CHAPTER V

1888-1892

MANCHESTER WATER SUPPLY. ROCK OF NAMES. COUNTY COUNCIL. MEMORIAL TO GOUGH ON HELVELLYN. ILLNESS. LIFE OF BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN.

Farewell! the dear irrevocable shore!
Dark firs, and bluebell copse, and shallowing bight!
Stern Raven Crag is cheated of its height,
Gone is the bridge the Romans crossed of yore;
The stately wain—with Benjamin before,
The pack-horse string, now fade from Fancy's sight,
The "Rock of Names" has lost its guardian right—.
Where poets met for tryst, they meet no more!

Yet have we compensations for the wound—
The wound too deep for any time to heal—
Clear on the mounded water's ampler breast
Helvellyn stands more gloriously confest,
And Peace secure can walk the mountain ground
Love consecrates to serve the common weal.

Thirlmere, "Loss and Gain."

HARDWICKE had gradually come to be looked upon as the watch-dog of the Lake District, and successive schemes which he felt likely to injure its natural beauty were continually the means of spurring him to action. No matter, great or small, which affected

the Lake Country or the wellbeing of those who dwelt in it, failed to rouse his interest—his eager support if the project seemed to him to be good, or his tireless opposition if the scheme did not commend itself to him. Though naturally he was not always successful in his opposition, he was quick enough to seize the moment when some ameliorating advantage could be pressed, and so often gained concessions which considerably mitigated the drawbacks of the original proposal. A dam on the Duddon River, the opening of a quarry on Loughrigg, a proposed coach road on the southern shore of Rydal Water, the closing of the path to Stock Ghyll Force, were among the schemes which he combated with ardour during his first decade at Crosthwaite.

In 1885 the Manchester Corporation began its work of turning "shapely Thirlmere into tanks." Hardwicke sadly realized that the needs of the great city must be met, but it was a real grief to him to see the raw soil embankments scarring the sides of the fells, to know the loveliness of outline of the sedgy margin of the lake must be lost for ever, that the quiet footpaths threading the valley-pastures—described by Matthew Arnold in his poem "Resignation"—must be flooded, that the old bridge at the Narrows would be known no more. Then came the news that the "Rock of Names," the trysting-place of the poets, that

Upright mural rock of stone
Moist with pure water trickling down—

was to be broken up and the stone used for the walls

of the waterworks. On this rock were graven the initials of six friends, poets all—

> Meek women, men as true and brave
> As ever went to hopeful grave.

Wordsworth, the tallest of the party, had cut his initials the highest, then came those of his affianced bride, Mary Hutchinson, next those of the "dear, dear sister," Dorothy Wordsworth, followed by the initials of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson.

Hardwicke obtained leave from the Corporation's committee to move the rock bodily, but though he took the best masons from Keswick to see if this could be done, it was found to be impossible from the nature of the stone, which was lava and volcanic ash, either to move the rock or to cut away and preserve even its face. A year later, on hearing that it had been blown up by dynamite, Hardwicke and Edith went to the place and searched for the fragments, which they carefully collected, returning another day for further search "to make sure we had missed none." Four men from Keswick were engaged, and under Hardwicke's direction they built the fragments into the cairn which now stands on the east side of the road, at a much higher level than the original site of the rock, but as nearly as possible exactly above it.

The construction of the road on the western side of Thirlmere, which the Corporation had undertaken as compensation for the doing away with the bridges and ford from Dalehead to Armboth, was opposed

in 1889 by the Lake District Defence Association, on the ground that it was unnecessary and a destruction of natural scenery; but throughout the many battles with the Corporation in which he was concerned, Hardwicke maintained excellent personal relations with the chairman and committee of the waterworks; and when the great day came, October 12th, 1894, and the water was turned on to flow to Manchester, he was asked to open the proceedings with prayer, and later was called upon to propose the toast of the waterworks committee. After mentioning with regret the removal of old landmarks, he felt able to add:—"There was a time when every Manchester man was looked upon as a Vandal or worse, but those who have been brought into communion with the tender kindness of Manchester in this particular part of England would remember not only how generous and unselfish and considerate she has been, but how they could trust her in the future to help in the battle for preserving the beauty of this land of the lakes." No less than four commemorative sonnets by Hardwicke were circulated among the throng, including that at the opening of this chapter. He had many tussles later with the Corporation, and in the interests of the public gained many modifications of their policy.

