

Chapter XXII

1917 - 1919

Leaving Crosthwaite : Marriage : Peace Celebrations

Gradually, Hardwicke recovered his health and from the shock of Edith's death, but he felt that he could not continue his public or parish work without her help. She had made it possible for him to do both and he sent his resignation to the Bishop. There was a great outcry, when this became known, but he had decided and could not be persuaded to change his mind.

On hearing the news, his parishioners wished to give him a present, in recognition of his long and faithful service. He said that he would like a little book of remembrance containing their names. His parishioners would have none of it and in the week after Easter, 1917, presented him with three beautiful silver steeple cups and a silver gilt cup which are now at Balliol College.* A silver tray made at the K.S.I.A. was given to him in memory of Edith, for her life and work at the School. Many glowing tributes were paid to Hardwicke at the presentation, which moved him deeply. In accepting and thanking everyone for the beautiful gifts and warm affection he gave special thanks for remembering Edith

... "the truest helpmeet that man ever had given to him, and for their present in memory of one who, many-gifted and absolutely unselfish and unsparing of herself, put all her gifts at the service of the parish, and by her constant endeavour and help in the background, set me free to do what otherwise I could not have done for this neighbourhood and the public at large."¹

He continued by saying that parsons usually never know of the kind interest felt by parishioners, in their efforts, until it is too

* Appendix 15

¹Rawnsley, E.F., Canon Rawnsley, Maclehose, Glasgow, 1923, p245

late and they are taking wreaths to their graves. They had not done so and he was glad that he was able to tell them, personally, how much he appreciated their kind gifts and warm, affection. He ended his speech of thanks with a sonnet which ended with the words, "I feel such gift of friendship is divine."

Hardwicke preached for the last time as Vicar of Crosthwaite on the first Sunday after Easter, 1917. His sermon was entitled, "Right Thinking," with the text:-

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; ... think on these things."¹

The next day he travelled south for a break. In the next parish magazine a final poem for it appeared, beginning with:-

"Farewell, my sojourn ends,
I do not leave you friends,
I carry all your kindness in my heart."

Ending with,

"I shall come back to rest
In your God's acre blest,
Of all churchyards pre-eminently fair."

Hardwicke returned to Allan Bank, in the middle of May, where he was among so many friends, especially the Simpson family. Their two properties were adjacent and as he enjoyed the company of Mrs. Simpson and her daughters, he had a little gate put in the wall between The Wray and Allan Bank for easy access. By now, he had picked up the threads of his life and was as busy as ever, with his National Trust work, activities connected with education and the Cathedral at Carlisle. Many friends from far and wide came to visit him at Grasmere, but now and again he had an enjoyable outing to the Roman Wall and to see the ancient

¹Philippians Ch 4, Verse 8, A.V.

crosses at Ruthwell and Bewcastle. He loved to go bird watching along the Solway coast, but on one occasion he was upset to find many dead geese and spent a considerable time trying to discover the cause through the Board of Agriculture.

Meanwhile his friendship with Eleanor Simpson had deepened and in April of 1918 many newspapers carried the announcement of their engagement.¹ On the 1 June, 1918, the wedding took place at St. Oswald's Church at Grasmere. The Reverend Elliott Simpson, brother of the bride, Rector of Overton, Flintshire, assisted by Reverend M.F. Peterson, Rector of the Parish, took the service. The ceremony was short and simple. No guests were invited, but nevertheless there was a large congregation of friends and neighbours. Family members consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Willingham Rawnsley, Miss Frances Rawnsley, Miss Ethel Rawnsley, Eleanor's sisters, Mrs. Elliott Simpson, the Misses Sharpe and Mr. and Mrs. Watkins.

*The Times*² newspaper reported that the bride wore a dark blue travelling dress with matching hat. She carried a bouquet of Mme Abel Chatenay roses. There were no bridesmaids and Eleanor was given away by her mother, while Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, a grandson of the poet, was the best man.

There were some details of the service given in the *Westmorland Gazette*.³ The hymn, "Now thank we all our God", was sung and Miss Sumner, the organist played Gounod's "Sanctus", the "Bridal Procession" from "Lohengrin" and the "Wedding Choral" from the "Meistersingers".

Before leaving to visit National Trust properties in Wales, also the south and west of England, the newly married couple visited the

¹e.g. *The Daily Sketch; Liverpool Post; Daily Mirror; Yorkshire Post; The Star; Church Family Newspaper, Daily Sketch*. The announcement said that Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley M.A., Canon of Carlisle, Chaplain to the King ... to Eleanor Foster, second daughter of the late W. Frederick Simpson and Mrs. Simpson, The Wray, Grasmere.

²*The Times*, the 3 June 1918

³8 June 1918

grave of Wordsworth in Grasmere churchyard, on which they placed a laurel wreath with the inscription, "With gratitude for all we owe to the great and ever living poet, from Canon and Mrs .Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley on their wedding day".

Hardwicke wrote descriptive accounts of all the places they visited. Later they were published in book form as, A Nation's Heritage.¹

The day when the war ended and peace was declared, Canon Rawnsley and Eleanor were in Carlisle at the Cathedral. As the news came, the choir was hurriedly gathered and with the Precentor and Dean, together with as many of the Cathedral staff as possible, including the Rawnsleys, climbed to the top of the tower, where they sang the "National Anthem" and unfurled the Union Jack. A cacophany of sound broke out in the City as bells rang, whistles and sirens sounded, horns hooted. The party at the top of the tower rushed down to the Town Hall steps for the official announcement by the Mayor, that the war was at an end. Special services of Thanksgiving were held and Hardwicke arranged a service for children, with representatives from every school in Carlisle, so that the Cathedral was filled to overflowing.

Convocation then appointed a committee with Hardwicke as Chairman, to advise on war memorials, suggesting suitable materials, letterings and designs. By this means it was hoped that ugly excesses could be avoided. As this work continued, Hardwicke was busy also organizing the bonfires to celebrate the end of war and to rejoice that there was peace.²

After this, what he had feared during the turning of Thirlmere Lake into a reservoir for Manchester, i.e. that it would open the way for further demands for water for cities, from the Lake District, happened. Manchester wanted another reservoir, namely, Haweswater Lake. Reluctantly, Hardwicke agreed that it was necessary, but that equally so, care must be taken to preserve, not

¹Rawnsley, H.D., A Nation's Heritage, Allen and Unwin, London, 1920

²See Ch VIII, 'Bonfires'

only the beauty of the Lake District but also all other threatened, beautiful places. To this end, a Commission was suggested with certain powers to deal with such problems. Meanwhile a small Society for Safeguarding the Natural Beauty of the Lake District was formed, with Hardwicke as Chairman to keep a watchful eye on such schemes which would prove damaging.¹

From 1896 there had been proposals for making a road for motor vehicles over Sty Head Pass. An owner of land on each side of the Pass left £5,000 in his Will, towards carrying out the project within a set time. Hardwicke, although he was in favour of a footpath for walkers, vigorously opposed, by all means possible, the building of a road, because he envisaged an invasion of motor cyclists roaring up and down the steep gradients, shattering the peace and quiet of the area. The County Council agreed with him, eventually, and turned down the scheme in August 1919.²

For the rest of the year Hardwicke was occupied with work connected with juvenile crime and juvenile welfare, as well as trying to list special features of the Diocese's church buildings and their interesting possessions.

¹Eventually a reservoir was constructed which necessitated the flooding of the Mardale valley and in 1936 the church, the Dun Bull Inn, all farms and houses, were destroyed.

² C.R.O. D/MG and DX/300/J.G. Bell (County Surveyor).