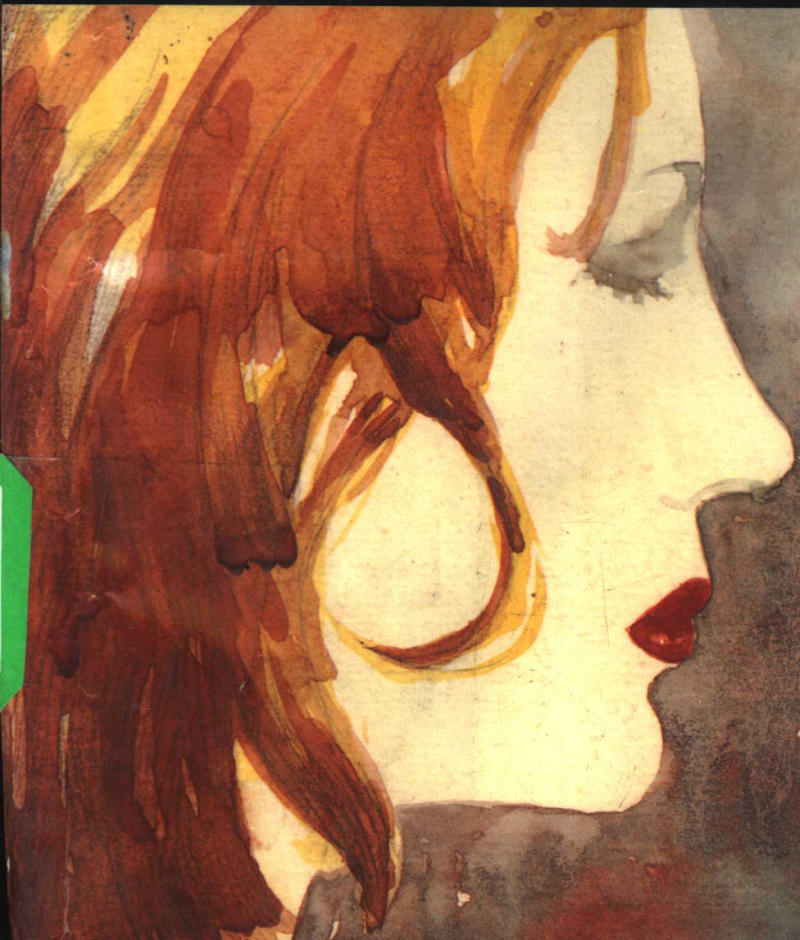


English and American Classics Series

# TESS OF THE D' URBERVILLES

Thomas Hardy



Tess of the  
D'Urbervilles

Thomas Hardy

Edited

with an introduction

Liu Tianshi

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## INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy, English novelist and poet, was born in 1840 in Dorset, an agricultural district in southwestern England. He was educated at local schools and articled to an architect at the age of sixteen. At twenty-two, he went to London to study architecture. After working as an architect for several years, he turned to novel-writing. But when publication of *Jude the Obscure* caused a scandal he turned again to poetry, which was his early pursuit. He died in 1928 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is among Hardy's best and most widely-read novels. It tells of the tragic story of Tess Durbeyfield, who is a pretty, warm-hearted farm girl. Her father is a pedlar and, after learning from the local clergyman that he is the last descendant of the ancient family of the D'Urbervilles, he goes to a public house and spends all his money on drink to celebrate his noble blood. He gets so drunk that Tess has to take the load of beehives herself to the retailers in Casterbridge for the Saturday market. On the way a mail cart runs into her wagon and kills the horse. At her father's insistence, she goes to Trantridge to claim kinship with the wealthy but spurious d'Urbervilles, and as a result she is seduced by the young master of the house, Alec d'Urberville. *Tess* returns home and afterwards gives birth to a child, which dies in infancy.

The sordid poverty of her family forces her to work as a milkmaid at the Talbothays dairy where she meets Angel Clare. They soon fall in love and get married.

On the wedding night, Clare tells her of his own experience with a bad woman, but when she discloses her past to him, he abandons her and leaves for Brazil.

