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AN ERROR IN THE TEXT OF HARDY'S
FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

By ROBERT C. SCHWEIK

SOME twenty-eight years ago, Carl Weber pointed out an oddity in the behavior of Jan Coggan's watch in Chapter XXXII of the Macmillan "Wessex" edition of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and in a note titled, "Setting a Time-Piece," he corrected a misprint which had persisted in the text of the novel since 1895.¹

The emendation he provided has been incorporated in subsequent editions of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, but another error in the text of the novel has so far gone unnoticed. Anyone using the authoritative Macmillan edition of 1912, or more recent texts based upon it, will find in Chapter XL, "On Casterbridge Highway," the following sentence describing Fanny Robin's struggle to reach the Casterbridge Union: "Whilst she sorrowed in her heart she cheered with her voice, and what was stranger than that the strong should need encouragement from the weak was that cheerfulness should be so well stimulated by such utter dejection."

Although seventy years have passed since that sentence appeared in print, apparently no one has questioned what does seem indeed very strange — that cheerfulness would be "stimulated" by utter dejection. Predictably, this reading is without any authority. Hardy's manuscript, used to set the *Cornhill* serial version of the novel, reads "simulated" in place of "stimulated" — a reading which of course makes better sense.

A check of subsequent editions of *Far From the Madding Crowd* reveals that "simulated" appears in all of them until the Osgood McIlvaine edition of 1895 where the word "stimulated" was introduced, probably by the error of a typesetter who picked it up from the word "stimulating" which appears in the sentence immediately preceding. Henceforth, editors of *Far From the Madding Crowd* should not only reset Coggan's watch but should allow Fanny Robin's utter dejection only the more modest strangeness of having "simulated" cheerfulness.

¹ *The Colophon*, n.s. 3 (February, 1938), 139-141.