect under whom Hardy had served his years of pupillage. In 1864 Barnes had retired from school-keeping, and accepted the living of Winterborne-Came-cum-Whit - combe, the rectory house being, by chance, not half a mile from the only spot Hardy could find convenient for building a dwelling on. Hardy's walk across the fields to attend the poet's funeral was marked by the singular incident to which he alludes in the poem entitled 'The Last Signal'. He also wrote an obituary notice of his friend for the *Athenceum*, which was

afterwards drawn upon for details of his life in the Dictionary of National Biography. It was not till many years after that he made and edited a selection of Barnes's poems.

The beginning of December covers this entry:

'I often view society-gatherings, people in the street, in a room, or elsewhere, as if they were beings in a somnambulistic state, making their motions automatically — not realising what they mean.'

And a few days later another, when going to London:

'December 7. Winter. The landscape has turned from a painting to an engraving: the birds that love worms fall back upon berries: the back parts of homesteads assume, in the general nakedness of the trees, a humiliating squalidness as to their details that has not been contemplated by their occupiers.

'A man I met in the train says in a tone of bitter regret that he wore out seven sets of horseshoes in riding from Sturminster Newton to Weymouth when courting a young woman at the latter place. He did not say whether he won and married her, or not; but I fancy he did.

'At the Society of British Artists there is good technique in abundance; but ideas for subjects are lacking. The impressionist school is strong. It is even more suggestive in the direction of literature than in that of art. As usual it is pushed to absurdity by some. But their principle is, as I understand it, that what you carry away with you from a scene is the true feature to grasp; or in other words, what appeals to your own individual eye and heart in particular amid much that does not so appeal, and which you therefore omit to record.

'Talked to Bob Stevenson — Louis's cousin — at the Savile. A more solid character than Louis.

'Called on Mrs. Jeune. She was in a rich pinky-red gown, and looked handsome as we sat by the firelight en tete-a-tete: she was, curiously enough, an example of Whistler's study in red that I had seen in the morning at the Gallery.

'To Lady Carnarvon's "small and early". Snow falling: the cabman drove me furiously — I don't know why. The familiar man with the lantern at the door. Her drawing-room was differently arranged from its method during her summer crushes. They seemed glad to see me. Lady Winifred told me she was going to be married on the 10th of January at the Savoy Chapel, with other details of the wedding. She was serious and thoughtful — I fancied a little careworn. Said she was not going to let her honeymoon interfere with her reading, and means to carry a parcel of books. Spoke of her betrothed as 'He' — as a workman speaks of his employer — never mentioning his name. Wants me to call my heroine "Winifred", but it is too late to alter it.

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'Talked to Lady Carnarvon about the trees at Highclere in relation to my work in hand [The Woodlanders]. Lord C. told me he had filled several bookshelves with books all written by members of his own family — from Sir Philip Sidney, who was his mother's mother's mother's, etc. brother, downwards.

‘The last time, I suppose, that I shall see friendly Winifred Herbert pouring out tea from the big tea-pot in that house, as I have seen her do so many times. Lady Carnarvon went about the room weaving little webs of sympathy between her guests.’

So came the end of 1886.

January 1887 was uneventful at Max Gate, and the only remark its occupier makes during the month is the following:

‘After looking at the landscape ascribed to Bonington in our drawing-room I feel that Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery. I don’t want to see landscapes, i.e., scenic paintings of them, because I don’t want to see the original realities — as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings.

‘The “simply natural” is interesting no longer. The much decried, mad, late-Turner rendering is now necessary to create my interest. The exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art — it is a student’s style — the style of a period when the mind is serene and unawakened to the tragical mysteries of life; when it does not bring anything to the object that coalesces with and translates the qualities that are already there, — half hidden, it may be — and the two united are depicted as the All.’

‘February 4, 8.20 p.m. Finished *The IWoodlanders*. Thought I should feel glad, but I do not particularly, — though relieved.’ In after years he often said that in some respects *The IWoodlanders* was his best novel.

‘February 6. Sunday. To see my father. It was three men whom he last saw flogged in Dorchester by the Town-pump — about 1830. He happened to go in from Stinsford about mid-day. Some soldiers coming down the street from the Barracks interfered, and swore at Davis [Jack Ketch] because he did not “flog fair”; that is to say he waited between each lash for the flesh to recover sensation, whereas, as they knew from experience, by striking quickly the flesh remained numb through several strokes.’

‘February 13. You may regard a throng of people as containing a certain small minority who have sensitive souls; these, and the aspects of these, being what is worth observing. So you divide them into the mentally unquickened, mechanical, soulless; and the living, throbbing, suffering, vital. In other words, into souls and machines, ether and clay.

‘I was thinking a night or two ago that people are somnambulists — that the material is not the real — only the visible, the real being invisible optically. That it is because we are in a somnambulistic hallucination that we think the real to be what we see as real.

‘Faces. The features to beholders so commonplace are to their possessor lineaments of high estimation, striking, hopeful.’

Having now some leisure, and the spring drawing near, Hardy carried into effect an idea that he had long entertained, and on Monday, March 14, 1887, left Dorchester with Mrs. Hardy for London on their way to Italy, the day before *The IWoodlanders* was published by the Messrs. Macmillan.

## CHAPTER XV

1887: Aet. 46

The month had been mild hitherto, but no sooner had they started than the weather turned to snow; and a snowstorm persistently accompanied them across the Channel and southward beyond. They broke the journey at Aix-les-Bains, at which place they arrived past midnight, and the snow being by this time deep a path was cleared with spades for them to the fly in waiting, which two horses, aided by men turning the wheels, dragged with difficulty up the hill to the Hotel Chateau Durieux — an old-fashioned place with stone floors and wide fireplaces. They were the only people there — the first visitors of the season — and in spite of a huge fire in their bedroom they found the next morning a cone of snow within each casement, and a snow film on the floor sufficient to show their tracks in moving about. Hardy used to speak of a curious atmospheric effect then witnessed: he was surprised that the windows of the room they occupied — one of the best — should command the view of a commonplace paddock only, with a few broken rails and sheds. But presently ‘what had seemed like the sky evolved a scene which uncurtained itself high up in the midst of the aerial expanse, as in a magic lantern, and vast mountains appeared there, tantalisingly withdrawing again as if they had been a mere illusion’.

They stayed here a day or two, ‘the mountains showing again coquettish signs of uncovering themselves, and again coquettishly pulling down their veil’.

Leaving for Turin they stayed there awhile, then duly reached Genoa, concerning the first aspect of which from the train Hardy wrote a long time after the lines entitled ‘Genoa and the Mediterranean’, though that city — so pre-eminently the city of marble — ‘everything marble’, he writes, ‘even little doorways in slums’ — nobly redeemed its character when they visited its palaces during their stay.

At Pisa after visiting the Cathedral and Baptistery they stood at 187

the top of the leaning tower during a peal of the bells, which shook it under their feet, and saw the sun set from one of the bridges over the Arno, as Shelley had probably seen it from the same bridge many a time. Thence by ‘melancholy olives and cheerful lemons’ they proceeded to Florence, where they were met by an inhabitant of that city, Lucy Baxter, the daughter of the poet Barnes, married and settled there since Hardy had known her in girlhood, and who wrote under the name of ‘Leader Scott’. She had obtained lodgings for them at the Villa Trollope, in the Piazza dell’ Indipendenza; and there they remained all the time they were in Florence. Their Florentine experiences onward were much like those of other people visiting for the first time the buildings, pictures, and historic sites of that city. They were fortunately able to see the old Market just before its destruction. Having gone through the galleries and churches of Florence, they drove out and visited another English resident in the country near, and also went over the Certosa di Val d’Ema. Then they travelled on to Rome, their first glimpse of it being of the Dome of St. Peter’s across the stagnant flats of the Campagna.

They put up at the Hotel d'Allemagne, in the Via Condotti, a street opposite the Piazza di Spagna and the steps descending from the church of SS. Trinita dei Monti, on the south side of which stands the house where Keats died. Hardy liked to watch of an evening, when the streets below were immersed in shade, the figures ascending and descending these steps in the sunset glow, the front of the church orange in the same light; and also the house hard by, in which no mind could conjecture what had been lost to English literature in the early part of the same century that saw him there.

After some days spent in the Holy City Hardy began to feel, he frequently said, its measureless layers of history to lie upon him like a physical weight. The time of their visit was not so long after the peeling of the Colosseum and other ruins of their vast accumulations of parasitic growths, which, though Hardy as an architect defended the much-deplored process on the score of its absolute necessity if the walls were to be preserved, he yet wished had not been taken in hand till after his inspection of them. This made the ruins of the ancient city, the 'altae moenia Romae' as he called them from the Aeneid, more gaunt to the vision and more depressing to the mind than they had been to visitors when covered with greenery, and accounts for his allusions to the city in the poems on Rome written after his return, as exhibiting 'ochreous gauntness', 'umbered walls', and so forth.

He mentions in a note the dustiness of the Pincio: 'Dust rising in clouds from the windy drive to the top, whitening the leaves of the evergreen oaks, and making the pale splotches on the trunks of the plane trees yet paler. The busts of illustrious Romans seem to require hats and goggles as a protection. But in the sheltered gardens beneath palms spread, and oranges still hang on the trees.'

There was a great spurt of building going on at this time, on which he remarks, 'I wonder how anybody can have any zest to erect a new building in Rome, in the overpowering presence of decay on the mangy and rotting walls of old erections, originally of fifty times the strength of the new.' This sentiment was embodied in the sonnet called 'Building a New Street in the Ancient Quarter.'

A visit to the graves of Shelley and Keats was also the inspiration of more verses — probably not written till later; his nearly falling asleep in the Sala delle Muse of the Vatican was the source of another poem, the weariness being the effect of the deadly fatiguing size of St. Peter's; and the musical incident, which as he once said, took him by surprise when investigating the remains of Caligula's palace, that of another.

'The quality of the faces in the streets of Rome: Satyrs: Emperors: Faustinas.'

Hardy's notes of Rome were of a very jumbled and confusing kind. But, probably from a surviving architectural instinct, he made a few measurements in the Via Appia Antica, where he was obsessed by a vision of a chained file of prisoners plodding wearily along towards Rome, one of the most haggard of whom was to be famous through the ages as the founder of Pauline Christianity. He also noticed that the pavement of the fashionable promenade, the Corso, was two feet six inches wide. Of a different kind was his note that 'The monk who showed us the hole in which stood Saint Peter's Cross in the Church of S. Pietro in Montorio, and fetched up a pinch of clean sand from it,

implying it had been there ever since the apostle's crucifixion, was a man of cynical humour, and gave me an indescribably funny glance from the tail of his eye as if to say: "You see well enough what an imposture it all is!" I have noticed this sly humour in some more of these Roman monks, such as the one who sent me on alone into the vaults of the Cappuccini [among the thousands of skulls there], not knowing that I was aware of them, and therefore not startled at the ghastly scene. Perhaps there is something in my appearance which makes them think me a humorist also.'

On the Roman pictures and statuary the only remark he makes except in verse is: 'Paintings. In Roman art the kernel of truth has acquired a thick rind of affectation: e.g. I find that pictures by Giotto have been touched up so thoroughly that what you see is not Giotto at all, but the over-lying renovations. A disappointing sight. Alas for this "wronged great soul of an ancient master"!' (The remark, though written at Rome, seems to refer more particularly to Florence.)

By curious chance Hardy was present at a wedding at the church of S. Lorenzo-in-Lucina, and was vexed with himself that he did not recollect till afterwards that it was the church of Pompilia's marriage in *The Ring and the Book*. But he was on the whole more interested in Pagan than in Christian Rome, of the latter preferring churches in which he could detect columns from ancient temples. Christian Rome, he said, was so rambling and stratified that to comprehend it in a single visit was like trying to read Gibbon through at a sitting. So that, for instance, standing on the meagre remains of the Via Sacra then recently uncovered, he seemed to catch more echoes of the inquisitive -bore's conversation there with the poet Horace than of worship from the huge basilicas hard by, which were in point of time many centuries nearer to him. But he was careful to remind one to whom he spoke about this that it was really a question of familiarity, time being nothing beside knowledge, and that he happened to remember the scene in the *Satires* which he, like so many schoolboys, had read, while his mind was a blank on the most august ceremonial of the Middle-Age Christian services in the Basilica Julia or the Basilica of Constantine.

'April. Our spirits. As we get older they are less subject to steep gradients than in youth. We lower the elevations, and fill the hollows with sustained judgments.'

While here he received among other letters one from Mrs. Procter containing the following remarks:

'It is very kind of you to think of me in Rome, and stretch out a friendly hand. Perhaps, as you are living amidst the Ancient, there is a propriety in thinking of the Oldish, and, I must say, the truest, friend you have.

'We are still in Winter: to-day a bitter East wind, and tiles and chimney pots flying about. Never have we had so long a season of cold weather — all our Money gone in Coals and Gas.

'I have been displeased, so much as one ever is by a Man whom you care nothing about, by an Article written by a Dr. Wendell Holmes the American. He comes here, and then says, "the most wonderful thing I saw in England were the Old Ladies —



they are so active, and tough like Old Macaws" — Now am I like an Old Macaw? — He might have said Parrots.

'Then Mr. Thackeray's letters [to Mrs. Brookfield]: so common, so vulgar! You will see them in Scribners Magazine. — He was never in love with me, but the 200 letters he wrote me were very superior to these.'

It was with a sense of having grasped very little of its history that he left the city, though with some relief, which may have been partly physical and partly mental.

Returning to Florence on 'a soft green misty evening following rain', he found the scenery soothing after the gauntness of Rome. On a day of warm sun he sat down for a long time, he said, on the steps of the Lanzi, in the Piazza della Signoria, and thought of many things:

'It is three in the afternoon, and the faces of the buildings are steeped in afternoon stagnation. The figure of Neptune is looking an intense white against the brown-grey houses behind, and the bronze forms round the basin [of the fountain] are starred with rays on their noses, elbows, knees, bosoms and shoulders. The shade from the Loggia dei Lanzi falls half across the Piazza. Turning my head there rise the three great arches with their sculptures, then those in the middle of the Loggia, then the row of six at the back with their uplifted fingers, as if' [sentence unfinished].

'In the *caffè* near there is a patter of speech, and on the pavement outside a noise of hoofs. The reflection from that statue of Neptune throws a secondary light into the *caffè*.

'Everybody is thinking, even amid these art examples from various ages, that this present age is the ultimate climax and upshot of the previous ages, and not a link in a chain of them.

'In a work of art it is the accident which charms, not the intention; that we only like and admire. Instance the amber tones that pervade the folds of drapery in ancient marbles, the deadened polish of the surfaces, and the cracks and the scratches.'

In visiting Fiesole they met with a mishap which might have ended in a serious accident. With Mrs. Baxter they had journeyed out from Florence to the foot of the hill on which the little town stands, and were about to walk up the height when on second thoughts they entered a gimcrack omnibus that plied to the top. The driver went to have a drink before starting, and left the omnibus untended, only one of the two horses being put to. The horse immediately started with the three inside at a furious pace towards Florence. The highway was dotted with heaps of large stones for repair, but he avoided them by a miracle, until the steam tram from Florence appeared a little way ahead, and a collision seemed inevitable. Two workmen, however, seeing the danger, descended from the roof of a house and stepping in front of the horse stopped it. They again attempted Fiesole, and climbed up — this time on foot despite all invitations from flymen.

In a sonnet on Fiesole called 'In the Old Theatre' Hardy makes use of an incident that occurred while he was sitting in the stone Amphitheatre on the summit of the hill.

A few more looks at Florence, including the Easter ceremony of the Scoppio del Carro, a visit to Mrs. Browning's tomb, and to the supposed scene in the Piazza dell' Annunziata of one of Browning's finest poems, 'The Statue and the Bust', ended their visit to this half-English city, and after seeing Siena they left for Bologna, Ferrara, and Venice by the railway across the Apennines, not forgetting to gaze at the Euganean Hills so inseparable from thoughts of Shelley. It is rather noticeable that two such differing poets as Browning and Shelley, in their writings, their mentality, and their lives, should have so mingled in Hardy's thoughts during this Italian tour, almost to the exclusion of other English poets equally, or nearly so, associated with Italy, with whose works he was just as well acquainted.

Hardy seems to have found more pleasure in Venice than in any Italian city previously visited, in spite of bad weather during a part of his stay there. Byron of course was introduced here among the other phantom poets marshalled through his brain in front of the sea-queen's historic succession of scenes.

A wet windy morning accompanied their first curious examination of the Ducal Palace, 'the shining ferri of the gondolas curtseying down and up against the wharf wall, and the gondoliers standing looking on at us. The wet draught sweeps through the colonnade by Miinster's shop, not a soul being within it but Munster, whose face brightens at sight of us like that of a man on a desert island. . . . The dumb boy who showed us the way to the Rialto has haunted us silently ever since.

'The Hall of the Great Council is saturated with Doge-domry. The faces of the Doges pictured on the frieze float out into the air of the room in front of me. "We know nothing of you", say these spectres. "Who may you be, pray?" The draught brushing past seems like inquiring touches by their cold hands, feeling, feeling like blind people what you are. Yes: here to this visionary place I solidly bring in my person Dorchester and Wessex life; and they may well ask why do I do it. . . . Yet there is a connection. The bell of the Campanile of S. Marco strikes the hour, and its sound has exactly that tin-tray timbre given out by the bells of Longpuddle and Weatherbury, showing that they are of precisely the same-proportioned alloy.'

Hardy had been, for many reasons, keen to see St. Mark's; and he formed his own opinion on it:

'Well. There is surely some conventional ecstasy, exaggeration, — shall I say humbug? — in what Ruskin writes about this, if I remember (though I have not read him lately), when the church is looked at as a whole. One architectural defect nothing can get over — its squatness as seen from the natural point of view — the glassy marble pavement of the Grand Piazza. Second, its weak, flexuous, constructional lines. Then, the fantastic Oriental character of its rails makes it barbaric in its general impression, in spite of their eat beauty.

air 'Mosaics, mosaics, mosaics, gilding, gilding, everywhere inside and out. The domes like inverted china-bowls within — much gilt also.

‘This being said, see what good things are left to say — of its art, of its history! That floor, of every colour and rich device, is worn into undulations by the infinite multitudes of feet that have trodden it, and what feet there have been among the rest!

‘A commonplace man stoops in a dark corner where he strikes a common match, and shows us — what — a lost article? — a purse, pipe, or tobacco-pouch? no; shows us — drags from the depths of time as by a miracle — wonderful diaphanous alabaster pillars that were once in Solomon’s temple.’

On Venice generally he makes the following desultory remarks: ‘When it rains in Italy it makes one shrink and shiver; it is so far more serious a matter than in England. We have our stern gray Stone and brick walls, and weathered copings, and buttress-slopes, to fend such. But here there are exposed to the decaying rain marbles, and frescoes, and tesseræ, and gildings, and endless things — driving one to implore mentally that all these treasures may be put under a glass case!’

When the weather was finer:

‘Venice is composed of blue and sunlight. Hence I incline, after all, to “sun-girt” rather than “sea-girt”, which I once upheld.’ [In Shelley’s poem, ‘Many a Green Isle needs must be.’]

‘Venice requires heat to complete the picture of her. Heat is an artistic part of the portrait of all southern towns.’

They were most kindly received and entertained during their brief stay by friends to whom they had introductions. Browning’s friend Mrs. Bronson showed them many things; and in respect of an evening party given for them by Mrs. Daniel Curtis at the Palazzo Barbarigo, it could not be said that ‘silent rows the songless gondolier’, several boats lit, by lanterns pausing in front of the open windows on the Grand Canal while their rowers and the singers they brought serenaded the guests within. But alas, it was true that ‘Tasso’s echoes were no more’, the music being that of the latest popular song of the date:

‘Fu-ni-cu-li, fu-ni-cu-la, Fu-ni-cu-li-cu-la!’

However, the scene was picturesque, Hardy used to say — the dark shapes of the gondoliers creeping near to them silently, like cat or other nocturnal animals, the gleam of a ferro here and there: then the lanterns suddenly lighting up over the heads of the singers throwing diffused light on their faces and forms; a sky as of black velvet stretching above with its star points, as the notes flapped back from the dilapidated palaces behind with a hollow and almost sepulchral echo, as if from a vault.

Quoting Byron brings to the mind a regret which Hardy sometimes expressed, that though he possibly encountered some old native man or woman of fourscore or over who could remember Byron’s residence at the Spinelli and Mocenigo palaces, he never questioned any likely one among them on the point, though once in especial he stood on the Riva degli Schiavoni beside such an aged personage whose appearance made him feel her to be an instance of such recollection.

He was curious to know if any descendants of the powerful Doges were left in decayed modern Venice. Mr. Curtis told him that there were some in Venetian society still —

poor, but proud, though not offensively so. The majority were extinct, their palaces being ruinous. Going on to Mrs. Bronson's immediately afterwards,

the Contessa Mcalled. She was a great beauty, having the well-

defined hues and contours of foreigners in the south; and she turned out to be one of the very descendants Hardy had inquired about. When asked afterwards how she was dressed, he said in a green velvet jacket with fluffy tags, a grey hat and feathers, a white veil with seed pearls, and a light figured skirt of a yellowish colour. She had a charming manner, her mind flying from one subject to another like a child's as she spoke her pretty attempts at English. 'But I li — eek moch to do it!' . . . 'Si, si!' ... 'Oh noh, noh!'

However, Hardy was not altogether listening, he afterwards recalled. This correct, modest, modern lady, the friend of his English and American acquaintance in Venice, and now his own, was to him primarily the symbol and relic of the bygone ancient families; and the chief effect, he said, of her good looks and pretty voice on him was to carry him at one spring back to those behind the centuries, who here took their pleasure when the sea was warm in May, Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday, When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow. . . .

It is not known whether the Italian Contessa in *A Group of Noble Dames* was suggested by her; but there are resemblances.

Then they left Venice. 'The Riva degli Schiavoni is interested along its whole length in our departure, just as nautical people at ports always are, and as we left the station we could see the tops of the Alps floating in the sky above the fog.' They had been unable to follow Ruskin's excellent advice to approach Venice by water, but they had seen it from the water a good deal while there.

'The Cathedral, Milan. Yes, perhaps it is architectural filigree: and yet I admire it. The vaulting of the interior is infinite quadrilles in carved-work. A momentary vexation comes when I am reminded that it is not real — even a disgust. And yet I admire. The sense of space alone demands admiration, being beyond that expressed anywhere except at St. Peter's.'

The cheerful scenes of life and gaiety here after the poetical decay of Venice came as the greatest possible contrast, and a not unwelcome change. Here Hardy's mind reverted to Napoleon, particularly when he was sitting in the sun with his wife on the roof of the Cathedral, and regarding the city in vistas between the flying buttresses. It was while here on the roof, he thought in after years, though he was not quite sure, that he conceived the Milan Cathedral scene in *The Dynasts*.

Hardy had lately been obsessed by an old French tune of his father's, 'The Bridge of Lodi', owing to his having drawn near the spot of that famous Napoleonic struggle; and at a large music-shop in the Gallery of Victor Emmanuel he inquired about it; as may be expected, his whimsical questioning met with no success. He felt it could meet with none, and yet went on with his search. At dinner at the Grand Hotel de Milan that evening, where the Hardys had put up, they became friendly with a young

Scotch officer of Foot returning from India, and Hardy told him about Lodi, and how he could not get the old tune.

‘The Bridge of Lodi?’ said the Scotchman (apparently a sort of Farfrae). ‘Ay, but I’ve never heard of it!’

‘But you’ve heard of the battle, anyhow?’ says the astonished Hardy.

‘Nay, and I never have whatever!’ says the young soldier.

Hardy then proceeded to describe the conflict, and by degrees his companion rose to an enthusiasm for Lodi as great as Hardy’s own. When the latter said he would like to go and see the spot, his friend cried ‘And I’ll go too!’

The next morning they started and passing through levels of fat meads and blooming fruit-trees, reached the little town of their quest, and more especially the historic bridge itself — much changed, but at any rate sufficiently well denoting the scene of Napoleon’s exploit in the earlier and better days of his career. Over the quiet flowing of the Adda the two re-enacted the fight, and the ‘Little Corporal’s’ dramatic victory over the Austrians.

The pleasant jingle in Poems of the Past and the Present named after the bridge, and written some time after the excursion to the scene, fully enough describes the visit, but the young Scotch lieutenant from India is not mentioned, though his zest by this time had grown more than equal to Hardy’s — the latter’s becoming somewhat damped at finding that the most persevering inquiries at Lodi failed to elicit any tradition of the event, and the furthest search to furnish any photograph of the town and river.

They returned to England by way of Como and the St. Gothard, one of the remarks Hardy makes on the former place being on the vying of ‘the young greens with the old greens, the greens of yesterday and the greens of yesteryear’. It was too early in the year for Lucerne, and they stayed there only a day. Passing through Paris, they went to see the Crown jewels that chanced just then to be on exhibition, previous to their sale.

## **PART IV - BETWEEN TOWN AND COUNTRY**

### **CHAPTER XVI**

#### **LONDON FRIENDS, PARIS, AND SHORT STORIES**

1887-1888: Aet. 47-48

Reaching London in April 1887, Hardy attended the annual dinner of the Royal Academy. He remarks thereon:

‘The watching presence of so many portraits gives a distinct character to this dinner. ... In speaking, the Duke of Cambridge could not decide whether he had ended his

speech or not, and so tagged and tagged on a bit more, and a bit more, till the sentences were like acrobats hanging down from a trapeze. Lord Salisbury's satire was rather too serious for after-dinner. Huxley began well but ended disastrously; the Archbishop was dreary; Morley tried to look a regular dining-out man-of-the-world, but really looked what he is by nature, the student. Everybody afterwards walked about, the Prince of Wales included, remaining till 12. I spoke to a good many; was apparently unknown to a good many more I knew. At these times men do not want to talk to their equals, but to their superiors.'

On the Sunday after, the Hardys again met Browning at Mrs. Procter's, and being full of Italy, Hardy alluded to 'The Statue and the Bust' (which he often thought one of the finest of Browning's poems); and observed that, looking at 'the empty shrine' opposite the figure of Ferdinand in the Piazza dell' Annunziata, he had wondered where the bust had gone to, and had been informed by an officious waiter standing at a neighbouring door that he remembered seeing it in its place; after which he gave further interesting details about it, for which information he was gratefully rewarded. Browning smiled and said, 'I invented it.'

Shortly afterwards they settled till the end of July at a house in Campden-Hill Road.

Speaking of this date Hardy said that in looking for rooms to stay at for the season he called at a house-agent's as usual, where, not seeing the man at the desk who had been there a day or two before, and who knew his wants in flats and apartments, he inquired for the man and was told he was out. Saying he would call again in an hour, Hardy left. On coming back he was told he was still out. He called a day or two afterwards, and the answer then was that the clerk he wanted was away.

'But you said yesterday he was only out,' exclaimed Hardy. His informant looked round him as if not wishing to be overheard, and replied:

'Well, strictly he is not out, but in.'

'Why didn't you say so?'

'Because you can't speak to him. He's dead and buried.'

'May 16. Met Lowell at Lady Carnarvon's.'

'May 29. Instance of a wrong (i.e. selfish) philosophy in poetry:

'Thrice happy he who on the sunless side

Of a romantic mountain. . . .

Sits coolly calm; while all the world without,

Unsatisfied and sick, tosses at noon.

Thomson.'

'June 2. The forty-seventh birthday of Thomas the Unworthy.'

'June 8. Met at a dinner at the Savile Club: Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Lytton, A. J. Balfour, and others.'

'June 9. At dinner at (Juliet) Lady Pollock's. Sir F. told Emma that he had danced in the same quadrille with a gentleman who had danced with Marie Antoinette.

‘Sir Patrick Colquhoun said that Lord Strath(illegible) told him he was once dining with Rogers when Sir Philip Francis was present. The conversation turned on “Junius”. Rogers said he would ask Sir Philip point-blank if he really were the man, so going to him he said “Sir Philip, I want to ask you a question”. Sir P. “ At your peril, Sir!” Rogers retreated saying “He’s not only Junius, but Junius BrutusV’

‘He also told us that Lord Sonce related to him how George III. met him on Richmond Hill, and said to him: “Eton boy, what are you doing here?”“Taking a walk, Sir.”“What form are you in?”“The sixth.”“Then you have that which I couldn’t give you.”(Characteristic.)’

‘Sunday. To Mrs. Procter’s. Browning there. He was sleepy. In telling a story would break off, forgetting what he was going to say.’

On the 21 st was Queen Victoria’s Jubilee, and Hardy took his wife to see the procession from the Savile Club in Piccadilly. ‘The Queen was very jolly-looking. The general opinion is that there will certainly never be another jubilee in England; anyhow, probably never such a gathering of royal personages again.’

‘25. At a concert at Prince’s Hall I saw Souls outside Bodies.’

‘26. We were at Mrs. Procter’s when Browning came in as usual. He seemed galled at not having been invited to the Abbey (Jubilee) ceremony. He says that so far from receiving (as stated in the Pall Mall) an invitation even so late as twenty-four hours before, he received absolutely no invitation from the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Lathom) at all. The Dean offered him one of his own family tickets, but B. did not care to go on such terms, so went off to Oxford to stay with Jowett. People who were present say there were crowds of Court-servants and other nobodies there. An eminent actor had 25 tickets sent him . . . Millais, Huxley, Arnold, Spencer, etc., had none. Altogether Literature, Art, and Science had been unmitigatedly snubbed, and they should turn republican forthwith.’ An interesting comment on the reign of Queen Victoria!

The remainder of the London season in the brilliant Jubilee-year was passed by the Hardys gaily enough. At some houses the scene was made very radiant by the presence of so many Indian princes in their jewelled robes. At a certain reception Hardy was rather struck by one of the Indian dignitaries (who seems to have been the Raja of Kapurthala); remarking of him:

‘In his mass of jewels and white turban and tunic he stood and sat apart amid the babble and gaiety, evidently feeling himself alone, and having too much character to pretend to belong to and throw himself into a thoughtless world of chit-chat and pleasure which he understood nothing of.’

‘June 30. Talked to Matthew Arnold at the Royal Academy Soiree. Also to Lang, du Maurier, Thornycrofts, Mrs. Jeune, etc.

‘With E. to lunch at Lady Stanley’s (of Alderley). Met there Lord Halifax, Lady Airlie, Hon. Maude Stanley, her brother Mon - signor Stanley, and others. An exciting family dispute supervened, in which they took no notice of us guests at all.’

But Hardy does not comment much on these society-gatherings, his thoughts running upon other subjects, as is shown by the following memorandum made on the same

day as the above. (It must always be borne in mind that these memoranda on people and things were made by him only as personal opinions for private consideration, which he meant to destroy, and not for publication; an issue which has come about by his having been asked when old if he would object to their being printed, as there was no harm in them, and his saying passively that he did not mind.)

‘July 14. It is the on-going — i.e. the “becoming” — of the world that produces its sadness. If the world stood still at a felicitous moment there would be no sadness in it. The sun and the moon standing still on Ajalon was not a catastrophe for Israel, but a type of Paradise.’

In August he was back again at Max Gate, and there remarks on the difference between children who grow up in solitary country places and those who grow up in towns — the former being imaginative, dreamy, and credulous of vague mysteries; giving as the reason that ‘The Unknown comes within so short a radius from themselves by comparison with the city-bred’.

At the end of the month Mr. Edmund Gosse wrote to inform Hardy among other things that R. L. Stevenson was off to Colorado as a last chance, adding in the course of a humorous letter: ‘I hope your spirits have been pretty good this summer. I have been scarcely fit for human society, I have been so deep in the dumps. I wonder whether climate has anything to do with it? It is the proper thing nowadays to attribute to physical causes all the phenomena which people used to call spiritual. But I am not sure. One may be dyspeptic and yet perfectly cheerful, and one may be quite well and yet no fit company for a churchyard worm. For the last week I should not have ventured to say unto a flea, “Thou art my sister”.’

‘September 3. Mother tells me of a woman she knew named Nanny Priddle, who when she married would never be called by her husband’s name “because she was too proud”, she said; and to the end of their lives the couple were spoken of as “Nanny Priddle and John Cogan”.’

‘September 25. My grandmother used to say that when sitting at home at Bockhampton she had heard the tranter “beat out the tune” on the floor with his feet when dancing at a party in his own house, which was a hundred yards or more away from hers.’

‘October 2. Looked at the thorn-bushes by Rushy Pond [on an exposed spot of the heath]. In their wrath with the gales their forms resemble men’s in like mood.

‘A variant of the superstitions attached to pigeon’s hearts is that, when the counter-acting process is going on, the person who has bewitched the other enters. In the case of a woman in a village near here, who was working the spell at midnight, a neighbour knocked at the door and said; “Do ye come in and see my little maid. She is so ill that I don’t like to bide with her alone!”’

‘October 7. During the funeral of Henry Smith, the rector’s son at West Stafford, the cows looked mournfully over the churchyard wall from the adjoining barton at the grave, resting their clammy chins on the coping; and at the end clattered their horns in a farewell volley.’



Another outline scheme for *The Dynasts* was shaped in November, in which Napoleon was represented as haunted by an Evil Genius or Familiar, whose existence he has to confess to his wives. This was abandoned, and another tried in which Napoleon by means of necromancy becomes possessed of an insight, enabling him to see the thoughts of opposing generals. This does not seem to have come to anything either.

But in December he quotes from Addison:

‘In the description of Paradise the poet [Milton] has observed Aristotle’s rule of lavishing all the ornaments of diction on the weak, inactive parts of the fable.’ And although Hardy did not slavishly adopt this rule in *The Dynasts*, it is apparent that he had it in mind in concentrating the ‘ornaments of diction’ in particular places, thus following Coleridge in holding that a long poem should not attempt to be poetical all through.

‘December 11. Those who invent vices indulge in them with more judgment and restraint than those who imitate vices invented by others.’

‘December 31. A silent New Year’s Eve — no bell, or band, or voice.

‘The year has been a fairly friendly one to me. It showed me the south of France — Italy, above all Rome — and it brought me back unharmed and much illuminated. It has given me some new acquaintances, too, and enabled me to hold my own in fiction, whatever that may be worth, by the completion of *The Woodlanders*.

‘Books read or pieces looked at this year:

‘Milton, Dante, Calderon, Goethe.

‘Homer, Virgil, Moltere, Scott.

‘The Cid, Nibelungen, Crusoe, Don Quixote.

‘Aristophanes, Theocritus, Boccaccio.

‘Canterbury Tales, Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Lycidas.

‘Malory, Vicar of Wakefield, Ode to West Wind, Ode to Grecian Urn.

‘Christabel, Wye above Tintern.

‘Chapman’s Iliad, Lord Derby’s ditto, Worsley’s Odyssey.’

‘January 2. 1888. Different purposes, different men. Those in the city for money-making are not the same men as they were when at home the previous evening. Nor are these the same as they were when lying awake in the small hours.’

‘January 5. Be rather curious than anxious about your own career; for whatever result may accrue to its intellectual and social value, it will make little difference to your personal well-being. A naturalist’s interest in the hatching of a queer egg or germ is the utmost introspective consideration you should allow yourself.’

‘January 7. On New Year’s Eve and day I sent off five copies of the magazine containing a story of mine, and three letters — all eight to friends by way of New Year’s greeting and good wishes. Not a single reply. Mem.: Never send New Year’s letters, etc., again.’

[Two were dying: one ultimately replied. The story was either 'The Withered Arm', in Blackwood, or 'The Waiting Supper' in Murray's Magaine, both of which appeared about this time.]

'Apprehension is a great element in imagination. It is a semi - madness, which sees enemies, etc., in inanimate objects.'

'January 14. A "sensation-novel" is possible in which the sensationalism is not casualty, but evolution; not physical but psychical. . . . The difference between the latter kind of novel and the novel of physical sensationalism — i.e. personal adventure, etc., — is this: that whereas in the physical the adventure itself is the subject of interest, the psychical results being passed over as commonplace, in the psychical the casualty or adventure is held to be of no intrinsic interest, but the effect upon the faculties is the important matter to be depicted.'

'January 24. I find that my politics really are neither Tory nor Radical. I may be called an Intrinsicist. I am against privilege derived from accident of any kind, and am therefore equally opposed to aristocratic privilege and democratic privilege. (By the latter I mean the arrogant assumption that the only labour is hand-labour — a worse arrogance than that of the aristocrat, — the taxing of the worthy to help those masses of the population who will not help themselves when they might, etc.) Opportunity should be equal for all, but those who will not avail themselves of it should be cared for merely — not be a burden to, nor the rulers over, those who do avail themselves thereof.'

'February 5. Heard a story of a farmer who was "over-looked" [malignly affected] by himself. He used to go and examine his stock every morning before breakfast with anxious scrutiny. The animals pined away. He went to a conjuror or white witch, who told him he had no enemy; that the evil was of his own causing, the eye of a fasting man being very blasting: that he should eat a "dew-bit" before going to survey any possession about which he had hopes.' In the latter part of this month there arrived the following: 'The Rev. Dr. A. B. Grosart ventures to address Mr. Hardy on a problem that is of life and death; personally, and in relation to young eager intellects for whom he is responsible. . . . Dr. Grosart finds abundant evidence that the facts and mysteries-of nature and human nature have come urgently before Mr. Hardy's penetrative brain.'

He enumerated some of the horrors of human and animal life, particularly parasitic, and added:

'The problem is how to reconcile these with the absolute goodness and non-limitation of God.'

Hardy replied: ' Mr. Hardy regrets that he is unable to suggest any hypothesis which would reconcile the existence of such evils as Dr. Grosart describes with the idea of omnipotent goodness. Perhaps Dr. Grosart might be helped to a provisional view of the universe by the recently published Life of Darwin, and the works of Herbert Spencer and other agnostics.'

He met Leslie Stephen shortly after, and Stephen told him that he too had received a similar letter from Grosart; to which he had replied that as the reverend doctor was a

professor of theology, and he himself only a layman, he should have thought it was the doctor's business to explain the difficulty to his correspondent, and not bis to explain it to the doctor.

Two or three days later the Bishop (Wordsworth) of Salisbury wrote to Hardy for his views on the migration of the peasantry, 'which is of considerable social importance and has a very distinct bearing on the work of the Church', adding that Hardy with his very accurate knowledge of the custom was well-qualified to be the historian of its causes and its results. 'Are they good or bad morally and in respect of religion, respectability, etc., to men, women, and children.' Hardy's answer cannot be discovered, but he is known to have held that these modern migrations are fatal to local traditions, and to cottage horticulture. Labourers formerly, knowing they were permanent residents, would plant apple-trees and fruit-bushes with zealous care, to profit from them: but now they scarce ever plant one, knowing they will be finding a home elsewhere in a year or two; or if they do happen to plant any, digging them up and selling them before leaving! Hence the lack of picturesqueness in modern labourers' dwellings.

'March 1. Youthful recollections of four village beauties:

'1. Elizabeth B, and her red hair. [She seems to appear in the poem called "Lizbie Browne", and was a gamekeeper's daughter, a year or two older than Hardy himself.]

'2. Emily D, and her mere prettiness.

'3. Rachel H, and her rich colour, and vanity, and frailty, and clever artificial dimple-making. [She is probably in some respects the original of Arabella in *Jude the Obscure*.]

'4. Alice Pand her mass of flaxen curls.'

'March. At the Temperance Hotel. The people who stay here appear to include religious enthusiasts of all sorts. They talk the old faiths with such new fervours and original aspects that such faiths seem again arresting. They open fresh views of Christianity by turning it in reverse positions, as Gerome the painter did by painting the shadow of the Crucifixion instead of the Crucifixion itself as former painters had done.

'In the street outside I heard a man coaxing money from a prostitute in slang language, his arm round her waist. The outside was a commentary on the inside.'

'March 9. British Museum Reading Room. Souls are gliding about here in a sort of dream — screened somewhat by their bodies, but imaginable behind them. Dissolution is gnawing at them all, slightly hampered by renovations. In the great circle of the library Time is looking into Space. Coughs are floating in the same great vault, mixing with the rustle of book-leaves risen from the dead, and the touches of footsteps on the floor.'

'March 28. On returning to London after an absence I find the people of my acquaintance abraded, their hair disappearing, also their flesh, by degrees.

'People who to one's-self are transient singularities are to themselves the permanent condition, the inevitable, the normal, the rest of mankind being to them the singularity. Think, that those (to us) strange transitory phenomena, their personalities, are with them always, at their going to bed, at their uprising!

‘Footsteps, cabs, etc., are continually passing our lodgings. And every echo, pit-pat, and rumble that makes up the general noise has behind it a motive, a prepossession, a hope, a fear, a fixed thought forward; perhaps more — a joy, a sorrow, a love, a revenge.

‘London appears not to see itself. Each individual is conscious of himself, but nobody conscious of themselves collectively, except perhaps some poor gaper who stares round with a half-idiotic aspect.

‘There is no consciousness here of where anything comes from or goes to — only that it is present.

‘In the City. The fiendish precision or mechanism of town-life is what makes it so intolerable to the sick and infirm. Like an acrobat performing on a succession of swinging trapezes, as long as you are at particular points at precise instants, everything glides as if afloat; but if you are not up to time’

‘April 16. News of Matthew Arnold’s death, which occurred yesterday. . . . The Times speaks quite truly of his “enthusiasm for the nobler and detestation of the meaner elements in humanity”.’

‘April 19. Scenes in ordinary life that are insipid at 20 become interesting at 30, and tragic at 40.’

‘April 21. Dr. Quain told me some curious medical stories when we were dining at Mrs. Jeune’s. He said it was a mistake for anyone to have so many doctors as the German Emperor has, because neither feels responsible. Gave an account of Queen Adelaide, who died through her physicians’ ignorance of her malady, one of them, Dr. Chambers, remarking, when asked why he did not investigate her disorder, “Damn it, I wasn’t going to pull about the Queen” — she being such a prude that she would never have forgiven him for making an examination that, as it proved, would have saved her life.

‘Mary Jeune says that when she tries to convey some sort of moral or religious teaching to the East-end poor, so as to change their views from wrong to right, it ends by their convincing her that their view is the right one — not by her convincing them.’

‘April 23. To Alma-Tadema’s musical afternoon. Heckmann Quartett. The architecture of his house is incomplete without sunlight and warmth. Hence the dripping wintry afternoon without mocked his marble basin and brass steps and quilted blinds and silver apse.’

‘April 26. Thought in bed last night that Byron’s Childe Harold will live in the history of English poetry not so much because of the beauty of parts of it, which is great, but because of its good fortune in being an accretion of descriptive poems by the most fascinating personality in the world — for the English — not a common plebeian, but a romantically wicked noble lord. It affects even Arnold’s judgment.’

‘April 28. A short story of a young man — “who could not go to Oxford” — His struggles and ultimate failure. Suicide. [Probably the germ of Jude the Obscure.] There is something [in this] the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to

them — though I was not altogether hindered going, at least to Cambridge, and could have gone up easily at five-and-twenty.

‘In Regent Street, which commemorates the Prince Regent. It is in the fitness of things that The Promenade of Prostitutes should be here. One can imagine his shade stalking up and down every night, smiling approvingly.’

‘May 13. Lord Houghton tells me to-day at lunch at Lady Catherine Gaskell’s of a young lady who gave a full description of a ball to her neighbour during the Chapel Royal service by calling out at each response in the Litany as many details as she could get in. Also of Lord who saves all his old tooth-brushes affectionately.

‘The Gaskells said that Lord and Lady Lymington and themselves went to the city in an omnibus, and one of them nearly sat on an Irishwoman’s baby. G. apologized, when she exclaimed, “Och, ‘twas not you: ‘twas the ugly one!” (pointing to Lord L.).

‘Lady C. says that the central position of St. James’s Square (where their house is) enables her to see so many more people. When she first comes to Town she feels a perfect lump the first fortnight — she knows nothing of the new phrases, and does not understand the social telegraphy and allusions.’

May 28. They went to Paris via London and Calais: and stayed in the Rue du Commandant Riviere several weeks, noticing on their arrival as they always did ‘the sour smell of a foreign city’.

June 4 and 7. At the Salon. ‘Was arrested by the sensational picture called “The Death of Jezebel” by Gabriel Guays, a horrible tragedy, and justly so, telling its story in a flash.’

‘June 10. To Longchamps and the Grand Prix de Paris. Roar from the course as I got near. It was Pandemonium: not a blade of grass: half overshoe in dust: the ground covered with halves of white, yellow, and blue tickets: bookmakers with staring brass - lettered names and addresses, in the very exuberance of honesty. The starter spoke to the jockeys entirely in English, and most of the cursing and swearing was done in English likewise, and done well. The horses passed in a volley, so close together that it seemed they must be striking each other. Excitement. Cries of “Vive la France!” (a French horse having won).’

‘June 11. To the Embassy. Bon Marche with Em. Walked to l’Etoile in twilight. The enormous arch stood up to its knees in lamplight, dark above against the deep blue of the upper sky. Went under and read some names of victories which were never won.’

‘June 12. To see the tombs of St. Denis with E. A lantern at the slit on one side of the vault shows the coffins to us at the opposite slit.’

‘June 13. Exhibition of Victor Hugo’s manuscripts and drawings. Thence to one of the Correctional Courts: heard two or three trivial cases. Afterwards to the Salle des Conferences.’

‘June 14. Sunny morning. View from l’Etoile. Fresh, after rain; air clear. Could see distinctly far away along the Avenue de la Grande Armee — down into the hollow and on to rising ground beyond, where the road tapers to an obelisk standing there. Also could see far along the Avenue Wagram. In the afternoon I went to the Archives

Nationales. Found them much more interesting than I had expected. As it was not a public day the attendant showed me round alone, which, with the gloomy wet afternoon, made the relics more solemn; so that, mentally, I seemed close to those keys from the Bastille, those letters of the Kings of France, those Edicts, and those corridors of white boxes, each containing one year's shady documents of a past monarchy.'

Next day, coming out of the Bourse, he learnt of the death of the Emperor of Germany.

On returning to London Hardy had a rheumatic attack which kept him in bed two or three days, after which they entered lodgings at Upper Phillimore Place, Kensington, where they remained till the third week in July. Walter Pater sometimes called on them from over the way, and told them a story of George III anent the row of houses they were living in. These, as is well known, have their fronts ornamented with the stone festooning of their date, and the King would exclaim when returning from Weymouth: 'Ah, there are the dish-clouts. Now I shall soon be home!' Acquaintance was renewed with various friends, among them, after a dozen years of silence, Mrs. Ritchie (Miss Thackeray), later Lady Ritchie. 'Talked of the value of life, and its interest. She admits that her interest in the future lies largely in the fact that she has children, and says that when she calls on L. Stephen and his wife she feels like a ghost, who arouses sad feelings in the person visited.'

As to the above remark on the value of life> Hardy writes whimsically a day or two later:

'I have attempted many modes [of finding it] Forif there is any way of getting a melancholy sat'faction out of Ufe h Hes in dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh fa whkh j mean putting on the manners of ghosts, wandering in their haunts, and taking their views of surrounding things. To think of life as passing away is a sadness; to think of it as past is at least tolerable. Hence even when I enter into a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment; only fit to behold and say, as another spectre said: "Peace be unto you!"'

'July 3. Called on [Eveline] Lady Portsmouth. Found her alone and stayed to tea. Looked more like a model countess than ever I have seen her do before, her black brocaded silk fitting her well and suiting her eminently. She is not one of those marble people who can be depended upon for their appearance at a particular moment, but like all mobile characters uncertain as to aspect. She is one of the few, very few, women of her own rank for whom I would make a sacrifice: a woman too of talent, part of whose talent consists in concealing that she has any.'

'July 5. A letter lies on the red velvet cover of the table; staring up, by reason of the contrast. I cover it over, that it may not hit my eyes so hard.'

'July 7. One o'clock a.m. I got out of bed, attracted by the never-ending procession [of market-carts to Covent Garden] as seen from our bedroom windows, Phillimore Place. Chains rattle, and each cart cracks under its weighty pyramid of vegetables.'

‘July 8. A service at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington. The red plumes and ribbon in two stylish girls’ hats in the foreground match the red robes of the persons round Christ on the Cross in the east window. The pale crucified figure rises up from a parterre of London bonnets and artificial hair-coils, as viewed from the back where I am. The sky over Jerusalem seems to have some connection with the corn-flowers in a fashionable hat that bobs about in front of the city of David. . . . When the congregation rises there is a rustling of silks like that of the Devils’ wings in Paradise Lost. Every woman then, even if she had forgotten it before, has a single thought to the folds of her clothes. They pray in the litany as if under enchantment. Their real life is spinning on beneath this apparent one of calm, like the District Railway-trains underground just by — throbbing, rushing, hot, concerned with next week, last week. . . . Could these true scenes in which this congregation is living be brought into church bodily with the personages, there would be a churchful of jostling phantasmagorias crowded like a heap of soap bubbles, infinitely intersecting, but each seeing only his own. That bald-headed man is surrounded by the interior of the Stock Exchange; that girl by the jeweller’s shop in which she purchased yesterday. Through this bizarre world of thought circulates the recitative of the parson — a thin solitary note without cadence or change of intensity — and getting lost like a bee in the clerestory.’

‘July 9. To “The Taming of the Shrew”. A spirited unconventional performance, revitalising an old subject. The brutal mediaeval view of the sex which animates the comedy does not bore us by its obsolescence, the Shrew of Miss Ada Rehan being such a real shrew. Her attitude of sad, impotent resignation, when her husband wears out her endurance, in which she stands motionless and almost unconscious of what is going on around her, was well done. At first she hears the cracks of the whip with indifference; at length she begins to shrink at the sound of them, and when he literally whips the domestics out of the room she hides away. At first not looking at him in his tantrums, she gets to steal glances at him, with an awestruck arrested attention. ‘The scene in which the sun-and-moon argument comes in contained the best of acting. Drew’s aspect of inner humorous opinion, lively eye, and made-up mind, is eminently suited to the husband’s character.

‘Reading H. James’s Reverberator. After this kind of work one feels inclined to be purposely careless in detail. The great novels of the future will certainly not concern themselves with the minutiae of manners. . . . James’s subjects are those one could be interested in at moments when there is nothing larger to think of.’

‘July 11. At the Savile. [Sir] Herbert Stephen declares that he met Sr [another member of the Club] in Piccadilly, a few minutes ago, going away from the direction of the club house door, and that Sr nodded to him; then arriving quickly at the Club he saw Sr seated in the back room. Sr, who is present during the telling, listens to this story of his wraith, and as H. S. repeats it to the other members, becomes quite uncomfortable at the weirdness of it. H. S. adds that he believes Sr is in the back room still, and Sr says he is afraid to go in to himself.’

‘July 13. After being in the street: What was it on the faces of those horses? — Resignation. Their eyes looked at me, haunted me. The absoluteness of their resignation was terrible. When afterwards I heard their tramp as I lay in bed, the ghosts of their eyes came in to me, saying, “Where is your justice, O man and ruler?”’

‘Lady Portsmouth told me at a dinner party last night that once she sat between Macaulay and Henry Layard in dining at Lord Lansdowne’s, and whenever one of them had got the ear of the table the other turned to her and talked, to show that the absolute vacuity of his rival’s discourse had to be filled in somehow with any rubbish at hand.’

‘July 14. Was much struck with Gladstone’s appearance at Flinders Petrie’s Egyptian Exhibition. The full curves of his Roman face; and his cochin-china-egg complexion was not at all like his pallor when I last saw him, and there was an utter absence of any expression of senility or mental weakness. — We dined at Walter Pater’s. Met Miss , an Amazon, more, an Atalanta, most, a Faustine. Smokes: handsome girl: cruel small mouth: she’s of the class of interesting women one would be afraid to marry.’

Here follow long lists of books read, or looked into, or intended to be read, during the year.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MORE TOWN FRIENDS AND A NOVEL’S DISMEMBERMENT

1888-1889: 4et. 48-49

Returning to Dorchester two days later, he notes down: ‘Thought of the determination to enjoy. We see it in all nature, from the leaf on the tree to the titled lady at the ball. ... It is achieved, of a sort, under superhuman difficulties. Like pent-up water it will find a chink of possibility somewhere. Even the most oppressed of men and animals find it, so that out of a thousand there is hardly one who has not a sun of some sort for his soul.’

‘August 5, 1888. To find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet.’

‘8. The air is close, the sunshine suddenly disappears, and a bad kind of sea-fog comes up, smelling like a laundry or wash-house.’

‘19. Sent a story to H. Quilter, by request, for his Magazine, entitled A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’

‘21. The literary productions of men of rigidly good family and rigidly correct education, mostly treat social conventions and contrivances — the artificial forms of living — as if they were cardinal facts of life.

‘Society consists of Characters and No-characters — nine at least of the latter to one of the former.’



‘September 9. My Father says that Dick Facey used to rivet on the fetters of criminals when they were going off by coach (Facey was journeyman for Clare the smith). He was always sent for secretly, that people might not know and congregate at the gaol entrance. They were carried away at night, a stage-coach being specially ordered. One K. of Troytown, on the London Road, a poacher, who was in the great fray at Westwood Barn near Lulworth Castle about 1825, was brought past his own door thus, on his way to transportation: he called to his wife and family; they heard his shout and ran out to bid him good-bye as he sat in chains. He was never heard of again by them.

‘T. Voss used to take casts of heads of executed convicts. He took those of Preedy and Stone. Dan Pouncy held the heads while it was being done. Voss oiled the faces, and took them in halves, afterwards making casts from the masks. There was a groove where the rope went, and Voss saw a little blood in the case of Stone, where the skin had been broken, — not in Preedy’s.’

‘September 10. Destitution sometimes reaches the point of grandeur in its pathetic grimness: e.g., as shown in the statement of the lodging-house keeper in the Whitechapel murder:

“‘He had seen her in the lodging-house as late as half-past one o’clock or two that morning. He knew her as an unfortunate, and that she generally frequented Stratford for a living. He asked her for her lodging-money, when she said, ‘I have not got it. I am weak and ill, and have been in the infirmary.’ He told her that she knew the rules, whereupon she went out to get some money.” (Times report.)

‘O richest City in the world! “She knew the rules.”’

‘September 15. Visited the old White Horse Inn, Maiden Newton. Mullioned windows, queer old bedrooms. Fireplace in the late Perpendicular style. The landlady tells me that the attic was closed up for many years, and that on opening it they found a suit of clothes, supposed to be those of a man who was murdered.’ [This fine old Tudor inn is now pulled down.]

‘September 30. “The Valley of the Great Dairies” — Froom.

“‘The Valley of the Little Dairies” — Blackmoor.

‘In the afternoon by train to Evershot. Walked to Woolcombe, a property once owned by a — I think the senior — branch of the Hardys. Woolcombe House was to the left of where the dairy now is. On by the lane and path to Bubb-Down. Looking east you see High Stoy and the escarpment below it. The Vale of Blackmoor is almost entirely green, every hedge being studded with trees. On the left you see to an immense distance, including Shaftesbury.

‘The decline and fall of the Hardys much in evidence hereabout. An instance: Becky S.’s mother’s sister married one of the Hardys of this branch, who was considered to have bemeaned himself by the marriage. “All Woolcombe and Froom Quintin belonged to them at one time,” Becky used to say proudly. She might have added Up-Sydling and Toller Welme. This particular couple had an enormous lot of children. I remember when young seeing the man — tall and thin — walking beside a horse and common

spring trap, and my mother pointing him out to me and saying he represented what was once the leading branch of the family. So we go down, down, down.'

'October 7. The besetting sin of modern literature is its insincerity. Half its utterances are qualified, even contradicted, by an aside, and this particularly in morals and religion. When dogma has to be balanced on its feet by such hair-splitting as the late Mr. M. Arnold's it must be in a very bad way.'

'October 15-21. Has the tradition that Cerne-Abbas men have no whiskers any foundation in the fact of their being descendants of a family or tribe or clan who have not intermarried with neighbours on account of their isolation? They are said to be hot-tempered people.

'Stephen B. says that he has "never had the nerve" to be a bearer at a funeral. Now his brother George, who has plenty of nerve, has borne many neighbours to their graves.

'If you look beneath the surface of any farce you see a tragedy; and, on the contrary, if you blind yourself to the deeper issues of a tragedy you see a farce.

'My mother says that my [paternal] grandmother told her she was ironing her best muslin gown (then worn by young women at any season) when news came that the Queen of France was beheaded. She put down her iron, and stood still, the event so greatly affecting her mind. She remembered the pattern of the gown so well that she would recognize it in a moment.' Hardy himself said that one hot and thundery summer in his childhood she remarked to him: 'It was like this in the French Revolution, I remember.'

'December 10. . . . He, she, had blundered; but not as the Prime Cause had blundered. He, she, had sinned; but not as the Prime Cause had sinned. He, she, was ashamed and sorry; but not as the Prime Cause would be ashamed and sorry if it knew.' (The reference is unexplained.)

Among the letters received by Hardy for the New Year (1889) was one from Mr. Gosse, who wrote thanking him for *A Tragedy of Two Ambitions*, which he thought one of the most thrilling and most complete stories Hardy had written — 'I walked under the moral burden of it for the remainder of the day. ... I am truly happy — being an old faded leaf and disembowelled bloater and wet rag myself — to find your genius ever so fresh and springing.'

They were in London the first week of the year, concerning which Hardy remarks:

'On arriving in London I notice more and more that it (*viz* - London proper — the central parts) is becoming a vast hotel or caravan, having no connection with Middlesex — whole streets which were not so very long ago mostly of private residences consisting entirely of lodging-houses, and having a slatternly look about them.

'Called on Lady . She is a slim girl still, and continually tells her age, and speaks practically of "before I was married". Tells humorously of how she and Lord — her father, who is a nervous man, got to the church too soon, and drove drearily up and down the Thames Embankment till the right time. She has just now the fad of adoring

art. When she can no longer endure the ugliness of London she goes down to the National Gallery and sits in front of the great Titian.'

'January 8. To the City. Omnibus horses, Ludgate Hill. The greasy state of the streets caused constant slipping. The poor creatures struggled and struggled but could not start the omnibus. A man next me said: "It must take all heart and hope out of them! I shall get out." He did; but the whole remaining selfish twenty-five of us sat on. The horses despairingly got us up the hill at last. I ought to have taken off my hat to him and said: "Sir, though I was not stirred by your humane impulse I will profit by your good example"; and have followed him. I should like to know that man; but we shall never meet again!'

