

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

12 *In the Days of Crinoline*

A plain tilt-bonnet on her head
She took the path across the leaze.
— Her spouse the vicar, gardening, said,
“Too dowdy that, for coquetries,
So I can hoe at ease.” 5

But when she had passed into the heath,
And gained the wood beyond the flat,
She raised her skirts, and from beneath
Unpinned and drew as from a sheath
An ostrich-feathered hat. 10

And where the hat had hung she now
Concealed and pinned the dowdy hood,
And set the hat upon her brow,
And thus emerging from the wood
Tripped on in jaunty mood. 15

The sun was low and crimson-faced
As two came that way from the town,
And plunged into the wood untraced. . . .
When severally therefrom they paced
The sun had quite gone down. 20

The hat and feather disappeared,
The dowdy hood again was donned,
And in the gloom the fair one neared
Her home and husband dour, who conned
Calmly his blue-eyed blonde. 25

“To-day,” he said, “you have shown good sense,
A dress so modest and so meek
Should always deck your goings hence
Alone.” And as a recompense

He kissed her on the cheek.

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Ms, 1911

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Macmillan, 1930)