

II.—THE RIVAL COOKS: HANNAH GLASSE AND ANN COOK.

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I.

THE ALLGOODS.

The Allgood family were well known and respected in Hexham in the seventeenth century, when Lancelot Allgood, the head of the family, several times held the office of bailiff. He was the solicitor of Sir Edward Radcliffe of Dilston.¹ Like his great client, he was a royalist and suffered for his loyalty, but after the restoration the Allgoods profited by their connexion with the Radcliffes, and recovered more than all they had lost. Sir Francis, son and heir of Sir Edward, afterwards first earl of Derwentwater, procured the rectory of Simonburn, the largest and richest living in Northumberland, for Major Allgood, Lancelot's eldest son, while the second son, another Lancelot, held his father's position as solicitor to the Radcliffe family.

In this brief summary two of the characteristics of the Allgood family appear. They used the uncommon Christian name of Major, and they were a predominantly clerical

The principal authorities for this section are the pedigree of 1760 kindly lent by Captain Guy Allgood, the present owner of Nunwick Hall, and John Crawford Hodgson's MS. pedigrees in the Newcastle Central Public Library, I, pp. 436-8, 450, 486, from which are taken the dates and other facts for which separate references are not given.

¹ Watson, *History and Pedigree of the Family of Lewen*, pp. 49-54.

family. The Reverend Major Allgood was inducted to Simonburn rectory in 1666. He married as his second wife Mary, daughter of the Reverend John Pye, rector of Morpeth, on 4 March 1678/9. This lady had an unusual family misfortune; her mother had been put to death as a witch in the outbreak of the witch-hunting mania in Northumberland in 1656.² The Allgoods had a numerous family, of whom two are important to us: their eldest son Isaac, baptized on 29 March 1683, and their daughter Margaret, born in 1693.

Lancelot Allgood prospered in his profession, and in course of time bought the estates of Brandon White House in Eglington parish and of Reaveley in Ingram parish; having no children, he made his eldest nephew, Isaac Allgood, his heir. In 1707 Brandon and Reaveley were settled upon the marriage of Isaac Allgood with Hannah, daughter of Isaac Clark of London, vintner.

Isaac's sister Margaret remained unmarried until she reached the age of thirty-three, so that in the eyes of her own generation she was a confirmed old maid, but at that advanced age a marriage was arranged between her and Henry Widdrington, son and heir of Edward Widdrington of Colt Park near Morpeth. They were married early in July 1726 in the little chapel which had recently been built in the grounds of Chipchase Castle. Two years later Henry Widdrington died, leaving his whole estate absolutely to his widow. She lived to be eighty-four, and on her death in 1777 left the estate to her own nephew, Lancelot Allgood, much to the indignation of her husband's descendants, who disputed the settlement, but in vain.

This brings us to Isaac Allgood's children. Hannah, the eldest, was born on 24th March 1707/8 and baptized at St. Andrew's, Holborn, presumably when Mrs. Allgood was visiting her family. The eldest son, Lancelot, was born at Brandon White House on 11 February 1710/11. The other children died in childhood. Mrs. Allgood is

² John Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, part 2, vol. II, p. 450.

said to have died in 1724 in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn. Isaac Allgood made his will on 7 June 1725, and was buried on 3 August of the same year at Simonburn. In his will he mentioned his daughter Hannah and her husband Peter Glasse. As Hannah was only seventeen in 1725, she must have married very young.

Lancelot Allgood thus succeeded to his father's estate as an orphan at the age of fourteen. He went up to Brasenose College, Oxford, but took no degree. He was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1733, made the grand tour in France and Italy in 1736/8, returned home and married Jane Allgood on 22 February 1738/9. She belonged to another branch of the family, being the only daughter and heiress of Robert Allgood, who died in 1740, leaving to the young couple Lambley, which he inherited from his father, and Simonburn and Shitlington, which he had purchased. Jane was also the heiress of Seghill, the estate of her uncle, George Allgood, although the late owner would have been much annoyed if he had known the fact, as he quarrelled with his brother Robert, and made careful provision in his will that Seghill should not go to Robert's girl. He settled it on three young male relatives successfully, but as it happened they all died without sons, and Seghill reverted to the right heir of George, that is, to the despised Jane.

Lancelot Allgood had therefore a fine estate and played an important part in local affairs. He was high sheriff of the county in the eventful year 1745, M.P. for Northumberland 1748-52, knighted 5 December 1760, when his pedigree was drawn up. He lived in Hexham for the earlier part of his married life, but he began to build Nunwick Hall in 1749, and was living there in 1753. He died in 1782. His descendants still live at Nunwick Hall.

His sister, Hannah Glasse, does not seem to have been in very close communication with the north-country family, for in the pedigree of 1760 her husband's name is given as John, whereas from her father's will it is known to have been Peter. It is stated in the pedigree that he was the son

of [blank] Glasse "from Ireland" by his wife Margaret Ballendine of the Isle of Bute, and that he was buried at Bromfield in Essex, but the date of his death is not mentioned. The names of Hannah's children are among several additions to the pedigree which seem to have been made in 1767. They are as follows :

" Hannah, living unmarried; Margaret, died unmarried in Jamaica; Frances died at the age of almost five; Catherine married twice, has one son and now living a widow; Lancelot died young, not a year old; Isaac Allgood now living in Bombay *æt.* twenty-six unmarried; George Bourke lost in the Sunderland M. of W. off Pondicherry; Mary died an infant; Elizabeth Mary died young."

