

CUNNINGHAMES OF BRIGHOUSE AND LAINSHAW (LANGSHAW)

Sir John Dalrymple in the appendix to his "Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, published 1788, says, "I once asked the late Provost Cochrane of Glasgow... to what causes he imputed the sudden rise of Glasgow. He said it was all owing to four young men of talent and spirit who started at one time in business and whose success gave example to the rest..."

Mr. Cunninghame	afterwards of	Lainshaw
Mr. Speirs	"	Elderslie
Mr. Glassford	"	Dougalston
Mr. Ritchie	"	Busby

Mr. Cunninghame built a "large and elegant mansion in Queen Street which was offered for sale in 1789. It was afterwards purchased by Mr. Stirling. It next became the property of the Royal Bank, and finally was converted into the present Royal Exchange". Strang's "Glasgow and its Clubs" page 42.

"Mr. Cunninghame" was William, 2nd son (surviving) of our great great grandmother by her second husband, Alexander Cunninghame, and consequently half brother of our great grandfather, the Revd. Robert Findlay, D.D. Born in 1731, so shortly after the union of Scotland with England, the wealth and eminence to which his father had attained as a merchant in Kilmarnock both combined to give him a start in life under very favourable conditions. Hence Paterson in his "History of Cunninghame" part II, page 587, "He was brought up to a mercantile life and went out early to America. In a letter written to his 3rd son, William (the late William Cunninghame, Esq. of Lainshaw) dated 8th February, 1794, he says "During the whole time I was in business, say, from 1748 to the 1762, in America, and again from thence to the 1780 in Glasgow where retired from business.... I went out an ignorant raw boy to Virginia in 1746. Covenanted as an apprentice for three years. In 1750 I was appointed to a distinct charge by the company. And in 1752 was appointed to the supreme charge of all the companies settlements in Virginia. In 1762 (after having appointed and installed my brother, Alexander, by authority of the company in my place) I returned to Glasgow, became a principal partner in the trade, and assumed the sole and entire management thereof, which was in the course of 13 years (because the American rebellion commenced in 1775) attended with such success that it enabled me to retire to the country with the estate and property I now enjoy". The trade of Glasgow to the time of the union with England in 1707 had chiefly consisted in the curing of salmon and herrings and exporting them to France and Holland, importing in exchange from thence the luxuries of the continent, and among them, no doubt, likewise those of the distant East. This trade commenced as early as 1420. It may be worth noting here that in 1755 the population of Glasgow was only 23,546, including persons living in Houses beyond the bounds of the City, and that from the period of the union with England the population had doubled. After the union "the American Colonies hitherto the exclusive field for English enterprise were opened to the merchants of the West of Scotland, and partnerships were at once formed, and vessels chartered and thereafter built, for carrying on at first an extensive barter trade, and at length a regular commercial intercourse with Virginia, Maryland and Carolina."

A very interesting account of the tobacco trade is to be found in Dr. Strang's "Glasgow and its Clubs". Among other things he says, "Between 1760 and 1775 Glasgow became the great emporium for tobacco in the Empire, for while the whole import into Great Britain in 1772 was 90,000 hogsheads, Glasgow alone imported 49,000. Dr. Strang, page 40, seems to write of the "Tobacco Aristocracy" with an animus of which it is difficult to believe that as a class they were deserving. "For one of the Shopocracy to speak to a Tobacco Aristocrat on the street without some sign of recognition from the Great Man would have been regarded as an insult." Shopkeepers at the present day never think of speaking unless they are spoken to without a question of insult on either side, and doubtless the merchants of those days were a much more exclusive class than they are now, composed as they were for the most part of members of the principal gentle families of the Country.

they were Princes on the Plain Stanes and strutted about there every day as the rulers of the destinies of Glasgow. Like the princely merchants too who formerly paced the Piazzetta in Venice or occupied the gorgeous palaces in the Strada Balbi of Genoa, the Tobacco Lords distinguished themselves by a particular garb, being attired like their Venetian and Genovese predecessors, in scarlet cloaks, curled wigs, cocked hats and bearing gold headed canes...very soon after that event (the outbreak of the American war) the Tobacco Aristocracy ceased to lead and the scarlet cloaks gradually disappeared from the pavement".