'January 9. At the Old Masters, Royal Academy. Turner's water-colours: each is a landscape plus a man's soul. . . . What he paints chiefly is light as modified by objects. He first recognizes the impossibility of really reproducing on canvas all that is in a landscape; then gives for that which cannot be reproduced a something else which shall have upon the spectator an approximative effect to that of the real. He said, in his maddest and greatest days: "What pictorial drug can I dose man with, which shall affect his eyes somewhat in the manner of this reality which I cannot carry to him?" — and set to make such strange mixtures as he was tending towards in "Rain, Steam and Speed", "The Burial of Wilkie", "Agrippina landing with the ashes of Germanicus", "Approach to Venice", "Snowstorm and a Steamboat", etc. Hence, one may say, Art is the secret of how to produce by a false thing the effect of a true. . . .

'I am struck by the red glow of Romney's backgrounds, and his red flesh shades. . . . Watteau paints claws for hands. They are unnatural — hideous sometimes. . . . Then the pictures of Sir Joshua, in which middle-aged people sit out of doors without hats, on damp stone seats under porticoes, and expose themselves imprudently to draughts and chills, as if they had lost their senses. . . . Besides the above there were also the Holls, and the works of other recent English painters, such as Maclise. . . .

'How Time begins to lift the veil and show us by degrees the truly great men among these, as distinct from the vaunted and the fashionable. The false glow thrown on them by their generation dies down, and we see them as they are.'

'January 28. Alfred Parsons, the landscape painter, here. He gave as a reason for living in London and mixing a good deal with people (intellectual I presume) that you can let them do your thinking for you. A practice that will be disastrous to A. P.'s brush, I fear.'

'February 6. (After reading Plato's dialogue "Cratylus"): A very good way of looking at things would be to regard everything as having an actual or false name, and an intrinsic or true name, to ascertain which all endeavour should be made. . . . The fact is that nearly all things are falsely, or rather inadequately, named.'

'February 19. The story of a face which goes through three generations or more, would make a fine novel or poem of the passage of Time. The differences in personality to be ignored.' [This idea was to some extent carried out in the novel *The Well-Beloved*, the poem entitled 'Heredity', etc.]

‘February 26. In time one might get to regard every object, and every action, as composed, not of this or that material, this or that movement, but of the qualities pleasure and pain in varying proportions.’

‘March 1. In a Botticelli the soul is outside the body, permeating its spectator with its emotions. In a Rubens the flesh is without, and the soul (possibly) within. The very odour of the flesh is distinguishable in the latter.’

‘March 4. A Village story recalled to me yesterday:

‘Mary L., a handsome wench, had come to Bockhampton, leaving a lover at Askerswell, her native parish. William K. fell in love with her at the new place. The old lover, who was a shoemaker, smelling a rat, came anxiously to see her, with a present of a dainty pair of shoes he had made. He met her by chance at the pathway stile, but alas, on the arm of the other lover. In the rage of love the two men fought for her till they were out of breath, she looking on and holding both their hats the while; till William, wiping his face, said: “ Now, Polly, which of we two do you love best? Say it out straight!” She would not state then, but said she would consider (the hussy!). The young man to whom she had been fickle left her indignantly — throwing the shoes at her and her new lover as he went. She never saw or heard of him again, and accepted the other. But she kept the shoes, and was married in them. I knew her well as an old woman.’

‘March 15. What has been written cannot be blotted. Each new style of novel must be the old with added ideas, not an ignoring and avoidance of the old. And so of religion, and a good many other things!’

‘April 5. London. Four million forlorn hopes!’

‘April 7. A woeful fact — that the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment. Even the higher animals are in excess in this respect. It may be questioned if Nature, or what we call Nature, so far back as when she crossed the line from invertebrates to vertebrates, did not exceed her mission. This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how.’

A day or two later brought him a long and interesting letter from J. Addington Symonds at Davos Platz concerning *The Return of the Native*, which he had just met with and read, and dwelling enthusiastically on ‘its vigour and its freshness and its charm’. The last week in April they went off to London again for a few months, staying at the West Central Hotel till they could find something more permanent, which this year chanced to be two furnished floors in Monmouth Road, Bayswater.

‘May 5. Morning. Sunday. To Bow Church, Cheapside, with Em. The classic architecture, especially now that it has been regilt and painted, makes one feel in Rome. About twenty or thirty people present. When you enter, the curate from the reading-desk and the rector from the chancel aim ost smile a greeting as they look up in their surplices, so glad are they that you have condescended to visit them in their loneliness.’

‘That which, socially, is a great tragedy, may be in Nature no alarming circumstance.’

‘May 12. Evening. Sunday. To St. James’s, Westmoreland Street, with Em. Heard Haweis — a small lame figure who could with difficulty climb into the pulpit. His black hair, black beard, hollow cheeks and black gown, made him look like one of the skeletons in the Church of the Capuchins, Rome. The subject of his discourse was Cain and Abel, his first proposition being that Cain had excellent qualities, and was the larger character of the twain,

though Abel might have been the better man in some things. Yet, he reminded us, good people are very irritating sometimes, and the occasion was probably one of agricultural depression like the present, so that Cain said to himself: “ ‘Tis this year as it was last year, and all my labour wasted!” (titter from the congregation). Altogether the effect was comical. But one sympathized with the preacher, he was so weak, and quite in a perspiration when he had finished.’

‘May 20. Called on the Alma-Tademas. Tadema is like a school-boy, with untidy hair, a sturdy inquiring look, and bustling manner. I like this phase of him better than his man-of-the-world phase. He introduced me to M. Taine, a kindly, nicely trimmed old man with a slightly bent head.’

Earlier in the year Hardy had asked one of the Miss Sheridans, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Brinsley Sheridan, Hardy’s neighbours at Frampton Court, Dorset, if she could sing to him ‘How oft, Louisa!’ the once celebrated song in her ancestor’s comic opera ‘The Duenna’. (It was not a woman’s song, by the way.) His literary sense was shocked by her telling him that she had never heard of it, since he himself had sung it as a youth, having in fact been in love with a Louisa himself. Now he was in London he remembered that he had promised it to her, and looked for a copy, but, much to his surprise, to find one seemed beyond his power. At last he called at a second-hand music-shop that used to stand where the Oxford Circus Tube-Station now is, and repeated hopelessly, ‘How oft, Louisa?’ The shop was kept by an old man, who was sitting on an office stool in a rusty dress-suit and very tall hat, and at the sound of the words he threw himself back in his seat, spread his arms like an opera-singer, and sang in a withered voice by way of answer:

How oft, Louisa, hast thou told,

(Nor wilt thou the fond boast disown) Thou would’st not lose Antonio’s love To reign the partner of a throne!

‘Ah, that carries me back to times that will never return!’ he added. ‘Yes; when I was a young man it was my favourite song. As to my having it, why, certainly, it is here somewhere. But I could not find it in a week.’ Hardy left him singing it, promising to return again.

When his shop was pulled down the delightful old man disappeared, and though Hardy searched for him afterwards he never saw him any more.

‘May 29. That girl in the omnibus had one of those faces of marvellous beauty which are seen casually in the streets but never among one’s friends. It was perfect in

its softened classicality — a Greek face translated into English. Moreover she was fair, and her hair pale chestnut. Where do these women come from? Who marries them? Who knows them?’

They went to picture-galleries, concerts, French plays, and the usual lunches and dinners during the season; and in June Hardy ran down to Dorchester for a day or two, on which occasion, taking a walk in the meadows, he remarks: ‘The birds are so passionately happy that they introduce variations into their songs to an outrageous degree — which are not always improvements.’

In London anew: ‘One difference between the manners of the intellectual middle class and of the nobility is that the latter have more flexibility, almost a dependence on their encompassment, as if they were waiting upon future events; while the former are direct, and energetic, and crude, as if they were manufacturing a future to please them.’

‘July 9. Love lives on propinquity, but dies of contact.’

‘July 14. Sunday. Centenary of the fall of the Bastille. Went to Newton Hall to hear Frederic Harrison lecture on the French Revolution. The audience sang “The Marseillaise”. Very impressive.’

‘July 23. Of the people I have met this summer, the lady whose mouth recalls more fully than any other beauty’s the Elizabethan metaphor “Her lips are roses full of snow” (or is it Lodge’s?) is Mrs. Hamo Thornycroft — whom I talked to at Gosse’s dinner.’

‘July 24. B. Museum:

‘Greek text, etc. Soph. Oed. Tyr. 1365 (“and if there be a woe surpassing woes, it hath become the portion of Oedipus” — Jebb. Cf. Tennyson: “a deeper deep”).’

About this time Hardy was asked by a writer of some experience in adapting novels for the theatre — Mr. J. T. Grein — if he would grant permission for *The Woodlanders* to be so adapted. In his reply he says:

‘You have probably observed that the ending of the story — hinted rather than stated — is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband. I could not accentuate this strongly in the book, by reason of the conventions of the libraries, etc. Since the story was written, however, truth to character is not considered quite such a crime in literature as it was formerly; and it is therefore a question for you whether you will accent this ending, or prefer to obscure it.’

It appears that nothing arose out of the dramatization, it becoming obvious that no English manager at this date would venture to defy the formalities to such an extent as was required by the novel, in which some of the situations were approximately of the kind afterwards introduced to English playgoers by translations from Ibsen.

At the end of the month they gave up their rooms in Bayswater and returned to Dorchester; where during August Hardy settled down daily to writing the new story he had conceived, which was *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, though it had not as yet been christened. During the month he jots down as a casual thought:

‘When a married woman who has a lover kills her husband, she does not really wish to kill the husband; she wishes to kill the situation. Of course in Clytemnestra’s

case it was not exactly so, since there was the added grievance of Iphigenia, which half-justified her.'

'September 21. For carrying out that idea of Napoleon, the Empress, Pitt, Fox, etc., I feel continually that I require a larger canvas. ... A spectral tone must be adopted. . . . Royal ghosts. . . . Title: "A Drama of Kings". [He did not use it, however; preferring *The Dynasts*.]

'October 13. Three wooden-legged men used to dance a three - handed reel at Broadmayne, so my father says.'

In November Leslie Stephen wrote concerning a Dorset character for the Dictionary of National Biography, then in full progress under his hands:

'I only beg that you will not get into the Dictionary yourself. You can avoid it by living a couple of years — hardly a great price to pay for the exemption. But I will not answer for my grandson, who will probably edit a supplement.'

About the same time Hardy answered some questions by Mr. Gosse:

"Oak-apple day" is exotic; "sic-sac day" or "shic-sac day", being what the peasantry call it.

"Ich." This and kindred words, e.g. — "Ich woll", "er woll", etc., are still used by old people in N.W. Dorset and Somerset (vide Gammer Oliver's conversation in *The Woodlanders*, which is an attempted reproduction). I heard "Ich" only last Sunday; but it is dying rapidly.'

However, the business immediately in hand was the new story *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, for the serial use of which Hardy had three requests, if not more, on his list; and in October as much of it as was written was offered to the first who had asked for it, the editor of Murray's *Magazine*. It was declined and returned to him in the middle of November virtually on the score of its improper explicitness. It was at once sent on to the second, the editor of Macmillan's *Magazine*, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> was declined by him for practically the same reason. Hardy would now have much preferred to finish the story and bring it out in volume form only, but there were reasons why he could not afford to do this; and he adopted a plan till then, it is believed, unprecedented in the annals of fiction. This was not to offer the novel intact to the third editor on his list (his experience with the first two editors having taught him that it would be useless to send it to the third as it stood), but to send it up with some chapters or parts of chapters cut out, and instead of destroying these to publish them, or much of them, elsewhere, if practicable, as episodic adventures of anonymous personages (which in fact was done, with the omission of a few paragraphs); till they could be put back in their places at the printing of the whole in volume form. In addition several passages were modified. Hardy carried out this unceremonious concession to conventionality with cynical amusement, knowing the novel was moral enough and to spare. But the work was sheer drudgery, the modified passages having to be written in coloured ink, that the originals might be easily restored, and he frequently asserted that it would have been almost easier for him to write a new story

altogether. Hence the labour brought no profit. He resolved to get away from the supply of family fiction to magazines as soon as he conveniently could do so.

However, the treatment was a complete success, and the mutilated novel was accepted by the editor of the *Graphic*, the third editor on Hardy's list, and an arrangement came to for beginning it in the pages of that paper in July 1891. It may be mentioned that no complaint of impropriety in its cut-down form was made by readers, except by one gentleman with a family of daughters, who thought the bloodstain on the ceiling indecent — Hardy could never understand why.

'December 1. It was the custom at Stinsford down to 1820 or so to take a corpse to church on the Sunday of the funeral, and let it remain in the nave through the service, after which the burial took place. The people liked the custom, and always tried to keep a corpse till Sunday. The funeral psalms were used for the psalms of the day, and the funeral chapter for the second lesson.'

'December 13. Read in the papers that Browning died at Venice yesterday.' He was buried in Westminster Abbey on December 31.

"Incidents in the development of a soul! little else is worth study," — Browning.

'What the *Athenaeum* says is true, though not all the truth, that intellectual subtlety is the disturbing element in his art.'

Among other poems written about this time was the one called 'At Middle-Field Gate in February', describing the field-women of the author's childhood. On the present writer's once asking Hardy the names of those he calls the 'bevy now underground', he said they were Unity Sargent, Susan Chamberlain, Esther Oliver, Emma Shipton, Anna Barrett, Ann West, Elizabeth Hurden, Eliza Trevis, and others, who had been young women about twenty when he was a child.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### OBSERVATIONS ON PEOPLE AND THINGS

1890: Aet. 49 — 50

'January 5. Looking over old Punches. Am struck with the frequent wrong direction of satire, and of commendation, when seen by the light of later days.'

'January 29. I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him. As an external personality, of course — the only true meaning of the word.'

'March 5. A staid, worn, weak man at the railway station. His back, his legs, his hands, his face, were longing to be out of the world. His brain was not longing to be, because, like the brain of most people, it was the last part of his body to realise a situation.

'In the train on the way to London. Wrote the first four or six lines of "Not a line of her writing have I". It was a curious instance of sympathetic telepathy. The woman



whom I was thinking of — a cousin - — was dying at the time, and I quite in ignorance of it. She died six days later. The remainder of the piece was not written till after her death.'

'March 15. With E. to a crush at the Jeunes'. Met Mrs. T. and her great eyes in a corner of the rooms, as if washed up by the surging crowd. The most beautiful woman present. . . . But these women! If put into rough wrappers in a turnip-field, where would their beauty be?'

He observes later in respect of such scenes as these: 'Society, collectively, has neither seen what any ordinary person can see, read what every ordinary person has read, nor thought what every ordinary person has thought.'

'March-April:

'Altruism, or The Golden Rule, or whatever "Love your Neighbour as Yourself" may be called, will ultimately be brought about I think by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were a part of one body. Mankind, in fact, may be and possibly will be viewed as members of one corporeal frame.

'Tories will often do by way of exception to their principles more extreme acts of democratism or broad-mindedness than Radicals do by rule — such as help on promising plebeians, tolerate wild beliefs, etc.

'Art consists in so depicting the common events of life as to bring out the features which illustrate the author's idiosyncratic mode of regard; making old incidents and things seem as new.'

'Easter. Sir George Douglas came. Went to Barnes's grave with him; next day to Portland. Lunched at the Mermaid.

'In an article on Ibsen in the Fortnightly the writer says that his manner is wrong. That the drama, like the novel, should not be for edification. In this I think the writer errs. It should be so, but the edified should not perceive the edification. Ibsen's edifying is too obvious.'

'April 26. View the Prime Cause or Invariable Antecedent as "It" and recount its doings.' [This was done in *The Dynasts*.]

In May the Hardys were again resident in London, and went their customary round of picture-viewing, luncheons, calls, dinners, and receptions. At the Academy he reminds himself of old Academy exhibitions, e.g. the years in which there was a rail round Frith's pictures, and of the curious effect upon an observer of the fashionable crowd — seeming like people moving about under enchantment, or as somnambulists. At an evening service at St. George's, Hanover Square, 'everything looks the Modern World: the electric light and old theology seem strange companions; and the sermon was as if addressed to native tribes of primitive simplicity, and not to the Nineteenth-Century English.' Coming out of church he went into the Criterion for supper, where, first going to the second floor, he stumbled into a room whence proceeded 'low laughter and murmurs, the light of lamps with pink shades; where the men were all in evening clothes, ringed and studded, and the women much uncovered in the neck and heavily

jewelled, their glazed and lamp-blackened eyes wandering'. He descended and had his supper in the grill-room.

'May 9. MS. of A Group of Noble Dames sent to the Graphic as promised.

'In the streets I see patient hundreds, labouring on, and boxes on wheels packed with men and women. There are charcoal trees in the squares. A man says: "When one is half-drunk London seems a wonderfully enjoyable place, with its lamps, and cabs moving like fire-flies." Yes, man has done more with his materials than God has done with his.

'A physician cannot cure a disease, but he can change its mode of expression.'

'May 15. Coming home from seeing Irving in *The Bells*. Between 11 and 12. The 4,000,000 suggest their existence now, when one sees the brilliancy about Piccadilly Circus at this hour, and notices the kiln-dried features around.'

At Mr. Gosse's this month they met Miss Balestier — an attractive and thoughtful young woman on her first visit to England from America, who remarked to him that it was so reposeful over here; 'In America you feel at night, "I must be quick and sleep; there is not much time to give to it".' She afterwards became Mrs. Rudyard Kipling. About the same date Hardy also met — it is probable for the first time — Mr. Kipling himself. 'He talked about the East, and he well said that the East is the world, both in numbers and in experiences. It has passed through our present bustling stages, and has become quiescent. He told curious details of Indian life.'

Hardy remarks that June 2 is his fiftieth birthday: and during the month went frequently to the Savile Club, sometimes dining there with acquaintances, among others J. H. Middleton, Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. Hardy used to find fault with Middleton as having no sense of life as such; as one who would talk, for instance, about bishops' copes and mitres with an earnest, serious, anxious manner, as if there were no cakes and ale in the world, or laughter and tears, or human misery beyond tears. His sense of art had caused him to lose all sense of relativity, and of art's subsidiary relation to existence.

This season also Hardy seems to have had a humour for going the round of the music-halls, and pronounces upon the beauties 'whose lustrous eyes and pearly countenances show that they owe their attractions to art', that they are seldom well-formed physically; notes the 'round-hatted young men gaping at the stage, with receding chins and rudimentary mouths'; and comments upon the odd fact that though there were so many obvious drunkards around him, the character on the stage which always gave the most delight was that of a drunkard imitated. At Bizet's opera of *Carmen* he was struck, as he had been struck before, with the manner in which people-conducted themselves on the operatic stage; that of being 'possessed, maudlin, distraught, as if they lived on a planet whose atmosphere was intoxicating'. At a ballet at the Alhambra he noticed 'the air of docile obedience on the faces of some of the dancing women, a passive resignation like that of a plodding horse, as if long accustomed to correction. Also marks of fatigue. The morality of actresses, dancers, etc., cannot be judged by the same standard as that of people who lead slower lives. Living in a throbbing atmo-

sphere they are perforce throbbled by it in spite of themselves. We should either put down these places altogether because of their effect upon the performers, or forgive the performers as irresponsibles. . . . The Premiere Danseuse strokes each calf with the sole of her other foot like a fly — on her mouth hanging a perpetual smile.’

‘June 23. Called on Arthur Locker [editor] at the Graphic office in answer to his letter. He says he does not object to the stories [A Group of Noble Dames] but the Directors do. Here’s a pretty job! Must smooth down these Directors somehow I suppose.’

In the same month he met Mr. (afterwards Sir) H. M. Stanley, the explorer, at a dinner given by the publishers of his travels. Hardy does not seem to have been much attracted by his personality. He observed that Stanley was shorter than himself, ‘with a disdainful curve on his mouth and look in his eye which would soon become resentment’. He made a speech in the worst taste, in Hardy’s opinion, being to the effect that everybody who had had to do with producing his book was, rightly, delighted with the honour. At the same dinner Hardy talked to Du Chaillu, who had also spoken a few words. Hardy asked him: ‘Why didn’t you claim more credit for finding those dwarfs?’ The good-natured Du Chaillu said with a twinkle: ‘Noh, noh! It is his dinner.’ Hardy also made the acquaintance of the Bishop of Ripon at that dinner, from what he says: ‘He [the Bishop] has a nice face — a sort of ingenuous archness in it — as if he would be quite willing to let supernaturalism down easy, if he could.’

At the police courts, where just at this time he occasionally spent half an hour, being still compelled to get novel padding, he noticed that ‘the public’ appeared to be mostly represented by grimy gentlemen who had had previous experience of the courts from a position in the dock: that there were people sitting round an anteroom of the courts as if waiting for the doctor; that the character of the witness usually deteriorated under cross-examination; and that the magistrate’s spectacles as a rule endeavoured to flash out a strictly just manner combined with as much generosity as justice would allow.

On the last day of the month he wound up his series of visits to London entertainments and law-offices with the remark, ‘Am getting tired of investigating life at music-halls and police-courts’. About the same time he lost his friend Lord Carnarvon, who had written with prophetic insight when proposing him for the Athenaeum that it would have been better if his proposer had been a younger man. Before leaving London he met Miss Ada Rehan, for whom he had a great liking, and, in some of her parts, admiration, that of the Shrew being of course one of them. He says of her: ‘A kindly natured, winning woman with really a heart. I fear she is wearing herself out with too hard work.’ Two days later they were present at the Lyceum to see her as Rosalind in *As You Like It*. She was not so real — indeed could not be — in the character as in *The Shrew*. Before starting Hardy wrote: ‘Am going with E. to see Rosalind, after not seeing her for more than twenty years. This time she is composed of Ada Rehan.’ After going he added: ‘At the end of the second act I went round, and found her alone, in a highly strung throbbing state — and rather despondent. “O yes — it goes smoothly,”

she said. "But I am in a whirlwind. . . . Well, it is an old thing, and Mr. Daly liked to produce it!" I endeavoured to assure her that it was going to be satisfactory, and perhaps succeeded, for in the remaining acts she played full of spirit.' It is possible that the dramatic poem entitled 'The Two Rosalinds' was suggested by this performance combined with some other; but there is no certainty about this, and dates and other characteristics do not quite accord.

Mrs. Hardy had to leave London shortly after, on account of the illness and death of her father; but her husband had promised to write an Epilogue to be spoken by Miss Rehan at a performance on behalf of Mrs. Jeune's Holiday Fund for Children. So he remained in London till he had written it, and it had been duly delivered. He did not go himself to the performance, but in the evening of the same day was present at a debate at the St. James's Hall between Messrs. Hyndman and Bradlaugh, in which he was much struck by the extraordinary force in the features of the latter.

'July 24. Mary Jeune delighted with the verses: says Miss Rehan's hand shook so much when she read them that she seemed scarcely able to follow the lines.'

'August 5. Reflections on Art. Art is a changing of the actual proportions and order of things, so as to bring out more forcibly than might otherwise be done that feature in them which appeals most strongly to the idiosyncrasy of the artist. The changing, or distortion, may be of two kinds: (1) The kind which increases the sense of vraisemblance: (2) That which diminishes it. (1) is high art: (2) is low art.

'High art may choose to depict evil as well as good, without losing its quality. Its choice of evil, however, must be limited by the sense of worthiness.' A continuation of the same note was made a little later, and can be given here:

'Art is a disproportioning — (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) — of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence "realism" is not Art.'

'August 8-17. With E. to Weymouth and back. Alfred Parsons [R.A.] came. Went to see some Sir Joshuas and Pinturicchios belonging to Pearce-Edgcumbe. Then drove to Weymouth over Ridgeway Hill with Parsons. Lunch at the Royal.' This was the Old Royal Hotel, now pulled down, where George III and his daughters used to dance at the town assemblies, a red cord dividing the royal dancers from the townspeople. The sockets for the standards bearing the cord were still visible in the floor while the building was standing.

Later in this month of August Hardy started with his brother for Paris by way of Southampton and Havre, leaving the former port at night, when 'the Jersey boat and ours were almost overwhelmed by the enormous bulk of the "Magdalena" (Brazil and River Plate) — the white figure of her at the ship's head stretching into the blue-black sky above us'. The journey was undertaken by Hardy solely on his brother's account, and they merely went the usual round of sight-seeing. As was the case with Hardy almost always, a strange bizarre effect was noticed by him at the Moulin Rouge — in those days a very popular place of entertainment. As everybody knows, or knew,

it was close to the cemetery of Montmartre, being, it seems, only divided therefrom by a wall and erection or two, and as he stood somewhere in the building looking down at the young women dancing the cancan, and grimacing at the men, it appears that he could see through some back windows over their heads to the last resting-place of so many similar gay Parisians silent under the moonlight, and, as he notes, to near the grave of Heinrich Heine.

Coming back towards Havre he sees 'A Cleopatra in the railway carriage. Her French husband sits opposite, and seems to study her; to keep wondering why he married her; and why she married him. She is a good-natured amative creature by her voice, and her heavy moist lips.'

The autumn was passed in the country, visiting and entertaining neighbours, and attending garden-parties. In September, to their great grief, their watch-dog 'Moss' died — an affectionate retriever whose grave can still be seen at Max Gate.

In the latter part of this year, having finished adapting *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* for the serial issue, he seems to have dipped into a good many books — mostly the satirists: including Horace, Martial, Lucian, 'the Voltaire of Paganism', Voltaire himself, Cervantes, Le Sage, Molière, Dryden, Fielding, Smollett, Swift, Byron, Heine, Carlyle, Thackeray, *Satires and Profanities* by James Thomson, and Weismann's *Essays on Heredity*.

In December, staying in London, Hardy chanced to find himself in political circles for a time, though he never sought them. At one house he was a fellow-guest with Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the 'I forgot Goschen' story was still going about. At another house just afterwards he chanced to converse with the then Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Randolph Churchill's mother: 'She is a nice warm-feeling woman, and expressed her grief at what had happened to her son, though her hostess had told her flatly it was his own doing. She deplores that young men like should stand in the fore-front of the Tory party, and her son should be nowhere. She says he has learnt by bitter experience, and would take any subordinate position the Government might offer him. Poor woman — I was sorry for her, as she really suffers about it. Parnell, however, was the main thing talked about, and not Randolph.'

'December 4. I am more than ever convinced that persons are successively various persons, according as each special strand in their characters is brought uppermost by circumstances.'

'December 8 onwards. Lodging at the Jeunes. Lord Rowton, who is great on lodging-houses, says I am her "dosser".'

'December 18. Mr. E. Clodd this morning gives an excellently neat answer to my question why the superstitions of a remote Asiatic and a Dorset labourer are the same: "The attitude of man", he says, "at corresponding levels of culture, before like phenomena, is pretty much the same, your Dorset peasants representing the persistence of the barbaric idea which confuses persons and things, and founds wide generalizations on the slenderest analogies."

‘(This “ barbaric idea which confuses persons and things “ is, by the way, also common to the highest imaginative genius — that of the poet.)’

‘Christmas Day. While thinking of resuming “ the viewless wings of poesy” before dawn this morning, new horizons seemed to open, and worrying pettinesses to disappear.

‘Heard to-day an old country tradition; that if a woman goes off her own premises before being churched, e.g. crosses a road that forms the boundary of her residence — she may be made to do penance, or be excommunicated. I cannot explain this, but it reminds me of what old Mr. Hibbs of Bere Regis told me lately; that a native of that place, now ninety, says he remembers a young woman doing penance in Bere Church for singing scandalous songs about “a great lady”. The girl stood in a white sheet while she went through “the service of penance”, whatever that was.

‘Also heard another curious story. Mil [Amelia] Chad an illegitimate child by the parish doctor. She christened him all the doctor’s names, which happened to be a mouthful — Frederick Washington Ingen — and always called him by the three names complete. Moreover the doctor had a squint, and to identify him still more fully as the father she hung a bobbin from the baby’s cap between his eyes, and so trained him to squint likewise.’

Next day they lunched with a remote cousin of Hardy’s on the maternal side — Dr. Christopher Childs of Weymouth — to meet his brother and sister-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Borlase Childs on a visit from Cornwall, and heard from Borlase Childs (whose grandfather had married into the Borlase family) some traditions of his and Hardy’s common ancestors, on which Hardy remarks: ‘The Christopher Childs, brother of my great-grandmother, who left Dorset, was a Jacobite, which accounted for the fall in their fortunes. There is also a tradition — that I had heard before from my mother — that one of the family added the “s” to the name, and that it was connected with the Josiah Child who founded Child’s Bank, and with the family of Lord Jersey. I doubt the first statement, and have no real evidence of the latter.’

‘New Year’s Eve. Looked out of doors just before twelve, and was confronted by the toneless white of the snow spread in front, against which stood the row of pines breathing out: “ ‘Tis no better with us than with the rest of creation, you see!” I could not hear the church bells.’

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE NOVEL ‘TESS’ RESTORED AND PUBLISHED

1891: Aet. 50-51

At the beginning of January 1891, he was at home arranging *A Group of Noble Dames* for publication in a volume. He was also in London a part of the month, where he saw ‘what is called sunshine up here — a red-hot bullet hanging in a livid atmosphere — reflected from window-panes in the form of bleared copper eyes, and inflaming the sheets of plate-glass with smears of gory light. A drab snow mingled itself with liquid horsedung, and in the river puddings of ice moved slowly on. The steamers were moored, with snow on their gangways. A captain, in sad solitude, smoked his pipe against the bulk-head of the cabin stairs. The lack of traffic made the water like a stream through a deserted metropolis. In the City George Peabody sat comfortably in his easy chair, with snow on the folds of his ample waistcoat, the top of his bare head, and shoulders, and knees.’

After seeing Irving at the Lyceum, and admiring the staging: ‘But, after all, scenic perfection such as this only banishes one plane further back the jarring point between illusion and disillusion. You must have it somewhere, and begin calling in “make believe” forthwith, and it may as well be soon as late — immediate as postponed — and no elaborate scenery be attempted.

‘I don’t care about the fashionable first night at a play: it is so insincere, meretricious; the staginess behind the footlights seem to flow over upon the audience.’

On the Sunday following a number of people dined at the house where Hardy was staying. ‘Presently Ellen Terry arrived — diaphanous — a sort of balsam or sea-anemone, without shadow. Also Irving, Sir Henry Thompson, Evelyn Ashley, Lady Dorothy [Nevill], Justin McCarthy, and many others. Ellen Terry was like a machine in which, if you press a spring, all the works fly open. E. Ashley’s laugh is like a clap, or report; it was so loud that it woke the children asleep on the third floor. Lady Dorothy said she collected death’s.

heads — (what did she mean?). Ashley told me about his electioneering experiences. The spectacle of another guest — a Judge of the Supreme Court — telling broad stories with a broad laugh in a broad accent, after the ladies had gone, reminded one of Baron Nicholson of “Judge-and-Jury” fame. “Tom” Hughes and Miss Hughes came in after dinner. Miss Hilda Gorst said that at dinner we made such a noise at our end of the table that at her end they wondered what we had to amuse us so much. (That’s how it always seems.) ... A great crush of people afterwards, till at one o’clock they dwindled away, leaving nothing but us, blank, on the wide polished floor.’

At the end of the month he and his wife were at a ball at Mrs. Sheridan’s at Frampton Court, Dorset, where he saw a friend of his ‘waltzing round with a face of ambition, not of slightest pleasure, as if he were saying to himself “this has to be done”. We are all inveterate joy-makers: some do it more successfully than others; and the actual fabrication is hardly pleasure.’

‘February 10. Newman and Carlyle. The former’s was a feminine nature, which first decides and then finds reasons for having decided. He was an enthusiast with the absurd reputation of a logician and reasoner. Carlyle was a poet with the reputation of a philosopher. Neither was truly a thinker.’

On the 21<sup>st</sup> Hardy notes that Mrs. Hardy rode on horse-back for what turned out to be the last time in her life. It was to Mrs. Sheridan's at Frampton, and a train crossed a bridge overhead, causing the mare to rear; but happily not throwing the rider. Very few horses could.

In March they were again in London. A deep snow came on shortly after, but they had got home. It was in drifts:

'Sculptured, scooped, gouged, pared, trowelled, moulded, by the wind. Em says it is architectural. ... A person aged 50 is an old man in winter and a young man in summer. . . Was told by J. A. of a poor young fellow who is dying of consumption, so that he has to sit up in the night, and to get up because he cannot sleep. Yet he described to my informant that one night he had such a funny dream of pigs knocking down a thatcher's ladder that he lay awake laughing uncontrollably.'

In the same month Hardy erected what he called 'The Druid Stone' on the lawn at Max Gate. This was a large block they discovered about three feet underground in the garden, and the labour of getting it from the hole where it had lain for perhaps two thousand years was a heavy one even for seven men with levers and other appliances. — 'It was a primitive problem in mechanics, and the scene was such a one as may have occurred in building the Tower of Babel.' Round the stone, which had been lying flat, they had found a quantity of ashes and half charred bones.

Though Hardy was at this time putting the finishing touches to *Tess* he was thinking of 'A Bird's-Eye View of Europe at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. ... It may be called "A Drama of the Times of the First Napoleon".' He does not appear to have done more than think of it at this date.

In April he was at a morning performance at the old Olympic Theatre of that once popular play *The Stranger*, by Kotzebue; and he 'thought of the eyes and ears that had followed the acting first and last, including Thackeray's'. Miss Winifred Emery was Mrs. Haller on this occasion. During his time in London he notes the difference between English and French stage-dancing; 'The English girls dance as if they had learned dancing; the French as if dancing had produced them,' He also while in Town dined at the Lushingtons' 'and looked at the portrait of Lushington's father, who had known Lady Byron's secret'. He went to hear Spurgeon preach, for the first and last time. As Spurgeon died soon after, he was glad he had gone, the preacher having been a great force in his day, though it had been spent for many years. He witnessed the performance of Hedda Gabler at the Vaudeville, on which he remarks that it seems to him that the rule for staging nowadays should be to have no scene which would not be physically possible in the time of acting. [An idea carried out years after in *The Queen of Cornwall*.]

The Hardys were now as usual looking for a place in which to spend three or four months in London. Much as they disliked handling other people's furniture, taking on their breakages, cracks, and stains, and paying for them at the end of the season as if they had made them themselves, there was no help for it in their inability to afford a London house or flat all the year round. 'The dirty house-fronts, leaning gate-piers,



rusty gates, broken bells, Dore monstrosities of womankind who showed us the rooms, left Em nearly fainting, and at one place she could not stay for the drawing-room floor to be exhibited.' They found a flat at last in Mandeville Place, just about the time that Hardy learnt of his being elected to the Athenaeum Club by the Committee under Rule 2.

'April 28. Talking to Kipling to-day at the Savile, he said that he once as an experiment took the ideas of some mature writer or speaker (on Indian politics, I think) and translating them into his own language used them as his. They were pronounced to be the crude ideas of an immature boy.'

The Royal Academy this year struck Hardy as containing some good colouring but no creative power, and that as visitors went by names only the new geniuses, even if there were any, were likely to be overlooked. He recalled in respect of the fair spring and summer landscapes that 'They were not pictures of this spring and summer, although they seem to be so. All this green grass and fresh leafage perished yesterday; after withering and falling, it is gone like a dream.'

In the Gallery of the English Art Club: 'If I were a painter, I would paint a picture of a room as viewed by a mouse from a chink under the skirting.'

Hardy's friend Dr. (afterwards Sir) Joshua Fitch took him over Whitelands Training College for schoolmistresses, where it was the custom in those days, and may be now, to choose a May Queen every year, a custom originated by Ruskin. Hardy did not, however, make any observation on this, but merely: 'A community of women, especially young women, inspires not reverence but protective tenderness in the breast of one who views them. Their belief in circumstances, in convention, in the Tightness of things, which you know to be not only wrong but damnably wrong, makes the heart ache, even when they are waspish and hard. . . . You feel how entirely the difference of their ideas from yours is of the nature of misunderstanding. . . . There is much that is pathetic about these girls, and I wouldn't have missed the visit for anything. How far nobler in its aspirations is the life here than the life of those I met at the crush two nights back!'

Piccadilly at night. 'A girl held a long-stemmed narcissus to my nose as we went by each other. At the Circus, among all the wily crew, there was a little innocent family standing waiting, I suppose for an omnibus. How pure they looked! A man on a stretcher, with a bloody bandage round his head, was wheeled past by two policemen, stragglers following. Such is Piccadilly.'

He used to see Piccadilly under other aspects, however, for the next day, Sunday, he attended the service at St. James's — as he did off and on for many years — because it was the church his mother had been accustomed to go to when as a young woman she was 'iving for some months in London. 'The preacher said that only five per cent of the inhabitants entered a church, according to the Bishop of London. On coming out there was a drizzle across the electric lights, and the paper-boys were shouting, not," Go to church!" but, "Wee-naw of the French Oaks!"'

Next day — wet — at the British Museum: 'Crowds parading and gaily traipsing round the mummies, thinking to-day is for ever, and the girls casting sly glances at

young men across the swathed dust of Mycerinus [?]. They pass with flippant comments the illuminated MSS. — the labours of years — and stand under Rameses the Great, joking. Democratic government may be justice to man, but it will probably merge in proletarian, and when these people are our masters it will lead to more of this contempt, and possibly be the utter ruin of art and literature! . . . Looking, when I came out, at the Oxford Music Hall, an hour before the time of opening, there was already a queue.’

‘Mayr,. Sunday. Em and I lunch at the Jeunes’ to see the house they have just moved into — 79 Harley St. Sun came in hot upon us through back windows, the blinds not being yet up. Frederic Harrison called afterwards. He is leaving London to live in the country.’

During the month of May he was much impressed by a visit paid with his friend Dr. (later Sir) T. Clifford Allbutt, thea Commissioner in Lunacy, to a large private lunatic asylum, where he had intended to stay only a quarter of an hour, but became so interested in the pathos of the cases that he remained the greater part of the day. He talked to ‘ the gentleman who was staying there of his own will, to expose the devices of the Commissioners; to the old man who offers snuff to everybody; to the scholar of high literary aims, as sane in his conversation as any of us; to the artist whose great trouble was that he could not hear the birds sing; “which as you will see, Mr. Hardy, is hard on a man of my temperament”; and, on the women’s side, listened to their stories of their seduction; to the Jewess who sang to us; to the young woman who, with eyes brimming with reproach, said to the doctor, “When are you going to let me out of this?” [Hardy appealed for a re-examination of her, which was done afterwards.] Then came the ladies who thought themselves queens — less touching cases, as they were quite happy — one of them, who was really a Plantagenet by descent, perversely insisted on being considered a Stuart. All the women seemed prematurely dried, faded, flitries.’

In June he visited Stockwell Training College. ‘A pretty custom among the girls here is that of each senior student choosing a daughter from the list of junior girls who are coming. The senior is mother to the daughter for the whole year, and looks after her. Sometimes the pair get fond of each other; at other times not. I gather that they are chosen blindly before arrival, from the names only. There must be singular expectancies, confrontings, and excitements resulting therefrom.’

In July he took Mrs. Hardy to the balcony of the Athenaeum Club to see the German Emperor William II pass to the City; the next day he met W. E. Henley at the Savile. ‘He is paler, and his once brown locks are getting iron-grey.’ On the 13th, lunching at Lady Wynford’s, Grosvenor Square, Hardy discovered, or thought he did, that the ceiling of the drawing-room contained oval paintings by Angelica Kauffmann, and that the house was built by the Adams; ‘I was amused by Ld. Wynford, who told me he would not live in Dorset for £50,000 a year, and wanted me to smoke cigarettes made of tobacco from Lebanon — “same as smoked by Laurence Oliphant”. Wynford’s nose is two sides of a spherical triangle in profile.’ In the same week, on a visit with his wife to G. F. Watts, the painter, he was much struck with his host; ‘ that old small

man with a grey coat and black velvet skull-cap, who, when he saw one of his picture-frames pressing against a figure on canvas, moved it away gently, as if the figure could feel.'

'Dining at the Milnes-Gaskells', Lady Catherine told me that the Webbs of Newstead have buried the skulls that Byron used to drink from, but that the place seems to throw "a sort of doom on the family". I then told her of the tragic Damers of the last century, who owned Abbey property, and thought she rather shrank from what I said; I afterwards remembered to my dismay that her own place was an Abbey.' Hardy, however, found later that this was only a moment's mood, she being as free from superstitions as any woman.

'July 19. Note the weight of a landau and pair, the coachman in his grey great-coat, footmen ditto. All this mass of matter is moved along with brute force and clatter through a street congested and obstructed, to bear the petite figure of the owner's young wife in violet velvet and silver trimming, slim, small; who could be easily carried under a man's arm, and who, if held up by the hair and slipped out of her clothes, carriage, etc. etc., aforesaid, would not be much larger than a skinned rabbit, and of less use.

'At Mary Jeune's lunch to-day sat between a pair of beauties.

Mrs. A. G with her violet eyes, was the more seductive; Mrs.

R. C the more vivacious. The latter in yellow: the former in pale brown, and more venust and warm-blooded than Mrs. C,

who is large-eyed, somewhat slight, with quick impulsive motions, and who neglects the dishes and the coffee because possessed by some idea.' At another luncheon or dinner at this time 'the talk was entirely political — of when the next election would be — of the probable Prime Minister — of ins and outs — of Lord This and the Duke of That — everything except the people for whose existence alone these politicians exist. Their welfare is never once thought of.'

The same week: 'After a day of headache, went to I's Hotel to supper. This is one of the few old taverns remaining in London, whose frequenters after theatre-closing know each other, and talk across from table to table. The head waiter is called William. There is always something homely when the waiter is called William. He talks of his affairs to the guests, as the guests talk of theirs to him. He has whiskers of the rare old mutton-chop pattern, and a manner of confidence. He has shaved so many years that his face is of a bluish soap-colour, and if wetted and rubbed would raise a lather of itself. . . . Shakespeare is largely quoted at the tables; especially "How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?" "Theatrical affairs are discussed neither from the point of view of the audience, nor of the actors, but from a third point — that of the recaller of past appearances.

'Old-fashioned country couples also come in, their fathers having recommended the tavern from recollections of the early part of the century. They talk on innocently-friendly terms with the theatrical young men, and handsome ladies who enter with them as their "husbands", after the play.'

They annexed to their London campaign this year a visit to Sir Brampton and Lady Camilla Gurdon at Grundesburgh Hall, Suffolk — a house standing amid green slopes timbered with old oaks. The attraction was its possession of the most old-fashioned and delightful — probably Elizabethan — garden with high buttressed walls that Hardy had ever seen, which happily had been left unimproved and unchanged, owing to the Hall having been used merely as a farmhouse for a century or two, and hence neglected. The vegetables were planted in the middle of square plots surrounded by broad green alleys, and screened by thickets and palisades of tall flowers, ‘so that one does not know any vegetables are there’.

Hardy spent a good deal of time in August and the autumn correcting *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* for its volume form, which process consisted in restoring to their places the passages and chapters of the original MS. that had been omitted from the serial publication. The name ‘Talbothays’, given in the diary, was based on that of a farm belonging to his father, which, however, had no house on it at that time.

In September he and his wife paid a visit to his friend Sir George Douglas at Springwood Park, in fulfilment of a long promise, passing on their way north by the coastline near Holy Isle or Lindisfarne, at that moment glowing reddish on a deep blue sea under the evening sun, with all the romance of *Marmion* about its aspect. It was the place which he afterwards urged Swinburne to make his headquarters, as being specially suited for him — a Northumbrian — an idea which Swinburne was much attracted by, though he owned that ‘to his great shame’ he had never been on the isle. They had a very charming time in Scotland, visiting many Scott scenes, including Edie Ochiltree’s grave, and one that Hardy had always been anxious to see — Smaylho’me Tower — the setting of the ‘Eve of St. John’ — a ballad which was among the verse he liked better than any of Scott’s prose. At Springwood they met at dinner one evening old Mr. Usher, aged eighty-one, who had known Scott and Lady Scott well, and whose father had sold Scott the land called Huntley Burn. He said that when he was a boy Scott asked him to sing, which he did; and Scott was so pleased that he gave him a pony. When Hardy wondered why Lady Scott should have taken the poet’s fancy, Mr. Usher replied grimly, ‘She wadna’ ha’ taken mine!’

They finished this autumn visit by a little tour to Durham, Whitby, Scarborough, York, and Peterborough. At the last - mentioned place the verger ‘told us of a lady’s body found in excavating, of which the neck and bosoms glistened, being coated with a species of enamel. She had been maid of honour to Catherine of Arragon who lies near. ... In the train there was a woman of various ages — hands old, frame middle-aged, and face young. What her mean age was I had no conception of.’

‘October 28. It is the incompleteness that is loved, when love is sterling and true. This is what differentiates the real one from the imaginary, the practicable from the impossible, the Love who returns the kiss from the Vision that melts away. A man sees the Diana or the Venus in his Beloved, but what he loves is the difference.’

‘October 30. Howells and those of his school forget that a story must be striking enough to be worth telling. Therein lies the problem — to reconcile the average with

that uncommonness which alone makes it natural that a tale or experience would dwell in the memory and induce repetition.'

Sir Charles Cave was the judge at the Dorset assizes this autumn, and Hardy dined with him and Mr. Frith his marshal while they were in the town. Cave told him, among other things, that when he and Sir J. F. Stephen, also on the bench, were struggling young men the latter came to him and said a man was going to be hanged at the Old Bailey, jocularly remarking as an excuse for proposing to go and see it: 'Who knows; we may be judges some day; and it will be well to have learnt how the last sentence of the law is carried out.'

During the first week in November the Rev. Dr. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *Bookman*, forwarded particulars of a discussion in the papers on whether national recognition should be given to eminent men of letters. Hardy's reply was:

'I daresay it would be very interesting that literature should be honoured by the state. But I don't see how it could be satisfactorily done. The highest flights of the pen are mostly the excursions and revelations of souls unreconciled to life, while the natural tendency of a government would be to encourage acquiescence in life as it is. However, I have not thought much about the matter.'

As the year drew to a close an incident that took place during the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as a serial in the *Graphic* might have prepared him for certain events that were to follow. The editor objected to the description of Angel Clare carrying in his arms, across a flooded lane, Tess and her three dairymaid companions. He suggested that it would be more decorous and suitable for the pages of a periodical intended for family reading if the damsels were wheeled across the lane in a wheelbarrow. This was accordingly done.

Also the *Graphic* refused to print the chapter describing the christening of the infant child of Tess. This appeared in *Henley's Scots Observer*, and was afterwards restored to the novel, where it was considered one of the finest passages.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles; a Pure Woman faithfully Presented* was published complete about the last day of November, with what results Hardy could scarcely have foreseen, since the book, notwithstanding its exceptional popularity, was the beginning of the end of his career as a novelist.

# THE LATER YEARS OF THOMAS HARDY, 1892–1928 by Florence Hardy

Hardy's wife Florence published this second biography following the success and eager reception of the first. Now, critics believe both biographies were mostly written by Hardy himself.

Hardy and his second wife Florence

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## **PART 1 - 'TESS', 'JUDE', AND THE END OF PROSE**

Florence Hardy, several years after her husband's death

### **CHAPTER XX**

#### **THE RECEPTION OF THE BOOK**

1892: Aet. 51-52

As *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* got into general circulation it attracted an attention that Hardy had apparently not foreseen, for at the time of its publication he was planning something of quite a different kind, according to an entry he made:

'Title: — "Songs of Five-and-Twenty Years". Arrangement of the songs: Lyric Ecstasy inspired by music to have precedence.'

However, reviews, letters, and other intelligence speedily called him from these casual thoughts back to the novel, which the tediousness of the alterations and restorations had made him weary of. From the prefaces to later editions can be gathered more or less clearly what happened to the book as, passing into great popularity, an endeavour was made by some critics to change it to scandalous notoriety — the latter kind of clamour, raised by a certain small section of the public and the press, being quite inexplicable to the writer himself.

Among other curious results from the publication of the book was that it started a rumour of Hardy's theological beliefs, which lived, and spread, and grew, so that it was never completely extinguished. Near the end of the story he had used the sentence, 'The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess', and the first five words were, as Hardy often explained to his reviewers, but a literal translation of Aesch. Prom. 169: ΜαΚαpiov 7pυvραvis. The classical sense in which he had used them is best shown by quoting a reply he wrote thirty years later to some unknown critic who had said in an article:

'Hardy postulates an all-powerful being endowed with the baser human passions, who turns everything to evil and rejoices in the mischief he has wrought'; another critic



taking up the tale by adding: ‘ To him evil is not so much a mystery, a problem, as the wilful malice of his god.’

Hardy’s reply was written down but (it is believed), as in so many cases with him, never posted; though I am able to give it from the rough draft:

‘As I need hardly inform any thinking reader, I do not hold, and never have held, the ludicrous opinions here assumed to be mine — which are really, or approximately, those of the primitive believer in his man-shaped tribal god. And in seeking to ascertain how any exponent of English literature could have supposed that I held them I find that the writer of the estimate has harked back to a passage in a novel of mine, printed many years ago, in which the forces opposed to the heroine were allegorized as a personality (a method not unusual in imaginative prose or poetry) by the use of a well-known trope, explained in that venerable work, Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, as “one in which life, perception, activity, design, passion, or any property of sentient beings, is attributed to things inanimate”.

‘Under this species of criticism if an author were to say “Aeolus maliciously tugged at her garments, and tore her hair in his wrath”, the sapient critic would no doubt announce that author’s evil creed to be that the wind is “a powerful being endowed with the baser human passions”, etc., etc.

‘However, I must put up with it, and say as Parrhasius of Ephesus said about his pictures: There is nothing that men will not find fault with.’

The deep impression produced on the general and uncritical public by the story was the occasion of Hardy’s receiving strange letters — some from husbands whose experiences had borne a resemblance to that of Angel Clare, though more, many more, from wives with a past like that of Tess, but who had not told their husbands, and asking for his counsel under the burden of their concealment. Some of these were educated women of good position, and Hardy used to say the singular thing was that they should have put themselves in the power of a stranger by these revelations (their names having often been given, though sometimes initials at a post-office only), when they would not trust persons nearest to them with their secret. However, they did themselves no harm, he would add, for though he was unable to advise them, he carefully destroyed their letters, and never mentioned their names, or suspected names, to a living soul. He owed them that much, he said, for their trust in his good faith. A few, too, begged that he would meet them privately, or call on them, and hear their story instead of their writing it. He talked the matter over with his friend Sir Francis Jeune, who had had abundant experience of the like things in the Divorce Court, where he presided, and who recommended him not to meet the writers alone, in case they should not be genuine. He himself, he said, also got such letters, but made it a rule never to notice them. Nor did Hardy, though he sometimes sadly thought that they came from sincere women in trouble.

Tess of the D’Urbervilles was also the cause of Hardy’s meeting a good many people of every rank during that spring, summer, and onwards, and of opportunity for meeting a good many more if he had chosen to avail himself of it. Many of the details that

follow concerning his adventures in the world of fashion at dinner-parties, crushes, and other social functions, which Hardy himself did not think worth recording, have been obtained from diaries kept by the late Mrs. Hardy.

It must be repeated that his own notes on these meetings were set down by him as private memoranda only; and that they, or some of them, are reproduced here to illustrate what contrasting planes of existence he moved in — vibrating at a swing between the artificial gaieties of a London season and the quaintnesses of a primitive rustic life.

Society remarks on Tess were curious and humorous. Strangely enough, Lord Salisbury, with whom Hardy had a slight acquaintance, was a supporter of the story. Also: ‘The Duchess of Abercorn tells me that the novel has saved her all future trouble in the assortment of her friends. They have been almost fighting across her dinner-table over Tess’s character. What she now says to them is “Do you support her or not?” If they say “No indeed. She deserved hanging. A little harlot!” she puts them in one group. If they say “Poor wronged innocent!” and pity her, she puts them in the other group where she is herself.’ He was discussing the question thus with another noble dame who sat next him at a large dinner-party, when they waxed so contentious that they were startled to find the whole table of two-and-twenty silent, listening to their theories on this vexed question. And a well-known beauty and statesman’s wife, also present, snapped out at him: ‘Hanged? They ought all to have been hanged!’

‘Took Arthur Balfour’s sister in to dinner at the Jeunes’. Liked her frank, sensible, womanly way of talking. The reviews have made me shy of presenting copies of Tess, and I told her plainly that if I gave her one it might be the means of getting me into hot water with her. She said: “Now don’t I really look old enough to read any novel with safety by this time!” Some of the best women don’t marry — perhaps wisely.’

‘April 10. Leslie Ward, in illustration of the calamities of artists, tells me of a lady’s portrait, life-size, he has on his hands, that he was requested by her husband to paint. When he had just completed the picture she eloped with a noble earl, whereupon her husband wrote to say he did not want the painting, and Ward’s labour was wasted, there being no contract. The end of the story was that the husband divorced her, and, like Edith in Browning’s “Too Late”, she “married the other”, and brought him a son and heir. At a dinner the very same evening the lady who was my neighbour at the table told me that her husband was counsel in the case, which was hurried through, that the decree might be made absolute and the remarriage take place before the baby was born.’

‘11. In the evening with Sir F. and Lady J. to the Gaiety Theatre to hear Lottie Collins in her song “Ta-ra-ra”. A rather striking tune and performance, to foolish words.’

‘15. Good Friday. Read review of Tess in The Quarterly. A smart and amusing article; but it is easy to be smart and amusing if a man will forgo veracity and sincerity. . . . How strange that one may write a book without knowing what one puts into it

— or rather, the reader reads into it. Well, if this sort of thing continues no more novel-writing for me. A man must be a fool to deliberately stand up to be shot at.’

Moreover, the repute of the book was spreading not only through England, and America, and the Colonies, but through the European Continent and Asia; and during this year translations appeared in various languages, its publication in Russia exciting great interest. On the other hand, some local libraries in English-speaking countries ‘suppressed’ the novel — with what effect was not ascertained. Hardy’s good-natured friends Henry James and R. L. Stevenson (whom he afterward! called the Polonius and the Osric of novelists) corresponded about it in this vein: ‘Oh, yes, dear Louis: “Tess of the d’Urbervilles” is vile. The pretence of sexuality is only equalled by the absence of it [?], and the abomination of the language by the author’s reputation for style.’ (.Letters of Henry James.)

‘16. Dr. Walter Lock, Warden of Keble, Oxford, called. “Tess”, he said, “is the Agamemnon without the remainder of the Oresteian trilogy.” This is inexact, but suggestive as to how people think.

‘Am glad I have got back from London and all those dinners: — London, that hot-plate of humanity, on which we first sing, then simmer, then boil, then dry away to dust and ashes!’

‘Easter Sunday. Was told a story of a handsome country-girl. Her lover, though on the point of matrimony with her, would not perform it because of the temper shown by her when they went to buy the corner-cupboard and tea-things, her insistence on a different pattern, and so on. Their child was born illegitimate. Leaving the child at home she went to Jersey, for this reason, that a fellow village girl had gone there, married, and died; and the other thought that by going and introducing herself to the widower as his late wife’s playmate and friend from childhood he would be interested in her and marry her too. She carried this out, and he did marry her. But her temper was so bad that he would not live with her; and she went on the streets. On her voyage home she died of disease she had contracted, and was thrown into the sea — some say before she was quite dead. Query: What became of the baby?’

He notes that on the 27th of the month his father, away in the country, ‘went upstairs for the last time’. On the 31st he received a letter from his sister Mary on their father’s illness, saying that it being of a mild lingering kind there was no immediate hurry for his return, and hence he dined with Lady Malmesbury on his birthday, June 2nd, in fulfilment of a three weeks’ engagement, before returning to Dorchester. This, however, he did the next day, arriving at his house just when his brother had come to fetch him.

He found his father much changed; and yet he rallied for some weeks onward.

In the town one day Hardy passed by chance the tent just erected for Sanger’s Circus, when the procession was about to start. ‘Saw the Queen climb up on her lofty gilt-and-crimson throne by a step - ladder. Then the various nations personified climbed up on theirs. They, being men, mounted anyhow, “No swearin’!” being said to them as a caution. The Queen, seated in her chair on the terrestrial globe, adjusts her crimson and white robes over her soiled satin shoes for the start, and looks around on Hayne’s

trees, the church - tower, and Egdon Heath in the distance. As she passes along the South-walk Road she is obliged to duck her head to avoid the chestnut boughs tearing off her crown.'

'June 26. Considered methods for the Napoleon drama. Forces; emotions, tendencies. The characters do not act under the influence of reason.'

'July 1. We don't always remember as we should that in getting at the truth, we get only at the true nature of the impression that an object, etc., produces on us, the true thing in itself being still, as Kant shows, beyond our knowledge.

'The art of observation (during travel, etc.) consists in this: the seeing of great things in little things, the whole in the part — even the infinitesimal part. For instance, you are abroad: you see an English flag on a ship-mast from the window of your hotel: you realise the English navy. Or, at home, in a soldier you see the British Army; in a bishop at your club, the Church of England; and in a steam hooter you see Industry.'

He was paying almost daily visits to his father at this time. On the 19th his brother told him the patient was no worse, so he did not go that day. But on the 20th Crocker, one of his brother's men, came to say that their father had died quietly that afternoon — in the house in which he was born. Thus, in spite of his endeavours, Hardy had not been present.

Almost the last thing his father had asked for was water fresh drawn from the well — which was brought and given him; he tasted it and said, 'Yes — that's our well-water. Now I know I am at home.'

Hardy frequently stated in after years that the character of Horatio in Hamlet was his father's to a nicety, and in Hardy's copy of that play his father's name and the date of his death are written opposite the following lines:

'Thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks.'

He was buried close to his father and mother, and near the knights of various dates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with whom the Hardys had been connected.

'August 14. Mother described to-day the three Hardys as they used to appear passing over the brow of the hill to Stinsford Church on a Sunday morning, three or four years before my birth. They were always hurrying, being rather late, their fiddles and violoncello in green-baize bags under their left arms. They wore top hats, stick - up shirt collars, dark blue coats with great collars and gilt buttons, deep cuffs and black silk "stocks" or neckerchiefs. Had curly hair, and carried their heads to one side as they walked. My grandfather wore drab cloth breeches and buckled shoes, but his sons wore trousers and Wellington boots.'

In August they received at Max Gate a long-promised visit from Sir Arthur Blomfield, who had taken a house a few miles off for a month or two. Contrary to Hardy's expectations Blomfield liked the design of the Max Gate house. The visit was a very

pleasant one, abounding in reminiscences of 8 Adelphi Terrace, and included a drive to 'Weatherbury' (Puddletown) Church and an examination of its architecture.