In the *Newcastle Courant* of 8 September 1770 there is a curt notice that Mrs. Glasse, sister of Sir Lancelot Allgood, died in London last week, with none of the flourishes about her respectable character and amiable disposition which are usual in the obituary notices of the period.

II.

HANNAH GLASSE.

In 1747 there appeared a thin folio published by subscription, entitled: "*The Art of Cookery made Plain and Easy, which far exceeds any Thing of the kind ever yet published. . . .* By a Lady. London. Printed for the Author; and sold at Mrs. Ashburn's a China-shop, the corner of Fleet-Ditch." The book had a modest success and there were several editions. In the fourth edition was an advertisement of "Hannah Glasse, Habit Maker to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden." The *Dictionary of National Biography* includes an article on Hannah Glasse, which contains in addition to the list of her books only a discussion of whether she originated the proverb "First catch your hare—" and the statement that she may be identified with Hannah

Glass of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, who was a bankrupt in 1754.

In the first edition of *The Art of Cookery* there is a list of subscribers, and the first name upon the list is Mrs. Allgood. There are also Mrs. Cotesworth, Mrs. Duan, Mrs. Pye, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Soulby [? for Soulsby], and Mrs. Widdrington. Now Mrs. Allgood might be Lancelot Allgood's wife Jane; as we have seen already the grandmother of Hannah and Lancelot Allgood was a Miss Pye, and as will be shown later they had a cousin Thomas Pye living in Morpeth at this time, married and with a family; Mrs. Widdrington was the aunt of Lancelot and Hannah; Mrs. Cotesworth might be the wife of Michael Cotesworth of the Hermitage, Hexham, a property which a hundred years later came to the Allgood family by marriage;³ Mrs. Reed was the wife of John Reed, the Allgoods' neighbour at Chipchase Castle, and Mrs. Soulsby was John Reed's sister;⁴ Mrs. Duan, more correctly Duane, was the wife of a prominent lawyer, Matthew Duane, who practised both in Newcastle and in London.⁵ Though in the absence of Christian names and addresses no one of these identifications is certain, yet when there are so many names on the list which can be connected with the Allgoods, it makes a very strong probability that Hannah, the daughter of Isaac Allgood and wife of Peter Glasse, was the same person as Hannah Glasse the author of *The Art of Cookery*.

Two more subscribers on the list are Mrs. Glasse of Cary Street and Mr. Glasse attorney-at-law. W. C. Hazlitt in his *Old Cookery Books and Ancient Cuisine* combines these two pieces of information and says that Hannah Glasse was the wife of an attorney in Cary Street, but surely these are relations by marriage from whom Hannah extracted subscriptions.

In 1760 her second book was published:

³ *N.C.H.*, iv, pp. 145, 148.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xii, p. 34 n.

“ *The Servant’s Directory or House-keeper’s Companion: wherein the Duties of the Chamber-maid, Nursery-maid, House-maid, Landery-maid, Scullion, or Under-Cook, are fully and distinctly explained. To which is annexed a Diary, or House-Keeper’s Pocket-Book for the whole Year with directions for keeping Accounts with Tradesmen, and many other Particulars, fit to be known by the Mistress of a Family.* By H. Glass, Author of *The Art of Cookery made plain and easy.* ”

“ London: Printed for the Author; and sold by W. Johnston in Ludgate Street; at Mrs. Wharton’s, the Blue-Coat-Boys near the Royal Exchange, at Mrs. Ashburnham’s China Shop the Corner of Fleet Ditch, Mr. Vaughan’s, Upholder in Prince’s Street, Leicester Fields, and by all the Booksellers in Town and Country. MDCCLX. ”

“ N.B.—This Book is entered in the Hall of the Company of Stationers. ”

The list of subscribers in this volume puts the identity of Mrs. Glasse beyond all doubt, as it includes Mrs. Allgood, who is expressly stated to be “ of Nunwick ”; there is another Mrs. Allgood on the list, described as “ widow. ” She was probably Esther, widow of Lancelot Allgood of the Riding, Bywell, who was Hannah Glasse’s uncle.⁶ Mrs. Widdrington is still on the list, and another north-country name is Mrs. Collingwood, but Mrs. Glasse’s patrons are for the most part of much higher rank than those in the earlier list, no doubt in consequence of her employment by the Princess of Wales. She has a duke, two duchesses, the earl and countess of Northumberland and six more countesses, a viscountess and a number of honourables.⁷

Mrs. Glasse’s last book, *The Compleat Confectioner, or the Whole Art of Confectionery Made Plain and Easy*, is

⁶ N.C.H., VI, 274.

⁷ Information kindly supplied by Miss Regula Burnet from the copy of *The Servant’s Directory* in the University Library of St. Andrew’s.

undated but was probably published in 1770, the year of her death.

III.

ANN COOK.

The stage is now taken by the redoubtable personality of Ann Cook. In 1760 there was published :

“ *Professed Cookery: containing Boiling, Roasting, Pastry, Preserving, Pickling, Potting, Made-Wines, Gellies, And Part of Confectionaries. With an Essay upon the Lady’s Art of Cookery: Together with a Plan of House-keeping.* By Ann Cook, Teacher of *The True Art of Cookery.* The Third Edition. London, printed for and sold by the Author, at her Lodging, in Mr. Moors, Cabinet-maker, Fuller’s Rents, Holborn. Price Six Shillings.”