The old oaken cabinet mentioned by my father at page contains among many other documents which throw light on the family histories of ourselves and the Cunninghames, the agreement under which Alexander Cunninghame went to America. "It is agreed betwixt Andrew Cochrane, John Murdoch and Com^y, owners of the ship Cochrane of Glasgow and Alexander Cunninghame, son to the late Alexander Cunninghame, merchant in Kilmarnock, that is to say the said Alexander Cunninghame becomes hereby bound to serve the said owners as their Assistant Supra Cargoe in Virginia under William Cunninghame or any other the said owners shall appoint. And to do everything in his power either by keeping a separate store or otherways as they shall direct, and that for the space of three years from the date hereoff. And that he shall honestly and diligently serve them during the said space to the utmost of his power and capacity. And that he shall faithfully account for whatever goods or money shall be committed to his charge. And not absent from their service during the said space. And obey all orders and directions shall be given him by them or their principall Supra Cargoe. And on the other part the said owners oblige themselves to pay for the passage of said Alexander Cunninghame outward and to furnish him with bed, board and washing in Virginia during the space foresaid, and pay for or give him a (his) passage in a ship of theirs at the expiration of the said three years. And they are to give him five pounds sterling for the first year, ten pounds sterling for the second year and fifteen pounds sterling for the third and last year. And to allow him to sell goods in their store to the extent of thirty pounds sterling yearly. To which sum the said Alexander Cunninghame restricts his dealing in the said store during the time foresaid. And both partys oblige them to perform the premisses to each other and the party

to pay to the party observing, or willing to observe the sum of twenty pounds sterling. Att our performance and we constitute

procorrs In witness whereoff this presents consisting of this and the preceding page written on stamped paper by said Alexander Cunninghame are subscribed by both parties at Glasgow, the 2nd of March one thousand seven hundred and fiftyseven years. Before these witnesses William Robb, merchant in Glasgow and Allan McDonall, servant to the said Andrew Cochrane. The said Alexander Cunninghame in his dealings for the thirty pounds above mentioned is not to mix them with the Comys. signed Andrew Cochrane for self and partners, Alexander Cunninghame. William Robb, witness, Allan McDugall, witness.

Considering that this agreement was made by the "Cochranes Comy." with a lad of only sixteen years of age, likewise bearing in mind the greater value of money as compared with later times, also the probable value of the privilege of dealing to the value of £30 per annum, these must be considered very liberal terms even as compared with similar agreements at the present day. The Trade must have been easily managed. This lad five years later, i.e. in 1762, was installed in full charge of the business and returned home in 1768, havin apparently amassed a good independence. In the old cabinet I find a letter to Dr. Findlay docketed by the latter, "Letter from A. Cunninghame on his arrival w. my son, July, 1768". "Dear Brother, I have the pleasure to inform you that your son and me arrived this day about one o'clock at Fort Glasgow in the Cunninghame, both in good health. Bob's horse, not being so good as mine, I pushed forward to town hoping to overtake W.C. before he went out, and have embraced the opportunity which my being a head of him puts in my power to advise you of Bob's arrival, that you may take your own prudent way of acquainting Mrs. Findlay, least his sudden appearance may have some violent effect on her spirits. He will be here about fifteen minutes or thirty minutes hence. You may therefore expect him in that time. Should you

choose to walk out or send a line for him here. I push immediately out to my brother's, and shall do myself the pleasure of seeing you tomorrow. I would call now but I am aware my presence would have the same effect on Mrs. Findlay as Bob's and probably a worse, he not being come up.

I am, Dr. Sir, Your's affectely, Alex. Cunninghame.

Argyle Street. Cochranes Compy's Counting House.

It will be seen that my grandfather who is alluded to as "Bob", went out in 1764 to his Uncle Alexander apparently under an agreement like the foregoing and that up to 1780 long after Alexander's death when his Uncle William retired from business his career was linked with that of his kinsman.