In the autumn of 1888 Hardwicke had consented to stand for election as representative for the Keswick division of the County Council, then about to be first formed. There was keen contest for the seat, for which there were four candidates. His friends

rallied round him, realizing his pre-eminent qualifications for the post in his knowledge of men and affairs, his abnegation of self and self-interest—votes, too, were given him for other reasons. Former acts of neighbourly kindness were recalled; had he not carried the baby up the street for one tired mother, shouldered a sack of coals for another, and prescribed and sent medicine which cured a third? There was great excitement in the town; feeling ran high, and the bells were rung when it was announced that the Vicar was elected at the head of the poll. For the next six years all his resources of courage, good sense and energy were poured out unsparingly in the service of the Council. He promoted action with regard to tuberculosis and contagious diseases among cattle. He pressed strongly for the first dairy school, and for the experimental station for the testing of manures which was established at Keswick. He urged that measures should be taken to prevent the poisoning of fish—in the Greta and elsewhere—by washings from the lead mines, and did his utmost to get the rivers restocked. He tried hard to establish a County Medical Officer of Health who would strengthen the hands of the local officers. He served on six committees on the Council, and for some years was chairman of the Highways and Bridges Committee, which gave him opportunity of seeing, not only that the repair of many footpaths was undertaken, but that the paths were duly defined by signposts—an action which caused considerable controversy. The maintenance and upkeep of the roads was a special

interest, and necessitated endless journeys to Carlisle and throughout the neighbourhood for their inspection, and much intercourse with the representatives of the Manchester Corporation in connection with the roads at Thirlmere.

In 1895 Hardwicke's seat was contested. A good deal of friction and misunderstanding had arisen over a telegraph installation to Borrowdale, which, coupled with the fact that a strong stand had been taken by him against the granting of a licensé to sell intoxicating liquors to the proprietor of the Keswick Pavilion, and the line he had taken with regard to the closing of public rights of way, had set certain sections of the townspeople against him. He lost the seat, and when the new County Council met to appoint aldermen he was not returned to office. This rejection was, for the moment, a keen disappointment, but he was quick to realize that it was possible to influence a Council without being a member of it, and the leisure gained by his release from attendance at innumerable meetings was quickly absorbed by other interests of his crowded life. During his six years of devoted service on the Council he had gained experience, and of this he was able to make even fuller use as a free-lance.

Letters of regret and sympathy poured in from his late fellow-councillors and friends, and in April 1895, a testimonial, consisting of a beautiful piece of silver wrought at the Keswick School of Industrial Arts, was given to him with a book of signatures of many friends and an address which stated: " As representative of Keswick, and also as Alderman,

we recognise that the ability with which God has so abundantly endowed you has been placed entirely at the disposal of the public with extraordinary zeal and self-sacrifice . . . these services will long be remembered with gratitude."

During the summer of 1890 Miss Frances Power Cobbe was a visitor at Keswick, and she and Hardwicke found they had much in common. Together in 1894 they combated the scheme for a railway up Snowdon, he being the writer of letters which appeared in the press and were described by a contemporary as "eloquent laments over this disturbance of the sleep that is among the lonely hills." He wrote also to interested persons, but the opposition was not successful and the railway was made. One private individual who had been approached stated quite plainly that he "could only regard Canon Rawnsley's epistles as the sickly sentimental dribble (canonised) of a dreamer and a faddist."

Hardwicke shared all Miss Cobbe's anxieties about the closing of certain rights of way in the Dolgelly district; and though later he modified his views, he was to a certain extent in sympathy with her in her campaign against vivisection, and joined with her in urging that right teaching on kindness to animals should be more general. He preached vigorously and directly against the abuses of vivisection, on the cruelties of rabbit-coursing as practised at Crosthwaite in 1893, and spoke and wrote constantly, urging the necessity for the better

protection of wild birds, and in protest against the iniquity of 'murderous millinery.'

The story of that 'Rizpah among dogs,' who in 1805 watched for three months beside the body of her dead master, Charles Gough, above Red Tarn on Helvellyn, the subject of poems by Scott and Wordsworth, moved Miss Cobbe to suggest that "some record of that heroic little creature should be placed where passers-by might see it and ponder." Leave was obtained from the lord of the manor by Hardwicke, and together he and Miss Cobbe planned the inscription on the simple stone slab which, on a sultry June day in 1891, was dragged on a sledge to the ridge of Helvellyn, above Striding Edge, and set up to record for future generations the death of Gough and the faithfulness of the dog, giving the lines from Wordsworth's poem "Fidelity."

