

II.—THE CONTENTS OF A NORTHUMBERLAND MANSION 1772.

By SIR EDMUND CRASTER.

Valuations for probate are not usually entertaining, but the one which forms the subject of this paper has its interest in that it is a peculiarly detailed inventory of the effects of a country squire who died in the early part of the reign of George III. Some account has been given of George Craster in a recent volume of *Archæologia Aeliana*,¹ and it is sufficient to say here that he was a gentleman of fashion who divided his time between London, Paris and the North; that he had made the Grand Tour; and that he was a widower, having lost his wife two years before he himself died on May 9th, 1772. He had recently completed the Georgian block that forms the main portion of Craster Tower. He was mildly addicted to country sports and was a keen gardener.

The "Inventory of the Bedds, Bedding, Householde Goods and Furniture late belonging to George Craster late of Craster Esquire Deceased at Craster House in the County of Northumberland" was drawn up and signed on June 3rd, 1772, by two Newcastle tradesmen—George Lowes, a cabinet-maker, and Bartholomew Kent, an upholsterer. Their valuation amounted to £640 4s. 4d., and was supplemented by a list of the contents of the butler's pantry, appraised at £33 7s. 1d. All went to form part of George Craster's personal estate which he left, after payment of debts and legacies and subject to annuities, to his cousin, John Wood of Beadnell.

The contents of the various rooms in the house are taken in order, starting with the dining-room. It was the mahogany

¹ *A.A.*,⁴ XXXI, 32-46.

age, and the dining-room was furnished with four mahogany tables of varying size and twelve leather-bottomed chairs. Chippendale's receipted bill for one of the pieces of furniture in this room—a mahogany kettle-stand—is still at Craster. A large Turkey carpet, valued at £15, covered the floor, and a painting of flowers and fruit hung over the mantelpiece. On the other side of a central lobby lay the breakfasting room, now called the front library, having in it a couple of mahogany breakfast-tables, a mahogany card-table with a box of fish-counters, four mahogany chairs with hair bottoms, and oval mirrors on the walls. Polished grates, each with fender and fire-irons, valued at £3 3s. or £3 10s., were in these two front sitting-rooms and likewise upstairs in the three principal bedrooms.

Behind the breakfasting room was the library, with blue silk damask curtains in the windows. It had the globes (two terrestrial and two celestial) that no self-respecting library could at that time be without. Otherwise it seems to have been used as a bed-sitting-room; for how otherwise to account for the mahogany clothes-press with drawers below (£5 10s.); the mahogany washingstand; and the settee, stamped linen bed and curtains, mattress and two pillows with covers, feather-bed, bolster, pillow, three blankets and white quilt, the whole weighing 3 st. 4 lb. 12 oz. and valued at £10? There was a mahogany writing-desk (£4) and a handsome inkstand (15s.) for correspondence, and a backgammon table (£1 1s.) for amusement. The travelling canteen box (£10 10s.), travelling writing box (5s.) and travelling medicine chest (£3 3s.) marked the seasoned traveller. The contents of the gun-room seem also to have been emptied into the library; witness

Four double barrelled guns and three single barrelled guns (£21); one brass blunderbuss and two carbines and five cutlasses (£4 4s.); one large powder flask, one large shot-bag and three smaller bags (£1 10s.); a complete set of Lisbon drinking horns and five other drinking horns (7s. 6d.); and one box with musket balls and small shot (5s.).

Three Italian silk umbrellas (15s.), a box with nets and seeds (10s.), and "a curious print of a piece of plate found at Corbridge in Northumberland", in other words the well-known engraving of the Corbridge Lanx (3s.), complete the multifarious contents of this room.

There is no mention of any bookcase. We know however that there was one, and that it had six shelves, with a cupboard below in which pamphlets and manuscripts were piled. The library had been formed by George Craster's father, John Craster, bencher of Grays Inn and at one time member of Parliament, and consisted in the main of current literature which he began to buy about 1725 when he was thirty, and continued to collect until his death in 1763. George Craster added very spasmodically to his father's library, but appreciated it sufficiently to create it an heirloom which should accompany the Craster estate. For that reason no valuation was necessary, but "an Inventory or Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts contained in the Library of George Craster Esquire deceased at the time of his death" was taken on June 4th, 1772, the day after the completion of the main inventory. It records, apart from the contents of the cupboards, 340 works of which eighty to ninety are now gone, but sufficient remain to show the general nature of the library and the tastes and character of its collector. North-Country history, for example, is represented by Spearman's *Enquiry into the Ancient and Present State of the County Palatine of Durham* (1729); by Bourne's *History of Newcastle upon Tyne* (1736); by Drake's *Eboracum* (1736) and by Nicolson's *Leges Marchiarum or Border Laws* (1747). Of the manuscripts, fifteen in number, the most important were heraldic, for they included copies of Jenyns' Roll and of the visitations of Northumberland and Durham made by Flower in 1575 and by St. George in 1615; but both they and the pamphlets have long disappeared. These last are, on the whole, vaguely described, and the list of them includes such tantalizing entries as "a bundle of old plays etc." and "original poems in sheets". Items of local interest were a

