

THE CHILDREN OF
GEORGE SMYTTAN DAVIDSON (1816-1901)
AND HIS WIFE
MARY GAMMELL STEWART (1830-1923)

FOREWORD

This account of the children of the Rev. George Smyttan Davidson and his wife Mary Gammell Stewart has been written by three of their grandchildren, Alastair Davidson (R.A.M.D.), George Davidson (G.S.D.), and myself (M.S.P.). George's account of his father was written just before his death in 1960; the pencil manuscript which he left was never revised by him, and has been typed as it stood, except that obvious verbal slips have been corrected. Alasdair has had access to our Grandfather's diary; he has therefore been able to give factual biographies, as well as personal recollections. In what I have written, I have relied mainly on my own recollections. Up till our Grandfather's death in 1901, we spent every year long summer holidays at Kinfauns Manse, so that as a child I got to know all our Uncles and Aunts (except George, who had died in 1880). To me it seemed that the Manse was always crowded with Uncles and Aunts; at any rate, the big dining room table was always tall up at meal times and what meals they were! Those were happy days. The sun always shone, the fountain on the lawn always threw a rainbow across the rose-beds, there were mountains of strawberries on the table, and the gooseberries in the garden never came to an end, and there were always Uncles and Aunts around to bestow attention when required on me and my brother Nicolas.

Michael Stewart Pease.

July, 1961.

GEORGE HARCOURT DAVIDSON

1856-1880

Uncle George, who died twenty years before I was born, seems to have been a young man of a singularly lovable disposition. At any rate, he was always referred to by my Uncles and Aunt with respect and affection.

After leaving the Senior Class at the Royal High School, he secured a post in Glasgow with a firm of Civil and Mining Engineers in August 1871.

In August 1876 he had to give up his post and was for a year “under the Surgeon’s hand and more seriously under the Physician”.

But by mid-1877 he was able to attend Natural Philosophy and Engineering Classes at Edinburgh University: and towards the end of that year his health seemed so re-established that, on the recommendation of his previous employer, he accepted the offer of the post of Assistant Manager at Lugar Ironworks. Unfortunately his body had become a suitable focus for Koch’s bacillus and a haemorrhage occurred on January 8th, 1879 followed at intervals by others until his death in May 1880 at Kinfauns Manse. His grave is in the churchyard.

R.A.M.D.

JAMES STEWARD DAVIDSON - I

1858-1950

Uncle James was born at Kinfauns on 13th January, 1858. I don’t think that I ever heard about his early schooling, but I presume that he attended the Parish School until he was aged 9 or 10, when he went, during term time, to live with his grandfather Stewart at Liberton Manse, to enable him to attend the Royal High School, where his father had been before him.

The morning routine at Liberton was spartan: 7 a.m. rise, 7.20 breakfast, 7.40 family morning prayers, 8 a.m. leave, first with his elder brother George and later with Harcourt as well, to trudge, wet or shine, the three miles to the High School as at that hour no bus was available. There is no doubt that this daily walk contributed to the fine physical development of the whole family. For the return journey a coach was available, if they got out of school punctually, to take them as far as Liberton Dams, where the side road branched off to the Church and Manse from the main road to the south.

In those days it was the custom for the form master to progress up the school with his form, and he taught all subjects. It was Uncle James’ good fortune to join the class taught by

“Jimsy” Donaldson. He was a cultured man, a good teacher, a stern disciplinarian (he had to be with a class of 90) and a “look” was usually enough to deal with any misdemeanour. He later became the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of St. Andrew’s University and was knighted. I remember seeing him at an Inter-university Athletic Meeting at Aberdeen, when I was a student more than 50 years after he was teaching that particular class at the High School. At School, Uncle James had a turn of speed as a runner, and played wing three quarter in his early teens, until he damaged an ankle (probably a ruptured external lateral ligament) and had to give it up. All his life thereafter he was very prone to “go over on” that ankle when walking on uneven ground.

When he was 16, he had reached the Senior Class at school and wished to go in for medicine. On account, however, of the large family of brothers that had to be brought up and educated, it was essential for the older members to push on and be self-supporting as soon as possible, so he attended some classes in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University “for the sake of general culture” for a year, and then went into the office of the then well known merchants in Leith, Gillespie and Cathcart. There he progressed up the various stages from office boy till, after two years’ service, he was sent to Fraserburgh to help with the herring export part of the business which the firm ran there. After two years, when still probably only 21, he was put in charge of the work and continued till either that branch of the work was given up or the firm gave up business as a whole. I am inclined to think that the latter contingency was so, as both Gillespie and Cathcart were old men when he joined the firm.

It was natural that one Minister should command a young son, going out to strange parts, to the care of the Minister of the parish whither he was sent. That was how he came to meet the Rev. Peter McLaren and his second daughter, Agnes Finlayson, who subsequently became his wife. Through them he got an entry to the houses of any who at that time thought they were somebody in Fraserburgh, and among them was one, Archie Watson, who was then Agent (now called Manager) of the North Bank. This had an important bearing on his career not long after.

When Gillespie and Cathcart gave up business, Uncle James decided to launch out on his own. A herring exporter’s business is an exceedingly speculative one, as will be clear when it is pointed out that the usual routine was to buy a catch of herring from a curer, sometimes even before they were cured, without any knowledge when a sale for the cured herrings would be found on the Continent, when freightage would be available and what it would cost. This involved the possession of some capital (the more the better) and credit, and of these Uncle James had at the beginning none. However, Mr. Watson had taken a fancy to him, both as a man and as a business man, and lent him money of his own. I gathered that there was some unwritten agreement between them, and also lent him money from the bank with absolutely no security. When this was discovered during the annual inspection of the branch of the Bank, Mr. Watson was given a severe rap over the fingers, as it was quite against

banking practice for an agent to indulge in business apart from that of the bank and to give credit without reasonable security.

However the business was going well and there was now a little capital to play with and no more need to borrow without security. By degrees the business was built up from these small beginnings, and though there were, of course, ups and downs, there were more ups than downs and things began to prosper.

