

ART. XVI.—*The Griffith family: Wordsworth's kinsmen.*

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IN the early letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth the names "Mr Griffith" and "the Miss Griffiths" occur fairly often. Professor Ernest de Selincourt rightly identified these persons as cousins of their mother, but no general account of them has appeared hitherto. Papers preserved in America, augmented and clarified by records in England and Scotland, make it possible to trace the family in some detail from its Cumberland origins.¹

I.

Gabriel Griffith, its founder in the North, was a son of Roger Griffith, of Beaumaris, Anglesey.² About 1695 or before he married a daughter of Thomas Hunter, attorney, of Roosecote, near Barrow-in-Furness.³ She

¹ Ernest de Selincourt, ed. *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, Oxford, 1935, *passim*; hereafter *E.L.* For much of the information in this article I am indebted to the unflinching generosity of Messrs. C. Roy Hudleston (Durham), John Wilson (Halifax), Alfred Ferguson (New York), Robert Griffith Page, M.D. (Chicago), and T. D. Shepherd (Penrith).

² Among Dr Page's papers (hereafter P.P.) is a pedigree, copied by Gabriel's son Eaglesfield on 3 March 1722, which reads as follows: "Gabriel Griffith son of Roger Griffith of Bewmaris in Anglesey Gent: Son of Griffith of Caycurriog in y^e Parish of Ruabon in y^e County of Denbigh Gent: Son of John, Son of David, Son of Jehan, Son of Lleyuryn, Son of David, Son of Deicws, Son of Deio of Llanerch Rugog in Ruabon aforesaid, Lineally Descending from Kenerick ap Revallon a Nobleman of Bromfield, Lord of Whittington &c: The said Revallon was Son of Dingatt Son of Tudor Trevor Earle of Hereford &c. Kenerick ap Revallon Bore Armes — Ermins a Lyon Rampant Sable." There is no evidence that Gabriel was the Gabriel Griffith, *pauper puer*, of Abergele, Denbigh, who matriculated at St John's College, Oxford, aged 15, on 28 November 1673. (Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*)

³ In a letter to his son Thomas, dated 3 May 1721, he said: "Your Mother Was Born at Rouscroat near Peel in Lancashire. She was daughter to M^r Thomas Hunter Attorney at Law whose Mother Was a Rawlinson from Craythwaite [Graythwaite Hall, near Hawkshead] first Cosen to the late S^r W^m Rawlinson In Chancery Lane Whose Daughter Married to one Ayslaby Nigh Rippon in Yorkshire, and she Burn'd in Red-Lyon fieldes the Child was Saved by M^r King & my self S^r William's oth^r Daughter Married to M^r Lowder S^r W^m Dy'd at Hendon near London/ M^r Hunter Your Grandfather Married One Hardman [of] Lancaster The family all Extinct Saving he that was Mayor of Portsmouth Last Year a very rich man & now alive. Your Moth^r & he were Broth^r & Sister Children." (P.P.) Gabriel was clearly proud of his connection with Sir William Rawlinson (1640-1703), whose daughter Anne, wife of John Aislaby (1671-1742), of Studley Royal, near Ripon, died in a fire at a house in present Red Lion Square, London, on Christmas Day, 1701, and whose daughter Elizabeth

died not long after bearing a son, Thomas, and on either 10 or 11 March 1696/7, when he was living at Carlisle, he married at St Nicholas Church, Whitehaven, Grace, daughter of Richard Eaglesfield, of Allerby, Collector of Customs at Carlisle.⁴ By his second wife he had three known sons, Eaglesfield, Robert, and Gabriel, and a daughter, Grace, whose birth-places and birth-dates have not been determined.

While he lived at Carlisle he was presumably a gunner at the Castle, for he was styled "tormentarius" when Thomas and Eaglesfield were admitted to Carlisle Grammar School on 7 September 1701 and 7 February 1703/4 respectively.⁵ He found time, however, for a side interest: on 23 November 1698 the Dean and Chapter granted "M^r Gabriel Griffith master gunner" the lease of "a house near the Castle wth had lay waste sev^{ll} years," foregoing the annual rent of 9s. because he "intended to erect a manufacture for employing the Poor."⁶

married in 1687 William Lowther, son of Sir John Lowther, of Lowther. The child-whom Gabriel helped to rescue was William Aislabie (1700-1781). (DNB; Venn, *Alumni Cantab.*; *Gent. Mag.*, May 1781, p. 243).

⁴ Caesar Caine, *The Churches of Whitehaven Rural Deanery*, p. 30; *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society*, Vol. 74, p. 176; Bishops' transcripts for St Bees, at Carlisle. Richard Eaglesfield (b. 1642) was a son of Thomas Eaglesfield (18 March 1618—2 March 1656), of Allerby, and his wife Judith (bur. Brigham 18 January 1692/3), daughter of Thomas Fairfax (d. 1640), Rector of Caldbeck. On 25 October 1665 he married at Bridekirk Bridget, daughter of Lancelot Fletcher, of Tallentire Hall. Richard and Bridget had, besides Mrs Griffith, the following children: Richard, who sold the Allerby estate to Richard Lamplugh, of Dovenby; Thomas (d. November 1699), a collector of excise at Newcastle upon Tyne; Bridget, wife of Henry Shaw; Jane, wife of George Smith; Dorothy, wife of Alexander Blackstone; Katherine, unmarried in 1699; and Robert, admitted to Carlisle Grammar School on 19 February 1699/1700. A Griffith pedigree (see note 2) confirms 1656 as the year of Thomas Eaglesfield's death, so given under "Eaglesfield of Allerby" in Dugdale's *Visitation of Cumberland* in 1665. Col. Francis Haswell's MS. notes to this volume are the authority for the dates of Richard Eaglesfield's marriage and Mrs Judith Eaglesfield's burial, and for the sale of Allerby. Lancelot Fletcher's career is sketched in Venn, *Alumni Cantab.* The names of Richard Eaglesfield's children were found by Mr Hudleston in the son Thomas' nuncupative will at Durham. The son Robert's admission to Carlisle Grammar School is noted in the school register.

⁵ Register of Carlisle Grammar School.

⁶ These premises were No. 54 Finkle Street, described as a "Parcel of waste ground formerly a Burgage & Garth adjoining the Castle orchard on the N. Long. 26 yds 2 feet Lat. 25 yd." On 2 June 1737 the lease was renewed in favour of Gabriel's son Eaglesfield at a reduced rent of 8s. after "Mr Griffith" (father? son?) paid thirteen years arrears of rent on 27 May. (Dean & Chapter of Carlisle Leases Book 1672, f. 109; Carlisle Rental or Catalogue of Leases 1685, f. 24.)



GABRIEL GRIFFITH (I) *c.* 1700.

Artist unknown; from a miniature owned by Robert Griffith Page, M.D., of Chicago, and reproduced by his kind permission.

In obtaining this lease he may have been helped by William Nicolson (1655-1727), Archdeacon of Carlisle and Rector of Great Salkeld since 1682, who mentions him from time to time in his diaries.⁷ On 10 July 1702, a month after Nicolson was consecrated Bishop of Carlisle, Griffith dined with him at Great Salkeld, and again on 4 March 1702/3. Soon afterwards Nicolson removed to Rose Castle, and on 22 March he received "a present of Glasses, &c. frō Mr Griffith." On 12 May Griffith stopped at Rose *en route* "for York." When he returned on 25 May, Nicolson observed with satisfaction: "(at last) Mr Griffith with two of my Lord A.B.'s [Archbishop's] sermons from York." On 30 December "Mr Griffith and's wife" were dinner guests at Rose and spent the night there.⁸

In 1704 Griffith's father-in-law, Collector of Customs since 19 December 1695, fell into difficulties and was threatened with ouster, apparently because he was a Non-conformist.⁹ On 31 March Nicolson noted: "Young Mr Eaglesfield with a Letter from's father; full of Jealousies of being supplanted and turn'd out by R.A. [Recorder Aglionby]." Deciding to conform to the Test Act, the elder Eaglesfield presented himself "at the sessions at Carlile" on 26 and 27 April, and, Nicolson wrote, "At M^r Eaglesfield's takeing of the Test, I explain'd the meaning of Communion; and had a very Satisfactory Ans^r from him." A visit which Nicolson reported on 29 August may have been inspired by Eaglesfield's troubles: "Mr Griffith brought his mother Eaglesfield, who walk'd most of the way frō Carlile [about six miles]; & (not weary'd) footed it to my Br^s and design'd to return in like manner tonight."¹⁰

Whether Eaglesfield was suspended from his duties is

⁷ Nicolson's cousin, Thomas Brisco, was married to Jane Fletcher, a sister of Gabriel's mother-in-law. (CW2 i 2; N. & B. ii 204.) Jane's brother, Henry Fletcher, married Thomas Brisco's sister.

⁸ CW2 ii 170, 193, 194; xlvi 195, 196, 212.

⁹ Mr Hudleston has found that he was an elder of the Carlisle Presbyterian Church in 1692/3.

