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Colby Library Quarterly

Series IV

May 1957

No. 10

ANOTHER HARDY SCRAP-BOOK

By E. N. SANDERS

THE August 1956 issue of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY described in detail the copy of Thomas Hardy's *A Laodicean* which the Reverend R. Grosvenor Bartelot, Vicar of Fordington Church, Dorchester, used as a Hardy scrap-book for many years—the book which the late Carroll A. Wilson owned from about 1940 until his death in 1947 and which Mr. H. Ridgely Bullock, Jr., presented to the Colby College Library in 1955.

In quoting the letters found in that book and in assigning conjectural dates to some of those letters, the writer of the account published last August slipped into a number of errors which it may be well to correct. Mr. Bartelot did not succeed the Reverend Henry Moule as Vicar at Fordington; he did not come to Dorchester until 1906. Previous to that date he had been at Corfe. It is therefore certain that the date suggested (page 131) for the letter written on "Thursday" to Mr. Bartelot cannot be correct, and Mrs. Hardy's use of a Bath Chair cannot have been connected with the bicycle accident referred to in the footnote.

Mr. Bartelot's predecessor at Fordington was the Reverend Sidney Boulter, and it was he who succeeded Henry Moule, and it was doubtless he who first called Mr. Bartelot's attention to Thomas Hardy upon the Vicar's arrival in Dorchester in 1906. All these facts find support in another Hardy scrap-book now in the Hardy Room in the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester—a copy of *The*

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Return of the Native (the Macmillan three-and-six blue-cloth edition) which Mr. Bartelot used in exactly the same souvenir-saving way he followed with the copy of *A Laodicean* now at Colby. The two books are, in a number of ways, twins. Both bear R. G. Bartelot's bookplate; both have a portrait of Hardy pasted in; both contain newspaper clippings; both have one of Mrs. Emma Hardy's visiting-cards laid in; and both contain little envelopes in which church offerings from Max Gate had been enclosed. In one respect the *Native* at Dorchester is different from the *Laodicean* at Colby: it contains a picture of Fordington Church.

As in the case of the scrap-book described in the August issue, the Dorchester book contains letters from Max Gate: four from Hardy himself and two from his first wife.* The four by the novelist were written to Sidney Boulter, Bartelot's predecessor, and the first one shows how the correspondence began. The Vicar was interested in certain necessary repairs to Fordington Church and drew up an Appeal for financial support. He not only submitted the text of this appeal to Hardy for comment and suggestion but also invited Hardy to serve on the Executive Committee appointed to superintend the project. The letters speak for themselves:

Max Gate.

13.10.1901

[October 13, 1901]

Dear Mr. Boulter,

I think the appeal excellently drawn up, and can suggest no amendments of any value. You will see that I have made one verbal criticism—merely on the repetition of the word "consideration"—and that I have pencilled a paragraph which might be inserted, if you thought fit, to give people at a distance assurance that no mischief to the

* These letters are here printed by special permission of Miss Irene Cooper Willis, Trustee (with Lloyds Bank, London) of the Hardy copyrights.

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architecture is intended—all church renovation being looked on with such suspicion at the present time.

Yours sincerely,

T. HARDY.

Max Gate.

[No date, but possibly referring to some meeting of the Executive Committee]

Dear Mr. Boulter,

As I have been away from home, and do not know much about the case, I send you a postcard which will no doubt explain itself to you. I am unable to attend the meeting.

Yours truly,

T. HARDY.

Max Gate Dorchester

Feb. 1, 1903.

Dear Mr. Boulter,

I ask your leave and the Committee's to withdraw from its membership, though it may seem ungracious to do so after being elected without having done anything to deserve the honour. The calls upon my time, however, take up so much more of it than was the case when I was younger that I feel I cannot give such attention to the proceedings as a member of the Executive Committee ought to give. One result has been that I did not know such an essential change in the outline of the Tower was in contemplation as has been effected by carrying up the Turret, (which happened by accident while I was away from home) and upon which, if I had seen a drawing of the proposed addition beforehand, I should have expressed my misgivings. Yet the architect may have good reasons for his course, imperceptible to me because I have not sufficiently investigated the question.

As you will know, I have not the least doubt that your own and the Committee's desire, as well as the architect's,

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is at bottom the same as my own—not to tamper in any degree with so venerable a monument as the Tower is. I wonder if I, or anybody, ever told you that its proportions were so much admired by Sir Gilbert Scott that he sent a man to measure and make an exact drawing of it for preservation.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS HARDY.

Rev. S. Boulter

Chairman of Committee

Max Gate.

4. 2. 03.

[February 4, 1903]

Dear Mr. Boulter,

My thanks for your note. It is quite as you may choose whether you read my letter to the Committee or no. I do not wish it, if you do not. As I was writing about being unable to attend the meetings I thought I would just mention about the turret. The fact is, architects do go on rather in a high-handed manner even nowadays, when they have had so many lessons! Between ourselves, I think this one wants *looking after*.

We had an interesting man here last night—Mr. Perkins, whom I think you spoke to. I believe the Society he represents wants a record, as it were, of the church details before attention.

I am confined to the house by rheumatism, which almost prevents my doing anything.

With kind regards to Mrs. Boulter,

Yours sincerely,

T. HARDY.

My scrawly writing is owing to the complaint. Please forgive.

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Max Gate
Dorchester

Feb. 24, 1907.

Dear Mr. Bartelott [*sic*],

Two women came here from Fordington to ask help of some sort— one named Cluett—the other Ellory. I had them informed that they must bring a recommendation from you, otherwise you see I should [have] half the parish here begging. Please tell me if they should be helped, how much in want they are? and if not worthless and unaidable? I thank you for garden room for my chair.

Yours sincerely,

EMMA L. HARDY.

Max Gate
Dorchester

Tuesday.

Dear Mr. Grosvenor Bartlott [*sic*],

Herewith I send you 5/— for the sick poor of Fordington.

I shall keep a list of undesirables for frequent reference when applications for help come. It will be a good matter effected when compulsory insurance is legalised.

I hope to see your little daughter again. Here is a bird for her!

Yours sincerely,

E. L. HARDY.

In July, 1912, Mr. Bartelot's daughter Romana had been one of a group of children whom Mrs. Hardy had taken on an outing to Osmington (see page 134 of the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY for August 1956), and the reference to seeing her again would suggest that the undated "Tuesday" of this letter was one in August 1912 or shortly thereafter.



AN UNRECORDED HARDY ITEM

THROUGH the Charles E. Feinberg Foundation the Library has received as the gift of Mrs. Julian Krolik of Detroit, Michigan, a copy of Georges Bazile's French translation of Thomas Hardy's "An Imaginative Woman." It