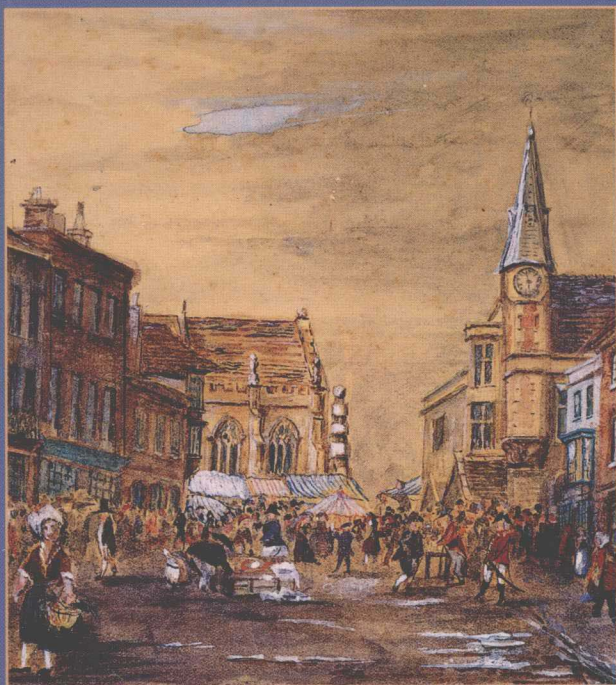


THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE

THOMAS HARDY



EDITED BY PHILLIP MALLETT

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION
SECOND EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Thomas Hardy

THE MAYOR
OF CASTERBRIDGE



AN AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
BACKGROUNDS AND CONTEXTS
CRITICISM

SECOND EDITION

Edited by

PHILLIP MALLET

UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

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Preface to the Second Edition

“Henchard is a great fellow, and Dorchester is touched in with the hand of a master. Do you think you would let me try to dramatize it?” So wrote Robert Louis Stevenson to Thomas Hardy, shortly after the first publication of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in book form, in May 1886. Elsewhere the novel had a more cautious reception. Hardy himself thought he had damaged it in his struggle to pack in the amount of incident required of a weekly serial. His publishers, Smith, Elder, were lukewarm, no doubt influenced by their reader, James Payn, who warned them that a novel that did not deal with the gentry would not attract an audience. Moreover, it was four years since Hardy had last appeared before the public, with *Two on a Tower* (1882), and the year before that with *A Laodicean*, neither of them among the best of his works. Smith, Elder eventually offered Hardy a disappointing one hundred pounds for the two-volume edition, half what they had paid for *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), and were in their turn disappointed with the sales, with fewer than seven hundred copies sold. The transaction had been unsatisfactory all round, and novelist and publisher severed their connection.

The reviews, however, were broadly favorable. Like Stevenson, the reviewers applauded the presentation of Wessex, and the towering figure of Henchard at the center of the novel—though the writer in the *Saturday Review* (possibly George Saintsbury) affected not to know which part of the country Hardy was writing about. With hindsight, it is clear that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* represented a crucial stage in Hardy’s sense of himself as a Wessex novelist. He had moved back to Dorchester in 1883, and then into his house there, Max Gate, in 1885. For much of that period he was systematically reading through and making notes on old issues of the *Dorset County Chronicle* for the years 1826–30, immersing himself as a reader in a world he also knew by report from his family, especially from his mother and grandmother. One of the strengths of the novel is the way pieces of material arrived at by different routes sit together so well. When in Chapter 31 the bankrupt Henchard offers his creditors his watch, and “a silent, reserved young man named Boldwood” commends the gesture, Hardy is drawing on the *Chronicle* for the incident, but he had already recounted, in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), the story of Boldwood’s later life. The town of Casterbridge, discontented because the bread made from Henchard’s wheat is inedible, can be seen as a city suffering because of its ruler’s sins—as it were, Thebes in rural England—but it remains a credible town in Victorian Dorset. The question demanded of Henchard in Chapter 5—“But what are you going to do to repay us for the past?”—has a wonderful resonance, but it is spoken by a baker or miller, who has lost out in his financial dealings with a corn factor whose business has outgrown his capacity to supervise it. Henchard’s “roaring din-

ners" are as palpable a sign of hubris as the red carpet on which Agamemnon walks into his house in Aeschylus's play, but they too are to be found in old copies of the *Dorset County Chronicle*. Hardy's claim, in the first chapter of his next novel, *The Woodlanders*, that "dramas of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean" might from time to time be enacted in the real in some remote spot, "outside the gates of the world," followed directly from the experience of writing *The Mayor*.