¹⁰ *Cal. Treas. Books*, x, pt. 3, 1262, 1413; CW2 xlvi 221; l 118; ii 205.

not certain. He was buried at St Mary's Church, Carlisle, on 28 January 1705, and on 31 January 1705/6 Joseph Sewell was appointed "Collector of Carlisle loco Rich. Eaglesfield dismissed [deceased?]." In the upshot, Eaglesfield's accounts were found deficient, and his sureties Gabriel Griffith and Alexander Blackstone (another son-in-law) petitioned the Surveyor General of Crown Lands on 30 April 1706 for a stay of process against themselves until they had examined his arithmetic. It may or may not have been in this connection that Nicolson was consulted on 23 August 1708 by "S^r Alexander Rigby (and two more great Officers of y^e Customs in Scotland, Mr Mure and ye Laird of Loggan) attended by M^r Griffith and Alex^r Blaikston."¹¹

Little has come to light about Gabriel's remaining years at Carlisle. On 9 January 1710 his son Eaglesfield was re-admitted to the Grammar School. An entry in Nicolson's diary for 2 February reads: "M^r Griffith, complaining ag^t young Thomas for ill Treatm^t on D^r Sach^s acc^t." Thomas was probably not Gabriel's son of that name, then a lad about fifteen, but a fellow-townsmen. As the son-in-law of a Nonconformist Gabriel may have spoken against the Rev. Henry Sacheverell (1674?-1724), a prisoner of the House of Lords since 14 January for having denounced the practice of occasional conformity.¹²

Sometime before 1721 Gabriel left Carlisle for Scotland, signing himself on 3 May of that year "Master Gunner and Barrack Master of Edinburgh Castle."¹³ At Edinburgh on the following 9 July a marriage licence was issued to "John Allane Glas-grinder in S.E. parish and Grace Griffeth Dau^r to Gabriel Griffeth Barrack master of the Garrisons of North Britain Now Resideing in the Castle of Edinburgh."¹⁴ Gabriel died before 14

¹¹ Register of St Mary's Church, Carlisle; *Cal. Treas. Books*, xx, pt. 3, 560, 634; CW2 iv 38.

¹² Register of Carlisle Grammar School; CW2 xxxv 121; *DNB*.

¹³ See note 3.

¹⁴ Parochial Registers, County of Edinburgh, Marriages 1705-1729, Vol. 683, f. 46, Registry House, Edinburgh.

April 1750, when his son Eaglesfield was granted admittance to a freehold at Carlisle "on the death of his father."¹⁵ His wife was living on 4 November 1734.¹⁶ It is not known whether she predeceased her husband, and neither their wills nor their burial places have been discovered.¹⁷

II.

Thomas Griffith, Gabriel's son by his first marriage, settled at York, possibly as a tanner.¹⁸ On 1 May 1721, while living at Darlington, he married Dorothy Colling, of Brafferton, Co. Durham, at neighbouring Great Stainton.¹⁹ Two days later his father sent congratulations and advice as follows:

Dear Son: I have reced your's, by this time I perceive you are in a Marriage State God in his Infinite Mercy guide guard and direct you both thro' the Course of this Mortall Life, or state and Grant that you may Live A Godly Peaceable Life together. Draw Equall in Your Yokes and sett God before your Eyes in all your actions. So will you not ffail of his Blessings — But if you forgett that most Weighty Matter Your Endeavours will not Prosper You must be ffrugal now in the Budd and Blossom of your Day's and Double your Dilligence till you be affore-hand with the World and Have a Care how you Contract Debts for the Goal [*sic*] Gates are open to None but the Simple and Lavish Man be sure you be Bound for No man that's the Way to Pennury and Sorrow of Heart, Be affable to your ffrinds, and Utter not many words But lett your Thoughts be your own. Beware of Ill Company and by all Means suffer not the rib or Wife of your Bosome once to see you Drunk, ffor Drunkenness bereaves you of your Senses and is Generally the first stepp to Distruction. God Keep you Both

¹⁵ Griffith Papers at the Bankfield Museum, Halifax; hereafter G.P.

¹⁶ A Bible belonging to Gabriel's son Gabriel, printed at Edinburgh in 1729, contains the inscription: "The Gift of my Dear Mother Mrs Grace Griffith to Her son Gabriel Griffith November 4th 1734." (P.P.)

¹⁷ The portrait of Gabriel reproduced in this article was painted probably about the time of his marriage to Grace Eaglesfield, when double-peaked wigs were in fashion.

¹⁸ He may have been the Thomas Griffith, tanner, of Edinburgh who on 14 December 1718 married at Edinburgh Janet, daughter of Alexander Herriot, of Prestonpans. (Register of Marriages, Edinburgh, 1701-1750, Registry House, Edinburgh.)

¹⁹ Boyd's MS. Index of Marriages, County Durham (at Newcastle upon Tyne).

in his ffaith ffear and Love and Lett my Blessing be thrice
Commended to your Wife and tell her she shall not want the
prayers of her Affectionate ffather in Law—

Gab^l Griffith

Master Gunner and Barrack Master of Edenburgh Castle²⁰

For a time this Polonius-like counsel was well heeded. Thomas acquired real estate in Marygate, York, and a farm with cottages in adjoining Clifton. But by 1743 his affairs seem to have grown tangled, for he was then lodged at York Castle, probably as a debtor, and there he died, a prisoner, in 1751.²¹

His obligations to creditors notwithstanding, on 13 July 1743 "Thomas Griffith of the Castle of York, gentleman" joined "Robert Colling of Darlington . . . gentleman" and his daughter Margaret Colling in a pre-nuptial agreement by which Thomas promised to convey to his son William Griffith "a considerable Tanyard" in Marygate which was to set up William in business when he married Margaret.²² On 6 December of the same year, while he was still an inmate of the Castle, he made a will confirming "the Settlement by me lately made to my son William Griffith on his marriage" and leaving to his wife Dorothy all his property "either in possession reversion redemption or expectancy and all my estate right benefit and equity of redemption in or to the land or any part thereof."²³ From this language it is a reasonable inference that Thomas was imprisoned for failure to satisfy a mortgage or mortgages.

Whether the tanyard passed unencumbered to William

²⁰ P.P. The letter was addressed to Darlington. For the postscript see note 3.

²¹ An entry in the register of St Mary's Church, Castlegate, for 1751 reads: "Thomas Griffith, Prisorinor from y^e Castle was Buried 10: Nov^r." (Original Parish Register Transcripts, Deanery of York, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.)

²² G.P.

²³ An executrix' bond of £200, posted by "Dorothy Griffith of St Marygate . . . widow and William Griffith of St Marygate . . . Tanner" on 7 December 1751 speaks of "Thomas Griffith late of the city . . . of York but at the Castle of York (having Bona Notabilia) Gentleman deceased." An inventory of the personalty showed effects worth £107. 6s. 1d., but when the will was proved on 10 January 1752 these were rated at under £40. (York Wills, Vol. 96, f. 5, Borthwick Institute.)

and his wife is uncertain. They prepared, at all events, to sell it on 17 September 1746 to Leonard Colling (presumably her brother), but the sale was not concluded, and the tanyard remained in William's hands until his death.²⁴ This occurred in 1753.²⁵ As his will, signed on 23 May of that year, refers to his wife as Mary, not Margaret, and as the will of Margaret's mother, dated 6 October of the same year, makes no mention of her, it may be guessed that she had died sometime before and William had remarried.²⁶ There were no children by either marriage, as far as is known, and when William's mother died in 1772, her property passed to her niece Hannah Law, spinster — evidently a Colling kinswoman.²⁷

Through good management William cleared his father's property of debt and, when he died, possessed it in his own right. As a result, what should have gone to his mother if his father had been solvent was for him to devise — the farm at Clifton and, besides the tanyard, real estate in Marygate. Accordingly, when he made his will, he gave his wife a legacy of £200 and an annuity of £40 charged against one of his parcels in Marygate; and he bequeathed to his mother a legacy of £100, an annuity of £30 charged against the farm, and a house in Marygate. Bequests to other persons, totalling £175 and charged against the farm, were to be paid after his mother's death. Being childless, he left the fee simple of what he had not otherwise bequeathed "unto my

²⁴ The sale was to be by means of lease and release. There are tax stamps on the lease, but no signature, and the release is missing. (G.P.) The will of Robert Colling (1671-1746), of Darlington, dated 1 May 1744, speaks of "my daughter Margaret Griffith" and "my son Leonard Colling." (Robert Surtees, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, iii 408; Durham Wills.) Margaret Colling was probably a relation of her husband's mother.

²⁵ He was buried on 15 September at St Olave's Church, York. (Original Parish Register Transcripts, Deanery of York, Borthwick Institute.)

²⁶ The will of Dorothy Colling (1687-1773), widow, proved on 19 February 1773. (Surtees, iii 408; Durham Wills.)

²⁷ She was buried at St Olave's on 25 November. (Original Parish Register Transcripts, Deanery of York; York Wills, Vol. 116, f. 387, Borthwick Institute.)