'August 31. My mother says she looks at the furniture and feels she is nothing to it. All those belonging to it, and the place, are gone, and it is left in her hands, a stranger. (She has, however, lived there these fifty-three years!)

'August. I hear of a girl of Maiden Newton who was shod by contract like a horse, at so much a year.'

'September 4. There is a curious Dorset expression — "tankard - legged". This style of leg seems to have its biggest end downwards, and I have certainly seen legs of that sort. My mother says that my Irish ancestress had them, the accomplished lady who is reputed to have read the Bible through seven times; though how my mother should know what the legs of her husband's great-great-grandmother were like I cannot tell.

'Among the many stories of spell-working that I have been told, the following is one of how it was done by two girls about 1830. They killed a pigeon, stuck its heart full of pins, made a tripod of three knitting needles, and suspended the heart on them over a lamp, murmuring an incantation while it roasted, and using the name of the young man in whom one or both were interested. The said young man felt racking pains about the region of the heart, and suspecting something went to the constables. The girls were sent to prison.'

This month they attended a Field-Club meeting at Swanage, and were introduced to 'old Mr. B, "the King of Swanage". He had a good profile, but was rougher in speech than I should have expected after his years of London — being the ordinary type of Dorset man, self-made by trade, whenever one of the county does self-make himself, which is not often. . . . Met Dr. Yeatman, the Bishop of Southwark [afterwards of Worcester]. He says the Endi - cotts [Mrs. J. Chamberlain's ancestors] are a Dorset family.'

'September 17. Stinsford House burnt. Discovered it to be on fire when driving home from Dorchester with E. I left the carriage and ran across the meads. She drove on, having promised to dine at Canon R. Smith's. I could soon see that the old mansion was doomed, though there was not a breath of wind. Coppery flames were visible in the sun through the trees of the park, and a few figures in shirt-sleeves on the roof. Furniture on the lawn: several servants perspiring and crying. Men battering out windows to get out the things — a bruising of tender memories for me. I worked in carrying books and other articles to the vicarage. When it grew dark the flames entered the drawing and dining rooms, lighting up the chambers of so much romance. The delicate tones of the wall-painting seemed pleased at the illumination at first, till the inside of the rooms became one roaring oven; and then the ceiling fell, and then the roof, sending a fountain of sparks from the old oak into the sky.

'Met Mary in the churchyard, who had been laying flowers on Father's grave, on which the firelight now flickered.

'Walked to Canon Smith's dinner-party just as I was, it being too late to change. E. had preceded me there, since I did not arrive until nine. Dinner disorganized and

pushed back between one and two hours, they having been to the fire. Met Bosworth Smith [Harrow master], who had taken E. to the fire, though I saw neither of them. Late home.

‘I am sorry for the house. It was where Lady Susan Strangways, afterwards Lady Susan O’Brien, lived so many years with her actor - husband, after the famous elopement in 1764, so excellently described in Walpole’s Letters, Mary Frampton’s Journal, etc.

‘As stated, she knew my grandfather well, and he carefully heeded her tearful instructions to build the vault for her husband and later herself, “just large enough for us two”. Walpole’s satire on her romantic choice — that “a footman were preferable” — would have missed fire somewhat if tested by time.

‘My father when a boy-chorister in the gallery of the church used to see her, an old and lonely widow, walking in the garden in a red cloak.’

‘End of September. In London. This is the time to realise London as an old city, all the pulsing excitements of May being absent.

‘Drove home from dining with McIlvaine at the Cafe Royal, behind a horse who had no interest in me, was going a way he had no interest in going, and was whipped on by a man who had no interest in me, or the horse, or the way. Amid this string of compulsions reached home.’

‘October. At Great Fawley, Berks. Entered a ploughed vale which might be called the Valley of Brown Melancholy. The silence is remarkable. . . . Though I am alive with the living I can only see the dead here, and am scarcely conscious of the happy children at play.’

‘October 7. Tennyson died yesterday morning.’

‘October 12. At Tennyson’s funeral in Westminster Abbey. The music was sweet and impressive, but as a funeral the scene was less penetrating than a plain country interment would have been. Lunched afterwards at the National Club with E. Gosse, Austin Dobson, Theodore Watts, and William Watson.’

‘18. Hurt my tooth at breakfast-time. I look in the glass. Am conscious of the humiliating sorriness of my earthly tabernacle, and of the sad fact that the best of parents could do no better for me. . . . Why should a man’s mind have been thrown into such close, sad, sensational, inexplicable relations with such a precarious object as his own body!’

‘October 24. The best tragedy — highest tragedy in short — is that of the worthy encompassed by the inevitable. The tragedies of immoral and worthless people are not of the best.’

‘December. At the “Empire” [Music-Hall]. The dancing-girls are nearly all skeletons. One can see drawn lines and puckers in their youngflesh. They should be penned and fattened for a month to round out their beauty.’

‘December 17. At an interesting legal dinner at Sir Francis Jeune’s. They were all men of law but myself — mostly judges. Their stories, so old and boring to one another, were all new to me, and I was delighted. Hawkins told me his experiences in

the Tich - borne case, and that it was by a mere chance that he was not on the other side. Lord Coleridge (the cross-examiner in the same case, with his famous, "Would you be surprised to hear?") was also anecdotic. Afterwards, when Lady J. had a large reception, the electric-lights all went out, just when the rooms were most crowded, but fortunately there being a shine from the fire we all stood still till candles were brought in old rummaged-up candlesticks.'

## CHAPTER XXI

### VISITS AND INTERMITTENT READING

1893: Aet. 52-53

1 January 13. The Fiddler of the Reels (short story) posted to Messrs. Scribner, New York.'

'February 16. Heard a curious account of a grave that was ordered (by telegraph?) at West Stafford, and dug. But no funeral ever came, the person who had ordered it being unknown; and the grave had to be filled up.' This entry had probably arisen from Hardy's occupation during some days of this winter in designing his father's tombstone, of which he made complete drawings for the stonemason; and it was possibly his contact with the stonemason that made him think of that trade for his next hero, though in designing church stonework as an architect's pupil he had of course met with many.

'February 22. There cannot be equity in one kind. Assuming, e.g., the possession of £1,000,000 sterling or 10,000 acres of land to be the coveted ideal, all cannot possess £1,000,000 or 10,000 acres. But there is a practicable equity possible: that the happiness which one man derives from one thing shall be equalled by what another man derives from another thing. Freedom from worry, for instance, is a counterpoise to the lack of great possessions, though he who enjoys that freedom may not think so.'

'February 23. A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling. We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners, and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests (in other words, the hurrying public) unless he has something more unusual to relate than the ordinary experience of every average man and woman.

'The whole secret of fiction and the drama — in the constructional part — lies in the adjustment of things unusual to things eternal and universal. The writer who knows exactly how exceptional, and how non-exceptional, his events should be made, possesses the key to the art.'

'April. I note that a clever thrush, and a stupid nightingale, sing very much alike.

'Am told that Nat C's good-for-nothing grandson has "turned ranter" — i.e. street-preacher — and, meeting a girl he used to carry on with, the following dialogue ensued:

He: "Do you read your Bible for your spiritual good?"

She: "Ho-ho! Git along wi'thee!"

He: "But do you, my dear young woman?"

She: "Haw-haw! Not this morning!"

He: "Do you read your Bible, I implore?"

She: (tongue out) "No, nor you neither. Come, you can't act in that show, Natty! You haven't the guts to carry it off!" The discussion was ended by their going off to Came Plantation.'

In London this spring they again met many people, the popularity of Hardy as an author now making him welcome anywhere. For the first time they took a whole house, 70 Hamilton Terrace, and brought up their own servants, and found themselves much more comfortable under this arrangement than they had been before.

At such crushes, luncheons, and dinners the Hardys made or renewed acquaintance also with Mrs. Richard Chamberlain, Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mr. Goschen, and the Duke, Duchess, and Princess May of Teck, afterwards Queen Mary. 'Lady Winifred Gardner whispered to me that meeting the Royal Family always reminded her of family prayers. The Duke confused the lady who introduced me to him by saying it was unnecessary, as he had known me for years, adding privately to me when she was gone, "That's good enough for her: of course I meant I had known you spiritually".'

'13. Whibley dined with me at the Savile, and I afterwards went with him to the Trocadero Music-Hall. Saw the great men — famous performers at the Halls — drinking at the bar in long coats before going on: on their faces an expression of not wishing in the least to emphasize their importance to the world.'

'April 19. Thought while dressing, and seeing people go by to their offices, how strange it is that we should talk so glibly of "this cold world which shows no sympathy", when this is the feeling of so many components of the same world — probably a majority — and nearly everyone's neighbour is waiting to give and receive sympathy.'

'25. Courage has been idealised; why not Fear? — which is a higher consciousness, and based on a deeper insight.'

'27 - A great lack of tact in A. J. B., who was in the chair at the Royal Literary Fund dinner which I attended last night. The purpose of the dinner was, of course, to raise funds for poor authors, largely from the pockets of the more successful ones who were present with the other guests. Yet he dwelt with much emphasis on the decline of the literary art, and on his opinion that there were no writers of high rank living in these days. We hid our diminished heads, and buttoned our pockets. What he said may have been true enough, but alas for saying it then!'

'28. At Academy Private View. Find that there is a very good painting here of Woolbridge Manor-House under the (erroneous) title of "Tess of the d'Urbervilles' ancestral home". Also one entitled "In Hardy's Country, Egdon Heath".

'The worst of taking a furnished house is that the articles in the rooms are saturated with the thoughts and glances of others.'

'May 10. Spent a scientific evening at the conversazione of the Royal Society, where I talked on the exhibits to Sir R. Quain, Dr. Clifford Allbutt, Humphry Ward, Bosworth Smith, Sir J. Crichton - Browne, F. and G. Macmillan, Ray Lankester, and others,



without (I flatter myself) betraying excessive ignorance in respect of the points in the show.'

'May 18. Left Euston by 9 o'clock morning train with E. for Llandudno, en route for Dublin. After arrival at Llandudno drove round Great Orme's Head. Magnificent deep purple-grey mountains, the fine colour being on account of an approaching storm.'

'19. Went on to Holyhead and Kingstown. Met on board John Morley, the Chief Secretary, and Sir John Pender. Were awaited at Dublin by conveyance from the Viceregal Lodge as promised, this invitation being one renewed from last year, when I was obliged to postpone my visit on account of my father's death. We were received by Mrs. Arthur Henniker, the Lord-Lieutenant's sister. A charming, intuitive woman apparently. Lord Houghton (the Lord-Lieutenant) came in shortly after.

'Our bedroom windows face the Phoenix Park and the Wicklow Mountains. The Lodge appears to have been built some time in the last century. A roomy building with many corridors.'

'20. To Dublin Castle, Christ Church, etc., conducted by Mr. Trevelyan, Em having gone with Mrs. Henniker, Mrs. Greer, and Miss Beresford to a Bazaar. Next day (Sunday) she went to Christ Church with them, and Trevelyan and I, after depositing them at the church door, went on to Bray, where we found the Chief Secretary and the Lord Chancellor at the grey hotel by the shore, "making magistrates by the dozen", as Morley said.'

'22. JVhit Monday. Several went to the races. Mr. Lucy (who is also here) and I, however, went into Dublin, and viewed the public buildings and some comical drunken women dancing, I suppose because it was Whitsuntide.

'A larger party at dinner. Mr. Dundas, an A.D.C., played banjo and sang: Mrs. Henniker the zithern.'

'23. Morley came to lunch. In the afternoon I went with H. Lucy to the scene of the Phoenix Park murders.'

'24. Queen's birthday review. Troops and carriages at door at \ past 11. The Aides — of whom there are about a dozen — are transformed by superb accoutrements into warriors — Mr. St. John Meyrick into a Gordon Highlander [he was killed in the South African War], Mr. Dundas into a dashing hussar. Went in one of the carriages of the procession with E. and the rest. A romantic scene, pathetically gay, especially as to the horses in the gallop past. "Yes: very pretty!" Mr. Dundas said, as one who knew the real thing.

'At lunch Lord Wolseley told me interesting things about war. On the other side of me was a young lieutenant, grandson of Lady de Ros, who recalled the Napoleonic wars. By Wolseley's invitation I visited him at the Military Hospital. Thence drove to Mrs. Lyttel - ton's to tea at the Chief Secretary's Lodge (which she rented). She showed me the rooms in which the bodies of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. Burke were placed, and told some gruesome details of the discovery of a roll of bloody clothes under the sofa after the entry of the succeeding Secretary. The room had not been cleaned out since the murders.

‘We dined this evening at the Private Secretary’s Lodge with Mrs. Jekyll. Met Mahaffy there, a rattling, amusing talker, and others. Went back to the Viceregal Lodge soon enough to join the state diners in the drawing-room. Talked to several, and the Viceroy. Very funny altogether, this little Court.’

‘25. Went over Guinness’s Brewery, with Mrs. Henniker and several of the Viceregal guests, in the morning. Mr. Guinness conducted us. On the miniature railway we all got splashed with porter, or possibly dirty water, spoiling Em’s and Mrs. Henniker’s clothes. E. and I left the Lodge after lunch and proceeded by 3 o’clock train to Killarney, Lord Houghton having given me a copy of his poems. Put up at the Great Southern Railway Hotel.’

‘26. Drove in car round Middle Lake, first driving to Ross Castle. Walked in afternoon about Killarney town, where the cows stand about the streets like people.’

‘27. Started in wagonette for the Gap of Dunloe. Just below Kate Kearney’s house Em mounted a pony and I proceeded more leisurely on foot by the path. The scenery of the Black Valley is deeply impressive. Here are beauties of Nature to delight man, and to degrade him by attracting all the vagabonds in the country. Boats met us at the head of the Upper Lake, and we were rowed through the three to Ross Castle, whence we drove back to Killarney town.’

On the following Sunday they left and passed through Dublin, sleeping at the Marine Hotel at Kingstown, and early the next morning took the boat to Holyhead. Reached London the same evening.

Early in June Hardy attended a rehearsal at Terry’s Theatre of his one-act play called *The Three Wayfarers* — a dramatization of his story *The Three Strangers*, made at the suggestion of J. M. Barrie. On the 3rd June the play was produced with one equally short by his friend, and another or two. The Hardys went with Lady Jeune and some more friends, and found that the little piece was well received.

During the week he saw Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm*, in which Miss Elizabeth Robins played. The former he had already seen, but was again impressed by it, as well as by the latter. Hardy could not at all understand the attitude of the English press towards these tragic productions — the culminating evidence of our blinkered insular taste being afforded by the nickname of the ‘Ibscene drama’ which they received.

On the eighth he met for the first time (it is believed) that brilliant woman Mrs. Craigie; and about this date various other people, including Mr. Hamilton Aide, an old friend of Sir Arthur Blomfield’s. In the week he still followed up Ibsen, going to *The Master Builder* with Sir Gerald and Lady Fitzgerald and her sister, Mrs. Henniker, who said afterwards that she was so excited by the play as not to be able to sleep all night; and on Friday lunched with General Milman at the Tower, inspecting ‘Little-ease’, and other rooms not generally shown at that time. In the evening he went with Mrs. Hardy and Miss Milman to Barrie’s play, *Walker*, London, going behind the scenes with Barrie, and making the acquaintance of J. L. Toole, who said he could not go on

even now on a first night without almost breaking down with nervousness. In a letter to Mrs. Henniker Hardy describes this experience:

‘The evening of yesterday I spent in what I fear you will call a frivolous manner — indeed, during the time, my mind reverted to our Ibsen experience; and I could not help being regretfully struck

by the contrast — although I honestly was amused. Barrie had arranged to take us and Maarten Maartens to see B.’s play of Walker, London, and lunching yesterday with the Milmans at the Tower we asked Miss Milman to be of the party. Mr. Toole heard we had come and invited us behind the scenes. We accordingly went and sat with him in his dressing-room, where he entertained us with hock and champagne, he meanwhile in his paint, wig, and blazer, as he had come off the stage, amusing us with the drollest of stories about a visit he and a friend paid to the Tower some years ago: how he amazed the custodian by entreating the loan of the crown jewels for an amateur dramatic performance for a charitable purpose, offering to deposit 30s. as a guarantee that he would return them, etc., etc., etc. We were rather late home as you may suppose.’

Some ten days later Hardy was at Oxford. It was during the Encaenia, with the Christ Church and other college balls, garden - parties, and suchlike bright functions, but Hardy did not make himself known, his object being to view the proceedings entirely as a stranger. It may be mentioned that the recipients of Honorary Degrees this year included Lord Rosebery, the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Liddell, and Sir Charles Euan Smith, a friend of his own. He viewed the Commemoration proceedings from the undergraduates’ gallery of the Sheldonian, his quarters while at Oxford being at the Wilberforce Temperance Hotel.

The remainder of their season in London this year was of the usual sort. A memorial service to Admiral Tryon, a view of the marriage procession of the Duke of York and Princess May from the Club window, performances by Eleanora Duse and Ada Rehan in their respective theatres, with various dinners and luncheons, brought on the end of their term in Hamilton Terrace, and they returned to Dorchester. A note he made this month runs as follows:

‘I often think that women, even those who consider themselves experienced in sexual strategy, do not know how to manage an honest man.’

In the latter part of July Hardy had to go up to town again for a few days, when he took occasion to attend a lecture by Stepniak on Tolstoi, to visit City churches, and to go with Lady Jeune and her daughters to a farewell performance by Irving. His last call this summer was on Lady Londonderry, who remained his friend through the ensuing years. ‘A beautiful woman still’, he says of her; ‘and very glad to see me, which beautiful women are not always. The Duchess of Manchester [Consuelo] called while I was there, and Lady Jeune. All four of us talked of the marriage-laws, a conversation which they started, not I; also of the difficulties of separation, of terminable marriages where there are children, and of the nervous strain of living with a man when you know he can throw you over at any moment.’

It may be mentioned here that after the Duchess of Manchester's death a good many years later Hardy described her as having been when he first knew her 'a warm-natured woman, laughing-eyed, and bubbling with impulses, in temperament very much like "Julie-Jane" in one of my poems'.

'At Dorchester. July 31 st. Mrs. R. Eliot lunched. Her story of the twins, "May" and "June". May was born between 11 and 12 on the 31st May, and June between 12 and 1 on June the 1st.'

The following month, in reply to an inquiry by the editors of the Parisian paper *L'Ermitage*, he wrote:

'I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living. To this end I would have society divided into groups of temperaments, with a different code of observances for each group.'

It is doubtful if this Utopian scheme possessed Hardy's fancy for any long time.

In the middle of August Hardy and his wife accepted an invitation to visit the Milnes-Gaskells at Wenlock Abbey, on their way thither calling at Hereford to see the Cathedral, Hardy always making a point of not missing such achievements in architecture, even if familiar. Lady Catherine and her daughter met them at the station. 'Lady C. is as sweet as ever, and almost as pretty, and occasionally shows a quizzical wit. The pet name "Catty" which her dearest friends give her has, I fear, a suspicious tremor of malice.' They were interested to find their bedroom in the Norman part of the building, Hardy saying he felt quite mouldy at sleeping within walls of such high antiquity.

Their time at the Abbey appears to have been very pleasant. They idled about in the shade of the ruins, and Milnes-Gaskell told an amusing story of a congratulatory dinner by fellow-townsmen to a burgher who had obtained a divorce from his wife, where the mayor made a speech beginning 'On this auspicious occasion'. During their stay they went with him to Stokesay Castle and Shrewsbury.

Lady Wenlock came one day; and on Sunday Hardy and Lady C. walked till they were tired, when they 'sat down on the edge of a lonely sandpit and talked of suicide, pessimism, whether life was worth living, and kindred dismal subjects, till we were quite miserable. After dinner all sat round a lantern in the court under the stars — where Lady C. told stories in the Devonshire dialect, moths flying about the lantern as in *In Memoriam*. She also defined the difference between coquetting and flirting, considering the latter a grosser form of the first, and alluded to Zola's phrase, "a woman whose presence was like a caress", saying that some women could not help it being so, even if they wished it otherwise. I doubted it, considering it but their excuse for carrying on.'

On their way back the Hardys went to Ludlow Castle, and deplored the wanton treatment which had led to the rooflessness of the historic pile where *Comus* was first performed and *Hudibras* partly written. Hardy thought that even now a millionaire might be able to re-roof it and make it his residence.

On a flying visit to London at the end of this month, dining at the Conservative Club with Sir George Douglas, he had 'an interesting scientific conversation' with Sir James Crichton-Browne. 'A woman's brain, according to him, is as large in proportion to her body as a man's. The most passionate women are not those selected in civilized society to breed from, as in a state of nature, but the colder; the former going on the streets (I am sceptical about this). The doctrines of Darwin require readjusting largely; for instance, the survival of the fittest in the struggle for life. There is an altruism and coalescence between cells as well as an antagonism. Certain cells destroy certain cells; but others assist and combine. Well, I can't say.'

'September 13. At Max Gate. A striated crimson sunset; opposite it I sit in the study writing by the light of a shaded lamp, which looks primrose against the red.' This was Hardy's old study facing west (now altered) in which he wrote *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, before he removed into his subsequent one looking east, where he wrote *The Dynasts* and all his later poetry, and which is still unchanged.

'September 14. Drove with Em. to the Sheridans', Frampton. Tea on lawn. Mrs. Mildmay, young Harcourt, Lord Dufferin, etc. On our return all walked with us as far as the first park-gate. May [afterwards Lady Stracey] looked remarkably well.'

'September 17. At Bockhampton heard a story about eels that was almost gruesome — how they jumped out of a bucket at night, crawled all over the house and half-way up the stairs, their tails being heard swishing in the dark, and were ultimately found in the garden; and when water was put to them to wash off the gravel and earth they became lively and leapt about.'

At the end of the month Hardy and his wife went on a visit to Sir Francis and Lady Jeune at Arlington Manor, finding the house when they arrived as cheerful as the Jeunes' house always was in those days, Hardy saying that there was never another house like it for cheerfulness. Among the other house-guests were Mrs. Craigie ('John Oliver Hobbes'), Lewis Morris, Mr. Stephen (a director of the North-Western Railway), and Hubert Howard, son of Lord Carlisle. On Sunday morning Hardy took a two hours' walk with Mrs. Craigie on the moor, when she explained to him her reasons for joining the Roman Catholic Church, a step which had vexed him somewhat. Apparently he did not consider her reasons satisfactory, but their friendship remained unbroken. While staying there they went to Shaw House, an intact Elizabethan mansion, and to a picnic in Savernake Forest, 'where Lady Jeune cooked luncheon in a great saucepan, with her sleeves rolled up and an apron on'.

'October 7-10. Wrote a song.' (Which of his songs is not mentioned.)

'November 11. Met Lady Cynthia Graham. In appearance she is something like my idea of *Tess*, though I did not know her when the novel was written.'

'November 23. Poem. "The Glass-stainer" (published later on).'

'November 28. Poem. "He views himself as an automaton" (published).'

'December. Found and touched up a short story called "An Imaginative Woman".'

'In London with a slight cold in the head. Dined at the Dss. of Manchester's. Most of the 'guests had bad colds, and our hostess herself a hacking cough. A lively dinner

all the same. As some people had not been able to come I dined with her again a few days later, as did also George [afterwards Lord] Curzon. Lady Londonderry told me that her mother's grandmother was Spanish, whence the name of Theresa. There were also present the Duke of Devonshire, Arthur Balfour, and Mr. and Mrs. Lyttelton. When I saw the Duchess again two or three days later, she asked me how I liked her relation, the Duke. I said not much; he was too heavy for one thing. "That's because he's so shy!" she urged. "I assure you he is quite different when it wears off." I looked as if I did not believe much in the shyness. However, I'll assume it was so.'

After looking at a picture of Grindelwald and the Wetterhorn at somebody's house he writes: 'I could argue thus: "There is no real interest or beauty in this mountain, which appeals only to the childish taste for colour or size. The little houses at the foot are the real interest of the scene".' Hardy never did argue so, nor intend to, nor quite believe the argument; but one understands what he means.

Finishing his London engagements, which included the final revision with Mrs. Heniker of a weird story in which they had collaborated, entitled 'The Spectre of the Real', he spent Christmas at Max Gate as usual, receiving the carol-singers there on Christmas Eve, where, 'though quite modern, with a harmonium, they made a charming picture with their lanterns under the trees, the rays diminishing away in the winter mist'. On New Year's Eve it was calm, and they stood outside the door listening to the muffled peal from the tower of Fordington St. George.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ANOTHER NOVEL FINISHED, MUTILATED, AND RESTORED

1894-1895: Aet. 53-55

'February 4, 1894. Curious scene encountered this (Sunday) evening as I was walking back to Dorchester from Bockhampton very late — nearly 12 o'clock. A girl almost in white on the top of Stinsford Hill, beating a tambourine and dancing. She looked like one of the "angelic quire", who had tumbled down out of the sky, and I could hardly believe my eyes. Not a soul there or near but her and myself. Was told she belonged to the Salvation Army, who beat tambourines devotionally.' The scene was afterwards put into verse.

One day this month he spent in Stinsford Churchyard with his brother, superintending the erection of their father's tombstone.

At Londonderry House the subject arose of social blunders. The hostess related some amusing ones of hers; but Sir Redvers Buller capped everybody by describing what he called a 'double-barrelled' one of his own. He inquired of a lady next him at dinner who a certain gentleman was, 'like a hippopotamus', sitting opposite them. He

was the lady's husband; and Sir Redvers was so depressed by the disaster that had befallen him that he could not get it off his mind; hence at a dinner the next evening he sought the condolences of an elderly lady, to whom he related his misfortune; and remembered when he had told the story that his listener was the gentleman's mother.

At a very interesting luncheon at the Bachelors' Club given by his friend George Curzon he made the acquaintance of Mr. F. C. Selous, the mighty hunter, with the nature of whose fame he was not, however, quite in sympathy, wondering how such a seemingly humane man could live for killing; and also of Lord Roberts and Lord Lansdowne.

After these cheerful doings he returned to Max Gate for a while, but when in London again, to look for a house for the spring and summer, he occasionally visited a friend he had earlier known by 262

correspondence, Lord Pembroke, author of *South Sea Bubbles*, a fellow Wessex man, as he called himself, for whom Hardy acquired a very warm feeling. He was now ill at a nursing home in London, and an amusing incident occurred while his visitor was sitting by his bedside one afternoon, thinking what havoc of good material it was that such a fine and handsome man should be prostrated. He whispered to Hardy that there was a 'Tess' in the establishment, who always came if he rang at that time of the day, and that he would do so then that Hardy might see her. He accordingly rang, whereupon Tess's chronicler was much disappointed at the result; but endeavoured to discern beauty in the very indifferent figure who responded, and at last persuaded himself that he could do so. When she had gone the patient apologized, saying that for the first time since he had lain there a stranger had attended to his summons.

On Hardy's next visit to his friend Pembroke said with the faintest reproach: 'You go to the fashionable house in front, and you might come round to the back to see me.' The nursing home was at the back of Lady Londonderry's. They never met again, and when he heard of Pembroke's unexpected death Hardy remembered the words and grieved.

'April 7. Wrote to Harper's asking to be allowed to cancel the agreement to supply a serial story to Harper's Magazine.' This agreement was the cause of a good deal of difficulty afterwards (the story being *Jude the Obscure*), as will be seen.

This year they found a house at South Kensington, and moved into it with servants brought from the country, to be surprised a little later by the great attention their house received from butchers' and bakers' young men, postmen, and other passers-by; when they found their innocent country servants to have set up flirtations with all these in a bold style which the London servant was far too cautious to adopt.

At the end of April he paid a visit to George Meredith at his house near Box Hill, and had an interesting and friendly evening there, his son and daughter-in-law being present. 'Meredith', he said, 'is a shade artificial in manner at first, but not unpleasantly so, and he soon forgets to maintain it, so that it goes off quite.'

At a dinner at the Grand Hotel given by Mr. Astor to his contributors in May, Hardy had a talk with Lord Roberts, who spoke most modestly of his achievements. It

was 'an artistic and luxuriant banquet, with beds of roses on the tables, electric lights shining up like glow-worms through their leaves and petals [an arrangement somewhat of a novelty then], and a band playing behind the palms'.

This month he spared two or three days from London to go to Aldeburgh in Suffolk, where at the house of Mr. Edward Clodd, his host, he met Grant Allen and Whymper, the mountaineer, who told of the tragedy on the Matterhorn in 1865 in which he was the only survivor of the four Englishmen present — a reminiscence which specially impressed Hardy from the fact that he remembered the particular day, thirty years before, of the arrival of the news in this country. He had walked from his lodgings in Westbourne Park Villas to Harrow that afternoon, and on entering the place was surprised to notice people standing at the doors discussing something with a serious look. It turned out to be the catastrophe, two of the victims being residents of Harrow. The event lost nothing by Whymper's relation of it. He afterwards marked for Hardy on a sketch of the Matterhorn a red line showing the track of the adventurers to the top and the spot of the accident — a sketch which is still at Max Gate with his signature.

On a day in the week following he was at the Women Writers' Club — probably its first anniversary meeting — and, knowing what women writers mostly had to put up with, was surprised to find himself in a group of fashionably dressed youngish ladies, the Princess Christian being present with other women of rank. 'Dear me — are women-writers like this!' he said with changed views.

During the same week they fulfilled likewise day or night invitations to Lady Carnarvon's, Mrs. Pitt-Rivers's, and other houses. At Lady Malmesbury's one of her green linnets escaped from its cage, and he caught it — reluctantly, but feeling that a green linnet at large in London would be in a worse predicament than as a prisoner. At the Countess of's 'a woman very rich and very pretty' [Marcia,

Lady Yarborough] informed him mournfully in tite-h-tite that people snubbed her, which so surprised him that he could hardly believe it, and frankly told her it was her own imagination. She was the lady of the 'Pretty pink frock' poem, though it should be stated that the deceased was not her husband but an uncle. And at an evening party at her house later he found her in a state of nerves, lest a sudden downpour of rain which had occurred should prevent people coming, and spoil her grand gathering. However, when the worst of the thunderstorm was over they duly streamed in, and she touched him joyfully on the shoulder and said, 'You've conjured them!' 'My entertainer's sister, Lady P — , was the most beautiful woman there.

On coming away there were no cabs to be got [on account of a strike it seems], and I returned to S.K. on the top of a 'bus. No sooner was I up there than the rain began again. A girl who had scrambled up after me asked for the shelter of my umbrella and I gave it — when she startled me by holding on tight to my arm and bestowing on me many kisses for the trivial kindness. She told me she had been to "The Pav", and was tired, and was going home. She had not been drinking. I descended at the South Kensington Station and watched the 'bus bearing her away. An affectionate nature wasted on the streets! It was a strange contrast to the scene I had just left.'



Early in June they were at the first performance of a play by Mrs. Craigie at Daly's Theatre, and did some entertaining at their own house, after which Mrs. Hardy was unwell, and went to Hastings for a change of air, Hardy going to Dorchester to look at some alterations he was making in his Max Gate house. At the end of a week he fetched his wife from Hastings, and after more dinners and luncheons he went to a melodrama at the Adelphi, which was said to be based without acknowledgement on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He had received many requests for a dramatic version of the novel, but he found that nothing could be done with it among London actor-managers, all of them in their notorious timidity being afraid of the censure from conventional critics that had resisted Ibsen; and he abandoned all idea of producing it, one prominent actor telling him frankly that he could not play such a dubious character as Angel Clare (which would have suited him precisely) 'because I have my name to make, and it would risk my reputation with the public if I played anything but a heroic character without spot'. Hardy thought of the limited artistic sense of even a leading English actor. Yet before and after this time Hardy received letters or oral messages from almost every actress of note in Europe asking for an opportunity of appearing in the part of 'Tess' — among them being Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, and Eleanora Duse.

During July Hardy met Mrs. Asquith for the first time; and at another house he had an interesting conversation with Dr. W. H. Russell on the battles in the Franco-Prussian war, where Russell had been correspondent for *The Times*, and was blamed by some readers for putting too much realism into his accounts. Russell told Hardy a distressing story of a horse with no under jaw, laying its head upon his thigh in a dumb appeal for sympathy, two or three days after the battle of Gravelotte, when he was riding over the field; and other such sickening experiences.

Whether because he was assumed to have written a notorious novel or not Hardy could not say, but he found himself continually invited hither and thither to see famous beauties of the time — some of whom disappointed him; but some he owned to be very beautiful, such as Lady Powis, Lady Yarborough, Lady de Grey — 'handsome, tall, glance-giving, arch, friendly' — the Duchess of Montrose, Mrs. John Hanbury, Lady Cynthia Graham, Amelie Rives, and many others. A crush at Lady Spencer's at the Admiralty was one of the last of the parties they attended this season. But he mostly was compelled to slip away as soon as he could from these gatherings, finding that they exhausted him both of strength and ideas, few of the latter being given him in return for his own, because the fashionable throng either would not part from those it possessed, or did not possess any.

On the day of their giving up their house at South Kensington a curious mishap befell him. He had dispatched the servants and luggage in the morning; Mrs. Hardy also had driven off to the station, leaving him, as they had arranged, to look over the house, see all was right, and await the caretaker, when he and his portmanteau would follow the rest to Dorchester. He was coming down the stairs of the silent house dragging the portmanteau behind him when his back gave way, and there he had to sit till the woman arrived to help him. In the course of the afternoon he was better

and managed to get off, the acute pain turning out to be rheumatism aggravated by lifting the portmanteau.

‘August 1 — 7. Dorchester: Seedy: back got better by degrees.’

‘October 16. To London to meet Henry Harper on business.’

‘October 20. Dined at the Guards’ Mess, St. James’s, with Major Henniker. After dinner went round with him to the sentries with a lantern.’

‘October 23. Dining at the Savile last Sunday with Ray Lankester we talked of hypnotism, will, etc. He did not believe in silent influence, such as making a person turn round by force of will without communication. But of willing, for example, certain types of women by speech to do as you desire — such as “ You shall, or you are to, marry me”, he seemed to have not much doubt. If true, it seems to open up unpleasant possibilities.’

‘November. Painful story. Old P, who narrowly escaped hanging for arson about 1830, returned after his imprisonment, died at West Stafford, his native village, and was buried there. His widow long after died in Fordington, having saved £5 to be buried with her husband. The rector of the village made no objection, and the grave was dug. Meanwhile the daughter had come home, and said the money was not enough to pay for carrying the body of her mother out there in the country; so the grave was filled in, and the woman buried where she died.’

‘November 11. Old song heard:

“And then she arose,  
And put on her best clothes,  
And went off to the north with the Blues.”

‘Another:

“Come ashore, Jolly Tar, with your trousers on.”

‘Another (sung at J. D.’s wedding):

“Somebody here has been . . .  
Or else some charming shepherdess  
That wears the gown of green.”“

In December he ran up to London alone on publishing business, and stayed at a temporary room off Piccadilly, to be near his club. It was then that there seems to have occurred, according to what he said later, some incident of the kind possibly adumbrated in the verses called ‘At Mayfair Lodgings’, in *Moments of Vision*. He watched during a sleepless night a lighted window close by, wondering who might be lying there ill. Afterwards he discovered that a woman had lain there dying, and that she was one whom he had cared for in his youth, when she was a girl in a neighbouring village.

In March of the next year (1895) Hardy was going about the neighbourhood of Dorchester and other places in Wessex with Mr. Macbeth Raeburn, the well-known etcher, who had been commissioned by the publishers to make sketches on the spot for frontispieces to the *Wessex Novels*. To those scenes which Hardy could not visit himself he sent the artist alone, one of which places, Char - borough Park, the scene of

Two on a Tower, was extremely difficult of access, the owner jealously guarding ingress upon her estate, and particularly to her park and house. Raeburn came back in the evening full of his adventures. Reaching the outer park-gate he found it locked, but the lodge-keeper opened it on his saying he had important business at the house. He then reached the second park-gate, which was unfastened to him on the same representation of urgency, but more dubiously. He then got to the front door of the mansion, rang, and asked permission to sketch the house. ‘Good God!’ said the butler, ‘you don’t know what you are asking. You had better be off before the mis’ess sees you, or the bailiff comes across you!’ He started away discomfited, but thought he would make an attempt at a sketch behind the shadow of a tree. Whilst doing this he heard a voice shouting, and beheld a man running up to him — the redoubtable bailiff — who promptly ordered him out of the park. Raeburn as he moved off thought he detected something familiar in the accent of the bailiff, and turning, said, ‘Surely you come from my country?’ ‘An’ faith, man, it may be so!’ the bailiff suddenly replied, whereon they compared notes, and found they had grown up in the same Scottish village. Then matters changed. ‘Draw where you like and what you like, only don’t let her see you from the windows at a’. She’s a queer auld body, not bad at bottom, though it’s rather far down. Draw as ye will, an’ if I see her coming I’ll haud up my hand.’ Mr. Raeburn finished his sketch in peace and comfort, and it stands to this day at the beginning of the novel as evidence of the same.

During the spring they paid a visit of a few days to the Jeunes at Arlington Manor, where they also found Sir H. Drummond Wolff, home from Madrid, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Sir Henry Thompson, and other friends; and in May entered a flat at Ashley Gardens, Westminster, for the season. While here a portrait of Hardy was painted by Miss Winifred Thomson. A somewhat new feature in their doings this summer was going to teas on the terrace of the House of Commons — in those days a newly fashionable form of entertainment. Hardy was not a bit of a politician, but he attended several of these, and of course met many Members there.

On June 29 Hardy attended the laying of the foundation stone of the Westminster Cathedral, possibly because the site was close to the flat he occupied, for he had no leanings to Roman Catholicism. However, there he was, and deeply impressed by the scene. In July he visited St. Saviour’s, Southwark, by arrangement with Sir Arthur Blomfield, to see how he was getting on with the restoration. Dinners and theatres carried them through the month, in which he also paid a visit to Burford Bridge, to dine at the hotel with the Omar Khayyam Club and meet George Meredith, where the latter made a speech, and Hardy likewise, said to be the first and last ever made by either of them; at any rate it was the first, and last but one or two, by Hardy.

Hardy’s entries of his doings were always of a fitful and irregular kind, and now there occurs a hiatus which cannot be filled. But it is clear that at the end of the summer at Max Gate he was ‘restoring the MS. of *Jude the Obscure* to its original state’ — on which process he sets down an undated remark, probably about the end of August, when he sent off the restored copy to the publishers:

‘On account of the labour of altering *Jude the Obscure* to suit the magazine, and then having to alter it back, I have lost energy for revising and improving the original as I meant to do.’

In September they paid a week’s visit to General and Mrs. Pitt - Rivers at Rushmore, and much enjoyed the time. It was on the occasion of the annual sports at the Larmer Tree, and a full moon and clear sky favouring, the dancing on the green was a great success. The local paper gives more than a readable description of the festivity for this particular year:

‘After nightfall the scene was one of extraordinary picturesqueness and poetry, its great features being the illumination of the grounds by thousands of Vauxhall lamps, and the dancing of hundreds of couples under these lights and the mellow radiance of the full moon. For the dancing a space was especially enclosed, the figures chosen being mostly the polka-mazurka and schottische, though some country dances were started by the house-party, and led off by the beautiful Mrs. Grove, the daughter of General Pitt-Rivers, and her charming sister-in-law, Mrs. Pitt. Probably at no other spot in England could such a spectacle have been witnessed at any time. One could hardly believe that one was not in a suburb of Paris, instead of a corner in old-fashioned Wiltshire, nearly ten miles from a railway-station in any direction.’

It may be worth mentioning that, passionately fond of dancing as Hardy had been from earliest childhood, this was the last occasion on which he ever trod a measure, according to his own recollection; at any rate on the greensward, which is by no means so springy to the foot as it looks, and left him stiff in the knees for some succeeding days. It was he who started the country dances, his partner being the above-mentioned Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Grove.

A garden-party of their own at Max Gate finished the summer doings of the Hardys this year; and a very different atmosphere from that of dancing on the green soon succeeded for him, of the coming of which, by a strange divination, he must have had a suspicion, else why should he have made the following note beforehand?

“‘Never retract. Never explain. Get it done and let them howl.’” Words said to Jowett by a very practical friend.’

On the 1 st November *Jude the Obscure* was published.

A week after, on the 8th, he sets down:

‘England seventy years ago. — I have heard of a girl, now a very old woman, who in her youth was seen following a goose about the common all the afternoon to get a quill from the bird, with which the parish-clerk could write for her a letter to her lover. Such a first-hand method of getting a quill-pen for important letters was not infrequent at that date.’ It may be added that Hardy himself had written such love-letters, and read the answers to them: but this was after the use of the quill had been largely abandoned for that of the steel pen, though old people still stuck to quills, and Hardy himself had to practise his earliest lessons in writing with a quill.

The onslaught upon *Jude* started by the vituperative section of the press — unequalled in violence since the publication of Swinburne’s *Poems and Ballads* thirty

years before — was taken up by the anonymous writers of libellous letters and post-cards, and other such gentry. It spread to America and Australia, whence among other appreciations he received a letter containing a packet of ashes, which the virtuous writer stated to be those of his iniquitous novel.

Thus, though Hardy with his quick sense of humour could not help seeing a ludicrous side to it all, and was well enough aware that the evil complained of was what these ‘nice minds with nasty ideas’ had read into his book, and not what he had put there, he underwent the strange experience of beholding a sinister lay figure of himself constructed by them, which had no sort of resemblance to him as he was, and which he, and those who knew him well, would not have recognized as being meant for himself if it had not been called by his name. Macaulay’s remark in his essay on Byron was well illustrated by Thomas Hardy’s experience at this time: ‘We know of no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality.’

In contrast to all this it is worth while to quote what Swinburne wrote to Hardy after reading *Jude the Obscure*:

‘The tragedy — if I may venture an opinion — is equally beautiful and terrible in its pathos. The beauty, the terror, and the truth, are all yours and yours alone. But (if I may say so) how cruel you are! Only the great and awful father of “Pierrette” and “L’Enfant Maudit” was ever so merciless to his children. I think it would hardly be seemly to enlarge on all that I admire in your work — or on half of it. — The man who can do such work can hardly care about criticism or praise, but I will risk saying how thankful we should be (I know that I may speak for other admirers as cordial as myself) for another admission into an English paradise “under the greenwood tree”.

But if you prefer to be — or to remain — the most tragic of authors no doubt you may; for Balzac is dead, and there has been no such tragedy in fiction — on anything like the same lines — since he died.

‘Yours most sincerely,

‘A. C. Swinburne.’

Three letters upon this same subject, written by Hardy himself to a close friend, may appropriately be given here.

Letter I

‘Max Gate,

‘Dorchester,

‘November 10th, 1895.

“... Your review (of *Jude the Obscure*) is the most discriminating that has yet appeared. It required an artist to see that the plot is almost geometrically constructed — I ought not to say constructed, for, beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated it, and I simply let it come. As for the story itself, it is really sent out to those into whose souls the iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives. But one cannot choose one’s readers.

‘It is curious that some of the papers should look upon the novel as a manifesto on ‘the marriage question’ (although, of course, it involves it), seeing that it is concerned

first with the labours of a poor student to get a University degree, and secondly with the tragic issues of two bad marriages, owing in the main to a doom or curse of hereditary temperament peculiar to the family of the, parties. The only remarks which can be said to bear on the general marriage question occur in dialogue, and comprise no more than half a dozen pages in a book of five hundred. And of these remarks I state (p. 362) that my own views are not expressed therein. I suppose the attitude of these critics is to be accounted for by the accident that, during the serial publication of my story, a sheaf of “ purpose “ novels on the matter appeared.

‘You have hardly an idea how poor and feeble the book seems to me, as executed, beside the idea of it that I had formed in prospect.

‘I have received some interesting letters about it already — yours not the least so. Swinburne writes, too enthusiastically for me to quote with modesty.

‘Believe me, with sincere thanks for your review,

‘Ever yours,

‘Thomas Hardy.

‘P.S. One thing I did not answer. The “grimy” features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate this contrast. But I must have lamentably failed, as I feel I have, if this requires explanation and is not self-evident. The idea was meant to run all through the novel. It is, in fact, to be discovered in everybody’s life, though it lies less on the surface perhaps than it does in my poor puppet’s.’T. H.’

Letter II

‘Max Gate,

‘Dorchester,

‘November 20th, 1895.

‘I am keen about the new magazine. How interesting that you should be writing this review for it! I wish the book were more worthy of such notice and place.

‘You are quite right; there is nothing perverted or depraved in Sue’s nature. The abnormalism consists in disproportion, not in inversion, her sexual instinct being healthy as far as it goes, but unusually weak and fastidious. Her sensibilities remain painfully alert notwithstanding, as they do in nature with such women. One point illustrating this I could not dwell upon: that, though she has children, her intimacies with Jude have never been more than occasional, even when they were living together (I mention that they occupy separate rooms, except towards the end), and one of her reasons for fearing the marriage ceremony is that she fears it would be breaking faith with Jude to withhold herself at pleasure, or altogether, after it; though while uncontracted she feels at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she chooses. This has tended to keep his passion as hot at the end as at the beginning, and helps to break his heart. He has never really possessed her as freely as he desired.

‘Sue is a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me, but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now.

‘Of course the book is all contrasts — or was meant to be in its original conception. Alas, what a miserable accomplishment it is, when I compare it with what I meant to make it! — e.g. Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude’s reading the Greek testament; Christ-

minster academical, Christminster in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the Pagan, Sue the saint; marriage, no marriage; See., &c.

‘As to the “coarse” scenes with Arabella, the battle in the schoolroom, etc., the newspaper critics might, I thought, have sneered at them for their Fieldingism rather than for their Zolaism. But your everyday critic knows nothing of Fielding. I am read in Zola very little, but have felt akin locally to Fielding, so many of his scenes having been laid down this way, and his home near.

‘Did I tell you I feared I should seem too High-Churchy at the end of the book where Sue recants? You can imagine my surprise at some of the reviews.

‘What a self-occupied letter!

‘Ever sincerely,

‘T. H.’

Letter III

‘Max Gate,

‘Dorchester,

‘January 4, 1896.

‘For the last three days I have been tantalised by a difficulty in getting *Cosmopolis*, and had only just read your review when I received your note. My sincere thanks for the generous view you take of the book, which to me is a mass of imperfections. We have both been amused — or rather delighted — by the sub-humour (is there such a word?) of your writing. I think it a rare quality in living essayists, and that you ought to make more of it — I mean write more in that vein than you do.

‘But this is apart from the review itself, of which I will talk to you when we meet. The rectangular lines of the story were not premeditated, but came by chance: except, of course, that the involutions of four lives must necessarily be a sort of quadrille. The only point in the novel on which I feel sure is that it makes for morality; and that delicacy or indelicacy in a writer is according to his object. If I say to a lady “I met a naked woman”, it is indelicate. But if I go on to say “I found she was mad with sorrow”, it ceases to be indelicate. And in writing *Jude* my mind was fixed on the ending.

‘Sincerely yours,

‘T. H.’

In London in December they went to see Forbes-Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as *Romeo and Juliet*, supping with them afterwards at Willis’s Rooms, a building Hardy had known many years earlier, when it was still a ballroom unaltered in appearance from that of its famous days as ‘Almack’s’ — indeed, he had himself danced on the old floor shortly after his first arrival in London in 1862, as has been mentioned.

When they got back to Dorchester during December Hardy had plenty of time to read the reviews of *Jude* that continued to pour out. Some paragraphists knowingly

assured the public that the book was an honest autobiography, and Hardy did not take the trouble to deny it till more than twenty years later, when he wrote to an inquirer with whom the superstition still lingered that no book he had ever written contained less of his own life, which of course had been known to his friends from the beginning. Some of the incidents were real in so far as that he had heard of them, or come in contact with them when they were occurring to people he knew; but no more. It is interesting to mention that on his way to school he did once meet with a youth like Jude who drove the bread-cart of a widow, a baker, like Mrs. Fawley, and carried on his studies at the same time, to the serious risk of other drivers in the lanes; which youth asked him to lend him his Latin grammar. But Hardy lost sight of this featful student, and never knew if he profited by his plan.

Hardy makes a remark on one or two of the reviews: 'Tragedy may be created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions. If the former be the means exhibited and deplored, the writer is regarded as impious; if the latter, as subversive and dangerous; when all the while he may never have questioned the necessity or urged the non-necessity of either'

During this year 1895, and before and after, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* went through Europe in translations, German, French, Russian, Dutch, Italian, and other tongues, Hardy as a rule stipulating that the translation should be complete and unabridged, on a guarantee of which he would make no charge. Some of the renderings, however, were much hacked about in spite of him. The Russian translation appears to have been read and approved by Tolstoi during its twelve months' career in a Moscow monthly periodical.

In December he replied to Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of *The Review of Reviews*:

'I am unable to answer your inquiry as to "Hymns that have helped me".

'But the undermentioned have always been familiar and favourite hymns of mine as poetry:

'1. "Thou turnest man, O Lord, to dust". Ps. xc. vv. 3, 4, 5, 6.

(Tate and Brady.) '2. "Awake, my soul, and with the sun." (Morning Hymn, Ken.).

'3. "Lead, kindly Light." (Newman.)' So ended the year 1895.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MORE ON 'JUDE', AND ISSUE OF 'THE WELL-BELOVED'

1896-1897: Aet. 55-57

Hardy found that the newspaper comments on *Jude the Obscure* were producing phenomena among his country friends which were extensive and peculiar, they having a pathetic reverence for press opinions. However, on returning to London in the spring he



discovered somewhat to his surprise that people there seemed not to be at all concerned at his having been excommunicated by the press, or by at least a noisy section of it, and received him just the same as ever; so that he and his wife passed this season much as usual, going to Lady Malmesbury's wedding and also a little later to the wedding of Sir George Lewis's son at the Jewish Synagogue; renewing acquaintance with the beautiful Duchess of Montrose and Lady Londonderry, also attending a most amusing masked ball at his friends Mr. and Mrs. Montagu Crackanthorpe's, where he and Henry James were the only two not in dominoes, and were recklessly flirted with by the women in consequence.

This year they took again the house in South Kensington they had occupied two years earlier, and gave some little parties there. But it being a cold damp spring Hardy caught a chill by some means, and was laid up with a rheumatic attack for several days, in May suffering from a relapse. He was advised to go to the seaside for a change of air, and leaving the London house in the charge of the servants went with Mrs. Hardy to lodgings at Brighton.

While there he received a request from the members of the Glasgow University Liberal Club to stand as their candidate in the election of a Lord Rector for the University: the objection to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had been nominated, being that he was not a man of letters. Hardy's reply to the Honorary Secretary was written from Brighton on May 16, 1896.

'Dear Sir,

'Your letter has just reached me here, where I am staying for a few days for change of air after an illness.

'In reply let me assure you that I am deeply sensible of the honour of having been asked by the members of the Glasgow University Liberal Club to stand as their candidate for the Lord Rectorship.

'In other circumstances I might have rejoiced at the opportunity. But personal reasons which it would be tedious to detail prevent my entertaining the idea of coming forward for the office, and I can only therefore request you to convey to the Club my regrets that such should be the case; and my sincere thanks for their generous opinion of my worthiness.

'I am, dear Sir,

'Yours faithfully,

'Thomas Hardy.'

There they stayed about a week and, finding little improvement effected, returned to South Kensington. By degrees he recovered, and they resumed going out as usual, and doing as much themselves to entertain people as they could accomplish in a house not their own. This mostly took a form then in vogue, one very convenient for literary persons, of having afternoon parties, to the invitations to which their friends of every rank as readily responded as they had done in former years, notwithstanding the fact that at the very height of the season the Bishop of Wakefield announced in a letter to the papers that he had thrown Hardy's novel into the fire. Knowing the difficulty

of burning a thick book even in a good fire, and the infrequency of fires of any sort in summer, Hardy was mildly sceptical of the literal truth of the bishop's story; but remembering that Shelley, Milton, and many others of the illustrious, reaching all the way back to the days of Protagoras, had undergone the same sort of indignity at the hands of bigotry and intolerance he thought it a pity in the interests of his own reputation to disturb the episcopal narrative of adventures with Jude. However, it appeared that, further, — to quote the testimony in the *Bishop's Life* — the scandalised prelate was not ashamed to deal a blow below the belt, but 'took an envelope out of his paperstand and addressed it to W. F. D. Smith, Esq., M.P. The result was the quiet withdrawal of the book from the library, and an assurance that any other books by the same author would be carefully examined before they were allowed to be circulated.' Of this precious conspiracy Hardy knew nothing, or it might have moved a mind which the burning could not stir to say a word on literary garrotting. In his ignorance of it he remained silent, being fully aware of one thing, that the ethical teaching of the novel, even if somewhat crudely put, was as high as that of any of the bishop's sermons — (indeed, Hardy was afterwards reproached for its being 'too much of a sermon'). And thus feeling quite calm on the ultimate verdict of Time he merely reflected on the shallowness of the episcopal view of the case and of morals generally, which brought to his memory a witty remark he had once read in a *Times* leading article, to the effect that the qualities which enabled a man to become a bishop were often the very reverse of those which made a good bishop when he became one.

The only sad feature in the matter to Hardy was that if the bishop could have known him as he was, he would have found a man whose personal conduct, views of morality, and of the vital facts of religion, hardly differed from his own.<sup>1</sup>

Possibly soured by all this he wrote a little while after his birthday: 'Every man's birthday is a first of April for him; and he who lives to be fifty and won't own it is a rogue or a fool, hypocrite or simpleton.'

At a party at Sir Charles Tennant's, to which Hardy and his wife were invited to meet the Eighty Club, Lord Rosebery took occasion in a conversation to inquire 'why Hardy had called Oxford "Christ - minster".' Hardy assured him that he had not done anything of the sort, 'Christminster' being a city of learning that was certainly suggested by Oxford, but in its entirety existed nowhere else in the world but between the covers of the novel under discussion. The answer was not so flippant as it seemed, for Hardy's idea had been, as he often explained, to use the difficulty of a poor man's acquiring learning at that date merely as the 'tragic mischief' (among others) of a dramatic story, for which purpose an old-fashioned university at the very door of the poor man was the most striking method; and though the architecture and scenery of Oxford were the best in England adapted for this, he did not slavishly copy them; indeed in some details he departed considerably from whatever of the city he took as a general model. It is hardly necessary to add that he had no feeling <sup>1</sup> That the opinions thus expressed by Bishop How in 189; are not now shared by all the clergy may be gathered from the following extract from an article in *Theology*, August 1928:

‘If I were asked to advise a priest preparing to become a village rector I would suggest first that he should make a good retreat . . . and then that he should make a careful study of Thomas Hardy’s novels. . . . From Thomas Hardy he would learn the essential dignity of country people and what deep and often passionate interest belongs to every individual life. You cannot treat them in the mass: each single soul is to be the object of your special and peculiar prayer.’

The author of this article is an eminent clergyman of the Church of England.

in the matter, and used Jude’s difficulties of study as he would have used war, fire, or shipwreck for bringing about a catastrophe.

It has been remarked above that Hardy with his quick sense of humour could not help seeing a ludicrous side to his troubles over Jude, and an instance to that effect now occurred. The New York World had been among those papers that fell foul of the book in the strongest terms, the critic being a maiden lady who expressed herself thus:

‘What has happened to Thomas Hardy? ... I am shocked, appalled by this story! ... It is almost the worst book I ever read. ... I thought that Tess of the d’Urbervilles was bad enough, but that is milk for babes compared to this. ... It is the handling of it that is the horror of it. ... I do not believe that there is a newspaper in England or America that would print this story of Thomas Hardy’s as it stands in the book. Aside from its immorality there is coarseness which is beyond belief. . . . When I finished the story I opened the windows and let in the fresh air, and I turned to my bookshelves and I said: “ Thank God for Kipling and Stevenson, Barrie and Mrs. Humphry Ward. Here are four great writers who have never trailed their talents in the dirt”.’

It was therefore with some amazement that in the summer, after reading the above and other exclamations grossly maligning the book and the character of its author, to show that she would not touch him with a pair of tongs, he received a letter from the writer herself. She was in London, and requested him to let her interview him ‘to get your side of the argument’. He answered:

‘Savile Club,

‘July 16, 1896.

‘My dear Madam:

‘I have to inform you in answer to your letter that ever since the publication of Jude the Obscure I have declined to be interviewed on the subject of that book; and you must make allowance for human nature when I tell you that I do not feel disposed to depart from this rule in favour of the author of the review of the novel in the New York World.

‘I am aware that the outcry against it in America was only an echo of its misrepresentation here by one or two scurrilous papers which got the start of the more sober press, and that dumb public opinion was never with these writers. But the fact remains that such a meeting would be painful to me and, I think, a disappointment to you.

‘Moreover, my respect for my own writings and reputation is so very slight that I care little about what happens to either, so that the rectification of judgements, etc., and the way in which my books are interpreted, do not much interest me. Those readers

who, like yourself, could not see that *Jude* (though a book quite without a “purpose” as it is called) makes for morality more than any other book I have written, are not likely to be made to do so by a newspaper article, even from your attractive pen.

‘At the same time I cannot but be touched by your kindly wish to set right any misapprehension you may have caused about the story. Such a wish will always be cherished in my recollection, and it removes from my vision of you some obviously unjust characteristics I had given it in my mind. This is, at any rate on my part, a pleasant gain from your letter, whilst I am “never the worse for a touch or two on my speckled hide” as the consequence of your review.

‘Believe me, dear Madam, ‘Yours sincerely,

‘Thomas Hardy.

‘To Miss Jeannette Gilder.’

It may be interesting to give Miss Gilder’s reply to this:

‘Hotel Cecil,

‘July 17, ‘96-

‘Dear Mr. Hardy,

‘I knew that you were a great man, but I did not appreciate your goodness until I received your letter this morning.

‘Sincerely yours, ‘Jeannette L. Gilder.’

Hardy must indeed have shown some magnanimity in condescending to answer the writer of a review containing such contumelious misrepresentations as hers had contained. But, as he said, she was a woman, after all — one of the sex that makes up for lack of justice by excess of generosity — and she had screamed so grotesquely loud in her article that Hardy’s sense of the comicality of it had saved his feelings from being much hurt by the outrageous slurs.

