

## POINTS TO REMEMBER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES-14

- 1) In 1898, Hardy published his first volume of poetry, **Wessex Poems**, a collection of poems written over 30 years. While some say Hardy gave up writing novels after the harsh criticism from **Jude the Obscure**, he spent the 20th century mainly writing poetry.
- 2) In the twentieth century, Hardy wrote only poems. Hardy wrote in various poetic forms, including lyrics, ballads, satire, dramatic monologues, and a three-volume epic closet drama **'The Dynasts'** (1904-1908).
- 3) In some ways, he was a very traditional poet influenced by folksong and ballads. But, he was never conventional and he was persistently experimental. He often invented stanza forms and meters. Also, he often used **'colloquial diction and rough-hewn rhythms'**.
- 4) He wrote a number of significant poems that relate to the Boer War and World War I. 'Drummer Hodge', 'In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations' and 'The Man he Killed' had a profound influence on war poets like **Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon**. In these poems, Hardy uses the viewpoint of ordinary soldiers and their colloquial speech.
- 5) In 'The Wessex Poems', the long shadow that the **Napoleonic War** cast over the 19th century, is seen, for example in 'The Sergeant's Song' and 'Leipzig.' The Napoleonic War is also the subject in 'The Dynasts'.
- 6) Some of Hardy's more famous poems are from "Poems of 1912-1913" part of **Satire of Circumstances** (1914). written following the death of his wife Emma in 1912. They had been estranged for 20 years, and these lyric poem express deeply felt 'regret and remorse'.
- 7) Poems like 'After a Journey', '**The Voice**' and others from this collection are by general consent regarded as the peak of his poetic achievement.
- 8) In a recent biography on Hardy, **Claire Tomalin** argues that Hardy became a truly great English Poet after the death of his first wife. Beginning with these elegies, she describes as 'finest and one of the strangest celebrations of the dead in English poetry.'
- 9) Many of Hardy's poems deal with disappointment in love and life, perverse fate and elegiac feelings. The irony is an important element in a number of **Hardy's poems**, including 'The Man he Killed' and 'Are you digging my Grave'.

10) 'The Blinded Bird' reflect his stance against animal cruelty. This poem was also a polemic against sport vinkenzetting. His view against vivisectionism and membership in the **Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals**.

11) A number of notable English composers set poems by Hardy to music. Holst also wrote the orchestral tone poem **Egdon Heath: A Homage to Thomas Hardy** in 1927.

12) Although his poems initially were not well-received as his novels, Hardy has now been recognised as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. His verse was a major influence on later writers including **Robert Frost, W.H Auden, Dylan Thomas** and **Philip Larkin**.

13) Larkin included 27 poems by Thomas Hardy compared with only 9 by Eliot in his Oxford Book of Twentieth-Century English verse in 1973. There were fewer poems by Yeats.

14) The irony and struggles of life made him question the traditional Christian view of God. Hardy frequently wrote about the supernatural forces. The forces that control the universe with indifference and caprice: the **Immanent Will**.

15) His writings show a fascination with ghosts, spirits, Christian rituals particularly seen the rural communities. We can also see **Biblical** references in Hardy's works.

16) Hardy's friend **Horace Moule** introduced him to the scientific findings that cast doubt on the literal interpretations of Bible. It is suggested that Hardy was influenced by Gideon Mantell's work 'Wonders of Geology' in his work 'A Pair of Blue Eyes'. It is also suggested that the character of Henry Knight in 'A Pair of Blue Eyes' is based on Horace Moule.

17) Hardy never felt home at London because of class divisions. He was conscious of his social inferiority. During this time, he became interested in the works of **John Stuart Mill**. He was introduced to the works of Auguste Comte and Charles Fourier.

18) **Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell** (1810-1865) often referred to as Mrs. Gaskell was an English novelist, biographer and short story writer. Her study is of an interest to social historians because of the detailed portrayal of the many strata of Victorian society.

19) Her first novel, **Mary Barton** was published in 1848. Gaskell's 'The Life of Charlotte Bronte', published in 1857 was the first biography of Charlotte Bronte. (PAPER 2, Q24, 2004)

20) **Mrs Gaskell's** best known novels are 'North and South' (1854-55), Cranford (1851-53), and Wives and Daughters (1865).

21) **Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life** is the first novel by English author Elizabeth Gaskell, published in 1848. The story is set in the **English city of Manchester** between 1839-1842. It deals with the difficulties faced by the Victorian working class. The novel was published anonymously.

22) She became very popular for her writing, especially ghost stories, aided by **Charles Dickens**, who published her work in his magazine *Household Words*.

23) **Mary Ann Evans** (1819-1880) known by her pen name **George Eliot** was one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. She wrote seven novels: 1) *Adam Bede* (1859), 2) *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), 3) *Silas Marner* (1861), 4) *Romola* (1862-63), 5) *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), 6) *Middlemarch* (1871-72) and 7) *Daniel Deronda* (1876).

24) **George Eliot** like Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy emerged from provincial England. Most of her works were set there. Her works are known for realism, psychological insight and a detailed depiction of countryside.

25) **Middlemarch** was described by the novelist Virginia Woolf as 'one of the few English novels written for grown-up people' and by Martin Amis and Julian Barnes as the greatest novels in the English language.