Cousin William Griffith the Son of Gabriel Griffith of Whitehaven" when he should become of age. Then, reflecting that this William might not reach twenty-one, he added as alternates "Thomas Griffith the Elder Brother of the said William" and, in succession, their brothers Peter and Gabriel and their father "my Uncle Gabriel Griffith of Whitehaven," whom he named his sole executor and his cousins' trustee and guardian during their nonage. Finally he directed his uncle Gabriel "to carry on the Trade at my House and Tan yards in Marygate" and desired that any of his cousins entitled to inherit from him should "continue to follow and carry on the said trade of tanner at my dwelling house." A few months later, being "in a weak state of health," he revoked by a codicil dated 1 August the legacies to his wife and his mother, increased the legacies to others by £266, and appointed Thomas Marfit, of York, merchant, to be "a Trustee to assist my Exōr."²⁸

The complications which arose from this testament, involving Wordsworth's father and grandfather, will be dealt with farther on.

III.

Eaglesfield Griffith, Gabriel's eldest son by his second marriage, adopted his father's vocation, becoming an artilleryman. Sometime before 1731 he married Dorothy (b. 4 March 1703), daughter of William Gilpin (1657-1724), of Scaleby Castle, and his wife Mary (bapt. 1654), eldest daughter of Henry Fletcher, of Tallentire Hall.²⁹ By that year they were living at Edinburgh, and Dorothy's nephew, Joseph Dacre Appleby, junior, of Kirkclinton, went there "to attend classes, having the advantage of an uncle in the regiment then in the Castle;

²⁸ The will with the codicil was proved on 28 September 1753. On the same day "Gabriel Griffith of Whitehaven . . . Merchant and Francis Bacon of the city of York apothecary" posted an executor's bond of £1,000. (York Wills, Vol. 97, f. 304, Borthwick Institute.)

²⁹ William Jackson, ed., *Memoirs of Dr Richard Gilpin . . . by the Rev. Wm. Gilpin*, p. 47 and tipped-in genealogical table.

& remained under the protection of his uncle & aunt, Major & Mrs Griffiths [*sic*], during the winter."³⁰ In 1737 Eaglesfield appears to have taken over the lease of land in Carlisle which his father had purchased.³¹ When the clans rose in 1745, he commanded the loyal artillery at the battle of Prestonpans. Wounded in the action, he was captured by the rebels and carried to Perth, where Dorothy nursed him "with every tenderness she could exert." The insurrection put down, he went to London "to solicit payment for some stores which he had purchased in his own name for the service of the government." Nothing came of this journey but more expense, "which, added to his other imprudencies, entirely broke up his affairs."³²

His improvidence and his wife's long-suffering nature were characterized as follows by her nephew the Rev. William Gilpin (1724-1804), the celebrated describer of landscape:

Dorothy had a harder life [than her sister Anne], a great part of which was only one continued example of resignation, & suffering piety. She was married to a gentleman of the name of Griffith, an artillery Officer, and brigade Major in Edinburgh Castle. He was barrack-master also; & had an income, which might have been a handsome support with economy: but economy was a virtue with which he had no acquaintance. Two persons indeed could hardly be less equally matched. Tho' he had his virtues, he was at the same time loud, boisterous & passionate; given much to swearing, jovial, profuse, & extravagant. She was mild, gentle, pious, domestic, generous, & yet frugal. He always *professed* a great regard for her; and *shewed* it by reducing her to extreme necessity. Nothing however could subdue the tenderness of her affection for him. It was founded on a sense of duty.³³

Eaglesfield's money troubles may have eased temporarily in 1750 when, at his father's death, he inherited

³⁰ Jackson, p. 47. The next spring Appleby escaped death by yielding to Dorothy's premonitions (which Eaglesfield could not discourage) that he would drown during a fishing trip.

³¹ See note 6.

³² Jackson, p. 45.

³³ Jackson, p. 45.

freehold and leasehold property in Carlisle. Evidently needing cash, on 9 May of that year he sold the freehold to his brother Gabriel and assigned to him one lease granted that day by the Dean and Chapter and another granted by the Mayor on 14 April.³⁴

His conviviality is implied, his loyalty to a Hanoverian ruler vouched for, by a diploma awarded him the following year:

At Edinburgh — The Twenty-first Day of January, One thousand Seven hundred and Fifty one years. In a Meeting of the Revolution Club

The which day Compeared Eaglisfield Griffith, Major-Gunner of the Castle of Edinburgh, and humbly desired to be admitted a member of the Old Revolution Club, and having declared the grateful sense he has of the Deliverance of these Kingdoms of Great Brittain & Ireland from Popery and Slavery, by King William and Queen Mary of glorious and immortal memory & for the further security of our Religion & Liberties by the Settlement of the Crown upon the Illustrious House of Hannover & his zealous attachment to his Majesty King George the Second, and our present happy Constitution in Church and State; we do admit the said Eaglisfield Griffith, a member of the said Club. In Testimony whereof these Presents are signed by our Clerk and our Seal Appended thereto.

David Forbes³⁵

He did not enjoy this membership very long. By a decree of the Commissaries of Edinburgh dated 30 April 1755 "Dorothea Griffith, widow, the only executrix" was appointed on 6 May to administer the effects of Eaglesfield Griffith, "Gunner in the Castle of Edinburgh," and scant they proved to be, with a value of less than £40 sterling when appraised.³⁶ Dorothy died sometime after 1769, at "an advanced age," assisted by "a small pension with some little kindnesses from her friends," and living

³⁴ See note 6. The Mayor granted Gabriel admittance on 11 October. The Dean and Chapter licensed the assignment on 23 November and granted him a new lease on the same day. (G.P.)

³⁵ P.P.

³⁶ The inventory contains such pathetic items as "an old family Picture," "a green waistcoat gold mounted," and "two punch bowls one of them cracked." (Edinburgh Testaments, Vol. 115, Part 2, Oct. 4, 1754—Dec. 19, 1755, Registry House, Edinburgh.)

with her Gilpin relations.³⁷ Eaglesfield and Dorothy had no children.

IV.

Robert Griffith, another of Gabriel's sons by his second marriage, also resided at Edinburgh, as a clerk in the excise office at the Castle. On 31 August 1740 he married at Edinburgh Mary, daughter of the late John Hamilton, of Bute, clerk.³⁸ He died there sometime in 1754, clerk to the comptroller of the excise office, and on 9 May 1755 his widow was confirmed as the only executrix.³⁹ She died before 15 December 1794.⁴⁰ They had two children, Grace and Eaglesfield. Grace married an officer named Foreth who served in the German emperor's army. They once lived "at Glina in High Germany." By 30 April 1796 she was believed dead.⁴¹

Eaglesfield was born in 1746.⁴² After spending some years in London, apparently as a merchant in Lombard Street, on 14 December 1786 he married at Kelso Jane (1754-1799), daughter of the late John Waldie, of Hendersyde, Roxburghshire.⁴³ Their children were Robert (13 July 1788 at Kelso — 24 August 1844 at London) and Jane (2 February 1790 at Edinburgh — 11 July 1804 at Cross Bank, near Kendal; unmarried).⁴⁴

Eaglesfield was a man in comfortable circumstances.

³⁷ On 23 April 1769, a few days after the death of her sister Susanna, wife of Joseph Dacre Appleby, her brother John Bernard Gilpin wrote: "As to my poor sister Griffith as she has lost her chief support I have given her an invitation to make my house her own." (Jackson, 45, 50.)

³⁸ Register of Marriages, Edinburgh, 1701-1750, Registry House, Edinburgh.

³⁹ Edinburgh Testaments, Vol. 115, Part 2, Registry House, Edinburgh.

⁴⁰ *Decennial Indexes to the Services of Heirs in Scotland*, ii (1750-1799) 22 (of the years 1790-99).

⁴¹ Facts given in her brother's will.

⁴² Date inferred from the record of his burial.

⁴³ *Newcastle Courant*, 23 December 1786; tablet commemorating her in Hawkshead Church.

⁴⁴ Memorial tablet in Hawkshead Church; correspondence (1899-1900) of John Thomas Griffith, M.D., with Manuel Eyre Griffith, of Philadelphia, in P.P. Robert married Rebecca Rowe, of Martlesham, Suffolk, by whom he had three sons: Robert Eaglesfield (1 March 1820—6 February 1869), John Thomas, M.D., (9 February 1823—15 August 1903), and Alfred Rawlinson (4 January 1829 — died in the 1860s near Nashville, Tennessee). John Thomas Griffith had three sons: Lt-Col. Edward Hugh (wife Frances; daughters Rosalyn; Barbara, married 25 June 1925 to Dr Leslie C. Cooke; and Gwen), Arthur Eaglesfield, and Herbert.