The business grew till, in 1912, when it was given up, he had agents in every herring port round the coast and on the Continent. His agents were to be found all along the Baltic Ports as far as St. Petersburg (as it then was) across Germany to Berlin, Warsaw (then in Russia) and Moscow and down to the S.E. of Germany to Dresden, Munich and Breslau. The sales on the Continent were carried out almost entirely by "foreign telegram" in code, and many of these I have taken down over the telephone when the messages were sent on to Taymount and later to Cairnlee after office hours if Uncle James was not available when the phone rang.

In addition to the export business, he carried on an agency for the Salt Union in Cheshire for the supply of salt for the curing, and he also imported it from Spain and also acted as a clearing agent for barrels between the coopers and the curers. When the export business was given up, he did not sell it or have any one succeed him, but allowed his various agents to make use of any connections which had been built up and make what they could out of it. The onset of the War two years later of course put "finis" to their chances of success.

From 1912 to 1919 Uncle James kept on his office. Till 1914 he continued his salt and barrel business, and thereafter his office was used as the head-quarters of the County War Work Association, of which he became the Secretary and Organiser. With a very skeleton staff the whole county was organised into work parties, and over a million comforts were sent out to the troops. For this work his name appeared in the first list of O.B.E.s. At the Investiture at which he received the Order from H.M. King George V, his cousin Sir Gershom Stewart, M.P. received a C.B.E.

Uncle James and Auntie Gie were married on 20th February, 1890 in St. Giles and went to live in Aberdeen. Auntie Janet, Auntie Gie's younger sister, lived with them for some years till she was married to Uncle Roger in the East Church in June 1897 on a day of torrential rain~

It is natural that with such a heredity, religion, and the Church of Scotland in particular, occupied a niche in Uncle James' life apart from his business. He was ordained an Elder in 1892 and served for 58 years till his death. He was one of the several young men, zealous for the Church, that Dr. Cooper had collected round him. Auntie Gie served diligently at a Mothers' Meeting attached to the Church. It was much more than a working party, and much

useful advice and information was given about domestic matters and the care of children, for, of course, in these days there was no Maternity and Child Welfare this served the purpose and did the work subsequently taken up by the Public Health Medical Officers and Health Visitors.

In 1899 when Dr. Cooper was transferred to the Chair of Church History at Glasgow University, they transferred their membership to the newly erected and struggling quoda sacra church of St. Ninian on the outskirts of the City, being more convenient and nearer to Taymount whither they had moved in 1895.

Uncle James was immediately co-opted to the new Kirk session and Auntie Gie resumed duties with the Women's Guild, though it was more a work party as there were no truly poor in this parish. It was a long stiff fight to get the debt cleared from the Church but eventually £6000 + interest, a large sum in those days, was raised.

Later when they moved to Cairnlee in 1909, Uncle James began the organisation of a campaign to build a proper church in place of the rather dismal hall-like building that was serving as such at Cults. In spite of the difficulties due to the War, a very lovely little church was built and opened free of debt in June, 1916. He continued as a devoted Elder till his death, though his difficulty in locomotion during his last 2 years made it impossible for him to take an active part.

He gave up his office when the War Work Party was wound up, and as he was then a very active 61, he had to find an outlet for his energy. One such was his work as a Trustee of the Church of Scotland, and he served from the passing of the Acts of Union in 1924 till the Union was completed in 1929, when he resigned, his work in this connection having been completed.

Under previous legislation the Heritors of the Church were required to keep the churches, manses and other church properties in proper structural and decorative condition. Under the Act they were required to hand over the fabric finally in a proper state of repair. It is clear that this term lent itself to many interpretations and much disputation took place and even litigation until all the parishes in Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine had, under his efforts with the Rev. Dr. Cox of Dyce, been settled and handed over to the Trustees. For this work he was publicly thanked from the floor of the Assembly.

When this was completed, another Church matter that occupied Uncle James' attention was the "Committee for the Maintenance of the Ministry". There were, and I suppose still are, very wealthy trust funds for the benefit of, though not directly under the control of, the Church. The Managers of these Funds agreed that where a congregation raised £10 to form an endowment fund for the stipend of the Minister of the Parish, they would contribute a like

sum. Uncle James now set himself to meet the Committees of Management of many of the churches in the area, where the stipend was too slender, and got them to raise the half of a fund which, with a like contribution from the Baird and other Trusts would, when suitably invested, yield a sum that would help to raise the stipend to a less penurious level. When it is pointed out that many of the stipends then amounted to only £300 and that all were raised to £600, it is an indication of the amount and the quality of the work that he put in.

Another such was his work for and devotion to the Unionist Party. While in town he had been a member of the South Aberdeen Division, but now he was able to give much more time to Committee Meetings of and canvassing for the Central Aberdeenshire Division. For a time he served on the Eastern Divisional Council for Scotland, which met in Edinburgh, and he was also for a time a member of the Committee of the S.C.C. and was a member of the Club for many years.

Another outlet of his energy was the Deeside Field Club. This was founded very shortly after the first World War. He became first Joint Secretary and later sole Secretary. The Club met every month from April to September and heard lectures on various archeological, historical, geological, zoological etc., subjects, and visited the places in the North East where these items were to be found. Uncle James secured the speakers, organised the transport (usually by bus) and the teas (most important!) for these excursions. This continued till World War 2 when it had to lapse, and I doubt if it came to life again after the War. At any rate Uncle James was not then able to organise things, and some one else must have taken over the secretarial duties if the Club was resurrected.

Though his locomotion handicapped him greatly (he had to use a stick in the house and a bath chair outside during the last 2 years of his life), his mental keenness and perspicacity were preserved. Right to the end of his days he was able to write and speak against oppression and anything that offended his ideas of right and wrong, especially of the way in which Westminster was apt to tack Scotland on to England, almost as if it were another English County instead of being a country with its own heritage and tradition. He was perhaps most vociferous of all in his criticism and condemnation of Attlee and the Socialist Government.

G.S.D.

