

**The Convergence of the Twain**  
**(Lines on the loss of the “Titanic”)<sup>1</sup>**  
**By Thomas Hardy**

**I**

In a solitude of the sea  
 Deep from human vanity,  
 And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

**II**

*Line*      Steel chambers, late the pyres  
 5      Of her salamandrine<sup>2</sup> fires,  
 Cold currents thrid,<sup>3</sup> and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

**III**

Over the mirrors meant  
 To glass the opulent  
 The sea-worm crawls-- grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

**IV**

10      Jewels in joy designed  
 To ravish the sensuous mind  
 Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

**V**

Dim moon-eyed fishes near  
 Gaze at the gilded gear  
 15 And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” ...

**VI**

Well: while was fashioning  
 This creature of cleaving wing,<sup>4</sup>  
 The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

**VII**

Prepared a sinister mate  
 20 For her-- so gaily great--  
 A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

**VIII**

And as the smart ship grew  
 In stature, grace, and hue,  
 In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

**IX**

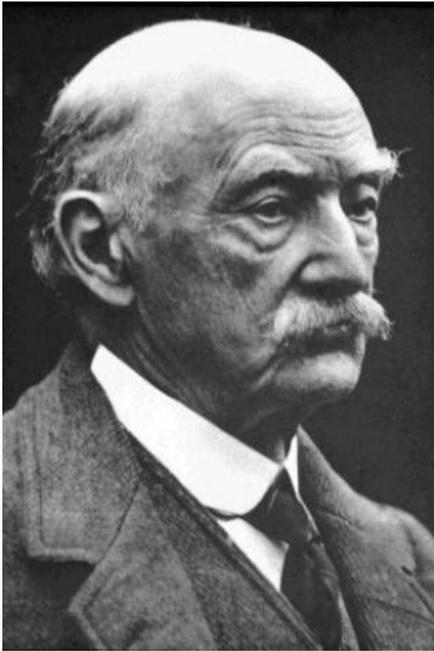
25 Alien they seemed to be;  
 No mortal eye could see  
 The intimate welding of their later history,

**X**

Or sign that they were bent  
 By paths coincident  
 30 On being anon<sup>5</sup> twin halves of one august event,

**XI**

Till the Spinner of the Years  
 Said “Now!” And each one hears,  
 And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.



Thomas Hardy  
 1840-1928

<sup>1</sup> *Titanic* was a luxury cruise liner that sank on its maiden voyage on April 14, 1912 after colliding with an iceberg in the north Atlantic; it had been advertised as virtually unsinkable; 1,517 people died in the accident. The poem was published three years later in 1915.

<sup>2</sup> in legend, salamanders are often described as having an affinity for fire

<sup>3</sup> thread

<sup>4</sup> i.e., dividing the waves

<sup>5</sup> soon