A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE
POEMS OF THOMAS HARDY

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Thomas Hardy (1968)

Thomas Hardy: An Annotated Reading List (1974)

Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding (A Critical Guide) (1987)

He is the editor of *Poems by Thomas Hardy* (an anthology) (1979)

and the co-editor, with James Gibson, of *Thomas Hardy, Poems: a Casebook* (of critical comment on Hardy's verse) (1979).

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Trevor Johnson

M
MACMILLAN

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For my wife, Margaret, without whom I should never finish anything, and my daughters, Sarah and Kate.

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The text used for Hardy's poems is that of Dr James Gibson's *Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems* (Macmillan, 1976) and I also owe a great deal to his *Variorum Complete Poems*. To the late J. O. Bailey's and to Frank Pinion's handbooks to Hardy's verse I am often indebted, while no one who writes on Hardy can afford to neglect Michael Millgate's definitive biography.

It would be invidious to single out individuals among the many critics from whose work I have profited over the years, but I take this occasion to thank the many generations of English students at Mather and at the City of Manchester Colleges, from whose insights into Hardy's poems this book will derive a good deal of any value it may have.

Finally, to those who may have read my previous articles and essays on Hardy's poetry, and who recognise occasional fragments from them embedded in this book, I hope they will forgive me if, where I felt I could not improve on what I had already said of a poem, I have let it stand here.

TREVOR JOHNSON

Note on abbreviations

Throughout the text I have employed the following abbreviations:

- (1) *Life* (or *The Life*) for *The Life of Thomas Hardy* by F. E. Hardy (Macmillan, 1962).
- (2) MS for [Hardy's] holograph manuscript, i.e. of the poems in question.

Other abbreviations are dealt with in the sections where they occur.

During Wind & Rain

They sing their dearest songs —

He, she, all of them — yea

Treble & Tenor & bass,

And one to play;

With the candles mooring each face, ...

Ah, no; the years O!

How the sick ~~and~~ leaves ^{reel} down in throngs!

They clear the creeping moss —

Elders & juniors — yea,

^{making} ~~clearing~~ the pathways neat

And the garden gay;

And they build a shady seat...

Ah, no; the years O!

^{See,} ~~there~~ The webbed white storm-birds wing across!

They are blithely breakfasting all —

Men & maidens — yea,

Under the summer tree,

(With a glimpse of the bay,

While pet birds come to the knee....

Ah, no; the years O!

~~And~~ The ^{rotten} rose is ript from ^{the wall}.

They

They change to a high new house,
He, she, all of them - yea,
Clocks & carpets & chairs
On the lawn all day,
And brightest things that are theirs.....
Ah, no; the years O!
^{Down} ~~On~~ their chiselled names the ~~rain-drop ploughs.~~
~~rain-drop ploughs.~~

During Wind and Rain (441/ALL/*). The MS shows Hardy's clear, strong handwriting. Hardy's emendations to the text given here are discussed in the detailed analysis of the poem on pp. 167-9. Reproduced by permission of the Master and Fellows, Magdalene College, Cambridge.