To support her family, Tess has to slave away on a distant farm at Flintcomb-Ash, grubbing and trimming swedes or “untying sheaf after sheaf in endless succession” on the platform of the threshing-machine. Worn down by hardship, she writes to Clare, imploring him to return but in vain. Then she goes to Emminster to see his parents, who happen to be away when she gets there. On her way back, she is walking past a church when she finds that the preacher is Alec D’Urberville. She immediately turns away. Alec, however, has caught sight of her. On finding out where she lives, he pays her frequent visits, trying to force her to go and live with him. What with the death of her father and the forced uprooting and migration of her family, she is driven to go back to Alec. Meanwhile, Angel Clare returns from Brazil. After he confesses to her that he has been wrong in deserting her, she kills Alec and goes off with Clare, only to be arrested a few days later and hanged in the Winchester gaol.

As a work of fiction, *Tess* has undoubtedly an element of the pessimistic and the painful. Readers tend to regard Hardy as a “pessimist”, but Hardy professed himself a “meliorist”. He said, “My motto is, first, correctly diagnose the complaint—in this case, human ills—and ascertain the cause, then set about finding a remedy if one exists.” According to Hardy, the aim of the artist is to “give impressions not arguments.” In the case of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, the author perhaps intends to give the impression or make the diagnosis that the tragic fate of Tess and her family is symbolic of the disintegration of the peasantry after the intrusion of in-

dustrialism into the English countryside in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

*Tess* was first published serially in the *Graphic* with the last two paragraphs of Chapter 9 and the whole of Chapters 10 and 11 omitted at the request of the publisher, but when it appeared in book form, the original text was restored. The present text is that of the Wessex Edition of 1912.

Lü Tianshi (吕天石)

"Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed  
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd."  
—Shakespeare

### *Explanatory Note to the First Edition*

The main portion of the following story appeared—with slight modifications—in the *Graphic* newspaper and *Harper's Bazaar*; other chapters, more especially addressed to adult readers, in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *National Observer*, as episodic sketches. My thanks are tendered to the editors and proprietors of those periodicals for enabling me now to piece the trunk and limbs of the novel together, and print it complete, as originally written two years ago.

I will just add that the story is sent out in all sincerity of purpose, as an attempt to give artistic form to a true sequence of things; and in respect of the book's opinions I would ask any too genteel reader who cannot endure to have said what everybody nowadays thinks and feels, to remember a well-worn sentence of St. Jerome's: "If an offence come out of the truth, better is it that the offence come than that the truth be concealed."

T.H.

November, 1891.

## *Preface to the Fifth (English) Edition*

This novel being one wherein the great campaign of the heroine begins after an event in her experience which has usually been treated as extinguishing her, in the aspect of protagonist at least, and as the virtual ending of her career and hopes, it was quite contrary to avowed conventions that the public should welcome the book, and agree with me in holding that there was something more to be said in fiction than had been said about the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe. But the responsive spirit in which *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* has been received by the readers of England and America would seem to prove that the plan of laying down a story on the lines of tacit opinion, instead of making it to square with the merely vocal formulae of society, is not altogether a wrong one, even when exemplified in so unequal and partial an achievement as the present. For this responsiveness I cannot refrain from expressing my thanks; and my regret is that, in a world where one so often hungers in vain for friendship, where even not to be wilfully misunderstood is felt as a kindness, I shall never meet in person these appreciative readers, male and female, and shake them by the hand.

I include amongst them the reviewers—by far the majority—who have so generously welcomed the tale. Their words show that they like the others have only too largely repaired my defects of narration by their own



imaginative intuition.

Nevertheless, though the novel was intended to be neither didactic nor aggressive, but in the scenic parts to be representative simply, and in the contemplative to be oftener charged with impressions than with opinions, there have been objectors both to the matter and to the rendering.

Some of these maintain a conscientious difference of sentiment concerning, among other things, subjects fit for art, and reveal an inability to associate the idea of the title-adjective with any but the licensed and derivative meaning which has resulted to it from the ordinances of civilization. [The original title is *Tess of the D'Urbervilles—A Pure Woman*.] They thus ignore, not only all Nature's claims, all aesthetic claims on the word, but even the spiritual interpretation afforded by the finest side of Christianity; and drag in, as a vital point, the acts of a woman in her last days of desperation, when all her doings lie outside her normal character. Others dissent on grounds which are intrinsically no more than an assertion that the novel embodies the views of life prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, and not those of an earlier and simpler generation—an assertion which I can only hope may be well founded. Let me repeat that a novel is an impression, not an argument, and there the matter must rest, as one is reminded by a passage which occurs in the letters of Schiller to Goethe on judges of this class: "They are those who seek only their own ideas in a representation, and prize that which should be as higher than what is. The cause of the dispute, therefore, lies in the very first principles, and it would be utterly impossible to come to an understanding with them." And again: "As soon as I observe that any one, when judging of poetical representations, con-

siders anything more important than the inner Necessity and Truth, I have done with him."