The first edition of this work has not been traced at present. From a hint in the book itself, to be discussed later, it seems possible that the first edition was issued in 1751. Extracts from the third edition were published in 1936 under the title of *Ann Cook and Friend*, edited by Regula Burnet (Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.). The editor’s introduction is most interesting and informative, but does not trace the local allusions in the work. This in fact would probably have been impossible for anyone to do, if it had not happened, by a coincidence, that just at the time when the book came into my hands I was working on the Allgood pedigree, and was therefore in a position to recognize hints which would otherwise be inexplicable.

The Essay upon the Lady’s Art of Cookery is a violent onslaught upon Hannah Glasse’s *Art of Cookery*. According to the author of *Professed Cookery* anyone who followed Mrs. Glasse’s directions would infallibly be ruined both in digestion and pocket. It is difficult, as her modern

editor remarks, for us at the present day to judge between the merits of the rivals, as the recipes of both mostly read like sudden death in this dyspeptic age. Mrs. Cook is not content to attack Mrs. Glasse in prose. She is so much moved that she bursts into poetry :

If genealogy was understood
It's all a Farce, her Title is not good;
Can Seed of Noble Blood or renown'd Squires
Teach Drudges to clean Spits and build up Fires?

The editor suggests that this means that Mrs. Cook knew that Mrs. Glasse was not a lady; the poetess waxes incoherent in her wrath, but I think she is making a different point. She is protesting against a lady claiming to know anything about cookery. She herself, the writer, makes no pretensions to being a lady, but she does know her work and her place, and she likes a lady who is a lady and knows hers.

Besides the natural bitterness between two of a trade, Mrs. Cook had another motive for attacking the Lady Teacher, as she scornfully calls Mrs. Glasse. She was carrying on a feud which had begun in the north of England between Mr. and Mrs. Cook on the one hand and on the other no less person than Esquire Lancelot Allgood, Mrs. Hannah Glasse's rich and influential brother. Mrs. Cook's sneers at Mrs. Glasse's noble birth were partly directed at him. He was proud of his family, and had his pedigree drawn up, as we have seen. He claimed to be descended from "John Allgood of Salherne within the county of Devon, Esq.; who attended John Duke of Lancaster in his expedition to Spain against the pretended king of Castile, Anno 1386, the 9th of Richard II." This is set forth on a marble mural tablet in the chancel of Simonburn church over the burial place of the Allgoods, probably erected by the direction of Lancelot Allgood himself.

The third division of *Professed Cookery* is mentioned in the title as *A Plan of House-keeping*, and it is conceived

in a form which has proved popular from that day to this. Instructions in various points of housekeeping, such as how to fatten fowls, and how to manage servants, are worked into a narrative about a real or fictitious household. A similar blend of amusement and instruction may be found in any women's magazine of the present day.

The story begins, as all such stories do, with an inexperienced bride. She has a cook who is a very excellent character, but unluckily as she comes from London she does not know how to fatten chickens. The young wife complains of this to her cousin, who is Ann's mistress, and Ann is sent to teach the Londoner the art of poultry-fattening. Rather surprisingly they become firm friends, but the vicissitudes of their lives carry them apart, and there is a lapse of about thirty years until they meet again, when they settle down to tell each other the story of their lives. The friend tells her story first. She is never given a name in the original work, but for convenience the editor has christened her Abigail. Her story proceeds according to the original design. She tells us how to prepare feathers for stuffing mattresses, how to make home-made wine, how to dress wounds, etc., interspersing the information with anecdotes, the whole being strung on a thread of narrative. But when it is Mrs. Cook's turn to take up the tale, the original design goes to the winds. Her strong sense of personal injury makes her pour out all her grievances without any thought of amusing or instructing her readers.

In her poem she tells us that she was "eighteen years cook, and mistress of an inn." I think these are two independent statements; she was first eighteen years cook, and then mistress of an inn by her marriage with John Cook. She tells us that in the winter of 1745 her eldest daughter was seventeen. The girl must therefore have been born in 1728, and the Cooks were probably married about 1725. Eighteen years before that takes us to 1707, and as Ann must have been about twelve when she went into service, her birth would be in the last decade of the

seventeenth century. She says nothing about her parents, but she tells us, in her somewhat incoherent way :

For although I never was out of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland but 10 Days, and found 30 years so hard travelling in the latter, as may let the World see what Providence hath enabled one Mortal to undergo.

From this it seems that she was born and spent her early life in Durham, and that on her marriage she went to Northumberland—also that when she wrote her *Plan of House-keeping* she had been married thirty years. In another part of her story she says, in very similar words, that she has had “ 24 Years hard travelling in one Country,” but this is when she mentions an incident which she expressly says took place after the publication of her book. It seems probable that the first edition of *Professed Cookery* was published six years before the third, that is, in 1754. Mrs. Cook describes it as containing only receipts. She says that after its publication she visited her old friend and wrote down the history of their different careers. There is a copy of the second edition of *Professed Cookery* in the Newcastle Central Free Library, “ printed for the Author and sold at her House in the Groat-market, Newcastle, 1755. Price 6s.” It contains the *Plan of Housekeeping* in exactly the same form as in the third edition of 1760.

From these somewhat complicated calculations it may be deduced that in 1725 Ann, after eighteen years as a professional cook, married one Cook of Hexham, an inn-keeper, and came to live in Hexham. She never tells us her husband's Christian name, nor the name of the inn, and it only comes out accidentally in the course of her narrative that they lived at Hexham.

