

## Chapter XXIII

1920

### The Death of Canon Rawnsley

After Hardwicke's return from residence as Canon, in Carlisle, at the end of 1919, he was kept busy with all his activities, particularly advising on war memorials, not only in the Lake District, but further afield, as at Uppingham School and Oxford. After attending the Convocation in York, he gave many lectures about preserving the beauty, not only of the countryside, but also of towns. He also kept up his campaign against litter.

In March, Hardwicke and Eleanor took a holiday in France, where the warmth of Provence improved the stiffness, from which he suffered. Although often in pain, he explored the area, visiting the rock caverns of Les Baux and even climbed all the towers of the Papal Palace at Avignon. Wherever they went he wrote articles and poems about the places visited. Travelling north, they saw some of the areas devastated by the war, the craters, shell holes, heaps of rubble, that once were villages, the lifeless trees and the large amounts of rusting debris.

On returning to England, he travelled to Oxford to see the land at Cumnor, bought by four men who had studied at Balliol, for a memorial to the fourteen thousand four hundred Oxford men who had served in the war, and the two thousand two hundred who had been killed. The weather was pleasant and warm. The scene struck Hardwicke as very beautiful, with the spring flowers and blossoms in profusion.

The following day, he travelled to York in completely different weather, an icy blizzard, which chilled him and increased his pain. He spent all day, the 28th of April, at the Convocation, where he became suddenly ill with heart trouble. Eleanor was sent for and on arriving in York, found him in bed and very weak.

Hardwicke had a long standing engagement to preach on the Sunday, the 2 May, in St. Clement's Church, York, where a window was to be dedicated to one of his dearest friends, Margaret Argles. In spite of protests from all around him, he was determined to carry out this promise. Seeing his determination, his friends tried to make things as easy as possible, by having him rest in the vestry until it was time for his sermon, which was cheerful, comforting, as well as being, in a sense, prophetic, when he said that death was only the gate of life.

Satisfied that he had accomplished what he wanted to do, Hardwicke and Eleanor managed to return to Grasmere on the next day. During the night, however, he had a second heart attack. Slowly he seemed to make a steady recovery and began taking an interest in his committee work, dictating letters and writing verses. He enjoyed the beauty of the countryside around him and finished a long poem, "Praise before Work", which contained the following words:-

"Thrice happy they who, free from city care,  
Breathe with the birds the dewy morning air,  
And e'er they turn to seek their daily bread  
Learn that by praise the souls of men are fed."<sup>1</sup>

All seemed to be going well, when his temperature rose suddenly. Dr. Kidd came from London to assist his local doctor and they talked happily. As Dr. Kidd was about to leave, the severe symptoms returned and after hovering between life and death for two days, he died peacefully.

Tributes to Canon Rawnsley's character and work were received by his widow, in vast numbers, including a letter from King George V, through Lord Stamfordham, his private secretary, expressing his "true sympathy" at the death of one of his chaplains, who would, " ... be mourned by the large numbers of his fellow countrymen who enjoyed his friendship and valued his gifted and versatile personality."<sup>2</sup> The King had expected to be

<sup>1</sup>Rawnsley, E.F., Canon Rawnsley, Maclehose, Glasgow 1923, p264

<sup>2</sup>Cumberland and Westmorland Herald, the 5 June 1920

represented at the funeral by Dr. Sheppard, Sub-Dean of the Chapels Royal, but his son had become seriously ill and the time was too short to arrange for someone to take his place.

On Monday evening, Canon Rawnsley's body was brought from Grasmere in a pair horse hearse, to rest in the chancel of Crosthwaite Church, until Tuesday afternoon, when the funeral service was to take place.