In the introductory words to the first edition I suggested the possible advent of the genteel person who would not be able to endure the tone of these pages. That person duly appeared, mostly mixed up with the afore-said objectors. In another of his forms he felt upset that it was not possible for him to read the book through three times, owing to my not having made that critical effort which "alone can prove the salvation of such an one." In another, he objected to such vulgar articles as the devil's pitchfork, a lodging-house carving-knife, and a shame-bought parasol appearing in a respectable story. In another place he was a gentleman who turned Christian for half an hour the better to express his grief that a disrespectful phrase about the Immortals should have been used, though the same innate gentility compelled him to excuse the author in words of pity that one cannot be too thankful for: "He does but give us of his best." I can assure this great critic that to exclaim illogically against the gods, singular or plural, is not such an original sin of mine as he seems to imagine. True, it may have some local originality; though if Shakespeare were an authority on history, which perhaps he is not, I could show that the sin was introduced into Wessex as early as the Heptarchy itself. Says Glo'ster to Lear, otherwise Ina, king of that country:

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;  
They kill us for their sport."

The remaining two or three manipulators of *Tess* were of the sort whom most writers and readers would gladly forget, professed literary boxers, who put on their

convictions for the occasion, modern "Hammerers of Heretics"; sworn discouragers of effort, ever on the watch to prevent the tentative half-success from becoming the whole success; who pervert plain meanings, and grow personal under the name of practising the great historical method. However, they may have causes to advance, privileges to guard, traditions to keep going; some of which a mere tale-teller, who writes down how the things of the world strike him, without any ulterior intentions whatever, has overlooked, and may by pure inadvertence have run foul of when in the least aggressive mood. Perhaps some passing perception, the outcome of a dreamhour, would, if generally acted on, cause such an assailant considerable inconvenience with respect to position, interests, family, servant, ox, ass, neighbor or neighbor's wife. He therefore valiantly hides his personality behind a publisher's shutters, and cries "Shame!" So densely is the world thronged that any shifting of positions, even the best warranted advance, hurts somebody's heels. Such shiftings often begin in sentiment, and such sentiment sometimes begins in a novel.

T.H.

*July, 1892.*

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## PHASE THE FIRST

### *The Maiden*

#### *1*

On an evening in the latter part of May a middle-aged man was walking homeward from Shaston to the village of Marlott, in the adjoining Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor. The pair of legs that carried him were rickety, and there was a bias in his gait that inclined him somewhat to the left of a straight line. He occasionally gave a smart nod, as if in confirmation of some opinion, though he was not thinking of anything in particular. An empty egg-basket was slung upon his arm, the nap of his hat was ruffled, a patch being quite worn away at its brim where his thumb came in taking it off. Presently he was met by an elderly parson astride of a gray mare, who, as he rode, hummed a wandering tune.

"Good-night t'ye," said the man with the basket.

"Good-night, Sir John," said the parson.

The pedestrian, after another pace or two, halted, and turned round.

"Now, sir, begging your pardon, we met last market-day on this road about this time, and I said 'Good-night,' and you made reply, 'Good-night, Sir John,' as now."

"I did," said the parson.

"And once before that—near a month ago."

"I may have."

"Then what might your meaning be in calling me

‘Sir John’ these different times, when I be plain Jack Durbeyfield, the haggler?”

The parson rode a step or two nearer.

“It was only my whim,” he said; and, after a moment’s hesitation: “It was on account of a discovery I made some little time ago, whilst I was hunting up pedigrees for the new county history. I am Parson Tringham, the antiquary, of Stagfoot Lane. Don’t you really know, Durbeyfield, that you are the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the D’Urbervilles, who derive their descent from Sir Pagan D’Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, as appears by Battle Abbey Roll?”

“Never heard it before, sir.”

“Well, it’s true. Throw up your chin a moment, so that I may catch the profile of your face better. Yes, that’s the D’Urberville nose and chin—a little debased. Your ancestor was one of the twelve knights who assisted the Lord of Estremavilla in Normandy in his conquest of Glamorganshire. Branches of your family held manors over all this part of England; their names appear in the Pipe Rolls in the time of King Stephen. In the reign of King John one of them was rich enough to give a manor to the Knights Hospitallers; and in Edward the Second’s time your forefather Brian was summoned to Westminster to attend the great Council there. You declined a little in Oliver Cromwell’s time, but to no serious extent, and in Charles the Second’s reign you were made Knights of the Royal Oak for your loyalty. Aye, there have been generations of Sir Johns among you, and if knighthood were hereditary, like a baronetcy, as it practically was in old times, when men were knighted from father to son, you would be Sir John now.”