JAMES STEWARD DAVIDSON - II
1858-1950

My first recollection of Uncle James was in my early boyhood when my Mother (with my brother and myself) spent part of each summer at Fraserburgh where he and Aunt Agnes established themselves during the herring season. As young children we were slightly in awe

of him. He was a tall, handsome man, very like his cousin Gershom Stewart (himself said to be the handsomest Member of the House of Commons at that time), with a strong sense of propriety, immense drive and determination and great organising ability. As we of the younger generation grew older we remarked, not without amusement, the great similarity between Uncle James and his sister (Aunt Minnie) in everything except politics in which their views diverged very sharply.

At about ten years of age Uncle James went to stay with his grandparents at Liberton Manse to enable him to attend the Royal High School. (My grandfather's "jottings" record that on the 3rd October 1870 he left for Edinburgh with George and James for their "third course at the High School".)

At the end of his Secondary education Uncle James aspired to a medical career; but 'res angusta domi' decreed otherwise. After attending certain Arts classes at Edinburgh University he joined the firm of Gillespie and Cathcart in Leith where he served for four years as an apprentice and for seven years as an assistant, eventually being placed in charge of the firm's branch in Fraserburgh.

When the firm of Gillespie and Cathcart ceased its business activities (the partners were old men when Uncle James joined the firm), he struck out on his own in the highly speculative business of herring exporter. After various vicissitudes the business prospered until by 1912, he had agents throughout the Baltic as well as in the leading herring ports in Britain. In addition Uncle James had an extensive business with Spain and North Africa, chiefly as an importer of salt.

In 1894 he was joined by Uncle Jack on the latter's return from Australia. Under this arrangement Uncle James was enabled to travel extensively in the Baltic countries while Uncle Jack dealt with the accounting, freight and insurance problems. I have always understood that Uncle Jack joined the business on a salary and commission basis and that there was no formal partnership since, with his strict banking training, he was unwilling to come into a partnership without bringing in some capital; while Uncle James, for his part, was unwilling to subject Uncle Jack's slender resources to the extreme gamble that the business entailed.

Fortunately for the two brothers they gave up the herring export business in 1913. Had they continued until the outbreak of war, they would have faced financial disaster. Uncle Jack retired to Southern Ireland; but Uncle James retained his office in Aberdeen and continued his salt business. Subsequently his office became the headquarters of the County War Work Association, of which he was Secretary and Organiser. It was one of his proud boasts that the amount contributed to this cause per head of the population of Aberdeenshire far exceeded

that of any other County in the United Kingdom. For his services in this matter, his name appeared in first list of Officers of the British Empire.

For a man with Uncle James's background it was only natural that he should take a deep interest in Church affairs. As one of the Trustees of the Church of Scotland he made a significant contribution during the crucial years between the Act of Union in 1706 and the formal completion of the Union in 1707. He also did valuable work in connection with the raising of minimum stipends.

Politics also occupied his interest. He was a staunch supporter of the Unionist Party and devoted much time to the organisation of the party in the East-Aberdeenshire Division. For some years he served on the Party's Eastern Divisional Council for Scotland.

I saw Uncle James most frequently between 1914 and 1924 at Cairnlee, where Aunt Agnes and he kept "open house" for their nephews and nieces. One of my most vivid recollections of him is as Secretary of the Deeside Field Club, which met during the summer months to hear lectures on archaeological, historical and kindred matters in appropriate localities. To see Uncle James in action when organising these excursions (he fixed up the lectures and arranged the transport and commissariat) was a fascinating experience.

I paid short visits to Cairnlee whenever I came on leave from Africa between 1925 and 1950 and was amazed by Uncle James's mental vigour as an old man. It was only in his ninetieth year when his locomotion failed him that I discerned signs that the end was approaching. In his younger days he was a tremendous walker and had traversed every glen of the Scottish Highlands on foot. Any newcomer to the land who wished a rewarding tour to be mapped out had only to go to Uncle James.

R.A.M.D.

HARCOURT MORTON DAVIDSON - I

1859 - 1926

For Uncle Harcourt, as for his brothers (apart from Andrew the youngest), Liberton was a second home in his years of adolescence. From there he attended the Royal High School and the University of Edinburgh. Despite his "many natural gifts" his future seems to have been the cause of considerable anxiety to his parents - an anxiety which was "amply repaid" when they first heard him preach in Kinfauns Church on August 24th, 1884. He had been unanimously appointed assistant in West St. Giles, Edinburgh, a few weeks previously (having been licensed by the Presbytery of Perth towards the end of June in that year). According to my grandfather's "jottings" "George ever had a great interest in Harcourt and

destined the legacy, which he got from Captain Thornton, to defray the expense of Harcourt's studying for the Ministry".

On October 3rd 1887 (his father's 70th birthday) he preached in St. Andrews Church, Dundee, and was the "choice of the people in a unanimous and cordial call (signed by 1000)". The day of his Ordination (December 16th) seems to have been quite an affair - dinner in the queen's Hotel with the Provost in the Chair, a Soirée in the Church at 7.30 p.m. with "excellent addresses" from various notables, fine music (vocal and instrumental) and a presentation to Harcourt of a handsome pulpit gown and cincture. My grandfather records:- "We all reached home (Harcourt included) at 1 a.m. and with thankful and delighted hearts enjoyed supper"! For the rest of his life Uncle Harcourt remained at St. Andrews, Dundee - a much loved parish minister.

My recollections of Uncle Harcourt cover two periods, the first being the pre-1914 years when once or twice annually he conducted the evening Service at Kinfauns, the second from 1914 to the early "twenties" when he visited the Manse at the New Year or at family gatherings, e.g. the celebration of my grandmother's 90th birthday.

As a preacher he was pre-eminent. His ideas were deep and true, clearly and distinctly expressed, earnestly and impressively delivered. As a little boy, when I could not by any stretch of imagination have developed a predilection for sermons, Uncle Harcourt's discourses never failed to rivet my attention and, indeed, the attention of all who listened to him. Apart from his natural gift of oratory, he was impressive in appearance. Like his brothers and sister he was over six feet in height and massively proportioned. He would have played Rugby for Scotland had he not been injured in a final trial when he was only 17 years old: so he must have developed his great physique at a very early age.