Here, he thought, the matter had ended. But make the doors upon a woman’s wit, and it will out at the casement. The amusing sequel to the episode was that the unsuspecting Hardy was invited to an evening party a few days later by an American lady resident in London, and though he knew her but slightly he went, having nothing better to do. While he was talking to his hostess on the sofa a strange lady drew up her chair rather near them, and listened to the conversation, but did not join in it. It was not till afterwards that he discovered that this silent person had been his reviewer, who was an acquaintance of his entertainer, and that the whole thing had been carefully schemed.

Various social events took them into and through July; Hardy’s chief pleasure, however, being none of these, but a pretty regular attendance with his wife in this, as in other summers, at the Imperial Institute, not far from their house, where they would sit and listen to the famous bands of Europe that were engaged year after year by the management, but were not, to Hardy’s regret, sufficiently appreciated by the London public. Here one evening they met, with other of their friends, the beautiful Mrs., afterwards Lady, Grove; and the ‘Blue Danube’ Waltz being started, Hardy and the latter lady danced two or three turns to it among the promenaders, who eyed them

with a mild surmise as to whether they had been drinking or not. In such wise the London season drew to a close and was wound up, as far as they were concerned, with the wedding of one of Lady Jeune's daughters, Miss Dorothy Stanley, at St. George's, Hanover Square, to Mr. Henry Allhusen.

When he reached Dorchester he paid a visit to his mother, on whom he remarks that she was well, but that 'her face looked smaller'.

On the 12th August they left Dorchester for Malvern, where they put up at the Foley Arms, climbed the Beacon, Hardy on foot, Mrs. Hardy on a mule; drove round the hills, visited the Priory Church, and thence went on to Worcester to see the Cathedral and porcelain works; after which they proceeded to Warwick and Kenilworth, stopping to correct proofs at the former place, and to go over the castle and church. A strange reminder of the transitoriness of life was given to Hardy in the church, where, looking through a slit by chance, he saw the coffin of the then recent Lord Warwick, who, a most kindly man, some while before, on meeting him in London, had invited him to Warwick Castle, an invitation which he had been unable to accept at the time, though he had promised to do so later.

Here I am at last', he said to the coffin as he looked; 'and here are you to receive me!' It made an impression on Hardy which he never forgot.

They took lodgings for a week at Stratford-on-Avon, and visited the usual spots associated with Shakespeare's name; going on to Coventry and to Reading, a town which had come into the life of Hardy's paternal grandmother, who had lived here awhile; after which they went to Dover, where Hardy read King Lear, which was begun at Stratford. He makes the following observation on the play:

'September 6. Finished reading King Lear. The grand scale of the tragedy, scenically, strikes one, and also the large scheme of the plot. The play rises from and after the beginning of the third act, and Lear's dignity with it. Shakespeare did not quite reach his intention in the King's character, and the splitting of the tragic interest between him and Gloucester does not, to my mind, enhance its intensity, although commentators assert that it does.'

'September 8. Why true conclusions are not reached, notwithstanding everlasting palaver: Men endeavour to hold to a mathematical consistency in things, instead of recognizing that certain things may both be good and mutually antagonistic: e.g., patriotism and universal humanity; unbelief and happiness.

'There are certain questions which are made unimportant by their very magnitude. For example, the question whether we are moving in Space this way or that; the existence of a God, etc.'

Having remained at Dover about a fortnight they crossed to Ostend in the middle of September, and went on to Bruges. He always thought the railway station of this town the only satisfactory one in architectural design that he knew. It was the custom at this date to admire the brick buildings of Flanders, and Hardy himself had written a prize essay as a young man on Brick and Terra-Cotta architecture; but he held then, as always, that nothing can really compensate in architecture for the lack of

stone, and would say on this point — with perhaps some intentional exaggeration — that the ashlar back-yards of Bath had more dignity than any brick front in Europe. From Bruges they went on to Brussels, Namur, and Dinant, through scenes to become synonymous with desolation in the war of after years.

‘September 23. At dinner at the public table [of the hotel] met a man possessed of the veritable gambling fever. He has been playing many days at the Casino (roulette and trente-et-quarante). He believes thoroughly in his “system”, and yet, inconsistently, believes in luck: e.g., 36 came into his head as he was walking down the street towards the Casino to-day; and it made him back it, and he won. He plays all the afternoon and all the evening.

‘His system appears to be that of watching for numbers which have not turned up for a long time; but I am not sure.

‘He is a little man; military looking; large iron-grey moustache standing out detached; iron-grey hair; fresh crimson skin. Produces the book, ruled in vertical columns, in which he records results. Discusses his system incessantly with the big grey-bearded man near. Can talk of nothing else. . . . Has lost to-day 4500 francs. Has won back some — is going to play to-night till he has won it all back, and if he can profit enough to pay the expenses of his trip on the Continent he will be satisfied. His friend with the beard, who seems to live in the hotel permanently, commends him by a nod and a word now and then, but not emphatically.’

‘September 24. After breakfast unexpectedly saw the gambler standing outside the hotel-entrance without a hat, looking wild, and by comparison with the previous night like a tree that has suddenly lost its leaves. He came up to me; said he had had no luck on the previous night; had plunged, and lost heavily. He had not enough money left to take him home third-class. Is going to Monte Carlo in November with £2000 to retrieve his losses. . . .

‘We left between 12 and 1. The gambler left at the same time by a train going in the opposite direction, and was carefully put into a third-class carriage by his friend of the hotel, who bought his ticket. He wore a green-grey suit and felt hat, looking bleak-faced and absent, and seemed passive in the other’s hands. His friend is apparently a decoy from the Casino.’

Mrs. Hardy, not being a good walker, had brought her bicycle as many people did just then, bicycling being wildly popular at the time, and Flanders being level. After they had paid twenty-four francs duty at Ostend for importing it, it had several adventures in its transit from place to place, was always getting lost, and miraculously turned up again when they were just enjoying the relief of finding themselves free of it. At Liege it really did seem gone, Hardy having watched the transfer of all the luggage at a previous junction, and the bicycle not being among it. Having given up thinking of it they were hailed by an official, who took them with a mysterious manner to a storeroom some way off, unlocked it, and with a leer said, to Hardy’s dismay: ‘Le vilioie!’ How it had got there they did not know.

At Spa they drove to the various fountains, examined the old gaming-house in the Rue Vauxhall where those that were now cold skeletons had burnt hot with the excitement of play, thought of the town's associations in fact and fiction, of the crowned heads of all the countries of Europe who had found their pleasure and cure at this Mother of Watering-places — now shrunk small like any other ancient matron.

Getting back to Brussels they put up for association's sake at the same hotel they had patronized twenty years before, but found it had altered for the worse since those bright days. Hardy again went out to Waterloo, which had been his chief reason for stopping at the Belgian capital, and no doubt made some more observations with a view to *The Dynasts*, to which he at this time had given the provisional name of 'Europe in Threes'. All he writes thereon in his pocket - book while in Brussels is:

'Europe in Threes.

'Three Parts. Five Acts each.

'Characters: Burke, Pitt, Napoleon, George III., Wellington. . . .  
and many others.'

But he set down more copious notes for the drama elsewhere. It is believed he gave time to further conjectures as to the scene of the Duchess's Ball, which he had considered when here before, and on which it may be remembered there is a note in *The Dynasts*, ending, 'The event happened less than a century ago, but the spot is almost as phantasmal in its elusive mystery as towered Camelot, the Palace of Priam, or the Hill of Calvary'.

Concerning the scene of the battle itself he writes:

'October 2. To Field of Waterloo. Walked alone from the English line along the Charleroi Road to "La Belle Alliance". Struck with the nearness of the French and English lines to each other. Shepherds with their flocks and dogs, men ploughing, two cats, and myself, the only living creatures on the field.'

Returning homeward through Ostend a little later they found the hotels and shops closed and boarded up, and the Digue empty, Mrs. Hardy being the single woman bicyclist where there had been so many.

'Max Gate. October 17. A novel, good, microscopic touch in Crabbe [which would strike one trained in architecture]. He gives surface without outline, describing his church by telling the colour of the lichens.

'Poetry. Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystallized opinion — hard as a rock — which the vast body of men have vested interests in supporting. To cry out in a passionate poem that (for instance) the Supreme Mover or Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either limited in power, unknowing, or cruel — which is obvious enough, and has been for centuries — will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist, which in their crass illiteracy they seem to think is the same thing. ... If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved, the Inquisition might have let him alone.'

‘1897. January 27. To-day has length, breadth, thickness, colour, smell, voice. As soon as it becomes yesterday it is a thin layer among many layers, without substance, colour, or articulate sound.’

‘January 30. Somebody says that the final dictum of the *Ion* of Plato is “inspiration, not art”. The passage is Greek text. And what is really meant by it is, I think, more nearly expressed by the words “inspiration, not technicality” — “art” being too comprehensive in English to use here.’

‘February 4. Title: “Wessex Poems: with Sketches of their Scenes by the Author”.’

‘February 10. In spite of myself I cannot help noticing countenances and tempers in objects of scenery, e.g. trees, hills, houses.’

‘February 21. My mother’s grandfather, Swetman — a descendant of the Christopher Swetman of 1631 mentioned in the *History of the County* as a small landed proprietor in the parish — used to have an old black bedstead, with the twelve apostles on it in carved figures, each about one foot six inches high. Some of them got loose, and the children played with them as dolls. What became of that bedstead?’

‘March 1. Make a lyric of the speech of Hyllus at the close of the *Trachiniae*.’ (It does not appear that this was ever carried out.)

At the beginning of March a dramatization of *Tess of the d’Urber - villes* was produced in America with much success by Mr. Fiske. About the same date Hardy went with Sir Francis Jeune to a banquet at the Mansion House in honour of Mr. Bayard, the American Ambassador, on his leaving England, which Hardy described as a ‘brilliant gathering’, though the night was so drenching and tempestuous as to blow off house-roofs and flood cellars. In the middle of the month a revised form of a novel of his which had been published serially in 1892 as *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament*, was issued in volume form as *The Well-Beloved*. The theory on which this fantastic tale of a subjective idea was constructed is explained in the preface to the novel, and again exemplified in a poem bearing the same name, written about this time and published with *Poems of the Past and the Present* in 1901 — the theory of the transmigration of the ideal beloved one, who only exists in the lover, from material woman to material woman — as exemplified also by Proust many years later. Certain critics affected to find unmentionable moral atrocities in its pages, but Hardy did not answer any of the charges further than by defining in a letter to a literary periodical the scheme of the story somewhat more fully than he had done in the preface:

‘Not only was it published serially five years ago but it was sketched many years before that date, when I was comparatively a young man, and interested in the Platonic Idea, which, considering its charm and its poetry, one could well wish to be interested in always. . . . There is, of course, underlying the fantasy followed by the visionary artist the truth that all men are pursuing a shadow, the Unattainable, and I venture to hope that this may redeem the tragicomedy from the charge of frivolity. . . . “Avice” is an old name common in the county, and “Caro” (like all the other surnames) is an



imitation of a local name . . . this particular modification having been adopted because of its resemblance to the Italian for “dear”.’

In reply to an inquiry from an editor he wrote:

‘No: I do not intend to answer the article on *The Well-Beloved*. Personal abuse best answers itself. What struck me, next to its mendacious malice, was its maladroitness, as if the writer were blinded by malignity. . . . Upon those who have read the book the review must have produced the amazed risibility I remember feeling at Wilding’s assertions when as a youth I saw Foote’s comedy of *The Liar*. . . . There is more fleshliness in *The Loves of the Triangles* than in this story — at least to me. To be sure, there is one explanation which should not be overlooked: a reviewer himself afflicted with “sex mania” might review so — a thing terrible to think of.’

Such were the odd effects of Hardy’s introduction of the subjective theory of love into modern fiction, and so ended his prose contributions to literature (beyond two or three short sketches to fulfil engagements), his experiences of the few preceding years having killed all his interest in this form of imaginative work, which had ever been secondary to his interest in verse.

A letter from him to Swinburne was written about this time, in which he says:

‘I must thank you for your kind note about my fantastic little tale [ *The Well-Beloved*], which, if it can make, in its better parts, any faint claim to imaginative feeling, will owe something of such feeling to you, for I often thought of lines of yours during the writing; and indeed, was not able to resist the quotation of your words now and then.

‘And this reminds me that one day, when examining several English imitations of a well-known fragment of Sappho, I interested myself in trying to strike out a better equivalent for it than the commonplace “Thou, too, shalt die”, etc., which all the translators had used during the last hundred years. I then stumbled upon your “Thee, too, the years shall cover”, and all my spirit for poetic pains died out of me. Those few words present, I think, the finest drama of Death and Oblivion, so to speak, in our tongue.

‘Believe me to be ‘Yours very sincerely,

‘Thomas Hardy.’

‘P.S. — I should have added that *The Well-Beloved* is a fanciful exhibition of the artistic nature, and has, I think, some little foundation in fact. I have been much surprised, and even grieved, by a ferocious review attributing an immoral quality to the tale. The writer’s meaning is beyond me. T. H.’

## PART II - VERSE, TO THE END OF 'THE DYNASTS'

### CHAPTER XXIV

## COLLECTING OLD POEMS AND MAKING NEW

1897-1898: Aet. 57-58

The misrepresentations of the last two or three years affected but little, if at all, the informed appreciation of Hardy's writings, being heeded almost entirely by those who had not read him; and turned out ultimately to be the best thing that could have happened; for they wellnigh compelled him, in his own judgment at any rate, if he wished to retain any shadow of self-respect, to abandon at once a form of literary art he had long intended to abandon at some indefinite time, and resume openly that form of it which had always been more instinctive with him, and which he had just been able to keep alive from his early years, half in secrecy, under the pressure of magazine writing. He abandoned it with all the less reluctance in that the novel was, in his own words, 'gradually losing artistic form, with a beginning, middle, and end, and becoming a spasmodic inventory of items, which has nothing to do with art'.

The change, after all, was not so great as it seemed. It was not as if he had been a writer of novels proper, and as more specifically understood, that is, stories of modern artificial life and manners showing a certain smartness of treatment. He had mostly aimed at keeping his narratives close to natural life and as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow, and had often regretted that those conditions would not let him keep them nearer still.

Nevertheless he had not known, whilst a writer of prose, whether he might not be driven to society novels, and hence, as has been seen, he had kept, at casual times, a record of his experiences in social life, though doing it had always been a drudgery to him. It was now with a sense of great comfort that he felt he might leave off further chronicles of that sort. But his thoughts on literature and life were often written down still, and from his notes much of which follows has been abridged.

He had already for some time been getting together the poems 291

which made up the first volume of verse that he was about to publish. In date they ranged from 1865 intermittently onwards, the middle period of his novel-writing producing very few or none, but of late years they had been added to with great rapidity, though at first with some consternation he had found an awkwardness in getting back to an easy expression in numbers after abandoning it for so many years; but that soon wore off.

He and his wife went to London as usual this year (1897), but did not take a house there. After two or three weeks' stay they adopted the plan of living some way out, and going up and down every few days, the place they made their temporary centre being

Basingstoke. In this way they saw London friends, went to concerts at the Imperial Institute (the orchestra this season being the famous Vienna band under Edouard Strauss), saw one or two Ibsen plays, and the year's pictures. Being near they also went over the mournful relics of that city of the past, Silchester; till in the middle of June they started for Switzerland, thus entirely escaping the racket of the coming Diamond Jubilee, and the discomfort it would bring upon people like them who had no residence of their own in London.

All the world, including the people of fashion habitually abroad, was in London or arriving there, and the charm of a lonely Continent impressed the twain much. The almost empty Channel steamer, the ease with which they crossed France from Havre by Paris, Dijon, and Pontarlier to Neuchatel, the excellent rooms accorded them by obsequious hosts at the hotels in Switzerland, usually frequented by English and American tourists, made them glad they had come. On the actual day, the 20th, they were at Berne, where they celebrated it by attending a Jubilee Concert in the Cathedral, with the few others of their fellow-countryfolk who remained in the town. At Interlaken the comparative solitude was just as refreshing, the rosy glow from the Jungfrau, visible at three in the morning from Hardy's bedroom, seeming an exhibition got up for themselves alone; and a pathetic procession of empty omnibuses went daily to and from each railway train between shops that looked like a banquet spread for people who delayed to come. They drove up the valley to Grindelwald, and having been conveyed to Scheidegg, walked thence to the Wengern Alp — overlooking the scene of Manfred — where a laby had just been born, and where Hardy was more impressed by the thundering rumble of unseen avalanches on the immense Jungfrau immediately facing than by the sight of the visible ones.

The next day, or the next following, The Times account of the celebration in London of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee reached Hardy's hands, and he took it out and read it in the snowy presence of the maiden-monarch that dominated the whole place.

It was either in the train as it approached Interlaken, or while he was there looking at the peak, that there passed through his mind the sentiments afterwards expressed in the lines called 'The Schreck - horn: with thoughts of Leslie Stephen'.

After a look at Lauterbrunnen, the Staubbach, the Lake and Castle of Thun, they stopped at the Hotel Gibbon, Lausanne, Hardy not having that aversion from the historian of the Decline and Fall which Ruskin recommended. He found that, though not much might remain of the original condition of the building or the site, the remoter and sloping part of the garden, with its acacias and irregular contours, could not have been much changed from what it was when Gibbon haunted it, and finished his history. Accordingly his recaller sat out there till midnight on June 27, and imagined the historian closing his last page on the spot, as described in his Autobiography:

'It was on the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains.'

It is uncertain whether Hardy chose that particular evening for sitting out in the garden because he knew that June 27th was Gibbon's date of conclusion, or whether the coincidence of dates was accidental. The later author's imaginings took the form of the lines subjoined, which were printed in *Poems of the Past and the Present*.

LAUSANNE

In Gibbon's old garden: 11-12 p.m.

June 27, 1897

A spirit seems to pass,

Formal in pose, but grave withal and grand:

He contemplates a volume in his hand,

And far lamps fleck him through the thin acacias.

Anon the book is closed,

With 'It is finished!'

And at the alley's end

He turns, and when on me his glances bend

As from the Past comes speech — small, muted, yet composed.

'How fares the Truth now? — Ill? —

Do pens but slily further her advance?

May one not speed her but in phrase askance?

Do scribes aver the Comic to be Reverend still?

'Still rule those minds on earth

At whom sage Milton's wormwood words were hurled:

"Truth like a bastard comes into the world

Never without ill-fame to him who gives her birth "'1

1 The quotation is from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, the passage running as follows: 'Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch, as the sunbeam; though this ill hap wait on her nativity, that she never comes into the world, but like a bastard, to the ignominy of him that brought her forth; till Time, the midwife rather than the mother of truth, have washed and salted the infant and declared her legitimate.

From Lausanne, making excursions to Ouchy, and by steamer to Territet, Chillon, Vevey, and other places on the lake, they afterwards left for Zermatt, going along the valley of the Rhone amid intense heat till they gradually rose out of it beside the roaring torrent of the Visp. That night Hardy looked out of their bedroom window in the Hotel Mt. Cervin, and 'Could see where the Matterhorn was by the absence of stars within its outline', it being too dark to see the surface of the mountain itself although it stood facing him. He meant to make a poem of the strange feeling implanted by this black silhouette of the mountain on the pattern of the constellation; but never did, so far as is known. However, the mountain inspired him to begin one sonnet, finished some time after — that entitled 'To the Matterhorn' — the terrible accident on whose summit, thirty-two years before this date, had so impressed him at the time of its occurrence.

While walking from Zermatt with a Russian gentleman to the Riffel-Alp Hotel, whither Mrs. Hardy had preceded him on a pony, he met some English ladies, who informed him of the mysterious disappearance of an Englishman somewhere along the very path he had been following. Having lunched at the hotel and set his wife upon the pony again he sent her on with the guide, and slowly searched all the way down the track for some clue to the missing man, afterwards writing a brief letter to *The Times* to say there was no sign visible of foul play anywhere on the road. The exertion of the search, after walking up the mountain-path in the hot morning sun, so exhausted his strength that on arriving at Geneva, whither they went after leaving Zermatt, he was taken so ill at the Hotel de la Paix that he had to stay in bed. Here as he lay he listened to the plashing of a fountain night and day just outside his bedroom window, the

casements of which were kept widely open on account of the heat. It was the fountain beside which the Austrian Empress was murdered shortly after by an Italian anarchist. His accidental nearness in time and place to the spot of her doom moved him much when he heard of it, since thereby hung a tale. She was a woman whose beauty, as shown in her portraits, had attracted him greatly in his youthful years, and had inspired some of his early verses, the same romantic passion having also produced the outline of a novel upon her, which he never developed.

While he was recovering at Geneva Mrs. Hardy found by chance the tomb of an ancestor who had died there. But of Geneva, its lake, Diodati, Montalegre, Ferney, and the neighbourhood, he merely remarks: ‘These haunts of the illustrious! Ah, but they are gone now, and care for their chosen nooks no more!’

Again in London in July he expressed views on scenery in the following letter:

To the Editor of the ‘Saturday Review’

‘Sir, — I am unable to reply to your inquiry on “The Best Scenery I know”. A week or two ago I was looking at the inexorable faces of the Jungfrau and the Matterhorn: a few days later at the Lake of Geneva with all its soft associations. But, which is “best” of things that do not compare at all, and hence cannot be reduced to a common denominator? At any given moment we like best what meets the mood of that moment.

‘Not to be entirely negative, however, I may say that, in my own neighbourhood, the following scenes rarely or never fail to delight beholders:

‘1. View from Castle Hill, Shaftesbury.

‘2. View from Pilsdon Pen.

‘3. New Forest vistas near Brockenhurst.

‘4. The River Dart.

‘5. The coast from Trebarwith Strand to Beeney Cliff, Cornwall.’

From London he returned to Max Gate, and with Mrs. Hardy wandered off to Wells Cathedral, and onwards to Frome and Longleat, whence after examining the library and the architecture he proceeded to Salisbury, a place in which he was never tired of sojourning, partly from personal associations and partly because its graceful cathedral

pile was the most marked instance in England of an architectural mention carried out to the full.

‘August 10, Salisbury. Went into the Close late at night. The moon was visible through both the north and south clerestory windows to me standing on the turf on the north side. . . . Walked to the west front, and watched the moonlight creep round upon the statuary of the fagade — stroking tentatively and then more and more firmly the prophets, the martyrs, the bishops, the kings, and the queens. . . . Upon the whole the Close of Salisbury, under the full summer moon on a windless midnight, is as beautiful a scene as any I know in England — or for the matter of that elsewhere.

‘Colonel T. W. Higginson of the United States, who is staying at the same hotel as ourselves, introduced himself to us. An amiable well-read man, whom I was glad to meet. He fought in the Civil War. Went with him to hunt up the spot of the execution of the Duke of Buckingham, whose spirit is said to haunt King’s House still.’

After revisiting Stonehenge he remarks:

‘The misfortune of ruins — to be beheld nearly always at noonday by visitors, and not at twilight.

‘August 10, continued. “The day goeth away . . . the shadows of the evening are stretched out ... I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye nations. ... To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.” Passages from the first lesson (Jer. vi.) at the Cathedral this afternoon. E. and I present. A beautiful chapter, beautifully read by the old Canon.’

‘August 13. All tragedy is grotesque — if you allow yourself to see it as such. A risky indulgence for any who have an aspiration towards a little goodness or greatness of heart! Yet there are those who do.’

‘August 15. It is so easy nowadays to call any force above or under the sky by the name of “God” — and so pass as orthodox cheaply, and fill the pocket!’

In September he passed a few pleasant days in bicycling about the neighbourhood with Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who had an idea just at that time that he would like to buy a house near Weymouth. They found a suitable house for sale at Rodwell, commanding a full view of Portland Roads; but difficulties arose when inquiries were made, and Mr. Kipling abandoned the idea.

Bicycling was now in full spirit with the Hardys — and, indeed, with everybody — and many were the places they visited by that means.

‘October 10. Am told a singularly creepy story - — absolutely true, I am assured — of a village girl near here who was about to be married. A watch had been given her by a former lover, his own watch, just before their marriage was prevented by his unexpected death of consumption. She heard it going in her box at waking on the morning of the wedding with the second lover, though it had not been touched for years.

‘Lizzy D[the monthly nurse who had attended at Hardy’s birth] told my mother that she walked eighteen (?) miles the day after her own baby was born. . . . She was an excellent nurse, much in demand; of infinite kindheartedness, humour, and quaintness, and as she lived in a cottage quite near our house at Bockhampton, she as it were kept an eye upon the Hardy family always, and being her neighbour gave my mother the preference in clashing cases. She used to tell a story of a woman who came to her to consult her about the ghost of another woman she declared she had seen, and who “troubled her” — the deceased wife of the man who was courting her.

“How long hev’ the woman been dead?” I said.

“Many years!”

“Oh, that were no ghost. Now if she’d only been dead a month or two, and you were making her husband your fancy-man, there might have been something in your story. But Lord, much can she care about him after years and years in better company!”

To return to 1897. Nothing more of much account occurred to Hardy during its lapse, though it may be mentioned that *Jude*, of which only a mutilated version could be printed as a serial in England and America, appeared in a literal translation in Germany, running through several months of a well-known periodical in Berlin and Stuttgart without a single abridgement.

‘1898. February 5. Write a prayer, or hymn, to One not Omnipotent, but hampered; striving for our good, but unable to achieve it except occasionally.’ [This idea of a limited God of goodness, often dwelt on by Hardy, was expounded ably and at length in MacTaggart’s *Some Dogmas of Religion* several years later, and led to a friendship which ended only with the latter’s death.]

As the spring drew on they entered upon their yearly residence of a few months in London — this time taking a flat in Wynnstay Gardens, Kensington. Hardy did some reading at the British Museum with a view to *The Dynasts*, and incidentally stumbled upon some details that suggested to him the Waterloo episode embodied in a poem called ‘*The Peasant’s Confession*’. He also followed up the concerts at the Imperial Institute, mostly neglected by Londoners. One visit gave him occasion for the following note, the orchestra this year being from the Scala, Milan:

‘Scene at the Imperial Institute this afternoon. Rain floating down in wayward drops. Not a soul except myself having tea in the gardens. The west sky begins to brighten. The red, blue, and white fairy lamps are like rubies, sapphires, turquoises, and pearls in the wet. The leaves of the trees, not yet of full size, are dripping, and the waiting-maids stand in a group with nothing to do. Band playing a “*Contemplazione*” by Luzzi.’

On June 24th, declining to write an Introduction to a proposed Library Edition of Fielding’s novels, he remarks:

‘Fielding as a local novelist has never been clearly regarded, to my mind: and his aristocratic, even feudal, attitude towards the peasantry {e.g. his view of Molly as a “slut” to be ridiculed, not as a simple girl, as worthy a creation of Nature as the lovely

Sophia) should be exhibited strongly. But the writer could not well be a working novelist without his bringing upon himself a charge of invidiousness.’

Back in Dorset in July he resumed cycling more vigorously than ever, and during the summer went to Bristol, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Sherborne, Poole, Weymouth, and many other places — sometimes with Mrs. Hardy, sometimes with his brother.

In the middle of December *Vessex Poems* was published; and verse being a new mode of expression with him in print he sent copies to friends, among them one to Leslie Stephen, who said:

‘It gave me a real pleasure. I am glad to think that you remember me as a friend. ... I am always pleased to remember that *Far from the Madding Crowd* came out under my command. I then admired the poetry which was diffused through the prose; and can recognize the same note in the versified form. ... I will not try to criticize or distinguish, but will simply say that they have pleased me and reminded me vividly of the old time. I have, as you probably know, gone through much since then. . . .’

## CHAPTER XXV

### ‘WESSEX POEMS’ AND OTHERS

1899-1900: Aet. 58-60

In the early weeks of this year the poems were reviewed in the customary periodicals — mostly in a friendly tone, even in a tone of respect, and with praise for many pieces in the volume; though by some critics not without umbrage at Hardy’s having taken the liberty to adopt another vehicle of expression than prose-fiction without consulting them. It was probably these reviews that suggested to Hardy several reflections on poetry and criticism about this time, and the following gleanings of his opinions are from the rough entries he made thereon. Some no doubt were jotted down hastily, and might have been afterwards revised.

He observes that he had been under no delusion about the coldness and even opposition he would have to encounter — at any rate from some voices — in openly issuing verse after printing nothing (with trifling exceptions) but prose for so many years.

Almost all the fault-finding was, in fact, based on the one great antecedent conclusion that an author who has published prose first, and that largely, must necessarily express himself badly in verse, no reservation being added to except cases in which he may have published prose for temporary or compulsory reasons, or prose of a poetical kind, or have written verse first of all, or for a long time intermediately.

In criticism generally, the fact that the date of publication is but an accident in the life of a literary creation, that the printing of a book is the least individual occurrence in the history of its contents, is often overlooked. In its visible history the publication is what counts, and that alone. It is then that the contents start into being for the outside public. In the present case, although it was shown that many of the verses had



been written before their author dreamt of novels, the critics' view was little affected that he had 'at the eleventh hour', as they untruly put it, taken up a hitherto uncared - for art.

### 3°oVERSE1899-1900

It may be observed that in the art-history of the century there was an example staring them in the face of a similar modulation from one style into another by a great artist. Verdi was the instance, 'that amazing old man' as he was called. Someone of insight wrote concerning him: 'From the ashes of his early popularity, from II Trova - tore and its kind, there arose on a sudden a sort of phoenix Verdi. Had he died at Mozart's death-age he would now be practically unknown.' And another: 'With long life enough Verdi might have done almost anything; but the trouble with him was that he had only just arrived at maturity at the age of threescore and ten or thereabouts, so that to complete his life he ought to have lived a hundred and fifty years.'

But probably few literary critics discern the solidarity of all the arts. Curiously enough Hardy himself dwelt upon it in a poem that seems to have been little understood, though the subject is of such interest. It is called 'Rome: The Vatican: Sala delle Muse'; in which a sort of composite Muse addresses him:

'Be not perturbed', said she. ' Though apart in fame, I and my sisters are one.'

In short, this was a particular instance of the general and rather appalling conclusion to which he came — had indeed known before — that a volume of poetry, by clever manipulation, can be made to support any a priori theory about its quality. Presuppose its outstanding feature to be the defects aforesaid; instances can be found. Presuppose, as here was done, that it is overloaded with derivations from the Latin or Greek when really below the average in such words; they can be found. Presuppose that Wordsworth is unorthodox: instances can be found; that Byron is devout; instances can also be found. [The foregoing paragraphs are abridged from memoranda which Hardy set down, apparently for publication; though he never published them.]

He wrote somewhere: 'There is no new poetry; but the new poet — if he carry the flame on further (and if not he is no new poet)

— comes with a new note. And that new note it is that troubles the critical waters.

'Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art.'

In the reception of this and later volumes of Hardy's poems there was, he said, as regards form, the inevitable ascription to ignorance of what was really choice after full knowledge. That the author loved the art of concealing art was undiscerned. For instance, as to rhythm. Years earlier he had decided that too regular a beat was bad art. He had fortified himself in his opinion by thinking of the analogy of architecture, between which art and that of poetry he had discovered, to use his own words, that there existed a close and curious parallel, both arts, unlike some others, having to carry a rational content inside their artistic form. He knew that in architecture cunning irregularity is of enormous worth, and it is obvious that he carried on into his verse, perhaps in part unconsciously, the Gothic art-principle in which he had been trained

— the principle of spontaneity, found in mouldings, tracery, and such like — resulting in the ‘unforeseen’ (as it has been called) character of his metres and stanzas, that of stress rather than of syllable, poetic texture rather than poetic veneer; the latter kind of thing, under the name of ‘constructed ornament’, being what he, in common with every Gothic student, had been taught to avoid as the plague. He shaped his poetry accordingly, introducing metrical pauses, and reversed beats; and found for his trouble that some particular line of a poem exemplifying this principle was greeted with a would-be jocular remark that such a line ‘did not make for immortality’. The same critic might have gone to one of our cathedrals (to follow up the analogy of architecture), and on discovering that the carved leafage of some capital or spandrel in the best period of Gothic art strayed freakishly out of its bounds over the moulding, where by rule it had no business to be, or that the enrichments of a string-course were not accurately spaced; or that there was a sudden blank in a wall where a window was to be expected from formal measurement, have declared with equally merry conviction, ‘This does not make for immortality’.

One case of the kind, in which the poem ‘On Sturminster Foot - Bridge’ was quoted with the remark that one could make as good music as that out of a milk-cart, betrayed the reviewer’s ignorance of any perception that the metre was intended to be onomatopoeic, plainly as it was shown; and another in the same tone disclosed that the reviewer had tried to scan the author’s sapphics as heroics.

If any proof were wanted that Hardy was not at this time and ‘ater the apprentice at verse that he was supposed to be, it could be found in an examination of his studies over many years. Among his papers were quantities of notes on rhythm and metre: with outlines and experiments in innumerable original measures, some of which he adopted from time to time. These verse skeletons were mostly blank, and only designated by the usual marks for long and

#### VERSE

1899-1900

short syllables, accentuations, etc., but they were occasionally made up of ‘nonsense verses’ — such as, he said, were written when he was a boy by students of Latin prosody with the aid of a ‘Gradus’.

Lastly, Hardy had a born sense of humour, even a too keen sense occasionally: but his poetry was sometimes placed by editors in the hands of reviewers deficient in that quality. Even if they were accustomed to Dickensian humour they were not to Swiftian. Hence it unfortunately happened that verses of a satirical, dry, caustic, or farcical cast were regarded by them with the deepest seriousness. In one case the tragic nature of his verse was instanced by the ballad called ‘The Bride-night Fire’, or ‘The Fire at Tranter Sweatley’s’, the criticism being by an accomplished old friend of his own, Frederic Harrison, who deplored the painful nature of the bridegroom’s end in leaving only a bone behind him. This piece of work Hardy had written and published when quite a young man, and had hesitated to reprint because of its too pronounced obviousness as a jest.

But he had looked the before-mentioned obstacles in the face, and their consideration did not move him much. He had written his poems entirely because he liked doing them, without any ulterior thought; because he wanted to say the things they contained and would contain. He offered his publishers to take on his own shoulders the risk of producing the volume, so that if nobody bought it they should not be out of pocket. They were kind enough to refuse this offer, and took the risk on themselves; and fortunately they did not suffer.

A more serious meditation of Hardy's at this time than that on critics was the following:

'January (1899). No man's poetry can be truly judged till its last line is written. What is the last line? The death of the poet. And hence there is this quaint consolation to any writer of verse — that it may be imperishable for all that anybody can tell him to the contrary; and that if worthless he can never know it, unless he be a greater adept at self-criticism than poets usually are.'

Writing to Hardy in March about her late husband's tastes in literature Mrs. Coventry Patmore observes:

'... It shows how constant he was to his loves. From 1875 [when he first met with the book — vide ante] to 1896 he continually had *A Pair of Blue Eyes* read aloud to him. Each time he felt the same shock of surprise and pleasure at its consummate art and pathos. In illness, when he asked for *A Pair of Blue Eyes* one knew he was able to enjoy again.'

A correspondence on another matter than literature may be alluded to here. Mr. W. T. Stead had asked Hardy to express his opinion on 'A Crusade of Peace' in a periodical he was about to publish under the name of *War against War*. In the course of his reply Hardy wrote:

'As a preliminary, all civilized nations might at least show their humanity by covenanting that no horses should be employed in battle except for transport. Soldiers, at worst, know what they are doing, but these animals are denied even the poor possibilities of glory and reward as a compensation for their sufferings.'

His reply brought upon Hardy, naturally, scoffs at his unpractical tenderheartedness, and on the other hand, strong expressions of agreement.

In the following April (1899) the Hardys were again in London where as in the previous year they took a flat in Wynnstay Gardens, though not the same one. They saw their friends as usual, on one of whom Hardy makes this observation after a call from him:

'When a person has gone, though his or her presence was not much desired, we regret the withdrawal of the grain of value in him, and overlook the mass of chaff that spoilt it. We realise that the essence of his personality was a human heart, though the form was uninviting.'

'It would be an amusing fact, if it were not one that leads to such bitter strife, that the conception of a First Cause which the theist calls " God ", and the conception of the same that the so-styled atheist calls " no-God ", are nowadays almost exactly

identical. So that only a minor literary question of terminology prevents their shaking hands in agreement, and dwelling together in unity ever after.'

At the beginning of June Hardy was staying at a country-house not many miles from London, and among the guests was the young Duchess of M, a lady of great beauty, who asked him if he would conduct her to the grave of the poet Gray, which was within a walk. Hardy did so and, standing half-balanced on one foot by the grave (as is well known, it was also that of Gray's mother) his friend recited in a soft voice the 'Elegy' from the first word to the last in leisurely and lengthy clearness without an error (which Hardy himself could not have done without some hitch in the order of the verses). With startling suddenness, while duly commending her Performance, he seemed to have lived through the experience before.

Then he realised what it was that had happened: in love of recitation, attitude, and poise, tone of voice, and readiness of memory, the fair lady had been the duplicate of the handsome dairymaid who had insisted on his listening to her rehearsal of the long and tedious gospels, when he taught in the Sunday school as a youth of fifteen. What a thin veneer is that of rank and education over the natural woman, he would remark.

On the 18th he met A. E. Housman (the Shropshire Lad) for the first time probably, and on the 20th he visited Swinburne at Putney, of which visit he too briefly speaks; observing, 'Again much inclined to his engaging, fresh, frank, almost childlike manner. Showed me his interesting editions, and talked of the play he was writing. Promised to go again.' He also went a day or two later, possibly owing to his conversation with Swinburne (though he had been there before), to St. Mildred's, Bread Street, with Sir George Douglas, where Shelley and Mary Godwin were married, and saw the register, with the signatures of Godwin and his wife as witnesses. The church was almost unaltered since the poet and Mary had knelt there, and the vestry absolutely so, not having even received a coat of paint as it seemed. Being probably in the calling mood he visited George Meredith just afterwards, and found him 'looking ruddy and well in the upper part; quite cheerful, enthusiastic and warm. Would gladly see him oftener, and must try to do so.' At the end of the month he rambled in Westminster Abbey at midnight by the light of a lantern, having with some friends been admitted by Miss Bradley through the Deanery.

Hardy had suffered from rather bad influenza this summer in Town, and it left an affection of the eye behind it which he had never known before; and though he hoped it might leave him on his return to Dorchester it followed him there. He was, indeed, seldom absolutely free from it afterwards.

In July he replied to a communication from the Rationalist Press Association, of which his friend Leslie Stephen was an honorary associate:

'Though I am interested in the Society I feel it to be one which would naturally compose itself rather of writers on philosophy, science, and history, than of writers of imaginative works, whose effect depends largely on detachment. By belonging to a philosophic association imaginative writers place themselves in this difficulty, that they are misread as propagandist when they mean to be simply artistic and delineative.'

The pleasures of bicycling were now at their highest appreciation, and many miles did Hardy and his wife, and other companions, cover during the latter part of this summer. He was not a long-distance cyclist, as was natural at fifty-nine, never exceeding forty to fifty miles a day, but he kept vigorously going within the limit, this year and for several years after. His wife, though an indifferent walker, could almost equal him in cycle distances.

In October his sonnet on the departure of the troops for the Boer War, which he witnessed at Southampton, appeared in the Daily Chronicle, and in November the very popular verses called 'The Going of the Battery' were printed in the Graphic, the scene having been witnessed at Dorchester. In December 'The Dead Drummer' (afterwards called 'Drummer Hodge') appeared in Literature, and 'A Christmas Ghost-Story' in the Westminster Gazette.

The latter months of this same year (1899) were saddened for him by the sudden death of Sir Arthur Blomfield, shortly before the date which had been fixed for a visit to him at Broadway by Hardy and his wife. Thus was snapped a friendship which had extended over thirty-six years.

Hardy's memoranda on his thoughts and movements — particularly the latter — which never reached the regularity of a diary — had of late grown more and more fitful, and now (1900) that novels were past and done with, nearly ceased altogether, such notes on scenes and functions having been dictated by what he had thought practical necessity; so that it becomes difficult to ascertain what mainly occupied his mind, or what his social doings were. His personal ambition in a worldly sense, which had always been weak, dwindled to nothing, and for some years after 1895 or 1896 he requested that no record of his life should be made. His verses he kept on writing from pleasure in them. The poetic fantasy entitled 'The Souls of the Slain' was published in the Cornhill in the April of this year, and he and his wife went to London this month according to custom, though instead of taking a flat or house as in former years they stayed on at the West Central Hotel in Southampton Row. He possibly thought it advisable to economize, seeing that he had sacrificed the chance of making a much larger income by not producing more novels. When one considers that he might have made himself a man of affluence in a few years by taking the current of popularity which he had served, writing 'best sellers', and ringing changes upon the novels he had already written, his bias towards poetry must have been »'instinctive and disinterested.

In a pocket-book of this date appears a diagram illustrating 'the language of verse':

and the following note thereon:

'The confusion of thought to be observed in Wordsworth's teaching in his essay in the Appendix to Lyrical Ballads seems to arise chiefly out of his use of the word "imagination". He should have put the matter somewhat like this: In works of passion and sentiment (not "imagination and sentiment") the language of verse is the language of prose. In works of fancy (or imagination), "poetic diction" (of the real kind) is proper, and even necessary. The diagram illustrates my meaning.'

For some reason he spent time while here in hunting up Latin hymns at the British Museum, and copies that he made of several have been found, of dates ranging from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, by Thomas of Celano, Adam of S. Victor, John Mombaer, Jacob Balde, etc. That English prosody might be enriched by adapting some of the verse-forms of these is not unlikely to have been his view.

When they left London this year is uncertain, but we find Hardy at the latter part of July bicycling about Dorset with his friend Mr. (later Sir) Hamo Thornycroft, and in August entertaining Mr. A. E. Housman, Mr. Clodd, and Sir Frederick Pollock, bicycling from Max Gate to Portland Bill and back in one day with the last named, a performance whose chief onerousness lay in roughness of road surface and steepness of gradient. Cycling went merrily along through August, September, and into October, mostly with Mrs. Hardy and other companions, reaching to the outskirts of the county and into Somerset, Devon, and Hants. In October, declining to be interviewed by the representative of the American National Red Cross Society, he wrote as a substitute:

‘A society for the relief of suffering is entitled to every man’s gratitude; and though, in the past century, material growth has been out of all proportion to moral growth, the existence of your Society leaves one not altogether without hope that during the next hundred years the relations between our inward and our outward progress may become less of a reproach to civilization.’

In the same month he replied to the Rev. J. Alexander Smith:

‘On referring to the incident in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* to which you draw my attention, I do not find there anything more than an opinion, or feeling, on lay baptism by a person who was nettled at having his clerical ministrations of the rite repulsed. The truth or error of his opinion is therefore immaterial. Nevertheless if it were worth while it might be plausibly argued that to refuse clerical performance and substitute lay performance not from necessity but from pure obstinacy (as he held), might deprive that particular instance of lay baptism of its validity.’

At the very close of the year Hardy’s much admired poem on the Century’s End, entitled ‘The Darkling Thrush’, was published in a periodical.

[end of the nineteenth century]

## CHAPTER XXVI

### ‘POEMS OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT’, AND OTHERS

1901-1903: Aet. 60-63

May found them in London, and hearing music. At an Ysaye Concert at Queen’s Hall a passage in the descriptive programme evidently struck him — whether with

amusement at the personifications in the rhetoric, or admiration for it, is not mentioned — for he takes the trouble to copy it:

“The solo enters at the twelfth bar. . . . Later in the movement a new theme is heard — a brief episode, the thematic material of the opening sufficing the composer’s needs. In the Adagio the basses announce and develop a figure. Over this the soloists and first violins enter”, etc. (Bach’s Concerto in E.) I see them: black-headed, lark-spurred fellows, marching in on five wires.’

‘May 11. Leslie Stephen says: “The old ideals have become obsolete, and the new are not yet constructed. . . . We cannot write living poetry on the ancient model. The gods and heroes are too dead, and we cannot seriously sympathize with . . . the idealised prize-fighter.”’

A few days later Hardy chronicles a feat of execution by Kubelik at a concert he attended at St. James’s Hall — that of playing ‘pizzicato’ on his violin the air of ‘The Last Rose of Summer’ with Ernst’s variations, and fingering and bowing a rapid accompaniment at the same time. At Mr. Maurice Hewlett’s Madame Sarah Bernhardt talked to him pensively on her consciousness that she was getting old, but on his taking his wife a day or two later to see her as the Due in M. Rostand’s *L’Aiglon* she appeared youthful enough, he said, ‘though unfortunately too melodramatically lime-lighted for naturalness’.

At the end of the month the well-known literary and journalistic fraternity called the Whitefriars Club paid Hardy a visit at Max Gate, where they were entertained in a tent on the lawn. To diversify their journey from London they had travelled the last ten miles by road in open carriages, and the beautiful new summer dresses of the ladies were encrusted with dust. But nobody minded — except perhaps some of the ladies themselves — and the visit was a most lively one, though the part of the country they had driven through was not the most picturesque part.

Thomas Hardy’s mother, now in her eighty-eighth year, was greatly interested to hear of this visit of the Club to the home of her son. Her devoted daughters, Mary and Katherine, promised to take her in her wheeled chair, for she was no longer able to walk abroad as formerly, to see the carriages drive past the end of a lane leading from Higher Bockhampton to the foot of Yellowham Hill, some three miles from Max Gate.

On the day appointed, the chair, its two attendants, and its occupant, a little bright-eyed lady in a shady hat, waited under some trees bordering the roadside for the members of the Whitefriars Club to pass.

Mrs. Hardy had announced gaily that she intended to wave her handkerchief to the travellers, but her more sedate daughters urged that this was not to be done. However, as soon as the dusty vehicles had whirled past the old lady pulled out a handkerchief which she had concealed under the rug covering her knees, and waved it triumphantly at the disappearing party. So unquenchable was her gay and youthful spirit even when approaching her ninetieth year.

Long afterwards one member of the visiting party said to the present writer: 'If we had known who that was, what cheers there would have been, what waving of handkerchiefs, what a greeting for Thomas Hardy's mother!'

In a letter on Rationalism written about this time, but apparently not sent, he remarks:

'My own interest lies largely in non-rationalistic subjects, since non-rationality seems, so far as one can perceive, to be the principle of the Universe. By which I do not mean foolishness, but rather a principle for which there is no exact name, lying at the indifference point between rationality and irrationality.'

In reply to the letter of an inquirer as to the preservation of the prospect from Richmond Hill, he wrote, 10th June 1901:

'I have always been in love with Richmond Hill — the Lass included — and though I think I could produce a few specimens from this part of the country that would be fairly even with it, or her, in point of beauty, I am grieved to hear that the world-famed view is in danger of disfigurement. I cannot believe that any such foolish local policy will be persevered in.'

To Dr. Arnaldo Cervesato of Rome 'June 20, 1901.

'I do not think that there will be any permanent revival of the old transcendental ideals; but I think there may gradually be developed an Idealism of Fancy; that is, an idealism in which fancy is no longer tricked out and made to masquerade as belief, but is frankly and honestly accepted as an imaginative solace in the lack of any substantial solace to be found in life.'

'July 8. Pictures. My weakness has always been to prefer the large intention of an unskilful artist to the trivial intention of an accomplished one: in other words, I am more interested in the high ideas of a feeble executant than in the high execution of a feeble thinker.'

During the seven weeks ensuing he was preparing for the press a number of lyrics and other verses which had accumulated since *Wessex Poems* appeared, and sent off the manuscript to the publishers at the end of August. It was published in the middle of November under the title of *Poems of the Past and the Present*. He seems to have taken no notice of the reception accorded to the book by the press, though it might have flattered him to find that some characteristic ideas in this volume — which he never tried to make consistent — such as in the pieces entitled 'The Sleep-worker', 'The Lacking Sense', 'Doom and She', and others — ideas that were further elaborated in *The Dynasts*, found their way into many prose writings after this date.

On the last day of the year he makes the following reflection: 'After reading various philosophic systems, and being struck with their contradictions and futilities, I have come to this: Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience. He will not be able to escape using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophers, but let him avoid adopting their theories if he values his own mental life. Let him remember the fate of Coleridge, and save years of labour by working out his own views as given him by his surroundings.'



‘January 1 (1902). A Pessimist’s apology. Pessimism (or rather what is called such) is, in brief, playing the sure game. You cannot lose at it; you may gain. It is the only view of life in which you can never be disappointed. Having reckoned what to do in the worst possible circumstances, when better arise, as they may, life becomes child’s play.’

In reply this month to a writer in the Parisian *Revue Bleue* he gave it as his opinion that the effect of the South African War on English literature had been:

‘A vast multiplication of books on the war itself, and the issue of large quantities of warlike and patriotic poetry. These works naturally throw into the shade works that breathe a more quiet and philosophic spirit; a curious minor feature in the case among a certain class of writers being the disguise under Christian terminology of principles not necessarily wrong from the point of view of international politics, but obviously anti-Christian, because inexorable and masterful.’

In view of the approaching centenary of Victor Hugo’s birth, Hardy, amongst other European men of letters, was asked at this time by a Continental paper for a brief tribute to the genius of the poet; and he sent the following:

‘His memory must endure. His works are the cathedrals of literary architecture, his imagination adding greatness to the colossal and charm to the small.’

‘March. Poetry. There is a latent music in the sincere utterance of deep emotion, however expressed, which fills the place of the actual word-music in rhythmic phraseology on thinner emotive subjects, or on subjects with next to none at all. And supposing a total poetic effect to be represented by a unit, its component fractions may be either, say:

‘Emotion three-quarters, plus Expression one quarter, or ‘Emotion one quarter, plus Expression three-quarters.

‘This suggested conception seems to me to be the only one which explains all cases, including those instances of verse that apparently infringe all rules, and yet bring unreasoned convictions that they are poetry.’

In April of this year he was writing ‘A Trampwoman’s Tragedy’ — a ballad based on some local story of an event more or less resembling the incidents embodied, which took place between 1820

and 1830. Hardy considered this, upon the whole, his most successful poem.

To Mr. (afterwards Sir) Rider Haggard, who was investigating the conditions of agriculture and agricultural labourers, he gave the following information:

‘March, 1902.

‘My dear Haggard,

‘As to your first question, my opinion on the past of the agricultural labourers in this county: I think, indeed know, that down to 1850 or 1855 their condition was in general one of great hardship. I say in general, for there have always been fancy-farms, resembling St. Clair’s in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, whereon they lived as smiling exceptions to those of their class all around them. I recall one such, the estate-owner being his own farmer, and ultimately ruining himself by his hobby. To go to the other extreme:

as a child I knew a sheep-keeping boy who to my horror shortly afterwards died of want — the contents of his stomach at the autopsy being raw turnip only. His father's wages were six shillings a week, with about two pounds at harvest, a cottage rent free, and an allowance of thorn faggots from the hedges as fuel. Between these examples came the great bulk of farms — wages whereon ranged from seven to nine shillings a week, and perquisites being better in proportion.

'Secondly: as to the present. Things are of course widely different now. I am told that at the annual hiring-fair just 'past, the old positions were absolutely reversed, the farmers walking about and importuning the labourers to come and be hired, instead of, as formerly, the labourers anxiously entreating the stolid farmers to take them on at any pittance. Their present life is almost without exception one of comfort, if the most ordinary thrift be observed. I could take you to the cottage of a shepherd not many miles from here that has a carpet and brass-rods to the staircase, and from the open door of which you hear a piano strumming within. Of course bicycles stand by the doorway, while at night a large paraffin lamp throws out a perfect blaze of light upon the passer-by.

'The son of another labourer I know takes dancing lessons at a quadrille-class in the neighbouring town. Well, why not?

'But changes at which we must all rejoice have brought other changes which are not so attractive. The labourers have become more and more migratory — the younger families in especial, who enjoy nothing so much as fresh scenery and new acquaintance. The consequences are curious and unexpected. For one thing, village tradition — a vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle, local topography, and nomenclature — is absolutely sinking, has nearly sunk, into eternal oblivion. I cannot recall a single instance of a labourer who still lives on the farm where he was born, and I can only recall a few who have been five years on their present farms. Thus you see, there being no continuity of environment in their lives, there is no continuity of information, the names, stories, and relics of one place being speedily forgotten under the incoming facts of the next. For example, if you ask one of the workfolk (they always used to be called "workfolk" hereabout — "labourers" is an imported word) the names of surrounding hills, streams; the character and circumstances of people buried in particular graves; at what spots parish personages lie interred; questions on local fairies, ghosts, herbs, etc., they can give no answer: yet I can recollect the time when the places of burial even of the poor and tombless were all remembered, and the history of the parish and squire's family for 150 years back known. Such and such ballads appertained to such and such a locality, ghost tales were attached to particular sites, and nooks wherein wild herbs grew for the cure of divers maladies were pointed out readily.

'On the subject of the migration to the towns I think I have printed my opinions from time to time: so that I will only say a word or two about it here. In this consideration the case of the farm labourers merges itself in that of rural cottagers generally, including jobbing labourers, artizans, and nondescripts of all sorts who go to make up the body of English villagery. That these people have removed to the towns of sheer choice

during the last forty years it would be absurd to argue, except as to that percentage of young, adventurous and ambitious spirits among them which is found in all societies. The prime cause of the removal is, unquestionably, insecurity of tenure. If they do not escape this in the towns it is not fraught with such trying consequences there as in a village, whence they may have to travel ten or twenty miles to find another house and other work. Moreover, if in a town lodgings an honest man's daughter should have an illegitimate child, or his wife should take to drinking, he is not compelled by any squire to pack up his furniture and get his living elsewhere, as is, or was lately, too often the case in the country. (I am neither attacking nor defending this order of things; I merely relate it: the landlord sometimes had reason on his side; sometimes not.)

'Now why such migrations to cities did not largely take place till within the last forty years or so is, I think (in respect of farm labourers), that they had neither the means nor the knowledge in old times that they have now. And owing to the then stability of villagers of the other class — such as mechanics and small traders, the backbone of village life — they had not the inclination. The tenure of these latter was, down to about fifty years ago, a fairly secure one, even if they were not in the possession of small freeholds. The custom of granting leaseholds for three lives, or other life-holding privileges, obtained largely in our villages, and though tenures by lifehold may not be ideally good or fair, they did at least serve the purpose of keeping the native population at home. Villages in which there is now not a single cottager other than a weekly tenant were formerly occupied almost entirely on the life-hold principle, the term extending over seventy or a hundred years; and the young man who knows that he is secure of his father's and grandfather's cottage for his own lifetime thinks twice and three times before he embarks on the uncertainties of a wandering career. Now though, as I have said, these cottagers were not often farm labourers, their permanency reacted on the farm labourers, and made their lives with such comfortable associates better worth living.

'Thirdly: as to the future, the evils of instability, and the ultimate results from such a state of things, it hardly becomes me to attempt to prophesy here. That remedies exist for them and are easily applicable you will easily gather from what I have stated above.'

'April 20. Vagg Hollow, on the way to Load Bridge (Somerset) is a place where "things" used to be seen — usually taking the form of a wool-pack in the middle of the road. Teams and other horses always stopped on the brow of the hollow, and could only be made to go on by whipping. A waggoner once cut at the pack with his whip: it opened in two, and smoke and a hooved figure rose out of it.'

'May 1. Life is what we make it as Whist is what we make it; but not as Chess is what we make it; which ranks higher as a purely intellectual game than either Whist or Life.'

Letter sent to and printed in *The Academy and Literature*, May 17, 1902, concerning a review of Maeterlinck's *Apology for Nature*:

'Sir,

‘In your review of M. Maeterlinck’s book you quote with seeming approval his vindication of Nature’s ways, which is (as I understand it) to the effect that, though she does not appear to be just from our point of view, she may practise a scheme of morality unknown to us, in which she is just. Now, admit but the bare possibility of such a hidden morality, and she would go out of court without the slightest stain on her character, so certain should we feel that indifference to morality was beneath her greatness.

‘Far be it from my wish to distrust any comforting fantasy, if it can be barely tenable. But alas, no profound reflection can be needed to detect the sophistry in M. Maeterlinck’s argument, and to see that the original difficulty recognized by thinkers like Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Haeckel, etc., and by most of the persons called pessimists, remains unsurmounted.

‘Pain has been, and pain is: no new sort of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators, the bearers thereof. And no injustice, however slight, can be atoned for by her future generosity, however ample, so long as we consider Nature to be, or to stand for, unlimited power. The exoneration of an omnipotent Mother by her retrospective justice becomes an absurdity when we ask, what made the foregone injustice necessary to her Omnipotence?

‘So you cannot, I fear, save her good name except by assuming one of two things: that she is blind and not a judge of her actions’ or that she is an automaton, and unable to control them: in either of which assumptions, though you have the chivalrous satisfaction of screening one of her sex, you only throw responsibility a stage further back.

‘But the story is not new. It is true, nevertheless, that, as M. Maeterlinck contends, to dwell too long amid such reflections does no good, and that to model our conduct on Nature’s apparent conduct, as Nietzsche would have taught, can only bring disaster to humanity.

‘Yours truly,

‘Thomas Hardy.

‘Max Gate, Dorchester.’

In June Hardy was engaged in a correspondence in the pages of the Dorset County Chronicle on Edmund Kean’s connection with Dorchester, which town he visited as a player before he became famous, putting up with his wife and child at an inn called ‘The Little Jockey’ on Glyde-Path Hill (standing in Hardy’s time). His child died whilst here, and was buried in Trinity Churchyard near at hand. The entry in the register runs as follows:

‘Burials in the Parish of Holy Trinity in Dorchester in the County of Dorset in the year 1813:

‘Name, Howard, son of Edmund and Mary Kean. Abode, Residing at Glyde Path Hill in this Parish. When buried, Nov. 24. Age 4. By whom the Ceremony was performed, Henry John Richman.’

Readers of the life of Kean will remember the heaviness of heart with which he noted his experience at Dorchester on this occasion — that it was a very wet night, that there was a small audience, that, unless we are mistaken, the play was *Coriolanus* (fancy playing *Corio - lanus* at Dorchester now!), that he performed his part badly. Yet he was standing on the very brink of fame, for it was on this very occasion that the emissary from Old Drury — Arnold, the stage manager — witnessed his performance, and decided that he was the man for the London boards.

In his letters to the paper under the pseudonym of ‘History’ Hardy observed:

‘Your correspondent “Dorset” who proposes to “turn the hose” upon the natural interest of Dorchester people in Edmund Kean, should, I think, first turn the hose upon his own uncharitableness. His contention amounts to this, that because one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of English tragedians was not without blemish in his morals, no admiration is to be felt for his histrionic achievements, or regard for the details of his life. So, then, Lord Nelson should have no place in our sentiment, nor Burns, nor Byron — not even Shakespeare himself — nor unhappily many another great man whose flesh has been weak. With amusing maladroitness your correspondent calls himself by the name of the county which has lately commemorated King Charles the Second — a worthy who seduced scores of men’s wives, to Kean’s one.