The Mayor himself, Michael Henchard, is one of the great male figures of Victorian fiction. As many critics have observed, the novel explores the processes of social change, as a community beginning to tire of the volcanic energies of one Mayor of Casterbridge turns with relief to the more cautious and prudent management of another. It has often proved tempting to go on to suggest that this is a novel about the clash between an older, greater, and somehow more truly rural way of life, and a newer, smaller, and essentially mechanical one. But this is to simplify the novel. Henchard is a speculator, gambling on the weather and the consequent fluctuations in the markets, not a peasant who embodies an idealized traditional way of life. He is not defeated by the coming of new machinery, but by the recklessness of his own financial dealings. But he is at the same time a man who fears his own unruly nature, and whom we see in search of a moral order: by turns fetishistic, defiant, aloof, self-destructive, penitent. Within the novel, Hardy quotes or alludes to the stories of Cain, Job, Saul, Oedipus, and King Lear. These are among the great tragic stories of Western literature, dealing with the violation of moral law; with love, loss, and belonging; and with the intertwined themes of friendship, power, and rivalry. It is a mark of Hardy's extraordinary achievement that it does not seem preposterous to invoke these stories in tracing the fortunes of an out-of-work hay-trusser in the southwestern counties of England in the early nineteenth century.

In the twentieth century, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has taken its place alongside *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* as one of Hardy's most successful novels. It has been televised, prescribed for reading in schools and universities, and made the subject of academic monographs. It has also been brought out in a number of scholarly editions. The first published text of the novel seen by Hardy, however, was of a very different kind. Like almost all of Hardy's novels, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was first published in serial form, with the book edition appearing as the serial was drawing to an end. The first two chapters came out in the *Graphic*, an illustrated weekly newspaper, on 2 January 1886. These chapters, together with an illustration by Robert Barnes of the conversation on the road between Henchard and the turnip-hoer, occupied just over two A3 pages (roughly 16.5 by 11.5 inches), printed in three densely set columns, with about ten lines of type to the inch. On the previous page are advertisements for everything from Broadwood pianos to chandeliers, turret-clocks, and cures for dyspepsia; on the page following, an article on children's fashions and a series of short reviews written with all the confidence of the editorial "we." These seemingly trivial matters are pertinent because, as N. N. Feltes has pointed out in a study of *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (Chicago, 1986), part of the meaning of a novel published in a magazine was established by the meanings that were already there, in its layout, blend of fiction and nonfiction, and

so forth, and in the readership these implied. This issue of the *Graphic*, for example, included under the heading "Topics of the Week" articles opposing Home Rule for Ireland, discussing "the Arab menace" in the Sudan, and denouncing the "predatory habits, ferocity, and cowardice" of the dacoits in Burma. The illustrations, some of them full-page engravings, showed war abroad, between Serbia and Bulgaria; and at home, a new production of *Faust* at the Lyceum theater, the visit of the Prince of Wales to the Doulton pottery works, and views of "The Royal River—The Thames from Source to Sea." If Hardy wished to challenge the complacency of late-Victorian England, he was trying to do so in a magazine that embodied it.

The present edition too carries its own cultural meanings, but it is not the part of an editor to comment on these. The first aim of this Norton Critical Edition has been to provide a reliable text. Here I have largely agreed with James K. Robinson, who edited the novel for Norton in 1977, in basing the text on that of the Wessex Edition of 1912. The reasons for doing so, and a list of the places where I have departed from the Wessex Edition, are set out in a Note on the Text. While I have profited by James Robinson's work in preparing the annotation, I have sometimes differed from him, and at others have chosen to annotate what he left without comment. No doubt the level of annotation in each case reflects our experience as readers of Hardy, and as teachers of English literature. I have also been able, in the section on "Backgrounds and Contexts," to include rather more of Hardy's nonfiction writings, in particular passages from his essay on "The Dorsetshire Labourer" of 1883, in which he commented directly on the social changes he had observed in his native county—one of the rare occasions when he set aside his usual insistence that his work offered only "impressions."