While living in London he bought in 1782 a piece of Edinburgh real estate, "Hamilton's Land & Garret," lying at the head of the Canongate on the south side. He cleared these premises in 1791 and put up a four-storey building with ground-floor shops. In 1791 he purchased a house in Homes Closs, also near the top of the Canongate. Recovering on a bond for £2,000 in 1793-4, he obtained a tract of land (Blebo and Nydie) on the River Eden in Fifeshire, renting for £100 a year.⁴⁵ The inventory of his estate shows that he also owned two bonds, one for £750 and one for £300, dated 1789 and 1792 respectively.⁴⁶

His will, signed at Edinburgh on 28 March 1794, left his wife an annuity of £100 (in accordance with an agreement drawn the preceding day), his daughter a legacy of £1,500 (if she married; £300 if she did not), his sister a legacy of £100, and his son the remainder of his estate. He also provided that if his son did not live to be twenty-one, the son's share was to go to "my Cousin German Robert Eaglesfield Griffith merchant in Manchester."⁴⁷ As both his children were then under legal age, he appointed as their guardian his wife and her brothers-in-law Alexander Chatto, of Mainhouse, near Kelso, and William Rawlinson, of Graythwaite Hall, Lancashire. By a codicil dated 30 April 1796 he made his daughter a full heir in case his son died, displacing his cousin Robert, and revoked the bequest to his sister.⁴⁸

Eaglesfield died at his house in Antigua Street, Leith, on 20 January 1797 and was buried in the yard of the West Kirk (St Cuthbert's), Edinburgh, on 25 January.⁴⁹ His widow did not survive him long. She died on 23 June

⁴⁵ Edinburgh Borough Register of Sasines, Vol. 69, f. 75 v. and Vol. 99, f. 1, Registry House, Edinburgh; National Library of Scotland, MS. Charters 1068, Edinburgh.

⁴⁶ Edinburgh Testaments, Vol. 130, Part 2, Registry House, Edinburgh.

⁴⁷ The youngest son of his uncle Gabriel Griffith, of Whitehaven.

⁴⁸ Register of Deeds, Vol. 269, f. 368 v., Registry House, Edinburgh.

⁴⁹ Newcastle *Courant*, 28 January 1797, which describes him as "formerly a resident in this town"; *Monthly Magazine*, March 1797, p. 249; Register of St Cuthbert's, Registry House, Edinburgh.

1799 at Graythwaite Hall and was buried at Hawkshead Church.⁵⁰

On their last years a few letters addressed to her brother George Waldie (1756-1826), of Newcastle and Hendersyde, throw occasional light. In the summer of 1792, when she was recovering from gout, they intended to visit Graythwaite Hall. They went to Kelso for her mother's funeral in July 1795, but in August 1797 she was again in ill health and depressed by her husband's death, and her sister Catherine wrote from Graythwaite:

I had a letter from my Sister Griffith . . . and was very concern'd to find by it that her health and Spirits were both so indifferent she seems to think of removing to Newcastle and Boarding in some Family — I think her going there a good Plan, but to be as a Boarder she will find uncomfortable I endeavourd to diswaide her from it, and have a house and garden to herself, or whether Kelso would not be as likely a Place for her — she seems to have no resolution to set about the dispose of her Furniture and seems quite dispirited, I cannot wonder much at it, her lameness and confinement is really disheartening and must of Course hurt her Health, she has an inclination to go to Bath again this Season, that I also wished to diswaide her from and to try another winter without it . . . I proposed to her to come and spend the winter with us — and if she had still an inclination in the Spring to go to Bath she was quite in her road here. I am truly sorry for her situation and would be glad if it was in my Power to render her any service or Comfort — her naturally anxious temper makes her worse.

Acting on Catherine's suggestion, Mrs Griffith went to Kelso that autumn and then, seemingly, to Graythwaite.⁵¹

Her son Robert attained his majority on 13 July 1797 and the following day proved his father's will as the "only Executor dative." On 17 July he received title to his father's real estate in Edinburgh, seisin of the land in Fifeshire having been presented to him on 18 May.

⁵⁰ Newcastle *Courant*, 29 June 1799; memorial tablet in Hawkshead Church.

⁵¹ *Gent. Mag.*, January 1826, p. 94; letters addressed to George Waldie, Esq., 2 January 1792—25 November 1799, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

He was then living at the Market Cross, Edinburgh Pier, Leith. His occupation has not been ascertained.⁵²

V.

Gabriel Griffith, a third son of Gabriel by his second marriage, established himself at Whitehaven as a merchant.⁵³ On 31 May 1740 he married at Newton Reigny, Ann (1713-1778), daughter of Thomas Cookson (1676-1721), mercer, of Penrith.⁵⁴ They had nine children, all born at Whitehaven: Grace (6 April 1741), Ann (23 May 1742), Thomas (9 August 1743), Eaglesfield (7 November 1744), William (27 January 1745), Elizabeth (13 November 1747), Peter (30 April 1749), Gabriel (3 June 1752), and Robert (24 December 1756). Eaglesfield died on 11 January 1746/7, Peter on 17 February 1754. Both were buried at Whitehaven.⁵⁵ Thomas, William, and Gabriel are lost sight of after the mid-1770s. Of the others something will be said later. On 8 November 1775 Gabriel Griffith, "late a Merchant at Whitehaven," died in Bull and Mouth Street, London. His widow died of consumption at Whitehaven and was buried there on 26 May 1778, aged sixty-five.⁵⁶

As a businessman Gabriel flourished, then failed, the crisis occurring some twenty years after his marriage. At one time or another he had a hand in a fishery, town property, coal mines, brass and iron works, and several farms. From 1752 to 1754, as a member of the Whitehaven Fishery Chamber, he was involved in a dispute with the authorities of the Isle of Man regarding the right

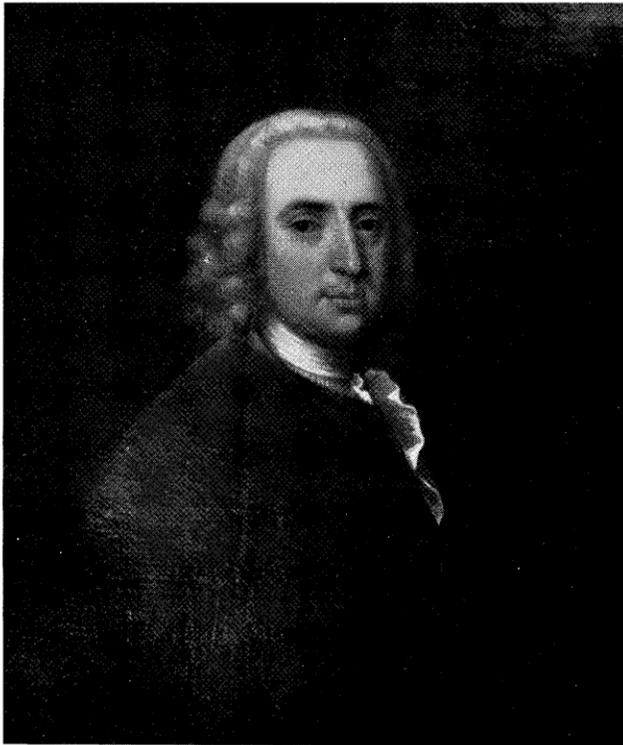
⁵² *Decennial Indexes to the Services of Heirs in Scotland*, ii 22 (of the years 1790-99); *Edinburgh Testaments*, Vol. 130, Part 2; *Edinburgh Borough Register of Sasines*, Vol. 99, f. 1; *National Library of Scotland, MS. Charters 1068*.

⁵³ If the Bible given him by his mother (see note 16) was presented on his twenty-first birthday, he was born in 1713.

⁵⁴ *Register of Newton Reigny*; P.P.; "Cookson-Crackanthorpe" in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. Under her father's will Ann was to receive £400 on her marriage. (*York Wills*, Vol. 76, f. 111, *Borthwick Institute*).

⁵⁵ P.P.; *Register of Holy Trinity Church, Whitehaven*.

⁵⁶ *Newcastle Covenant*, 11 November 1775; *Holy Trinity Church, Whitehaven, Parish Register*.



GABRIEL GRIFFITH (II) 1759.

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MRS GABRIEL GRIFFITH (II) 1759.

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of Whitehaven boats to take herring in Manx waters.⁵⁷ Having obtained freehold and leasehold lands at Carlisle in 1750, he bought a house at Priest Gate, Workington, on 24 December 1754.⁵⁸ About 1755, in conjunction with his Whitehaven acquaintances James Spedding and Spedding's brother-in-law William Brownrigg, M.D. (1712-1800), he invited Robert Maxwell (1695-1765), a Scottish specialist in agriculture, to visit Cumberland and advise him how to improve his two farms. Maxwell declared that one of these, Widop, a freehold two or three miles east of Egremont and bordering Lowther Park,⁵⁹ could support from 1,500 to 2,000 sheep, provided Gabriel could buy up the rights to common pasture of the adjoiners. Gabriel wanted the other farm, a "company farm" of seventy acres lying perhaps near Egremont, to be conditioned for maintaining "thirteen or fourteen Horses, so many being necessary" for his "Iron Work and the labouring of the Ground." Maxwell's recommendation was to sow clover plentifully. "I know that you are cautious and careful," he wrote, "and that you want to be fully satisfied of the Reasons for, and Practicableness of every Thing you are concerned in . . . It was, therefore, lucky you are inquisitive; for by your Advice from *London*, which you showed me, you are informed that even the small white Clover . . . is far preferable to natural Grass in all Respects." With a bow to a man of consequence Maxwell concluded: "You promote Praise-worthy Industry by Example; you employ People by Sea and by Land, in your Mines, and at your Brass and Iron Works: Their Wages being duly paid, their Wives and their little Ones bless you, their Prayers are heard, and you are happy and delight in the Music of your Hammers and Anvils."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ William Serjeant, "A Whitehaven—Isle of Man Fishing Dispute in 1753," CW2 lvii 174, 177.