bundle of north-country road acts, the Northumberland poll-book for 1747, and the Durham pollbook for 1761.

The lobby or passage between library and dining-room stood empty of furniture, but on its walls hung a large map of the city of Venice (£1 11s. 6d.) and two frames of coats of arms (£2 2s.) which are clearly the lost "Craster Tables" described in *Archæologia Aeliana*, 2nd ser., vol. XXIV, pp. 244-256.

Mounting the stairs one came to two floors of bedrooms, and first of all to the best bedroom, which is now the drawing-room. The others are described respectively as the brown stuff worked room, Mr. Craster's room, Mr. Askew's room, the bedchamber with two beds, Mr. Courtois' room, and Mr. Wood's room. Mr. Askew and Mr. Wood were George Craster's cousins; Mr. Courtois was his French or Swiss valet. Each bedroom contained, as a rule, a bedstead with mattress, feather-bed, three blankets, a bolster, a couple of pillows and quilt—sheets being listed separately under household linen. It had a dressing glass in a mahogany or a japanned frame; a mahogany dressing-table, corner table and occasional or "spider" table; a night table; a mahogany clothes-press or else a chest of drawers; three to six mahogany chairs with worked or horsehair seats, or, failing them, rush-bottomed chairs; a white stoneware washbasin and small jug (here called a bottle) and a chamberpot. The window curtains were usually chosen to match the bed. Those of the best bedroom were of green stuff damask; those in Mr. Craster's room were crimson silk damask.

A linen chest stood in the first floor gallery, and a five-shelved linen press and a large cedarwood chest in the gallery on the second floor. Household linen is not inventoried, but is known from lists made four years before to have included diaper damask table napkins; fine breakfast napkins and diaper breakfast cloths; damask tablecloths, of which one is described as sprigged and bordered, one as of basket pattern, a third as bearing the royal arms of Scotland, and a fourth as having Mrs. Craster's arms, namely Sharpe quartering Cart-

wright, each with a dozen or so of napkins to match. These all still remain at Craster. There were also doylies, diaper and huckaback hand-towels, fine Holland sheets and pillow-slips; to say nothing of common linen such as servants' sheets, round towels, waiters' napkins, teacloths for washing china, knifecloths and the like.

The cedarwood chest held a variety of toilet covers, one described as of crimson shalloon (but, alas, the moths had got at it), another as white worked gauze with lace at the bottom; white muslin covers for the fronts of toilet tables; a counterpane elegantly quilted with silk, priced at three guineas; spare window curtains of worsted stuff or chintz or printed linen, some of them in red and white or blue and white check; red and white check chair covers and cushion covers; and more besides.

From the front of the house the inventory passes to the back regions and takes first the housekeeper's room. Here in a large press was kept the Staffordshire ware—a tureen and dish, oval dishes, fish strainers, soup plates, sauce boats, compotiers of various shape for fruit at dessert, patty pans, egg cups, mugs, flowerpots, teacups and saucers, and custard cups. Here too were delf baking dishes and a miscellaneous lot of china. But the best china services were not in the housekeeper's charge. A list made of them four years earlier shows that they included a large blue and white dinner service; a tea set with the Sharpe and Cartwright arms; a tea and coffee service described as landscape pattern; and a third tea set given as partridge pattern, this last being Sèvres china, with partridges and kingfishers painted by the bird-artist Alonde in 1762. All four services are still in the family's possession.

Before closing the doors of the large press, one must not forget to mention its more perishable contents—twelve small pots of sweetmeats of various kinds (£1 16s.), a bottle of mushrooms and a bottle of mushroom powder (1s.), a bottle of capers (6d.), and two pounds of chocolate and half a pound of tea (12s.). Tea was still an expensive drink.