The other main differences between the two editions are to be found in the sections on modern criticism of the novel. I have included some or all of five essays that appeared after 1977, from (in chronological order) Elaine Showalter, George Levine, William Greenslade, Suzanne Keen and H. M. Daleski, together with two passages from Michael Millgate's *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist*. In order to do so I have had to exclude some pieces that Robinson had included; I have done so with regret, but in the confidence that the issues they raised are taken up and reexamined, in varying ways, by the passages included here for the first time.

I am grateful to Jill Gamble in the School of English in St Andrews for her help in preparing this edition, and to Carol Bemis, Ben Reynolds, Kate Lovelady, and Christa Grenawalt at Norton for their patient assistance throughout.

PHILLIP MALLETT

A Note on the Text

Like its predecessor, this Norton edition of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is based on the Macmillan Wessex Edition of 1912, departing from it in three respects: in the correction of obvious misprints, in regularizing the use of double quotation marks within quoted speech, and in the admission of some variants from the Mellstock Edition of 1920. These changes, 26 in all, are listed at the end of this note. But Hardy was an inveterate reviser, and there are accordingly a number of texts that an editor of *The Mayor* might choose to consult. It may be helpful to describe these briefly here.

There is first the surviving manuscript, which Hardy presented to the Dorset County Museum in 1911. It consists of 374 pages; 108 pages are missing, and 5 are fragmentary. Simon Gatrell has suggested, plausibly, that Hardy himself excised the missing portions of the manuscript because they had been written in by his wife, Emma.¹ Since whatever notes or plans Hardy had made for the novel before he began writing have not survived, part of the interest of the manuscript is the evidence it provides of various cancelled plotlines. Taken together these suggest that as Hardy began writing, large areas of the action were still to be decided: at one stage there were to be two daughters, one staying with Henchard, the other going with Susan and Newson; the Elizabeth-Jane of the opening chapters was not to die, so the figure we meet in the body of the novel was to be Henchard's real daughter; Newson, on the other hand, was to die, instead of returning in the final chapters to supplant Henchard. It is hard to square any of these possibilities with the novel as we now have it, and Hardy's hesitation in working out the family relationships perhaps supports the suggestion that the center of the novel, at least at the outset, was to be Henchard's relationship with Farfrae. This would be consistent with the narrator's comment in Chapter Six that if Farfrae had not overheard and reacted to the townspeople's complaints about the damaged grain, "this history had never been enacted" (see p. 31). Whatever the reasoning that led Hardy to his final decisions about the plot, the effect of these decisions was to distribute the interest of the novel more evenly, with the story of Henchard's baffled attempt to undo the past, and of his shifting relationship with Elizabeth-Jane, interweaving with the crises brought about by the rivalry of the older and the younger man.

The manuscript was the basis for both the English and the American serial versions of the novel, in the *Graphic* and in *Harper's Weekly*, which ran concurrently over the nineteen-week period from 2 January to 15 May 1886. There are no major differences between the serial versions, except that for reasons of space *Harper's* omitted some passages, which were restored in

1. Simon Gatrell, *Hardy the Creator: A Textual Biography* (Oxford, 1988), p. 48.

later editions. The serial versions show about 300 changes from the manuscript, essentially minor local improvements: a decrease in the number of Latinisms, modifications to the dialect, and some bowdlerization (for example, in the *Graphic*, "damn it" becomes "hang it"; *Harper's* appears to have been less persnickety).