⁵⁸ G.P. and see note 34.

⁵⁹ This is clearly not the Lowther Park in Westmorland, but one shown on the Ordnance Survey map as lying about two miles east of Egremont.

⁶⁰ Robert Maxwell, *The Practical Husbandman* (Edinburgh, 1757), pp. 248, 268, 273-290, 304-317; *DNB*. The site of the foundry has not been determined. The mines were at Workington.

Meanwhile, on the death of his nephew William in 1753 Gabriel, as executor, had to supervise William's property at York. On 25 March 1757 he let part of it — Almory Yard and Little Ings, in the parish of St Olave's — for fourteen years; and on 12 February 1761 he let the tanyard in Marygate for twenty-one years.⁶¹ As his son William, William's heir, was only sixteen (if living) in 1761, Gabriel no doubt received the rents as his guardian and trustee.

Within two years and for reasons unknown Gabriel's affairs declined. By January 1764 "Gabriel Griffith and Robert Ross of Whitehaven, merchants" (a firm) were bankrupts, and by the next month Gabriel himself was one.⁶² To accommodate him, on 13 July 1766 his brother-in-law William Cookson (1711-1787), mercer, of Penrith, bought from his assignees the properties at Carlisle and Workington for £320 and £405 respectively. Either then or later, furthermore, Cookson appears to have assumed Gabriel's obligations to a Mr Watson (£1,500) and a Mr Smith (£372. 10s.) and to have given the assignees a promissory note for £200.⁶³

During the next four years Gabriel made efforts to redeem these properties. On 17 March 1770 he wrote to Cookson from Whitehaven:

Dear Bror,

Mr. Lewthwaite tells me to day that Mr. Brockbank⁶⁴ has orders to write to every Body who has anything to pay for Mr. How . . . Pray let not that give you any fresh uneasiness. I

⁶¹ His nephew William Threlkeld (d. 1801), of Halifax, was one of the witnesses to the signing of the second lease, which contained the clause: "Whereas the Mayor and Commonality of the City of York as Trustees for the Citizens Inhabitants of Bootham Ward or otherwise have threatened to break down the fences of the said parcels of Ground called the Little Ings and the River Bank alleging and claiming a right of Common or Pasture therein which said claim the proprietor of the said Grounds under whom the said Gabriel Griffith holds the same is resolved to a contest at Law or in Equity if the same shall be necessary . . ." (G.P.; *Halifax Journal*, 26 December 1801.)

⁶² *Gent. Mag.*, January 1764, p. 47, and February 1764, p. 99.

⁶³ G.P.; J. F. Haswell, *The Registers of St Andrew's Parish Church, Penrith*, v 231.

⁶⁴ Perhaps Miles Brockbank, of Whitehaven, dealer and chapman, a bankrupt by February 1789 (*Gent. Mag.*, February 1789, p. 186).

have the money engaged in a double way at London if I consent to it here. But it[']s agreed for here [...] Mr. Wall of Workington takes the Workington house & Mr. Fletcher the Carlisle [...] You may depend upon it you shall not have any trouble with either of them. I wish the Dividends were near [...] I am afraid they are not, until all . . . are settled, which is the Business Mr. How is gone to London about. I had my Nephew['s] Letter Lately [...] It[']s our Determined Resolution to pay you £50 Before you go to London. I have wrote to my son abt. it & will send you my Bill for it before you go. Please tell me when you sett out. How will waite on you at London & assure you of payment — was the Rent but once begun to be paid you'd find a Regular payment yearly. I have nothing more at Heart than to do so but have many things to strugle with at present. I have not received one shilling of rent.

I am D. Bror. your Affte Bror.

Gab Griffith⁶⁵

By July it was still uncertain whether Gabriel could raise the wherewithal to buy back the houses, and on the fifteenth Cookson wrote from Penrith to his son-in-law John Wordsworth (1741-1783), attorney, at Cocker-mouth :

Dr. Sr.

The inclosed Letter I recd from Mr Lewthwaite & observe the contents [...] I writ to Mr Griffith to know his final resolution abt. the two purchases whether he really had the money ready or not & expected his answer by first return of Post [...] I writ to Mr Lewthwaite that I would get the money against the time and that he should not be disappointed. You may send the letter back. Your afft. Friend.

Willm Cookson

⁶⁵ Lewthwaite, probably John Lewthwaite (1701-1790), of Whitehaven, was one of Gabriel's assignees, the others being (John?) Gale (1716-1768) and (John?) Wilkinson, of Whitehaven. How was almost certainly Peter How, merchant, of the same place, who became a bankrupt by December 1763 and who with his partners John Younger and John Wilkinson failed in January 1766. How and Younger were members, like Gabriel, of the Whitehaven Fishery Chamber. Wall and Fletcher had evidently agreed to rent the Carlisle and Workington houses from Cookson. The dividends and rents which Gabriel was expecting were perhaps from his coal mines at Workington, discussed below. The son in London was probably Thomas, and the nephew who wrote the dunning letter was no doubt Cookson's son Christopher (1745-1799). (G.P.; Mr Timothy Cockerill; Ashworth P. Burke, *Family Records*, pp. 257-8; *Gent. Mag.*, December 1763, p. 620, and January 1766, p. 47; Serjeant, p. 174; "Cookson-Crackanthorpe" in Burke's *Landed Gentry*.)

What sum Cookson was expecting to remit to Lewthwaite, for what reason, and by what date are not clear. On 4 August, in any case, Gabriel's assignees paid Wordsworth for Cookson a dividend of £302. 1s. 6d., less £200 (the amount of Cookson's note to them); and on 10 August Cookson received from Wordsworth "the sd. promissory Note and also one hundred & two pounds one shilling & sixpence the Ballance in Cash." But Cookson's ownership of the houses at Carlisle and Workington ended on 2 November, when Gabriel signed a receipt to him for the deeds "at the time of the Conveyance from him to me."⁶⁶

Gabriel faced larger difficulties in salvaging his coal business. After his bankruptcy his son Thomas became his trustee for an estate and colliery at Workington called Banklands, which was subject to three mortgages totalling some £5,600. Needing funds for operating expenses, on 1 April 1768 he and Thomas formed a partnership with George Wharton, merchant, of London, William Mence, of Winchester, William Miles, of London, and William Stevens, of Hoxton, the company to have a capital of £1,200 and to be known as either Banklands Company or Griffith, Wharton and Co. Gabriel agreed to put up half of this sum, Wharton five-sixteenths, and Mence, Miles, and Stevens the remainder. The partners were to pay Gabriel a yearly rent of £100 and a royalty of 5s. for every ton of coal mined and sold. It was further understood that the rents and royalties were to be used, first to discharge the mortgages, then for Gabriel's own purposes.

Lacking cash to pay all of his half share of the capital, on 5 April Gabriel gave Wharton a bond for £312. 10s., to be redeemed by 5 July. Later Wharton advanced him and Thomas £375 for operating expenses and their personal needs. When the mine failed to yield as much as

⁶⁶ G.P.; Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (Boston, 1851), i 30. On 23 June 1771 Gabriel's leasehold at Carlisle was sold to Henry Gaitskell. See note 34.

had been expected, three of the mortgage-holders sued the partners in Chancery to restrain them from working the pits. At this juncture Wharton demanded repayment of his loans and advances, including what he had advanced as his share in the company, plus interest. As neither Gabriel nor Thomas had the £967. 5s. 11d. required, Thomas (now a merchant in Fleet Street, London) agreed on 11 August 1772 to take over Wharton's interest in the company, securing the total debt by a mortgage on the property at York which he had inherited from his cousin William.⁶⁷ Wharton's share in the company was to be held in trust as collateral security, and the mortgage was redeemable on 12 January 1773, Thomas meanwhile enjoying the rents.

What happened next is not entirely clear. Some months, probably, after this mortgage was executed Gabriel and Thomas gave William Cookson a mortgage secured by "the Yorkshire and Cumberland estates."⁶⁸ Under the terms of William Griffith's will, if Thomas died childless, his brother Gabriel (nicknamed Gaby) was due to inherit the York property; and not long before 13 March 1774 Cookson apparently urged Gaby to cede his right of reversion, no doubt in exchange for cash. On that day Gaby's cousin William Threlkeld wrote from Halifax to their cousin Christopher Cookson at Penrith: Dear Sir,

I have been longer in answering your letter than I intended but not being able to give you anything satisfactory as to the main business of it made it less necessary . . .

Soon after Gaby had received your letter he wrote both to Whitehaven & to his father to consult them what he ought to do as to the York Estate, the advice he got from Whitehaven was that he should comply with you[r] father's request, but

⁶⁷ G.P. Gabriel's son William was the first-named heir of Gabriel's nephew William; his son Thomas, the first alternate. It may therefore be inferred that the son William was now dead. Thomas averred that he was lawful owner of the York properties, except for a mortgage of £600, for the annuity of £30 to his aunt Dorothy, and for his cousin's minor bequests — all debts against the farm at Clifton.