The history of Hexham in the eighteenth century is largely an unworked field, as all the interest of the historians of the little town has been concentrated on the Abbey, and for later times they have been content to follow A. B. Wright, whose *History of Hexham* was published

in 1823. At that date one of the principal inns of the town was the Black Bull, an old house, where there was the Assembly Room.⁸ Now Mrs. Cook tells us that in 1745 her worthy landlord made a commodious assembly room at the inn. This was seventy-eight years before Wright's account, but inns are a permanent form of institution, and a small place like Hexham would not have more than one assembly room, so it is fairly safe to conjecture that Mrs. Cook was hostess of the Black Bull at the north-east corner of Hexham market-place and at the top of Bull Bank.

The marriage of Cook the innkeeper and Ann his wife cannot be found in the Hexham parish register, which is so badly preserved for the years 1725, 1726 and 1727 that hardly any of the marriage entries are legible. Mrs. Cook says she had a large family, but I have found only one baptism: "10th Aug. 1737. Robert son of John Cooke of Black Bull bapt." This is important as giving the name of Ann's husband and showing that he was the tenant of the Black Bull at that time, as I had conjectured. There are several passages in Mrs. Cook's book which suggest that she was a Roman Catholic (as for example that she usually calls the curate of a parish the priest, and though she knows that a licence was required for a sudden marriage, she makes the priest procure it instead of the bridegroom). Hexham was a centre for the Roman Catholics of the north, who in 1751 built a chapel there. This would explain the absence of entries about the family in the parish register. On the other hand it does not explain why they had one of their children christened in church, and as I have not examined the registers exhaustively, there may be other entries which I have overlooked. The little that can be gathered about the Cook family of Hexham rather supports this conjecture that they were Roman Catholics. In 1719 Thomas Leadbitter of Hexham accused Benjamin Cook of Hexham of being a reputed papist and of having taken

⁸ A. B. Wright, *History of Hexham*, p. 28.

part in the late rebellion, that is the rebellion of 1715,⁹ and in 1745 Joshua Cook skinner was in a list of reputed papists in Hexham.¹⁰ These examples show that the Cooks of Hexham were regarded as papists and Jacobites. It may or may not be significant that the Leadbitters, one of whom was the accuser of Benjamin Cook, were related by marriage to the Allgoods.

Mrs. Cook's story is of the persecution that she and her husband endured from a local magistrate of great influence in the district, whom she calls Esquire Flash. Having already suspected the identification of Hannah Glasse with Hannah Allgood, I wondered as I read whether Esquire Flash might be Hannah's brother Lancelot Allgood; and at every point he seems to fit so remarkably well into Mrs. Cook's account, that I think the identity may almost be regarded as proved.

Much as Mrs. Cook disliked Esquire Flash, she detested his aunt still more. This is the first point in the identification of Flash and Allgood, for I take this aunt to have been Margaret Widdrington *née* Allgood, whose history has been briefly sketched above. Mrs. Cook says that she had "a great Pleasure in entertaining those above her Rank and Circumstances after she got Riches, but hated the Sight of all those that were her greatest Benefactors in the Time of her Distress." As we have already seen, Margaret Allgood lived for thirty-three years a spinster on the slender provision made for her by her father, and then she made a rich marriage with Henry Widdrington, the heir of Ritton and Colt Park; these experiences fit in well enough with Mrs. Cook's rather exaggerated and spiteful description. Henry Widdrington's father gave the couple Portgate near Hexham, and they seem to have lived in Hexham, where Henry Widdrington was buried only two years after his marriage. His father survived him. Mrs. Cook tells us that Esquire Flash's aunt lived next door to

⁹ *N.C.H.*, III, p. 256.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

her for nine years, and that Esquire Flash came from the university to visit his aunt when he was about eighteen. On this visit to Hexham he called on Mrs. Cook and asked her to buy a clothes-horse of his aunt's for 5s. She agreed, although it was only fit for fire-wood, because she was sure from his expression that if she did not buy it, he would never again show her any goodwill.

This queer little episode agrees with Lancelot Allgood's history. He was at Brasenose College, Oxford, and as he was born in 1711 he would be eighteen in 1729, about four years after Mrs. Cook's marriage.

The next incident in Mrs. Cook's narrative occurred ten years later. In this time Lancelot Allgood attained his majority, made the grand tour, came home and married his heiress-cousin Jane, and set up housekeeping in the Allgood family mansion in Hexham, which was built over the entrance to St. Mary's chare in the market-place.¹¹ St. Mary's chare entered the market-place on the south¹² and the Allgood mansion was therefore on the opposite side to the Black Bull.

Hexham at that time was an assize town, and when the judge was expected on the Lent circuit of 1739/40 Esquire Flash sent a civil message to the host of the Black Bull that the judge, the chancellor, and all their attendants would lodge with Cook, and that he might have French wine or anything else they required from the esquire's cellars. Cook was much obliged, and when the chancellor was dissatisfied with the French wine at the Black Bull, sent to Esquire Flash's to borrow six bottles, which he offered to pay for, and accordingly charged on the lawyers' bill.

When the judge and his train reached Carlisle, one of the barristers who had stayed with Esquire Flash at Hexham inquired of the chancellor at dinner, when the whole legal body was together, how he liked the wine that Esquire Flash had sent him as a gift. As they had paid for the

¹¹ *N.C.H.*, III, p. 307.

¹² Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

wine, the judge and the lawyers thought that Cook had cheated them, and in high indignation resolved never to go to the Black Bull again.

