

MAX GATE,
DORCHESTER.

4:11:09

Dear Mr de la Fontaine:

I have just returned from London, & if I had known that you were laid up there I should have called. I hope the chill is not serious.

I am as shocked as you are at the idea of the hedgerow trees on the Puddleton road being destroyed. But I see no way of interfering. Although I can influence a London public to a slight extent by

press letters, &c., I can influence nobody down here. I know from what has happened in similar cases that I only encourage people to precipitate matters.

I have heard a report, too, that the Chancel at P. T. is to be pulled down & a new one erected of greater length! Fancy destroying the late Perpendicular (if I remember) wagon roof, the venerable walls, the 17th century woodwork, &c., which three centuries should render immune from the slightest

change, to put in their place a
brand new erection which will have
no historic or religious associations
whatsoever. And yet people are
blamed for not going to church.
I wonder if this is really to
be done?

Sincerely yours
Wm. Hardy.

THOMAS HARDY, A. L. S., 4 November 1909, to
Alfred C. de Lafontaine.

[engraved address] MAX GATE,
DORCHESTER.

4: 11: '09

Dear Mr de Lafontaine:

I have just returned from London, & if I had known that you were laid up there I should have called. I hope the chill is not serious.

I am as shocked as you are at the idea of the hedgerow trees on the Puddletown road being destroyed. But I see no way of interfering. Although I can influence a London public to a slight extent by [p. 2] press letters, &c, I can influence nobody down here. I know from what has happened in similar cases that I only enrage people to precipitate matters.

I have heard a report, too, that the Chancel at P. T. is to be pulled down & a new one erected of greater length! Fancy destroying the late Perpendicular (if I remember) wappen roof, the venerable walls, the 17th century woodwork, &c, which three centuries should render immune from the slightest [p. 3] change, to put in their place a bran new erection which will have no historic or religious associations whatever. And yet people are blamed for not going to church. I wonder if this is really to be done?

Sincerely yours
Thomas Hardy.

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Address: A. C. de Lafontaine, Esq. | 12 Park Lane | London |
W. (last 3 lines canceled; readdressed, upper corner: Athel-
hampton | Dorchester).

Provenance: As for the 5 Dec 1901 letter.

Unpublished.

Notes: 1. Hardy seems to be using *wappen* in the sense of *old-fashioned* or *obsolete*.

2. Here published by permission of Miss Irene Cooper Willis (through the courtesy of Macmillan & Co., Ltd., Little Essex Street, London, W.C.2).