

## Chapter XVI

1900-1901

### The Death of Ruskin : Queen Victoria's Funeral

Hardwicke was deeply saddened to hear of the death of his old friend, Ruskin at the end of January 1900, just before his eighty first birthday. Over the years, from Oxford to Coniston, he had been a great influence in Hardwicke's life. During the last ten years of Ruskin's life, it was difficult to continue regular visits because of his deteriorating mental state. Hardwicke was overwhelmed with sadness after each visit, although the memories of happier times prevailed.

The funeral took place on the 25 January 1900 and Ruskin was buried in a secluded part of Coniston churchyard. A place for him had been offered in Westminster Abbey, but refused, because, it was felt that he would have wished to be among the country people he knew and loved, as they loved him.

A large congregation, consisting mostly of his local friends and neighbours gathered in the sleet and rain to honour him. Hardwicke assisted at the funeral, and, as well as writing a sonnet, he composed a hymn for the occasion which ended with the following verses:-

"He gave us eyes for we were blind,  
He bade us know and hear  
By him the wonder of the mind  
Of God on earth was clear.

We knew the travail of his soul,  
We thank Thee for his rest,  
Lord lead us upward to his goal  
The pure, the true, the best."

These were the subject of debate and controversy and a Liverpool clergyman went so far as to call them blasphemous and a disgrace, but Hardwicke defended them as being meaningful to his friends, who felt it was right and appropriate to give thanks to God for granting rest after the suffering and torment of his last years, as well as for his work in opening the eyes, ears and minds of people to the wonder of God's world.

Three years later in 1903, Hardwicke preached a sermon in Manchester Cathedral on Ruskin. On this occasion he said that the truths Ruskin had been condemned for were now accepted, e.g. "the labourer is worthy of his hire" and, "the best labour was when there was joy in doing it." He continued by saying that the real wealth of a country lay not in hoarded gold bars but in millions of good lives, golden hearts and kind thoughts. Money making as the prime object of life was wrong. More important were bonds of sympathy, right feelings and high thoughts. Noble ideals can bind us into a stronger nation for the service of God and man.

Hardwicke said that Ruskin had shown the true meaning of education. It was not being crammed with indigestible facts but having our eyes opened to perceive the glory of God around us, in the earth, air, sea and rock, in wood and flower - to see God all around us.

In conclusion, Hardwicke described Ruskin as a many sided prism and multi-coloured like the lights seen through it, revealing to us the whole of God's truth. He taught joy in good work, sympathy, humility, the greatness of self sacrifice, the beauty of obedience and the crowning glory of reverence for all things good, beautiful and true.

W.G. Collingwood designed the gravestone in the form of a tall cross in the pre Norman form. It was covered with symbolic representations of Ruskin's chief works. The side facing the grave and looking east has a figure with a lyre symbolizing his early works of poetry and architecture. Above this is a panel containing

his name and dates, 1819-1900, enclosed by an interlacing pattern. Over this is the figure of an artist sketching, with pines, Mont Blanc and a rising sun, from the device on his great work, Modern Painters, surmounted by the Lion of St. Mark, for his Stones of Venice, plus the Candlestick of the Tabernacle for his Seven Lamps.

The south side contains a design of his favourite wild rose, with three much loved creatures nestled in its branches - a squirrel, robin and kingfisher - for his love of nature. On the west side which looks to the mountains, is depicted the parable of the workmen and the vineyard, where each one is receiving a penny for his labour, representing his work, Unto this Last. Further designs illustrate Sesame and Lilies and Fors Clavigera, with the Angel of Fate holding the club, nail and key, mentioned in his writings. Over this is the Crown of Wild Olives and above this, St. George and the Dragon. The north side is covered with a simple interlacing pattern. On one side of the cross head is a globe, symbolizing "the sun of righteousness"; on the other side is a disc with a 'Fylfot' or revolving cross representing eternal life.

Mr. Miles, a sculptor from Ulverston who had done work for Ruskin, did the carving, keeping it flat and low, using touches of shadow to bring out the highlights. The stone was the local hard greyish green stone from Tilberthwaite quarries, notable for not chipping or cracking and remaining the same, without any discolouration, for ever.

Both Hardwicke and Edith enjoyed travelling abroad. In May 1900, Mrs. Rylands who founded the Rylands Library at Manchester, invited them to join her on a driving tour. They visited Basle, Zurich, Landeck and Füssen, with the object of arriving at Ober-Ammergau for the Passion Play. They approached the occasion with trepidation and reservation, not knowing what to expect. Anton Lang, the twenty five year old potter, had been chosen to play the part of Christ and they were deeply moved by his total commitment and the all pervading,

devotional and reverent atmosphere of the entire event and its surroundings.

Later that year, Hardwicke visited Paris for a few days to see the Exhibition. James Cropper of Ellergreen in Westmorland, a close friend, was also staying in Paris. Suddenly he became seriously ill and Hardwicke was with him when he died, which was of great comfort to all Mr. Cropper's many friends and relatives.

In the autumn of the same year, Hardwicke was once more engaged in battle in his efforts to preserve the beauty of the Lake District. The British Electric Traction Company, had put forward a scheme opposed by Hardwicke, for running an electric tramway between Windermere, Bowness and Ambleside. The Westmorland County Council also opposed the plan, on the grounds that the road was too narrow. Before they would consider such a scheme, the whole length of the road would have to be widened to take the tramway and the necessary overhead wires. This would be an awkward enterprise, necessitating the acquisition of a great deal of land, posing the same kind of problems encountered in the discussions on the Ambleside Railway Bill.

Hardwicke and his supporters thought the wires would be unsightly and the beauty of the road completely destroyed. They had collected enough money to fight the case, but at the last moment, the scheme was withdrawn.