Although the day of the burial was dull, it brought out the colours of the countryside around Keswick, creating a beautiful setting, such as Hardwicke loved. Edith's grave was covered by wild blue hyacinths and purple iris, while the heaped up soil from the new grave next to it, was hidden by golden branches of gorse. Mr. Just, the gardener at Derwent Hill, had lined the grave with heather. The coffin was of unpolished oak, with a full length cross, outlined on the wood, a small brass plate, with only H.D. Rawnsley, Canon of Carlisle, engraved on it.

Inside the church, the pulpit and lectern were draped with purple and white materials and the chancel was filled with banks of flowers. There was a huge congregation from all walks of life, with clergy from all over the Diocese and beyond, led by family mourners. Noel, the Canon's son was not present as he was in Austria.

Hardwicke's successor at Crosthwaite, the Reverend W.E. Bradley, conducted the service and began by quoting the words said by Hardwicke when he left Crosthwaite, " ... I shall come back to rest/In your God's acre blest."<sup>1</sup>

The organist played, "O rest in the Lord" and after the first part of the service, Psalm 90 was sung. Dean Rashdall of Carlisle read the lesson and Archdeacon Campbell said the prayers. Two hymns

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<sup>1</sup>See Ch XXII

were sung, "O strength and stay, upholding all creation"<sup>1</sup> and "Let saints on earth in concert sing".<sup>2</sup>

After the service, the coffin was carried to the grave by men, prominent in public life in Keswick, mostly wearing Freemasons' regalia. The ground, for a large area around the grave, was covered with flowers and wreaths.

Later, memorial services were held in Carlisle Cathedral, where the Dean, Dr. Rashdall praised his achievements; at Crosthwaite Church and Keswick School. The following inscription was added to the cross he had erected for Edith:-

"Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley, 28th May 1920,  
A helper of his time, Canon of Carlisle,  
Chaplain to the King, and thirty four years  
Vicar of this parish."<sup>3</sup> \*

For Canon Rawnsley, who loved putting up memorials to others, his friends now felt that there should be something to honour his memory. On the 26 June 1920, in a letter to *The Herald* newspaper, members of the National Trust Executive Committee, after paying tribute to his work and extending sympathy to Mrs. Rawnsley, suggested that the memorial he would have liked, would be the acquisition of some place of natural beauty for all to enjoy. They appealed for subscriptions for this purpose.

In July, 1921, another letter appeared in the same local newspaper giving the information that £2,300 had been contributed and used to buy Friars' Crag, Lord's Island and part of Calf Close Bay,<sup>4</sup> Derwentwater, as a memorial to Canon Rawnsley. It was felt, however, by the National Trust Executive, that to complete this area, another piece of land at Calf Close Bay was needed, making eight acres in all. This required another £275

<sup>1</sup>A.M. 12

<sup>2</sup>A.M. 221

<sup>3</sup>The details of the funeral are from the *Cumberland and Westmorland Herald*, the 5 June 1920

\* Appendix 16

<sup>4</sup>The area of Calf Close Bay is sometimes called Great Wood

which was quickly subscribed. The memorial was completed by a plain slab let into a wall, alongside the path, leading by Derwentwater to Friars' Crag. This was dedicated on the 7 September 1922. The inscription on the stone reads as follows:-

"To the honoured Memory of  
 Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley 1851-1920  
 Who greatly loving the fair things of nature and of art  
 Set all his love to the service of God and Man.  
 He was Canon of Carlisle, Chaplain to the King  
 Vicar of Crosthwaite 1883-1917 and One of the Founders  
 of the National Trust into whose care Friars' Crag,  
 Lord's Island and a part of Great Wood were given  
 by Subscribers who desired that his Name  
 should not be forgotten. 7th September 1922."