⁶⁸ Wordsworth papers in the custody of Messrs. Bleaymire & Shepherd, solicitors, at Penrith, transcribed by Mr Hudleston; hereafter W.P.

he received a letter from his father on Thursday, wherein he tells him to decline giving up his right, for the present at least; he says he is confident his affairs will be settled in the Island this Spring & that he will come over to Halifax and take him — Gaby — to York when they will examine the state of the whole & then agree upon what may be necessary to be done afterwards, besides he says his son Robt. is in the Settlement & that it is his opinion the estate cannot be sold till he be of age, he also talks of the profits of a farm at York with wh. we are totally unacquainted. I have told Gaby that he need not rely upon the assurances of his father [,] for his getting clear of the Island will I apprehend [*sic*] be very uncertain [.] Of this he seems partly sensible & yet before he would do any thing in the matter he would be glad you cou'd give him or put him in the way of getting an Acct. of the clear rent of the estate wth. the mortgages & other incumbrances upon it. I dare say he will be brt. to make any reasonable compliance.⁶⁹

Gaby was almost certainly living at Halifax or near it when this letter was written, and his father was on the Isle of Man, whether on business or in flight from his creditors is not known.⁷⁰ His brother Robert was not yet seventeen, but as Robert was not named in their cousin William's will, not having been born when William died, it is hard to believe that he was "in the Settlement" or that the estate could not be sold until he became twenty-one. Be this as it may, on 26 April 1775, when Robert was eighteen, he and either his father or Gaby witnessed at Halifax the will-signature of John Ferguson (1730-4 May 1775), linendraper, of Halifax, whose deceased wife Ann Threlkeld (1735-1773) was his and Gaby's cousin.⁷¹

William Threlkeld's concern with the York properties must be guessed at. Together with William Pollard (1718-1798) and Samuel Fenton (1723-1794), Halifax merchants like himself, he was an executor of Ferguson's

⁶⁹ G.P. Conceivably Thomas was dead, and the right which Cookson wished Gaby to surrender was a right of ownership rather than reversion. By quit-claiming in favour of his father, next in the stipulated succession to the York properties, Gaby would have cleared the way for Gabriel to inherit them and thus to convey them to Cookson.

⁷⁰ The Isle of Man had long been a debtors' refuge.

⁷¹ York Wills, Vol. 119, f. 175, Borthwick Institute; memorial tablet in Northgate End Chapel, Halifax.

(his brother-in-law's) will.⁷² It would seem that William Cookson owed Ferguson (his nephew) money and that to wipe out the debt he assigned to the executors a mortgage he held from Gabriel and Thomas. Between 12 and 16 October 1775 John Wordsworth made a journey to Halifax "about the Yorkshire Estate when Pollard and Fenton the Trustees proposed to conclude the Business by an immediate Sale of the Estate." During the same visit he obtained a release "from young Gabriel Griffith" to Cookson. Gabriel the father's death on 8 November and Robert's minority (ending 24 December 1777) may have halted the negotiations temporarily, but on 15 March 1777 Wordsworth billed Cookson for drawing an abstract of "the will of Mr William Griffith of Saint Mary Gate and Mortgage from Gabriel Griffith & Thomas Griffith to you of the Yorkshire and Cumberland estates for securing £250 and Interest sent this night to go to Halifax." On 26 July Wordsworth again billed him, for "Drawing and Ingrossing Affidavit of Execution of Lease and Release from you to Pollard Fenton and others the Trustees." Wordsworth's accounts with Cookson contain a final entry on this score, dated 8 June 1779: "Perusing letter sent you by Messrs. Pollard &c and writing answer for you."⁷³

Gabriel Griffith appears, then, to have died in embarrassed circumstances, and what became of Thomas and Gaby is a mystery.

VI.

The second Gabriel's three daughters — Grace, Ann, and Elizabeth — made Newcastle upon Tyne their home after their parents' deaths, supporting themselves partly by letting rooms. Grace died suddenly on 8 July 1796 at Corbridge, while travelling to Wardrew.⁷⁴ Ann died

⁷² Leeds *Mercury*, 24 March 1798; John W. Clay, ed., *Familiae Minorum Gentium*, i 289, 293.

⁷³ W.P.

⁷⁴ *Monthly Mag.*, July 1796, p. 510, and Newcastle *Courant*, 16 July 1796, where she is erroneously called "sister to John Griffith Esq. of Philadelphia." For John read Robert.

of a heart attack on 13 December 1804, while living in Northumberland Street, and was buried at St Andrew's Church.⁷⁵ Elizabeth, of Percy Street, died on 30 January 1812.⁷⁶

Next to their brother Robert, the Threlkelds, Fergusons, and Wordsworths were the kinsmen to whom they were most firmly attached. With their cousin Elizabeth Threlkeld (1745-1837), linendraper, of Halifax, who brought up Dorothy Wordsworth, the bond was particularly close.⁷⁷ When she married William Rawson (1748/9-1828), wool-merchant, of Halifax, on 7 March 1791, Ann and Robert witnessed the ceremony,⁷⁸ and following Ann's death Mrs John Marshall (1771-1847), of Leeds (born Jane, daughter of William Pollard) wrote to Dorothy on 24 February 1805: "From Mrs Wm. Rawson I have no doubt you often hear, and wou'd be shocked to learn the sudden loss of her old & valued friend Miss A. Griffiths [*sic*] whom all lament but none perhaps (but her Sister) will so severely feel her Loss as your Aunt."⁷⁹

In Wordsworth letters and Dorothy's journals allusions to the sisters occur fairly often until 1803. Writing to her brother Richard on 31 October 1789, her cousin Richard Wordsworth (1751-1816), attorney, of Branthwaite, said:

Mrs. Wordsworth and I have been at Newcastle and spent 5 or 6 days very agreeably there. Mr. Simpson (with whom we stay'd) was so kind as to ask your relations the Miss Griffith's to dine with us and we called at their House which is a very excellent one and they are in every respect perfectly happy, they inquired kindly after you.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Newcastle *Courant*, 15 December 1804; register of St Andrew's. Her gravestone misdates her death as 16 December 1805.

⁷⁶ Newcastle *Courant*, 8 February 1812.

⁷⁷ John Wilson, "Mrs William Rawson and Her Diary," *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 4 February 1958, 29-32.

⁷⁸ Memorial tablet to William Rawson in Halifax Parish Church and register of the same.

⁷⁹ Register of Northgate End Chapel, Halifax (now at Somerset House, London); *Gent. Mag.*, March 1847, 328; Dove Cottage Papers, Grasmere, File xx, Box 5, Folder 5. Mrs Rawson was not Dorothy's aunt, but her mother's cousin.

Dorothy, while living at Forncett, Norfolk, in 1791, begged Jane Pollard to remember her to "Miss Griffith" (Ann?), who was then presumably visiting Mrs Rawson at Halifax. In the spring of the following year her sailor brother John Wordsworth received "very great Civilities from Miss Griffiths during three or four Days which he spent in their House at Newcastle." In August 1793, when Dorothy hoped that Robert Griffith would escort her from Forncett to Halifax, she exchanged letters with one of the sisters. It was not until 1794, however, that she paid them a visit. "I have been at Newcastle more than a month," she informed her brother Richard on 16 January 1795, "and am very happy in the company of our good friends the Miss Griffiths, who are very pleasant chearful companions and excellent women." She was still with them on 11 March, but went to Sockburn, Co. Durham, in early April, from which she wrote that her uncle Christopher Cookson (now Crackanthorpe, of Newbiggin Hall) had "expressed so much affection for me and my brothers to the Miss Griffiths" that she had accepted his invitation to call on him. After Dorothy and her brother William settled at Grasmere, she wrote to "Miss Griffith" on 8 December 1800, 27 April 1801, and 29 June 1802.⁸¹

Further light is shed on the sisters from other quarters and in the perspective, mainly, of two careers — their brother Robert's and their cousin Samuel Ferguson's.

VII.

Robert, better known as Robert Eaglesfield (or Eggesfield), was a boy of fifteen when in December 1771 his "affectionate Mother Mrs. Ann Griffith" made him a present of his father's Bible. By the 1780s he had be-

⁸⁰ W.P.; MS. pedigree, "Wordsworths of Whitehaven," compiled by Gordon Wordsworth and owned by Mrs Dorothy Dickson, of Ambleside.