‘Kean was, in truth, a sorely tried man, and it is no wonder that he may have succumbed. The illegitimate child of a struggling actress, the vicissitudes and hardships of his youth and young manhood left him without moral ballast when the fire of his genius brought him success and adulation. The usual result followed, and owing to the publicity of his life it has been his misfortune ever since to have, like Cassius in *Julius Caesar*,

All his faults observed,

Set in a note-book, learn’d and conn’d by rote,

by people who show the Christian feeling of your correspondent.’

The following week Hardy sent a supplementary note:

‘One word as to the building [in Dorchester] in which Kean performed in 1813. There is little doubt that it was in the old theatre yet existing [though not as such], stage and all, at the back of Messrs. Godwin’s china shop; and for these among other reasons. A new theatre in North Square [Qy. Back West Street?], built by Curme, was opened in February 1828, while there are still dwellers in Dorchester who have heard persons speak of seeing plays in the older theatre about 1821 or 1822, Kean’s visit having been only a few years earlier.’

During the latter half of this year 1902 Hardy was working more or less on the first part of *The Dynasts*, which was interrupted in August and September by bicycle trips, and in October by a short stay in Bath, where the cycling was continued. On one of these occasions, having reached Bristol by road, and suddenly entered on the watered streets, he came off into the mud with a side-slip, and was rubbed down by a kindly coal-heaver with one of his sacks. In this condition he caught sight of some rare old volume in a lumber - shop; and looking him up and down when he asked the price, the

woman who kept the shop said: 'Well, sixpence won't hurt ye, I suppose?' He used to state that if he had proposed threepence he would doubtless have got the volume.

To a correspondent who was preparing a Report on Capital Punishment for the Department of Economics, Stanford University, California, and who asked for the expression of his opinion on the advisability of abolishing it in highly civilized communities, he replied about this time:

'As an acting magistrate I think that Capital Punishment operates as a deterrent from deliberate crimes against life to an extent that no other form of punishment can rival. But the question of the moral right of a community to inflict that punishment is one I cannot enter into in this necessarily brief communication.'

It may be observed that the writer describes himself as an 'acting magistrate', yet he acted but little at sessions. He was not infrequently, however, on Grand Juries at the Assizes, where he would meet with capital offences.

Returning to the country in July he sat down to finish the first part of *The Dynasts*, the MS. of which was sent to the Messrs. Mac - millan at the end of September. He then corrected the proofs of *A Trampwoman's Tragedy* for the *North American Review*, in which pages it was published in November. When the ballad was read in England by the few good judges who met with it, they reproached Hardy with sending it out of the country for publication, not knowing that it was first offered to the *Cornhill Magazine*, and declined by the editor on the ground of it not being a poem he could possibly print in a family periodical. That there was any impropriety in the verses had never struck the author at all, nor did it strike any readers, so far as he was aware.

In December he answered an inquiry addressed to him by the editor of *L'Europien*, an international journal published in Paris:

'I would say that I am not of opinion that France is in a decadent state. Her history seems to take the form of a serrated line, thus:

and a true judgement of her general tendency cannot be based on a momentary observation, but must extend over whole periods of variation.

'What will sustain France as a nation is, I think, her unique accessibility to new ideas, and her ready power of emancipation from those which reveal themselves to be effete.'

In the same month of December the first part of *The Dynasts* was published.

It was some time in this year that Hardy, in concurrence with his brother and sisters, erected in Stinsford Church a brass tablet to commemorate the connection of his father, grandfather, and uncle with the musical services there in the early part of the previous century — the west gallery, wherein their ministrations had covered altogether about forty years, having been removed some sixty years before this date. The inscription on the brass runs as follows:

In drawing up this inscription Hardy was guided by his belief that the English language was liable to undergo great alterations in the future, whereas Latin would remain unchanged.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### PART FIRST OF 'THE DYNASTS'

1904-1905: Aet. 63-65

As *The Dynasts* contained ideas of some freshness, and was not a copy of something else, a large number of critics were too puzzled by it to be unprejudiced. The appraisal of the work was in truth, while nominally literary, at the core narrowly Philistine, and even theosophic. Its author had erroneously supposed that by writing a frank preface on his method — that the scheme of the drama was based on a tentative theory of things which seemed to accord with the mind of the age; but that whether such theory did or not so accord, and whether it were true or false, little affected his object, which was a poetical one wherein nothing more was necessary than that the theory should be plausible — a polemic handling of his book would be avoided. Briefly, that the drama being advanced not as a reasoned system of philosophy, nor as a new philosophy, but as a poem, with the discrepancies that are to be expected in an imaginative work, as such it would be read.

However, the latitude claimed was allowed but in few instances, and an unfavourable reception was pretty general, the substance of which was 'On what ground do you arrogate to yourself a right to express in poetry a philosophy which has never been expressed in poetry before?'

Notwithstanding his hopes, he had a suspicion that such might be the case, as we may gather from a note he had written:

'The old theologies may or may not have worked for good in their time. But they will not bear stretching further in epic or dramatic art. The Greeks used up theirs: the Jews used up theirs: the Christians have used up theirs. So that one must make an independent plunge, embodying the real, if only temporary, thought of the age. But I expect that I shall catch it hot and strong for attempting it!\*

Hardy replied to one of these criticisms written by the dramatic critic of *The Times* in the *Literary Supplement* (*Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 5 and Feb. 19, 1904), but did not make many private memoranda on the reviews. One memorandum is as follows:

'I suppose I have handicapped myself by expressing, both in this drama and previous verse, philosophies and feelings as yet not well established or formally adopted into the general teaching; and by thus over-stepping the standard boundary set up for the thought of the age by the proctors of opinion, I have thrown back my chance of

acceptance in poetry by many years. The very fact of my having tried to spread over art the latest illumination of the time has darkened counsel in respect of me.

‘What the reviewers really assert is, not “This is an untrue and inartistic view of life”, but “This is not the view of life that we people who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted”. If, instead of the machinery I adopted, I had constructed a theory of a world directed by fairies, nobody would have objected, and the critics would probably have said, “What a charming fancy of Mr. Hardy’s!” But having chosen a scheme which may or may not be a valid one, but is presumably much nearer reality than the fancy of a world ordered by fairies would be, they straightway lift their brows.’

Writing to his friend Edward Clodd on March 22, he says:

‘I did not quite think that the Dynasts would suit your scientific mind, or shall I say the scientific side of your mind, so that I am much pleased to hear that you have got pleasure out of it.

‘As to my having said nothing or little (I think I did just allude to it a long while ago) about having it in hand, the explanation is simple enough — I did not mean to publish Part I. by itself until after a quite few days before I sent it up to the publishers: and to be engaged in a desultory way on a MS. which may be finished in five years (the date at which I thought I might print it, complete) does not lead one to say much about it. On my return here from London I had a sudden feeling that I should never carry the thing any further, so off it went. But now I am better inclined to go on with it. Though I rather wish I had kept back the parts till the whole could be launched, as I at first intended.

‘What you say about the “Will” is true enough, if you take the word in its ordinary sense. But in the lack of another word to express precisely what is meant, a secondary sense has gradually arisen, that of effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner. Another word would have been better if one could have had it, though “Power” would not do, as power can be suspended or withheld, and the forces of Nature cannot: However, there are inconsistencies in the Phantoms,

no doubt. But that was a point to which I was somewhat indifferent, since they are not supposed to be more than the best human intelligences of their time in a sort of quint-essential form. I speak of the “Years”. The “Pities” are, of course, merely Humanity, with all its weaknesses.

‘You speak of Meredith. I am sorry to learn that he has been so seriously ill. Leslie Stephen gone too. They are thinning out ahead of us. I have just lost an old friend down here, of forty-seven years’ standing. A man whose opinions differed almost entirely from my own on most subjects, and yet he was a good and sincere friend — the brother of the present Bishop of Durham, and like him in old - fashioned views of the Evangelical school.’

His mind was, however, drawn away from the perils of attempting to express his age in poetry by a noticeable change in his mother’s state of health. She was now in her ninety-first year, and though she had long suffered from deafness was mentally as clear and alert as ever. She sank gradually, but it was no’t till two days before her death



that she failed to comprehend his words to her. She died on Easter Sunday, April 3, and was buried at Stinsford in the grave of her husband. She had been a woman with an extraordinary store of local memories, reaching back to the days when the ancient ballads were everywhere heard at country feasts, in weaving shops, and at spinning-wheels; and her good taste in literature was expressed by the books she selected for her children in circumstances in which opportunities for selection were not numerous. The portraits of her which appeared in the *Sphere*, the *Gentlewoman*, the *Book Monthly*, and other papers — the best being from a painting by her daughter Mary — show a face of dignity and judgment.

A month earlier he had sent a reply to the Rev. S. Whittell Key, who had inquired of him concerning 'sport':

'I am not sufficiently acquainted with the many varieties of sport to pronounce which is, quantitatively, the most cruel. I can only say generally that the prevalence of those sports which consist in the pleasure of watching a fellow-creature, weaker or less favoured than ourselves, in its struggles, by Nature's poor resources only, to escape the death-agony we mean to inflict by the treacherous contrivances of science, seems one of the many convincing proofs that we have not yet emerged from barbarism.

'In the present state of affairs there would appear to be no logical reason why the smaller children, say, of overcrowded families, should not be used for sporting purposes. Darwin has revealed that there would be no difference in principle; moreover, these children would often escape lives intrinsically less happy than those of wild birds and other animals.'

During May he was in London reading at the British Museum on various days — probably historic details that bore upon *The Dynasts* — and went to Sunday concerts at the Queen's Hall, and to afternoon services at St. Paul's whenever he happened to be near the Cathedral, a custom of his covering many years before and after.

On June 28 *The Times* published the following letter:

'Sir,

'I should like to be allowed space to express in the fewest words a view of Count Tolstoy's philosophic sermon on war, of which you print a translation in your impression of to-day and a comment in your leading article.

'The sermon may show many of the extravagances of detail to which the world has grown accustomed in Count Tolstoy's other writings. It may exhibit, here and there, incoherence as a moral system. Many people may object to the second half of the dissertation — its special application to Russia in the present war (on which I can say nothing). Others may be unable to see advantage in the writer's use of theological terms for describing and illustrating the moral evolutions of past ages. But surely all these objectors should be hushed by his great argument, and every defect in his particular reasonings hidden by the blaze of glory that shines from his masterly general indictment of war as a modern principle, with all its senseless and illogical crimes.

'Your obedient servant,

'Thomas Hardy.'

Again in the country in August, Hardy resumed his cycling tours, meeting by accident Mr. William Watson, Mr. Francis Coutts (Lord Latymer), and Mr. John Lane at Glastonbury, and spending a romantic day or two there among the ruins.

In October Hardy learnt by letter from Madras of the death of Mrs. Malcolm Nicolson — the gifted and impassioned poetess known as 'Laurence Hope', whom he had met in London; and he wrote a brief obituary notice of her in the *Athenceum* at the end of the month. But beyond this, and the aforesaid newspaper letters, he appears to have printed very little during this year 1904. A German translation of *Life's Little Ironies* was published in *Aus fremden Zungen*, in Berlin, and a French translation of *The Well-Beloved* undertaken.

His memoranda get more and more meagre as the years go on, until we are almost entirely dependent on letter-references, reviews, and casual remarks of his taken down by the present writer. It is a curious reversal of what is usually found in lives, where notes and diaries grow more elaborate with maturity of years. But it accords with Hardy's frequent saying that he took little interest in himself as a person, and his absolute refusal at all times to write his reminiscences.

In January (1905) he served as Grand Juror at the winter Assizes, and in the latter part of the month met Dr. Shipley, Mr. Asquith, Lord Monteagle, Sir Edgar Vincent, and others at a dinner at the National Club given by Mr. Gosse. At this time he was much interested in the paintings of Zurbaran, which he preferred to all others of the old Spanish school, venturing to think that they might some day be held in higher estimation than those of Velazquez.

About this time the romantic poem entitled 'The Noble Lady's Tale' was printed in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

The first week in April Hardy left Dorchester for London en route for Aberdeen, the ancient University of which city had offered him the honorary degree of LL.D. In accepting it he remarked:

'I am impressed by its coming from Aberdeen, for though a stranger to that part of Scotland to a culpable extent I have always observed with admiration the exceptional characteristics of the northern University, which in its fostering encouragement of mental effort seems to cast an eye over these islands that is unprejudiced, unbiased, and unsleeping.'

It was a distance of near 700 miles by the route he would have to take — almost as far as to the Pyrenees — and over the northern stage of it winter still lingered; but his journey there and back was an easy one. The section from Euston Square to the north was performed in a train of sleeping-cars which crunched through the snow as if it were January, the occasion coinciding with the opening of the new sculpture gallery, a function that brought many visitors from London. Hardy was hospitably entertained at the Chanonry Lodge, Old Aberdeen, by Principal and Mrs. Marshall Lang, which was the beginning of a friendship that lasted till the death of the Principal. Among others who received the like honour at the same time were Professor Bury and Lord Reay.

In the evening there was a reception in the Mitchell Hall, Marischal College, made lively by Scotch reels and bagpipers; and the next day, after attending at the formal opening of the sculpture gallery, he was a guest at the Corporation Dinner at the Town Hall, where friends were warm, but draughts were keen to one from a southern county, and speeches, though good, so long that he and the Principal did not get back to Chanonry Lodge till one o'clock.

On Sunday morning Hardy visited spots in and about Aberdeen associated with Byron and others, and lunched at the Grand Hotel by the invitation of Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Murray, dining at the same place with the same host, crossing hands in 'Auld Lang Syne' with delightful people whom he had never seen before and, alas, never saw again. This was the 'hearty way' (as it would be called in Wessex) in which they did things in the snowy north. To Hardy the whole episode of Aberdeen, he said, was of a most pleasant and unexpected kind, and it remained with him like a romantic dream.

Passing through London on his way south he breakfasted at the Athenaeum, where he was shocked to learn of the death of his friend Lord St. Helier (Sir Francis Jeune), who had been ailing more or less since the loss of his only son in the previous August. Hardy on his way down to Dorset was led to think of the humorous stories connected with the Divorce Court that the genial judge sometimes had told him when they were walking in the woods of Arlington Manor in the summer holidays; among them the tale of that worthy couple who wished to be divorced but disliked the idea of such an unpleasant person as a co-respondent being concerned in it, and so hit upon the plan of doing without him. The husband, saying he was going to Liverpool for a day or two, got a private detective to watch his house; but instead of leaving stayed in London, and at the dead of night went to his own house in disguise, and gave a signal. His wife came down in her dressing-gown and let him in softly, letting him out again before it was light. When the husband inquired of the detective he was informed that there was ample evidence; and the divorce was duly obtained.

Hardy could not remember whether it was a story of the same couple or of another, in which Sir Francis had related that being divorced they grew very fond of each other, the former wife becoming the husband's mistress, and living happily with him ever after.

As they had taken a flat at Hyde Park Mansions for this spring and summer Hardy did not stay long in Dorset, and they entered the flat the week before Easter. During April he followed up Tchaikowsky at the Queen's Hall concerts, saying of the impetuous march-piece in the third movement of the Pathetic Symphony that it was the only music he knew that was able to make him feel exactly as if he were in a battle.

'May 5. To the Lord Mayor's farewell banquet to Mr. Choate at the Mansion House. Thought of the continuity of the institution, and the teeming history of the spot. A graceful speech by Arthur Balfour: a less graceful but more humorous one by Mr. Choate. Spoke to many whom I knew. Sat between Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity, and Sir J. Ramsay, Came home with Sir F. Pollock.'

This month he was seeing Ben Jonson's play, *The Silent Woman*, and Shaw's *John Bull's Other Island* and *Man and Superman*, and went to the Royal Society's *Conver-  
sazione*; though for some days confined to the house by a sore throat and cough. At a lunch given by Sidney Lee at the Garrick Club in June he talked about Shakespeare with Sir Henry Irving, and was reconfirmed in his opinion that actors never see a play as a whole and in true perspective, but in a false perspective from the shifting point of their own part in it, Sir Henry having shied at Hardy's suggestion that he should take the part of Jaques.

In this June, too, he paid a promised visit to Swinburne, and had a long talk with him; also with Mr. Watts-Dunton. 'Swinburne's grey eyes are extraordinarily bright still — the brightness of stars that do not twinkle — planets namely. In spite of the nervous twitching of his feet he looked remarkably boyish and well, and rather impish. He told me he could walk twenty miles a day, and was only an old man in his hearing, his sight being as good as ever. He spoke with amusement of a paragraph he had seen in a Scottish paper: "Swinburne planteth, Hardy watereth, and Satan giveth the increase." He has had no honours offered him. Said that when he was nearly drowned his thought was, "My *Both-well* will never be finished!" That the secret reason for Lady Byron's dismissal of Lord Byron was undoubtedly his liaison with Augusta. His (Swinburne's) mother [Lady Jane, nie Ashburnham] used to say that it was the talk of London at the time. That the last time he visited his friend Landor the latter said plaintively that as he wrote only in a dead language (Latin), and a dying language (English), he would soon be forgotten. Talking of poets, he said that once Mrs. Procter told him that Leigh Hunt on a visit to her father one day brought an unknown youth in his train and introduced him casually as Mr. John Keats. (I think, by the way, that she also told me of the incident.) We laughed and condoled with each other on having been the two most abused of living writers; he for *Poems and Ballads*, I for *Jude the Obscure*.'

Later on in June he went to Mr. Walter Tyndale's exhibition of Wessex pictures, some of which Hardy had suggested, and during the remainder of their stay in London they did little more than entertain a few friends at Hyde Park Mansions, and dine and lunch with others.

'June 26, 1905. To the Hon. Sec. of the Shakespeare Memorial Committee:

'I fear that I shall have to leave town before the meeting of the Committee takes place.

'All I would say on the form of the Memorial is that one which embodies the calling of an important street or square after Shakespeare would seem to be as effectual a means as any of keeping his name on the tongues of citizens, and his personality in their minds.'

In July they went back to Dorset. Here, in the same month, a Nelson-and-Hardy exhibition was opened in Dorchester, the relics shown being mainly those of the Captain of the *Victory*, who had been born and lived near, and belonged to a branch of the Dorset Hardys, the subject of this memoir belonging to another.

On September 1 Hardy received a visit from 200 members of the Institute of Journalists at their own suggestion, as they had arranged a driving tour through his part of the country. There was an understanding that no interviews should be printed, and to this they honourably adhered. Their idea had been a call on him only, but they were entertained at tea, for which purpose a tent 150 feet long had to be erected on Max Gate lawn. 'The interior with the sun shining through formed a pretty scene when they were sitting down at the little tables', Mrs. Hardy remarks in a diary. 'They all drove off in four-in-hand brakes and other vehicles to Bockhampton, Puddletown, Bere Regis, and Wool.' After they had gone it came on to rain, and Hardy, returning from Dorchester at ten o'clock, met the vehicles coming back in a procession, empty; 'the horses tired and steaming after their journey of thirty miles, and their coats and harness shining with rain and perspiration in the light of the lamps'.

In pursuance of the above allusion to interviewing, it may be stated that there are interviewers and interviewees. It once happened that an interviewer came specially from London to Hardy to get his opinions for a popular morning paper. Hardy said positively that he would not be interviewed on any subject. 'Very well', said the interviewer, 'then back I go, my day and my expenses all wasted.' Hardy felt sorry, his visitor seeming to be a gentlemanly and educated man, and said he did not see why he should hurry off, if he would give his word not to write anything. This was promised, and the interviewer stayed, and had lunch, and a pleasant couple of hours' conversation on all sorts of subjects that would have suited him admirably. Yet he honourably kept his promise, and not a word of his visit appeared anywhere in the pages of the paper.

In the middle of this month the 150th anniversary of the birth of the poet Crabbe at Aldeburgh in Suffolk was celebrated in that town, and Hardy accepted the invitation of Mr. Edward Clodd to be present. There were some very good tableaux vivants of scenes from the poems exhibited in the Jubilee Hall, some good lectures on the poet, and a sermon also in the parish church on his life and work, all of which Hardy attended, honouring Crabbe as an apostle of realism who practised it in English literature three-quarters of a century before the French realistic school had been heard of.

Returning to Max Gate he finished the second part of *The Dynasts* — that second part which the *New York Tribune* and other papers had been positive would never be heard of, so ridiculous was the first — and sent off the MS. to the Messrs. Macmillan in the middle of October.

'First week in November. The order in which the leaves fall this year is: Chestnuts; Sycamores; Limes; Hornbeams; Elm; Birch; Beech.'

A letter written November 5 of this year:

'All I know about my family history is that it is indubitably one of the several branches of the Dorset Hardys — having been hereabouts for centuries. But when or how it was connected with the branch to which Nelson's Hardy's people belonged — who have also been hereabouts for centuries — I cannot positively say.<sup>1</sup> The branches are always asserted locally to be connected, and no doubt are, and there is a strong

family likeness. I have never investigated the matter, though my great-uncle knew the ramifications. The Admiral left no descendant in the male line, as you may know.

‘As to your interesting remarks on honours for men of letters, I have always thought that any writer who has expressed unpalatable or possibly subversive views on society, religious dogma, current morals, and any other features of the existing order of things, and who wishes to be free and to express more if they occur to him, must feel hampered by accepting honours from any government — which are different from academic honours offered for past attainments merely.’

1 Since writing the above I have received from a correspondent what seems to me indubitable proof of the connection of these two branches of the Hardy family. — F. E. H.

To Mr. Israel Zangwill on November 10:

‘It would be altogether presumptuous in me — so entirely outside Jewish life — to express any positive opinion on the scheme embodied in the pamphlet you send to me. I can only say a word or two of the nature of a fancy. To found an autonomous Jewish state or colony, under British suzerainty or not, wears the look of a good practical idea, and it is possibly all the better for having no retrospective sentiment about it. But I cannot help saying that this retrospective sentiment among Jews is precisely the one I can best enter into.

‘So that if I were a Jew I should be a rabid Zionist no doubt. I feel that the idea of ultimately getting to Palestine is the particular idea to make the imaginative among your people enthusiastic — “like unto them that dream” — as one of you said in a lyric which is among the finest in any tongue, to judge from its power in a translation. You, I suppose, read it in the original; I wish I could. (This is a digression.)

‘The only plan that seems to me to reconcile the traditional feeling with the practical is that of regarding the proposed Jewish state on virgin soil as a stepping-stone to Palestine. A Jewish colony united and strong and grown wealthy in, say, East Africa, could make a bid for Palestine (as a sort of annexe) — say 100 years hence — with far greater effect than the race as scattered all over the globe can ever do; and who knows if by that time altruism may not have made such progress that the then ruler or rulers of Palestine, whoever they may be, may even hand it over to the expectant race, and gladly assist them, or part of them, to establish themselves there.

‘This expectation, nursed throughout the formation and development of the new territory, would at any rate be serviceable as an ultimate ideal to stimulate action. With such an idea lying behind the immediate one, perhaps the Zionists would reunite and co-operate with the New Territorialists.

‘I have written, as I said, only a fancy. But, as I think you know, nobody outside Jewry can take a deeper interest than I do in a people of such extraordinary character and history; who brought forth, moreover, a young reformer who, though only in the humblest-walk of life, became the most famous personage the world has ever known.’

At the end of 1905 a letter reached him from a correspondent in the Philippine Islands telling him that to its writer he was ‘like some terrible old prophet crying in the wilderness’.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE REMAINDER OF ‘THE DYNASTS’

1906-1908: Aet. 65-67

The Dynasts, Part II, was not published till the first week in February 1906, and its reception by the reviews was much more congratulatory than their reception of the first part, an American critical paper going so far as to say, ‘Who knows that this work may not turn out to be a masterpiece?’

This year they reoccupied the flat in Hyde Park Mansions that had been let to them by Lady Thompson the year before, and paid the customary visits to private views, concerts, and plays that are usually paid to such by people full of vigour from the country. Of the Wagner concerts he says:

‘I prefer late Wagner, as I prefer late Turner, to early (which I suppose is all wrong in taste), the idiosyncrasies of each master being more strongly shown in these strains. When a man not contented with the grounds of his success goes on and on, and tries to achieve the impossible, then he gets profoundly interesting to me. To-day it was early Wagner for the most part: fine music, but not so particularly his — no spectacle of the inside of a brain at work like the inside of a hive.’

An attack of influenza, which he usually got while sojourning in London, passed off, and they entertained many friends at the flat as usual, and went out to various meetings and dinners, though he does not write them down in detail as when he thought he must. They included one at Vernon Lushington’s, where Hardy was interested in the portrait of his host’s father, the Lushington of the Lady Byron mystery, who kept his secret honourably; also a luncheon in a historic room weighted with its antiquity, the vaulted dining-room of the house in Dean’s Yard then occupied by Dr. Wilberforce as Archdeacon of Westminster. It was this year that Hardy met Dr. Grieg, the composer, and his wife, and when, discussing Wagner music, he said to Grieg that the wind and rain through trees, iron railings, and keyholes fairly suggested Wagner music; to which the rival composer responded severely that he himself would sooner have the wind and rain.

On the 21 st May the following letter, in which Hardy gives a glimpse of himself as a young man in London, appeared in The Times:

‘Sir,

‘This being the 100th anniversary of J. Stuart Mill’s birth, and as writers like Carlyle, Leslie Stephen, and others have held that anything, however imperfect, which affords an idea of a human personage in his actual form and flesh, is of value in respect

of him, the few following words on how one of the profoundest thinkers of the last century appeared forty years ago to the man in the street may be worth recording as a footnote to Mr. Morley's admirable estimate of Mill's life and philosophy in your impression of Friday.

'It was a day in 1865, about three in the afternoon, during Mill's candidature for Westminster. The hustings had been erected in Covent Garden, near the front of St. Paul's Church; and when I — a young man living in London — drew near to the spot, Mill was speaking. The appearance of the author of the treatise *On Liberty* (which we students of that date knew almost by heart) was so different from the look of persons who usually address crowds in the open air that it held the attention of people for whom such a gathering in itself had little interest. Yet it was, primarily, that of a man out of place. The religious sincerity of his speech was jarred on by his environment — a group on the hustings who, with few exceptions, did not care to understand him fully, and a crowd below who could not. He stood bareheaded, and his vast pale brow, so thin-skinned as to show the blue veins, sloped back like a stretching upland, and conveyed to the observer a curious sense of perilous exposure. The picture of him as personified earnestness surrounded for the most part by careless curiosity derived an added piquancy — if it can be called such — from the fact that the cameo clearness of his face chanced to be in relief against the blue shadow of a church which, on its transcendental side, his doctrines antagonized. But it would not be right to say that the throng was absolutely unimpressed by his words; it felt that they were weighty, though it did not quite know why.

'Your obedient servant,

'Thomas Hardy.

'Hyde Park Mansions, 'May 20.'

The same month Mrs. Hardy makes the following note: 'May 30. Returned to Max Gate for a day or two. I gardened a little, and had the first strange fainting-fit [I had known]. My heart seemed to stop; I fell, and after a while a servant came to me.' (Mrs. Hardy died of heart-failure six years after.)

During the summer in London M. Jacques Blanche, the well-known French painter, who had a studio in Knightsbridge, painted Hardy's portrait in oils. And a paper called 'Memories of Church Restoration', which he had written, was read in his enforced absence by Colonel Eustace Balfour at the annual meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

At the end of the lecture great satisfaction was expressed by speakers that Hardy had laid special emphasis on the value of the human associations of ancient buildings, for instance, the pews of churches, since they were generally slighted in paying regard to artistic and architectural points only.

As the June month drew on Hardy seems to have been at the British Museum Library verifying some remaining details for *The Dynasts*, Part Third; also incidentally going to see the *Daily Telegraph* printed, and to meet a group of German editors on a visit to England. He returned with his wife to Dorset towards the latter part of July.



At the end of July he wrote to Pittsburgh, U.S.A.:<

‘The handsome invitation of the Trustees of the Pittsburgh Institute that I should attend the dedication with wife or daughter, free of expense to us from the time we leave home till we return again, is a highly honouring and tempting one. But I am compelled to think of many contingent matters that would stand in the way of my paying such a visit, and have concluded that I cannot undertake it.

‘Please convey my thanks to Mr. Carnegie and the trustees.’

‘August 15. Have just read of the death of Mrs. Craigie in the papers. . . . Her description of the artistic temperament is clever; as being that which “thinks more than there is to think, feels more than there is to feel, sees more than there is to see”. . . . It reveals a bitterness of heart that was not shown on the surface by that brilliant woman.’

On August 17 he started with his brother on a tour to some English cathedrals, which included Lincoln, Ely, the Cambridge Colleges, and Canterbury; and finished out the summer with bicycling in Dorset and Somerset. He must have been working at the third part of *The Dynasts* at intervals this year, though there is apparently no record of his doing so.

1907

The poem entitled ‘New Year’s Eve’, written in 1906, was issued in the January number of the *Fortnightly Review*, 1907 (afterwards reprinted in the volume called *Time’s Laughingstocks*). Some time in the same month he made the following notes on kindred subjects:

‘An ephemeral article which might be written: “The Hard Case of the Would-be-Religious. By Sinceritas.”

‘Synopsis. Many millions of the most thoughtful people in England are prevented entering any church or chapel from year’s end to year’s end.

‘The days of creeds are as dead and done with as days of Pterodactyls.

‘Required: services at which there are no affirmations and no supplications.

‘Rationalists err as far in one direction as Revelationists or Mystics in the other; as far in the direction of logicity as their opponents away from it.

‘Religious, religion, is to be used in the article in its modern sense entirely, as being expressive of nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness, the old meaning of the word — ceremony, or ritual — having perished, or nearly.

‘We enter church, and we have to say, “We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep”, when what we want to say is, “Why are we made to err and stray like lost sheep?” Then we have to sing, “My soul doth magnify the Lord”, when what we want to sing is, “O that my soul could find some Lord that it could magnify! Till it can, let us magnify good works, and develop all means of easing mortals’ progress through a world not worthy of them.”

‘Still, being present, we say the established words full of the historic sentiment only, mentally adding, “How happy our ancestors were in repeating in all sincerity these articles of faith!” But we perceive that none of the congregation recognizes that we

repeat the words from an antiquarian interest in them, and in a historic sense, and solely in order to keep a church of some sort afoot — a thing indispensable; so that we are pretending what is not true: that we are believers. This must not be; we must leave. And if we do, we reluctantly go to the door, and creep out as it creaks complainingly behind us.’

Hardy, however, was not a controversialist in religion or anything else, and it should be added here that he sometimes took a more nebulous view, that may be called transmutative, as in a passage that he wrote some time later:

‘Christianity nowadays as expounded by Christian apologists has an entirely different meaning from that which it bore when I was a boy. If I understand, it now limits itself to the religion of emotional morality and altruism that was taught by Jesus Christ, or nearly so limits itself. But this teaching does not appertain especially to Christianity: other moral religions within whose sphere the name of Christ has never been heard, teach the same thing! Perhaps this is a mere question of terminology, and does not much matter. That the dogmatic superstitions read every Sunday are merely a commemorative recitation of old articles of faith held by our grandfathers, may not much matter either, as long as this is well understood. Still, it would be more honest to make these points clearer, by recasting the liturgy, for their real meaning is often misapprehended. But there seems to be no sign of such a clearing up, and I fear that, since the “Apology” [in *Late Lyrics*], in which I expressed as much some years ago, no advance whatever has been shown; rather, indeed, a childish back - current towards a belief in magic rites.’

‘February 8. E. goes to London to walk in thl suffragist procession to-morrow.’

In March occurred the death of a friend — the Rev. T. Perkins, rector of Turnworth, Dorset — with whom Hardy was in sympathy for his humane and disinterested views, and staunch support of the principle of justice for animals, in whose cause he made noble sacrifices, and spent time and money that he could ill afford. On the 29th of the month Hardy enters a memorandum:

‘Eve of Good Friday. 11.30 p.m. Finished draft of Part III. of *The Dynasts*’ He had probably been so far influenced by the reception of the first two parts as not to expect the change of view which was about to give to the third part, and the whole production, a warm verdict of success, or he would not have followed the entry by the addendum:

‘Critics can never be made to understand that the failure may be greater than the success. It is their particular duty to point this out; but the public points it out to them. To have strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of the mount is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of ten hundredweight only halfway up that mount is a failure. But the latter is two or three times as strong a deed.’

They again took the flat in Hyde Park Mansions for the spring and summer, and moved thither the third week in April, whence they made their usual descent on friends and acquaintances, picture - galleries, and concert-rooms. It was this year that they

met Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw — it is believed for the first time. They also received at the flat their customary old friends, including Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Barrie, M. and Madame Jacques Blanche, and many others.

In May he was present at an informal but most interesting dinner at the house of his friend Dr. Hagberg Wright, where he met M. and Mme. Maxim Gorky, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Richard Whiteing, and others. A disconcerting but amusing accident was the difficulty of finding Dr. Wright's flat, on account of which the guests arrived at intervals and had their dinners in succession, the Gorkys coming last after driving two hours about London, including the purlieus of Whitechapel, which he had mistaken for 'Westminster'. Naturally it was a late hour when the party broke up.

June 2. Hardy's birthday, which he kept by dining at Lady St. Helier's.

On the same day he wrote to Mr. Edward Wright:

'Your interesting letter on the philosophy of The Dynasts has reached me here. I will try to answer some of your inquiries.

'I quite agree with you in holding that the word "Will" does not perfectly fit the idea to be conveyed — a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction. But it has become accepted in philosophy for want of a better, and is hardly likely to be supplanted by another, unless a highly appropriate one could be found, which I doubt. The word that you suggest — Impulse — seems to me to imply a driving power behind it; also a spasmodic movement unlike that of, say, the tendency of an ape to become a man and other such processes.

'In a dramatic epic — which I may perhaps assume The Dynasts to be — some philosophy of life was necessary, and I went on using that which I had denoted in my previous volumes of verse (and to some extent prose) as being a generalised form of what the thinking world had gradually come to adopt, myself included. That the Unconscious Will of the Universe is growing aware of Itself I believe I may claim as my own idea solely — at which I arrived by reflecting that what has already taken place in a fraction of the whole (i.e. so much of the world as has become conscious) is likely to take place in the mass; and there being no Will outside the mass — that is, the Universe — the whole Will becomes conscious thereby: and ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic.

'I believe, too, that the Prime Cause, this Will, has never before been called "It" in any poetical literature, English or foreign.

'This theory, too, seems to me to settle the question of Free-will v. Necessity. The will of a man is, according to it, neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them.

‘In the first edition of a drama of the extent of *The Dynasts* there may be, of course, accidental discrepancies and oversights which seem not quite to harmonize with these principles; but I hope they are not many.

‘The third part will probably not be ready till the end of this or the beginning of next year; so that I have no proofs as yet. I do not think, however, that they would help you much in your proposed article. The first and second parts already published, and some of the poems in *Poems of the Past and the Present*, exhibit fairly enough the whole philosophy.’

Concerning Hardy’s remark in this letter on the Unconscious Will being an idea already current, though that its growing aware of Itself might be newer, and that there might be discrepancies in the Spirits’ philosophy, it may be stated that he had felt such questions of priority and discrepancy to be immaterial where the work was offered as a poem and not as a system of thought.

On the 22nd of June they were guests at King Edward’s Garden Party at Windsor Castle, and a few days later at Mr. Reginald Smith’s met Sir Theodore Martin, then nearly ninety-one. Hardy remembering when as a young man he had frequented the pit of Drury Lane to see Lady Martin — then Miss Helen Faucit — in Shakespeare characters. His term at Hyde Park Mansions came to an end in the latter part of July, and they returned to Max Gate, though Hardy attended a dinner a week later given by the Medico-Psychological Society, where he had scientific discussions with Sir James Crichton - Browne and Sir Clifford Allbutt, and where one of the speakers interested Hardy by saying that all great things were done by men ‘who were not at ease’.

That autumn Sir Frederick and Lady Treves took a house near Max Gate, and Hardy frequently discussed with the Serjeant-surgeon a question which had drawn their attention for a long time, both being Dorset men; that of the ‘poor whites’ in Barbados, a degenerate, decadent race, descendants of the Dorset and Somerset ‘rebels’ who were banished there by Judge Jeffreys, and one of whom had been a collateral ancestor of Hardy’s on the maternal side.

He was now reaching a time of life when shadows were continually falling. His friend Pretor, Fellow of St. Catherine’s College, Cambridge, wrote to tell him he was dying, and asked him for an epitaph. Hardy thought of an old one:

If a madness ‘tis to weepe  
For a man that’s fall’n asleepe,  
How much more for that we call  
Death — the sweetest sleepe of all!

They still kept up a little bicycling this autumn, but he did some writing, finishing the third part of *The Dynasts* in September, and posting the MS. to the publishers shortly after.

In November he complied with a request from the Dorsetshire Regiment in India, which had asked him for a marching tune with the required local affinity for the use of the fifes and drums, and sent out an old tune of his grandfather’s called ‘The Dorchester Hornpipe’, which he himself had fiddled at dances as a boy. He wound up the year by

sending to the Wessex Society of Manchester, also at their request, a motto for the Society:

While new tongues call, and novel scenes unfold,  
Meet may it be to bear in mind the old. . . .  
Vain dreams, indeed, are thoughts of heretofore;  
What then? Your instant lives are nothing more.

About the same time he forwarded 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy' to the English Review as wished, where it appeared shortly after; and also in fulfilment of a promise, sent the following old-fashioned psalm tunes associated with Dorsetshire to the Society of Dorset Men in London of which he was President-elect for the ensuing year:

Frome; Wareham; Blandford; New Poole; Bridport; Lul - worth; Rockborne; Mercy; Bridehead; Charmouth.

The concluding part of *The Dynasts* was published about six weeks later and was the cause of his receiving many enthusiastic letters from friends and strangers, among which the following from the far west of Australia may be given as a specimen:

'My thanks for your tremendous new statement in *The Dynasts* of the world-old problem of Freewill versus Necessity. You have carried me on to the mountain with Jesus of Nazareth, and, viewing with Him the great conflict below, one chooses with Him to side with the Spirit of the Pities, in the belief that they will ultimately triumph; and even if they do not we at least will do our little to add to the joy rather than to the woe of the world. . . . The Spirit of the Pities is indeed young in comparison with The Years, and so we must be patient. . . . Your conception of the Immanent Will — irresponsible, blind, but possibly growing into self-consciousness, was of great significance to me, from my knowledge of Dr. Bucke's theory of the Cosmic Consciousness.'

In connection with this subject it may be here recalled, in answer to writers who now and later were fond of charging Hardy with postulating a malignant and fiendish God, that he never held any views of the sort, merely surmising an indifferent and unconscious force at the back of things 'that neither good nor evil knows'. His view is shown, in fact, to approximate to Spinoza's — and later Einstein's — that neither Chance nor Purpose governs the universe, but Necessity.

## **PART III - 'TIME'S LAUGHINGSTOCKS', 'SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE', AND 'MOMENTS OF VISION'**

### **CHAPTER XXIX**

#### **DEATHS OF SWINBURNE AND MEREDITH**

1908-1909: Aet. 67-69

In March he finished preparing a book of selections from the poems of William Barnes, for the Clarendon Press, Oxford, with a critical preface and glossary.

In April Lady St. Helier and a party motored from beyond Newbury to Max Gate and back, arriving within five minutes of the time specified, although the distance each way was seventy-five miles. It was considered a good performance in those days. At the end of the month he dined at the Royal Academy, but was in Dorchester at a performance by the local Dramatic Society of some scenes from *The Dynasts* — the first attempt to put on the stage a dramatic epic that was not intended for staging at all. In May he sent his Presidential Address to the Society of Dorset Men in London, to be read by the Secretary, as he was always a victim to influenza and throat-trouble if he read or spoke in London himself; afterwards on request he sent the original manuscript. (By the way, the address never was read, so he might have saved himself the trouble of writing it. What became of the manuscript is unknown.)

The following letter to Mr. Robert Donald in May explains itself:

‘If I felt at all strongly, or indeed weakly, on the desirability of a memorial to Shakespeare in the shape of a theatre, I would join the Committee. But I do not think that Shakespeare appertains particularly to the theatrical world nowadays, if ever he did. His distinction as a minister to the theatre is infinitesimal beside his distinction as a poet, man of letters, and seer of life, and that his expression of himself was cast in the form of words for actors and not in the form of books to be read was an accident of his social circumstances that he himself despised. I would, besides, hazard the guess that he, of all poets of high rank whose works have taken a stage direction, will some day cease altogether to be acted, and be simply studied.

‘I therefore do not see the good of a memorial theatre, or for that matter any other material monument to him, and prefer not to join the Committee.

‘Nevertheless I sincerely thank you for letting me know how the movement is progressing, and for your appreciative thought that my joining the promoters would be an advantage.’

Hardy afterwards modified the latter part of the above opinion in favour of a colossal statue in some public place.

It appears that the Hardys did not take any house or flat in London this year, contenting themselves with short visits and hotel quarters, so that there is not much to mention. From letters it can be gathered that at a dinner his historic sense was appealed to by the Duchess of St. Albans taking a diamond pin from her neck and telling him it had been worn by Nell Gwynne; and in May or June he paid a few days’ visit to Lord Curzon at Hackwood Park, where many of the house - party went into the wood by moonlight to listen to the nightingale, but made such a babble of conversation that no nightingale ventured to open his bill.

In July Hardy was again in London with Mrs. Hardy, and was present at the unveiling by Lord Curzon of the memorial to ‘John Oliver Hobbes’ (Mrs. Craigie), at University College, where he had the pleasure of hearing his writings cried down by a speaker, nobody knowing him to be present. During some of these days he sat to Sir Hubert Herkomer for his portrait, kindly presented to him by the painter. He went on to Cambridge to the Milton Celebration, where at the house of his friend Sir Clifford

Allbutt he met Mr. Robert Bridges, the Poet-Laureate, for the first time, and made the acquaintance of Dr. Peile, the Master of Christ's College, Sir James ('Dictionary') Murray, and others. Comus was played at the theatre, in which performance young Rupert Brooke appeared as the attendant Spirit, but Hardy did not speak to him, to his after regret.

The remainder of the month was spent in Dorset, where he met for the last time his friend Bosworth Smith, long a house-master at Harrow, who told him he was soon to undergo a severe surgical operation — under which indeed he sank and died three months after. This was the fourth of his friends and relations that had sunk under the surgeon's knife in four years — leaving a blank that nothing could fill.

'August 18. The Poet takes note of nothing that he cannot feel emotively.

'If all hearts were open and all desires known — as they would be if people showed their souls — how many gapings, sighings, clenched fists, knotted brows, broad grins, and red eyes should we see in the market-place!'

The autumn was filled by little journeys to cathedrals and a visit to his sister at Swanage, whither she had gone for change of air; and in December he attended a dinner at the Mansion House to commemorate Milton, from which he returned in company with his friend Mr. S. H. Butcher, walking up and down with him late that night in Russell Square, conversing on many matters as if they knew they would never meet again. Hardy had a great liking for him, and was drawn to him for the added reason that he and his family had been warm friends of Hardy's dead friend Horace Moule.

In the following January (1909) the University of Virginia invited him to attend the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe, and in writing his thanks for the invitation Hardy adds:

'The University of Virginia does well to commemorate the birthday of this poet. Now that lapse of time has reduced the insignificant and petty details of his life to their true proportion beside the measure of his poetry, and softened the horror of the correct classes at his lack of respectability, that fantastic and romantic genius shows himself in all his rarity. His qualities, which would have been extraordinary anywhere, are much more extraordinary for the America of his date.

'Why one who was in many ways disadvantageously circumstanced for the development of the art of poetry should have been the first to realise to the full the possibilities of the English language in rhyme and alliteration is not easily explicable.

'It is a matter for curious conjecture whether his achievements in verse would have been the same if the five years of childhood spent in England had been extended to adult life. That "unmerciful disaster" hindered those achievements from being carried further must be an endless regret to lovers of poetry.'

At the beginning of this year Hardy was appointed by the Dorset Court of Quarter Sessions a Representative Governor of the Dorchester Grammar School, a position he filled till the end of 1925. He said he was not practical enough to make a good governor, but was influenced to accept the office by the fact that his namesake, Thomas Hardy

of Melcombe Regis, who died in 1599, was the founder of the school. The latter has a monument in St. Peter's Church, Dorchester,

and is believed to have been of the same stock as the Thomas Hardy of this memoir.

In March came the last letter he was ever to receive from George Meredith, in which the elder writes:

'The French review herewith comes to my address and is, as you see by the superscription, intended for you.

'I am reminded that you are among the kind souls who thought of me on my 80th [birthday] and have not been thanked for their testimony of it. . . . The book [The Dynasts] was welcome all the more as being a sign that this big work was off your mind. How it may have been received I cannot say, but any book on so large a scale has to suffer the fate of a Panorama, and must be visited again and again for a just impression of it to be taken. I saw that somewhere in your neighbourhood it was represented in action. That is the way to bring it more rapidly home to the mind. But the speaker of Josephine's last words would have to be a choice one.'

The representation had been in Dorchester, and was limited to a few of the country scenes.

On the 10th April he heard of the death of Swinburne, which was the occasion of his writing the following letter:

'Max Gate, April 13, 1909.

'For several reasons I could not bring myself to write on Swinburne immediately I heard that, to use his own words, "Fate had undone the bondage of the gods" for him.

. . .

'No doubt the press will say some good words about him now he is dead and does not care whether it says them or no. Well, I remember what it said in 1866, when he did care, though you do not remember it, and how it made the blood of some of us young men boil.

'Was there ever such a country — looking back at the life, work, and death of Swinburne — is there any other country in Europe whose attitude towards a deceased poet of his rank would have been so ignoring and almost contemptuous? I except The Times, which has the fairest estimate I have yet seen. But read the Academy and the Nation.

'The kindly cowardice of many papers is overwhelming him with such toleration, such theological judgements, hypocritical sympathy, and misdirected eulogy that, to use his own words again, "it makes one sick in a corner" — or as we say down here in Wessex, "it is enough to make every little dog run to mixen".

'However, we are getting on in our appreciativeness of poets. One thinks of those other two lyricists, Burns and Shelley, at this time, for obvious reasons, and of how much harder it was with them. We know how Burns was treated at Dumfries, but by the time that Swinburne was a young man Burns had advanced so far as to be regarded as no worse than "the glory and the shame of literature" (in the words of a critic of that date). As for Shelley, he was not tolerated at all in his lifetime. But Swinburne



has been tolerated — at any rate since he has not written anything to speak of. And a few months ago, when old and enfeebled, he was honoured by a rumour that he had been offered a complimentary degree at Oxford. And Shelley too, in these latter days of our memory, has been favoured so far as to be considered no lower than an ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in vain. . . .

‘I was so late in getting my poetical barge under way, and he was so early with his flotilla — besides my being between three and four years younger, and being nominally an architect (an awful impostor at that, really) — that though I read him as he came out I did not personally know him till many years after the Poems and Ballads year. . .

‘T. H.’

‘April 13. A genius for repartee is a gift for saying what a wise man thinks only.’

‘April 15. Day of Swinburne’s funeral. Find I cannot go with this rheumatism, though it is but slight, the journey being so roundabout.

‘Thought of some of Swinburne’s lines: e.g.,

‘On Shelley: “O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were “.

‘On Newman and Carlyle: “With all our hearts we praise you whom ye hate”.

‘On Time: “For time is as wind and as waves are we”.

‘On Man: “Save his own soul he hath no star”.’<sup>1</sup>

In May Hardy was in London, and walking along Dover Street on his way to the Academy saw on a poster the announcement of the death of Meredith. He went on to the Athenaeum and wrote some memorial lines on his friend, which were published a day or two later in *The Times*, and reprinted in *Time’s Laughingstocks*.

<sup>1</sup> But Isaiah had said before him: ‘Mine own arm brought salvation unto me’.

On the 22nd he attended a memorial service to Meredith in Westminster Abbey — meeting there Maurice Hewlett, Henry James, Max Beerbohm, Alfred Austin, and other acquaintance — and returned to Dorchester the same afternoon.

In June he was asked to succeed Meredith as President of the Society of Authors; and wrote to Mr. Maurice Hewlett, who had brought the proposal before him:

‘I am moved more than I can say by learning that in the view of the Council I should be offered the succession to the Presidentship. But I must nevertheless perform the disagreeable duty of acting upon my own conviction of what is for the Society’s good, and tell you that I feel compelled to decline the honour. I have long had an opinion that although in the early years of the Society it may perhaps have been not unwise to have at its head men who took no part in its management — indeed the mere names of Tennyson and Meredith were in themselves of use to the institution — the time has now come when the President should be one who takes an active part in the Council’s deliberations, and if possible one who lives in or near London — briefly, that he should preside over its affairs. Now this I could never do. I will not go into the reasons why, as they are personal and unavoidable. . . .

‘I may perhaps add that if there should still be a preponderating opinion in the Council that an inactive President of the old kind is still desirable, the eminent name of Lord Morley suggests itself.’

However, the matter ended by the acceptance of the Presidency by Hardy on further representations by the Council. His first diffidence had, in fact, arisen, as he stated, out of consideration for the Society’s interests, for he remembered that the Society included people of all sorts of views, and that since Swinburne’s death there was no living English writer who had been so abused by sections of the press as he himself had been in previous years; ‘and who knows’, he would drily add, ‘that I may not be again?’

But, as said above, his objections were overruled.

As usual his stay in London had given him influenza, and he could not go to Aldeburgh as he had intended. About this time he wrote to a lady of New York in answer to an inquiry she made:

‘The discovery of the law of evolution, which revealed that all organic creatures are of one family, shifted the centre of altruism from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively. Therefore the practice of vivisection, which might have been defended while the belief ruled that men and animals are essentially different, has been left by that discovery without any logical argument in its favour. And if the practice, to the extent merely of inflicting slight discomfort now and then, be defended [as I sometimes hold it may] on grounds of it being good policy for animals as well as men, it is nevertheless in strictness a wrong, and stands precisely in the same category as would stand its practice on men themselves.’

In July the influenza had nearly passed off, and he fulfilled his engagement to go to Aldeburgh — the air of which he always sought if possible after that malady, having found it a quicker restorative than that of any other place he knew.

In the second week of this month he was at rehearsals of Baron F. d’Erlanger’s opera *Tess* at Covent Garden, and on the 14th was present with Mrs. Hardy at the first performance. Though Italianized to such an extent that Hardy scarcely recognized it as his novel, it was a great success in a crowded house, Queen Alexandra being among the distinguished audience. Destinn’s voice suited the title-character admirably; her appearance less so.

In response to an invitation by Dr. Max Dessoir, a professor at the University of Berlin, who wished to have an epitome of the culture and thought of the time — the ‘Weltanschauung’ of a few representative men in England and Germany — Hardy wrote the following during August this year:

‘We call our age an age of Freedom. Yet Freedom, under her incubus of armaments, territorial ambitions smugly disguised as patriotism, superstitions, conventions of every sort, is of such stunted proportions in this her so-called time, that the human race is likely to be extinct before Freedom arrives at maturity.’

In the meantime he had been putting together poems written between-whiles, some of them already printed in periodicals — and in addition hunting up quite old ones

dating from 1865, and overlooked in his earlier volumes, out of which he made a volume called *Time's Laughingstocks*, and sent off the MS. to his publishers the first week in September.

In continuance of the visits to cathedrals he went this autumn to Chichester, York, Edinburgh, and Durham; and on returning to Dorchester was at a rehearsal of a play by Mr. A. H. Evans, the dramatist of the local Debating and Dramatic Society, based on *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was performed there in the Corn Exchange, and a few days later before the Society of Dorset Men in London. Hardy had nothing to do with the adaptation, but thought it a neater achievement than the London version of 1882 by Mr. Comyns Carr.

In December *Time's Laughingstocks* was published, and Hardy was in London, coming back as usual with a choking sore throat which confined him to his bed till the New Year, on the eve of which at twelve o'clock he crouched by the fire and heard in the silence of the night the ringing of the muffled peal down the chimney of his bedroom from the neighbouring church of St. George.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH

1910: Aet. 69-70

In March, being at Ventnor, Hardy visited Swinburne's grave at Bonchurch, and composed the poem entitled 'A Singer Asleep'. It is remembered by a friend who accompanied him on this expedition how that windy March day had a poetry of its own, how primroses clustered in the hedges, and noisy rooks wheeled in the air over the little churchyard. Hardy gathered a spray of ivy and laid it on the grave of that brother-poet of whom he never spoke save in words of admiration and affection.

'To the Secretary of the Humanitarian League 'The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W.'  
'10 th April 1910.

'Sir:

'I am glad to think that the Humanitarian League has attained the handsome age of twenty years — the Animals Defence Department particularly.

'Few people seem to perceive fully as yet that the most far - reaching consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species is ethical; that it logically involved a readjustment of altruistic morals by enlarging as a necessity of rightness the application of what has been called " The Golden Rule " beyond the area of mere mankind to that of the whole animal kingdom. Possibly Darwin himself did not wholly perceive it, though he alluded to it While man was deemed to be a creation apart from all other creations, a secondary or tertiary morality was considered good enough towards the "inferior" races; but no person who reasons nowadays can escape the trying conclusion that this is not maintainable. And though I myself do not at present see how

the principle of equal justice all round is to be carried out in its entirety, I recognize that the League is grappling with the question.'

It will be seen that in substance this agrees with a letter written earlier, and no doubt the subject was much in his mind just now.

About this time Hardy was asked by the editor of Harper's Magazine to publish his reminiscences in the pages of that periodical month by month. He replied:

'I could not appear in a better place. But it is absolutely unlikely that I shall ever change my present intention not to produce my reminiscences to the world.'

In the same month of April he was looking for a flat again in London, and found one at Blomfield Court, Maida Vale, which he and his wife and servants entered in May. Looking out of the window while at breakfast on the morning after their arrival, they beheld placarded in the street an announcement of the death of King Edward.

Hardy saw from the Athenaeum the procession of the removal of the King's body to Westminster, and the procession of the funeral from Westminster three days later. On account of the suggestiveness of such events it must have been in these days that he wrote 'A King's Soliloquy on the Night of his Funeral'. His own seventieth birthday a fortnight later reminded him that he was a year older than the monarch who had just died.

There was general satisfaction when Hardy's name appeared as a recipient of the Order of Merit in the Birthday List of Honours in June 1910. He received numerous and gratifying telegrams and letters of congratulation from both friends and strangers, and, though he accepted the award with characteristic quietude, it was evident that this sign of official approval of his work brought him pleasure.

At the flat — the last one they were to take, as it happened — they received their usual friends as in previous years, and there were more performances of the Tess opera; but in the middle of June they were compelled to cancel all engagements suddenly owing to Hardy's illness, which was happily but brief. In July he was able to go out again, and on the 19th went to Marlborough House to be invested with the Order of Merit. The King received him pleasantly: 'but afterwards I felt that I had failed in the accustomed formalities'.

Back in the country at the end of the month they entertained some visitors at Max Gate. A brief visit to Aldeburgh, where he met Professor Bury and Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Frazer, and a few cycle rides, diversified the close of this summer.

In September he sat to Mr. William Strang for a sketch-portrait, which was required for hanging at Windsor Castle among those of other recipients of the Order of Merit; and on November 16 came the interesting occasion of the presentation of the freedom of Dorchester to Hardy, which appealed to his sentiment more perhaps than did many of those recognitions of his literary achievements that had come from the uttermost parts of the earth at a much earlier time. Among the very few speeches or lectures that he ever delivered, the one he made on this occasion was perhaps the most felicitous and personal:

‘Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen of the Corporation — This is an occasion that speaks for itself, and so, happily, does not demand many remarks from me. In simply expressing my sincere thanks for the high compliment paid me by having my name enrolled with those of the Honorary Freemen of this historic town, I may be allowed to confess that the freedom of the Borough of Dorchester did seem to me at first something that I had possessed a long while, had helped myself to (to speak plainly), for when I consider the liberties I have taken with its ancient walls, streets, and precincts through the medium of the printing-press, I feel that I have treated its external features with the hand of freedom indeed. True, it might be urged that my Casterbridge (if I may mention seriously a name coined off-hand in a moment with no thought of its becoming established and localised) is not Dorchester — not even the Dorchester as it existed sixty years ago, but a dream-place that never was outside an irresponsible book. Nevertheless, when somebody said to me that “Casterbridge” is a sort of essence of the town as it used to be, “a place more Dorchester than Dorchester itself”, I could not absolutely contradict him, though I could not quite perceive it. At any rate, it is not a photograph in words, that inartistic species of literary produce, particularly in respect of personages. But let me say no more about my own doings. The chronicle of the town has vivid marks on it. Not to go back to events of national importance, lurid scenes have been enacted here within living memory, or not so many years beyond it, whippings in front of the town-pump, hangings on the gaol-roof. I myself saw a woman hanged not 100 yards from where we now stand, and I saw, too, a man in the stocks in the back part of this very building. Then, if one were to recount the election excitements, Free Trade riots, scenes of soldiers marching down the town to war, the proclamation of Sovereigns now crumbled to dust, it would be an interesting local story.

‘Miss Burney, in her diary, speaks of its aspect when she drove through with the rest of King George’s Court on her way to Weymouth. She says: “The houses have the most ancient appearance of any that are inhabited that I have happened to see.” This is not quite the case now, and though we may regret the disappearance of these old buildings, I cannot be blind to the difficulty of keeping a town in what may be called working order while retaining all its ancient features. Yet it must not be forgotten that these are its chief attractions for visitors, particularly American visitors. Old houses, in short, have a far larger commercial value than their owners always remember, and it is only when they have been destroyed, and tourists who have come to see them vow in their disappointment that they will never visit the spot again, that this is realised. An American gentleman came to me the other day in quite a bad temper, saying that he had diverged from his direct route from London to Liverpool to see ancient Dorchester, only to discover that he knew a hundred towns in the United States more ancient-looking than this (laughter). Well, we may be older than we look, like some ladies; but if, for instance, the original All-Saints and Trinity Churches, with their square towers, the castle, the fine mansion of the Trenchards at the corner of Shirehall Lane, the old Three Mariners Inn, the old Greyhound, the old Antelope, Lady Abingdon’s house at the corner of Durngate Street, and other mediaeval buildings were still in their places,

more visitors of antiquarian tastes would probably haunt the town than haunt it now. Old All-Saints was, I believe, demolished because its buttresses projected too far into the pavement. What a reason for destroying a record of 500 years in stone! I knew the architect who did it; a milder-mannered man never scuttled a sacred edifice. Milton's well-known observation in his *Areopagitica* — "Almost as well kill a man as kill a good book" — applies not a little to a good old building; which is not only a book but a unique manuscript that has no fellow. But corporations as such cannot help these removals; they can only be prevented by the education of their owners or temporary trustees, or, in the case of churches, by Government guardianship.