This news was sent to Esquire Flash, who had just become a father. He gave a banquet after his lady's recovery, to celebrate the happy event, and in the course of the evening he sent for Cook, on a pretext of business, and before a full drawing-room accused him of cheating the lawyers, showing him the letter and saying :

“ Here, Villain, is thy Character in black Lines; sure no Gentleman of Credit will ever frequent the House of a common Robber: Villain! I will bring thou to a dry Morsel, for robbing me of my Wine, for which I shall bring thy House into Desolation.”

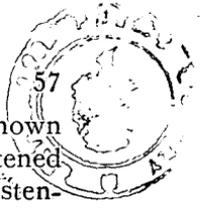
Cook was too much dazed by this unexpected attack to make any reply, but when he got home and told his wife about it, she sat down and wrote Esquire Flash a letter telling him :

“ How much the warm Reception had terrified my Husband, but how little it had frightened me, who gave him the Consolation of his Worship's committing the same Mistake on a far greater Man, whose Light so shines that Thousands seeth his good Works and praises them; whose Lady never joined in Concert against a Person in Distress: Adding that if this alworthy Man met with the same Fate from his Worship, what reason my Husband had to be content with his, And if he solicits his Judge, he will relieve his wrongs at his Time and Pleasure; This was the Consolation given her Husband from yours A.C.

About half an Hour after he had received this Letter, a Neighbour came, and with great Concern told me how much it grieved the Neighbourhood in general, to hear this Hero declare aloud in the open Street that he could freely forgive my Husband, but swore to be the Destruction of the Bitch his wife.”

To this Mrs. Cook retorted :

“ It is not the Advantage of a liberal Education, nor the Improvements of four Years travel in France and Rome; neither the Benefits he received from the Touch nor the great Rise to a plentiful Fortune, that can make a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit. Cannot an Ass bray in the Streets? Nay, an Ideot can shout out Bitch.”



The incidents in this story all agree with the known career of Lancelot Allgood. His first child, christened Robert, was born on 1st March 1739/40, so that its christening party would take place at the time indicated by Mrs. Cook. Lancelot Allgood spent the years 1736-8 on the grand tour in France and Italy and had had the advantage of a liberal education. Though there is no record that he was touched for the king's evil, it is possible that, as he was born in 1711, he might have been touched by Queen Anne at the same time as Samuel Johnson in 1712,¹³ and he rose to a plentiful fortune when he married his cousin. As for Mrs. Cook's obscurely worded letter, its meaning would be clear if it had been addressed to Lancelot Allgood's father, Isaac Allgood, when the "alworthy man" would certainly have been James Radcliffe earl of Derwentwater, the leader of the '15. Wright, a hundred years later, said :

The Earl of Derwentwater was almost adored by the poor of this district. His charity, his humility, and his innumerable acts of generosity are still dwelt on with rapture by the children of those who remember his goodness.¹⁴

The sign of the Black Bull itself was taken from the Radcliffe arms. Now the Allgoods owed their rise in the world to the Radcliffes, as we have seen already. Isaac Allgood was the nephew and heir of the older Lancelot Allgood, the family lawyer of the Radcliffes, who died in 1705. But in the rising of the '15 no Allgoods followed the earl, who resented their defection. When he was a prisoner after the surrender at Preston, he said to another prisoner :

" You see what we have brought ourselves to, by giving Credit to our Neighbour Tories, as Will Fenwick, Tate, Green and Allgood. If you outlive Misfortune and return to live in the North, I desire you never to be seen to converse with such Rogues in Disguise, that promised to join us, and animated us to rise with them."¹⁵

¹³ Crawford, *The King's Evil*, pp. 144-5.

¹⁴ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

¹⁵ Major Skeat, *The Life of the Third Earl of Derwentwater*, p. 70, quoting Penrice, *The Life of Charles Radcliffe* (1747).

Lancelot Allgood the younger was only four years old at the time of the rebellion, and it was therefore in one sense absurd to accuse him of betraying the earl, but I suspect that Mrs. Cook was hinting at hereditary treachery in the family, while at the same time, even in her wrath, she had enough sense to remember that what she wrote was dangerous, and accordingly to wrap it up in phrases not strictly applicable.

Meanwhile the Cooks took a more judicious way of clearing their character by appealing to Esquire Flash's steward, who had been present when Cook borrowed the wine, and who was prepared to bear witness that he paid for it on the day the judges left his house. With this backing Cook went to Newcastle at the next assizes and begged the judge to come again to his inn, explaining the slander against him. At first he was roughly refused, but four principal inhabitants of Hexham spoke in his favour, and after two assizes lawyer Askew¹⁶ prevailed upon the chancellor to return to the Black Bull. So after three years the Cooks recovered their legal customers again.

Mrs. Cook declared that this was all a plot laid by wicked Esquire Flash to ruin herself and her husband. From her story it seems that the incident might have begun by a genuine misunderstanding on the squire's part, which he was too proud to acknowledge, especially after Mrs. Cook had exasperated the quarrel. Poor Cook was not very fortunate in his Amazonian wife, and it is rather amusing to see in her narrative how she would like to lay the blame for all their troubles on him, but is restrained by the knowledge that she will win more sympathy from her readers if she represents him as an exemplary character.

