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Hardy's Popularity

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1828: *Poetical Works*, one vol., Paris. The first one-volume collected edition.

1835: *Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems*.

1836: *Poetical Works*, 6 vols. The fifth collected edition.

1842: *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*.

The poet who, in youth, "had approached the shield of human nature from the golden side," in old age still held active faith in "human nature rising up to her own defense."



HARDY'S POPULARITY

THE Librarian is pleased to be able to announce that *The First Hundred Years of Thomas Hardy*, the centenary Bibliography of Hardiana published just a year ago by the Colby College Library, has been completely sold out. Professor Weber's compilation has been greeted with approval in many places and welcomed in many libraries. The *New York Times Book Review* declared that "this voluminous and impressive record is a valuable service to scholars." The *London Times Literary Supplement* spoke of this "impressive proof of the interest that Hardy and his works arouse in all sorts and conditions of men." And more recently, Professor Raymond D. Havens, writing from The Johns Hopkins University, spoke of this "attractive and impressive Bibliography." Professor Havens continued:

"I first knew of Hardy as the author only of *Tess*, but when I began really to read him (about 1910), I was fascinated, as I have been ever since. I once wrote to him and said that he might be interested to know that, in a country that he had never seen, and in a city and university (the University of Rochester) of which he had never heard, the constant circulation of his novels showed him to be the most popular English or American writer. His novels were never on the shelves. In reply, I received from him a brief

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note written in his own hand." Here is the note (dated November 6, 1912):

6: 11: 1912

Dear Sir:

I have pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter, with its interesting account of the reading of my books in your University.

Believe me, Yours truly

MR. R. D. HAVENS.

THOMAS HARDY.

On September 27, 1942, the *New York Times Book Review* reported (p. 29) that "in a recent lecture" at Westminster Abbey, Dr. Adam Fox, Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, declared himself to be "in favor of Thomas Hardy" as a candidate for a memorial in Poets' Corner. An inquiry from the Colby Library to Dr. Fox, as to whether his lecture had been printed, led to the reply: "I don't expect to print it." In an autograph letter now in the Colby manuscript file, Dr. Fox wrote: "What I said about Hardy was that he had a claim to a monument in the Abbey indisputably, that *The Dynasts* gave him a national interest, which is a point of special importance in connection with Poets' Corner. I expressed the opinion that, in general, poets (and painters and musicians too) ought to have what is in itself a work of art for their monument. Hardy has his ashes under a flat stone — not good enough, I think, though it is the same with Tennyson, Browning, Kipling, and old Beaumont."

The *New York Herald Tribune* announced, on December 9, 1942, that the Trade Book Clinic of the American Institute of Graphic Arts had named as its December selections eight books that best co-ordinate imaginative design with sound execution. One of the eight was The Heritage Press edition (1942) of *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy. Members of The Heritage Club who received copies of this edition read, in its introduction, the following comment on "the most elaborate observance" of the centennial

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of Hardy's birth—one held in New York City: "The Colby College Library in Waterville, Maine, published *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Grolier Club Centennial Exhibition of the Works of Thomas Hardy*, compiled by Carroll A. Wilson. Colby College had been among those who made extensive loans for the exhibition. Mr. Wilson himself is the holder of a Colby honorary degree . . . [and] Colby [is] the world's greatest Hardy shrine. . . . On its shelves . . . [are] . . . examples of fifty-six editions of *The Return of the Native*. Two pirated editions have so far eluded the grand lama of the Hardy cult in America, but their situation is hopeless—they might as well go to Maine and give themselves up at the door of the Colby College Library."

The activities of the Colby Library cannot all be classified under acquiring or getting. Twice last year, when investigation showed that our Library owned Hardy material not easily available elsewhere, not even in the Library of Congress and (in at least one instance) not even in the British Museum, the Colby Library published limited editions of two products of Hardy's pen, in order to make them available to admirers and students of the Wessex author in all the major American libraries. *Maumbury Ring* (reviewed in the *New York Times Book Review* on November 15, 1942, p. 18) and *The Thieves Who Couldn't Help Sneezing* (reviewed in the same place on December 13, 1942, p. 34) were issued, each, in an edition of one hundred numbered copies. Both issues have been completely sold out. Mention may also be made of two articles in which Professor Weber reports the results of further Hardy researches: "Thomas Hardy and his New England Editors" (in the *New England Quarterly*, December, 1942), and "A Masquerade of Noble Dames" (in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, June, 1943). The *New York Times* recently observed that the "Colby College Library has become a source of information and comment on Hardy in the same way that the Folger Library [in Washington] is a Shakespeare center."