'And when all has been said on the desirability of preserving as much as can be preserved, our power to preserve is largely an illusion. Where is the Dorchester of my early recollection — I mean the human Dorchester — the kernel — of which the houses were but the shell? Of the shops as I first recall them not a single owner remains; only in two or three instances does even the name remain. As a German author has said, "Nothing is permanent but change". Here in Dorchester, as elsewhere, I see the streets and the turnings not far different from those of my schoolboy time; but the faces that used to be seen at the doors, the inhabitants, where are they? I turn up the Weymouth Road, cross the railway-bridge, enter an iron gate to "a slope of green access", and there they are! There is the Dorchester that I knew best; there are names on white stones one after the other, names that recall the voices, cheerful and sad, anxious and indifferent, that are missing from the dwellings and pavements. Those who are old enough to have had that experience may feel that after all the permanence or otherwise of inanimate Dorchester concerns but the permanence of what is minor and accessory.

'As to the future of the town, my impression is that its tendency is to become more and more a residential spot, and that the nature of its business will be mainly that of administering to the wants of "private residents" as they are called. There are several reasons for supposing this. The dryness of its atmosphere and subsoil is unexcelled. It has the great advantage of standing near the coast without being on it, thus escaping the objections some people make to a winter residence close to the sea; while the marine tincture in its breezes tempers the keenness which is felt in those of high and dry chalk slopes further inland. Dorchester's future will not be like its past; we may be sure of that. Like all other provincial towns, it will lose its individuality — has lost much of it already. We have become almost a London suburb owing to the quickened locomotion, and, though some of us may regret this, it has to be.

'I will detain you no longer from Mr. Evans's comedy that is about to be played downstairs. Ruskin somewhere says that comedy is tragedy if you only look deep enough. Well, that is a thought to remember; but to-night, at any rate, we will all be young and not look too deeply.'

After the presentation — which was witnessed by Mrs. Hardy, by Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Newbolt, by the writer of this memoir, and by other friends, the Dorchester Dramatic Society gave for the first time, at the hands of their own dramatist, an adaptation of *Under the Greenwood Tree* entitled *The Mellstock Quire* — the second

title of the novel — Hardy himself doing no more than supply the original carols formerly sung by the Quire of the parish outshadowed by the name ‘Mellstock’ — the village of Stinsford, a mile from the town.

In December the American fleet paid a visit to Portland Roads, and though the weather was bad while they were lying there Hardy went on board the battleship Connecticut, where he met the captain, commander, and others; who, with several more officers, afterwards visited him and Mrs. Hardy at Max Gate. On the 29th they went on board the English Dreadnought, which was also lying there, and thence to a dance on board the United States flagship Louisiana, to which they were welcomed by Admiral Vreeland.

It was at the end of this year that Hardy published in the Fortnightly Review some verses entitled ‘God’s Funeral’. The alternative title he had submitted for the poem was ‘The Funeral of Jahveh’ — the subject being the gradual decline and extinction in the human race of a belief in an anthropomorphic god of the King of Dahomey type — a fact recognized by all bodies of theologians for many years. But the editor, thinking the longer title clumsy and obscure, chose the other, to which Hardy made no objection, supposing the meaning of his poem would be clear enough to readers.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### BEREAVEMENT

1911 — 1912: Aet. 70 — 72

In March (1911) Hardy received a letter from M. Emile Bergerat of Paris asking him to let his name appear as one of the Committee for honouring Theophile Gautier on his approaching centenary, to which Hardy readily agreed. In the same month he visited Bristol Cathedral and Bath Abbey, and in April attended the funeral of the Mayor of Dorchester, who had presented him with the freedom of the borough but a few months earlier. A sequence of verses by Hardy, entitled ‘Satires of Circumstance’, which were published in the Fortnightly Review at this juncture, met with much attention both here and in America.

In April he and his brother, in pursuance of a plan of seeing or re-seeing all the English cathedrals, visited Lichfield, Worcester, and Hereford.

He makes only one note this spring: ‘View the matrices rather than the moulds’.

Hardy had been compelled to decline in February an invitation from the Earl-Marshal to the Coronation in Westminster Abbey in the coming June. That month found him on a tour with his brother in the Lake Country, including Carlisle Cathedral and Castle, where the dungeons were another reminder to him of how ‘evil men out of the evil treasure of their hearts have brought forth evil things’. However, the tour was agreeable enough despite the wet weather, and probably Hardy got more pleasure

out of Coronation Day by spending it on Windermere than he would have done by spending it in a seat at the Abbey.

Of Grasmere Churchyard he says: ‘ Wordsworth’s headstone and grave are looking very trim and new. A group of tourists who have never read a line of him sit near, addressing and sending off picture postcards. . . . Wrote some verses.’ He visited Chester Cathedral coming homeward, called at Rugby, and went over the school and chapel; and returned to Dorchester through London.

After his return he signed, with many other well-known people, a protest against the use of aerial vessels in war; appealing to all governments ‘to foster by any means in their power an international understanding which shall preserve the world from warfare in the air’. A futile protest indeed!

In July Hardy took his sister Katherine on an excursion to North Somerset, stopping at Minehead, and going on by coach to Porlock and Lynmouth. Thence they went by steamer to Ilfracombe, intending to proceed through Exeter to South Devon. But the heat was so great that further travelling was abandoned, and after going over the cathedral they returned home.

In the preceding month, it may be remarked, had died Mr. W. J. Last, A.M.Inst. C.E., Director of the Science Museum, South Kensington, who was a son of Hardy’s old Dorchester schoolmaster, Isaac Glandfield Last. The obituary notices that appeared in *The Times* and other papers gave details of a life more successful than his father’s, though not of higher intellectual ability than that by which it had been Hardy’s good fortune to profit.

At the end of the month Mr. Sydney Cockerell, director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, called, mainly to inquire about Hardy’s old manuscripts, which was the occasion of his looking up those that he could find and handing them over to Mr. Cockerell to distribute as he thought fit among any museums that would care to possess one, Hardy himself preferring to have no voice in the matter. In the course of October this was done by Mr. Cockerell, the MSS. of *The Dynasts* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* being accepted by the British Museum, of *Time’s Laughingstocks* and *Jude the Obscure* by the Fitzwilliam, and of *IVessex Poems*, with illustrations by the author himself (the only volume he ever largely illustrated), by Birmingham. Others were distributed from time to time by Mr. Cockerell, to whom Hardy had sent all the MSS. for him to do what he liked with, having insisted that ‘it would not be becoming for a writer to send his own MSS. to a museum on his own judgement’.

It may be mentioned in passing that in these months Mr. F. Saxelby of Birmingham, having been attracted to Hardy’s works by finding in them a name which resembled his own, published ‘*A Hardy Dictionary*’, containing the names of persons and places in the author’s novels and poems. Hardy had offered no objection to its being issued but accepted no responsibility for its accuracy.

In November the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society gave another performance of plays from the Wessex novels. This time the selection was the short one-act piece that Hardy had dramatized himself many years before, from the story called *The*



Three Strangers, entitled *The Three Wayfarers*; and a rendering by Mr. A. H. Evans of the tale of *The Distracted Preacher*. The Hardys' friend, Mrs. Arthur Henniker, came all the way from London to see it, and went with his wife and himself.

The curator of the Dorset County Museum having expressed a wish for a MS. of Hardy's, he sent this month the holograph of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Being interested at this time in the only Gothic style of architecture that can be called especially and exclusively English — the perpendicular style of the fifteenth century — Hardy made a journey to Gloucester to investigate its origin in that cathedral, which he ascertained to be in the screen between the south aisle and the transept — a fact long known probably to other investigators, but only recently to him. He was so much impressed by the thought that the inventor's name, like the names of the authors of so many noble songs and ballads, was unknown, that on his return he composed a poem thereon, called '*The Abbey Mason*', which was published a little later in *Harper's Magazine*, and later still was included in a volume with other poems.

The illness of his elder sister Mary saddened the close of 1911; and it was during this year that his wife wrote the *Reminiscences* printed in the earlier pages of this book, as if she had premonitions that her end was not far off; though nobody else suspected it.

The year 1912, which was to advance and end in such gloom for Hardy, began serenely. In January he went to London for a day or two and witnessed the performance of *Oedipus* at Covent Garden. But in February he learnt of the death of his friend General Henniker, and in April occurred the disaster to the Titanic steamship, upon which he wrote the poem called '*The Convergence of the Twain*' in aid of the fund for the sufferers.

On the 22nd April Hardy was correcting proofs for a new edition of his works, the *Wessex Edition*, concerning which he wrote to a friend:

"... I am now on to p. 140 of *The Woodlanders* (in copy I mean, not in proofs, of course). That is vol. vi. Some of the later ones will be shorter. I read ten hours yesterday — finishing the proofs of the *Native* (wh. I have thus got rid of) — I got to like the character of Clym before I had done with him. I think he is the nicest of all my heroes, and not a bit like me. On taking up *The Woodlanders* and reading it after many years I think I like it, as a story, the best of all. Perhaps that is owing to the locality and scenery of the action, a part I am very fond of. It seems a more quaint and fresh story than the *Native*, and the characters are very distinctly drawn. . . . Seven o'clock p.m. It has come on to rain a little: a blackbird is singing outside. I have read on to p. 185 of *The Woodlanders* since the early part of my letter.'

The Hardys dined with a few friends in London this season, but did not take a house, putting up at a hotel with which Hardy had long been familiar, the *West Central* in Southampton Row.

On June 1 at Max Gate they had a pleasant week-end visit from Henry Newbolt and W. B. Yeats, who had been deputed by the Royal Society of Literature to present Hardy with the Society's gold medal on his seventy-second birthday. The two eminent men of letters were the only people entertained at Max Gate for the occasion; but

everything was done as methodically as if there had been a large audience. Hardy says: ‘Newbolt wasted on the nearly empty room the best speech he ever made in his life, and Yeats wasted a very good one: mine in returning thanks was as usual a bad one, and the audience was quite properly limited’.

In the middle of June he was in London at Lady St. Helier’s, and went to the play of Bunty pulls the Strings with her. An amusing anticlimax to a story of the three-crow type occurred in connection with this or some other popular play of the date. It was currently reported and credited that Mr. Asquith had gone to see it eight times, and Mr. Balfour sixteen. Taking Miss Balfour in to dinner and discussing the play, Hardy told her of the report, and she informed him that her brother had been only once. How few the visits of Mr. Asquith were could not be ascertained. Possibly he had not gone at all.

Later on in the autumn a letter was addressed to him on a gross abuse which was said to have occurred — that of publishing details of a lately deceased man’s life under the guise of a novel, with assurances of truth scattered in the newspapers. In the course of his reply he said:

‘What should certainly be protested against, in cases where there is no authorization, is the mixing of fact and fiction in unknown proportions. Infinite mischief would lie in that. If any statements in the dress of fiction are covertly hinted to be fact, all must be fact,

and nothing else but fact, for obvious reasons. The power of getting lies believed about people through that channel after they are dead, by stirring in a few truths, is a horror to contemplate.’

‘June. Here is a sentence from the Edinburgh Review of a short time back which I might have written myself: “The division [of poems] into separate groups [ballad, lyrical, narrative, &c.] is frequently a question of the preponderance, not of the exclusive possession, of certain aesthetic elements.”’

Meanwhile in July he had returned to Max Gate just in time to be at a garden-party on July 16 — the last his wife ever gave — which it would have much grieved him afterwards to have missed. The afternoon was sunny and the guests numerous on this final one of many occasions of such a gathering on the lawn there, and nobody foresaw the shadow that was so soon to fall on the house, Mrs. Hardy being then, apparently, in her customary health and vigour. In the following month, August, she was at Weymouth for the last time; and Hardy took her and her niece to see the performance of Bunty at the Pavilion Theatre. It was her last play.

However, she was noticed to be weaker later on in the autumn, though not ill, and complained of her heart at times. Strangely enough, she one day suddenly sat down to the piano and played a long series of her favourite old tunes, saying at the end she would never play any more. The poem called ‘The Last Performance’ approximately describes this incident.

She went out up to the 22nd November, when, though it was a damp, dark afternoon, she motored to pay a visit six miles off. The next day she was distinctly unwell, and the

day after that was her birthday, when she seemed depressed. On the 25<sup>th</sup> two ladies called; and though she consulted with her husband whether or not to go downstairs to see them, and he suggested that she should not in her weak state, she did go down. The strain obliged her to retire immediately they had left. She never went downstairs again.

The next day she agreed to see a doctor, who did not think her seriously ill, but weak from want of nourishment through indigestion. In the evening she assented quite willingly to Hardy's suggestion that he should go to a rehearsal in Dorchester of a play made by the local company, that he had promised to attend. When he got back at eleven o'clock all the house was in bed and he did not disturb her.

The next morning the maid told him in answer to his inquiry that when she had as usual entered Mrs. Hardy's room a little earlier she had said she was better, and would probably get up later on;

but that she now seemed worse. Hastening to her he was shocked to find her much worse, lying with her eyes closed and unconscious. The doctor came quite quickly, but before he arrived her breathing softened and ceased.

It was the day fixed for the performance of *The Trumpet-Major* in Dorchester, and it being found impossible to put off the play at such short notice, so many people having come from a distance for it, it was produced, an announcement of Mrs. Hardy's unexpected death being made from the stage.

Many years earlier she had fancied that she would like to be buried at Plymouth, her native place; but on going there to the funeral of her father she found that during a 'restoration' the family vault in Charles Churchyard, though it was not full, had been broken into, if not removed altogether, either to alter the entrance to the church, or to erect steps; and on coming back she told her husband that this had quite destroyed her wish to be taken there, since she could not lie near her parents.

There was one nook, indeed, which in some respects was preeminently the place where she might have lain — the graveyard of St. Juliot, Cornwall — whose dilapidated old church had been the cause of their meeting, and in whose precincts the early scenes of their romance had a brief being. But circumstances ordered otherwise. Hardy did not favour the thought of her being carried to that lonely coast unless he could be carried thither likewise in due time; and on this point all was uncertain. The funeral was accordingly at Stinsford, a mile from Dorchester and Max Gate, where the Hardys had buried for many years.

She had not mentioned to her husband, or to anybody else so far as he could discover, that she had any anticipations of death before it occurred so suddenly. Yet on his discovery of the manuscript of her 'Recollections', written only a year earlier, it seemed as if some kind of presentiment must have crossed her mind that she was not to be much longer in the world, and that if her brief memories were to be written it were best to write them quickly. This is, however, but conjecture.

## CHAPTER XXXII

# REVISITINGS, SECOND MARRIAGE, AND WAR WRITINGS

1913-1914: Aet. 72 — '74

Many poems were written by Hardy at the end of the previous year and the early part of this — more than he had ever written before in the same space of time — as can be seen by referring to their subjects, as well as to the dates attached to them. To adopt Walpole's words concerning Gray, Hardy was 'in flower' in these days, and, like Gray's, his flower was sad-coloured.

On March 6 — almost to a day, forty-three years after his first journey to Cornwall — he started for St. Juliot, putting up at Bos - castle, and visiting Pentargan Bay and Beeny Cliff, on which he had not once set foot in the long interval.

He found the Rectory and other scenes with which he had been so familiar changed a little, but not greatly, and returning by way of Plymouth arranged for a memorial tablet to Mrs. Hardy in the church with which she had been so closely associated as organist before her marriage, and in other ways. The tablet was afterwards erected to his own design, as was also the tomb in Stinsford Churchyard — in the preparation of which memorials he had to revive a species of work that he had been unaccustomed to since the years of his architectural pupillage.

In June he left for Cambridge to receive the honorary degree of Litt.D., and lunched with the Master of Magdalene (also Vice - Chancellor), Dr. Donaldson, and Lady Albinia Donaldson, meeting — some for the first and last time — the Master of Trinity and Mrs. Butler, John Sargent, Arthur Benson, Henry Jackson, Vice-Master of Trinity and the Regius Professor of Greek, Sir James Murray, and many others. The visit was full of interest for Hardy as the sequel to his long indirect connection with the University in several ways, partly through the many graduates who were his friends, his frequent visits to the place, and his intention in the eighteen-sixties to go up himself for a pass-degree, which was abandoned mainly owing to his discovery that he could not conscientiously carry out his idea of taking Orders. A few weeks later he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Magdalene, as will be seen.

In July he was in London once or twice, meeting Dr. Page, the American Ambassador, Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, and others here and there. A German translation of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* under the title of *Der Btirgermeister* was begun as a serial in Germany at this time, and in the same month the gift of the MS. of his poem on Swinburne's death was acknowledged by the Newnes Librarian at Putney, an offer which had originated with Mr. Sydney Cockerell. In response to a request from the Secretary of the General Blind Association, he gave his permission to put some of his books in prose and verse into Braille type for the use of the blind, adding:

‘I cannot very well suggest which, as I do not know the length you require. . . . If a full-length novel, I would suggest *The Trumpet - Major*. If verse, the *Battle of Trafalgar* scenes or the *Battle of Waterloo* scenes from *The Dynasts*, or a selection from the *Poems*. . . I am assuming that you require scenes of action rather than those of reflection or analysis.’

In August he was at Blandford with Mr. John Lane searching about for facts and scenes that might illustrate the life of Alfred Stevens, the sculptor, whose best-known work is the *Wellington monument* in *St. Paul’s*, and who was born and grew up in this town. Hardy had suggested that it ought to be written before it was too late, and Mr. Lane had taken up the idea. The house of his birth was discovered, but not much material seems to have been gained. It was not till a year or two later that Hardy discovered that Stevens’s father painted the *Ten Commandments* in the church of *Blandford St. Mary*, his name being in the corner: ‘*G. Stevens, Blandford, 1825*’.

‘September 15. Thoughts on the recent school of novel-writers. They forget in their insistence on life, and nothing but life, in a plain slice, that a story must be worth the telling, that a good deal of life is not worth any such thing, and that they must not occupy a reader’s time with what he can get at first hand anywhere around him.’

The autumn glided on with its trifling incidents. In the muddle of Hardy’s unmistressed housekeeping animal pets of his late wife died, strayed, or were killed, much to Hardy’s regret; short visits were paid by friends, including Mr. Frederic Harrison; and in November, while staying with the Master of his College, Hardy was admitted in chapel as Honorary Fellow. ‘The ceremony, which consists of a Latin formula of admission before the Altar, and the handing-in of the new Fellow into his stall, was not unimpressive’, said the *Cambridge Review*. Hardy had read the lessons in church in his young manhood, besides having had much to do with churches in other ways, and the experience may have recalled the old ecclesiastical times. In the evening he dined in Hall, where ‘the Master proposed the health of him who was no longer a guest, but one of the Society, and the day’s proceedings terminated happily’, continued the *Cambridge Review*. It was an agreeable evening for Hardy, Mr. A. E. Housman and Sir Clifford Allbutt being present as guests among others of his friends.

A good sketch-painting of him was made this autumn by Mr. Fuller Maitland for his friend Arthur Benson, to be hung with the other portraits in the hall of *Magdalene College*; and in the middle of November the *Dorchester amateurs’* version of *The Woodlanders*, adapted by themselves, was performed on the *Dorchester stage*, but Hardy was not present on the occasion.

In the December of this year M. Anatole France was entertained at a dinner in London by a committee of men of letters and of affairs. Hardy was much disappointed at being unable to attend; and he wrote to express his regret, adding:

‘In these days when the literature of narrative and verse seems to be losing its qualities as an art, and to be assuming a structureless and conglomerate character, it is a privilege that we should have come into our midst a writer who is faithful to the principles that make for permanence, who never forgets the value of organic form and

symmetry, the force of reserve, and the emphasis of understatement, even in his lighter works.'

In February of the year following (1914) the subject of this memoir married the present writer.

In the spring of the same year Hardy was at the dinner of the Royal Academy, and he and his wife saw several friends in London, afterwards proceeding to Cambridge, where they spent a pleasant week in visiting and meeting Mr. Arthur Benson, Professor and Mrs. Bury, Mr. and Mrs. Cockerell, Professor Quiller-Couch, the Master of Jesus, Dr. James, Provost of King's, Dr. and Mrs. MacTaggart, and the oldest friend of Hardy's in Cambridge, or for that matter anywhere, Mr. Charles Moule, President and formerly Tutor of Corpus, who had known him as a boy. A dinner at St. John's — the 'Porte - Latin Feast' — with the mellow radiance of the dark mahogany tables, curling tobacco smoke, and old red wine, charmed Hardy, in spite of his drinking very little, and not smoking at all. A visit to Girton and tea with Miss Jones and members of her staff ended the Cambridge week for them.

Although Hardy had no sort of anticipation of the restrictions that the war was so soon to bring on motoring, he went about in a car this early summer almost as if he foresaw what was coming, taking his wife to Exeter, Plymouth, and back across Dartmoor.

After serving as a Grand Juror at the Assizes he dined during June with the Royal Institute of British Architects, a body of which he had never lost sight on account of his early associations with the profession, though nearly all the members he had known — except his old acquaintance, the Vice-President, John Slater, and the Blom - fields — had passed away.

A communication from men of letters and art in Germany who thought of honouring the memory of Friedrich Nietzsche on the seventieth anniversary of his birth, was the occasion of Hardy's writing at this date:

'It is a question whether Nietzsche's philosophy is sufficiently coherent to be of great ultimate value, and whether those views of his which seem so novel and striking appear thus only because they have been rejected for so many centuries as inadmissible under humane rule.

'A continuity of consciousness through the human race would be the only justification of his proposed measures.

'He assumes throughout the great worth intrinsically of human masterfulness. The universe is to him a perfect machine which only requires thorough handling to work wonders. He forgets that the universe is an imperfect machine, and that to do good with an ill - working instrument requires endless adjustments and compromises.'

There was nothing to tell of the convulsion of nations that was now imminent, and in Dorset they visited various friends and stayed a week-end with Sir Henry and Lady Hoare at Stourhead (where they met as their fellow-guests Mr. and Mrs. Charles Whibley, the former of whom Hardy had long known, though they had not met for years). To Hardy as to ordinary civilians the murder at Serajevo was a lurid and

striking tragedy, but carried no indication that it would much affect English life. On July 28th they were at a quiet little garden-party near Dorchester, and still there was no sign of the coming storm: the next day they lunched about five miles off with friends at Ilsington, and paid a call or two — this being the day on which war was declared by Austria on Serbia. Hardy made a few entries just after this date:

‘August 4, 11 p.m. War declared with Germany.’

On this day they were lunching at Athelhampton Hall, six miles off, where a telegram came announcing the rumour to be fact. A discussion arose about food, and there was almost a panic at the table, nobody having any stock. But the full dimensions of what the English declaration meant were not quite realised at once. Their host disappeared to inquire into his stock of flour. The whole news and what it involved burst upon Hardy’s mind next morning, for though most people were saying the war would be over by Christmas he felt it might be a matter of years and untold disaster.

‘August 9-15. English Expeditionary Force crosses the Channel to assist France and Belgium.’

‘August onwards. War excitement. “Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi!”’ It was the quotation Hardy had made at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war forty-four years earlier, when he was quite a young man.

He had been completely at fault, as he often owned, on the coming so soon of such a convulsion as the war, though only three or four months before it broke out he had printed a prophetic poem in the *Fortnightly* entitled ‘Channel Firing’, whereof the theme,

All nations striving strong to make Red war yet redder,  
was, to say the least, a perception singularly coincident. However, as stated, that it would really burst, he doubted. When the noisy crew of music-hall Jingoese said exultingly, years earlier, that Germany was as anxious for war as they were themselves, he had felt convinced that they were wrong. He had thought that the play, *An Englishman’s Home*, which he witnessed by chance when it was produced, ought to have been suppressed as provocative, since it gave Germany, even if pacific in intention beforehand, a reason, or excuse, for directing her mind on a war with England. A long study of the European wars of a century earlier had made it appear to him that common sense had taken the place of bluster in men’s minds; and he felt this so strongly that in the very year before war burst on Europe he wrote some verse called ‘His Country’, bearing on the decline of antagonism between peoples; and as long before as 1901 he composed a poem called ‘The Sick Battle-God’, which assumed that zest for slaughter was dying out. It was seldom he had felt so heavy at heart as in seeing his old view of the gradual bettering of human nature, as expressed in these verses of 1901, completely shattered by the events of 1914 and onwards. War, he had supposed, had grown too coldly scientific to kindle again for long all the ardent romance which had characterized it down to Napoleonic times, when the most intense battles were over in a day, and the most exciting tactics and strategy led to the death of comparatively few combatants. Hence nobody was more amazed than he at the

German incursion into Belgium, and the contemplation of it led him to despair of the world's history thenceforward. He had not reckoned on the power still retained there by the governing castes whose interests were not the people's. It was, however, no use to despair, and since Germany had not shown the rationality he had expected of her, he presently began to consider if there was anything he — an old man of seventy-four — could do in the critical circumstances. A slight opening seemed to offer when he received a letter from the Government asking his attendance at a private Conference in which eminent literary men and women who commanded confidence abroad 'should take steps to place the strength of the British case and the principles for which the British troops and their allies are fighting before the populations of neutral countries'. He went to London expressly to attend, as explained in the following memorandum:

'September 2. To London in obedience to a summons by Mr. Masterman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, at the instance of the Cabinet, for the organization of public statements of the strength of the British case and principles in the war by well-known men of letters.'

This meeting was at Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, and in view of what the country was entering on has a historic significance. There was a medley of writers present, including, in addition to the Chairman, Mr. Masterman, among Hardy's friends and acquaintance, Sir James Barrie, Sir Henry Newbolt, J. W. Mackail, Arthur and Monsignor Benson, John Galsworthy, Sir Owen Seaman, G. M. Trevelyan, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Masefield, Robert Bridges, Anthony Hope Hawkins, Gilbert Murray, and many others. Whatever the effect of the discussion, the scene was impressive to more than one of them there. In recalling it Hardy said that the yellow September sun shone in from the dusty street with a tragic cast upon them as they sat round the large blue table, full of misgivings, yet unforeseeing in all their completeness the tremendous events that were to follow. The same evening Hardy left London — 'the streets hot and sad, and bustling with soldiers and recruits'

to set about some contribution to the various forms of manifesto that had been discussed.

In Dorset the Hardys kept up between-whiles their motoring through September, visiting Broadwindsor, Axminster, the summit called 'Cross-in-hand', from which both the Bristol and English Channels are visible, and on which many years earlier Hardy had written a traditional poem, 'The Lost Pyx'; also Bridport, Abbots - bury, Portisham, including the old residence of Admiral Hardy's father, still intact with its dial in the garden, dated 1767.

In the same month he published in *The Times* the soldiers' war - song called 'Men who March Away', which won an enormous popularity; and in October wrote 'England to Germany', a sonnet 'On the Belgian Expatriation' for King Albert's Book, and in the papers a letter on the destruction of Reims Cathedral. This month, too, he brought out another volume of verses entitled *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries* — the book being made up of the 'Satires in Fifteen Glimpses', published in a periodical in 1911, and other poems of a very different kind with which the satires ill harmonized



— the latter filling but fifteen pages in a volume of 230 pages. These were caustically humorous productions which had been issued with a light heart before the war. So much shadow, domestic and public, had passed over his head since he had written the satires that he was in no mood now to publish humour or irony, and hence he would readily have suppressed them if they had not already gained such currency from magazine publication that he could not do it. The ‘Lyrics and Reveries’, which filled the far greater part of the volume, contained some of the tenderest and least satirical verse that ever came from his pen.

In November he and his wife went to London to a rehearsal of a portion of *The Dynasts*, which Mr. Granville-Barker was then preparing for the stage at the Kingsway Theatre, and which was produced there on the 25th November, though the author had never dreamt of a single scene of it being staged. Owing to a cold Hardy was unable to be present on the first representation, but he went up two or three weeks later.

Hardy’s idea had been that the performance should be called what it really was, namely, ‘Scenes from *The Dynasts*’ — as being less liable to misconception than the book-title unmodified, since people might suppose the whole epic-drama was to be presented, which was quite an impossibility. However, as the scheme of the production was Mr. Granville-Barker’s own, as he had himself selected all the scenes, Hardy did not interfere, either with this or any other detail. The one feature he could particularly have wished altered was that of retaining indoor architecture for outdoor scenes, it being difficult for the spectator to realise — say in the *Battle of Waterloo* — that an open field was represented when pillars and architraves hemmed it in. He thought that for the open scenes a perfectly plain green floorcloth and blue backcloth would have suited better. But the theatre’s resources of space were very limited. However, the production was artistically successful.

More verses on the war were written by Hardy in December, including ‘An Appeal to America’. A sad vigil, during which no bells were heard at Max Gate, brought in the first New Year of this unprecedented ‘breaking of nations’.

It may be added here that the war destroyed all Hardy’s belief in the gradual ennoblement of man, a belief he had held for many years, as is shown by poems like ‘*The Sick Battle-God*’, and others. He said he would probably not have ended *The Dynasts* as he did end it if he could have foreseen what was going to happen within a few years.

Moreover, the war gave the coup de grace to any conception he may have nourished of a fundamental ultimate Wisdom at the back of things. With his views on necessitation, or at most a very limited free will, events seemed to show him that a fancy he had often held and expressed, that the never-ending push of the Universe was an unpurposive and irresponsible groping in the direction of the least resistance, might possibly be the real truth. ‘Whether or no’, he would say,

‘*Desine fata Deum ficti sperare precando.*’

## CHAPTER XXXIII

WAR EFFORTS, DEATHS OF RELATIVES, AND 'MOMENTS OF VISION'  
1915-1917: Aet. 74-77

He seems to have been studying the Principia Ethica of Dr. G. E. Moore early this year; and also the philosophy of Bergson. Writing on the latter in answer to a letter from Dr. C. W. Saleeby on the subject, he states:

'I suppose I may think that you are more or less a disciple of his, or fellow-philosopher with him. Therefore you may be rather shocked at some views I hold about his teaching — or did hold, anyhow. His theories are much pleasanter ones than those they contest, and I for one would gladly believe them; but I cannot help feeling all the time that his is rather an imaginative and poetical mind than a reasoner's, and that for his charming and attractive assertions he does not adduce any proofs whatever. His use of the word "creation" seems to me loose and vague. Then as to conduct: I fail to see how, if it is not mechanism, it can be other than caprice, though he denies it. Yet I quite agree with him in regarding finalism as an erroneous doctrine. He says, however, that mechanism and finalism are only external views of our conduct — "Our conduct extends between them, and slips much further". Well, it may, but he nowhere shows that it does.

'Then again: "A mechanistic conception . . . treats the living as the inert. . . . Let us, on the contrary, trace a line of demarcation between the inert and the living." Well, let us, to our great pleasure, if we can see why we should introduce an inconsistent rupture of Order into a uniform and consistent Law of the same.

'You will see how much I want to have the pleasure of being a Bergsonian. But I fear his theory is, in the bulk, only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes — an ingenious fancy without real foundation, and more complicated than the fancies he endeavours to overthrow.

'You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist for all this.

Half my time — particularly when writing verse — I "believe" (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc. But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more for that. . . .

'By the way, how do you explain the following from the Cambridge Magazine, by a writer whom I imagine to be of a school of thinkers akin to your own, concerning Herbert Spencer's doctrine of the Unknowable?

"We doubt if there is a single philosopher alive to-day who would subscribe to it. Even men of science are gradually discarding it in favour of Realism and Pragmatism."

'I am utterly bewildered to understand how the doctrine that, beyond the knowable, there must always be an unknown, can be displaced.'

In April a distant cousin of promising ability — a lieutenant in the 5 th Batt. Dorset Regiment — came to see him before going abroad, never to be seen by him again; and in the following month he sat to Mr. [Sir Hamo] Thornycroft for a model of a head

which the sculptor wished to make. At home he heard that two single-page songs in manuscript which he had sent to the Red Cross Sale at Christie's had fetched £48 — 'Men who March Away' and 'The Night of Trafalgar'.

'May 14. Have been reading a review of Henry James. It is remarkable that a writer who has no grain of poetry, or humour, or spontaneity in his productions, can yet be a good novelist. Meredith has some poetry, and yet I can read James when I cannot look at Meredith.'

'May 27. "Georgian Poets". It is a pity that these promising young writers adopted such a title. The use of it lacks the modesty of true genius, as it confuses the poetic chronology, and implies that the hitherto recognized original Georgians — Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, etc., are negligible; or at any rate says that they do not care whether it implies such or no.'

'June 10. Motored with F. to Bridport, Lyme, Exeter, and Torquay. Called on Mr. and Mrs. Eden Phillpotts. Saw their garden and beautiful flowers. Then back to Teignmouth, Dawlish, and Exeter, putting up at the "Clarence" opposite the Cathedral.'

'June ix. To Cathedral — then home via Honiton, Chard, Crewkerne.'

In July they were in London on a visit to Lady St. Helier, and paid a long-promised call on Sir Frederick and Lady Treves in Richmond Park. Later on in the month he was at the funeral at Stinsford of a suddenly lost friend, Mr. Douglas Thornton the banker, and received visits from Sir Henry Hoare, who motored over from Stour - head, and Professor Flinders Petrie, whom he had known but not seen for many years.

In August he learnt of the loss of his second cousin's son, Lieutenant George, who had been killed that month in Gallipoli during a brave advance. Hardy makes this note of him:

'Frank George, though so remotely related, is the first one of my family to be killed in battle for the last hundred years, so far as I know. He might say *Militavi non sine gloria* — short as his career has been.'

In the autumn Hardy sometimes, and his wife continually, assisted in the evenings at the soldiers' tea-room established in the Dorchester Corn Exchange; they visited the Australian Camp near Weymouth, and spent two or three days at Melbury House. On returning he learnt that his elder sister was again seriously ill. She died the same week, at his brother's house at Talbothays. The two poems, 'Logs on the Hearth' and 'In the Garden', in *Moments of Vision*, evidently refer to her, as also the Fourth person in 'Looking Across', in the same volume.

The hobby of her life had been portrait-painting, and she had shown her aptitude in catching a likeness, particularly of her relations, her picture of her mother in oils bearing a striking resemblance to the striking original. But she had been doomed to school-teaching, and organ-playing in this or that village church during all her active years, and hence was unable to devote sufficient time to pictorial art till leisure was too late to be effective. Her character was a somewhat unusual one, being remarkably unassertive, even when she was in the right, and could easily have proved it; so that the point of the following remark about her is manifest:

‘November 29. Buried her under the yew-tree where the rest of us lie. As Mr. Cowley read the words of the psalm “Dixi Custo - diam” they reminded me strongly of her nature, particularly when she was young: “ I held my tongue and spake nothing: I kept silence, yea, even from good words.” That was my poor Mary exactly. She never defended herself; and that not from timidity, but indifference to opinion.’

The funeral day had been cold and wet, and Hardy was laid up l.t.h.2 b till the end of the year with a violent bronchitis and racking cough. Nevertheless, during December, in response to a request from Winchester House for a contribution to a ‘Pro-Ally Film’ of paragraphs in facsimile from authors’ writings, which was ‘to be exhibited throughout the world and make its appeal particularly to the neutral nations’, he was able to send the following passages from Pitt’s actual speech in the House of Commons a hundred years earlier, as closely paraphrased in *The Dynasts*:

#### ENGLAND AT BAY

The strange fatality that haunts the times  
Wherein our lot is cast, has no example;  
Times are they fraught with peril, trouble, gloom;  
We have to mark their lourings and to face them.

#### ENGLAND RESOLUTE

Unprecedented and magnificent  
As were our strivings in the previous wars,  
Our efforts in the present shall transcend them,  
As men will learn.

In January of the next year (1916) a war ballad of some weirdness, called ‘The Dead and the Living One’, which had been written several months before, was published in the *Sphere* and the *New York World*, and later reprinted in *Moments of Vision*.

In February he was again confined to his room with a cold, the previous one never having quite gone off. But he managed to send to the Red Cross Sale for this year, not any work of his own, but ‘A Sheaf of Victorian Letters’, written to T. H. by many other writers, nearly all deceased, and of a very interesting kind. Mrs. Hardy also sent to the same sale three short MSS. of his: ‘The Oxen’, ‘The Breaking of Nations’, and a fragment of a story — the whole fetching £72: 10s.

A *Book of Homage to Shakespeare* was printed in April, for which Hardy had written a piece entitled ‘To Shakespeare after three hundred years’, afterwards included in the volume called *Moments of Vision*.

In June he served again as Grand Juror at the Assizes, and was at a rehearsal in Dorchester of *Wessex Scenes* from *The Dynasts*. This, made by ‘The Hardy Players’, was quite a different selection from that of Mr. Granville-Barker, embracing scenes of a local character only, from which could be gathered in echoes of drum and trumpet and alarming rumours, the great events going on elsewhere. Though more limited in scope than the former, it was picturesque and effective as performed by the local actors at the Weymouth Pavilion a fortnight later, and was well appreciated by the London press.

In the same month of June he paid a visit with his wife and remaining sister to a house he had never entered for forty years. This was Riverside Villa, Sturminster Newton — the first he had furnished after his first marriage, and in which he had written *The Return of the Native*. He found it much as it had been in the former years; and it was possibly this visit which suggested the poems about Sturminster that were published in *Moments of Vision*. Motorings to Melbury again, to Swanage, and again to Bridport, passed the midsummer days.

‘July 27. *Times Literary Supplement* on “What is Militarism?” The article suggests a term to express the cause of the present war, “hypochondria” (in the Prussians). I should rather have said “apprehensiveness”. The term would fit some of the facts like a glove.’

In September they set out by train for Cornwall, breaking the journey at Launceston. Thence they went on to Camelford, Bos - castle, and St. Juliot, to see if Hardy’s design and inscription for the tablet in the church had been properly carried out and erected. At Tintagel they met quite by accident Hardy’s friends the Stuart - Wortleys, which made their sojourn at that romantic spot a very pleasant one.

‘September 10. Sunday. To Tintagel Church. We sat down in a seat bordering the passage to the transept, but the vicar appalled us by coming to us in his surplice and saying we were in the way of the choir, who would have to pass there. He banished us to the back of the transept. However, when he began his sermon we walked out. He thought it was done to be even with him, and looked his indignation; but it was really because we could not see the nave lengthwise, which my wife, Emma, had sketched in watercolours when she was a young woman before it was “restored”, so that I was interested in noting the changes, as also was F., who was familiar with the sketch. It was saddening enough, though doubtless only a chance, that we were inhospitably received in a church so much visited and appreciated by one we both had known so well. The matter was somewhat mended, however, by their singing the beautiful 34th Psalm to Smart’s fine tune, “Wiltshire”. By the by, that the most poetical verse of that psalm is omitted from it in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* shows the usual ineptness of hymn selectors. We always sang it at Stinsford. But then, we sang there in the good old High-and-Dry Church way — straight from the New Version.’

Multifarious matters filled up the autumn — among others a visit to the large camp of some 5000 German prisoners in Dorchester; also visits to the English wounded in hospital, which conjunction led him to say:

‘At the German prisoners’ camp, including the hospital, operating - room, etc., were many sufferers. One Prussian, in much pain, died whilst I was with him — to my great relief, and his own. Men lie helpless here from wounds: in the hospital a hundred yards off other men, English, lie helpless from wounds — each scene of suffering caused by the other!’

‘These German prisoners seem to think that we are fighting to exterminate Germany, and though it has been said that, so far from it, we are fighting to save what is best in Germany, Cabinet ministers do not in my opinion speak this out clearly enough.’

In October the Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy were published in Macmillan's Golden Treasury Series, a little book that received some very good reviews; and in December the J Vessex Scenes from *The Dynasts*, which had been produced earlier at Weymouth, were performed at Dorchester. Some of Hardy's friends, including Sir James Barrie and Mr. Sydney Cockerell, came to see the piece, but Hardy could not accompany them, being kept in bed by another cold. The performances were for Red Cross Societies.

'January 1, 1917. Am scarcely conscious of New Year's Day.'

'January 6. I find I wrote in 1888 that "Art is concerned with seemings only", which is true.'

To the Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature 'February 8, 1917.

'Dear Sir,

'I regret that as I live in a remote part of the country I cannot attend the meeting of the Entente Committee.

'In respect of the Memorandum proposing certain basic principles of international education for promoting ethical ideals that shall conduce to a League of Peace, I am in hearty agreement with the proposition.

'I would say in considering a *modus operandi*:

'That nothing effectual will be accomplished in the cause of Peace till the sentiment of Patriotism be freed from the narrow meaning attaching to it in the past (still upheld by Junkers and Jingo - ists) and be extended to the whole globe.

'On the other hand, that the sentiment of Foreignness — if the sense of a contrast be really rhetorically necessary — attach only to other planets and their inhabitants, if any.

'I may add that I have been writing in advocacy of those views for the last twenty years.'

To Dr. L. Litwinski 'March 7, 1917.

'Dear Sir,

'I feel much honoured by your request that I should be a member of the Committee for commemorating two such writers of distinction as Verhaeren and Sienkiewicz. But for reasons of increasing years and my living so far from London I have latterly been compelled to give up membership with several associations; and I am therefore sorry to say that I must refrain from joining any new committee in which I should be unable actively to support the cause, even when so worthy as the present one.'

In this March also a sonnet by him named 'A Call to National Service' was printed in the newspapers. An article in the April Fortnightly by Mr. Courtney, the editor, on Hardy's writings, especially *The Dynasts*, interested him not only by its appreciativeness, but also by the aspect some features of the drama assumed in the reviewer's mind:

'Like so many critics, Mr. Courtney treats my works of art as if they were a scientific system of philosophy, although I have repeatedly stated in prefaces and elsewhere that the views in them are seemings, provisional impressions only, used for artistic purposes

because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe.

‘As to his winding up about a God of Mercy, etc. — if I wished to make a smart retort, which I really should hate doing, I might say that the Good-God theory having, after some thousands of years of trial, produced the present infamous and disgraceful state of Europe — that most Christian Continent! — a theory of a Goodless-and-Badless God (as in *The Dynasts*) might perhaps be given a trial with advantage.

‘Much confusion has arisen and much nonsense has been talked latterly in connection with the word “atheist”. I have never understood how anybody can be one except in the sense of disbelieving in a tribal god, man-shaped, fiery-faced and tyrannous, who flies into a rage on the slightest provocation; or as (according to Horace Walpole) Sir Francis Dashwood defined the Providence believed in by the Lord Shrewsbury of that date to be — a figure like an old angry man in a blue cloak. . . . Fifty meanings attach to the word “God” nowadays, the only reasonable meaning being the Cause of Things, whatever that cause may be.<sup>1</sup> Thus no modern thinker can be an atheist in the modern sense, while all modern thinkers are atheists in the ancient and exploded sense.’

In this connection he said once — perhaps oftener — that although invidious critics had cast slurs upon him as Nonconformist, Agnostic, Atheist, Infidel, Immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist, or something else equally opprobrious in their eyes, they had never thought of calling him what they might have called him much more plausibly — churchy; not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions ruled. As a child, to be a parson had been his dream; moreover, he had had several clerical relatives who held livings; while his grandfather, father, uncle, brother, wife, cousin, and two sisters had been musicians in various churches over a period covering altogether more than a hundred years. He himself had frequently read the church lessons, and had at one time as a young man begun reading for Cambridge with a view to taking Orders.

His vision had often been that of so many people brought up under Church of England influences, a giving of liturgical form to modern ideas, and expressing them in the same old buildings that had already seen previous reforms successfully carried out. He would say to his friends, the Warden of Keble, Arthur Benson, and others, that if the bishops only had a little courage, and would modify the liturgy by dropping preternatural assumptions out of it, few churchgoers would object to the change for long, and congregations would be trebled in a brief time. The idea was clearly expressed in the ‘Apology’ prefixed to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*.

‘June 9. It is now the time of long days, when the sun seems reluctant to take leave of the trees at evening — - the shine climbing 1 In another place he says ‘Cause’ means really but the ‘invariable antecedent up the trunks, reappearing higher, and still fondly grasping the tree - tops till long after.’

Later in the month his friend J. M. Barrie suggested that Hardy should go with him to France, to which proposal Hardy replied:

‘Max Gate, Dorchester, ‘23 June 1917.

‘My dear Barrie,

‘It was so kind of you to concoct that scheme for my accompanying you to the Front — or Back — in France. I thought it over carefully, as it was an attractive idea. But I have had to come to the conclusion that old men cannot be young men, and that I must content myself with the past battles of our country if I want to feel military. If I had been ten years younger I would have gone.

‘I hope you will have a pleasant, or rather, impressive, time, and the good company you will be in will be helpful all round. I am living in hope of seeing you on the date my wife has fixed and of renewing acquaintance with my old friend Adelphi Terrace.

‘Always sincerely yours,

‘Thomas Hardy.’

In July his poem ‘Then and Now’ was printed in *The Times*, and in the latter half of the month he and his wife paid a visit of two days to J. M. Barrie at Adelphi Terrace — a spot with which Hardy had had years of familiarity when their entertainer was still a child, and which was attractive to him on that account. Here they had some interesting meetings with other writers. Upon one memorable evening they sat in a large empty room, which was afterwards to be Sir James’s study but was then being altered and decorated. From the windows they had a fine view over the Thames, and searchlights wheeled across the sky. The only illumination within the room was from candles placed on the floor to avoid breaking war regulations, which forbade too bright lighting.

He came back to pack up in August his MS. of *Moments of Vision* and send to the Messrs. Macmillan.

In October he went with Mrs. Hardy to Plymouth, calling for a day or two upon Mr. and Mrs. Eden Phillpotts at Torquay on their way. But the weather being wet at Plymouth they abandoned their stay there and came home.

‘I hold that the mission of poetry is to record impressions, not convictions. Wordsworth in his later writings fell into the error of recording the latter. So also did Tennyson, and so do many poets when they grow old. Absit omen!

‘I fear I have always been considered the Dark Horse of contemporary English literature.

‘I was quick to bloom; late to ripen.

‘I believe it would be said by people who knew me well that I have a faculty (possibly not uncommon) for burying an emotion in my heart or brain for forty years, and exhuming it at the end of that time as fresh as when interred. For instance, the poem entitled “The Breaking of Nations” contains a feeling that moved me in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian war, when I chanced to be looking at such an agricultural incident in Cornwall. But I did not write the verses till during the war with Germany of 1914, and onwards. Query: where was that sentiment hiding itself during more than forty years?’



Hardy's mind seems to have been running on himself at this time to a degree quite unusual with him, who often said — and his actions showed it — that he took no interest in himself as a personage.

'November 13. I was a child till I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 or 50.'

The above note on his being considered a Dark Horse was apt enough, when it is known that none of the society men who met him suspected from his simple manner the potentialities of observation that were in him. This unassertive air, unconsciously worn, served him as an invisible coat almost to uncanniness. At houses and clubs where he encountered other writers and critics and world-practised readers of character, whose bearing towards him was often as towards one who did not reach their altitudes, he was seeing through them as though they were glass. He set down some cutting and satirical notes on their qualities and compass, but destroyed all of them, not wishing to leave behind him anything which could be deemed a gratuitous belittling of others.

This month Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses was published, and it may have been his occupation with the proofs that had set him thinking of himself; and also caused him to make the following entry: 'I do not expect much notice will be taken of these poems: they mortify the human sense of self-importance by showing, or suggesting, that human beings are of no matter or appreciable value in this nonchalant universe.' He subjoined the Dedication of Sordello, where the author remarks: 'My own faults of expression are many; but with care for a man or book such would be surmounted, and without it what avails the faultlessness of either?'

It was in this mood that he read such reviews of the book as were sent him.

'December 31. New Year's Eve. Went to bed at eleven. East wind. No bells heard. Slept in the New Year, as did also those "out there".'

This refers to the poem called 'Looking Across' published in the new volume, Stinsford Churchyard lying across the mead from Max Gate.

## **PART IV - LIFE'S DECLINE**

### **CHAPTER XXXIV**

#### **REFLECTIONS ON POETRY**

1918: Aet. 77-78

On January 2 Hardy attended a performance of the women land - workers in the Corn Exchange. 'Met there Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, Lady Shaftesbury, and other supporters of the movement. The girls looked most picturesque in their raiment of emancipation, which they evidently enjoyed wearing.'

Meanwhile the shadows lengthened. In the second week of the month he lost his warm-hearted neighbour, Mrs. A. Brinsley Sheridan, nee Motley, of Frampton Court. 'An old friend of thirty-two years' standing. She was, I believe, the first to call when we entered this house at Max Gate, and she remained staunch to the end of her days.'

'January 16. As to reviewing. Apart from a few brilliant exceptions, poetry is not at bottom criticized as such, that is, as a particular man's artistic interpretation of life, but with a secret eye on its theological and political propriety. Swinburne used to say to me that so it would be two thousand years hence; but I doubt it.

'As to pessimism. My motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint — in this case human ills — and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimists is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms.

'Browning said (in a line cited against me so often):

Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would triumph.

'Well, that was a lucky dreamlessness for Browning. It kept him comfortably unaware of those millions who cry with the Chorus in *Hellas*-. "Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, Salutes the rising sun!"<sup>1</sup> — or with Hyllus in the *Trachiniae*: "Mark the vast injustice of the gods!"<sup>2</sup>

'January 24. It is the unwilling mind that stultifies the contemporary criticism of poetry.'

1 Shelley's *Hellas*, line 940.2 Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, 1266.

'January 25. The reviewer so often supposes that where Art is not visible it is unknown to the poet under criticism. Why does he not think of the art of concealing art? There is a good reason why.'

'January 30. English writers who endeavour to appraise poets, and discriminate the sheep from the goats, are apt to consider that all true poets must be of one pattern in their lives and developments. But the glory of poetry lies in its largeness, admitting among its creators men of infinite variety. They must all be impractical in the conduct of their affairs; nay, they must almost, like Shelley or Marlowe, be drowned or done to death, or like Keats, die of consumption. They forgot that in the ancient world no such necessity was recognized; that Homer sang as a blind old man, that Aeschylus wrote his best up to his death at nearly seventy, that the best of Sophocles appeared between his fifty-fifth and ninetieth years, that Euripides wrote up to seventy.

'Among those who accomplished late, the poetic spark must always have been latent; but its outspringing may have been frozen and delayed for half a lifetime.'

'January 31. Performance of *The Mellstock Quire* at the Corn Exchange, Dorchester, by the local Company for Hospital purposes. Arranged for the admission of the present "Mellstock" Quire to see the resuscitated ghosts of their predecessors.'

The romantic name of 'Little Hintock' in *The Woodlanders* was advanced to a practical application in the February of this year by a request from Mr. Dampier Whetham, once Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, whose hobby when in his Dorset home was dairy farming, to be allowed to define as the 'Hintock' herd,

the fine breed of pedigree cattle he was establishing in the district which Hardy had described under that fictitious name.

In a United States periodical for March it was stated that 'Thomas Hardy is a realistic novelist who . . . has a grim determination to go down to posterity wearing the laurels of a poet'. This writer was a glaring illustration of the danger of reading motives into actions. Of course there was no 'grim determination', no thought of 'laurels'. Thomas Hardy was always a person with an unconscious, or rather unreasoning, tendency, and the poetic tendency had been his from the earliest. He would tell that it used to be said to him at Sir Arthur Blomfield's: 'Hardy, there can hardly have been anybody in the world with less ambition than you.' At this time the real state of his mind was, in his own words, that 'A sense of the truth of poetry, of its supreme place in literature, had awakened itself in me. At the risk of ruining all my worldly prospects I dabbled in it . . . was forced out of it. . . . It came back upon me. . . . All was of the nature of being led by a mood, without foresight, or regard to whither it led.'

To Professor D. A. Robertson, University of Chicago 'February 7th, 1918.

'In reply to your inquiry if I am likely to visit the United States after the war, I am sorry to say that such an event is highly improbable. . . .

'The opinion you quote from Lord Bryce to the effect that Americans do not think internationally, leads one to ask, Does any country think internationally? I should say, none. But there can be no doubt that some countries think thus more nearly than others; and in my opinion the people of America far more than the people of England.'

In April there was sold at Christie's Red Cross Sale the manuscript of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The interest of the latter — at least to Hardy himself — lay in the fact of it being a revenant — that for forty years he had had no other idea but that the manuscript had been 'pulped' after its use in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1874, since it had completely disappeared, not having been sent back with the proofs. Hardy's rather whimsical regret was that he had not written it on better paper, unforeseeing the preservation. It afterwards came to his knowledge that after the sale it went to America, and ultimately was bought off a New York dealer for the collection of Mr. A. E. Newton of Pennsylvania.

'April 30. By the will of God some men are born poetical. Of these some make themselves practical poets, others are made poets by lapse of time who were hardly recognized as such. Particularly has this been the case with the translators of the Bible. They translated into the language of their age; then the years began to corrupt that language as spoken, and to add grey lichen to the translation; until the moderns who use the corrupted tongue marvel at the poetry of the old words. When new they were not more than half so poetical. So that Coverdale, Tyndale, and the rest of them are as ghosts what they never were in the flesh.'

'May 8. A letter from Sir George Douglas carries me back to Wimborne and the time when his brother Frank lived opposite us there in the Avenue:

They are great trees, no doubt, by now,  
That were so thin in bough —

That row of limes —  
When we housed there;  
I'm loth to reckon when;  
The world has turned so many times,  
So many, since then!

Whether any more of this poem was written is not known.

Two days later Hardy was seized with a violent cough and cold which confined him for a week. However, he was well enough by the 23rd to adjudicate at the Police Court on several food-profiteering cases, undertaken as being 'the only war-work I was capable of', and to receive some old friends, including Sydney Cockerell, John Powys, Lady Ilchester, and her mother, Lady Londonderry, of whom he says: 'Never saw her again: I had known her for more than twenty - five years'. A little later came Mrs. Henry Allhusen, whom he had known from her childhood, Sir Frederick Treves, and Mr. H. M. and Mrs. Rosalind Hyndman (a charming woman), who were staying at Dorchester for the benefit of the air.

Some sense of the neglect of poetry by the modern English may have led him to write at this time:

'The poet is like one who enters and mounts a platform to give an address as announced. He opens his page, looks around, and finds the hall — empty.'

A little later he says:

'It bridges over the years to think that Gray might have seen Wordsworth in his cradle, and Wordsworth might have seen me in mine.'

Some days later:

'The people in Shakespeare act as if they were not quite closely thinking of what they are doing, but were great philosophers giving the main of their mind to the general human situation.

'I agree with Tennyson, who said he could form no idea how Shakespeare came to write his plays.

'My opinion is that a poet should express the emotion of all the ages and the thought of his own.'

## CHAPTER XXXV

### POETICAL QUESTIONS: AND MELLSTOCK CLUB-ROOM

1918-1919: Aet. 78-79

'Sunday, June 2. Seventy-eighth birthday. Several letters.' Among others was an interesting one from a lady who informed him that some years earlier she had been made the happiest woman in the world by accidentally meeting for the first time, by

the 'Druid Stone' on his lawn, at the late Mrs. Hardy's last garden-party, the man who was now her husband. And a little later came one he much valued, from a man he long had known — Mr. Charles Moule, Senior Fellow and President of Corpus, Cambridge, enclosing a charming poem to Hardy as his 'almost lifelong friend . . . Too seldom seen since far-off times' — times when the two had visited mediaeval buildings together, and dived from a boat on summer mornings into the green water of Weymouth Bay.

In September 1918 he received a circular letter asking him to assist in bringing home to people certain facts relating to the future with a view to finding a remedy, and stating that, 'It is agreed by all students of modern military methods that this war, horrible as it seems to us, is merciful in comparison with what future wars must be. Scientific munition-making is only in its infancy. The next world-war, if there is another, will find the nations provided not with thousands, but with hundreds of thousands of submarines, and all these as far surpassing the present types in power and destructiveness as they surpass the feeble beginnings of ten years ago. . . .'

In his reply he remarked:

'If it be all true that the letter prophesies, I do not think a world in which such fiendishness is possible to be worth the saving. Better let Western "civilization" perish, and the black and yellow races have a chance.

'However, as a meliorist (not a pessimist as they say) I think better of the world.'

'December 31. New Year's Eve. Did not sit up.'

At the beginning of the year 1919 Hardy received a letter and volume of verses from Miss Amy Lowell, the American poetess, who reminded him of her call at the beginning of the war — 'two bedraggled ladies', herself and her friend. Hardy did remember, and their consternation lest they should not be able to get back to their own country.

In February he signed a declaration of sympathy with the Jews in support of a movement for 'the reconstitution of Palestine as a National Home for the Jewish People', and during the spring he received letters from Quiller-Couch, Crichton-Browne, and other friends on near and dear relatives they had lost in the war; about the same time there appeared a relevant poem by Hardy in the *Athenxum* which was much liked, entitled in words from the Burial Service, 'According to the Mighty Working'.

In May Edmund Gosse wrote that he was very curious to know who drew the rather unusual illustration on the cover of the first edition of *The Trumpet-Major*. Hardy was blank on the matter for a time, until, finding a copy, he remembered that he drew it himself.

Being in London for a few days the same month he went to the dinner of the Royal Academy — the first held since the war — with his friend J. M. Barrie, with whom he was then staying, and was saddened to find how many of the guests and Academicians that he had been formerly accustomed to meet there had disappeared from the scene. He felt that he did not wish to go again, and, indeed, he never did. Among the incidents of this visit was a meeting at Lady St. Helier's with Dr. Bernard, Archbishop of Dublin, and a discussion with him on Coverdale's translation of the Psalms, and the inferiority

of the Latin Vulgate in certain passages of them, with which Dr. Bernard agreed, sending him afterwards the two versions in parallel readings.

On his birthday in June he did what he had long intended to do — took his wife and sister to Salisbury by the old road which had been travelled by his and their forefathers in their journeys to London — via Blandford, Woodyates Inn, and Harnham Hill, whence Constable had painted his famous view of the cathedral, and where the track was still accessible to wheels. Woodyates Inn — now no longer such, to the surprise of everybody since the revival of road traffic — still retained its genial hostelry appearance, and reminded Hardy of the entry in the diary of one of the daughters of George the Third after she and the rest of the family had halted there: ‘At Woodyates Inn . . . had a beastly breakfast’. It is said that Browning’s great-grandfather was once the landlord of this famous inn.