The second period of my recollection of Uncle Harcourt (from 1914 onwards) is marked by enjoyment of his gifts as a raconteur. He had a "pawky" humour and an endless repertory of amusing anecdotes. I have always regretted that I never heard him speak at a public function. He had the reputation of being the finest after-dinner speaker in Dundee, being bracketed in that capacity with the local M.P. (Winston Churchill). He won a unique place in the affections of the people of Dundee; and his memory is still treasured by its middle-aged and elderly citizens. The stories about him are legion: whenever I visit Dundee and happen to mention that I am Harcourt Davidson's nephew, a new one is invariably forth-coming.

In 1888 Uncle Harcourt married Jane Primrose Hutchison, daughter of a Leith merchant. One of her brothers, Sir Robert, was a famous child doctor. Another, who carried on the family business, was Lord Provost of Edinburgh and received a Baronetcy after his second "tour of Service". As a young woman Aunt Primrose was said to be a beauty. When I first remember her she was "amply proportioned", ever ready to cackle with laughter and possessed of a

somewhat Rabelaisian wit. My relations with her were always harmonious and she was charming to those who met with her “approval”. She had, however, a streak of ruthlessness and was an implacable enemy of those who incurred her displeasure. She died in the winter of 1952.

R.A.M.D.

HARCOURT MORTON DAVIDSON - II
1859 - 1926

Uncle Harcourt, like all his brothers, stood over six feet tall. But, unlike his brothers, he was stout his weight must have been tremendous. To me as a small child, he seemed solemn. We stood rather in awe of him, partly, I think, because he didn't enter into our childish games as the other Uncles did. When I was very small he and Aunt Primrose visited us at Limpsfield: I remember his reproving me for calling my father “Ted”. He was a Minister in Dundee where he was widely known for his great personal kindness, for his learned and eloquent preaching, and for his fund of good stories. There were also many good stories about him, some still current in Dundee. One such recently came to my ears. Uncle Harcourt was some half an hour late for a wedding in his church: when the bridegroom expostulated at his lateness, Uncle Harcourt retorted “By the look of the bride, you are several months late”!

His trouble was that he mixed Scotch theology with Scotch whisky; the latter hastened his death in 1926 at a relatively early age. The last time I met him was in 1918, just after my return from Germany. He took me to his club in Dundee; and while I sipped a glass of lemonade I marvelled how he put down tumbler after tumbler of whisky and soda, the soda being the minor ingredient. He rose from his seat as steady as a pillar and piloted me unerringly through the streets to Tay Bridge Station.

Aunt Primrose was the sister of the famous child doctor, Sir Robert Hutchison who died only in 1960. She was large and florid, with a penetrating voice, and laughter ever on her lips; she was kind and understanding to us children, perhaps because she had none of her own. She had a beautiful alto voice, and I used to sit transfixed while she sang at the piano in Kinfauns Manse. She and Uncle Harcourt adopted Uncle Andrew's Gordon after Uncle Andrew's death, and brought him up as their own child.

M. S. P.

MARY GAMMELL PEASE - I

1861 - 1950

Those who have recorded their impressions of my grandfather during the latter part of the nineteenth century~ present a picture of a gentle, scholarly dreamer living, as it were, in a separate compartment from the numerous and noisy family with which at various times of the day he was of necessity brought into contact. But these impressions cover the latter part of his life, spent in the peace and quiet of Kinfauns, very different from the earlier part with its manifold activities when he was brought in contact with famous men and historic places. My grandfather was a deeply religious man, but he was no narrow theologian. His journal abounds in evidence of his interest in scenery, historical monuments, famous battlefields, ancient manuscripts, classical scholarship, climatic peculiarities there is a long chronological note on the winter weather in Dresden picture galleries, objets d'art, national characteristics and national history. And on all these topics he displays no mean powers of observation and a rich equipment of historical, classical, and ecclesiastical knowledge. When he married in 1855 Mary Gammell Stewart, the daughter of the Rev. John Stewart, who was distinguished for his determination in a church which has produced many determined characters, it required no great gift of imagination to foresee that the issue of that union would include some unusual personalities. Such a one was our grandparent's only daughter (Aunt Minnie).

Factual details of Aunt Minnie's earlier years are largely lost in the "mists of pre-history". She attended the Ministers' Daughters' College, Edinburgh, (now Esdaile School) in the "seventies", being a contemporary of my mother's elder sisters, Aunt Margaret (Mrs. Calder) and Aunt Agnes (Uncle James's wife). She was present, with her parents and seven brothers, at the funeral service of her grandfather at Liberton on 4th January 1880; and she was also present on the 20th May of that year at the burial of her eldest brother George. The following year found her in London, apparently undergoing a teacher training course in Miss Buss's Young Ladies Seminary, Camden Road. My grandfather, writing from 424 Camden Road, immediately after returning from his last continental tour, records that he accompanied Aunt Minnie to the Crystal Palace on the 9th May, 1881 and that on the following day he called on Miss Buss and was "much pleased with what he saw".

By the end of 1882 she was back at the Manse assisting her mother in good works. The journal (December 17th 1882) records a week "unusually trying and severe with all the multifarious duties and distractions incident to a Bazaar The occasion apparently was to enable the Presbytery to fulfil an obligation to rebuild Kinnoull Church: and my grandfather writes pungently that Mary, and Minnie seconding her, "laboured at it beyond her strength amid heavy troubles"!

At some time in the "eighties" Aunt Minnie became engaged to Dr. Ballingall, the minister of the adjacent Rhind Parish: but the latter broke it off, thereby invoking the brotherly

vituperations characteristic of the times. It seems probable (though this is mere surmise) that the foregoing episode in her life induced in Aunt Minnie an animus against the church as an institution, while in no wise abating her religious and reforming zeal. Be that as it may, she left the Manse on 2nd October, 1888 to enter St. Hilda's College, Cheltenham.

The journal (January 1st 1889) records the family gathering (apart from Uncle Jack) on New Year's Day. "And more than that, a prospective daughter-in-law, Agnes McLaren engaged to James and a prospective son-in-law Edward Pease engaged to Minnie". Exactly a year later my grandfather notes that Minnie has "gone forth (September 16th) in married life to the great Metropolis with the Partner and in the sphere she has chosen"; and on October 3rd 1890: "This day brought the news of the birth of a son to Minnie at Aberfeldy yesterday at 0.45 a.m.". At the end of April 1891 my grandparents journeyed to London to see Aunt Minnie in "her own Home". Further visits followed in May 1895 ("we may now localise them - and where it is their purpose to build on an acre they have bought") and in May 1896 "to see Minnie and hers in their new abode", that is, the Pendicle, Limpsfield where she and Uncle Edward lived for the rest of their long lives.