⁸¹ *E.L.*, 47, 69, 104, 132, 134, 274; *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, i 75, 164.

come a commercial traveller, with either Liverpool or Manchester as headquarters. In the autumn of 1787 Dorothy Wordsworth, fretting at life with her Cookson grandparents, observed: "Mr. Griffith when he was at Penrith would gladly have taken me with him to Newcastle." She was solaced when he came again at Christmas. Sometime within the next three years he went to Philadelphia as an agent primarily of Peel, Yates & Co., the chief Lancashire manufacturers of calico prints.⁸² There he formed a partnership with Philip Nicklin (1759-1806), a general importer, effective on 1 December 1790, and sailed for England on 8 November, with the understanding that he would live at either Liverpool or London and that the firm would continue to represent the Manchester houses which had been employing him.⁸³

The return voyage took place just as Samuel Ferguson (11 April 1769—2 August 1816) was sailing from England to Philadelphia with a three-year contract as the partners' employee. He had quitted Halifax in 1787 and seems to have been Robert's understudy in Lancashire. "You will have a consid^{ble} part of my work here," Robert wrote in a letter left behind for him; "you have seen a good deal of Mankind — you must now profit by your observations."

While Robert was in England, he kept in touch with the Wordsworths.⁸⁴ On 16 February 1793, soon after William's poems *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* had come out, Dorothy announced: "Mr. Griffith desired my Br to send him half a dozen copies as soon as they should be published which I have no doubt he has done." On 3 May Robert lent John Words-

⁸² His contract with this firm ended on 19 November 1790. Peel was Robert Peel (1750-1830), father of the future Prime Minister. Yates was his father-in-law, whose daughter Ellen he married in 1783. The main mill was at Bury. (*DNB*.)

⁸³ *E.L.*, II, 19; Ferguson Papers, Genealogical and Biographical Society of New York. All data in the following paragraphs come from either this source or P.P., except as noted.

⁸⁴ He may have gone to England twice before the close of 1794.

worth £100, about three weeks before John headed for China as fifth mate on the *Earl of Abergavenny*, East Indiaman.⁸⁵ From early June to the end of August Dorothy lived on the expectation that "Mr. Griffith" would take her to Halifax — a blighted hope, as has been seen.⁸⁶ Whether he was her companion to Newcastle in December of the following year is uncertain. By 15 March 1795 he was again in America.

During the next decade he became a wealthy and respected Philadelphian. In 1796 he was elected Steward of the Society of the Sons of St George, a benevolent organisation for Englishmen in the city.⁸⁷ On 22 May 1797 he married at Christ Church, Philadelphia, Maria (19 December 1774—9 July 1854), daughter of John Patterson (1742-1798), formerly an officer in the British army, and his wife Catharine Livingston (1744-1832).⁸⁸ Their first child, Robert Eggesfield, was born on 13 February 1798, and on 2 April Robert bought a fine house, which he named "Eaglesfield," in Fairmount Park.⁸⁹ In 1800 he and his wife sat to Gilbert Stuart for their portraits.⁹⁰ A second child, Ann Catherine, was born on 18 January 1802 and a third, John Patterson, on 8 January 1804.

Because he was well-to-do, Robert was able to send allowances to his sisters and gifts to the Wordsworths. On 27 April 1801 Dorothy told her future sister-in-law Mary Hutchinson: "You will be glad to hear that our good friend, Mr. Griffith, has sent us a barrel of the best flour from America — it is now at Liverpool." Amplifying, when she wrote to her brother Richard on 26 June,

⁸⁵ W.P.; Charles Hardy, *A Register of Ships Employed in the Service of the . . . East India Company* (London, 1811), p. 156, and information supplied by Mr C. M. H. Burton of the Commonwealth Relations Office, London.

⁸⁶ *E.L.*, 11, 19, 86-8, 90, 92, 96, 98, 104-5, 107.

⁸⁷ He held this post until 1803 and was president from 1807 to 1829.

⁸⁸ Edwin B. Livingston, *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor* (New York, 1910), pp. 545-6.

⁸⁹ The site is now occupied by the re-erected William Penn house.

⁹⁰ Reproduced in *Gilbert Stuart: An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works*, compiled by Lawrence Park (New York, 1926), iii 218-19.

she said: "I have had a very kind letter from Mr Griffith and a present of 10£; he has also sent us a barrel of the best American flour, which has been most acceptable to us." In return, when the second edition of William's *Lyrical Ballads* appeared in the spring of 1802, she sent Robert a copy. With his kindness and generosity in mind, when an unidentified girl from Grasmere was about to cross the Atlantic on 22 February 1804, she informed Samuel Ferguson, then in New York:

I wish she had been going to New York or Philadelphia. I would have requested you or Mr. Griffith to see her, but I have written to Mr. G. and if you have an opportunity I wish you would request him to send the letter as it contains all the family news I can recollect.⁹¹

But Robert's halcyon days were numbered. In 1805 he had serious financial reverses, and on 1 December Mrs Rawson wrote to Samuel Ferguson's wife:

The poor Griffiths! what Anxiety and disgrace has his unbounded craving for riches brought upon them. I have no doubt but that his Wifes broken health may be attributed to uneasiness of Mind, as to him whom I pity while I blame, what Misery has he not endured! I now have quite given up any expectation of ever seeing them, for he wou'd on no Account I think be able to bear the countenance of injured and indignant Sufferers who used to be Friends.

During the next year Robert recovered some of the ground lost and by 26 February 1806 notified Mrs Rawson that he would have something left. "Is not that melancholy," she asked, "after what he has had?" But on 5 June she was happy to remark to Samuel: "I rejoice that Mr Griffiths affairs are again in a good way'— but I hope he has the Grace not to Grumble at the feelings people cou'd not help having." Within a month, however, Nicklin & Griffith's credit sank very low, and after Nicklin's death in the autumn, Robert became bankrupt.

The aftermath was painful. By 28 April 1807 Mrs Raw-

⁹¹ *E.L.* 274, 286, 327, 362. The letter to Richard is misdated 1803 in *E.L.*

son learned that he would have to part with Eaglesfield. On 15 September his mother-in-law wrote:

It affords me much great satisfaction . . . to learn that Mr. G's character and credit has not suffered in the estimation of any one during the whole of this unpleasant business, and make no doubt from all accounts, that he will soon be in good business again and his credit as well established as ever tho' strict economy will be absolutely necessary for some time to come.

By 1 November, however, the counted-on improvement had not occurred, and his wife had to say:

To Eggesfield I have probably bid a last adieu . . . I had hoped my poor Robert would have been its master when his father ceased to be so. This last, to the mortification attending my husband's failure which affected him too deeply not to make me miserable, is by far the severest pang attending our poverty . . . My husband's spirits have latterly been pretty good, he finds he still retains the confidence and good opinion of his valued friends.

One of these, the distinguished lawyer, financier, and statesman Alexander Dallas (1759-1817), stepped forward to bid for Eaglesfield when it went on the block early in December; but because Robert insisted on his stopping at \$20,000, the only sum Robert had any confidence of raising eventually, it was knocked down to another bidder for \$20,600 — a good deal less than its value.⁹²

After the sale Robert and his wife took a rented house on South Sixth Street near Spruce Street. There a fourth child, Mary Elizabeth, was born in September 1808 and a fifth, William, at a date unknown, both of whom died as infants. Robert's creditors pressed him hard in the next years, but gradually he was able to recoup to some extent. He lived to hear his son Robert's account of visits to Halifax and Grasmere in the summer of 1820, following young Robert's graduation in medicine from the

⁹² To Benjamin Chew, a brother of Nicklin's second wife Juliana, daughter of the famous Benjamin Chew (1722-1810). (*Dictionary of American Biography*.) Stuart's portraits of Mr and Mrs Nicklin are reproduced in Park, *op. cit.*, ii 551-2 and iv 354-5.

University of Pennsylvania, and in 1832 he corresponded briefly with William Wordsworth.⁹³ He died at Philadelphia on 4 November 1833 and was buried at St Stephen's Church, Tenth Street, which he had helped to found.⁹⁴

VIII.

Gleanings from letters to Samuel Ferguson and from a few other sources make Robert Griffith and his sisters more distinct. After a voyage to China in 1794-5 as a supercargo on Nicklin & Griffith's ship *America*, Samuel returned to England in the summer of 1796. He reached Halifax in time to find his aunt Mrs Rawson, his sisters Martha (bapt. 4 August 1762—12 April 1837), Ann (bapt. 10 April 1766—31 November 1836), and Elizabeth (16 April 1771—7 March 1827), and his brother Edward (bapt. 1 May 1764—17 February 1843) wearing mourning for Grace Griffith.⁹⁵ By April 1797 he had returned to Philadelphia, on the eve of Robert's marriage.

The wedding was a timely topic when Ann and Elizabeth Griffith arrived at Halifax in mid-May for a three months' visit with Mrs Rawson. "A very chearful time we have had," Mrs Rawson informed Samuel on 3 July, "for Miss Ann never at any time She says enjoy'd such good Health, they have always enjoy'd the Blessing of good Spirits"; and she mentioned "a long designed Wedding present" (a piano) from Robert's Halifax kin. Writing to Samuel from Liverpool on 9 September, Elizabeth corroborated Mrs Rawson: "Your Autumnal cousins . . . accompanied by Edward had a Concert every night." Of her new sister-in-law she said:

⁹³ *National Encyclopedia of American Biography*, xii 552; Kathleen Coburn, ed., *The Letters of Sara Hutchinson* (Toronto, 1954), 187-8; Ernest de Selincourt, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years*, 632.

⁹⁴ There is a commemorative window to him and his wife in the north transept.

