

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

B. A. (HONS.), PART-II, PAPER-IV

TOPIC – **FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD**

BY DR. PRABHAT RANJAN KARN

ASSOC. PROF., DEPT. OF ENGLISH,

DR. L.K. V. D.COLLEGE, TAJPUR

CHARACTER SKETCH OF BATHSHEBA IN THE NOVEL, “FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD”

Bathsheba Everdene, an extremely charming and beautiful lady, is the heroine of the novel, "Far from the Madding Crowd", the first popular novel by Thomas Hardy. Like the other heroines of Hardy's novels, such as Eustacia Vye (the heroine of "The Return of the Native") and Tess (the heroine of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"), Hardy has bestowed all his attention on Bathsheba.

To suggest her beauty, the novelist writes, "She is a fair product of Nature in the feminine kind." She is regarded as "fair handsome lady" and the turnpike keeper calls her "handsome maid". She is the "attractive young wife" of Troy. She is conscious of her beauty and her physical charm and she is quite boastful about her beauty, which is emphasized with the progress of the story. She has a vain woman's desire to be looked at, that's why, Billy Smallbury describes her as "a very vain feymell". Oak gives proof to this opinion when he finds her looking in the mirror and blushing to find that she is as beautiful as she thinks herself to be.

Bathsheba is not only beautiful, she is practical and sharp-minded. She possesses practical sense and administrative ability. She detects very soon that her bailiff Pennyways is a dishonest man and dismisses him at once. She manages herself a big farm

without any assistance. She also has feminine sensibility and thinks herself equal to man. She tells her labourers:

"You have a mistress instead of a master. I don't yet know my powers or talent in farming; but I shall do my best, and if you serve me well, so shall I serve you. Don't let the unfair ones among you suppose that because I'm a woman, I don't understand the difference between bad gonings-on and good."

On the other hand, like the typical woman of all time, she is an extremely jealous woman by nature. It is, in fact, the reason behind her marrying Troy. And even when Troy kisses the dead Fanny, she is overcome by a fit of jealousy. She exclaims wildly from the deepest depth of the heart:

"Don't - don't kiss them! O, Frank, I can't bear it - I can't! I love you better than she did: kiss me too, Frank, - kiss me. You will, Frank, kiss me too."

Though Bathsheba possesses the practical qualities, she is not without the kindness of the female heart. She feels disappointed at Fanny's sudden disappearance. She does everything which she can do.

Thus, Bathsheba becomes one of the most remarkable heroines of Hardy. She is one of Hardy's "most convincing feminine creations". She is a practical, sane, strong, and successful woman of the whole novel.