My memories of Aunt Minnie begin in my boyhood and youth (1907-1923) when my grandmother was still alive and staying at the Manse. I then formed a clear impression of a devoted daughter (my grandmother won the respectful affection of all her children) with a deep interest in all that concerned the family and in her childhood contemporaries in Kinfauns, e.g. the Misses Drummond Hay. She was of more than ordinary stature for a woman and, moreover, had a vigorous personality.

It was years later when I visited the Pendicle on furlough from Africa (and more frequently during my secondment to the Colonial Office in 1941-43) that I came to appreciate her prodigious energy supported by an iron constitution. She ran her household single-handed, entertaining all and sundry in the process: she ministered to the sick and the afflicted for miles around: she was a tireless member of the District Council (Education and Housing being her main interests); and she was a regular attender at the Oxted Bench and quarter Sessions (she was one of the first women J.P.s).

Aunt Minnie shared with her brother James a restless energy and a flair for getting things done. In achieving their objectives, all obstacles were brushed aside; and woe betide the person who endeavoured to thwart them. They both had the physique which enabled them to carry out their activities to an age when ordinary mortals would have retired or, at least, taken things more easily.

R.A.M.D.

MARY GAMMELL PEASE - II

1861 - 1950

One of the many oddities about my mother was that she was never known by her proper Christian name: she was Aunt Minnie at the Manse and Aunt Marjory in the south country. She was our grandparents' only daughter and in some ways she must have been a problem child, or at any rate a difficult "teenager. She was always silent about her childhood she refused many entreaties to write out her story and many more times she evaded answering questions. My father respected her wishes, and even if he himself knew, he never let on to his children. She was at a girls' school in Edinburgh much later she trained as a teacher under Miss Buss, of whom she always spoke warmly, and for a short time she was at Cheltenham. She certainly held a Cambridge teacher's certificate and she did teach at one time in Fitzroy Square at a school run by Louise Michel, the best known heroine of the Paris Commune. Her girlhood can hardly have been without some unhappiness, for at an early age she rebelled against the narrow theology of the Manse. She developed a religious urge to do good for the poor and the oppressed on this earth, and to good works in Kinfauns and in the neighbouring parishes she devoted herself with the zeal of a convert. She became engaged to the Minister of a neighbouring parish, but broke it off when she ceased to believe in his religion. At some point her good works brought her into touch with an eminent Edinburgh divine, a certain Dr. Glass. Dr. Glass shared her social sympathies, he understood her aversion from the narrow theology of the church, though he did not share her atheism. They struck up a great friendship, so that she became a frequent and welcome visitor at the Glass household in Edinburgh.

Now it happened that my father, (Uncle Edward), after a short and successful career on the London Stock Exchange, came under the influence of William Morris and the arts and crafts movement; he came to Newcastle to work with his hands as a cabinet maker and incidentally to convert his fellow workers to socialism. News of Dr. Glass' s remarkably "left" views had filtered south to Newcastle, and my father in consequence travelled north to meet this unusually outspoken Edinburgh divine. There he met not only the socialist Minister, but also his future wife; for Aunt Minnie, there and then, decided to marry Edward Pease. They were married in Gateshead Registry office on September 16th 1889; Sidney Webb was a witness, and my Aunt Lucy Pease provided the wedding breakfast in Darlington. My mother was then 28, so that clearly much of her early days has remained untold.

One story of my parents' engagement is worth recording. As a young man, our Grandpapa had been a tutor in the Gurney family. There, like everyone else, he fell under the spell of Elizabeth (Gurney) Fry. One of my cherished relics is a book given to our grandpapa by Elizabeth Fry and inscribed in her own handwriting. Grannie and grandpapa became more reconciled to Aunt Minnie's eccentric engagement, when they learnt that their future son-in-law's mother was a Fry. They went down to Bristol to visit my grandmother Pease (née

Susan Fry). And no doubt as they passed along the corridor to the principal visitor's room, grandpapa's eye would have caught sight of Richmond's well known portrait of Elizabeth looking down at him. Be that as it may, grandpapa eagerly swapped stories about Elizabeth with my grandmother and the older generation of Frys who had known Elizabeth well. And then, forgetting that he was in a Fry household and not in a Gurney household, he came out with the well known Gurney jibe, "Ah, she was far too good for her husband"! (The jibe is unfair on Joseph Fry: he was her devoted slave and every penny that he earned, and he was a lot richer than the Gurneys, went to Elizabeth for her prison work.)

My parents (Aunt Minnie and Uncle Edward) lived from about 1893 until the end of their days at Limpsfield in Surrey. In the early years they spent long summer holidays at Kinfauns, for Aunt Minnie was a devoted daughter. She was also a most devoted mother; where we two boys were concerned, nothing was too much trouble. We lived comfortably, but very austere; we fed well, but very simply. In helping others and in educating us two boys my parents spent generously; but they disliked spending money on themselves and in any case there was very little to spend. Aunt Minnie insisted on doing her own housework, and that at a time when this was regarded as quite shocking in middle-class families. But Aunt Minnie was never deterred by convention. She did her own housework partly on principle ("no man is good enough to be another man's master") and partly because she regarded servants as at once incompetent, dishonest, and expensive. As soon as we boys were off at school, mother returned to good works. She threw herself into politics and was, to a considerable degree, responsible for the unique Liberal victory in the Reigate Division of Surrey in 1906. She herself unsuccessfully contested the same division in the Labour interest in 1922.

