



Minety

Newspaper reports relating to the feud between Henry Hibberd and W T Perry Keene

TESTIMONIAL

A meeting of agriculturalists and others, the friends of Mr Hibberd, of Braydon House, and formerly of Reading, was held on Thursday last, at the Old Inn, Minety, at which they presented that gentleman with a valuable silver tankard, in token of their high estimation of him as a fellow parishioner, and of his conduct generally amongst them during his residence in that neighbourhood. The tankard, which is of exquisite workmanship, weighs 28¼ ounces, and bears the following inscription: - "Presented to Henry Hibberd, Esq., by the parishioners of Minety, as a token of regard and esteem for the kind and gentlemanly manner in which he has conducted himself during his residence at Braydon House."

Salisbury and Winchester Journal 2 April 1859

To the Editor of the Wiltshire Independent

Sir, -- You will do me a favour by inserting the following in your next publication, as I wish the true circumstances to be known attending the presentation of plate to Mr Hibberd, which took place on Thursday, 17th, with the avowed purpose of annoying and trying to bring discredit upon the character of a clergyman, who has deserved very different treatment.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, W T K Perry Keene Minety House, March 21st 1859.

Sir, -- A more disgusting or degrading event has seldom taken place, than has just been enacted in the parish of Minety. A piece of plate has been presented to a person who, having been of little more than two years resident in the parish, receives it for the merit of having been the supposed cause of driving a clergyman from his flock, where he has, for upwards of 14 years, been endeavouring to teach his parishioners their duty towards God and their neighbour. And what are the circumstances that have occasioned this vindictive feeling towards the Rev Gentleman? Forsooth, the building a School, and the repairing a Church, that was in a most dilapidated and deplorable condition. I have this as the chief reason, in the writing of one of the prime movers in this vicious desire to throw odium on one who does not deserve such treatment. I am proud to say such is not the feeling of the majority of the parish, and particularly the poor, upwards of 90 of whom subscribed and presented Mr Tuson with a piece of plate, which will be an honour for him to exhibit, while that given to Mr Hibberd must in his heart tell him, represents virulent malice and inveterate hatred; -- and what credit can this bring upon either those who have given or him who has received it?

Most likely Mr Hibberd will at Godalming (where it is said he is now going to live) represent this piece of plate as having been given him for teaching the farmers of Minety a new system of agriculture, as he once told me, in presence of a witness, that he had received a purse of 40 sovs for teaching the people of a place he had lately come from (Warminster, I believe) how to cultivate their land.

In conclusion, I call upon Mr Charles Brown, who is a Dissenter, and Mr Jonathan Cole (I know not what he is) to give the names of and the amount subscribed by the parishioners of Minety, as I believe very few of them have given towards this very disgraceful affair.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, W T K Perry Keene Minety House, March 21st 1859.

Wiltshire Independent 31 March 1859

To the Editor of the Wiltshire Independent

Sir, -- I will thank you to allow me space for a few words in answer to a letter which appeared in your last week's paper, signed "W T K Perry Keene."

Perhaps it does not deserve an answer, or perhaps a letter written in such a style, and in such spirit, may be thought a sufficient answer to itself. After the compliment, however, which has just been paid me by the parishioners of Minety, I feel bound to protect them from the very untruthful and ridiculous charges brought against them by Mr Keene.

In the first place, I may say that no resident in the parish ever exhibited a vindictive feeling towards the clergyman he refers to, on account of building schools or repairing churches. His unpopularity arose from very different causes, as reasonable persons will imagine.

As to the subscribers to the testimonial, I was informed by the gentlemen who acted as collectors (and I was much gratified by the information) that many poor men and poor women came forward with their little offerings in the most spontaneous and hearty manner; indeed, one of the collectors said, "I believe seventeen out of every twenty among the poor in Minety would have subscribed if Mr Keene had not prevented them by threats." Another also stated that he called on 75 householders in Minety parish, and that 70 of them subscribed. Now, considering that nearly every respectable man in the parish joined in the testimonial, I think it rather too barefaced for Mr Keene to say he believes "very few of them have given towards this very disgraceful affair."

Mr Keene then informs your readers that I am about to reside at Godalming, which is as accurate as the rest of his statements, and that he once heard me say I had received a purse of 40 sovs for teaching the people at Warminster how to farm. How a man can be so ridiculously untruthful I can hardly imagine. It is quite true that I did once receive such a testimonial in another county, and felt very proud of it, but I will venture to predict that Mr Perry Keene never had a similar compliment paid him, for farming, or anything else requiring the exercise of common sense, or of proper conduct towards his neighbours.

As to Mr Cole, I will leave him to speak for himself, or rather the whole neighbourhood of Minety for him, and Mr Charles Brown too, who, although he is a "dissenter," is Mrs Perry Keene's uncle, and therefore entitled to better treatment at the hands of his ill-tempered nephew, even if he doesn't get it. Mr Keene lays some stress on the fact that the parishioners of Minety have done me this honour, although I have lived only two years among them. Well, I think it a significant fact too, but it merely shows that he, who succeeded to the property of his uncle, a rich tradesman in the parish, many years

ago, has failed to conciliate the good feelings of his neighbours to the extent of one who has resided there on his own property for a short time only.

Hoping Mr Keene's friends will take proper care of him,

I remain, Sir, yours obediently,

H Hibberd

Pickhurst Lodge, April 2

[With this letter the correspondence must cease. Ed. W I]

Wiltshire Independent 7 April 1859