

Chapter XIV

1897 - 1898

Temperance : Friends

Throughout his life, Hardwicke supported and worked for the Temperance movement. At the same time as his campaign to help the Armenians, he was preparing evidence to give before the Royal Commission which was enquiring into the liquor trade.

At Penrith, eighteen miles from Keswick, he was invited to be the chairman at a public meeting in the Drill Hall, which was being held to demand a Liquor Bill. He had a previous engagement but sent a letter of apology and support, which ended with these words:-

"In Penrith alone there are 54 public houses, 49 of which have another public-house within 100 yards of its door, and when the population of Penrith is considered, it is found there is one public house to every 126 of the population."

At the end of his letter, referring to the "drink fiend", he says, "Dark home-destroyer, hence! begone!"¹

During the same year, 1894, in March, as a County Councillor, he was a member of the Cumberland Standing Joint Committee which discussed, "Beerhouses and their privileges: Treatment of habitual drunkards." The week after this meeting, it was reported in the local newspaper as follows:-

"Canon Rawnsley explained that the object of the Prohibited Persons (Drink) Bill was to enable magistrates to prohibit persons convicted of drunkenness from entering licensed premises for a year ensuing and also to prohibit licensed persons from

¹*The Advertiser*, 1894 (the local newspaper)

selling or delivering drink to such convicted persons for the same period."¹

The Editorial in the same newspaper was very sceptical saying,

"How in the name of commonsense such an object is to be attained we are not told. Will the Bench order the names and addresses, occupations, etc., etc., to be published and posted up on every public-house in the County, accompanied by a telling likeness of the offender after each sitting on the Petty Sessions ... ?"

Although Hardwicke was totally opposed to alcohol, he was not in favour of prohibition, but thought the problem of drunkenness could be overcome by providing counter attractions, such as public reading rooms, recreation grounds, technical education, lectures and choral competitions. He wanted the liquor trade regulated and licenses to grocers withdrawn. Amongst his own parishioners, he persuaded men whose lives and homes were being destroyed by their addiction to alcohol to sign promises written out by Hardwicke,

"Knights of St. Kentigern - For God and home, for wife and friends, for our love of the brethren, we do hereby pledge our word to our friend the Vicar of Crosthwaite, to have done with our enemy from this day forward, and in sight of God and man to set the best example we in our town and in our walk in life can set, of work without liquor and of a conscience clear of offence, so help us God."²

Others promised not to enter certain inns for periods of time.

If bottles of an intoxicating nature were given for prizes at Parish events or sporting occasions, he bought them himself and replaced them with goods he considered more suitable.

Ten years later, 1904, on one of his visits to Switzerland, Hardwicke persuaded the landlord of the Engstlen Alp hotel,

¹Ibid

²Rawnsley, E.F., Canon Rawnsley, Glasgow, 1923, p121

together with other guests and local men to climb a steep cliff, by a waterfall, for the purpose of painting out with grey paint the large advertisement for Morgen Bitters, which had appeared on the rock face.

Although he was so strongly against alcohol and went to great lengths to prevent its influence, Hardwicke did enjoy smoking cigarettes.

In spite of his action packed life, Hardwicke always had time for friends of which he had a great number, many of them women. He had the gift of making friends wherever he went, due to his ready sympathy and interest. He used to say that he liked to be kind. These friendships were not of an ephemeral nature, but long lasting, life long. Many of his women friends, such as Lilian Buchanan (Lady Adam Smith), thought of him as a confidant or a father figure to whom they could turn for advice and share their family experiences. Older women often thought of him as a son, who gave them comfort and support in their later years. One, indeed, whom he comforted when her son, a promising artist, died, left Hardwicke her house and all its contents.

Another friend was Mrs. Lynn Linton, the novelist who had lived in Crosthwaite Vicarage until her health forced her to move south. She missed her old home very much but revealed in a letter dated December 1897, how much comfort she had gained from Hardwicke's letter to her, which contained a sonnet and a description of her father's old study which Hardwicke used and cared for.¹ She felt that she had been transported back to her old home.

He was a prolific letter writer on all manner of subjects, especially to newspapers, and replied at once to the great variety of letters he received each day, although his writing was not always legible or decipherable. Many dealt with parish matters, his many interests and activities, but some were more difficult to answer tactfully.

¹Rawnsley, E.F., Canon Rawnsley, Glasgow 1923, pp123-4

One lady wrote to him, wishing to be a paying guest, as she had suffered much, but her love of Lakeland made up for everything. She continued by explaining that she was not strong, but that it was only liver and exhaustion, so she would be no trouble. Her letter ended by saying that she was always "chatty" at table and offered to supply references.

Another lady wanted a list of recommended boarding houses with soft beds and good food. She had been prompted to write after reading his account of Keswick in the *Standard* newspaper.

In 1924, four years after Hardwicke's death, this article in the *Standard* was remembered and commented on by Wansfell in Lakeland Notes, published in the *Cumberland and Westmorland Herald*. Evidently, Hardwicke had, in describing the beauty of winter sunshine in the Lake District and over Skiddaw, in particular, used the colours, purple and bronze of the trees getting ready for spring and wrote of, " ... thrushes singing clarion clear". This resulted in a contemporary writer poking gentle fun by suggesting that the clergyman must have had a special dispensation, to change the seasons and the green of spring to more unusual colours with thrushes singing, when Londoners were sitting with their feet in hot water and eating basins of gruel. (*Sunday Times*).

Two of Hardwicke's dearest friends were the artist, G.F. Watts and his wife. They supported him in many of his activities, notably the K.S.I.A., the National Trust, the plight of the Armenians and the destruction of wild birds for their plumage.

Hardwicke loved to visit them at Little Holland House, Kensington or Limmerslease in Compton, Surrey. On his last visit to them in Surrey in 1903, when G.F. Watts was eighty six years old, he found the artist working on the large statue of Tennyson which now stands on Minster Green at Lincoln. At that time G.F. Watts was suffering from rheumatism and could not use clay which exacerbated his condition. Instead he was using gesso which sets

more quickly, so that there is little time in which to model and this was causing him much frustration, as he could not get the head of the poet and the dog to his satisfaction. Since he felt Tennyson would have been pleased with the idea of the statue, he persevered. In conversation with Hardwicke, he explained what he was trying to express with regard to Tennyson's thoughts and beliefs. Tennyson had always loved and cared for the wonders of Creation, however small, so in the statue he is looking down at the small flower, marvelling at its perfection, while his dog looks up with devotion to his master. In Creation, love and caring are united.

As well as discussing the work of their friends, Tennyson and Ruskin, they exchanged ideas about their own work. Both of them would have liked to be poets. Hardwicke loved writing sonnets but Watts felt that he himself had no talent in that sphere. On the whole he never felt satisfied with his work. On one occasion of dissatisfaction, Hardwicke said that nature had given him a sense of form and colour, imagination and aspiration. Watts was pleased with the word, "aspiration", and said that when he died he would like a simple tablet placed above his ashes with the words, "Only an aspirer".¹

When Hardwicke published his book, "Ballads of Brave Deeds in 1896, Watt's picture, the "Happy Warrior", was the frontispiece and he contributed the Preface. The book was dedicated by Hardwicke - "To my dear friends, G. F. Watts and Mrs. Watts".

¹E.F.R., Canon Rawnsley, London 1923, p130