But her real absorbing life interest lay in Local Government She was elected a Poor Law Guardian and Rural District Councillor in 1911, a position which she held without break until her retirement in 1946. Her widespread but unspectacular work here for the poor, the sick, the homeless and the unfortunate was truly vast. Day in and day out for forty years the problems of feckless humanity poured in upon her. She was never daunted, she never gave in, she never ceased to worry, and she rarely failed in the end to find the solution for her clients. The public position that pleased her most of all was her appointment as a J.P. in the first list of women magistrates after the removal of the sex-disqualification in 1918. She was assiduous in her attendance at the Oxted Bench and at Quarter Sessions: she served on the Lord Lieutenant's Advisory Committee for Surrey during the whole of her time as a Magistrate.

Aunt Minnie's passion for helping the unfortunate was sometimes almost quixotic; she would drive 10 miles in our old open pony cart, regardless of roads or weather, to take to some ailing old body fruit and flowers from the garden and to listen helpfully to her tale of woe. Very occasionally something would turn her kindness sour, and she would pursue her victim with a hatred that was uncanny. It was an odd inconsistency in her character; but it showed that even Aunt Minnie had within her some spark of human frailty. She was not interested in

abstract ideas; action alone satisfied her restless spirit. She was dominated by an overpowering sense of public duty, and she was endowed with nerves of steel that drove her victoriously forward when others, more prudent, would have rested; and which finally drove her to her death at 89 during the General Election campaign of 1950.

Aunt Minnie will be remembered in Oxted and Limpsfield for very many years to come, since some of her work was embodied in building. She was indefatigable in getting Council Houses built in these two parishes indeed she was a pioneer, since her District Council was one of the only two Rural District Councils which put up Council Houses before the first war. Another of her achievements before the first war was getting a new council school built in a remote part of the parish, where the need was very great. But for Aunt Minnie, neither these Council Houses nor this school would have been built when they were. On her retirement from the Council, her fellow members presented her with her portrait, which now hangs in the Council chamber at Oxted; and shortly after her death the Council named a small estate on Limpsfield Chart "Marjory Pease Cottages".

M. S. P.

JOHN STEWARD DAVIDSON
1863 - 1952

Uncle Jack's "second home" in his boyhood days was Liberton Manse where, along with his brothers, he undertook daily the long walk to and from the Royal High School during session time. On the completion of his secondary education he was apprenticed to the Commercial Bank of Scotland, Perth, where he served for five years at the princely salary of £10 per annum, rising to £12d before going out into the world.

On June 21st, 1886, Uncle Jack left Kinfauns to start on his long voyage to Melbourne. His departure was evidently deeply felt by his parents, for my grandfather notes in his journal:- "The parting is very sore to me who in all likelihood will never see him again and to his mother who was so devoted to him, and in whom we had so good and dutiful, so considerate and loving a son. All this that so endeared him to us, makes the parting more painful. Still, we have had him with us till his youth was ripe and well formed and his principles so far confirmed. He goes forth to a fine country and a healthy climate with much better prospects in his profession than he ever could have here. His past augurs well for his future."

After seven years absence - on June 1st, 1894 - Uncle Jack returned to the Manse "the same kindly, home-loving youth". He had done well in his profession, first in Victoria, and, later, in Perth, Western Australia. Whether his return was due to pressure on my grandfather's part (as averred by my mother) or to his own volition, is not quite clear. It may be that both

factors operated; and that the prospect of linking up in business with Uncle James may have turned the scales. In any event, the two brothers joined forces: and my grandfather records a visit to Aberdeen in November 1894 where he enjoyed, inter alia, seeing James and John in “brotherly harmony and mutual help in business”. This collaboration lasted until 1913 when, fortunately for both, they gave up their highly speculative export trade with the Baltic.

I first remember Uncle Jack in my early childhood during his frequent visits to the Manse and during the summer holidays when my mother (with my brother Jock and myself) paid our annual visit to Fraserburgh and Crimond. He was tall, good looking, with sparkling blue eyes and a great sense of fun a trait which endeared him to his nephews and nieces.

In 1909 he married Marie Louise Heuston, the younger daughter of a small landed proprietor near Tipperary. It was no doubt at Aunt Louise’s instance that Uncle Jack, on his retirement from business, decided to settle down in Ireland at Innisshannon, County Cork, where he lived a happy carefree existence in idyllic surroundings on the bank of the River Bandon for eight years. I have clear recollections of a delightful holiday spent in Coolmoreen (with my father and brother) in 1916. My cousin Nicolas Pease, who also stayed with Uncle Jack and Aunt Louise during that period, revisited the spot only last year (1960) and has informed me that Uncle Jack’s name is still remembered locally.

When “the troubles” came in 1921, Uncle Jack decided to return to Britain and after a short stay in London (St. Johns Wood) settled down in Twyford, Berkshire. A year later he and Aunt Louise lost their only child - a bright little girl of three years - as a result of a “missed appendix”, a grievous blow which Uncle Jack bore with immense fortitude. A year or two later they moved to Bournemouth where they stayed until the end of their lives and were devotedly served by Mrs. Johnson, the widow of an officer in a Highland Regiment.

I stayed for several months at Twyford in 1922/23 and visited Uncle Jack and Aunt Louise in Bournemouth whenever I came on leave from Africa. For over 30 years we kept in close touch for I was, I believe, his favourite nephew: and Uncle Jack was a prolific correspondent - so much so that my father averred that he was frightened to write to him because a reply invariably came by return of post!

I always found Uncle Jack a delightful companion, fond of a joke, catholic in his tastes, and mellow in his judgment of people and affairs. He was a “middle of the road man” in politics, a lover of nature in all its aspects, fond of music (in his younger days he was a competent violinist), interested in all forms of sport (Henley, Twickenham, Wimbledon and Lords found him a frequent visitor when he was in his prime), and a devotee of the Fine Arts (picture galleries and the like attracted him greatly). He had a genius for friendship and corresponded regularly until the end of his days with companions of more than sixty years standing. He lacked the restless energy of his brother James and sister Minnie and regarded their more

quixotic ventures with amused tolerance. Had he combined their traits with those which were peculiarly his own, I believe that he would have carved out for himself a notable niche in public life. Up to the last he retained a natural gaiety of spirit which was all the more remarkable, since Aunt Louise developed a mental illness which would have damped the spirits of a lesser man.

R.A.M.D.