Mrs. Cook has now reached the year 1743. At this time her enemy, Esquire Flash, became a commissioner of the land tax. All except two of the old commissioners had

¹⁶ I have not been able to identify lawyer Askew. There was a well-known medical family of Askews in Newcastle, who came from Kendal. Adam Askew began to practise in Newcastle in 1725 and attained a great reputation.

dined at the Cooks' inn during their meetings for rectifying the land tax on the lands of Roman Catholics, but Esquire Flash insisted upon going to another inn. He induced the other commissioners to join him there by promising to come in turn and dine with them at the Cooks', but he never would keep this promise.¹⁷ In consequence of the squire's continual opposition, Mrs. Cook began to wish to leave Hexham for some place where she would be out of his reach.

In the ominous year of 1745 two neighbouring landlords of inns complained to Mrs. Cook that there had been no horse races at Hexham for four years. The races were run on Tyne Green, and are still held, though, perhaps unfortunately, all the historians of Hexham are too refined to mention them, except Wright, who does just say that races are held. Both these innkeepers had married cousins of Esquire Flash, but as their names are not given, they cannot be identified. They complained that Esquire Flash would never permit the races to be held as long as the Cooks were in the town. Mrs. Cook then pointed out to them a clever way by which they might trick Esquire Flash into signing the parchment which would give the necessary permission. The details of the manœuvre are beyond me, as I cannot understand the technicalities of horse-racing, ancient or modern, but the upshot seemed to be that the races would take place, and it was on this occasion that Mrs. Cook's landlord prepared the assembly room at the Black Bull.

Unluckily for the races, the Young Pretender landed in Scotland, and on 21st September 1745 Sir John Cope was defeated at Prestonpans. A great meeting of Northumbrian magistrates was held at Morpeth, where Esquire Flash requested the magistrates to make an order forbidding Hexham races as giving an opportunity for the papists and Jacobites to meet. There is a persistent tradi-

¹⁷ One of the commissioners who supported the Cooks was Mr. Read of Chipchase. See *N.C.H.*, IV, p. 347; IX, p. 70.

tion that the Jacobites of 1715 planned the rising at a race meeting, which might be his grounds for objection. Esquire Flash was answered by "a noble Baronet," who said :

" Sir, Races in such little towns are made for the Benefit of low life People, instead of suppressing them, let us all unanimously meet, and spend some Money, to help them to live."

But nevertheless the Hexham races were prohibited. Now as Lancelot Allgood was sheriff of Northumberland in this anxious year, and was thanked by the government for his control of a delicate situation, it is evident that he was the person to call the county meeting, which Mrs. Cook says was summoned by Esquire Flash, so that this is one more reason for identifying Allgood with Flash:

At this time the Queen's Head Inn at Morpeth was vacant, and in order to escape from their enemy the Cooks took it, entering into a bond for £369 with the landlord. The lease of the Hexham inn did not expire for three months, so Cook and his two daughters remained at Hexham, while Mrs. Cook went to Morpeth. In November 1745 General Wade and his army reached Newcastle, and in attempting to march to Carlisle were held up by the bad weather and the bad roads at Hexham. Mrs. Cook gives a vivid description of the army in the north from the innkeeper's point of view.

After the troops had all gone, she had a visit from her landlord, who proved to be a cousin of the hated Esquire Flash! This is another reason for believing that Flash was Allgood, as the Queen's Head was owned by Thomas Pye, whose grandfather seems to have been the brother of Lancelot Allgood's grandmother, Mary Pye.¹⁸ Her landlord told Mrs. Cook that he had been summoned to the presence of his two great cousins, "the Aunt and her

¹⁸ Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, part 2, vol. II, p. 450, and deeds in the possession of the Northumberland County History Committee.

Nephew," whom we may now confidently state to have been Mrs. Widdrington and Lancelot Allgood. Pye said that he had been very much upbraided by them for letting his house to such a rogue as Cook. He also expressed his belief that "his Cousin would in a very little time be the brightest Gentleman in the Country," to which Mrs. Cook replied :

"He must improve very fast in Person, Mind and Fortune, then, for he has at present many Superiors in all those Talents."

In July 1746 the Duke of Cumberland returned from his Scottish campaign and passed through Morpeth, where he was grandly entertained, and Esquire Flash in company abused Cook as a rebel, a rogue and a villain.

The Cooks were in terror that their house would be plundered by the mob, and not without reason, for a Roman Catholic house and chapel were burnt in Gateshead on the troops' march south; however, there was no rioting in Morpeth and the Cooks escaped.

In 1748 Lancelot Allgood stood as tory parliamentary candidate for the county, and was elected, though there was, as so frequently happened in those days, a dispute and an election petition. Mrs. Cook's account is :

The next News was, that Esquire Flash would stand candidate for Parliament Man for the Country. "Then," said I, "He cannot keep the Freeholders from my House."

Apparently the candidates provided board and lodging for the freeholders who came in to vote for them. Esquire Flash did his best to prevent them from going to the Queen's Head by giving them billets on other inns, but, according to Mrs. Cook, many of them said that they would come to her even if they had to pay for themselves, and the Esquire's friendly steward passed the accounts. There was a large race meeting at Morpeth and a huge entertainment at the Queen's Head, which was a great success, though Esquire Flash did his best to spoil it by a

rival entertainment at the Black Bull—that is, the Black Bull at Morpeth, not the Cooks' old house in Hexham.

Meanwhile, however, the Cooks' financial position was growing worse. They never recovered from the unlucky bond for £369 which Cook entered into on taking the Queen's Head. He never managed fully to discharge it, though he paid £320. Thomas Pye, who seems to have been a disagreeable mixture of Shylock and the Walrus in *Through the Looking-Glass*, insisted upon his bond while telling them that "it was as much against his Inclination to do it as to tear the Flesh from his Bones."