⁹⁵ Register of Northgate End Chapel, Halifax, and memorial tablet there; John Wilson, "Sutcliffes of Ovenden", *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 5 April 1955, 51, 58, 59.

We have had a letter from the lady in question, most charmingly written & well expressed — so much so that Nancy [Ann] shall have the pleasure of answering all her epistles . . . I shou'd not like to give her an idea whilst she was reading a performance of mine that she had made a connection with a Man who had as Sister a little creeping Mantua maker, for such a being my letters represent.⁹⁶

From Liverpool, where she and Ann stayed with Mrs Henry Littledale (d. 1808), an acquaintance from their girlhood in Whitehaven, they went back to Newcastle in November.⁹⁷ Summing up their sojourn at Halifax, Mrs Rawson commented to Samuel on 12 December: "I never saw any two people who cou'd make and receive amusement from common circumstances in so high a degree . . . in them . . . very good sense . . . prevents pleasantry from degenerating into frivolity."

During the next two years the sisters made visits elsewhere for health and recreation. By 14 February 1798 Elizabeth had gone to Bath, hoping "for benefit in her Rheumatic Complaints from the warm Bathing," and by 8 August they were at Gilsland Spa, having recently lent Mrs Rawson some poetry which Robert had forwarded from America. On 26 June 1799 they were guests of "Mrs Spedding at Keswick."⁹⁸ In 1801, with a reversal of roles, they entertained Samuel Ferguson, back in England for eighteen months, in April and again in September, after he had visited the Wordsworths at Grasmere. On 29 July 1802, when he was about to sail from Liverpool with a bride, Elizabeth Day (4 July 1778—6 October

⁹⁶ Unless she was joking, this remark hints that part of her maintenance came from dressmaking.

⁹⁷ Ashworth P. Burke, 385-8. Mrs Littledale, born Sarah, daughter of John Wilkinson, of Whitehaven, married on 12 August 1766. Her son Anthony (1777-1820) saw Robert's house, Eaglesfield, during a visit to Philadelphia and gave such an account of it, said Mrs Rawson on 26 June 1799, that "we think there is little chance of his [Robert's] coming to reside in England."

⁹⁸ Probably Sarah, daughter of Henry Gibson, of Newcastle. On 20 February she had married John Spedding (1770-1851), of Mirehouse, near Keswick. Register of All Saints' Church, Newcastle; Frank Haley, "The Speddings of Mirehouse," *Cumbria*, April 1956, pp. 12-15; *Gent. Mag.*, March 1851, 328; information furnished by Mr Hudleston.

1823), of Suffolk, Ann wrote: "Shou'd we live till your return how glad shall I be to see you at Newcastle."

Two months later their house was the scene of a brief but touching drama, pictured thus for Samuel by Edward Ferguson:

If you see Mr. Griffith soon, He will probably tell you of the present His Sisters have had, which has diverted us a good deal one Evening just after they had Supp'd — they heard a Rap at the Door which the Maid cou'd not immediately open . . . when she did, — She found a New Born Female Infant in a Basket, — there was no other way but taking it in and they have put it out to Nurse — it is a fine thriving Child.

This problem solved, the sisters went to Bath in December as guests of Mrs Littledale, who paid their expenses "for the sake of their company," and remained there until July 1803 "amongst colonels & a deal of great folks."

Ann's death late in 1804 came as a shock. Writing about it to Dorothy Wordsworth on 21 March 1805, Edward Ferguson said:

I have been to visit poor Betty Griffith . . . she bears her loss heroically, and yet with all the tenderness such an inestimable Woman demands — we were apprehensive from the known warmth of her heart, that she wou'd have indulged immoderate grief — but I was very happy to find her — calm and resign'd — and had the pleasure of thinking my Visit most seasonable, — as during Mr Burdons attendance on his Parliamentary duty, she was left solitary and forlorn — I cou'd not prevail upon her to accompany me into Yorkshire, having all her affairs to settle — Miss Griffith [Ann] had saved sufficient out of her Income, — to leave her not affluent indeed; — but comfortable.⁹⁹

Edward's journey to Newcastle had taken place in February. In May and June Mrs Rawson spent three weeks there, trying to hearten her cousin and witnessing her signature to a will on 25 May.¹⁰⁰ By 28 July she had brought her to Halifax, and Edward observed to Samuel:

⁹⁹ Dove Cottage Papers, File xx, Box 5, Folder 5. Rowland Burdon (1757-1838), of Castle Eden, Durham, M.P. for Durham 1790-1806, used her house in Northumberland Place as a town residence. (Foster, *Alumni Oxon.*)

¹⁰⁰ York Wills, Vol. 156, f. 483, Borthwick Institute.

We have poor Miss Betty . . . with us, in such an indifferent state of Health, as to have no enjoyment of any thing; all her fine Spirits overpower'd . . . she has such giddiness in the Head — that she is oblig'd to sit constantly in her Room, — and mostly in a dark corner of it — a sad melancholly visit both for herself and us who used to enjoy her company so much, — after three Weeks stay at Buxton, she return'd to us worse than she went.

But when Elizabeth left Halifax in August, she was again “a chearful reasonable being.”

During her convalescence Edward wrote to Richard Wordsworth about a debt of John Wordsworth, who had been drowned in February, to her brother. Not receiving a reply, he wrote again on 10 September:

I troubled you a few Weeks ago with a Letter concerning a note of your Brother John's to Mr Griffith whose Sister was at that time on a visit to us — and to whom he transmitted it, with a Power of Atty. to Receive the money . . . If you will have the goodness to favor me with a line I can satisfy Mr Griffith's enquiries.

Richard put off replying, and on 30 April 1806 Robert wrote to Edward:

I think I told you how very disrespectfully Rich^d Wordsworth had treated my Sister, in not even answering her Letters — I wish you would make a point of seeing him — when in London.

At length, on 13 January 1807 Richard, as John's executor, paid off the obligation, with interest from 1793, and on 26 February Mrs Rawson said:

Miss Betty Griffith has got 150£ from Dick Wordsworth by Mr Burdon's unwearied pains — and the help of two attorneys. She wrote to me in great Spirits on the occasion.

Richard was unable to repay at once another £200 which Robert had put at John's disposal in 1801, but he did promise interest on it to Elizabeth. It would seem that Robert gave her £100 from what was first redeemed and all of the £200, for about this time she told Edward:

One hundred pounds wick I got from Dick Wordsworth . . . along with the two which he is now to give me intrest for — is what I call my own, & which I may either sink or swim with

at pleasure, but I shou'd like to leave it all to my dear Robert & his poor Bairns if I can scrape on without dipping into this emense wealth.¹⁰¹

Elizabeth's frame of mind and health in 1805 was no doubt owing partly to Robert's financial setback. To prevent his creditors from attaching anything she might bequeath him, she stipulated in the will which she signed then that the bulk of her possessions (ultimately worth £1,000) should go to his wife for life, "without being subject or liable to the debts, controul, or engagements of her . . . husband," and then to Robert's children.¹⁰² The foresight of this provision enabled Mrs Griffith to help Robert through some of the lean years that followed Elizabeth's death in 1812.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ *E.L.*, 446; W.P.

¹⁰² His son Robert married on 5 February 1829 Mary, daughter of Manuel Eyre, shipping merchant, of Philadelphia, and died on 26 June 1850. His daughter Ann Catherine married Edward Coleman, of Philadelphia, and died without issue on 14 September 1886. His son John married Emeline Phillips and had two children: Robert Eglesfeld (10 December 1834—12 April 1908), who married Mary H. Brice, of Philadelphia (d. 16 April 1918), dying without issue; and Anna Clifford (6 March 1837—13 December 1906), unmarried.

The son Robert's children were Robert Eglesfeld (23 December 1829—28 February 1866), unmarried; Anne Louisa (15 June 1833—11 September 1882), unmarried; and Manuel Eyre (18 January 1837—2 August 1910), who married Mary Ellen (d. 1 September 1912), daughter of Thomas Robinson, of Philadelphia. They had four children: (1) Mary Eyre (b. 19 June 1865), who married on 10 November 1895 George C. Carter, of Oatlands, Loudon County, Virginia, and was the mother of Robert Griffith Carter (b. 14 July 1901); (2) Anne Louisa (b. 30 April 1867), unmarried; (3) Robert Eglesfeld (25 November 1868—12 March 1926), who married on 17 April 1895 Elizabeth, daughter of W. A. M. Fuller, of Philadelphia; and (4) Ellen Robinson (b. 21 January 1878), who married Roland R. Foulke, of Philadelphia, on 6 June 1900.

Robert Eglesfeld Griffith and his wife Elizabeth Fuller were the parents of Elizabeth (b. 10 April 1897), who married Edward C. Page on 24 June 1916. To them were born Elizabeth Griffith Page (5 October 1917—29 September 1919), Edward C. Page, junior (14 November 1919), Robert Griffith Page, M.D. (25 March 1920), and Mary C. Page (4 May 1926).

¹⁰³ Some thirty letters and other papers relating to the settlement of Elizabeth's estate are among G.P. at Halifax.