In the old cabinet there is evidence in correspondence between Dr. Findlay and "Tom" Cunninghame as well as other members of the family of the cause of his father having past him over in the succession. Of his brother Alexander there is little mention. They had evidently displeased their father by their conduct. "Tom" had entered the army, apparently against his father's wish. In letters to his uncle, Dr. Findlay, he tries to justify his conduct, signing himself "Capt. 45th Regt.". The latter replies upholding the conduct of his brother in the matter. There is one letter specially devoted to remonstrance on the evil of his drinking habits. Altogether, although in writing to his nephew William, in India, the old man expresses great commiseration for Capt. Cunninghame in having been left out of the succession by his father, although having "no great esteem for him", he seems quite to have concurred in the justice of the proceeding. The correspondence also shows that the characteristic benevolence of the uncle came to the aid of the erring nephew on more than one occasion in a substantial form. Of this branch of the family in the male line I do not know that any of my generation of Findlays have ever heard. I have no recollection of ever having heard of them or known anything of them until I read Paterson's book. Of the sisters it is otherwise. Some of my elder sisters have a recollection of having seen Mrs. Ferguson, a childless widow, the sons of Mrs. Handisyde, Robert, an advocate, afterwards Lord of Session under the title of Lord Handisyde, used to visit frequently at Easterhill in our young days. (margin note: see page 16) He married Miss Bruce of Kennet, who survives him, sister of last Laird, and aunt of (now) Lord Balfour of Burleigh; Peter was a physician in Edinburgh.

Of the Haldanes, Robert was settled when we were children in South America at Santa Fe de Bogata. He always came to Easterhill when he visited this. I have not heard of him for half a lifetime. William Haldane, the younger brother, used to be often at Easterhill in our young days. He married before I went to India, several years as well as I remember, and went to Australia (I think). I have not heard of him since.

Mrs. Cunninghame's (Margaret N. Cranstoun's) correspondence with her brother-in-law, Dr. Findlay, is full of interest to us, as showing the kindly feelings which prevailed between them, the veneration in which she held him, and the affectionate regard entertained towards him by her children. At the same time the fatherly interest taken in them by him; irrespective of the ties of relationship, it would appear that there was another bond. Mary writes to me, "The Cranstouns were all people of great literary attainments. I have no doubt that was one cause of that family always having (as Miss Cranstoun told me) felt such a warm attachment to the old Dr., her half uncle, as also to our father, from his earliest years. Relationship "I have no doubt would have died out latterly had there not been that strong sympathy".

The following is worthy of quoting among many other letters from Mrs. Cunninghame to Dr. Findlay, and all the more so as the subject of it, Mrs. McLeod, the last of her generation, is still alive. It is docketed by Dr. Findlay "Mrs. Cunninghame, Edbro, March 20, 1813".

My dear Sir, I have not had the pleasure of hearing of your welfare

since my son, Mr. Cunninghame (this was no doubt William from whom there are several letters to his uncle at that time) went to London but I truly hope that you have been enjoying your health and strength, and been enabled to go through with the College business as well as usual. From the kind and sincere interest which you have ever taken in the family of your deceased brother, I am certain that you will be pleased to be informed that my youngest daughter, Isabella, is about to be married to Mr. McLeod, only son to Mr. McLeod of Cadboll, a young man of a most excellent and unexceptionable character and son to a gentleman of high respectability as to family, and fortune. I have the comfort to add that no young woman was ever received with more flattering marks of respect into any family than she has been by both Mr. and Mrs. McLeod. Immediately after the ceremony which will take place we hope about the first week of April, they set out to Tunbridge to pay their respects to Mr. and Mrs. McLeod where they always reside on account of the very delicate health of both; They are also to be at Oxford to see my John who has been there about a month at Chrischurch. I am happy to say he is most exceedingly pleased with his situation there, and finds his knowledge of Greek and Latin to be such as to make the business very easy. You will be pleased to be informed that his account of Oxford in general is very favourable as to morals; drinking is quite out of fashion; a few young men game, but that is not very common; and the set he has got into are very pleasant regular youths. We will be almost happy to hear that Mrs. Findlay and every branch of her family are in perfect health. We request you will have the kindness to present our kind remembrances to every one of them. Your nieces beg to offer their dutiful compts. to you. I am, With Great Truth, My dear Sir, Your affectionate humble servt., Margt. N. Cunninghame."