Mrs. Cook's eldest daughter married a young man who was setting up an inn at Newcastle. Mrs. Cook gave them various household goods, whereupon the rumour went round that the Cooks meant to abscond, and their creditors became clamorous. They sold their possessions at the Queen's Head and removed to Newcastle, where they took a house on the Quayside. Mrs. Cook proposed to set up a pastrycook shop, besides selling malt liquors, wine and spirits, but their creditors would not allow them more time, nor come to a composition with them. Poor Cook was taken off to the debtors' prison and they were sold up. Mrs. Cook was, of course, convinced that the hidden hand of wicked Esquire Flash was behind it all. At this distressing point her story ends. It was her financial difficulties which drove her to literature, and as her book went through three editions we may hope that it was fairly successful, and somewhat relieved the situation.

Mrs. Cook attacks Esquire Flash with so much bitterness as to cause a certain reaction in his favour in the reader's mind. At any rate one can see his point of view. He regarded the Cooks as dangerous characters, and thought it his duty as a magistrate to keep an eye on them. He was all the more severe, perhaps, because his own family might easily be suspected of a leaning to Jacobitism. On the list of papists and Jacobites in Hexham in 1745 there is the name of Bartholomew Allgood, who may

have been an uncle of Lancelot Allgood. Because he was a tory, and liable to be accused of Jacobitism by the whigs, he was all the more relentless to a suspicion of it in others.

IV.

FRIEND.

The larger part of Mrs. Cook's *Plan of Housekeeping* consists of the narrative of Mrs. Cook's nameless friend, whom her editor calls Abigail. Abigail was in the service of Esquire and Mrs. Goodman, and all three are a complete contrast to Mrs. Cook and the Flashes. Abigail is the dutiful servant who makes a good marriage and reaps the reward of her virtue in complete domestic happiness. Mr. and Mrs. Goodman are a model esquire and his wife. The editor points out the great difference that there is between Mrs. Cook's narrative and Abigail's, a difference so striking that she suggests that Abigail dictated her experiences to Mrs. Cook. I am rather inclined to the supposition that Abigail and the Goodmans are to a considerable extent the creations of Mrs. Cook's imagination, and that the contrast between her narrative and Abigail's is the contrast between fact and fiction. But on this point the editor's opinion is more valuable than mine, as I know little about eighteenth-century fiction. It is certain, however, that Abigail's story cannot be checked up with actual events as directly as Mrs. Cook's has been in the previous section. Most of her narrative seems to bear some relation to facts, but they have been manipulated a good deal.

As an example of her method I will analyse the story of Esquire Goodman's charity school. At first sight it seemed an easy matter to identify Esquire Goodman, as one of the incidents of his career is the founding of a large charity. Abigail tells us that the esquire went to visit an old tenant on his estate who was dying. This old man was the last of his race. Two hundred years before his

ancestor had been a faithful servant to the ancestors of Esquire Goodman, and in repayment for his services they had leased him a farm at a low rent, which had never been raised to any of his posterity. Now that the old man was dying, he resolved to leave to his good landlord all his accumulated savings, amounting to £4,000. Esquire Goodman was to use this legacy first to augment the salary of the curate of the parish, who had but £40 a year on which to maintain himself, his wife and five children, while he did all the work of the parish as the rector came only once a year to preach a sermon. Secondly, £1,000 of the legacy was to be devoted to form a loan stock from which farmers might borrow without interest, on proper security; while the rest was to endow a school where all the children of the parish might be taught free, with two masters, a school-house and a house for the masters.

Now it seemed that one had only to look through the *Report of the Charity Commissioners on the Counties of Northumberland and Durham* in 1835 to find a school endowed during the first half of the eighteenth century under these conditions, and Esquire Goodman was discovered. It seemed impossible that such a large charity should completely disappear in the course of a hundred years, and if it had, that was exactly the sort of case which the commissioners were appointed to inquire into. It was necessary to take both counties into consideration, as it was doubtful from the narrative whether Esquire Goodman lived in Northumberland or in Durham. There were about half a dozen schools founded in each county during the period in question; but none of them corresponded at all closely to the conditions described by Abigail. There was nothing on nearly such a large scale, for one thing; but that was not very important; a stronger objection was that some of the schools were founded by women, some by clergymen, and when the founder was a layman, he made provision for his wife or his relatives, showing that he was not the last of his family.

The foundation most nearly resembling Abigail's story was Giles Heron's charity in Simonburn parish. Giles Heron was not the descendant of an old servant, nor a farmer. He was the illegitimate son of one of the Herons of Chipchase, and a pedlar in a very small way of business, but by great frugality he saved up £800. According to Mackenzie :

A few years before his death a neighbour met him one day on the road to Chipchase, whom he told of his intention of bequeathing his effects to the gentleman of that place. His friend endeavoured to point out the impropriety of this decision, and finally prevailed on him to return to Wark, and to appropriate his money to such purposes as might preserve his memory among an applauding posterity.¹⁹

He left his estate in the hands of George Heron and seven other trustees, to found a free school for the poor children of the parish and a fund to be applied to the relief of the poor of the parish. This was in 1684, and the owner of Chipchase was Sir Cuthbert Heron, who augmented the living of the curate of Chollerton when he was even worse off than Abigail's imaginary curate.²⁰ But it does not appear what connexion, if any, Sir Cuthbert had with Giles Heron's charity. In 1684 Mrs. Cook and, by inference, her friend Abigail were not born, and the other facts of Sir Cuthbert Heron's life do not, so far as they can be tested, correspond with the story of Esquire Goodman.