A year after Ruskin's death, Queen Victoria died on the Isle of Wight, at Osborne House, on the 22 January 1901. Having been so closely connected with the celebrations for her Golden Jubilee in 1887 and Diamond Jubilee in 1897, through the organizing of the lighting of the chain of bonfires, locally and nationally to mark the occasions, Hardwicke was determined to attend the Queen's funeral.<sup>1</sup> She had made detailed arrangements some time before and these were contained in four sealed packets and kept in four locations to cover the eventuality of her death taking place, at Osborne, Balmoral, Windsor or abroad.

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<sup>1</sup>See chapter VIII, 'Bonfires'

Her main wishes were for a mighty naval pageant and a great civil and military cortège, followed by a service in the Royal Chapel of St. George's, Windsor and a private burial at Frogmore, Windsor, in the mausoleum she had had built for her beloved husband, Prince Albert, who died on the 14 December 1861, forty years before.

As the Queen died at Osborne, the naval part of the ceremonies was to take place in the Solent between the Island and the mainland. Hardwicke left at once for Portsmouth and managed to get aboard one of the warships taking part in the pageant, from which he had a good view of the proceedings and could give a vivid description of the impressive scene.

On Friday at 1.45p.m., the coffin, covered by the Union Jack, was carried through the grounds of Osborne House as pipers played a lament. At the Queen's Gate, the muffled drums of the massed bands took over the playing of mournful music. At Trinity Pier, Cowes, the coffin was placed on the *Alberta*, a tiny vessel, much loved by the Queen. The King and the Kaiser, together with other Royal and important male mourners, followed in the much larger *Victoria and Albert*, while the ladies and foreign representatives were on the *Royal Yacht, Osborne* and the large, white German *Hohenzollern*, respectively.

Hardwicke from his vantage point, was able to see the tiny *Alberta* bobbing up and down among the waves, dwarfed as she sailed between two lines of great and majestic battleships, symbols of Britain's might, drawn up in the Solent to honour the Queen's memory, especially those of Germany, Japan, Portugal and France, showing every mark of courtesy. Exceptions noted were those of Russia, Holland, Italy and America. The voyage lasted about two hours and at minute intervals guns were fired and the sound boomed over the waves. On arriving at Portsmouth, the *Alberta* lay at anchor over night with the Queen's body aboard.

On Saturday morning, the coffin was taken from the *Alberta* and placed on a khaki coloured gun carriage with rubber tyres and

taken to a special corridor train of eleven carriages, which conveyed the Queen's body and close mourners to Victoria station in London. There the coffin was placed on another gun carriage and the procession formed. The three and a half mile route, through St. James's Park, St. James's Street, across Praed Street to Paddington station, was lined by twenty thousand troops. The journey was expected to take two hours and the King had asked for traffic to stop and that the funeral drapes along the route should be of the colour purple and not black. The King, Kaiser, other Kings and Princes followed the coffin on horseback. Members of Parliament and others prominent in national life, followed. The gun carriage was drawn by eight of the Queen's favourite cream coloured horses. Hardwicke was among the crowd watching the impressive procession.

From Paddington, the Queen's body was taken by train to Windsor. Once more, the coffin was placed on another gun carriage. The bearers, on each occasion that the coffin was moved, were all specially chosen non-commissioned officers and men from the ten Queen's Regiments, all of them being of excellent character and at least six feet tall. The cortège now proceeded to St. George's Chapel where the coffin was taken through the nave, into the choir and placed in the chancel, facing the altar. Royal mourners sat in the stalls of the Garter Knights and the Albert Chapel was filled with flowers. One thousand seats in St. George's Chapel were allocated to ticket holders, one of them being Hardwicke. The Archbishops of York and Canterbury, assisted by the Bishop of Winchester, together with the Dean and Canons of the Royal Chapel, conducted the simple service.

The Queen's body remained in the Chapel during Sunday, watched over by the Grenadiers. On Monday morning, Queen Victoria was laid to rest beside her beloved Albert, with only members of the Royal family being present.

Hardwicke composed a hymn\* for the occasion which was used in his church at Crosthwaite. It is unlikely to have been sung at the Royal funeral, as the Queen had requested her favourite hymns.<sup>1</sup>

After his participation in the sad events of Ruskin's and Queen Victoria's funerals, by May of 1901, Hardwicke was once again busy with his diverse round of activities, which included visits to places associated with the early lives of Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, such as Racedown in Dorset and Alfoxden in Somerset. He endeavoured to find out personal reminiscences about Wordsworth from elderly residents, trying to find local allusions in his poems. Wordsworth had chosen to live in that area in order to be near Coleridge who lived at Nether Stowey, where they collaborated in writing Lyrical Ballads. Hardwicke continued his researches around there as well.

At the end of May he went to Amiens, Beauvais, Chartres, Provens and Rouen. During all these travels he gathered information from which he wrote articles and prepared lectures, recording his impressions of all the places he visited. After two months of working in his parish he left for Nuremberg and Bayreuth, where he attended a performance of Parsifal.

On his return, the preparations for the Coronation bonfires for the new King took up much of his time, especially with the reorganisation necessary due to the King's illness.<sup>2</sup> In August he attended the Coronation of Edward VII in Westminster Abbey and was fascinated by the difference between it and that of the Czar, at which he had been present in Russia. The quietness of the British Coronation, both inside and outside of the Abbey, with only the bells of St. Margaret's ringing, was in sharp contrast to the thundering of every bell in Moscow.

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\* Appendix 14

<sup>1</sup>This account from the *Mid Cumberland and North Westmorland Herald*, A.O. Hales of the *Daily News* and H.D. Rawnsley, the 26 Jan. and the 2 Feb. 1901.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter VIII, 'Bonfires'