The novel also appeared in book form in 1886, as the serial publication was drawing to a close, published in two volumes in Britain by Smith, Elder, and in a one-volume edition in America by Henry Holt. Hardy made further changes for both of these editions. In later years he wrote that *The Mayor* "was a story he had damaged more recklessly as an artistic whole, in the interest of the newspaper in which it appeared serially, than perhaps any other of his novels,"² and in revising it for publication in volume form he set out to streamline the plot, cutting back on episodes whose main purpose was to grab the attention of the serial reader. Among the incidents he removed were the marriage of Henchard and Lucetta two weeks before Susan's return; a chance encounter between Lucetta and Susan, which Henchard observes; and another chance meeting, with Farfrae coming across Henchard and Lucetta, now Mrs. Farfrae, in the dusk, but failing to recognize her. In addition, two episodes in which letters were passed through intermediaries were greatly simplified. No doubt Hardy felt that enough of the action already turned on the misdelivery or the untimely opening of letters.

But there are also significant differences between the two book versions. In the serial and in the American editions, Elizabeth-Jane knows that Newson is still alive, and she has in fact been meeting him for some time without Henchard's knowledge. In the English edition, the situation is reversed: Henchard knows of Newson's return but Elizabeth-Jane does not. In effect, in the American edition Elizabeth-Jane deceives Henchard, while in the English edition he deceives her. Consequently, in the English edition it is the realization that she is about to be reunited with her real father, rather than her forthcoming marriage to Farfrae, that causes Henchard to leave Casterbridge. This edition also omitted Henchard's return to see the wedding, bringing the goldfinch as a present, only to be rejected by Elizabeth-Jane; this episode was retained in the American edition. Taken together, these changes cause Elizabeth-Jane to appear in a less sympathetic light in the American version.

A second English edition, in 1887, by Sampson Low, Marston, this time in one volume, had comparatively few changes from the Smith, Elder edition, of which the most notable is the addition of Farfrae's unfeeling remark that to spend the night away from home in the search for Henchard would "make a hole in a sovereign." For the first Collected Edition of his novels, however, the Osgood, McIlvaine Edition of 1895, Hardy made over 600 revisions. A number of these followed from his decision to embed all his novels more firmly in the world of "Wessex," with locations and distances made more consistent with those in other novels. Many of the other changes were modifications to the dialect. There is a typical example of these in the first conversation in the novel. In the earlier versions the turnip-hoer laments that "fokes" have nowhere to live in Weydon-Priors; in 1895 Hardy amended this

2. *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, by Thomas Hardy, ed. Michael Millgate (London, 1984), p. 185.

to "volk," nearer to the softer forms of speech in the south and southwest of England. Farfrae's Scots, too, underwent some revision, following the advice of Hardy's friend Sir George Douglas. But there were also more substantial changes, including the reinstatement of the goldfinch episode and a return to Hardy's original plan for an irregular sexual liaison between Henchard and Lucetta—not, as in the serial, a marriage entered into on the assumption that Susan is dead, nor, as in the earlier book versions, a nonsexual relationship. By 1895, the novel had reached in all essentials the shape in which it has most often been reprinted.

The last sustained process of revision was for the Wessex Edition of 1912, with approximately 150 minor changes, many of them further modifications to the dialect. The Mellstock Edition of 1920 shows only minor changes, but in a few instances these provide support for correcting what can reasonably be seen as typographical errors in the 1912 text.

The case for using the 1912 Wessex Edition as the copy text is a strong one. It has been suggested, however, that while this edition should be used for substantives, the accidentals—essentially, the punctuation—should be checked against the manuscript, on the grounds that in these areas this represents Hardy's intentions, whereas the printed text reflects the hand of a number of compositors and their varying and sometimes inconsistent interpretations of the house styles adopted by different publishers.³ This argument has been rejected in this edition for two reasons.

First, *The Mayor* was Hardy's tenth published novel; he was familiar with the ways of compositors, and to the extent that he did not insist on his own punctuation it may be assumed that he was not unwilling to allow the compositors to regularize it. In this edition I have followed the ancient legal principle that in the absence of other evidence, silence should be taken to imply consent.