In a reply to a letter of this date concerning a new literary periodical started in Canada, he adds, after some commendatory remarks:

‘But why does the paper stultify its earlier articles by advertising “The Best Sellers”? Of all marks of the un-literary journal this is the clearest. If the Canadian Bookman were to take a new line and advertise eulogistically the worst sellers, it might do something towards its object.’

Replying to a birthday letter from Mrs. Arthur Henniker, Hardy writes:

‘Max Gate, 5 June 1919.

‘Sincere thanks for your good wishes, my dear friend, which I echo back towards you. I should care more for my birthdays if at each succeeding one I could see any sign of real improvement in the world — as at one time I fondly hoped there was; but I fear that what appears much more evident is that it is getting worse and worse. All development is of a material and scientific kind — and scarcely any addition to our knowledge is applied to objects philanthropic and ameliorative. I almost think that people were less pitiless towards their fellow-creatures — human and animal — under the Roman Empire than they are now; so why does not Christianity throw up the sponge and say, I am beaten, and let another religion take its place?’

‘I suddenly remember that we had a call from our Bishop and his wife two or three days ago, so that perhaps it is rather shabby of me to write as above. By a curious coincidence we had motored to Salisbury that very day, and were in his cathedral when he was at our house.

‘Do you mean to go to London for any length of time this summer? We are not going again till I don’t know when. We squeezed a good deal into the four days we were there, and I got a bad throat as usual, but it has gone off. At Lady St. Helier’s we met the Archbishop of Dublin (English Church), and found him a pleasant man. We also met several young poets at Barrie’s, where we were staying.

‘We do hope you are well — in “rude health” as they call it. Florence sends her love, and I am,

‘Ever affectionately,

‘Th. H.’

Shortly after his birthday he received a charming volume of holograph poems, beautifully bound, from some forty or fifty living poets. The mark of recognition so appealed to him that he determined to answer every one of the contributors by letter, and ultimately did so, though it took him a long while; saying that if they could take the trouble to write the poems he could certainly take the trouble to write the letters. It was almost his first awakening to the consciousness that an opinion had silently grown up as it were in the night, that he was no mean power in the contemporary world of poetry.

This 'Poets' Tribute' had been arranged by his friend Siegfried Sassoon, who brought the gift and placed it in Hardy's hand.

It had impressed him all the more as coming just after his reading quite by chance in an Australian paper a quotation from a recent English review of his verse — belittling one of the poems — that called 'On Sturminster Foot-Bridge' — in a manner that showed the critic to be quite unaware of what was called 'onomatopoeia' in poetry, the principle on which the lines had been composed. They were intended to convey by their rhythm the impression of a clucking of ripples into riverside holes when blown upon by an up-stream wind; so that when his reviewer jested on the syllables of the verse sounding like milk in a cart he was simply stating that the author had succeeded in doing what he had tried to do — the sounds being similar. As the jest by the English review had come back to England from Australia, where it had been quoted to Hardy's damage without the context, he took the trouble to explain the matter to the writer of the article, which he would probably have left undone if it had not so frequently happened that his intentions were shown up as blunders. But he did not get a more satisfactory reply than that the critics, like the writer, were sheep in wolves' clothing, and meant no harm.

Hardy's loyalty to his friends was shown by his devotion to the Moule family, members of which he had known intimately when he was a young man. The following is probably the last letter he wrote to one whom he could remember as a small boy:

'29 June 1919.

'My dear Bishop of Durham,

'You may agree with me in thinking it a curious coincidence that the evening before your letter arrived, and when it probably was just posted, we were reading a chapter in Job, and on coming to the verse, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come", I interrupted and said: "That was the text of the Vicar of Fordington one Sunday evening about 1860". And I can hear his voice repeating the text as the sermon went on — in the way they used to repeat it in those days — just as if it were yesterday. I wonder if you have ever preached from that text; I daresay you have. I should add that he delivered his discourse without note of any kind.

'My warm thanks for your good feeling about my birthday. The thoughts of friends about one at these times take off some of the sadness they bring as one gets old.

'The study of your father's life (too short, really) has interested me much. I well remember the cholera years in Fordington; you might have added many details. For

instance, every morning a man used to wheel the clothing and bed-linen of those who had died in the night out into the mead, where the Vicar had a large copper set. Some was boiled there, and some burnt. He also had large fires kindled in Mill Street to carry off infection. An excellent plan I should think.

‘Many thanks, too, for the volume of poems which duly came. ‘Apollo at Pherae’ seems to me remarkably well constructed in “plot”, and the verse facile: I don’t quite know how you could have acquired such readiness at such an early date, and the influence of Milton is not excessive — at least I think not.

‘I hope you will let us know when you come this way again.’

August. The Collected edition of Hardy’s poems was published about this time in two volumes, the first containing the shorter poems, and the second *The Dynasts*.

October. A curious question arose in Hardy’s mind at this date on whether a romancer was morally justified in going to extreme lengths of assurance — after the manner of Defoe — in respect of a tale he knew to be absolutely false. Thirty-seven years earlier, when much pressed to produce something of the nature of a fireside yarn, he had invented a picturesque account of a stealthy nocturnal visit to England by Napoleon in 1804, during the war, to spy out a good spot for invasion. Being struck with the extreme improbability of such a story, he added a circumstantial framework describing it as an old local tradition to blind the reader to the hoax. When it was published he was much surprised at people remarking to him: ‘I see you have made use of that well-known tradition of Napoleon’s landing’. He then supposed that, strange as it seemed, such a story must have been in existence without his knowledge, and that perhaps the event had happened. So the matter rested till the time at which we have arrived, when a friend who was interested made inquiries, and was assured by historians and annalists whom he consulted that such a visit would have been fatuous, and wellnigh impossible. Moreover, that there had never existed any such improbable tradition. Hence arose Hardy’s aforesaid case of conscience as to being too natural in the art he could practise so well. Had he not long discontinued the writing of romances he would, he said, have put at the beginning of each new one: ‘Understand that however true this book may be in essence, in fact it is utterly untrue’.

Being interested in a dramatic case of piracy on the high seas, which might have happened a hundred or two hundred years before, Hardy and his wife went to the October assizes, on the invitation of Mr. Justice Darling, and sat through the case. Such sensational trials came to quiet Dorset whenever the port of landing was in the county, even if they happened a thousand miles off.

On October 30 the following was written at his request:

‘In reply to your letter I write for Mr. Hardy, who is in bed with a chill, to say that he cannot furnish you with any biographical details. ... To your inquiry if *Jude the Obscure* is autobiographical, I have to answer that there is not a scrap of personal detail in it, it having the least to do with his own life of all his books. The rumour, if it still persists, was started some years ago. Speaking generally, there is more autobiography in a hundred lines of Mr. Hardy’s poetry than in all the novels.’



It is a tribute to Hardy's powers of presentation that readers would not for many years believe that such incidents as Jude's being smacked when bird-keeping, his driving a baker's cart, his working as a journeyman mason, as also many situations described in verse, were not actual transcripts from the writer's personal experience, although the briefest reference to biographical date-books would have shown the impossibility of anything of the sort.

Hardy had been asked this autumn if he would object to a representation of some of the scenes in *The Dynasts* by the Oxford University Dramatic Society in the following year, and on his making no objection some correspondence ensued with the President and Manager on certain details.

To Mr. Maurice Colbourne 'November 11, 1919.

'Your plan for showing the out-of-doors scenes is very ingenious and attractive — and more elaborate than I imagined, my idea having been just a backcloth coloured greyish-blue, and a floorcloth coloured greenish-grey — a purely conventional representation for all open - air scenes. . . . My feeling was the same as yours about the *Strophe* and *Antistrophe* — that they should be unseen, and, as it were, speaking from the sky. But it is, as you hint, doubtful if the two ladies will like to have their charms hidden. Would boys do instead, or ugly ladies with good voices? But I do not wish to influence largely your methods of presentation. It will be of the greatest interest to me, whether I can get to Oxford for the performance or not, to see how the questions that arise in doing the thing have been grappled with by younger brains than mine.'

'November 18. To my father's grave (he was born Nov. 18, 1811) with F. [Mrs. Hardy]. The funeral psalm formerly sung at the graveside to the tune of "St. Stephen" was the xc. in Tate and Brady's version. Whether Dr. Watts's version, beginning "O God, our help in ages past" — said to be a favourite with Gladstone — was written before or after T. and B.'s (from Coverdale's prose of the same psalm) I don't know, but I think it inferior to the other, which contains some good and concise verse, e.g.,

'T. and B.:

For in Thy sight a thousand years  
Are like a day that's past,  
Or like a watch at dead of night  
Whose hours unnumbered waste.  
Thou sweep'st us off as with a flood,  
We vanish hence like dreams. . . .

'Watts (more diffusely):

A thousand ages in Thy sight  
Are like an evening gone;  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
Before the rising sun.  
Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
Bears all its sons away;  
They fly forgotten, as a dream

Dies at the opening day.'

In December Sir George Douglas writes concerning a lecture he is going to give in Edinburgh on Hardy's poems, and incidentally remarks: 'Those Aeschylean poems in *The Past and the Present* . . .

how would Wordsworth have regarded them, I wonder, differing so markedly as they do from his view of Nature?' His friend Sir Frederick Pollock also sent a letter containing an impromptu scene of a humorous kind: 'Overheard at the sign of the Mermaid in Elysium', purporting to be a conversation between the shades of Shakespeare, Campion, and Heine, 'on a book newly received' — (i.e. Hardy's *Collected Poems*) — in which Shakespeare says:

'Twas pretty wit, friend Thomas, that you spoke;  
You take the measure of my Stratford folk,  
the lines referring to Hardy's poem 'To Shakespeare after three hundred years'.

In December he opened a village war memorial in the form of a club-room in Bockhampton. It was close to his first school, erected, as has been told, by the manor lady of his early affections, and here he danced, for the last time in his life, with the then lady of the manor. The room was erected almost on the very spot where had stood Robert Reason's shoe-making shop when Hardy was a boy, described in *Under the Greenwood Tree* as 'Mr. Robert Penny's'.

A speech made by Hardy at the opening of the Bockhampton Reading-room and Club on the 2nd December 1919 was not reported in any newspaper, but the following extracts from it may be of interest:

'I feel it an honour — and an honour of a very interesting kind — to have been asked by your President to open this Club as a memorial to the gallant men of this parish who fought in the last great war — a parish I know so well, and which is only about a mile from my own door.

'This room is, it seems, to be called "The Mellstock Club". I fancy I have heard the name of "Mellstock" before. But we will let that pass. . . .

'The village of Bockhampton has had various owners. In the time of the Conqueror it belonged to a Norman countess; later to a French Priory; and in the time of Queen Elizabeth to the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, who at the beginning of the last century sold it to Mr. Morton Pitt, a cousin of Pitt the Premier. What a series of scenes does this bare list of owners bring back!

'At one time Bockhampton had a water-mill. Where was that mill, I wonder? It had a wood. Where was that wood?

'To come to my own recollections. From times immemorial the village contained several old Elizabethan houses, with mullioned windows and doors, of Ham Hill stone. They stood by the withy bed. I remember seeing some of them in process of being pulled down, but some were pulled down before I was born. To this attaches a story. Mr. Pitt, by whose orders it was done, came to look on, and asked one of the men several questions as to why he was doing it in such and such a way. Mr. Pitt was notorious for his shabby clothes, and the labourer, who did not know him, said at last,

‘Look here, old chap, don’t you ask so many questions, and just go on. Anybody would think the house was yours!’ Mr. Pitt obeyed orders, and meekly went on, murmuring, “Well, ‘tis mine, after all!”

‘Then there were the Poor-houses, I remember — just at the corner turning down to the dairy. These were the homes of the parish paupers before workhouses were built. In one of them lived an old man who was found one day rolling on the floor, with a lot of pence and halfpence scattered round him. They asked him what was the matter, and he said he had heard of people rolling in money, and he thought that for once in his life he would do it, to see what it was like.

‘Then there used to be dancing parties at Christmas, and some weeks after. This kind of party was called a Jacob’s Join, in which every guest contributed a certain sum to pay the expenses of the entertainment — it was mostly half-a-crown in this village. They were very lively parties I believe. The curious thing is that the man who used to give the house-room for the dances lived in a cottage which stood exactly where this Club-house stands now — so that when you dance here you will be simply carrying on the tradition of the spot.

‘In conclusion, I have now merely to say I declare the Mellstock Club and reading-room to be open.’

To a correspondent, on December 30, Hardy writes:

‘I am sorry to say that your appeal for a poem that should be worthy of the event of the 8th August 1918 reaches me at too late a time of life to attempt it. . . . The outline of such a poem, which you very cleverly sketch, is striking, and ought to result at the hands of somebody or other who may undertake it, in a literary parallel to the “Battle of Prague” — a piece of music which ceased to be known long before your time, but was extraordinarily popular in its day — reproducing the crashing of guns nearer and nearer, the groans of the wounded, and the final fulfilment, with great fidelity.

‘The length of the late war exhausted me of all my impromptu poems dealing with that tragedy. . . . I quite think that one of our young poets would rise to the occasion if you were to give him the opportunity.’

This year went out quietly with Hardy, as is shown by the brief entry: ‘New Year’s Eve. Did not sit up.’

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### ‘THE DYNASTS’ AT OXFORD; HON. DEGREE; A DEPUTATION; A CONTROVERSY

1920; Aet. 79 — 80

‘January 19. Coming back from Talbothays by West Stafford Cross I saw Orion upside-down in a pool of water under an oak.’

On February 2 Hardy was invited to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters during the time he was to be in Oxford at the performance of *The Dynasts* at the theatre, which he had promised to attend; and on the 9th he set out by train for Oxford with Mrs. Hardy, though the members of the O.U.D.S. had offered to send a car for him all the way. The day was unusually fine for February, and they were met at the station by enthusiastic representatives of the society, driven round Oxford, and conducted to the house of Sir Walter and Lady Raleigh, who were their hosts.

The next day, after lunching with friends, they went to the Sheldonian and the degree was received.

In presenting Hardy, the Public Orator, Mr. A. D. Godley, made one of the most felicitous of his many excellent speeches. He said:

‘*Scilicet ut Virgilio nostro sic huic quoque “molle atque facetum adnuerunt gaudentes rure Camenae”*. Hie est, qui divini gloriam ruris sicut nemo alius nostrorum idylliis suis intertexuit: hie est, qui agricolarum sensus et colloquia ita vivide verbis effinxit ut videre rusticos consessus, ut ipsos inter se sermocinantes, cum legimus, audire videamur. Obruit multos cita oblivio qui in rebus transitoriis versantur: qui insitos animorum sensus et naturae humanae irarum - tabilitatem exprimit, cuius scripta aeternam silvarum et camporum amoenitatem spirant, hunc diu vivum per ora virum volitaturum esse Praedicimus. Quid quod idem in poesi quoque eo evasit ut hoc solo scribendi genere, nisi fabularum narratio vel magis suum aliquid et proprium habeat, immortalam famam assequi possit?’<sup>1</sup>

1 ‘Surely as with Virgil, so with him, have the Muses that rejoice in the countryside approved his smoothness and elegance. This is he who has interwoven in his (pastoral) P<sup>o</sup>ems, as no other has done, the (heavenly) glory of the (heavenly) countryside: this is he who has portrayed in words the feelings and conversations of rustics so clearly that when we read of them we seem to picture their meetings and hear them discoursing one with another. Speedy forgetfulness overwhelms many who treat of life’s fleeting things, but of him who unfolds the inborn feelings of man’s soul and the unchangeable - ness of his nature, whose writings breathe the eternal charm of (the) woods and fields, we foretell that his living fame shall long hover on the lips of men.

‘Why now, is not the excellence of his poems such that, by this type of writing alone, he can achieve immortal fame, even if the narration of his stories has not something about them more peculiarly his own?’

And then, after a reference to the production that evening by the O.U.D.S. of *The Dynasts* — ‘opus eius tam scriptoris facundia quam rerum quae tractantur magnitudine insignitum’<sup>1</sup> — he concluded:

‘Nunc ut homini si quis alius Musis et dis agrestibus amico titulum debitum dando, non tantum illi quantum nobis ipsis decus addatis, duco ad vos senem illustrem Thomam Hardy. . . .’<sup>2</sup>

His wife, Evelyn Gifford, and her sister were present among others. Evelyn, daughter of the late Archdeacon Gifford, was his bright and affectionate cousin by marriage, whom Hardy was never to see again. Had he known it when he was parting from her

outside the Sheldonian in the rain that afternoon, his heart would have been heavier than it was.

In the afternoon he met the Poet-Laureate (Robert Bridges), Mr. Masefield, and many friends at the Raleighs', and also at the theatre in the evening, from which they did not return till one o'clock — the whole day having been of a most romantic kind.

An Account of Thomas Hardy's coming to Oxford in 1920 to witness a performance of *The Dynasts* by the Oxford University Dramatic Society, and of a later meeting with him in Dorchester when *A Desperate Remedy* was produced there: written in 1929, at Mrs. Hardy's request, by Charles Morgan, who in 1920 was Manager for the O.U.D.S., in 1921 its President, and afterwards dramatic critic of *The Times*.

When the University reassembled after the war, the Oxford University Dramatic Society was in low water. The tradition was broken, the surviving membership was not more than half a dozen, and the treasury was empty. During 1919 new members joined and life began to flicker in the Society, but its future largely depended

1 'His work marked not only by the eloquence of the author, but by the magnitude of the events which he describes.'

2 'Now that you may confer distinction, not so much on him as on our own selves, by granting a deserved tide to one who is a friend of the Muses and pastoral gods, I present to you the revered and renowned Thomas Hardy.'

upon the success or failure of the first annual play in the new series.

An undergraduate was instructed to consider, during the long vacation of 1919, what play should be performed and to report to the Committee. His choice was *The Dynasts*, and he had to defend it against those who objected that it was not Shakespearian and that Shakespeare was a tradition of the Society: and against those more dangerous critics who said that *The Dynasts* would be costly, and, pointing to the balance-sheet, asked whence the money would come. The financial objection was at last overcome by personal guarantees.

The Committee endorsed the choice, and the Vice-Chancellor, whose special consent was needed for the performance of so modern a work, allowed it. The arguments in its favour were, indeed, unanswerable.

*The Dynasts* was unique in literature, an epic-drama without predecessor in its own kind. Its writer was a living Englishman: its subject was closely linked with the tragedy in which nearly all the players had lately participated: and, except for those who had seen Granville-Barker's production, it would be a new theatrical experience.

One difficulty remained: the play was copyright, and it seemed to us very probable that Hardy would refuse permission to perform it. He is an old man, we said, and set fast in Dorset; he will not give a fig for what he will call amateur theatricals, nor will he be troubled with our affairs. It was the impression of us all that he would be forbidding and formidable, and he was approached with misgiving. He gave his play to us, not grudgingly nor with any air of patronage, but with so gracious a courtesy that we were made to feel that he was genuinely pleased to find young men eager to perform his work. I do not remember the text of his reply to the original request, but I remember

well the impression made by it — an impression increased by his later correspondence. Long before he came to Oxford his individuality had become established among us. Without whittling away his legend by any of the affectations of modesty, he had, by his gentle plainness, banished our fear of it.

Even so, when we invited him and Mrs. Hardy to come to Oxford to see the play, we had little hope that he would accept, for our ideas had overestimated his age — or, rather, underestimated the vigour of it — and his withdrawal into Wessex was believed to be permanent. But he said he would come, and Sir Walter Raleigh invited him to be his guest. So soon as it was known that he would visit Oxford, everyone perceived what hitherto few had been able to perceive — that, in withholding her highest honour from the author of *The Dynasts* and *The Return of the Native* (perhaps, whispered Cambridge and the world, because he was also the author of *Jude the Obscure*), Christminster was making herself ridiculous. A D.C.L. was offered him. Authority must have sighed with relief when he did not refuse.

It fell to me to meet him at the station. I give my impression of him then and afterwards, not because it is of value as being mine, but for two reasons — first, that Mrs. Hardy has asked it; secondly, that I should dearly love to see some great writer of the past as a contemporary undergraduate saw him. In days to come, even so slight a record as this may have an interest that it cannot now possess.

Hardy made it easy for a young man to be his host — made it easy, not by any loose affability of manner or by a parade of that heartiness which, in too many celebrated men, is a form of patronage, but simply by making no attempt whatever to impress or to startle me. I had not expected cleverness or volubility in him; and his speech was, at first, slight and pleasantly conventional. He introduced me to Mrs. Hardy, asked how long the drive would be to Sir Walter's, used, in brief, the small talk of encounter, giving me time to become accustomed to his presence and to break free of the thought: I must remember this; I shall remember and tell of it when I am an old man. He himself seemed to me prodigiously old, not because there was any failure in his powers — he was, on the contrary, sprightly, alert, bird-like — but because his head had an appearance of being much older than his body, his neck having the thinness and his brow the tightness of great age, and his eyes — so old that age itself seemed to have swung full circle within them — being the eyes of some still young man who had been keeping watch at sea since the beginning of time. I remember that, sitting opposite him in the cab, I began to think of the sea and to imagine his head appearing above the bridge - ladder of a warship. Then I thought of a bird again, a small bird with a great head. And I made another discovery that pleased me: in external things he was deeply old-fashioned, and, fearing perhaps some assertive, new-fangled conduct in an undergraduate, timid and a little suspicious. I knew at once that I had nothing to fear from an old gentleman who by no means wished to pretend that he was young, and would never embarrass me by forsaking those little formalities of ordinary behaviour to which I myself had been trained.

Thus, because he made no attempt to break it, the ice melted easily and naturally. He asked of the play, saying that it had not been intended for the stage and that he wondered at our having chosen it.

Then, breaking off from this and reminded, I think, by Mrs. Hardy, he said: 'We thought we should like to make a little tour of Oxford before going out to the Raleighs'. I don't know it well as it is to-day, and Mrs. Hardy knows it less.' He knew it, however, well enough to have planned a route with precision. We drove slowly, stopping now and then when he commanded it, and of each place he spoke in a different tone as if some mood were connected with it. Jude was, of course, the inevitable thought of one who had read that book in a midshipman's hammock when to him also Oxford was a beckoning dream. It seemed very strange to be driving solemnly down the High and up the Broad with the author of *Jude*. It seemed strange because, after all, it was so natural. Here was an old man taking a normal and reasonable interest in the place where he was — quietly 'seeing the sights' in the fashion of his own time and without the self-consciousness of ours.

But when we are undergraduates we expect writers to be literary men in all things; we cannot easily dissociate them from their works; and it seemed to me very odd that Thomas Hardy should bother about the Martyrs' Memorial.

When the tour was over, we went forward towards our destination. Hardy began to ask me about the age of undergraduates, and what effect the war has had upon us. I told him that my own war service delivered me from one examination and from compulsory chapels. 'Compulsory chapels . . .' said Hardy, and no more; then, opening a little case on the seat beside him and producing from it a handful of small volumes, he asked me if I knew what they were. 'Poems', he said, 'written by young men. They very kindly send them to me.' Very kindly — was there irony in that? But Hardy, reading my thought, dismissed it. He left no doubt that he was glad to have these volumes sent to him, seeing in them a tribute to himself as a poet, not a novelist — and he cared deeply for that. And from this there came to me an opportunity to ask a question that I had been afraid to ask: whether he would ever write another tale? 'No,' he answered, 'I gave it up long ago. I wanted to write poetry in the beginning; now I can. Besides, it is so long since I wrote a novel that novel readers must have forgotten me.' And, when I had said something, he added: 'No. Much depends on the public expectation. If I wrote a story now, they would want it to be what the old ones were. Besides, my stories are written.'

I have no recollection of any conversation after that, nor any Picture of Hardy in my mind until, going to Dorchester in 1922 to see the Hardy Players perform a dramatization of *Desperate Remedies*, I was invited by him to Max Gate, where we sat round the fire after tea and he told me of his early days in London, and how he would go to Shakespearian plays with the text in his hands and, seated in the front rows, follow the dialogue by the stage light. He told me, too, that he had written a stage version of *Tess*, and something of its early history; how, after the success of the novel, the great ones of the earth had pressed him to dramatize it; how he had done

so, and the play had been prepared for the stage; by what mischance the performance of it had been prevented. Where was it now?

In a drawer. Would he allow it to be performed? He smiled, gave no answer, and began at once to talk of criticism — first of dramatic criticism which, he said, in the few newspapers that took it seriously was better than literary criticism, the dramatic critics having less time ‘to rehearse their prejudices’; then of literary criticism itself — a subject on which he spoke with a bitterness that surprised me. The origin of this bitterness was in the past where, I believe, there was indeed good reason for it, but it was directed now against contemporary critics of his own work, and I could not understand what general reason he had to complain of them. He used no names; he spoke with studied reserve, sadly rather than querulously; but he was persuaded — and there is evidence of this persuasion in the preface to the posthumous volume of his verse — - that critics approached his work with an ignorant prejudice against his ‘pessimism’ which they allowed to stand in the way of fair reading and fair judgment.

This was a distortion of facts as I knew them. It was hard to believe that Hardy honestly thought that his genius was not recognized; harder to believe that he thought his work was not read. Such a belief indicated the only failure of balance, the only refusal to seek the truth, which I perceived in Hardy, and I was glad when the coming of a visitor, who was, I think, secretary of the Society of Dorset Men, led him away from criticism to plainer subjects. When the time came for me to go, seeing that he proposed to come out with me, I tried to restrain him, for the night was cold; but he was determined, and Mrs. Hardy followed her own wise course of matching her judgment with his vitality. So he came down among the trees to the dark road, and I saw the last of him standing outside his gate with a lantern swaying in his hand. I shall not know a greater man, nor have I ever known one who had, in the same degree, Hardy’s power of drawing reverence towards affection.

He was not simple; he had the formal subtlety peculiar to his own generation; there was something deliberately ‘ordinary’ in his demeanour which was a concealment of extraordinary fires — a method of self-protection common enough in my grandfather’s generation, though rare now.

There are many who might have thought him unimpressive because he was content to be serious and determined to be unspectacular. But his was the kind of character to which I lay open. He was an artist, proud of his art, who yet made no parade of it; he was a traditionalist and, therefore, suspicious of fashion; he had that sort of melancholy, the absence of which in any man has always seemed to me to be a proclamation of blindness.

There was in him something timid as well as something fierce, as if the world had hurt him and he expected it to hurt him again. But what fascinated me above all was the contrast between the plainness, the quiet rigidity of his behaviour, and the, passionate boldness of his mind, for this I had always believed to be the tradition of English genius, too often and too extravagantly denied.



To Mr. Joseph McCabe, who wrote proposing to include Hardy in a Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists 'February 18, 1920.

'Dear Sir,

'As Mr. Hardy has a cold which makes writing trying to his eyes, I answer your letter for him. He says he thinks he is rather an irrationalist than a rationalist, on account of his inconsistencies. He has, in fact, declared as much in prefaces to some of his poems, where he explains his views as being mere impressions that frequently change. Moreover, he thinks he could show that no man is a rationalist, and that human actions are not ruled by reason at all in the last resort. But this, of course, is outside the question. So that he cannot honestly claim to belong to the honourable body you are including in your dictionary, whom he admires for their straightforward sincerity and permanent convictions, though he does not quite think they can claim their title.

'Yours very truly,

'F. E. Hardy.'

On March 7, 1920, Hardy writes to an old friend of nearly fifty years' standing, Mr. John Slater, F.R.I.B.A.: l.t.h. — 2 d . . As to your question whether I should like to be nominated as an Hon. Fellow of the R.I.B.A., I really don't know what to say. Age has naturally made me, like Gallo, care for none of these things, at any rate very much, especially as I am hardly ever in London. But at the same time I am very conscious of the honour of such a proposition, and like to be reminded in such a way that I once knew what a T-square was. So, shall I leave the decision to your judgment?'

Hardy was duly nominated and elected, and it was a matter of regret to him that he could not attend the meetings of the Institute, held still in the same old room in Conduit Street in which he had received the prize medal for his essay in 1863 from the hands of Sir Gilbert Scott. Mr. John Slater was almost the only surviving friend of Hardy's architectural years in London since the death of Arthur Blomfield.

'March 25. Joined National Committee for acquiring Wentworth Place — the house once occupied by John Keats.'

'April 7. A would-be author, not without humour, writing from South Africa for a "foreword" from me, adds: "Mr. Balfour when writing asked me not to use his remarks mentioning the number of books sent him from all parts of the world (for forewords). But mental dexterity greatly inferior to yours, Sir, could contrive to do somewhat, and yet avoid the consequences contemplated" — i.e. multitudes of other would-be novelists asking the same favour.'

'April 21. Went with F. to St. Margaret's, Westminster, to the wedding of Harold Macmillan and Lady Dorothy Cavendish. Sat with Lord Morley, and signed as one of the witnesses. Morley, seeing Bryce close by us, and the Duke of Devonshire near, whispered to F., "Which weigh most, three O.M.'s or one Duke?"'

This was Hardy's last visit to London. He, with his wife, stayed for two nights only at J. M. Barrie's flat, so near the house in Adelphi Terrace where he had worked as an architect's assistant nearly sixty years before.

'May 14. Motored with F. and K. to Exeter. Called on the Granville-Barkers at Sidmouth. Cathedral service: the beautiful anthem "God is gone up" (Croft). Well sung. Psalms to Walker in E flat. Felt I should prefer to be a cathedral organist to anything in the world. "Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work, claiming each slave of the sound." A fine May day.'

At the end of May a letter came from C. W. Moule in reply to Hardy's note of sympathy on his loss of his only remaining brother,

Handley, the Bishop of Durham, with whom Hardy had had occasion to correspond the year before. As it was the last letter Hardy received from his correspondent, who himself passed away within the next year, the following passages are quoted:

'In condolence "the half is more than the whole", as the wise Greek paradox saith (τὸ ἕναι ἢ τὸ ἅπαντα). Your friendly acceptance of those stanzas was answered by me, but that in which you told me that dear Horace was one of "The Five Students" in Moments of Vision I fear was never answered. ... I did not know of Handley's nearness in age to your sister Mary (they were only two days apart), nor did I know that your mother and mine knew each other well enough to compare notes on the point. ... I am glad you saw him at Max Gate. We wish that we could see you here. I may try to send you some book in memoriam H. C. G. M. . . . "Not one is there among us that understandeth any more", as a snapshot of the current generation, is worthy of you.' [Hardy had quoted the words from the 74th Psalm in the letter to which this was an answer, alluding probably to the memories familiar to all three.]

On June 2nd of this year came Hardy's eightieth birthday, and he received a deputation from the Society of Authors, consisting of Mr. Augustine Birrell, Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins, and Mr. John Galsworthy. The occasion was a pleasant one, and the lunch lively. Many messages were received during the day, including one from the King, the Lord Mayor of London, the Cambridge Vice-Chancellor, and the Prime Minister.

Hardy pencilled down the following as "Birthday notes": 'When, like the Psalmist, "I call mine own ways to remembrance", I find nothing in them that quite justifies this celebration.

'The value of old age depends upon the person who reaches it. To some men of early performance it is useless. To others, who are late to develop, it just enables them to complete their job.

'We have visited two cathedrals during the last month, and I could not help feeling that if men could get a little more of the repose - fulness and peace of those buildings into their lives how much better it would be for them.

'Nature's indifference to the advance of her species along what we are accustomed to call civilized lines makes the late war of no importance to her, except as a sort of geological fault in her continuity.

'Though my life, like the lives of my contemporaries, covers a period of more material advance in the world than any of the same length can have done in other centuries, I do not find that real civilization has advanced equally. People are not more humane, so far as I can see, than they were in the year of my birth. Disinterested kindness

is less. The spontaneous goodwill that used to characterize manual workers seems to have departed. One day of late a railway porter said to a feeble old lady, a friend of ours, "See to your luggage yourself". Human nature had not sunk so low as that in 1840.

'If, as has been lately asserted, only the young and feeble League of Nations stands between us and the utter destruction of Civilisation, it makes one feel he would rather be old than young. For a person whose chief interest in life has been the literary art — poetry in particular — the thought is depressing that, should such an overturn arrive, poetry will be the first thing to go, probably not to revive again for many centuries. Anyhow, it behoves young poets and other writers to endeavour to stave off such a catastrophe.'

Among others who remembered his birthday, Mr. John Lane sent a glass goblet which had come into his possession many years before, remarking, ... 'no doubt it was intended as a gift for you from some fair but probably shy admirer'; to which Hardy replied:

'Also, for the mysterious goblet inscribed to the mysterious namesake of mine. He must, or may, have been a jockey from the diagrams. . . . Anyhow, no woman ever took the trouble to inscribe her love for me on a cup of crystal — of that you may be sure; and it is best on the whole to leave the history of the glass in vague obscurity.'

The next week J. M. Barrie came to Max Gate on a visit, and in July Hardy and his wife were motoring about Dorset, showing some features of the county to their friend Mrs. Arthur Henniker, who was staying at Weymouth, and at that time had ideas of buying a house in the neighbourhood. He was also engaged in further correspondence on the scheme of establishing a South-western University at Exeter.

To Mr. G. Herbert Thring 'August 23, 1920.

'The address from the Members of the Council, representing the Society of Authors all, has reached me safely, and though I knew its contents — its spiritual part — on my actual birthday when the deputation came here, I did not realise its bodily beauty till now.

'As to the address itself, I can only confirm by this letter what I told the deputation by word of mouth — how much I have been moved by such a mark of good feeling — affection as I may truly call it — in the body of writers whose President I have had the distinction of being for many years — a do-nothing President, a *roi-faineant*, I very greatly fear, in spite of their assurances! However, the Society has been good enough to take me as worth this tribute, and I thank them heartily for it and what it expresses. It will be a cheering reminder of bright things whenever I see it or think of it, which will be often and often.'

'September 6. Death of Evelyn Gifford, at Arlington House, Oxford. Dear Evelyn! whom I last parted from in apparently perfect health.' She was the daughter of Dr. Gifford, who married Margaret Jeune, and the poem 'Evelyn G. of Christminster' was written on this occasion.

‘November 11. Hardy’s poem ‘And there was a great calm’ appeared in The Times Armistice Supplement.

The request to write this poem had been brought to him from London by one of the editorial staff. At first Hardy was disinclined, and all but refused, being generally unable to write to order. In the middle of the night, however, an idea seized him, and he was heard moving about the house looking things up. The poem was duly written and proved worthy of the occasion.

On the 13th the Dorchester Amateurs performed The Return of the Native in Dorchester, as dramatized by Mr. Tilley.

‘More interested than I expected to be. The dancing was just as it used to be at Higher Bockhampton in my childhood.’

In declining to become a Vice-President of a well-known Society, Hardy writes:

‘I may be allowed to congratulate its members upon their wise insistence on the word “English” as the name of this country’s people, and in not giving way to a few short-sighted clamourers for the vague, unhistoric and pinchbeck title of “British” by which they would fain see it supplanted.’

Towards the end of the year Hardy was occupied with the following interesting correspondence:

To Mr. Alfred Noyes ‘Dorchester, 13th December 1920.

‘Dear Mr. Noyes,

‘Somebody has sent me an article from the Morning Post of December 9 entitled “Poetry and Religion”, which reports you as saying, in a lecture, that mine is “a philosophy which told them (readers) that the Power behind the Universe was an imbecile jester”.

‘As I hold no such “philosophy”, and, to the best of my recollection, never could have done so, I should be glad if you would inform me whereabouts I have seriously asserted such to be my opinion.

‘Yours truly,

‘Th. Hardy.’

It should be stated that Mr. Noyes had always been a friendly critic of Hardy’s writings, and one with whom he was on good terms, which was probably Hardy’s reason for antagonism in his letter.

Mr. Noyes replied that he was sorry the abbreviated report of his address did not contain the tribute he had paid Hardy as a writer with artistic mastery and at the head of living authors, although he did disagree with his pessimistic philosophy; a philosophy which, in his opinion, led logically to the conclusion that the Power behind the Universe was malign; and he referred to various passages in Hardy’s poems that seemed to bear out his belief that their writer held the views attributed to him in the lecture; offering, however, to revise it when reprinted, if he had misinterpreted the aforesaid passages.

To Mr. Alfred Noyes ‘December 191 h, 1920.

‘I am much obliged for your reply, which I really ought not to have troubled you to write. I may say for myself that I very seldom do give critics such trouble, usually letting things drift, though there have been many occasions when a writer who has been so much abused for his opinions as I have been would perhaps have done well not to hold his peace.

‘I do not know that there can be much use in my saying more than I did say. It seems strange that I should have to remind a man of letters of what, I should have supposed, he would have known as well as I — of the very elementary rule of criticism that a writer’s works should be judged as a whole, and not from picked passages that contradict them as a whole — and this especially when they are scattered over a period of fifty years.

‘Also that I should have to remind him of the vast difference between the expression of fancy and the expression of belief. My imagination may have often run away with me; but all the same, my sober opinion — so far as I have any definite one — of the Cause of Things, has been defined in scores of places, and is that of a great many ordinary thinkers: that the said Cause is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral: “loveless and hateless” I have called it, “which neither good nor evil knows” — etc., etc. — (you will find plenty of these definitions in *The Dynasts* as well as in short poems, and I am surprised that you have not taken them in). This view is quite in keeping with what you call a Pessimistic philosophy (a mere nickname with no sense in it), which I am quite unable to see as “leading logically to the conclusion that the Power behind the universe is malign”.

‘In my fancies, or poems of the imagination, I have of course called this Power all sorts of names — never supposing they would be taken for more than fancies. I have even in prefaces warned readers to take them as such — as mere impressions of the moment, exclamations in fact. But it has always been my misfortune to presuppose a too intelligent reading public, and no doubt people will go on thinking that I really believe the Prime Mover to be a malignant old gentleman, a sort of King of Dahomey — an idea which, so far from my holding it, is to me irresistibly comic. “What a fool one must have been to write for such a public!” is the inevitable reflection at the end of one’s life.

‘The lines you allude to, “A Young Man’s Epigram”, dated 1866, I remember finding in a drawer, and printed them merely as an amusing instance of early cynicism. The words “Time’s Laughingstocks” are legitimate imagery all of a piece with such expressions as “Life, Time’s fool”, and thousands in poetry and I am amazed that you should see any belief in them. The other verses you mention, “New Year’s Eve”, “His Education”, are the same fanciful impressions of the moment. The poem called “He abjures Love”, ending with “And then the curtain”, is a love-poem, and lovers are chartered irresponsibles. A poem often quoted against me, and apparently in your mind in the lecture, is the one called “Nature’s Questioning”, containing the words, “some Vast Imbecility”, etc. — as if these definitions were my creed. But they are merely enumerated in the poem as fanciful alternatives to several others, having nothing to

do with my own opinion. As for “The Unborn”, to which you allude, though the form of it is imaginary, the sentiment is one which I should think, especially since the war, is not uncommon or unreasonable.

‘This week I have had sent me a review which quotes a poem entitled “To my Father’s Violin”, containing a Virgilian reminiscence of mine of Acheron and the Shades. The writer comments: “Truly this pessimism is insupportable. . . . One marvels that Hardy is not in a madhouse”. Such is English criticism, and I repeat, why did I ever write a line! And perhaps if the young ladies to whom you lectured really knew that, so far from being the wicked personage they doubtless think me at present to be, I am a harmless old character much like their own grandfathers, they would consider me far less romantic and attractive.’

Mr. Noyes in a further interesting letter, after reassuring Hardy that he would correct any errors, gave his own views, one of which was that he had ‘ never been able to conceive a Cause of Things that could be less in any respect than the things caused’. To which Hardy replied:

‘Many thanks for your letter. The Scheme of Things is, indeed, incomprehensible; and there I suppose we must leave it — perhaps for the best. Knowledge might be terrible.’

To the ‘New York World’

‘December 23, 1920.

‘Yes I approve of international disarmament, on the lines indicated by the New York World:

The following letter, written to someone about December 1920, obviously refers to his correspondence with Mr. Noyes:

‘A friend of mine writes objecting to what he calls my “philosophy” (though I have no philosophy — merely what I have often explained to be only a confused heap of impressions, like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show). He says he has never been able to conceive a Cause of Things that could be less in any respect than the things caused. This apparent impossibility to him, and to so many, is very likely owing to his running his head against a Single Cause, and perceiving no possible other. But if he would discern that what we call the first Cause should be called First Causes, his difficulty would be lessened. Assume a thousand unconscious causes — lumped together in poetry as one Cause, or God — and bear in mind that a coloured liquid can be produced by the mixture of colourless ones, a noise by the juxtaposition of silences, etc., etc., and you see that the assumption that intelligent beings arise from the combined action of unintelligent forces is sufficiently probable for imaginative writing, and I have never attempted scientific. It is my misfortune that people will treat all my mood-dictated writing as a single scientific theory.’

About Christmas the song entitled ‘When I set out for Lyon - nesse’ was published as set to music by Mr. Charles A. Speyer. It was one of his own poems that Hardy happened to like, and he was agreeably surprised that it should be liked by anybody else, his experience being that an author’s preference for particular verses of his own

was usually based on the circumstances that gave rise to them, and not on their success as art.

On Christmas night the carol singers and mummers came to Max Gate as they had promised, the latter performing the Play of Saint George, just as he had seen it performed in his childhood. On the last day of the old year a poem by Hardy called 'At the Entering of the New Year' appeared in the Athenceum.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### SOME FAREWELLS

1921-1925: Aet. 80-85

The New Year found Hardy sitting up to hear the bells, which he had not done for some time.

Early in January he was searching through registers of Stinsford for records of a family named Knight, connected with his own. Many generations of this family are buried in nameless graves in Stinsford Churchyard.

J. M. Barrie paid him a brief visit on May 11, staying at Max Gate for one night, and visiting Hardy's birthplace at Bockhampton on the morning of May 12. The same day Hardy learned of the death of a friend, an elder brother of the confidant and guide of his youth and early manhood. In his note-book he writes:

'May 11. Charles Moule died. He is the last of "the seven brethren".'

On June 2 he notes that his birthday was remembered by the newspapers, and that he received an address from younger writers. Accompanying this was a fine copy of the first edition of 'Lamia', 'Isabella', 'The Eve of St. Agnes', and other poems by John Keats, in the original boards with the half-title and eight pages of advertisements.

The idea had originated with Mr. St. John Ervine, who summoned a committee to consider the nature of the tribute. The address was signed by a hundred and six younger writers, and ran as follows:

'Dear Mr. Hardy,

'We, who are your younger comrades in the craft of letters, wish on this your eighty-first birthday to do honour to ourselves by praising your work, and to thank you for the example of high endeavour and achievement which you have set before us. In your novels and poems you have given us a tragic vision of life which is informed by your knowledge of character and relieved by the charity of your humour, and sweetened by your sympathy with human suffering and endurance. We have learned from you that the proud heart can subdue the hardest fate, even in submitting to it. . . . In all that you have written you have shown the spirit of man, nourished by tradition and sustained by pride, persisting through defeat.

‘You have inspired us both by your work and by the manner in which it was done. The craftsman in you calls for our admiration as surely as the artist, and few writers have observed so closely as you have the Host’s instruction in the Canterbury Tales:

‘Your termes, your colours, and your figures,  
Keep them in store, till so be ye indite  
High style, as when that men to kinges write.

‘From your first book to your last, you have written in the “high style, as when that men to kinges write”, and you have crowned a great prose with a noble poetry.

‘We thank you, Sir, for all that you have written . . . but most of all, perhaps, for *The Dynasts*.

‘We beg that you will accept the copy of the first edition of *Lamia* by John Keats which accompanies this letter, and with it, accept also our grateful homage.’

A few days later, on June 9, he motored to Sturminster Newton with his wife and Mr. Cecil Hanbury to see a performance of *The Mellstock Quire* by the Hardy Players in the Castle ruins. Afterwards he went to Riverside, the house where he had written *The Return of the Native*, and where the Players were then having tea.

On June 16 Mr. de la Mare arrived for a visit of two nights. The following day he walked to Stinsford with Hardy and was much interested in hearing about the various graves, and in reading a poem that Hardy had just lately written, ‘Voices from Things growing in a Country Churchyard’. The first verse of the poem runs thus:

These flowers are I, poor Fanny Hurd,  
Sir or Madam, A little girl here sepultured.  
Once I flit-fluttered like a bird  
Above the grass, as now I wave In daisy shapes above my grave,  
All day cheerily,  
All night eerily!

Fanny Hurd’s real name was Fanny Hurden, and Hardy remembered her as a delicate child who went to school with him. She died when she was about eighteen, and her grave and a head-stone with her name are to be seen in Stinsford Churchyard. The others mentioned in this poem were known to him by name and repute.

Early in July a company of film actors arrived in Dorchester for the purpose of preparing a film of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Hardy met them outside *The King’s Arms*, the hotel associated with the novel. Although the actors had their faces coloured yellow and were dressed in the fashion of some eighty years earlier, Hardy observed, to his surprise, that the townsfolk passed by on their ordinary affairs and seemed not to notice the strange spectacle, nor did any interest seem aroused when Hardy drove through the town with the actors to Maiden Castle, that ancient earthwork which formed the background to one part of the film.

About this time he went to St. Peter’s Church, to a morning service, for the purpose of hearing sung by the choir the morning hymn, ‘Awake, my Soul’, to Barthelemon’s setting. This had been arranged for him by Dr. Niven, the Rector of St. Peter’s. Church music, as has been shown, had appealed strongly to Hardy from his earliest years. On



July 23 a sonnet, 'Barthelemon at Vauxhall', appeared in *The Times*. He had often imagined the weary musician, returning from his nightly occupation of making music for a riotous throng, lingering on Westminster Bridge to see the rising sun and being thence inspired to the composition of music to be heard hereafter in places very different from Vauxhall.

In the same month he opened a bazaar in aid of the Dorset County Hospital, and in the evening of that day he was driven into Dorchester again to see some dancing in the Borough Gardens. Of this he writes:

'Saw "The Lancers" danced (for probably the last time) at my request. Home at 10: outside our gate full moon over cottage: band still heard playing.'

At the beginning of September Hardy stood sponsor at the christening of the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Hanbury of Kingston Maurward. His gift to his little godchild was the manuscript of a short poem contained in a silver box. This appeared afterwards in *Human Shows* under the title 'To C. F. H.'

Three days later he was again at Stinsford Church, attending the evening service. In his notebook he records: 'A beautiful evening. Evening Hymn Tallis.'

During the latter half of September Hardy was sitting to his friend Mr. Oules for his portrait, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. On October 14 he received a visit from Mr. and Mrs. John Masefield, who brought with them a gift: a full-rigged ship made by John Masefield himself. This ship had been named by its maker *The Triumph*, and was much valued by Hardy, who showed it with pride to callers at Max Gate, with the story of how it arrived. Four days later Hardy writes:

'October 18. In afternoon to Stinsford with F. A matchless October: sunshine, mist and turning leaves.'

The first month of 1922 found him writing an energetic preface to a volume of poems entitled *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, the MS. of which he forwarded to the publishers on January 23. Some of his friends regretted this preface, thinking that it betrayed an oversensitiveness to criticism which it were better the world should not know. But sensitiveness was one of Hardy's chief characteristics, and without it his poems would never have been written, nor, indeed, the greatest of his novels. He used to say that it was not so much the force of the blow that counted, as the nature of the material that received the blow.

An interesting point in this preface was his attitude towards religion. Through the years 1920 to 1925 Hardy was interested in conjectures on rationalising the English Church. There had been rumours for some years of a revised Liturgy, and his hopes were accordingly raised by the thought of making the Established Church comprehensive enough to include the majority of thinkers of the previous hundred years who had lost all belief in the supernatural.

When the new Prayer Book appeared, however, his hopes were doomed to disappointment, and he found that the revision had not been in a rationalistic direction, and from that time he lost all expectation of seeing the Church representative of modern thinking minds.

In April J. M. Barrie stayed at Max Gate for one night. The 23rd May saw the publication of *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, and on the following day Hardy motored to Sturminster Newton to call at the house where he had spent some of the early years of his first marriage, and where he wrote *The Return of the Native*. Two days later he notes: 'Visited Stinsford and Higher Bockhampton. House at the latter shabby, and garden. Just went through into heath, and up plantation to top of garden.' It was becoming increasingly painful to Hardy to visit this old home of his, and often when he left he said that he would go there no more.

On May 29 he copied some old notes made before he had contemplated writing *The Dynasts*.

'We — the people — Humanity, a collective personality — (Thus "we" could be engaged in the battle of Hohenlinden, say, and in the battle of Waterloo) — dwell with genial humour on "our" getting into a rage for we knew not what.

'The intelligence of this collective personality Humanity is pervasive, ubiquitous, like that of God. Hence e.g. on the one hand we could hear the roar of the cannon, discern the rush of the battalions, on the other hear the voice of a man protesting, etc.

'Title "self-slaughter"; "divided against ourselves".

'Now these 3 (or 3000) whirling through space at the rate of 40 miles a second — (God's view). "Some of our family who" (the we of one nation speaking of the "we" of another).

'A battle. Army as somnambulists — not knowing what it is for.

'We were called "Artillery" etc. "We were so under the spell of habit that" (drill).

'It is now necessary to call the reader's attention to those of us who were harnessed and collared in blue and brass. . . .

'Poem — the difference between what things are and what they ought to be. (Stated as by a god to the gods — i.e. as God's story.)

'Poem — I — First Cause, omniscient, not omnipotent — limitations, difficulties, etc., from being only able to work by Law (His only failing is lack of foresight).

'We will now ask the reader to look eastward with us ... at what the contingent of us out that way were doing.

'Poem. A spectral force seen acting in a man (e.g. Napoleon) and he acting under it — a pathetic sight — this compulsion.

'Patriotism, if aggressive and at the expense of other countries, is a vice; if in sympathy with them, a virtue.'

From these notes it will be seen how *The Dynasts* had been slowly developing in his mind. Unfortunately they are not dated, but there is in existence a notebook filled with details of the Napoleonic wars, and reflection upon them, having been written at the time he was gathering material for *The Trumpet-Major*, which was first published in 1880.

During July Hardy had visits from many friends. Florence Henniker came early in the month, and went for a delightful drive with him and his wife in Blackmore Vale, and to Sherborne, the scene of *The Woodlanders*. Later Siegfried Sassoon arrived

with Edmund Blunden, and then E. M. Forster, who accompanied him to an amateur performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the lawn of Trinity Rectory.

In August he was well enough to cycle (no small feat for a man of eighty-two) with his wife to Talbothays to visit his brother and his sister.

On August 11 he writes in his notebook:

‘Motored to Sturminster Newton, and back by Dogbury Gate. Walked to top of High Stoy with Flower (probably for the last time), thence back home. A beautiful drive.’

‘October 12. Walked across Boucher’s Close to Ewelease Stile.’ [Boucher’s Close is a green-wooded meadow next to Stinsford Vicarage, and the Ewelease Stile is the one whereon, more than fifty years before this date, he had sat and read the review of *Desperate Remedies* in the *Spectator*.]

On the same day Hardy wrote to J. H. Morgan as follows:

‘Dear General Morgan,

‘I had already begun to reply to your interesting letter from Berlin, which opened up so many points that had engaged me 20 years ago, but had rather faded in my memory. Now that you are at home I will write it in a more succinct form, for it is not likely that amid the many details you have to attend to after your absence you will want to think much about Napoleonic times.

‘I cannot for my life recall where I obtained the idea of N’s entry into Berlin by the Potsdamer-strasse, though I don’t think I should have written it without authority. However, you have to remember that the events generally in *The Dynasts* had to be pulled together into dramatic scenes, to show themselves to the mental eye of the reader as a picture viewed from one point; and hence it was sometimes necessary to see round corners, down crooked streets, and to shift buildings nearer each other than in reality (as Turner did in his landscapes); and it may possibly happen that I gave “A Public Place” in Berlin these convenient facilities without much ceremony.

‘You allude to Leipzig. That battle bothered me much more than Jena or Ulm (to which you also allude) — in fact more than any other battle I had to handle. I defy any human being to synchronize with any certainty its episodes from descriptions by historians. My time-table was, I believe, as probable a one as can be drawn up at this date. But I will go no further with these stale conjectures, now you are in London.

‘I have quite recently been reading a yellow old letter written from Berlin in June, 1815, by a Dorset man whose daughter is a friend of ours, and who lately sent it to me. The writer says what is oddly in keeping with your remarks on the arrogance of Prussian officers. “Buonaparte has rendered Germany completely military; at the inns and post-houses a private Gentleman exacts not half the respect exacted by a soldier. This contempt for those who wear no swords displays itself in no very pleasant shape to travellers. About 3 weeks ago I might have died of damp sheets if my German servant had not taken upon him to assure a brute of a Post-master that I was an English General travelling for my health. ... I have since girded on a sabre, got a military cap, and let my moustache grow: soldiers now present arms as we pass.”

‘It would be strange to find that Napoleon was really the prime cause of German militarism! What a Nemesis for the French nation!

‘Well, I have gone back to Boney again after all: but no more of him. I hope you find the change to London agreeable, and keep well in your vicissitudes.

‘Sincerely yours,

‘Thomas Hardy.’

Early in November he was visited by Mrs. Henry Allhusen, his friend from her girlhood, when she was Miss Dorothy Stanley, daughter of Lady Jeune, afterwards Lady St. Helier. With Mrs. Allhusen and her daughter Elizabeth he motored to Dogbury Gate and other beautiful parts of Dorset. Elizabeth Allhusen, a charming girl, died soon after, to Hardy’s grief.

A few days later came a letter from the Pro-Provost of Queen’s College, Oxford, to say that it had been decided to elect him to an Honorary Fellowship, which he accepted, an announcement to that effect being made in *The Times* on the 20th of the month.

Another entry in his notebook:

‘November 27. E’s death-day, ten years ago. Went with F. and tidied her tomb and carried flowers for her and the other two tombs.’

‘New Year’s Eve. Henry and Kate came to 1 o’clock dinner, stayed to tea, left 5.30. Did not sit up.’

Early in January 1923 Hardy was appointed Governor of the Dorchester Grammar School for three years.

‘February 26. A story (rather than a poem) might be written in the first person, in which “I” am supposed to live through the centuries in my ancestors, in one person, the particular line of descent chosen being that in which qualities are most continuous.’ (From an old note.)

A few days after this entry is the following:

‘April 5. In to-day’s *Times*:

“Henniker. — on the 4th April 1923, of heart failure, the Honourable Mrs. Arthur Henniker. R.I.P.”

‘After a friendship of 30 years!’

‘April 10. F. Henniker buried to-day at 1 o’clock at Thornham Magna, Eye, Suffolk.’

During the month of April Hardy finished the rough draft of his poetical play *The Queen of Cornwall*, and in May he made, with infinite care, his last drawing, an imaginary view of Tintagel Castle. This is delicately drawn, an amazing feat for a man in his eighty-third year, and it indicates his architectural tastes and early training. It was used as an illustration when *The Queen of Cornwall* was published.

In April, replying to a letter from Mr. John Galsworthy, he writes:

‘. . . The exchange of international thought is the only possible salvation for the world: and though I was decidedly premature when I wrote at the beginning of the South African War that I hoped to see patriotism not confined to realms, but circling the earth, I still maintain that such sentiments ought to prevail.

‘Whether they will do so before the year 10,000 is of course what sceptics may doubt.’

Towards the end of May Mr. and Mrs. Walter de la Mare stayed at Max Gate for two nights, and early in June, the day after Hardy’s birthday, Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker came to see him, bringing with them friends he had not seen for many years, Mr. and Mrs. Max Beerbohm.

‘June 10. Relativity. That things and events always were, are, and will be (e.g. Emma, Mother and Father are living still in the past).’

‘June 21. Went with F. on board the Queen Elizabeth on a visit to Sir John de Robeck, Lady de Robeck, and Admiral W. W. Fisher.’ More than once, upon the invitation of Admiral Fisher, he had had a pleasant time on board a battleship off Portland.

On June 25 Hardy and his wife went to Oxford by road to stay at Queen’s College for two nights. This was the last long journey that Hardy was to make, and the last time that he was to sleep away from Max Gate. It was a delightful drive, by way of Salisbury,

Hungerford, and Wantage. At Salisbury they stopped for a little while to look at the Cathedral, as Hardy always loved doing, and at various old buildings, including the Training College which he had visited more than fifty years before when his two sisters were students there, and which is faithfully described in *Jude the Obscure*.

They paused also at Fawley, that pleasant Berkshire village described in the same novel under the name of Marygreen. Here some of Hardy’s ancestors were buried, and he searched fruitlessly for their graves in the little churchyard. His father’s mother, the gentle, kindly grandmother who lived with the family at Bockhampton during Hardy’s childhood, had spent the first thirteen years of her life here as an orphan child, named Mary Head, and her memories of Fawley were so poignant that she never cared to return to the place after she had left it as a young girl. The surname of Jude was taken from this place.

So well had their journey been timed that on their arrival at Oxford they found awaiting them under the entrance gateway of Queen’s, Mr. Godfrey Elton, who was to be their cicerone, and whose impressions of their visit are given herewith.

‘Having been elected an Honorary Fellow Hardy paid Queen’s College a visit on June 25 th and 26th, just after the end of the summer term of 1923. With a colleague, Dr. Chattaway, I was delighted to meet him at the College gate — he was to come by road with Mrs. Hardy from Dorchester. Neither Chattaway nor I had met Hardy before, but I felt confident that we should recognise the now legendary figure from his portraits. It was almost like awaiting a visit from Thackeray or Dickens. . . .

‘The car arrived punctually, and a smallish, fragile, bright-eyed man, elderly certainly but as certainly not old, climbed out of it. An elderly gentleman, one would have said, who had always lived in the country and knew much of the ways of wild creatures and crops. . . .

