



# THOMAS HARDY

1840-1928

## The Oxen

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.

- 5 We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave

- 10 In these years! Yet, I feel,  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
“Come; see the oxen kneel

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,”

- 15 I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

1915