The second point is perhaps the more compelling. Since the manuscript of *The Mayor* is incomplete, it would be necessary to refer also to the *Graphic*, as the text nearest to the manuscript. But where these two can be compared, there is a significant number of differences between them. For example, in folio 17 of the manuscript (reproduced in facsimile as part of Christine Winfield's essay in this volume [see p. 267]), there are the following differences:

| Manuscript | Graphic |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 'Very well— | 'Very well, |
| swear? | swears? |
| temper. | temper! |
| hay trusser's | hay-trusser's |
| and the child both | and the child, both |
| good-bye | good bye |

3. For fuller discussion of these issues, see Simon Gatrell, *Hardy the Creator*, pp. 209–22, and his "Hardy, House-style, and the Aesthetics of Punctuation," in Anne Smith, ed., *The Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London, 1979), pp. 169–92; Michael Millgate, "The Making and Unmaking of Hardy's Wessex Edition," in Jane Millgate, ed., *Editing Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York, 1978), pp. 61–82; Robert Schweik and Michael Piret, "Editing Hardy," *Browning Institute Studies* 9 (1981): 15–41.

Two of these changes are merely trivial, one introducing and the other removing a hyphen, but the rest are not. Three of them, in altering the punctuation, also affect the rhythm and movement of the sentence: for example, the hyphen after "Very well" invites a longer pause than the comma. The fourth suggests that Newson too speaks in dialect, in using the third person form of the verb with the second person pronoun ("that you swears?"). But the broader point is that a comparison of one page of the manuscript with the corresponding passage in the *Graphic* reveals no fewer than six differences. It seems difficult, on this basis, to justify the use of the *Graphic* for the 108 pages missing from the manuscript, if the intention is to get close to Hardy's preferred text.

This is not to dismiss the point, made by Simon Gatrell and others, that an over-fussy compositor can damage Hardy's prose. Describing Susan's brief moment of defiance in the opening chapter, as she pauses by the door of the tent before leaving with Newson, the manuscript has:

On reaching it she turned, and pulling off her wedding ring flung it across the room in the hay trusser's face.

In the Wessex Edition this becomes:

On reaching it, she turned, and pulling off her wedding-ring, flung it across the booth in the hay-trusser's face.

The change from "room" to "booth" is logical (it also reveals that when he came to revise the text Hardy paused over this sentence), but the added commas, though grammatically correct, are surely out of key with the passionate nature of Susan's gesture. It is tempting to go with the earlier version. But there are other sentences where a compositor has added or adjusted punctuation in a way that seems to be required by the sense, and where most modern editors might also feel inclined to do so. Even if we had it complete, to transcribe Hardy's manuscript might create as many problems as it resolved. But since we do not have it complete, and it therefore cannot be used consistently, I have preferred to work from the edition of 1912, and to make the smallest possible number of changes.

The following are the changes made from the 1912 Wessex Edition:

| <i>Wessex Edition</i> | | <i>Norton Edition</i> | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 14.7 | od send | 13.30 | 'od send |
| 23.7 | whity-brown | 19.19 | whitey-brown |
| 35.16 | agitated, | 26.36 | agitated. |
| 84.17 | makes | 58.21 | make |
| 88.17 | Laocoons | 60.25 | Laocoöns |
| 97.8 | Shinar's | 66.28 | Shiner's |
| 118.9 | hands | 80.14 | hands. |
| 127.31 | calligraphy | 86.12 | calligraphy |
| 158.25 | to day | 106.32 | to-day |
| 183.1 | Ay, | 122.15 | 'Ay, |
| 191.38 | grasshoper | 127.34 | grasshopper |
| 238.27 | you | 157.40 | your |
| 241.12 | you | 159.28 | your |

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| 301.8 | landlady, | 198.1 | landlady. |
| 302.12 | way, | 198.25 | way. |
| 304.26 | day, | 200.5 | day. |
| 310.14 | lappel | 204.5 | lapel |
| 329.31 | Henchard | 216.16 | Henchard, |
| 337.11 | 'Since | 221.5 | "Since |
| 337.12 | bide,' | 221.6 | bide," |
| 337.12 | ' 'twill | 221.6 | " 'twill |
| 337.14 | for,' | 221.7 | for," |
| 337.14 | 'while | 221.7 | "while |
| 337.17 | home.' | 221.9 | home." |
| 344.14 | imag eo' | 225.35 | image o' |
| 356.18 | eclat | 233.4 | éclat |

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The Text of
THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF THE MAYOR
OF CASTERBRIDGE



A Story of a Man of Character

by
THOMAS HARDY



Preface

Readers of the following story who have not yet arrived at middle age are asked to bear in mind that, in the days recalled by the tale, the home Corn Trade, on which so much of the action turns, had an importance that can hardly be realized by those accustomed to the sixpenny loaf of the present date, and to the present indifference of the public to harvest weather.