The daughters of this lady, Maria and Margaret, who each in succession took the name of Edmonston Cranstoun and after their uncle, Mr. Cranstoun's death resided at Corehouse, are held in very affectionate remembrance by many members of our family, excepting Mrs. McLeod whom I only once saw, they are the only ones I have known.

William Cunninghame who succeeded to Lainshaw went to India in early life as a "writer" in the service of the Honble East Indian Company. There is an allusion in some of the letters in the old cabinet to his having at first been on the Madras Establishment from which he appears to have been transferred to Bengal. There are many letters from him to his uncle, Dr. Findlay, both from India and after his return, all indicating deep affection and much community of feeling. He was a man of very deep convictions, as regards religion, to which all his letters bear testimony. Writing from Calcutta, under date 28th August, 1802, he says, "I have for some time, and principally since my acquaintance with Mr. Carey (the missionary) been convinced of the importance of religion and I think that the whole system of modern education is in this respect radically wrong". This with reference to some observations he had made to Mrs. Cunninghame "on the general defectiveness of the religious education of young women". In the same letter he says "Having nothing more to add at present I shall conclude by assuring you of the very high sense I have of my obligations to all the trustees, and more particularly Mr. Robert Findlay, for their great exertions in my favor since the death of my father; I hope soon to relieve them of a part of the trouble which now rests on them". On 5th October, 1802, also from Calcutta, he writes, - when he last wrote he "little imagined that the very next ships would bring me the very melancholy intelligence of the death of my lamented and invaluable friend, your son, Mr. Robert Findlay..... I shall always feel it to be my duty to render unto Mr. Findlay's family that attention which gratitude for the great friendship and effectual services he shewed and rendered unto me and the younger branches of my father's family should dictate."

He returned to England in 1803, by the time I have any recollection of his name, my idea is that he had become very much of a recluse living at Lainshaw absorbed in his literary pursuits. These were chiefly connected with religious questions, and particularly with the fulfilment of prophecy on which subject I believe he wrote several treatises. His letters to his uncle from London in the latter years of Dr. Findlay's life show how

completely his mind was occupied with all religious undertakings of the day. The following is a curious extract from a letter of 24th February, 1812: "I have seen your friend, Mr. Granville Sharpe, only once since my arrival here. I found him at his chambers. He has given me two pamphlets for you. One on the reality of Melchizedec's existence and the other on the Roman Catholic Catechism of Ireland. I saw at his chamber several objects which attracted my attention in a peculiar manner. There was a Hebrew Psalter lying open and next to it a music book and a harp from which assemblage I naturally concluded that there is at least one individual in the present age of the world who sings the praises of God in the precise words and with the instrument of the Royal Psalmist of Israel."

John Cunninghame succeeded his brother William in 18 , and was succeeded in Lainshaw by his eldest son in 18 , his second son at same time succeeding to Hensol etc., as Charles the 4th succeeded his aunt in Corehouse under his uncle, Lord Corehouse's will. The 3rd son was the only one left without an estate.

The Revd. Robert Findlay D.D. Copy of, apparently, an obituary notice found among papers of late Charles Bannatyne, 1882.