WILLIAM SMYTTAN DAVIDSON - I
1867 - 1906

I have no clear recollection of Uncle Willie though I must have seen him in my early childhood since he lived in Perth and was a frequent visitor to the Manse. I remember, however, the news of his death being brought to me by my nurse: and I also recollect being present at his funeral in Kinfauns churchyard in October 1906.

From all I have heard Uncle Willie had a gay and buoyant disposition and was universally popular. At the time of his death he had built up the best legal practice in Perth and had a large clientele, particularly among the farming community.

Uncle Willie, like his elder brothers and my father, was educated at the Royal High School, Edinburgh. He embarked on a legal apprenticeship in 1883 and in that year passed an "Examination in General Knowledge" as prescribed by the Law Agents (Scotland) Act, 1873, "and relative Acts of" Sederunt". At that time he resided in Pilrig Street, Edinburgh (presumably with my grandfather's sister, Jane Walker). He passed his "Second General Knowledge Examination", which at that time was taken towards the end of a legal apprenticeship, in January, 1888. He took Scots Law classes at Edinburgh University during the 1887-1888 Session and Conveyancing during the 1888-89 Session. During his stay in Edinburgh he played Rugby with my father for the Royal High School Former Pupils Club.

He qualified on the 13th March, 1890 and was enrolled in the Register of Law Agents in Scotland on the 27th of that month. On the 29th April, 1890, he signed the Roll permitting him to practise in the Perth Sheriff Court.

Uncle Willie commenced practice immediately thereafter in his own name, first at 6 Charlotte Street and subsequently at 22 St. John Street, Perth. On his death in October 1906 Mr. George N. Gray who was one of his closest friends, was asked by my father if he would take over Uncle Willie's business; and it was arranged that he would carry on as "Davidson & Gray". (Mr. W.N.G. Hunter, Mr. Gray's nephew, who is now the Senior Partner, commenced his apprenticeship with the firm in July, 1907.)

Uncle Willie married Kate Riach, one of the many daughters of Dr. Riach, the minister of Grange Parish Church, Edinburgh. Aunt Kate shared her husband's warm-heartedness and gaiety and was a great favourite with her nephews. I have vivid recollections of her during my younger days at the Manse and at Fraserburgh (during the summer holidays) and, later, at Lockarton Gardens, Edinburgh, when her son George and I were at Fettes. After George was killed on the Somme in 1916, Aunt Kate moved to London and later to Worthing; I saw her at intervals up to the time of her death at the age of 82 years. She remained amazingly cheerful through every vicissitude and I greatly admired the courage with which she fought (and largely overcame) a crippling attack of arthritis.

R.A.M.D.

WILLIAM SMYTTAN DAVIDSON - II

1867 - 1906

Uncle Willie was, of all our Uncles, the one to whom the epithet jovial applied without reservation. Gay, cheerful, generous, warm-hearted, always a twinkle in his eye, a jest on his lips, and a lark round the corner, we children loved him. And we often saw him, for he lived in Perth and was in and out of the Manse almost every day. Uncle Willie's gaiety, unlike Uncle Andrew's, reflected his substantial worldly success, the reward of hard work and persevering industry. He followed his elder brothers to school in Edinburgh, and took up law as a profession, practising as a solicitor in Perth. His practice was clearly successful, since in 1906 he was able to move from a semi-detached suburban villa into a substantial modern residence, standing in ample grounds overlooking the Tay on the out-skirts of Perth. Unfortunately he did not live to enjoy his new estate: in the same year he died suddenly of appendicitis.

Aunt Kate, in those far off days, shared all Uncle Willie's warm-heartedness and gaiety. indeed in some quarters she was regarded as a bit frivolous. But her widowhood permanently saddened her, nor did she ever recover from George's death in the battle of the Somme in 1916. She was sadly crippled with arthritis in later years; but she bore her affliction bravely till the end.

M.S.P.

ROGER STEWART DAVIDSON

1869 - 1955

My grandfather's "jottings" contain the following extract:- "March 14th, 1869. Sabbath, Mr. Stewart here this day to baptise our seventh child and sixth son "Roger Stewart" - after his own father, the child's great grandfather".

My father (Uncle Roger) for the eighty six years of his life was continuously associated with the Parish of Kinfauns apart from a two year spell in Aberdeen where he served as Assistant to the famous Dr. Mitford Mitchell.

He was a countryman by instinct with the countryman's distaste for the urban proletariat. From his Border ancestors he inherited a streak of "thrawnness" (in parenthesis he used to recount how, when a boy, his great grandfather - a land Steward in the Kelso area - hid in the whins to watch Sir John Cope's dragoons splashing through the ford at Coldstream in full flight after the Battle of Prestonpans): from his Stewart ancestors a determination shared in greater and lesser degree by his brothers and sister: and from his Gammell ancestors a vein of panache.

In his early years he attended the Parish School under the village dominie and thereafter went, during term time, to stay with his grandparents at Liberton Manse to attend the Royal High School. On the completion of his secondary education he went to Edinburgh University where he graduated in Arts and Divinity. His Professors included those so brilliantly portrayed by JM. Barrie.

During his stay in Edinburgh Uncle Roger took up Rugby football and developed into one of his country's finest forwards, eventually winning an International cap. In the season 1902-3 he became President of the Scottish Rugby Union and was wont to recall with pride that during his term of office Scotland won the "triple crown".

On February 25th 1894 my grandfather intimated to the Kinfauns congregation that under the burden of advancing years and increasing infirmities, it was no longer in his power "to fulfil the duties of the Minister with justice to the Parish". On July 23rd he finished his active ministry as sole Minister of Kinfauns and recorded the Nomination and Appointment of his son Roger Stewart as Assistant and Successor "with the marked favour of the Presbytery and many kind friends". Uncle Roger's ministry at Kinfauns extended from that year until his death, 61 years later. That of father and son extended over a period of 102 years (1853-1955).

My earliest recollections of my father were of a minister assiduous in visiting his parishioners (most of whom he had known as a boy), of a keen gardener and active sportsman. He was an exceptionally good shot and much in demand during the "Season". He was also an effective

curler and angler. Amongst his other interests were the Territorial Army, in which he served as a Chaplain for about a quarter of a century, and Local Government (he represented the Carse of Cowrie on Perthshire County Council for a number of years).