‘We left Mr. and Mrs. Hardy at tea in the Provost’s lodgings. The Provost was only one year Mr. Hardy’s senior, but with his patriarchal white beard appeared a great deal older, and as we left the party — Hardy sitting bright-eyed and upright on the edge of his chair — it seemed almost like leaving a new boy in charge of his headmaster. . . . Next day there was a lunch in Common-room, at which the Fellows and their wives met Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, and a photograph in the Fellows’ garden in which Hardy appeared in his Doctor’s gown with his new colleagues. In the morning he was shown the sights of the College. He was obviously happy to be in Oxford, and happy, I think, too, to be of it, and I wished that it had been term-time and that he could have seen the younger life of the place, which one felt in some ways he would have preferred to Tutors and Professors. We took him round College a trifle too fast. He would pause reflectively before Garrick’s copy of the First Folio or the contemporary portrait of Henry V., and seem about to make some comment when his conductors would be passing on again and some new historical information would be being offered him. It was characteristic of him that in some pause in this perambulation he found occasion to say some kind words to me of some youthful verse of mine he had chanced to see. . . . Afterwards he asked me to take him into the High Street to see the famous curve, and we spent some minutes searching for the precise spot from which it can best be viewed, while in my mind memories of Jude the Obscure and an earlier Oxford conflicted with anxieties as to the traffic of the existing town — to which he seemed quite indifferent. Then, apparently unwearied, he asked for the Shelley Memorial. . . .

‘After this came the Common-room lunch, and afterwards Mrs. Hardy invited me to accompany them on a visit to the Masefields. We drove to Boar’s Hill, paying a visit in Christ Church on the way. Had it not been for my constant consciousness that I was sitting before a Classic, I should not have guessed that I was with a man who wrote; rather an elderly country gentleman with a bird-like alertness and a rare and charming youthfulness — interested in everything he saw, and cultured, but surely not much occupied with books: indeed almost all of us, his new colleagues, would have struck an impartial observer as far more bookish than the author of the Wessex novels. . . .

‘At the Masefields’ Hardy was asked a question or two about Jude’s village, which it was thought he might have passed on the road from Dorchester, and he spoke briefly and depreciatingly of “ that fictitious person. If there ever was such a person. . . .” When we left, Hardy holding a rose which Mr. Masefield had cut from his garden, there was still time to see more. I had expected that he would wish to rest but no; he wanted to see the Martyrs’ Memorial and New College, Cloisters. Obviously there were certain of the Oxford sights which he had resolved to see again. I am ashamed to remember that, by some error which I cannot now explain, I conducted our guests to the Chapel, instead of the Cloisters, at New College. But perhaps it was a fortunate error, for the choir were about to sing the evening service, and at Hardy’s wish we sat about twenty minutes in the ante-chapel listening in silence to the soaring boys’ voices. . . .

‘Next morning Mr. and Mrs. Hardy left. He spoke often afterwards of his pleasure at having seen his College, and he contemplated another visit. This too brief membership and his one visit remain a very happy memory to his colleagues.’

The Hardys motored back to Max Gate by way of Newbury, Winchester, and Ringwood, having lunch in a grassy glade in the New Forest in the simple way that Hardy so much preferred.

This occasion was an outstanding one during the last years of his life.

On July 20 the Prince of Wales paid a visit to Dorchester, to open the new Drill Hall for the Dorset Territorials, and Hardy was invited to meet him there, and to drive back to Max Gate where the Prince and the party accompanying him were to lunch. It was a hot day, and the whole episode might well have proved fatiguing and irksome to a man of Hardy’s years and retiring nature, but owing to the thoughtfulness of the Prince and his simple and friendly manner, all passed off pleasantly.

At lunch, besides the Prince and the Hardys, there were present Lord Shaftesbury, Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, Sir Godfrey Thomas, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Walter Peacock, and Messrs. Proudfoot and Wilson, the Duchy Stewards.

The Prince had a friendly talk with Hardy in the garden, before leaving to visit certain Duchy farms in Dorchester: the main characteristic of the visit was its easy informality.

The next few months saw a certain activity on Hardy’s part. He visited several friends either for lunch or tea, as he did not go out in the evening except for a short walk, nor did he again sleep away from Max Gate. Many from a distance also called upon him, including his ever faithful friend Lady St. Helier, who travelled from Newbury to Max Gate on October 3rd, this being their last meeting.

On November 15<sup>th</sup> the poetic drama *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* was published. Hardy’s plan in writing this is clearly given in a letter to Mr. Harold Child:

‘The unities are strictly preserved, whatever virtue there may be in that. (I, myself, am old-fashioned enough to think there is a virtue in it, if it can be done without artificiality. The only other case I remember attempting it in was *The Return of the Native*.) The original events could have been enacted in the time taken up by the performance, and they continue unbroken throughout. The change of persons on the stage is called a change of scene, there being no change of background.

‘My temerity in pulling together into the space of an hour events that in the traditional stories covered a long time will doubtless be criticized, if it is noticed. But there are so many versions of the famous romance that I felt free to adapt it to my purpose in any way — as, in fact, the Greek dramatists did in their plays — notably Euripides.

‘Wishing it to be thoroughly English I have dropped the name of Chorus for the conventional onlookers, and called them Chanters, though they play the part of a Greek Chorus to some extent. I have also called them Ghosts (I don’t for the moment recall an instance of this in a Greek play). . . . Whether the lady ghosts in our performance will submit to have their faces whitened I don’t know! . . .

'I have tried to avoid turning the rude personages of, say, the fifth century into respectable Victorians, as was done by Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold, etc. On the other hand it would have been impossible to present them as they really were, with their barbaric manners and surroundings.'

On the 28th of the same month the play was produced by the Hardy Players at the Corn Exchange at Dorchester. The great difficulties which the play presented to amateur actors, unaccustomed to reciting blank verse, who were at their best in rustic comedy, were more or less overcome, but naturally a poetic drama did not make a wide appeal. However, the performance, and particularly the rehearsals, gave Hardy considerable pleasure.

On December 10 the death was announced of Sir Frederick Treves, Hardy's fellow-townsmen, the eminent surgeon. Frederick Treves as a child had attended the same school as Hardy's elder sister Mary, and it was from the shop of Treves's father that Hardy as a boy purchased his first writing-desk. The care which he took of all his possessions during his whole life is shown by the fact that this desk was in his study without a mark or scratch upon it at the time of his death. Because of the early association and the love which they both bore to the county, there was a strong link between these two Dorset men.

On the last day but one of the year Mr. and Mrs. G. Bernard Shaw and Colonel T. E. Lawrence lunched with the Hardys and spent several hours with them. The following entry in his notebook ends his brief chronicle of the year's doings:

'31. New Year's Eve. Did not sit up. Heard the bells in the evening.'

1924

'January 2. Attended Frederick Treves's funeral at St. Peter's. Very wet day. Sad procession to the cemetery. Casket in a little white grave.

'Lord Dawson of Penn and Mr. Newman Flower came out to tea afterwards.'

On January 5 a poem by Hardy, 'In Memoriam, F. T.', appeared in *The Times*, a last tribute to an old friend.

During February *The Queen of Cornwall* was performed in London by the Hardy Players of Dorchester, but it was not altogether a success, partly owing to the only building available having no stage suitable for the performance, a rather small concert platform having to be used.

On March 7 Hardy notes:

'To Stinsford with F. (E. first met 54 years ago).'

And later, on April 3:

'Mother died 20 years ago to-day.'

Among the many letters which arrived on June 2, the 84th anniversary of his birth, was one from a son of the Baptist minister, Mr. Perkins, whom, in his youth, Hardy had so respected. This correspondent was one of the young men who had met him at the Baptist Chapel at the eastern end of the town for a prayer-meeting which was hindered by the arrival of a circus.



More than sixty years had elapsed since Hardy had had any contact with this friend of his youth, and for a little while he was strongly tempted to get into touch with him again. However, too wide a gulf lay between and, as might have been told in one of his poems, the gesture was never made and the days slipped on into oblivion.

On June 11 Mr. Rutland Boughton arrived at Max Gate for a visit of two days, the purpose of which was to consult Hardy about a plan he had for setting *The Queen of Cornwall* to music. Hardy was greatly interested, though he had heard no modern compositions, not even the immensely popular 'Faerie Song' from *The Immortal Hour*. 'The Blue Danube', 'The Morgenblatter Waltz', and the 'Overture to William Tell' interested him more strongly, and also church music, mainly on account of the association with his early days.

But he found Mr. Boughton a stimulating companion, and was interested in his political views, though he could not share them. After Mr. Boughton's departure he said with conviction, 'If I had talked to him for a few hours I would soon have converted him'.

One feature of this visit was a drive the Hardys took with their guests across parts of Egdon Heath, which were then one blaze of purple with rhododendrons in full bloom.

On June 16 a poem by Hardy entitled 'Compassion' appeared in *The Times*. It was written in answer to a request, and was intended to celebrate the Centenary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Although not one of his most successful efforts, as he was never happy when writing to order, it served to demonstrate the poet's passionate hatred of injustice and barbarity.

Much has been won — more, maybe, than we know —  
And on we labour hopeful. 'Ailino!'  
A mighty voice calls: 'But may the good prevail!'  
And 'Blessed are the merciful!'  
Calls a yet mightier one.

On July 1 the Balliol Players, a party of undergraduates from Oxford, visited Max Gate, during the course of a tour in the west of England, to perform on the lawn *The Oresteia* as *The Curse of the House of Atreus*. This was a pleasant and informal occasion which gave delight to Hardy. Always sympathetic to youth, and a lifelong admirer of Greek tragedy, he fully appreciated this mark of affection and respect. The performance was not without an amusing side. The day was a windy one, and cold for July, hence the players with their bare arms and legs and scanty costumes must have been none too comfortable. However, they ran about the lawn and pranced into the flower-beds with apparent enjoyment. Finding that the carrying of lighted torches in the sunlight was ineffective, they carried instead tall spikes of a giant flowering spiraea which they plucked from a border. While having tea after the play they gathered round Hardy, who talked to them with a sincerity and simplicity that few but he could have shown. Among the names of the players that he jotted down in his notebook were those of Mr. A. L. Cliffe — Clytemnestra: Mr. Anthony Asquith — Cassandra; Mr.

Walter Oakshott — Orestes; Mr. H. T. Wade-Gery — Agamemnon; Mr. A. A. Farrer — Electra; and he also notes, ‘The Balliol Players had come on bicycles, sending on their theatrical properties in a lorry that sometimes broke down’. Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker were present as spectators on this occasion.

A day or two later, with reference to what is not clear, Hardy copies a quotation from Emerson:

‘The foolish man wonders at the unusual, but the wise man at the usual.’

On August 4, noted by Hardy as being the day on which war was declared ten years before, he and Mrs. Hardy motored to Netherton Hall in Devon to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker. Two days later he received a visit from Siegfried Sassoon and Colonel T. E. Lawrence.

About this time Rutland Boughton’s music version of *The Queen of Cornwall* was produced at Glastonbury, and on August 28 Hardy with his wife went to see and hear it, making the journey to Glastonbury by car.

From the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> Hardy was sitting to the Russian sculptor Serge Yourievitch for his bust. This was made in Hardy’s study at Max Gate, and though he enjoyed conversation with the sculptor he was tired by the sittings, probably on account of his age, and definitely announced that he would not sit again for anything of the kind.

For several years some of the members of the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society had wished to perform a dramatization of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. After much hesitation Hardy handed over his own dramatization, although, as he notes in his diary, he had come to the conclusion that to dramatize a novel was a mistake in art; moreover, that the play ruined the novel and the novel the play. However, the result was that the company, self-styled ‘The Hardy Players’, produced *Tess* with such unexpected success at Dorchester and Weymouth that it was asked for in London, and the following year produced there by professional actors for over a hundred nights, Miss Gwen Ffranggon-Davies taking the part of ‘Tess’.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October Hardy with his wife visited for the first time since childhood the old barn at the back of Kingston Maurward. Here, as a small boy, he had listened to village girls singing old ballads. He pointed out to his wife the corner where they had sat. He looked around at the dusty rafters and the debris, considering possibly the difference that seventy years had made, and his manner as he left the barn was that of one who wished he had not endeavoured to revive a scene from a distant past. Almost certainly he was the only human being left of that once gay party.

A characteristic note ends Hardy’s diary for 1924:

‘December 31. New Years Eve. Sat up and heard Big Ben and the London church bells by wireless ring in the New Year.’

On this day also he copied a quotation from an essay by L. Pearsall Smith:

‘In every representation of Nature which is a work of art there is to be found, as Professor Courthope said, something which is not to be found in the aspect of Nature

which it represents; and what that something is has been a matter of dispute from the earliest days of criticism.'

'The same writer adds', notes Hardy, "'Better use the word 'inspiration' than 'genius' for inborn daemonic genius as distinct from conscious artistry".

'(It seems to me it might be called "temperamental impulse", which, of course, must be inborn.)'

Early in January 1925 Hardy sent to the Nineteenth Century Magazine a poem entitled 'The Absolute Explains'.

In the spring of this year, in connection with Hardy's dog 'Wessex', an incident occurred which was impossible to explain. This dog, a wire-haired terrier, was of great intelligence and very friendly to many who visited Max Gate, though he had defects of temper, due perhaps to a want of thorough training. Among those to whom he showed a partiality was Mr. William Watkins, the honorary secretary to the Society of Dorset Men in London.

About nine o'clock on the evening of April 18, Mr. Watkins called at Max Gate to discuss with Hardy certain matters connected with his society. The dog, as was his wont, rushed into the hall and greeted his friend with vociferous barks. Suddenly these gave way to a piteous whine, and the change was so startling that Wessex's mistress went to see what had happened.

Nothing, however, seemed amiss, and the dog returned into the room where Hardy was sitting and where he was joined by Mr. Watkins. But even here Wessex seemed ill at ease, and from time to time went to the visitor and touched his coat solicitously with his paw, which he always withdrew giving a sharp cry of distress.

Mr. Watkins left a little after ten o'clock, apparently in very good spirits. Early the next morning there came a telephone message from his son to say that the father, Hardy's guest of the night before, had died quite suddenly about an hour after his return to the hotel from Max Gate. As a rule the dog barked furiously when he heard the telephone ring, but on this occasion he remained silent, his nose between his paws.

On May 26 a letter and a leading article appeared in The Times on the subject of a Thomas Hardy Chair of Literature and a Wessex University. The letter was signed by many eminent writers and educationalists. At the date of writing, however, the Chair has not been endowed.

Later in the summer, on July 15, a deputation from Bristol University arrived at Max Gate to confer on Hardy the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. This was the fifth degree he had received from English and Scottish Universities, the others being, in the order in which the degrees were bestowed — Aberdeen, Cambridge, Oxford, and St. Andrews.

At the end of July Hardy sent off the manuscript of his volume of poems, *Human Shows*, to the publishers, and a month later he made arrangements for the performance of his dramatization of *Tess* at the Barnes Theatre. About this time he enters in his notebook:

“‘Truth is what will work”, said William James (Harpers). A worse corruption of language was never perpetrated.’

Few other events were of interest to him during the year. Tess of the d’Urbervilles was produced in London, but he felt he had not sufficient strength to go up to see it. After nearly two months at Barnes Theatre the play was removed on November 2 to the Garrick Theatre, where the hundredth performance took place.

The many pilgrimages Hardy made with his wife to Stinsford Church took place usually in the evening during the summer, and in the afternoon during the winter. On October 9, however, contrary to his usual custom, he walked to Stinsford in the morning. The bright sunlight shone across the face of a worn tomb whose lettering Hardy had often endeavoured to decipher, so that he might recarve the letters with his penknife. This day, owing to the sunlight, they were able to read:

SACRED

to the memory of

ROBERT REASON

who departed this life

December 26th 1819

Aged 56 years

Dear friend should you mourn for me

I am where you soon must be.

Although Robert Reason had died twenty-one years before the birth of the author of Under the Greenwood Tree, he was faithfully described in that novel as Mr. Penny, the shoemaker, Hardy having heard so much of him from old inhabitants of Bockhampton. He used to regret that he had not used the real name, that being much better for his purpose than the one he had invented.

On December 6 the company of players from the Garrick Theatre arrived at Max Gate in the evening for the purpose of giving a performance of Tess in the drawing-room. The following description of this incident is taken from a letter written by one of the company to a correspondent in America who had particularly desired her impression of the visit:

‘Mr. and Mrs. Hardy behaved as if it were a most usual occurrence for a party of West-End actors to arrive laden with huge theatrical baskets of clothes and props.

‘They met us in the hall and entertained us with tea, cakes and sandwiches, and Mr. Hardy made a point of chatting with everyone.

‘The drawing-room was rather a fortunate shape — the door facing an alcove at one end of the room, and we used these to make our exits and entrances, either exiting into the hall or sitting quietly in the alcove.

‘Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, a friend of the Hardys, and two maids who, in cap and apron, sat on the floor — made up our audience. I think I am correct in saying there was no one else. The room was shaded — lamps and firelight throwing the necessary light on our faces.

‘We played the scenes of Tess’s home with chairs and a tiny drawing-room table to represent farm furniture — tea-cups for drinking mugs — when the chairs and tables were removed the corner of the drawing-room became Stonehenge, and yet in some strange way those present said the play gained from the simplicity.

‘It had seemed as if it would be a paralysingly difficult thing to do, to get the atmosphere at all within a few feet of the author himself and without any of the usual theatrical illusion, but speaking for myself, after the first few seconds it was perfectly easy, and Miss Ffranggon-Davies’s beautiful voice and exquisite playing of the Stonehenge scene in the shadows thrown by the firelight was a thing that I shall never forget. It was beautiful.

‘Mr. Hardy insisted on talking to us until the last minute. He talked of Tess as if she was someone real whom he had known and liked tremendously. I think he enjoyed the evening. I may be quite wrong, but I got the impression that to him it seemed quite a proper and usual way to give a play — and he seemed to have very little conception of the unusualness and difficulties it might present to us.

‘The gossip of the country has it that his house was designed and the garden laid out with the idea of being entirely excluded from the gaze of the curious. Of course it was dark when we arrived, but personally I should say he had succeeded.’

On December 20 he heard with regret of the death of his friend Sir Hamo Thornycroft, the sculptor, whose bronze head of Hardy was presented later to the National Portrait Gallery by Lady Thornycroft.

Siegfried Sassoon, a nephew of Sir Hamo’s, happened to be paying Hardy a visit at the time. He left to go to the funeral of his uncle at Oxford, carrying with him a laurel wreath which Hardy had sent to be placed on the grave. Hardy had a warm regard for the sculptor, whose fine upstanding mien spoke truly of his nobility of character. The hours Hardy had spent in Sir Hamo’s London studio and at his home were pleasant ones, and they had cycled together in Dorset while Sir Hamo was staying at Max Gate.

‘December 23. Mary’s birthday. She came into the world . . . and went out . . . and the world is just the same . . . not a ripple on the surface left.’

‘December 31. New Year’s Eve. F. and I sat up. Heard on the wireless various features of New Year’s Eve in London: dancing at the Albert Hall, Big Ben striking twelve, singing Auld Lang Syne, God Save the King, Marseillaise, hurrahing.’

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE LAST SCENE

1926 — January 1928: Aet. 86-87

Early in January 1926, feeling that his age compelled him to such a step, Hardy resigned the Governorship of the Dorchester Grammar School. He had always been reluctant to hold any public offices, knowing that he was by temperament unfitted to

sit on committees that controlled or ordained the activities of others. He preferred to be 'the man with the watching eye'.

On April 27, replying to a letter from an Oxford correspondent, who was one of four who had signed a letter to the Manchester Guardian upon the necessity of the reformation of the Prayer Book Services, Hardy writes from Max Gate:

'I have read your letter with interest: also the enclosure that you and your friends sent to the Manchester Guardian, particularly because, when I was young, I had a wish to enter the Church.

'I am now too old to take up the questions you lay open, but I may say that it has seemed to me that a simpler plan than that of mental reservation in passages no longer literally accepted (which is puzzling to ordinary congregations) would be just to abridge the creeds and other primitive parts of the Liturgy, leaving only the essentials. Unfortunately there appears to be a narrowing instead of a broadening tendency among the clergy of late, which if persisted in will exclude still more people from Church. But if a strong body of young reformers were to make a bold stand, in a sort of New Oxford Movement, they would have a tremendous backing from the thoughtful laity, and might overcome the retrogressive section of the clergy.

'Please don't attach much importance to these casual thoughts, and believe me,

'Very truly yours,

'T. H.'

In May he received from Mr. Arthur M. Hind a water-colour sketch of an attractive corner in the village of Minterne, which the artist thought might be the original of 'Little Hintock' in the Wood-landers. In thanking Mr. Hind, Hardy writes:

'The drawing of the barn that you have been so kind as to send me has arrived uninjured, and I thank you much for the gift. I think it a charming picture, and a characteristic reproduction of that part of Dorset.

'As to the spot being the "Little Hintock" of The Woodlanders — that is another question. You will be surprised and shocked at my saying that I myself do not know where "Little Hintock" is! Several tourists have told me that they have found it, in every detail, and have offered to take me to it, but I have never gone.

'However, to be more definite, it has features which were to be found fifty years ago in the hamlets of Hermitage, Middlemarsh, Lyons-Gate, Revels Inn, Holnest, Melbury Bubb, etc. — all lying more or less under the eminence called High Stoy, just beyond Minterne and Dogbury Gate, where the country descends into the Vale of Blackmore.

'The topographers you mention as identifying the scene are merely guessers and are wrong. . . .'

On June 29 he again welcomed the Balliol Players, whose chosen play this summer, the Hippolytus of Euripides, was performed on the lawn of Max Gate. About the same time he sent by request a message of congratulation and friendship to Weymouth, Massachusetts, by a deputation which was then leaving England to visit that town.

'July 1926. Note — It appears that the theory exhibited in The Well-Beloved in 1892 has been since developed by Proust still further:

‘Peu de personnes comprennent le caractère purement subjectif du phénomène qu’est l’amour, et la sorte de création que c’est d’une personne supplémentaire, distincte de celle qui porte le même nom dans le monde, et dont la plupart des éléments sont tirés de nous - mêmes.’ (Ombre, i. 40.)

‘Le désir s’élève, se satisfait, disparaît — et c’est tout. Ainsi, la jeune fille qu’on épouse n’est pas celle dont on est tombé amoureux.’ (Ombre, ii. 158, 159.)

On September 8 a dramatization of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Mr. John Drinkwater was produced at the Barnes Theatre, and on the 20th the play was brought to Weymouth, where Hardy went to see it. He received a great ovation in the theatre, and also, on his return to Max Gate, from an enthusiastic crowd that collected round the Pavilion Theatre on the pier. From balconies and windows people were seen waving handkerchiefs as he drove past. In his diary he notes:

‘20 September. Performance of *Mayor of Casterbridge* at Weymouth by London Company, a “flying matinee”. Beautiful afternoon, scene outside the theatre finer than within.’

Writing to a friend about a proposed dramatization of *Jude the Obscure*, he observes:

‘I may say that I am not keen on the new mode (as I suppose it is regarded, though really Elizabethan) of giving a series of episodes in the film manner instead of set scenes.

‘Of the outlines I sent you which suggested themselves to me many years ago, I thought the one I called (I think) “4th Scheme” most feasible.

‘Would not Arabella be the villain of the piece? — or Jude’s personal constitution? — so far as there is any villain more than blind Chance. Christminster is of course the tragic influence of Jude’s drama in one sense, but innocently so, and merely as crass obstruction. By the way it is not meant to be exclusively Oxford, but any old-fashioned University about the date of the story, 1860-1870, before there were such chances for poor men as there are now. I have somewhere printed that I had no feeling against Oxford in particular.’

A few days later he visited Mrs. Bankes at Kingston Lacy in Dorset, and was greatly interested in the priceless collection of pictures shown him. Of this occasion he writes:

‘End of September. With F. on a visit to Mrs. Bankes at Kingston Lacy. She told me an amusing story when showing me a letter to Sir John Bankes from Charles the First, acknowledging that he had borrowed £500 from Sir John. Many years ago when she was showing the same letter to King Edward, who was much interested in it, she said, “Perhaps, Sir, that’s a little matter which could now be set right”. He replied quickly, “Statute of Limitations, Statute of Limitations”.’

Another note:

‘1 November. Went with Mr. Hanbury to Bockhampton and looked at fencing, trees, etc., with a view to tidying and secluding the Hardy house.’

That was his last visit to the place of his birth. It was always a matter of regret to him if he saw this abode in a state of neglect, or the garden uncherished.

During this month, November, his friend Colonel T. E. Lawrence called to say good-bye, before starting for India. Hardy was much affected by this parting, as T. E. Lawrence was one of his most valued friends. He went into the little porch and stood at the front door to see the departure of Lawrence on his motor-bicycle. This machine was difficult to start, and, thinking he might have to wait some time Hardy turned into the house to fetch a shawl to wrap round him. In the meantime, fearing that Hardy might take a chill, Lawrence started the motor-bicycle and hurried away. Returning a few moments after, Hardy was grieved that he had not seen the actual departure, and said that he had particularly wished to see Lawrence go-

The sight of animals being taken to market or driven to slaughter always aroused in Hardy feelings of intense pity, as he well knew, as must anyone living in or near a market-town, how much needless suffering is inflicted. In his notebook at this time he writes:

‘December (1st Week). Walking with F. by railway saw bullocks and cows going to Islington (?) for slaughter.’ Under this he drew a little pencil sketch of the rows of trucks as they were seen by him, with animals’ heads at every opening, looking out at the green countryside they were leaving for scenes of horror in a far-off city. Hardy thought of this sight for long after. It was found in his will that he had left a sum of money to each of two societies ‘to be applied so far as practicable to the investigation of the means by which animals are conveyed from their houses to the slaughter-houses with a view to the lessening of their sufferings in such transit’.

The year drew quietly to an end. On the 23rd of December a band of carol-singers from St. Peter’s, Dorchester, came to Max Gate and sang to Hardy ‘While Shepherds Watched’ to the tune which used to be played by his father and grandfather, a copy of which he had given to the Rector.

A sadness fell upon the household, for Hardy’s dog, Wessex, now thirteen years old, was ill and obviously near his end.

Two days after Christmas Day Hardy makes this entry:

‘27 December. Our famous dog “Wessex” died at J past 6 in the evening, thirteen years of age.’

‘28. Wessex buried.’

‘28. Night. Wessex sleeps outside the house the first time for thirteen years.’

The dog lies in a small turfed grave in the shrubbery on the west side of Max Gate, where also were buried several pet cats and one other dog, Moss. On the headstone is this inscription drawn up by Hardy, and carved from his design:

THE FAMOUS

DOG WESSEX

August 1913-27 Dec. 1926

Faithful. Unflinching.

There were those among Hardy’s friends who thought that his life was definitely saddened by the loss of Wessex, the dog having been the companion of himself and his wife during twelve years of married life. Upon summer evenings or winter afternoons



Wessex would walk with them up the grassy slope in the field in front of their house, to the stile that led into Came Plantation, and while Hardy rested on the stile the dog would sit on the ground and survey the view as his master was doing. On Frome Hill when his companions sat on the green bank by the roadside, or on the barrow that crowns the hill, he would lie in the grass at their feet and gaze at the landscape,' as if', to quote Hardy's oft-repeated comment on this,' it were the right thing to do'.

Those were happy innocent hours. A poem written after the dog's death, ' Dead " Wessex ", the dog to the household', well illustrates Hardy's sense of loss. Two of its verses are:

Do you look for me at times,  
Wistful ones?  
Do you look for me at times  
Strained and still?  
Do you look for me at times,  
When the hour for walking chimes,  
On that grassy path that climbs  
Up the hill?  
You may hear a jump or trot,  
Wistful ones,  
You may hear a jump or trot —  
Mine, as 'twere —  
You may hear a jump or trot  
On the stair or path or plot;  
But I shall cause it not,  
Be not there.

On December 29 Hardy wrote to his friends Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker from Max Gate:

' . . . This is intended to be a New Year's letter, but I don't know if I have made a good shot at it. How kind of you to think of sending me Raymond Guyot's Napoleon. I have only glanced at it, at the text that is, as yet, but what an interesting collection of records bearing on the life of the man who finished the Revolution with "a whiff of grapeshot", and so crushed not only its final horrors but all the worthy aspirations of its earlier time, made them as if they had never been, and threw back human altruism scores, perhaps hundreds of years.'

'31 December. New Year's Eve. Did not sit up.'

In January 1927 'A Philosophical Fantasy' appeared in the Fortnightly Review. Hardy liked the year to open with a poem of this type from him in some leading review or newspaper. The quotation at the heading, 'Milton . . . made God argue', gives the keynote, and the philosophy is much as he had set forth before, but still a ray of hope is shown for the future of mankind.

Aye, to human tribes nor kindlessness  
Nor love I've given, but mindlessness,

Which state, though far from ending,  
May nevertheless be mending.

Weeks passed through a cold spring and Hardy's eighty-seventh birthday was reached. This year, instead of remaining at Max Gate, he motored with his wife to Netherton Hall in Devonshire, to spend a part of the day with friends, Helen and Harley Granville-Barker. In a letter written some months later, Mrs. Granville-Barker describes this visit.

"... There were no guests, just the peaceful routine of everyday life, for that last birthday here. Mr. Hardy said to you afterwards, you told me, that he thought it might be the last, but at the time he was not in any way sad or unlike himself. He noticed, as always, and unlike most old people, the smallest things. At luncheon, I remember, one of the lace doilies at his place got awry in an ugly way, showing the mat underneath, and I saw him, quietly and with the most delicate accuracy, setting it straight again — all the time taking his part in the talk.

'Wasn't it that day he said, speaking of Augustus John's portrait of him:

"I don't know whether that is how I look or not — but that is how I feel"?

'In the afternoon we left him alone in the library because we thought he wanted to rest a little. It was cold, for June, and a wood fire was lighted.

'Once we peeped in at him through the garden window. He was not asleep but sitting, walled in with books, staring into the fire with that deep look of his. The cat had established itself on his knees and he was stroking it gently, but half-unconsciously.

'It was a wonderful picture of him. I shall not forget it. Nor shall I forget the gay and startlingly youthful gesture with which he flourished his hat towards us as, once in the motor-car, later that afternoon, he drove away from us.'

At the end of the day he seemed in a sad mood, and his wife sought to amuse him by a forecast of small festivities she had planned for his ninetieth birthday, which she assured him would be a great occasion. With a flash of gaiety he replied that he intended to spend that day in bed.

Once again the Balliol Players appeared at Max Gate, this year on July 6. As before, their visit gave Hardy considerable pleasure, and after their performance on the lawn of Iphigenia in Aulis he talked with them freely, appreciating their boyish ardour and their modesty.

A few days later he received visits from his friends Siegfried Sassoon and Mr. and Mrs. John Masefield, and on July 21 he laid the foundation-stone of the new building of the Dorchester Grammar School, which was to be seen clearly from the front gate of his house, looking towards the Hardy Monument, a noticeable object on the sky-line, to the south-west. It was Hardy's custom nearly every fine morning after breakfast in the summer to walk down to the gate to see what the weather was likely to be by observing this tower in the distance.

The day chosen for the stone-laying was cold and windy, by no means a suitable day for a man of Hardy's advanced years to stand in the open air bareheaded. Nevertheless he performed his task with great vigour, and gave the following address in a clear

resonant voice that could be heard on the outskirts of the crowd that collected to hear him:

‘I have been asked to execute the formal part of to-day’s function, which has now been done, and it is not really necessary that I should add anything to the few words that are accustomed to be used at the laying of foundation or dedication stones. But as the circumstances of the present case are somewhat peculiar, I will just enlarge upon them for a minute or two. What I have to say is mainly concerning the Elizabethan philanthropist, Thomas Hardy, who, with some encouragement from the burgesses, endowed and rebuilt this ancient school after its first humble shape — him whose namesake I have the honour to be, and whose monument stands in the church of St. Peter, visible from this spot. The well-known epitaph inscribed upon his tablet, unlike many epitaphs, does not, I am inclined to think, exaggerate his virtues, since it was written, not by his relatives or dependents, but by the free burgesses of Dorchester in gratitude for his good action towards the town. This good deed was accomplished in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and the substantial stone building in which it merged eventually still stands to dignify South Street, as we all know, and hope it may remain there.

‘But what we know very little about is the personality of this first recorded Thomas Hardy of the Froome Valley here at our back, though his work abides. He was without doubt of the family of the Hardys who landed in this county from Jersey in the fifteenth century, acquired small estates along the river upwards towards its source, and whose descendants have mostly remained hereabouts ever since, the Christian name of Thomas having been especially affected by them. He died in 1599, and it is curious to think that though he must have had a modern love of learning not common in a remote county in those days, Shakespeare’s name could hardly have been known to him, or at the most vaguely as that of a certain ingenious Mr. Shakespeare who amused the London playgoers; and that he died before Milton was born.

‘In Carlylean phraseology, what manner of man he was when he walked this earth, we can but guess, or what he looked like, what he said and did in his lighter moments, and at what age he died. But we may shrewdly conceive that he was a far-sighted man, and would not be much surprised, if he were to revisit the daylight, to find that his building had been outgrown, and no longer supplied the needs of the present inhabitants for the due education of their sons. His next feeling might be to rejoice in the development of what was possibly an original design of his own, and to wish the reconstruction every success.

‘We living ones all do that, and nobody more than I, my retirement from the Governing body having been necessitated by old age only. Certainly everything promises well. The site can hardly be surpassed in England for health, with its open surroundings, elevated and bracing situation, and dry subsoil, while it is near enough to the sea to get very distinct whiffs of marine air. Moreover, it is not so far from the centre of the borough as to be beyond the walking powers of the smallest boy. It has a capable headmaster, holding every modern idea on education within the limits of good judge-

ment, and assistant masters well equipped for their labours, which are not sinecures in these days.

‘I will conclude by thanking the Governors and other friends for their kind thought in asking me to undertake this formal initiation of the new building, which marks such an interesting stage in the history of the Dorchester Grammar School.’

After the ceremony, having spoken to a few friends, Hardy went away without waiting for the social gathering that followed. He was very tired, and when he reached home he said that he had made his last public appearance.

There seemed no ill after-effects, however, and on August 9 Hardy drove with Gustav Hoist to ‘Egdon Heath’, just then purple with heather. They then went on to Puddletown and entered the fine old church, and both climbed up into the gallery, where probably some of Hardy’s ancestors had sat in the choir, more than a century earlier.

On August 8 he wrote to Mr. J. B. Priestley:

‘. . . I send my sincere thanks for your kind gift of the “George Meredith” book, and should have done so before if I had not fallen into the sere, and weak eyesight did not trouble me. I have read your essay, or rather have had it read to me, and have been much interested in the bright writing of one in whom I had already fancied I discerned a coming force in letters.

‘I am not at all a critic, especially of a critic, and when the author he reviews is a man who was, off and on, a friend of mine for forty years; but it seems to me that you hold the scales very fairly. Meredith was, as you recognize, and might have insisted on even more strongly, and I always felt, in the direct succession of Congreve and the artificial comedians of the Restoration, and in getting his brilliancy we must put up with the fact that he would not, or could not — at any rate did not — when aiming to represent the “Comic Spirit”, let himself discover the tragedy that always underlies Comedy if you only scratch it deeply enough.’

During the same month Hardy and his wife motored to Bath and back. On the way they had lunch sitting on a grassy bank, as they had done in former years, to Hardy’s pleasure. But now a curious sadness brooded over them; lunching in the open air had lost its charm, and they did not attempt another picnic of this kind.

In Bath Hardy walked about and looked long and silently at various places that seemed to have an interest for him. He seemed like a ghost revisiting scenes of a long-dead past. After a considerable rest in the Pump Room they returned home. Hardy did not seem tired by this drive.

Some weeks later they motored to Ilminster, a little country town that Hardy had long desired to visit. He was interested in the church, and also in the tomb of the founder of Wadham College therein. By his wish, on their return, they drove past the quarries where Ham Hill stone was cut.

Stopping at Yeovil they had tea in a restaurant, where a band of some three musicians were playing. One of Hardy’s most attractive characteristics was his ability to

be interested in simple things, and before leaving he stood and listened appreciatively to the music, saying afterwards what a delightful episode that had been.

On September 6, an exceedingly wet day, Mr. and Mrs. John Galsworthy called on their way to London. During the visit Hardy told them the story of a murder that had happened eighty years before. Mr. Galsworthy seemed struck by these memories of Hardy's early childhood, and asked whether he had always remembered those days so vividly, or only lately. Hardy replied that he had always remembered clearly. He could recall what his mother had said about the Rush murder when he was about the age of six: 'The governess hanged him'. He was puzzled, and wondered how a governess could hang a man. Mr. and Mrs. Galsworthy thought that Hardy seemed better than when they saw him last, better, in fact, than they had ever seen him.

September 7 being a gloriously fine day, Hardy with his wife walked across the fields opposite Max Gate to see the building of the new Grammar School, then in progress.

During September Hardy was revising and rearranging the Selected Poems in the Golden Treasury Series in readiness for a new edition. The last entry but one in his notebook refers to the sending of the copy to the publishers, and finally, on the 19th of September, he notes that Mr. Weld of Lulworth Castle called with some friends. After this no more is written, but a few notes were made by his wife for the remaining weeks of 1927.

About the 21st of September they drove to Lulworth Castle to lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Weld and a house-party, and Hardy was much interested in all that he was shown in the Castle and in the adjoining church. A few weeks later he and his wife lunched at Charborough Park, the scene of *Two on a Tower*, the first time he had entered this house.

## NOTES BY F. E. H.

'October 24. A glorious day. T. and I walked across the field in front of Max Gate towards Came. We both stood on a little flat stone sunk in the path that we call our wishing stone, and I wished. T. may have done so, but he did not say.

'On the way he gathered up some waste paper that was blowing about the lane at the side of our house and buried it in the hedge with his stick, and going up the path to Came he stopped for quite a long time to pull off the branches of a tree a heap of dead weeds that had been thrown there by some untidy labourer who had been cleaning the field. He says that a man has no public spirit who passes by any untidiness out of doors, litter of paper or similar rubbish.'

'October 27. During the evening he spoke of an experience he had a few years ago. There were four or five people to tea at Max Gate, and he noticed a stranger standing by me most of the time. Afterwards he asked who that dark man was who stood by me. I told him that there was no stranger present, and I gave him the names of the three men who were there, all personal friends. He said that it was not one of these,

and seemed to think that another person had actually been there. This afternoon he said: "I can see his face now".

'Later in the evening, during a terrific gale, I said that I did not wonder that some people disliked going along the dark road outside our house at night.

'T. replied that for twelve years he walked backwards and forwards from Bockhampton to Dorchester often in the dark, and he was only frightened twice. Once was when he was going up Stinsford Hill, no habitation of any sort being in sight, and he came upon two men sitting on chairs, one on either side of the road. By the moonlight he saw that they were strangers to him; terrified, he took to his heels; he never heard who they were or anything to explain the incident.

'The other time was when, as a small boy walking home from school, reading *Pilgrim's Progress*, he was so alarmed by the description of Apollyon that he hastily closed his book and went on his way trembling, thinking that Apollyon was going to spring out of a tree whose dark branches overhung the road. He remembered his terror, he said, that evening, seventy-five years afterwards.'

'October 30. At lunch T. H. talked about Severn, speaking with admiration of his friendship towards Keats. He said that it must have been quite disinterested, as Keats was then comparatively obscure.'

'October 31. Henry Williamson, the author of *Tar ha the Otter*, called.'

'November 3. While he was having tea to-day, T. H. said that whenever he heard any music from *Il Trovatore*, it carried him back to the first year when he was in London and when he was strong and vigorous and enjoyed his life immensely. He thought that *Il Trovatore* was good music.'

'November 4. We drove in the afternoon to Stinsford, to put flowers on the family graves. The tombs are very green, being covered with moss because they are under a yew-tree. T. H. scraped off most of the moss with a little wooden implement like a toy spade, six inches in length, which he made with his own hands and which he carries in his pocket when he goes to Stinsford. He remarked that Walter de la Mare had told him that he preferred to see the gravestones green.

'Then we drove to Talbothays (his brother's house). As we turned up Dark Hill, T. H. pointed out the place {where, as a small boy, he had left an umbrella in the hedge, having put it down while he cut a stick. He did not remember it until he reached home and his mother asked him where was his umbrella. As he went to school next morning he looked in the hedge and found it where he had left it.

'After having been with H. H. and K. H. (the brother and sister) for half an hour we returned home.'

Thus ended a series of visits paid regularly to his family extending over forty years. While his parents were alive, Hardy went to see them at Bockhampton nearly every Sunday afternoon when he was in Dorchester, walking at first, then cycling. After his mother's death he visited his two sisters and his brother at Bockhampton, and later at Talbothays, to which house they moved in 1912. These visits continued until the last year or two of his life, when he was unable to go very often. He cycled there in

fine weather until he was over eighty, and then he walked, until the distance seemed beyond his powers. Stinsford was a favourite haunt until the last few months of his life, the walk there from Max Gate, across the water-meadows,

being a particularly beautiful one; and the churchyard, to him, the most hallowed spot on earth.

‘November 4, continued. At tea T. H. said that he had been pleased to read that day an article by the composer Miss Ethel Smyth, saying that II *Trovatore* was good music. He reminded me of what he said yesterday.’

‘November 11. Armistice Day. T. came downstairs from his study and listened to the broadcasting of a service at Canterbury Cathedral. We stood there for the two minutes’ silence. He said afterwards that he had been thinking of Frank George, his cousin, who was killed at Gallipoli.

‘In the afternoon we took one of our usual little walks, around “the triangle” as we call it, that is down the lane by the side of our house, and along the cinder-path beside the railway line. We stood and watched a goods train carrying away huge blocks of Portland stone as we have done so many times. He seems never tired of watching these stone-laden trucks. He said he thought that the shape of Portland would be changed in the course of years by the continual cutting away of its surface.

‘Sitting by the fire after tea he told me about various families of poachers he had known as a boy, and how, when a thatched house at Bockhampton was pulled down, a pair of swingels was found under the thatch. This was an instrument of defence used by poachers, and capable of killing a man.<sup>1</sup>

‘He said that if he had his life over again he would prefer to be a small architect in a country town, like Mr. Hicks at Dorchester, to whom he was articled.’

‘November 17. To-day T. H. was speaking, and evidently thinking a great deal, about a friend, a year or two older than himself, who was a fellow-pupil at Mr. Hicks’s office. I felt, as he talked, that he would like to meet this man again more than anyone in the world. He is in Australia now, if alive, and must be nearly ninety. His name is Henry Robert Bastow; he was a Baptist and evidently a very religious youth, and T. H. was devoted to him. I suggested that we might find out something about him by sending an advertisement to Australian newspapers, but T. H. thought that would not be wise.’

‘Sunday, November 27. The fifteenth anniversary of the death of Emma Lavinia Hardy; Thursday was the anniversary of the death of Poachers’ iron swingels. A strip of iron ran down three or four sides of the flail part, and the two flails were united by three or four links of chain, the keepers carrying cutlasses which would cut off the ordinary eel-skin hinge of a flail. — From T. H.’s notebook, Dec. 1884.

of Mary, his elder sister. For two or three days he has been wearing a black hat as a token of mourning, and carries a black walking-stick that belonged to his first wife, all strangely moving.

‘T. H. has been writing almost all the day, revising poems. When he came down to tea he brought one to show me, about a desolate spring morning, and a shepherd

counting his sheep and not noticing the weather.’ This is the poem in Winter Words called ‘An Unkindly May’.

‘November 28. Speaking about ambition T. said to-day that he had done all that he meant to do, but he did not know whether it had been worth doing.

‘His only ambition, so far as he could remember, was to have some poem or poems in a good anthology like the Golden Treasury.

‘The model he had set before him was “Drink to me only”, by Ben Jonson.’

The earliest recollection of his childhood (as he had told me before) was that when he was four years old his father gave him a small toy concertina and wrote on it, ‘Thomas Hardy, 1844’. By this inscription he knew, in after years, his age when that happened.

Also he remembered, perhaps a little later than this, being in the garden at Bockhampton with his father on a bitterly cold winter day. They noticed a fieldfare, half-frozen, and the father took up a stone idly and threw it at the bird, possibly not meaning to hit it. The fieldfare fell dead, and the child Thomas picked it up and it was as light as a feather, all skin and bone, practically starved. He said he had never forgotten how the body of the fieldfare felt in his hand: the memory had always haunted him.

He recalled how, crossing the eweleaze when a child, he went on hands and knees and pretended to eat grass in order to see what the sheep would do. Presently he looked up and found them gathered around in a close ring, gazing at him with astonished faces.

An illness, which at the commencement did not seem to be serious, began on December 11. On the morning of that day he sat at the writing-table in his study, and felt totally unable to work. This, he said, was the first time that such a thing had happened to him.

From then his strength waned daily. He was anxious that a poem he had written, ‘Christmas in the Elgin Room’, should be copied and sent to The Times. This was done, and he asked his wife anxiously whether she had posted it with her own hands. When she assured him that she had done so he seemed content, and said he was glad that he had cleared everything up. Two days later he received a personal letter of thanks, with a warm appreciation of his work, from the editor of The Times. This gave him pleasure, and he asked that a reply should be sent.

He continued to come downstairs to sit for a few hours daily, until Christmas Day. After that he came downstairs no more.

On December 26 he said that he had been thinking of the Nativity and of the Massacre of the Innocents, and his wife read to him the gospel accounts, and also articles in the Encyclopedia Biblica. He remarked that there was not a grain of evidence that the gospel story was true in any detail.

As the year ended a window in the dressing-room adjoining his bedroom was opened that he might hear the bells, as that had always pleased him. But now he said that he could not hear them, and did not seem interested.



His strength still failed. The weather was bitterly cold, and snow had fallen heavily, being twelve inches deep in parts of the garden. In the road outside there were snowdrifts that in places would reach a man's waist.

By desire of the local practitioner additional advice was called in, and Hardy's friend Sir Henry Head, who was living in the neighbourhood, made invaluable suggestions and kept a watchful eye upon the case. But the weakness increased daily.

He could no longer listen to the reading of prose, though a short poem now and again interested him. In the middle of one night he asked his wife to read aloud to him 'The Listeners', by Walter de la Mare.

On January 10 he made a strong rally, and although he was implored not to do so he insisted upon writing a cheque for his subscription to the Pension Fund of the Society of Authors. For the first time in his life he made a slightly feeble signature, unlike his usual beautiful firm handwriting, and then he laid down his pen.

Later he was interested to learn that J. M. Barrie, his friend of many years, had arrived from London to assist in any way that might be possible. He was amused when told that this visitor had gone to the kitchen door to avoid any disturbance by ringing the front-door bell.

In the evening he asked that Robert Browning's poem 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' should be read aloud to him. While reading it his wife glanced at his face to see whether he were tired, the poem being a long one of thirty-two stanzas, and she was struck by the look of wistful intentness with which Hardy was listening. He indicated that he wished to hear the poem to the end.

He had a better night, and in the morning of January 11 seemed so much stronger that one at least of those who watched beside him had confident hopes of his recovery, and an atmosphere of joy prevailed in the sick-room. An immense bunch of grapes arrived from London, sent by a friend, and this aroused in Hardy great interest. As a rule he disliked receiving gifts, but on this occasion he showed an almost childlike pleasure, and insisted upon the grapes being held up for the inspection of the doctor, and whoever came into the room. He ate some, and said quite gaily, 'I'm going on with these'. Everything he had that day in the way of food or drink he seemed to appreciate keenly, though naturally he took but little. As it grew dusk, after a long musing silence, he asked his wife to repeat to him a verse from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, beginning

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth —

She took his copy of this work from his bedside and read to him:

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,

And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:

For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man Is blacken'd —

Man's forgiveness give — and take!

He indicated that he wished no more to be read.

In the evening he had a sharp heart attack of a kind he had never had before. The doctor was summoned and came quickly, joining Mrs. Hardy at the bedside. Hardy remained conscious until a few minutes before the end. Shortly after nine he died.

An hour later one, going to his bedside yet again, saw on the death-face an expression such as she had never seen before on any being, or indeed on any presentment of the human countenance. It was a look of radiant triumph such as imagination could never have conceived. Later the first radiance passed away, but dignity and peace remained as long as eyes could see the mortal features of Thomas Hardy.

The dawn of the following day rose in almost unparalleled splendour. Flaming and magnificent the sky stretched its banners over the dark pines that stood sentinel around.

## APPENDIX I

On the morning of Thursday, January 12, the Dean of Westminster readily gave his consent to a proposal that Hardy should be buried in Westminster Abbey; and news of this proposal and its acceptance was sent to Max Gate. There it was well known that Hardy's own wish was to be buried at Stinsford, amid the graves of his ancestors and of his first wife. After much consideration a compromise was found between this definite personal wish and the nation's claim to the ashes of the great poet. On Friday, January 13, his heart was taken out of his body and placed by itself in a casket. On Saturday, January 14, the body was sent to Woking for cremation, and thence the ashes were taken the same day to Westminster Abbey and placed in the Chapel of St. Faith to await interment. On Sunday, January 15, the casket containing the heart was taken to the church at Stinsford, where it was laid on the altar steps.

At two o'clock on Monday, January 16, there were three services in three different churches. In Westminster Abbey the poet's wife and sister were the chief mourners, while in the presence of a great crowd, which included representatives of the King and other members of the Royal Family, and of many learned and other societies, the ashes of Thomas Hardy were buried with stately ceremonial in Poets' Corner. The pallbearers were the Prime Minister (Mr. Stanley Baldwin) and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, representing the Government and Parliament; Sir James Barrie, Mr. John Galsworthy, Sir Edmund Gosse, Professor A. E. Housman, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, and Mr. Bernard Shaw, representing literature; and the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge (Mr. A. S. Ramsey), and the Pro-Provost of Queen's College, Oxford (Dr. E. M. Walker), representing the Colleges of which Hardy was an honorary Fellow. A spadeful of Dorset earth, sent by a Dorset farm labourer, Mr. Christopher Corbin, was sprinkled on the casket. In spite of the cold and wet the streets about the Abbey were full of people who had been unable to obtain admission to the service, but came as near as they might to taking part in it. At the same hour at Stinsford, where Hardy was baptized, and where as boy and man he had often worshipped, his brother,

Mr. Henry Hardy, was the chief mourner, while, in the presence of a rural population, the heart of this lover of rural Wessex was buried in the grave of his first wife among the Hardy tombs under the great yew-tree in the corner of the churchyard. And in Dorchester all business was suspended for an hour, while at St. Peter's Church the Mayor and Corporation and many other dignitaries and societies attended a memorial service in which the whole neighbourhood joined.H. C.

## APPENDIX II

Letters from Thomas Hardy to Dr. Caleb Saleeby I

Max Gate, Dorchester, Dec. 21, 1914.

Dear Sir,

I have read with much interest the lecture on The Longest Price of War that you kindly send: and its perusal does not diminish the gloom with which this ghastly business on the Continent fills me, as it fills so many. The argument would seem to favour Conscription, since the inert, if not the unhealthy, would be taken, I imagine.

Your visits to The Dynasts show that, as Granville-Barker foretold, thoughtful people would care about it. My own opinion when I saw it was that it was the only sort of thing likely to take persons of musing turn into a theatre at this time.

I have not read M. Bergson's book, and if you should not find it troublesome to send your copy as you suggest, please do.

The theory of the Prime Force that I used in The Dynasts was published in Jan. 1904. The nature of the determination embraced in the theory is that of a collective will; so that there is a proportion of the total will in each part of the whole, and each part has therefore, in strictness, some freedom, which would, in fact, be operative as such whenever the remaining great mass of will in the universe should happen to be in equilibrium.

However, as the work is intended to be a poetic drama and not a philosophic treatise I did not feel bound to develop this.

The assumption of unconsciousness in the driving force is, of course, not new. But I think the view of the unconscious force as gradually becoming conscious: i.e. that consciousness is creeping further and further back towards th<sup>o</sup> origin of force, had never (so far as I know) been advanced before The Dynasts appeared. But being only a mere impressionist I must not pretend to be a philosopher in a letter, and ask you to believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Hardy.

Dr. Saleeby.

2

Max Gate, Dorchester, Feb. 2, 1915.

Dear Dr. Saleeby,

Your activities are unlimited. I should like to hear your address on 'Our War for International Law'. Personally I feel rather disheartened when I think it probable that the war will end by sheer exhaustion of the combatants, and that things will be left much as they were before. But I hope not.

I have been now and then dipping into your Bergson, and shall be returning the volume soon. I suppose I may assume that you are more or less disciple, or fellow-philosopher, of his. Therefore you may be rather shocked by some views I hold about his teachings — if I may say I hold any views about anything whatever, which I hardly do.

His theories are certainly much more delightful than those they contest, and I for one would gladly believe them, but I cannot help feeling all the time that he is rather an imaginative and poetical writer than a reasoner, and that for his attractive assertions he does not adduce any proofs whatever. His use of the word 'creation' seems loose to me. Then, as to 'conduct'. I fail to see how, if it is not mechanism, it can be other than Caprice, though he denies it (p. 50). And he says that Mechanism and Finalism (I agree with him as to Finalism) are only external views of our conduct.

'Our conduct extends between them, and slips much further.' Well, I hope it may, but he nowhere shows that it does. And again: 'a mechanistic conception . . . treats the living as the inert. . . . Let us, on the contrary, trace a line of demarcation between the inert and the living (208).' Well, let us, to our great pleasure, if we can see why we should introduce an inconsistent rupture of order into uniform and consistent laws of the same.

You will see how much I want to be a Bergsonian (indeed I have for many years). But I fear that his philosophy is, in the bulk, only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes — an ingenious fancy without real foundation, and more complicated, and therefore less likely than the determinist fancy and others that he endeavours to overthrow.

You must not think me a hard-hearted rationalist for all this. Half my time (particularly when I write verse) I believe — in the modern use of the word — not only in things that Bergson does,

but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc.

But then, I do not believe in these in the old sense of belief any more for that; and in arguing against Bergsonism I have, of course, meant belief in its old sense when I aver myself incredulous.

Sincerely yours,  
Thomas Hardy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A great part of this letter will be found in a slightly different form on pp. 369-70 of this volume. Both versions are printed in order to illustrate Hardy's artistic inability to rest content with anything that he wrote until he had brought the expression as near to his thought as language would allow. He would, for instance, often go on revising his poems for his own satisfaction after their publication in book form. — F. E. H.

3

Max Gate, Dorchester, 16.3.1915.

Dear Dr. Saleeby,

My thanks for the revised form of *The Longest Price of IVar*, which I am reading.

I am returning, or shall be in a day or two, your volume of Bergson. It is most interesting reading, and one likes to give way to its views and assurances without criticizing them.

If, however, we ask for reasons and proof (which I don't care to do) I am afraid we do not get them.

An *ilan vital* — by which I understand him to mean a sort of additional and spiritual force, beyond the merely unconscious push of life — the 'will' of other philosophers that propels growth and development — seems much less probable than single and simple determinism, or what he calls mechanism, because it is more complex: and where proof is impossible probability must be our guide. His partly mechanistic and partly creative theory seems to me clumsy and confused.

He speaks of 'the enormous gap that separates even the lowest form of life from the inorganic world'. Here again it is more probable that organic and inorganic modulate into each other, one nature and law operating throughout. But the most fatal objection to his view of creation plus propulsion seems to me to lie in the existence of pain. If nature were creative she would have created painlessness, or be

in process of creating it — pain being the first thing we instinctively fly from. If on the other hand we cannot introduce into life what is not already there, and are bound to mere recombination of old materials, the persistence of pain is intelligible.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Hardy.

## APPENDIX III

Letters on 'The Dynasts'

Max Gate, Dorchester, New Year's Eve, 1907.

My dear Clodd,

I write a line to thank you for that nice little copy of Munro's *Lucretius*, and to wish you a happy New Year. I am familiar with two translations of the poet, but not with this one, so the book is not wasted.

I have been thinking what a happy man you must be at this time of the year, in having to write your name 8000 times. Nobody wants me to write mine once!

In two or three days I shall have done with the proofs of *Dynasts III*. It is well that the business should be over, for I have been living in Wellington's campaigns so much lately that, like George IV, I am almost positive that I took part in the battle of Waterloo, and have written of it from memory.

What new side of science are you writing about at present?

Yours sincerely,  
Thomas Hardy.  
Max Gate, 20:2:1908.  
My dear Clodd,

I must send a line or two in answer to your letter. What you remind me of — the lyrical account of the fauna of Waterloo field on the eve of the battle is, curiously enough, the page (p. 282) that struck me, in looking back over the book, as being the most original in it. Though, of course, a thing may be original without being good. However, it does happen that (so far as I know) in the many treatments of Waterloo in literature, those particular personages who were present have never been alluded to before.

Yes: I left off on a note of hope. It was just as well that the Pities should have the last word, since, like *Paradise Lost*, *The Dynasts* proves nothing.

Always yours sincerely,  
Thomas Hardy.

P.S. — The idea of the Unconscious Will becoming conscious with flux of time, is also new, I think, whatever it may be worth. At any rate I have never met with it anywhere. — T. H.

Max Gate, Dorchester, 28:8:1914.

My dear Clodd,

I fear we cannot take advantage of your kind invitation, and pay you a visit just now — much as in some respects we should like to. With the Germans (apparently) only a week from Paris, the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. We shall hope to come when things look brighter.

Trifling incidents here bring home to us the condition of affairs not far off — as I daresay they do to you still more — sentries with gleaming bayonets at unexpected places as we motor along, the steady flow of soldiers through here to Weymouth, and their disappearance across the Channel in the silence of night, and the 1000 prisoners whom we get glimpses of through chinks, mark these fine days. The prisoners, they say, have already mustered enough broken English to say 'Shoot Kaiser!' and oblige us by playing 'God Save the King' on their concertinas and fiddles. Whether this is 'meant sarcastic', as Artemus Ward used to say, I cannot tell.

I was pleased to know that you were so comfortable, when I was picturing you in your shirt sleeves with a lot of other robust Alde - burghers digging a huge trench from Aldeburgh church to the top of those steps we go down to your house, streaming with sweat, and drinking pots of beer between the shovellings (English beer of course).

Sincerely yours,  
Thomas Hardy.

P.S. — Yes: everybody seems to be reading *The Dynasts* just now — at least, so a writer in the *Daily News* who called here this morning tells me. — T. H.

# Hardy's Wessex Map

To use your Kindle to zoom in, move the cursor down and click when you see the magnifying glass symbol.

Westminster Abbey. Hardy had wished to be buried at Stinsford, close to his birthplace. However, after his death, public outcry demanded that he should be buried in 'Poets' Corner'. Faced with this dilemma, his second wife Florence decided that his heart should be buried at Stinsford and his ashes interred at Westminster Abbey.

[image not archived]

Poet's Corner

[image not archived]

St. Michael's Church, Stinsford, Dorset

[image not archived]

The grave, where 'lies the heart of Thomas Hardy'



The Ted K Archive

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