This excellent man died 15th June, 1814 in the 94th year of his age. He was born 22nd March 1721 and had he lived until next September he would have been 70 years an ordained clergyman of the Church of Scotland and 32 years Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow. He entered himself a student there in 1734 and having past through the regular course went for some time to Leyden according to the fashion of that period. On his return thence he prosecuted his studies both in London and Edinburgh and had some thoughts of entering into the medical profession, but having very soon decided in favor of the church, he was ordained minister of the parish of Stevenson in 1744 and translated to Galston in 1745. After being nine years there and two in Paisley he was appointed minister of the north west church of Glasgow in 1756; finally to the Divinity Chair in the university in 1782. Eminently distinguished through life through steady piety to God, by the faithful and zealous discharge of every public and private duty, by kindness, simplicity and humility, united with true dignity, by mind firm, independent and scrupulously correct, yet ever disposed to put the most favourable construction on the conduct of his neighbour, and slow to believe, and pained to listen to any reproach against him, he was truly an ornament to the religion which he taught in defence of divine truth he displayed the most undaunted firmness of mind. When the works of the celebrated Voltaire were diffusing their deadly poison through the British Isles, as well as on the continent, he published a learned work in vindication of the sacred books, in which he exposed in the clearest light the ignorance and misrepresentations of the champion of infidelity. At different times afterwards he committed to the press several theological tracts in support of particular doctrines of Christianity which though well known to his private friends, his extreme modesty led him to give to the public without his name. For depth of erudition, sound criticism, and candid reasoning, they are valued by students of Biblical learning, and do honour to the understanding and heart of the writer.

Never till last autumn did Dr. Findlay resile in any degree from the station assigned him. For the very unusual period of 69 years he actively discharged the duties of a minister and theological professor. At length when bending under the infirmities of age and feeling himself unable for further service, though still blessed with the entire possession of his faculties he was preparing to withdraw from his official situation it pleased God to relieve him from all his anxieties and to dissolve all his earthly relations. After a single night of indisposition, he past calmly into the world of spirits.

His memory must be cherished by his family and friends with affectionate veneration, and respected by every lover of religion and virtue for the useful example which he gave of the happy influence of a pervading faith in Christianity upon the life and character. (Subsequent note added in

red ink: life and correspondence of Abraham Sharp by William Cudworth, page 26, says "Towards close of the 17th century the university of Leyden enjoyed the highest reputation as a school of medicine and thither resorted most of the youth of Europe destined for the highest department of the healing art.")

Leyden. Dr. Findlay appears to have gone there August 1740 and to have returned August 1741 as shown by his will and likewise by an account for carriage of his luggage to and fro between Kilmarnock and Borrowstoness. I have often wondered that his stay was so short at this famous university but from recent reading Dr. Alex. Carlyle's autobiography I incline to think that it was by that time on the wane and that it was becoming a resort of young men of fortune and position more for fashion sake than from what no doubt had in former days been the motive, founded on the gain to be derived. Dr. Carlyle who went there October 1745 and left in end of February 1746. Among other things relating to his life, he says, "We past our time in general very agreeably and very profitably too, for the conversations at our evening meetings of young men of good knowledge, intended for different professions, could not fail to be instructive, much more so than the lectures, which, except two, that of Civil Law and that of Chemistry were very dull. I asked Gregory why he did not attend the lectures which he answered in his turn by asking why I did not attend the divinity professors (for there were no less than four of them).

Having heard all they could say in a much better form at home, we went but rarely and for forms sake only to hear the Dutchmen. Carlyle who like Dr. Findlay went from Glasgow university to Leyden says, further back, "I must confess I had profited much by two years' study at Glasgow in the two important branches, viz moral philosophy and theology, along with which last I received excellent instruction in composition...". (margin note: page 108) Leyden in the 16th century had been famous as a school of medicine but by this time rivals had sprung up in Paris, Edinburgh and Glasgow, etc.

(A note apparently added later at this point says:) Genealogical memoirs of Sir Walter Scott, page lii, says, "John Rutherford, born 1695, attended lectures on anatomy, surgery and materia medica in London and afterwards at Leyden under the celebrated Boerhaave. In 1719 he obtained the degree of M.D. from the university of Rheims. After some time residing at Edinburgh as a medical practitioner he suggested that a school of medicine should be opened in connection with the College and.... he was in 1726 appointed professor of the practice of medicine. As a textbook he used the work of his preceptor Boerhaave". (added in red ink: see page 34).