In June 1897 Uncle Roger married Janet Druinmond McLaren the youngest of the three daughters of the Rev. Peter McLaren of Fraserburgh. Of my earlier recollections of my mother, perhaps the most vivid is that of our annual holiday to Fraserburgh where Uncle James and Aunt Agnes (her elder sister) were installed during the summer months and to the adjacent parish of Crimond where her eldest sister was the minister's wife. Besides Uncle James and Aunt Agnes and their children (George and Pat) and my Mother (Aunt Janet) with my brother Jock and myself there were Uncle Jack and Aunt Louise, Aunt Kate and her three children (George, Mary and Betty), and Mr. and Mrs. Calder (Aunt Mattie) with their children Muriel, Enid, Winifred, Ian and Hew. These were halcyon days when the sun always seemed to shine and bathing picnics were a constant delight. I cannot help thinking that as children we were happier than the present generation. We certainly had no difficulty in finding healthy and varied pastimes in the days when cinema, radio and television were unknown.

My Mother was a handsome woman, hospitable, generous and warm-hearted, albeit headstrong and impatient of contradiction - qualities which she inherited from her father whose name is still remembered in Fraserburgh as the minister who stayed to visit the stricken during a terrible cholera epidemic, when all who could had fled the town.

In her younger days Aunt Janet had a fine mezzo-soprano voice and was a useful pianist. The drawing room at the Manse used to reverberate with the voices of the local Carusos among the farmers and ploughmen: and I have a clear recollection of the quality of the Church choir in 1912-13.

Throughout her long married life Aunt Janet devoted herself energetically to the traditional duties of a Parish Minister's wife - the organisation of the Women's Guild, sales of work, plays, concerts, kinderspiels and the like, a task in which she had a devoted coadjutor, for over a quarter of a century, in Mrs. Sprunt - the wife of the local schoolmaster.

During the second quarter of the century I saw my parents infrequently and then only during my leave of absence from Africa. My recollection is that they carried on with vigour until the mid-thirties when a slackening in their tempo became evident. Thereafter my wife (Elsie) and my brother (Jock) took an ever-increasing part in the conduct and surveillance of the Manse. Nevertheless, Uncle Roger and Aunt Janet enjoyed remarkably good health long after they celebrated their golden wedding. The end of the partnership was forecast in the latter part of 1954. In August of that year Uncle Roger lost the use of his sight - a crushing blow as he was always an avid reader - in October Aunt Janet attended her last whist-drive and dance in the Parish schoolroom (her swan-song, as she then described it).

In February 1955 Uncle Roger died and despite the bitter weather, a packed congregation paid its last tribute to him. A few months later, in early September, Aunt Janet followed him. Before her death she had been taken under the wing of Elsie and myself at St. Andrews.

R.A. M. D.

ANDREW GAMMELL DAVIDSON - I
1872 - 1907

I met Uncle Andrew (so far as I can recollect) on one occasion only when I was about six years of age and have a clear impression of him as a lively, vivacious young man of considerable personal charm .an impression which was subsequently confirmed by my mother and her sisters.

By the time he was of school age, the Liberton Manse was no longer available to enable him to attend the Royal High School, Edinburgh. Accordingly he lived at home and attended Perth Academy until he attained the age of 18 years. Early in 1891 he joined Messrs. Wallace and Nimmo (Wright's) .the leading brewery in Perth. The year 1895 found him in Leigh. (My grandfather records in May of that year that he and my grandmother set out to visit Aunt Minnie and Uncle Edward and their two boys and "stopped on the way to see Andrew at the situation to which he has lately gone, at Leigh, Lancashire").

A subsequent entry in the "jottings" shows that all six surviving sons were at the Manse in February 1898 "to welcome Andrew". '~The dear lad seems to live under a heavy pressure of work in an anxious charge and even in his recreation (Football) violent". I recollect my father saying that while Uncle Andrew was good enough to play for Lancashire, his skill was incommensurate with the prodigious energy which he expended on the football field.

In the early years of the present century Uncle Andrew became Manager of a brewery in Lancaster. I have always understood that he died of pneumonia which he contracted through going out at night in a snowstorm (probably insufficiently clothed) to make sure that the night staff were not letting the temperature of the brew fall.

About the turn of the century Uncle Andrew married a widow with a family by her first husband. When he died in 1907 she was left in straitened circumstances and financed by the family somehow until her own death circa 1919. Meanwhile the relatives of the children by her first marriage made themselves responsible for them; while Gordon was adopted by Uncle Harcourt and Aunt Primrose and Reginald, Ralph and Beatrice educated and launched

on the world by the Davidson uncles and aunt, the main burden falling on Uncle James and Aunt Minnie.

R. A. M. D.

ANDREW GAMMELL DAVIDSON - II

1872 - 1907

Uncle Andrew was the youngest of the seven brothers; being his mother's darling, he was kept at home without getting any professional training. Because of his youth, he was much more of a companion to us children, and I adored him; he was playful, vivacious and a charming companion. He sang beautifully. I remember in the long summer evenings at the Manse when he and Aunt Janet were at the piano in the drawing room (which in later years became the dining room), I used to creep out of bed and come down the winding stone stairs to sit listening outside the door. When I heard someone moving to open the door, I would scuttle back into the dark-ness of the staircase; I was never caught. It was his misfortune that he had had no proper training, so that he did not settle to a job. To save his being inveigled into marrying a girl in a music shop in Perth, he was sent off to Lancaster where he took a job as a clerk in a brewery.

Shortly afterwards, he married a Manchester lass of humble origin. My father visited them in 1901, when he was in Manchester for the Annual Conference of the Labour Party. He found them a happy family living in quite a small way on a weekly wage. Uncle Andrew died suddenly of pneumonia, leaving his wife and four children penniless. Gordon was, as mentioned elsewhere, adopted by Uncle Harcourt and Aunt Primrose. The other three were somehow educated and launched upon the world by the rest of the family, though the main burden fell on Uncle James and on my mother (Aunt Minnie). All have made good.

M.S.P.