"You don't say so!"

"In short," concluded the parson, decisively smacking his leg with his switch, "there's hardly such another family in England!"

"Daze my eyes, and isn't there?" said Durbeyfield. "And here have I been knocking about, year after year, from pillar to post, as if I was no more than the commonest feller in the parish.... And how long hev this news about me been knowed, Pa'son Tringham?"

The clergyman explained that, as far as he was aware, it had quite died out of knowledge, and could hardly be said to be known at all. His own investigations had begun on a day in the preceding spring when, having been engaged in tracing the vicissitudes of the D'Urberville family, he had observed Durbeyfield's name on his wagon, and had thereupon been led to make inquiries about his father and grandfather, till he had no doubt on the subject. "At first I resolved not to disturb you with such a useless piece of information," said he. "However, our impulses are too strong for our judgment sometimes. I thought you might perhaps know something of it all the while."

"Well, I have heard once or twice, 'tis true, that my family had seen better days before they came to Blackmoor. But I took no notice o't, thinking it to mean that we had once kept two horses where we now keep only one. I've got a wold silver spoon at home, too; and likewise a graven seal; but, Lord, what's a spoon and seal? ... And to think that I and these noble D'Urbervilles was one flesh. 'Twas said that my grandfer had secrets, and didn't care to talk of where he came from.... And where do we raise our smoke, now, parson, if I may make so bold; I mean, where do we D'Urbervilles live?"

"You don't live anywhere. You are extinct—as a county family."

"That's bad."

"Yes—what the mendacious family chronicles call extinct in the male line—that is,, gone down—gone under."

"And where do we lie?"

"At Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill: rows and rows of you in your vaults, with your effigies under Purbeck-marble canopies."

"And where be our family mansions and estates?"

"You haven't any."

"O! No lands neither?"

"None; though you once had 'em in abundance, as I said, for your family consisted of numerous branches. In this county there was a seat of yours at Kingsbere, and another at Sherton, and another at Millpond, and another at Lullstead, and another at Wellbridge."

"And shall we ever come into our own again?"

"Ah, that I can't tell."

"And what had I better do about it, sir?" asked Durbeyfield, after a pause.

"O—nothing, nothing; except chasten yourself with the thought of 'how are the mighty fallen.' It is a fact of some interest to the local historian and genealogist, nothing more. There are several families among the cottagers of this county of almost equal lustre. Good-night."

"But you'll turn back and have a quart of beer wi' me on the strength o't, Pa'son Tringham? There's a very pretty brew in tap at The Pure Drop—though, to be sure, not so good as at Rolliver's."

"No, thank you—not this evening, Durbeyfield. You've had enough already." Concluding thus, the par-



son rode on his way, with doubts as to his discretion in retailing this curious bit of lore.

When he was gone Durbeyfield walked a few steps in a profound reverie, and then sat down upon the grassy bank by the roadside, depositing his basket before him. In a few minutes a youth appeared in the distance, walking in the same direction as that which had been pursued by Durbeyfield. The latter, on seeing him, held up his hand, and the lad quickened his pace and came near.

"Boy, take up that basket! I want 'ee to go on an errand for me."

The lath-like stripling frowned. "Who be you, then, John Durbeyfield, that order me about and call me boy? You know my name as well as I know yours!"

"Do you—do you? That's the secret—that's the secret! Now obey my orders, and take the message I'm going to charge 'ee wi'.... Well, Fred, I don't mind telling you that the secret is that I'm one of a noble race—it has been just found out by me this present afternoon, P.M." And as he made the announcement, Durbeyfield, reclining from his sitting position, luxuriously stretched himself out upon the bank among the daisies.

The lad stood before Durbeyfield, and contemplated his length from crown to toe.

"Sir John D'Urberville—that's who I be," continued the prostrate man. "That is if knights were baronets—which they be. 'Tis recorded in history all about me. Dost know of such a place lad, as Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill?"

"Ees. I've been there to Greenhill Fair."

"Well, under the church of that city there lie——"

"'Tisn't a city, the place I mean; leastwise, 'twasn't when I was there—'twas a little one-eyed, blinking sort o' place."