

Hardy and Betjeman Passages

1. "The spirit of old papistical times still lingers in the nooks of those silent walls, like a bad odor in a still atmosphere, dulling the iconoclastic emotions of the true Puritan" (A Laodicean 1.7.70).

2. "She was transported to the Middle Ages ... She had never supposed such a street to exist outside the imaginations of antiquarians. Smells direct from the sixteenth century hung in the air ... The faces of the people ... seemed those of individuals who habitually gazed on the great Francis, and spoke of Henry the Eighth as the King across the sea" (6.1.460).

3. "the churches, the abbey, and other mediaeval buildings on this clear bright morning having the linear distinctness of architectural drawings, as if the original dream and vision of the conceiving master-mason were for a brief hour flashed down through the centuries to an unappreciative age. Giles saw their eloquent look on this day of transparency, but could not construe it" (Woodlanders, 5.75-6).

4. "Shaston, the ancient British Palladium,

'From whose foundation first such strange reports arise,'
(as Drayton sang it), was, and is, in itself the city of a dream. Vague imaginings of its castle, its three mints, its magnificent apsidal Abbey, the chief glory of South Essex, its twelve churches, its shrines, chantries, hospitals, its gabled freestone mansions--all now ruthlessly swept away--throw the visitor, even against his will, into a pensive melancholy, which the stimulating atmosphere and limitless landscape around him can scarcely dispel. The spot was the burial-place of a king and a queen, of abbots and abbesses, saints and bishops, knights and squires. The bones of King Edward 'the Martyr,' carefully removed hither for holy preservation, brought Shaston a renown which made it the resort of pilgrims from every part of Europe, and enabled it to maintain a reputation extending far beyond English shores. To this fair creation of the great Middle-Age the Dissolution was, as historians tell us, the death-knell. With the destruction of the enormous abbey the whole place collapsed in a general ruin: the Martyr's bones met with the fate of the sacred pile that held them, and not a stone is now left to tell where they lie.

The natural picturesque-ness and singularity of the town still remain; but strange to say these qualities which were noted by many writers in ages when scenic beauty is said to have been unappreciated, are passed over in this, and one of the queerest and quaintest spots in England stands virtually unvisited today. (Jude the Obscure 4.1.199)

5. "He would accept any employment which might be offered him ... as a provisional thing only. This was his form of the modern vice of unrest. Moreover he perceived that at best only copying, patching and imitating went on here; which he fancied to be owing to some temporary and local cause. He did not at that time see that mediaevalism was as dead as a fern-leaf in a lump of coal; that other developments were shaping in the world around him, in which Gothic architecture and its associations had no place--The deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him." (p. 98, Wessex Edn.)

6. "Till here on the hill, betwixt vill and vill,
He noted a clear straight ray
Stretching down from the sky to a spot hard by,
Which shone with the light of day.

And gathered around the illumined ground
Were common beasts and rare,
All kneeling at gaze, and in pause profound
Attent on an object there.

'Twas the Pyx, unharmed 'mid the circling rows
Of Blackmore's hairy throng,
Whereof were oxen, sheep, and does,
And hares from the brakes among ..." (Hardy, "The Lost Pyx")

7. Jan Je,drzejewski, "Thomas Hardy and Roman Catholicism," Thomas Hardy Journal 4 (1993), 27-40
 Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (1992)
 Eamon Duffy's The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England (1992)
 Jenny Franchot, Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism (1994)

8. "...The deepest Essex few explore
 Where steepest thatch is sunk in flowers
 And out of elm and sycamore
 Rise flinty fifteenth-century towers." (Betjeman, "Essex")

9. "That tower, so built to take the light
 Of sun by day and moon by night,
 That centuries of weather there
 Have mellowed it to twice as fair
 As when it first rose new and hard
 Above the sports in our churchyard ...
 Our churches are our history shown
 In wood and glass and iron and stone" (Betjemen, "Churchyards")

10. "... See the black-shawled congregations
 On the broidered vestment gaze
 Murmur past the painted stations
 As Thy Sacred Heart displays ...

there rose, abrupt and lonely,
 A ruined abbey, chancel only,
 Lichen-crusted, time-befriended,
 Soared the arches, splayed and splendid,
 Romanesque against the sky.