And this leads on to the little press. The contents of each of its dozen drawers are faithfully recorded. Here they are with their prices: (1) Vermicelli, 5s. (2) Hartshorn shavings and isinglass, 6d. (3) Rice and (4) ground rice, 6d. (5) 3 lb. of almonds at 10d. a lb. (6) 8 lb. of starch at 6d. a lb., and 1 lb. of stone blue, 6d. (7 & 8) 3 st. 5 lb. of hard soap at 6d. a lb. (9) Morellos and truffles, 15s. (10) 2 lb. of common raisins at 4d. a lb. (11) 4 lb. of jar raisins at 9d. a lb. (12) 3 lb. of sago and 3 lb. of pearl barley, 6s.

When the valuers came to a little closet and found in it a large jar of East India sweetmeats of different sorts, a smaller jar of tamarinds, a small jar of small limes, another of cedrate and orange, a bottle of green limes and a paper with dried cherries, their patience for a time failed them, and they omitted to give prices; but they dutifully valued a drawer of various sorts of seasonings at 10s., a drawer with 4 lb. of macaroni at 3s., and a drawer with shelled barley at 6d. Their eyes fell next on a large red cupboard with drawers below containing hardware, on a little medicine closet in the wall, and on a white-painted linen press (£3); and they listed, along with a number of miscellaneous utensils, a hamper containing ten French dried tongues, valued at £1, and a box of biscuits (5s.). In this room, too, was dumped Mr. Craster's chest of working tools (£2 2s.), for he was an amateur joiner.

Passing on from the housekeeper's room into the kitchen, one came in sight of a large plain "tree" table (£1 5s.), an eight-day clock (£4), and the kitchen jack with its two chains and two weights, pulleys and cords (£3 3s.). All the superior kitchen utensils—the teakettles, saucepans, stewpans, chocolate pots, coffee pots, moulds for blancmange, ladles, warming pans—were of copper. Others, as for instance the half-dozen moulds in the shape of fishes and the four bird moulds, were of tin. And one may infer from the inventory that the servants had their meals served on pewter dishes, ate off common pewter plates, drank their beer out of tin mugs, and lighted their way to bed with tin flat candlesticks. Leading

out of the kitchen was a back kitchen, with more copper kettles, timses or sieves for bolting flour, washing tubs and sundry small brewing utensils. Washhouse, brewhouse and bakehouse surrounded the kitchen court. The bakehouse still had its coal rake, breadshovel, breadboard and kneading trough; but it is probable that Mr. Craster had already converted its oven into a furnace for heating the greenhouse that he had built on the other side of its south wall.

The servants' hall lay next to the back kitchen and opposite the housekeeper's room. It was a bare room, apart from its large table, form, elbow chair and six other chairs. The few articles of service in it included a stand for brushing coats, three shoe brushes, a buckle brush, a clothes brush, and a three-leaved clothes horse. Two leather jacks for drawing beer from the adjoining beer-cellar were valued at £1 5s. Stairs led up from the servants' hall to the maid-servants' room which had two beds in it; to the housekeeper's bedchamber with its bed and campbed, and to the men-servants' room in which Mr. Redhead the butler slept with three underservants. The women and the butler had featherbeds laid on straw mattresses; the other menservants had to be content with flock. In the attic overhead was an apple chamber, and in it two boxes of candles, namely 10½ dozen tallow candles valued at £3 13s. 6d. and 12 shillings worth of wax candles. Here also were a spinning wheel, a portmantua (which we now call portmanteau), two pairs of saddlebags, white leather and black leather trunk straps, and a quantity of cord for tying up trunks.

At this point the valuers left the servants' quarters and returned to the Tower bedchamber which lay over the best bedchamber. It was used as a lumber room. The things of chief value in it were six elbow mahogany chairs with red and white check covers (£9), a large looking glass (£5), and a large mantelpiece glass with a gilt frame and picture at the top (£2 15s.). The side saddle near by must have belonged to Mrs. Craster. There was fishing and picnicking outfit—hampers, fishing creels, round and oval baskets, camp chairs,

and a parcel of fishing rods and canes. An old backgammon table stood on the floor. There were two sets of maps by the well-known map-makers, Moll and Senex; maps of North America, Paris, London, and the Carlisle road; maps of Northumberland by Warburton, Cay and Armstrong. "A box to hold spices fit for a housekeeper" was valued at 8s.; but the valuers, meticulous though they were, thought it unnecessary to put prices on two boxes with a variety of sea-shells or on a bottle of wine lees. They went on to list pictures and prints; a disappointing lot, among which they were most struck by one in a handsome gilt frame, showing a variety of game, and this they valued at three guineas. The picture of a negro boy and two mulattos (10s. 6d.) is identifiable as a copy, still at Craster, of a Murillo painting of peasant boys that hangs in Dulwich Gallery. There was a painted landscape for a chimneypiece, and three Chinese painted landscapes. Among the prints were views of Rome and of palaces in Naples, picked up on Mr. Craster's travels, and two prints of the Radcliffe Library at Oxford which had come to him from his father.

