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Colby Library Quarterly 129

HARDY'S BIRTHPLACE

by E. N. SANDERS

READERS of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY will doubtless remember that Miss Kate Hardy, sister of the famous novelist, left Max Gate to the National Trust, the institution which is concerned with the preservation of all kinds of buildings of historic interest, from castles to cottages. I now understand that Miss Hardy made it financially possible for the novelist's birthplace to be bought, and arrangements are being made for the cottage to be regularly shown to the public. This news will, I think, please many Hardy-lovers in the United States.

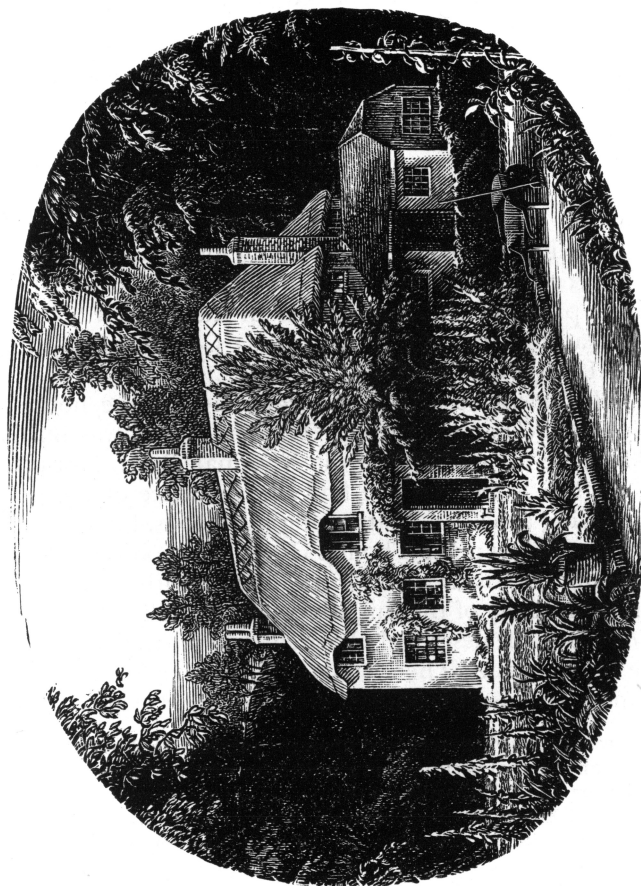
A leading article in the *Manchester Guardian* for June 4 is well worth quoting:

"There will be general satisfaction that the house at Higher Bockhampton where Thomas Hardy was born is to become the property of the National Trust. Not often in English letters can one find like evidence of the place so shaping a man and patterning his moods, his style, and content. Dorset made Thomas Hardy, and soon Hardy was bringing back to Dorset a lustre almost without comparison in the story of the English countryside. In *The Return of the Native* he described 'the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste.' There was no limit to his feeling for his home pastures or his understanding of their magic.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it well an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this. . . . Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity.

"Fair prospects, he noted, wed happily with fair times, but then (as indeed now) times were not always fair.

Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings over sadly



Sanders: Hardy's Birthplace

THE HOUSE AT UPPER BOCKHAMPTON IN WHICH THOMAS HARDY WAS BORN on June 2, 1840: a wood engraving* by Percy Grassby, reprinted from *Thomas Hardy in Maine* by Carl J. Weber (Portland, 1942). Professor Weber has offered the suggestion that Hardy had this house in mind when, in Chapter Two of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, he wrote: "It was a long low cottage with a hipped roof of thatch, having dormer windows breaking up into the eaves, a chimney standing in the middle of the ridge and another at the further end. . . . The walls of the dwelling were for the most part covered with creepers, though these were rather beaten back from the doorway—a feature which was worn and scratched by much passing in and out. . . ."

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tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.

"The delicate child born in the seven-roomed house at Higher Bockhampton on June 2, 1840, confounded the doctors. He grew up on that lovely and silent spot between woodland and heathland, and took it and the six counties around into his heart and into literature. Nothing distressed him more towards the end of his life than the fear that his birthplace might become shabby and overgrown. Now that need never happen."

I have quoted these remarks by special permission of the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*.*



THE FIRST COMPLETE JACOB ABBOTT BIBLIOGRAPHY

reviewed by JOHN A. HUMPHRY

Librarian, Springfield (Massachusetts) Public Library

THE appearance of *A Bibliography of Jacob Abbott* by Professor Carl J. Weber is a significant contribution to the tremendous but still incomplete body of knowledge known as bibliographical history. This work should prove useful not only to collectors, but also to librarians, bibliographers, and other bookmen. It marks the first attempt to compile a complete list of Abbott's works, including the British publications. A. Edward Newton and Amy Lowell were interested in the Rollo books; Jacob Blanck began a bibliography of the juvenile titles by Abbott; Rollo G. Silver has done a bibliography of Abbott first editions; Abraham Lincoln read and commented upon the histories; but up until now, no one has made a definitive bibliography of *all* of Jacob Abbott.

* Mr. Sanders, editor and ardent Hardy collector, has sent the foregoing contribution from Parkstone, Dorset, not far from Hardy's "Sandbourne" (Bournemouth).