

for divorce cannot hope to retain the respect of friends and fellow church members unless they again jump over the broom-stick—this time backwards. After the performance of this simple and inexpensive ceremony of annulment, costing nothing but agility, the principals are once more open to proposals. Mr. Hardy doesn't even put his people through the broom-stick drill.

In changing the name of the novel Mr. Hardy evidences that he neither knew a good thing when he had it, nor yet the value of first impressions. In retaining the title of "The Simpletons," pure and simple, the plot and the characters would present a coherent, well-developed whole, of the nature that one would expect to find under such a name. But as to "Hearts Insurgent"—there are none in the story. There are only weak, yielding, wavering hearts—uncertain for themselves and for those whom they have entangled. The opening chapters present a rare picture of pastoral charm and beauty, but the plot soon becomes depressing, and the agony augments until the white-souled lad, Jude, has degenerated to the soul-sick man, tipsy in the companionship of his coarse, and erstwhile truant, Arabella, and dying amid the shades of dead hopes and unfulfilled ambitions. Mr. Hardy is accredited with saying that the novel cannot be fairly viewed until appearing in book form. Certainly as a serial it has been one of the most harrowing of the recent neurotic creations.

Apropos of the re-marriage of Arabella and Jude, Mr. Hardy makes the following comment upon matrimony:

"The landlord of the lodging, who had heard they were a queer couple, had doubted if they were married at all, especially as he had seen Arabella kiss Jude one evening when she had taken a little cordial; and he was about to give them notice to quit, till by chance overhearing her one night haranguing Jude in rattling terms, and ultimately flinging a shoe at his head, he recognized the true ring of honest wedlock, and concluding that they must be respectable, said no more."

**

**

"A CHRISTMAS CANTICLE, SAINTS' DAY BALLADS AND SUNDRY OTHER MEASURES," is the quaint title of a very dainty

little *brochure* by Dr. E. H. Stafford, which the Bryant Press have just published.

The Saints' Day Ballads are narrative poems of much color and considerable action, while "A National Hymn" appears to us to have much origin.

Among other poems are some of a religious and reflective character, which, while dealing with familiar subjects, are nevertheless far from conventional, displaying marked originality of treatment.

**

**

AFTER the miasma of modern novels, the story of "Barbara Heck, a Tale of Early Methodism in Canada," by W. H. Withrow, is as refreshing as a draught of spring water or a breath from the woods in blossom time. The scene is laid in the days of the U. E. Loyalists, the people who were twice sifted, who left the mother country for conscience's sake, and, at the same bidding, while yet the memory of the first martyrdom was strong within them, again renounced home and friends and worldly wealth, and started life anew amid the perils of an almost unbroken wilderness. But as a lover of nature, the author testifies that the wilderness is not without charm, and gives us glimpses of the mystery and delight of forest aisles, the beauty of moss-hid violets and the royalty of sceptered iris, born in the purple. With him we hear the ring of the axe through echoing woodlands and scent the resinous pine boughs flame-wreathed in laughing, wide-mouthed chimneys. And we come to a closer knowledge of this splendid heritage of a fatherland not founded upon the favor of prince or hireling, but built by the "strenuous toil of unbought muscles."

**

**

"Ninety-Six," a most artistic New Year calendar, published by the Toronto Art Students' League, has just come to hand. Between the covers of this dainty little *brochure* are poems from the pens of Roberts, Campbell and Carman, illustrated and decorated by such well-known artists as C. M. Manly, J. D. Kelly, C. W. Jefferies, D. F. Thomson, F. H. Brigden, A. H. Howard, and others. "Ninety-Six" is one of the most artistic little booklets that it has yet been our pleasure to review.