There in pinnacles protecting,
 One extinguished family waits
 A Church of Ireland resurrection
 By the broken, rusty gates.
 Sheepswool, straw and droppings cover,
 Graves of spinster, rake and lover,
 Whose fantastic mausoleum
 Sings its own seablown Te Deum,
 In and out the slipping plates." (Betjeman, "Ireland with Emily") 123

11. "... Then ...
 the walled-in City of London, smelly and holy,
 Had a tinkling mass house in every cavernous street ...
 [Christ Church Newgate Street]
 Last of the east wall sculpture, a cherub gazes
 On broken arches, rosebay, bracken and dock,
 Where once I heard the roll of the Prayer Book phrases
 And the sumptuous tick of the old west gallery clock."
 (Betjeman, "Monody on the Death of Aldersgate Street Station")

12. "Are they one with the Celtic saints and the years between?
 Can they see the moonlit pools where ribbon weed drifts?" (Betjeman, "Old Friends")

13. "The leaping sciapod, the man-eating mantichora, the unicorn, might as easily be met in the forest by men with imaginations, which as easily would expect to see Our Lady fly through the air, or the local saint, for centuries enshrined in his altar, walking down the street ... So when we walk down a green lane

like an ancient cart track towards the ringing church-bells, we can see the power of God in the blossom and trees, remember legends of the saints about birds and stones, and recall miracles that happened in the parish at this or that spot." (In Praises of Churches, from Guide to English Country Churches)

14. "Church of England thoughts / occasioned by hearing the bells / of Magdalene Tower / from the Botanic Garden, Oxford / on St. Mary Magdalene's Day":

"A Church of England sound, it tells

Of "moderate" worship, God and State,

Where matins congregations go

Conservative and good and slow

To elevations of the plate ...

Before the spell begin to fail,

Before the bells have lost their power,

Before the grassy kingdom fade

And Oxford traffic roar invade,

I thank the bells of Magdalene Tower."

16. "There was an Elizabethan writer who lived in the parish, Nicholas Roscârrock. He loved the old religion and was imprisoned in the Tower and put on the rack and then imprisoned again. He wrote the life of his parish saint ... 'St Endelient' he called her and said she lived only on the milk of a cow" [the kind of belief held in "Catholic days"] (First and Last Loves)

17. "Contemporary scholars, such as Toffanin, Trinkaus, Grassi, Boyle, Camporeale, Mazzotta, have thoroughly discredited the secularist interpretation of Italian humanism. Even Machiavelli ... was a regular churchgoer ... Rabelais was no less a believer ... Marguerite of Navarre ... [was] no less a sincerely devout poet for having also written the ribald Heptameron." (Louis Dupree Passage to Modernity (Yale UP 1993).

18. "For since the historic and once august hierarchy of Rome some generation ago lost its chance of being the religion of the future by doing otherwise [than 'removing those things that are shaken'], and throwing over the little band of New Catholics who were making a struggle for continuity by applying the principle of evolution to their own faith, joining hands with modern science, and outflanking the hesitating English instinct toward liturgical restatement (a flank march which I at the time quite expected to witness, with the gathering of many millions of waiting agnostics into its fold); since then, one may ask, what other purely English establishment than the Church, of sufficient dignity and footing, with such strength of old association, such scope for transmutability, such architectural spell, is left in this country to keep the shreds of morality together?" (Hardy "Apology," Late Lyrics and Earlier)

19.

"with all due respect, the Roman Church is in England a sect. It is easier for the Church of England to become Catholic, than for the Church of Rome in England to become English; and if the Church of England was mutilated by separation from Rome, the Church of Rome was mutilated by separation from England. If England is ever to be in any appreciable degree converted to Christianity, it can only be through the Church of England." (T. S. Eliot, "Thoughts After Lambent", 1931)