A few days earlier the valuers had gone through the butler's pantry. They started on the glass and went on to the silver. But, as with the china, the best of the silver plate was not included, possibly because it had been left packed up at Mr. Craster's town house in Pall Mall. Most of it had come to him from his wife's parents. We know from other papers at Craster that the largest pieces were an epergne, complete with eight saucers and four candlesticks, weighing 264 ounces, which Mr. Craster left to his godson, George Askew; a tureen, cover and dish (171 oz. 15 dwt.); and a large "tea-table" or tea tray (132 oz. 10 dwts.). These and a good deal besides were not inventoried. But the valuers found much else to enumerate. They ploughed their way steadily through 78 items; counting as they went, the china handle and silver handle knives and forks used in the dining-room and the white handle and horn handle knives and forks used in the servants' hall. And they did not forget to

mention a Cheshire cheese, a single Gloucester and a Roquefort, valued at £1 18s. 4d.; and a Cheshire cheese, a double and a single Gloucester, and a Roquefort, which were in use at the time and therefore not priced.

And last, but not least interesting, come Mr. Craster's clothes. No prices are put on them, but, as it is seldom that one comes on so complete a record of an eighteenth century gentleman's wardrobe, we will give the list in full. Every single article is recorded.

First Shelf. One green palliasse and one red Polanese do. Piece of cotton for waistcoat border, gold and green. Half silk mourning waistcoat, silver border. Coat, waistcoat and two pair breeches of black velverette. Half mourning silk waistcoat, silver border. One black velvet coat, two do. silk waistcoats. Silk Pompadour suit embroidered with silver. Spring velvet suit, gold buttons. Gold do. do. White shag velvet for a cloak.

Second Shelf. Crimson velvet suit with two pair breeches. Flowered silk waistcoat with gold ground. Light-coloured suit, silk laced. Two summer light coloured waistcoats, gold and silver, the other gold striped. Highland maud.

Third Shelf. Blue flowered silk mourning gown. One pair Manchester black velvet breeches. Gobelin scarlet gold embroidered waistcoat. Cotton waistcoat, embroidered gold, green and crimson. White silk waistcoat embroidered with gold and flowers. Silver ground do. do. with do. and do. Stone coloured coat with gold lace.

Fourth Shelf. Two black velvet hoods. One pair do. do. breeches. Black coat and waistcoat, one satin waistcoat. Black silk waistcoat and breeches. Green suit and gold lace. Green Nottingham waistcoat, gold lace.

Fifth Shelf. Pair black shag knit breeches. Suit, stone coloured cotton, velvet silver Brandenburg. Do. Gobelin scarlet, gold buttons, white cotton lining. Do. grey and gold lace with two pair breeches.

All the above and aforesaid clothes in the mahogany press. Mahogany press drawers as follow.

Eleven pairs white silk stockings. Eight pairs raw do. do. Five pairs black do. do. Five pairs coloured coarse silk do. Six pairs fine thin white worsted do. Three hair bags and one rose do. One pair thread stockings. Three shirts, plain ruffles. Nine fine shirts. Eight common do. Eighteen cambric and one muslin stock. Six pairs mignonette ruffles. Two pairs point do.

with narrow lace for borders. Three pairs lace do. and two pairs of new. Five pairs net do. Nine pairs mourning muslin ruffles. Seven pairs half do. do., fringed border do. Four pairs half mourning net ruffles. One pair work muslin do. Three pairs cambric do. Thirteen India handkerchiefs and six do. do. Two half-dozen do., different sorts. Twenty red India do. Four white linen do., red borders. Ten do. cambric do. Four muslin neckcloths. Black stock and black neckcloth. Five double nightcaps, one single one. Two string do. do. One pair jet buckles and three do.; one gold stock buckle, in a shagreen case. One pair silver shoe and knee buckles. Dressed steel and gold sword and carriage. Mourning do. and do.

In the left hand, drawer. Eight pairs drawers, flannel gown, two pairs woollen stockings.

Hat and case on the press head. An oiled silk great coat. Bandolier. Eight pairs shoes, three pairs pumps, one pair clogs, and one pair strong boots. One pair gaiters, one pair plated spurs. Seven pairs yellow and two pairs red slippers.