Esquire Goodman then seems to be a composite portrait. Old Sir Cuthbert Heron contributed something to it, though Ann Cook and Abigail could only know of him by tradition. Probably his successor, John Reed of Chipchase, also lent something to the character. As we have seen already, he had befriended the Cooks, and his family was pious and charitable. His sister, Isabel Reed, founded a charity, and his wife seems, like Mrs. Goodman,

¹⁹ Mackenzie, *Northumberland*, II, p. 243 n.

²⁰ *N.C.H.*, IV, p. 359.

to have been delicate. She had no children and died at the age of thirty.

The excellent but delicate Mrs. Goodman used to send her maid Abigail about the country on horseback to visit the sick and take them remedies. "A neighbouring bluff Gentleman having an Estate of 300£ per Annum" was so much enamoured of her that he proposed for her hand in marriage, offering to settle all his land upon her. Abigail rejected him, and when her mistress remonstrated with her, she replied that his offered settlement would place her in a most embarrassing position if she survived him, as she would be obliged either to deprive an ancient family of the property it had held for a hundred years, or to offend her own relations by passing them over. This must be another hit at the detested Mrs. Widdrington, whose husband had left her in just such a position.

The most interesting of Abigail's stories is that of the architect, or the architecture as he is called, his foreman, and the shipwrecked Italian. Esquire Goodman added a new wing to his house. It was built for him by an architect, who lived in the same parish, a very good, worthy man, married and with three sons. He had also in his family a young man of thirty, who had been left in his care as an orphan at the age of seven; he had been trained in the architect's business and was foreman of the works in the building of the new wing of Esquire Goodman's house. He fell in love with Abigail, and in the end won her hand, although she was so much averse to marriage that she made him wait for seven years, during which she received one letter from him every month, but would not reply to them or see him. At the end of his period of probation the architect's wife died, leaving the old gentleman in great sorrow. He resolved to make over his business to the foreman. His three sons apparently were children; at any rate they were not destined to the business. He likewise made over to his foreman a certain Italian, who had lately been shipwrecked on the coast. He had

managed to swim ashore, towing after him a packing-case in which lay, so carefully packed that it was undamaged by sea-water, a spinet, his masterpiece, which formed his sole capital. He offered it for sale to a lady for whose husband the architect had done some building, and she consulted him as to what the spinet was worth. She offered £30 for it, but the Italian held out for £50. The architect assured her that it was cheap at £50. The lady thereupon flew into a great passion, declaring that the Italian and the architect were in a conspiracy to cheat her. Her husband came in, and on hearing the cause of the dispute took the part of the Italian, which enraged the lady so much that she struck the architect with her clenched fist, and her husband turned her out of the room and apologized for her. The Italian went home with the architect, and undertook to stay with him and teach his men to ornament furniture in the Italian way; for the architect employed his men in making furniture during the winter months, so that they might not be thrown out of work. It is possible that this violent lady might have her prototype in Mrs. Smith of Haughton Castle, the wife of William Smith, before her marriage Miss Anne Keenlyside.²¹ It was recorded of her that in the course of a "grand battle" with her mother-in-law "the young lady threw a tankard of ale on the old lady's face. After much altercation the old lady thought proper to retreat."

A suggestion may be offered as to Esquire Goodman's house, to which the architect added a new wing. At Callaly castle in Whittingham parish a new wing was built in 1727, as the date on it attests. Adding the seven years of the foreman's courtship, we arrive at 1734, which seems to be a fairly suitable date for Abigail's marriage. This new wing was built by order of Ralph Clavering, the owner of Callaly, who died in 1748. In 1757 his son, another Ralph Clavering, made extensive alterations and additions to Callaly, and in the interior decoration of the

²¹ *North Country Diaries II* (Surtees Society, vol. 124), p. 285 and n.

new work there are, according to a good authority, traces of an Italian influence.²² It may be that the old architect designed the 1727 wing, and his foreman and successor the 1757 alterations, in which the influence of his Italian workman is noticeable.²³ The Claverings were Roman Catholics and Jacobites, and would therefore appeal to the sympathies of Mrs. Cook and her friends. *Professed Cookery* was to be bought at a cabinet-maker's in Holborn. Mrs. Cook might have made his acquaintance through Abigail's husband.

Although she was not altogether an attractive character, Mrs. Cook was a very remarkable woman. She reminds me of Anthony Trollope's mother, who took to writing books in her middle-age in order to support her family; but Mrs. Cook showed even more astonishing mental energy in attempting to write anything, even a cookery book, when she was over fifty and had led a very active and wholly non-literary life. At the end of her narrative she says to her friend: "If you live to read the history of my life, in it you may perhaps see something deserving the Press," from which it appears that she was planning a new work. Such an indomitable woman is worthy of our respect.

²² *N.C.H.*, XII, p. 531, and pedigree of Clavering facing p. 537. The Italian influence on the interior work of the 1757 alterations was suggested privately to me.

²³ Alnwick seems the most probable place for the architect's residence, as Morpeth and Hexham are both ruled out by Mrs. Cook, who lived in those towns herself and says she was at a great distance from Abigail, while Berwick at that time was regarded as in another country.