On the 22 October 1923, on the wall in the south aisle of Carlisle Cathedral, another memorial to Canon Rawnsley was unveiled and dedicated by the Dean of York, in a ceremony held during a special Evensong service. The memorial was in the form of a bronze tablet, enclosed in a framework of Borrowdale stone, designed by Mr. J.W. Benwell and carried out by Mr. W. Bromley of Keswick. On the tablet there is a beautiful medallion of Canon Rawnsley, sculpted by Signor Lucchesi, an Italian sculptor and friend of Hardwicke, which was presented by Mrs. Rawnsley, who attended the service with two of his sisters. The inscription in Latin was written by Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity, which freely translated reads, "A poet of his country, a lover of beauty, an indefatigable defender of mountains, lakes and footpaths." Below the medallion is an inscription and quotation from Wordsworth:-

"1851-1920  
 Hardwicke Drummond Rawnsley,  
 Canon of Carlisle, Chaplain to the King,  
 Vicar of Crosthwaite 1883-1917"  
 'Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares.'

At the Dedication, a hymn written by Hardwicke was sung, "Lord Jesus who at Lazarus' Tomb". The Dean of York then spoke in sincere admiration about Canon Rawnsley's character and

achievements, especially mentioning his care and love of all things beautiful, describing him as a, "prophet of beauty".<sup>1</sup>

Another memorial plaque to Hardwicke was placed in the chapel of Uppingham School.

The parishioners of Crosthwaite honoured their former vicar, in June, 1924, when a tablet of Borrowdale green slate, designed by Mr. Atholl Weeks, the Director of the K.S.I.A. and made by Mr. W. Bromley of Keswick, was unveiled and dedicated. The tablet design consisted of the emblems of St. Kentigern, the bell, tree, fish and bird, with the rose of Carlisle in three panels at the bottom. The simple inscription which remembered both Hardwicke and Edith, contained the words, "Who battled for the true, the just".

Dr. Sir George Adam Smith, the Principal of Aberdeen University, officiated at the ceremony and gave a Dedicatory address in which he described Hardwicke as,

"So busy a servant of public and national causes ... never more loyal or more unsparing of himself in his attention to private and individual needs - of the child; the youth; the sick; the dying and the mourner."

Christ was the centre of his life. The hymns sung at the service were both written by Canon Rawnsley, "Lord God! our praise we give/For lake, and sea, and mountain." The second hymn was sung at the end of the service, "Now has come the Eventide".

Outside the church, amid the beautiful scenery, a Keswick lady who wished to remain anonymous, had covered his grave with a gorgeous array of scarlet oriental poppies, toned down with white clematis, sprays of white broom and green foliage, as a token of her "affectionate regard."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Herald*, the 27 October 1923

<sup>2</sup>*The Herald*, the 21 June 1924

Thirty one years after his death, Canon Rawnsley was remembered again, at two commemorative services for the centenary of his birth, the 28 September 1851. The first one was held on the Saturday morning, in the Rawnsley Assembly Hall in Keswick School, when Mr. Bruce Thompson of Ambleside, the Northern Area Secretary of the National Trust, spoke of Canon Rawnsley, as the driving force behind the formation of the Trust, of which he was Honorary Secretary until his death. The Headmaster, Mr. C.K. Lloyd, presided and pupils of the school recited some of Hardwicke's sonnets.

A large congregation, with Mrs. Rawnsley present, attended the Sunday morning service at Crosthwaite Church. The lessons were read by Mr. Tom Wilson, who had been a member of the Canon's Bible class, and Mr. Lloyd. Hardwicke's hymn for St. Kentigern's Day was sung. The sermon was preached by Reverend W.R. Burnett, who had been one of the Canon's curates. He chose for his text, favourite words of Hardwicke's which he used constantly, i.e. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true ...".<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Burnett stressed throughout his sermon that Canon Rawnsley's life was spent in striving for the good, beautiful and true. He ended by saying, " ... the finest living memorial to him was in the hearts of those who knew and loved him and cherished his ideals and who were the better for his life and influence."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Philippians Ch 4, vs 8, A.V., quoted in full on p233, when Hardwicke used them at his last sermon in Crosthwaite Church

<sup>2</sup>*The Herald*, the 6 October 1951