> The Dog, which still was hovering nigh,
> Repeating the same timid cry,
> This Dog, had been through three months' space
> A dweller in that savage place.
>
> How nourished here through such long time
> He knows, who gave that love sublime;
> And gave that strength of feeling, great
> Above all human estimate!

From 1890 Miss Cobbe became a constant correspondent. She greatly valued Hardwicke's sympathy, and in 1903 wrote to a friend:—"How the good Canon did 'draw me out' the other day, and how I fell into his kindly trap, a little intoxicated by the memory of the bright days in which I lived (not vegetated) as now! I have often thought that

the most refined mental pleasure in life is to be, if but for a little while, in intellectual intercourse with a mind which one feels all the time—not merely accepts on memory—to be greater than one's own, and from which drop simply, in the course of talk, grand thoughts which make one inwardly bow one's head in honour and admiration."

In the winter of 1890 the increasing rush of work again had the inevitable result. A letter came from a far-seeing fellow-townsman just after Hardwicke was stricken with serious illness at a friend's house near London: "I want to tell Mr. Rawnsley something which at present is on my mind. From the beginning of the County Council I have always felt sorry the electors sent him there. There is not the slightest doubt he was the best candidate—we had four—but he was worked and working enough, without taking a further load on his shoulders. But he was also anxious to serve his fellows, and this painful illness is one of the rewards of the over-strain he is putting upon a not too strong physical constitution. I hope he may live to learn that he can better serve the good interests of the people by preserving his life as long as he possibly can. It would be a bad day for Keswick that would see the present Vicar of Crosthwaite and his wife as leaving tenants. Although he may have felt it very desirable that he should see for himself all that was being done in the cause of technical education at the inception of any scheme, it was vastly more important that he should conserve his strength to guide efforts in the right way afterwards."

For some days Hardwicke's condition was precarious. Three doctors met in consultation, and eventually his old friend, Dr. Percy Kidd, went in to deliver an ultimatum to him. "The oracles are agreed," he began. "Very unlike oracles," came in a weak voice from the bed, but improvement had set in and was maintained. The next three months were spent in Egypt, the direct outcome being the compilation of a book *Notes for the Nile*, published in 1892—and a complete recovery of health and vigour, proved by an extract from Edith's diary written shortly after their return home—"Hardwicke with choir to Ullswater, and up Helvellyn, and on to London in the evening."

The death of the Bishop of Carlisle, Harvey Goodwin, in December 1891, took from Hardwicke a much loved and greatly honoured friend. At the end of the following year he was asked by the Goodwin family to undertake the writing of a life of the Bishop. His book of poems, *Valete*, was in the press, and the *Literary Associations of the English Lakes* was still on the stocks, as well as a revision of Jenkinson's *Guide to the Lake District*. In spite of this, during the summer and autumn of 1893 and throughout the following year, whenever there was leisure, he worked at the *Life* of the Bishop, and the book was published in 1896.

That in the midst of his busy life Hardwicke was able to devote so much time to literary work was due to the fact that he never wasted his spare moments. No experience was complete for him until he had crystallized the thought of it into words and those

words were on paper; his was emphatically 'the pen of a ready writer.' When once he had thought out a subject, whether it was sermon, or poem or article, the pen was put to paper, or if by good luck he could find an amanuensis he would, with his eyes shut, dictate sentence after lucid sentence, which needed little, if any, correction.

And this was certainly the course preferred by his correspondents, for his handwriting was hardly rivalled in illegibility by the most literary of his friends! When occasionally his own writing did reach the newspaper offices his copy spread terror, and several editors stipulated that his contributions must be type-written. One of his curates recalls that when left in charge at Crosthwaite during Hardwicke's absence, he received a postcard from the Vicar which he entirely failed to decipher. Two words baffled him; he read them 'Monday morning,' but that made no sense with the context. The message was marked 'Urgent,' so he hurried off to the veteran Keswick printer and journalist, who knew the Vicar and his writing well—to see if he could help. Bakewell studied the postcard with care, and finally pronounced the words to be 'larch plantation.' Knowing the Vicar's varied interests, it was agreed this might be possible, but still it threw no light on the meaning of the message, so in desperation the curate telegraphed for a translation, and the answer arrived, 'missionary meeting!'

The postal authorities did their best, but when a friend was married in Exeter Cathedral, the con-

gratulatory sonnet sent by Hardwicke with injunction to the verger that it should be handed to the happy pair as they left the vestry—did not reach them, because the postcard on which it was written bore only the Christian name of the bridegroom and was addressed to the wrong cathedral!