The incidents narrated arise mainly out of three events, which chanced to range themselves in the order and at or about the intervals of time here given, in the real history of the town called Casterbridge¹ and the neighbouring country. They were the sale of a wife by her husband,² the uncertain harvests which immediately preceded the repeal of the Corn Laws,³ and the visit of a Royal personage⁴ to the aforesaid part of England.

The present edition of the volume,⁵ like the previous one,⁶ contains nearly a chapter which did not at first appear in any English copy,⁷ though it was printed in the serial issue of the tale, and in the American edition. The restoration was made at the instance of some good judges across the Atlantic, who strongly represented that the home edition⁸ suffered from the omission. Some shorter passages and names, omitted or altered for reasons which no longer exist, in the original printing of both English and American editions, have also been replaced or inserted.

The story is more particularly a study of one man's deeds and character than, perhaps, any other of those included in my Exhibition of

1. The name Hardy gave in his fiction to Dorchester, county town of Dorset. See pp. 302–3 for a key to the place names in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.
2. Hardy found instances of wife-selling in the *Dorset County Chronicle* and elsewhere; see Christine Winfield, "Factual Sources of Two Episodes in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 25 (1970): 224–27; and Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London, 1971), pp. 240–42.
3. Laws introduced in 1815 restricting the import of foreign grain in order to protect home producers. They were finally repealed in 1846. See p. 304 for a fuller account of these laws.
4. Prince Albert, who in fact passed through Dorchester in July 1849, some years after the action of the novel.
5. The Wessex Edition, published in London by Macmillan in 1912.
6. The edition published in London by Osgood, McIlvaine & Co. in 1895.
7. Chapter 44 of this Norton Critical Edition was not included in either of the first English editions, brought out by Smith, Elder & Co. in 1886, and by Sampson Low, Marston in 1887. It was reinstated at the suggestion of Rebekah and Catherine Owen of New York City.
8. The novel was serialized in Britain in the *Graphic*, and in America in *Harper's Weekly*; the first American edition was by Henry Holt & Co. of New York, in 1886.

Wessex life.⁹ Objections have been raised to the Scotch language of Mr. Farfrae, the second character; and one of his fellow-countrymen went so far as to declare that men beyond the Tweed did not and never could say “warrld,” “cannet,” “advairrtisment,” and so on. As this gentleman’s pronunciation in correcting me seemed to my Southron¹ ear an exact repetition of what my spelling implied, I was not struck with the truth of his remark, and somehow we did not get any forwarder in the matter. It must be remembered that the Scotchman of the tale is represented not as he would appear to other Scotchmen, but as he would appear to people of outer regions. Moreover, no attempt is made herein to reproduce his entire pronunciation phonetically, any more than that of the Wessex speakers. I should add, however, that this new edition of the book has had the accidental advantage of a critical overlooking by a professor of the tongue in question²—one of undoubted authority:—in fact he is a gentleman who adopted it for urgent personal reasons in the first year of his existence.

Furthermore, a charming non-Scottish lady, of strict veracity and admitted penetration, the wife of a well-known Caledonian, came to the writer shortly after the story was first published, and inquired if Farfrae were not drawn from her husband, for he seemed to her to be the living portrait of that (doubtless) happy man. It happened that I had never thought of her husband in constructing Farfrae. I trust therefore that Farfrae may be allowed to pass, if not as a Scotchman to Scotchmen, as a Scotchman to Southerners.

The novel was first published complete, in two volumes, in May 1886.

T. H.

*February 1895—May 1912.*³

9. Hardy introduced the term Wessex in Chapter 50 of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in 1874. It covers an area of the south and southwest of England comprising most of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire.

1. Southern.

2. Sir George Douglas (1856–1935), whom Hardy first met in 1881.

3. The Preface was originally written in February 1895 for the Osgood, McIlvaine Edition, where it appeared in volume III, and then slightly revised for the Wessex Edition of 1912, where it appeared in volume V.