SHORTLY after the first World War, a young man in the newly reconstituted Poland became acquainted with the books of Thomas Hardy. They soon enslaved him, as they have so many other readers. As he put it, "the morbid and grand vision of Hardy gnawed at my young and inexperienced heart, and I vowed if ever fate should take me to England, I’d go to see the Hardy country." Then came another war. Poland was overrun. The young man escaped, and after wandering in "many distant lands" he made his way to England and there enlisted in the British army. As soon as he had donned his new uniform, he was assigned for duty to a spot which had been a military camp, way back in the days of the ancient Romans. And there—"the first thing I saw was a statue of Thomas Hardy. That Providence had brought me to begin my first day’s soldiering in a town where the poet of The Dynasts lived gave me cause to meditate pleasurably upon the mysterious ways of the Architect of the Universe.... Here I was, in Hardy’s town...."

Just about the time that the words here quoted were appearing in the New Statesman and Nation, London, June 10, 1944, a Colby undergraduate was taking a last look at Mayflower Hill. He had just visited the Treasure Room where the Hardy Collection is stored. He joined his regiment (the 385th Infantry) not far from the banks of the Mississippi, and from there his movements must remain hidden in the records of the War Department. Eventually, he set foot on foreign soil, and, like the Polish soldier, looked about him. He, too, found himself in the Hardy country! The regi-
ment's mess sergeants whetted their knives for carving the Christmas turkey near the spot where Tess of the D'Urbervilles had once used a knife on Alec D.!

And now another June arrives. Hardy's birthday, June 2—the fifth since his centenary—provides a suitable occasion for devoting an issue of this *Quarterly* to his memory. The articles here printed come—if not from the four corners of the earth, at least from three of them. Mr. Richard Rowley, who sends us his “Memories of Thomas Hardy,” is the editor of the Mourne Press, in Newcastle, Northern Ireland. Professor C. L. Cline, who has recently been reading Colby College Monograph No. 8, is a member of the English Department in The University of Texas. And Dr. Marguerite Roberts is Dean of Women and Assistant Professor of English in McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. We are happy to have Ireland, Texas, and Canada join us in observing the birthday of Thomas Hardy.

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**MEMORIES OF THOMAS HARDY**

**By Richard Rowley**

TWENTY years or so ago, I used to visit Thomas Hardy occasionally at Dorchester, when I stayed there with some relations, who were friends of his. An afternoon with Hardy was a delightful experience. Although he was then a very old man, he was as bright and alert and as much interested in his contemporaries as ever; and he was so modest, so unaware of his own great fame, so kind, natural, and unaffected, so free from jealousy and envy, that to listen to him, and to talk to him, was an inspiration.

He was more curious to know how other writers worked, than to discuss his own methods. But, once, when I told him that my friend, the Irish poet "A.E.,” believed that his